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Allen Thurston and Tien-Hui Chiang

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Article

What Freirean Critical Pedagogy Says and Overlooks from a Durkheimian Perspective

Tien-Hui Chiang

School of Educational Science, Anhui Normal University, China; E-Mail: thchiang@ahnu.edu.cn

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Abstract
"Critical pedagogy" has become a prevalent grammar furthering the necessity of a change in pedagogy from a banking-style to problem-posing approach, which it argues will facilitate students' development of independent values and equip them to lead the liberation of society from authoritarianism into democracy. To achieve this, classrooms need to serve as cultural forums, through which either engaged pedagogy or negotiated authority empowers teachers and students to engage in free dialogues that problematize school textbooks as "cultural politics." This empowerment demands that teachers perform as transformative intellectuals, dedicating themselves to the amelioration of inequity in educational results by reconstructing new texts, making them more accessible to working-class students. While these theoretical lexicons envision a new perspective for the "educational function," alleviation of the phenomenon of cultural reproduction can only occur if critical pedagogists pay more attention to academic curricula. Student achievements in such curricula, which respond to the demands of the social division of labor, have a profound influence on their potential social mobility.

Keywords
academic curriculum; educational inequity; emancipatory function; Freirean critical pedagogy; power relations; social mobility

Issue
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1. Introduction

The school of critical pedagogy presumes that education can accomplish its emancipatory function of transforming an authoritarian society into a democratic form by leading students to cultivate critical thought. This mission calls for a great change in pedagogical approach, from the traditional "banking" mode to one based on problem-posing, which allows students to draw upon their own experience to reply to questions posed by teachers (Freire, 1990). As this process promotes self-reflection, problem-posing facilitates the restoration of students' subjectivities through the project of *conscientização* (Freire, 1998). Because self-reflections are often retained within the domain of personal experience, students are much more likely to use predetermined viewpoints to endorse power relations embedded within the social structure. It is argued that desocialization enables them to develop open minds (Shor, 1992a). This process requires a democratic context in which both teachers and pupils can proceed with free dialogues (Freire, 1990, 1993, 2001). Accordingly, classrooms need to serve as cultural forums, permitting both sides to express their ideas in the spirit of multiculturalism that emphasizes the unique meanings found in individual cultures. Although the implementation of cultural forums demands a free context proliferating students' active participation in pedagogic practices (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991), empowerment is the key to exertion of such ideas as engaged pedagogy (hooks, 1994) and negotiation of authority (Shor, 1996). While freedom shields the practice of cultural forums, students' critical minds may become mature when they align their personal experiences with a social structure that transmits the dominant ideologies of ruling groups through school textbooks. The concept of cultural politics profiles this

political attempt (Giroux, 1981, 1994) and calls for teachers to make a contribution to developing students' critical minds (Giroux, 1988). Teachers thereby need to be empowered to act as transformative intellectuals who dedicate themselves to reducing inequity in education results (Giroux, 1989a, 2000) through the construction of new texts suitable for students from all types of social class backgrounds (Giroux, 2004).

Although the perspective of critical pedagogy addresses the linkage between independent values and social reform, the functions of education are not limited to this association. Education also needs to secure productivity through the transmission of knowledge/skills associated with production, in order to meet a variety of social needs (Durkheim, 1933). This function underlies the necessity of academic curricula, within which students' achievements play a key role in social mobility, which in turn is viewed as a yardstick for measuring educational inequity. Unfortunately, power relations have become implicitly enshrined in academic curricula through its theoretical and systematic character, whereby the logic of knowledge transmission prejudicially restricts the ability of some to legitimately have access to such curricula and achieve upward mobility (Bernstein, 1990, 1996). This article sets out to outline dual realms of educational function, namely the cultivation of independent values and academic knowledge. Its purpose is not to reject the insights of critical pedagogy with regard to educational inequity but to provide researchers who are interested in this school of thought with another path for enriching its theories. Although critical pedagogy has evolved by assimilating a range of other theories (Kincheloe, 2008), space limitations compel us to narrow the scope of this analysis to the leading proponents of Freirean critical pedagogy, Paulo Freire and Henry Giroux, who are its founder and most distinguished scholar respectively.

2. From Banking to Problem-Posing

For Freire (1990), education functions as a means of unshackling social members from an oppressed society by cultivating their critical thinking, and thus enabling them to transform their society from authoritarian to democratic form:

> As Freire argued, education as a practice for freedom must expand the capacities necessary for human agency, and hence the possibilities for new academic labor should be configured to ensure such a project that is integral to democracy itself. (Giroux, 2010, p. 718)

Unfortunately, in a despotic society, education is deployed as a political tool for relaying the ideology of dominant groups through the "banking" mode of pedagogy, which positions students as docile receivers of predetermined values that are embedded within school textbooks with unchallengeable authority. When students successfully assimilate dominant values, they become self-oppressed bodies who lose their capacity for critical thought and come to view the existing social structure as an unavoidable outcome (Freire, 1990). Freire (2001) points out that banking pedagogy not only transgresses democratic values but also neglects the unique features of individual students in the aspects of culture and experience. Therefore, it is necessary to change the pedagogical approach from the "banking" model to a "problem-posing" style that addresses dialogues rather than instructions. According to Freire's experiments, telling learners answers reveals an instructive form of pedagogy that cannot stimulate their reflections. In contrast, "problem-posing," implemented through open questions linked to the social world, opens up a free space for students to problematize social issues they confront, so that they can liberate themselves from false subjectivities:

> The world—no longer something to be described with deceptive words—becomes the object of that transforming action by men and women, which results in their humanization. (Freire, 1990, p. 67)

In this case, as language is a crucial medium for students to express their experiences, literacy no longer functions as a tool of oppression but instead offers possibilities of change and hope:

> Central to Freire's approach to literacy is a dialectical relationship between human beings and the world on the one hand, and language and transformative agency, on the other. (Giroux, 1988, p. 153)

3. Dialogue and Conscientization

Dialogues are thus viewed as a gateway for implementing the strategy of problem-posing. In practice, they need to allow students to utilize their own experiences to reflectively examine the questions posed by teachers. As power regulates the development of knowledge and social institutions in a repressive society, people have to recognize this situation prior to undertaking dialogues, so that it is possible for them to acquire critical minds (Freire, 1990). This recognition suggests that the precondition for developing critical minds is *conscientização* because it authorizes people to be aware of, discover, and finally judge power relations embedded within knowledge and social institutions. Because *conscientização* directs intentions and actions, it embraces dual functions, namely critical thinking and social transformation (Freire, 1993). *Conscientização* is comprised of three stages, progressing in order from semi-intransitivity of consciousness to transitivity of consciousness and finally critical consciousness. In the layer of semi-intransitivity, people are able to perceive and react towards problems arising from their social world:

> Men of semi-intransitive consciousness cannot apprehend problems situated outside their sphere of biological necessity. (Freire, 1998, p. 17)

Although such permeable consciousness enables them to have dialogues with others, it is confined within the stage of naive transitivity, which can easily lead to cynical irrationality that "can be characterized by an over-simplification of problems" (Freire, 1998, p. 18). When they move into the second tier—critically transitive consciousness—they can examine and interpret social phenomena with open minds and active attitudes. The shift from the first level to the second one won't occur automatically but requires the support of an inspirational curriculum that is concerned with social and political obligation. In the final stage, people develop critical minds able to disentangle the interwoven relations between power, knowledge and social structure (Freire, 1998).

These shifts reflect that the critical project presumes rational thinking as an innate faculty of human beings, which fosters the ability for social members to understand the multiple forms of meanings of social cultures. In this sense, dialogues are able to enlighten their critical thinking (Freire, 1998). As enlightenment can be achieved in a democratic context, students' capacity for independent thought is nurtured in a free dialogical context (Freire, 1993). Because this approach requires a value-free environment in which individual interlocutors have freedom to express their own viewpoints, structural constraints are eliminated, enabling students to engage in dialogue with themselves and their own environments by retrieving relevant data from their bank of social experiences. Their dialogues also need to be extended to include others and consider social structure. Such two-way interactions authorize interlocutors to reexamine and refine their own viewpoints and values through understanding the multiple forms of other cultures and their singular meanings. These correlations foreground a principle that problem-posing secures the practice of self-reflection, which leads to the creation of independent actors (Freire, 1998).

While experience-based dialogues may assist students to advance their critical faculties, Shor (1992a) reminds us that this growth may be limited within the realm of the social value system that has been internalized within their mindsets through socialization. As a consequence, they are likely to employ predetermined viewpoints to confirm social structure. However, this invisible constraint can be removed by the strategy of "desocialization," referring to a critical rethinking of existing socialization:

> To maintain the democratic politics of critical education, texts enter a student-centered process rather than students entering a text-centered discourse. (Shor, 1992b, p. 245)

This inductive teaching consists of reading, interpretation, questioning, and class dialogue, which need to be carried out through cooperative learning ensuring negotiated authority/co-governance between teachers and students. In this way, students can situate their viewpoints and experiences within real life issues, and thus discover the power-knowledge relations embedded within texts, such as the ways in which newspapers may promote ideologies of specific parties (Shor, 1992b). Freire (2001) further points out that experience-based dialogues aim at activating students' curiosity to explore the real picture behind social phenomena. Curiosity and self-reflection need to be integrated with the real world, so that students can build up advanced knowledge:

> In criticizing itself, ingenuous curiosity becomes "epistemological curiosity," as through greater methodological exactitude it appropriates the object of its knowing. (Freire, 2001, p. 37)

In this sense, critical minds serve as the foundation of knowledge development and the practice of critical thinking renews learners' subjectivities against alienation. When this reflexive scheme further stimulates students to recontextualize their daily life experiences into theoretical concepts, this not only reduces the gap between commonsense and theories but also sharpens their critical thinking. As a result, they become able to act as independent actors, constantly questioning the existing social structure and the manipulation of its dominant values by ruling groups (Freire, 1990).

4. Ideology and Cultural Politics

It is argued that academic colonization, caused by a hegemony of "universal truth" produced by Westerners, has excluded others' cultures but shaped their minds. In order to overcome this colonization, adoption of a phenomenological-hermeneutic perspective, addressing interpretation and understanding, enables teachers and learners to detect the relations between power, knowledge, knower, and self:

> As we uncover the plethora of ways that dominant power blocs colonize the mind, we begin to understand the intersection of personal experience and pluriversal knowledge anew. (Kincheloe, 2008, p. 249)

This relation can be explained in scientific positivism exercising in a hegemonic form convincing the public that the contribution of professional knowledge to securing social security is necessary if we want society to move forward, so that experts become the best agents for administering social development plans and solving related problems. Giroux (1997) theorizes this ideology as the culture of positivism depriving people's historical consciousness that forms critical minds:

> This form of rationality prevents us from using historical consciousness as a vehicle to unmask existing forms of domination as they reproduce themselves through the "facts" and common-sense assumptions that structure our view and experiences of the world. (Giroux, 1997, p. 12)

While human subjectivity is locked into a cage of ideologies such as technical rationality, an ideology often presents itself as a universal truth. This is evident, for example, in neoliberalism's redeployment of discourses of efficiency from corporate culture to endorse the reorganization of school institutional cultures:

> I use the term "corporate culture" to refer to an ensemble of ideological and institutional forces that functions politically and pedagogically to both govern organizational life through senior managerial control and to fashion compliant workers, depoliticized consumers, and passive citizens. (Giroux, 2003, p. 158)

A similar trick can be found in the discourse of economic prospect (human capital) advocated by neoliberalists, which has been invoked to effect great changes in educational purposes, particularly the increasing emphasis on basic competences and high academic performance (Shor, 1992a). Notwithstanding, the power-knowledge formation of ideologies also brings possibilities of change. This is because ideologies develop from contradictory conditions in historical contexts, the cleavages of which open up a great space for struggle and resistance:

> In this way it is important to understand ideology as both *the medium and outcome of human experiences*….In this way, ideology functions not only to limit human action but also to enable it. (McLaren, 1989b, p. 189)

Drawing upon the cultural hegemony theory of A. Gramsci, Giroux (2020) also recognizes culture as a medium for mobilizing the legitimacy of knowledge and authority. However, he argues that while this power array generates an oppressive political regime, it also provides educators with the pedagogical conditions to engage in social change and collective struggle, if they think critically about its relations with political purposes and its possible transformations related to democracy. Based on the encoding-decoding formulation (Hall, 1993), Giroux (1997) points out that such transformations are rooted in textual consumption that facilitates the turning of dominant ideologies into transformative actions, when readers exercise agency through dialectical reflections:

> The underlying grammar of ideology finds its highest expression in the ability of human beings to think dialectically….Thus, ideology implies a process whereby meaning is produced, represented, and consumed. (Giroux, 1997, p. 85)

Accordingly, dialectical reflections appropriate our viewpoints towards certain political intentions inscribed within school curricula (Shor, 1996), which attempt to reformulate students into docile receivers (McLaren, 1989a). As this is a political project, geared by ideologies and power, educators need to question why curriculum knowledge is legitimized and how students' subjectivities are constituted by such knowledge:

> Critical pedagogy initiates an inquiry into the relationship between cultural work, authority, and the securing of particular cultural practices. (Giroux, 1994, p. 132)

They also need to understand why educational enterprise exerts influence in various forms, such as through school organization, evaluation, and social relations in classrooms (Giroux, 1981). The practice of cultural politics thus implies a principle that schools cannot become agencies for transmitting dominant ideologies and shaping students' subordinated subjectivities, but rather activate students' subjectivities by incorporating their silent voices into school curricula. This is exemplified in the case of popular culture no longer being viewed as a loss of classical heritage but a channel for navigating students' daily experiences:

> This suggests a critical pedagogy operating to disrupt the unity of popular culture in order to encourage the voice of dissent while simultaneously challenging the lived experiences and social relations of domination and exploitation. (Giroux & Simon, 1989, p. 245)

When schooling becomes a form of cultural politics, we can create "a pedagogy of and for difference" allowing dominated groups to exercise agency by expressing their voices (Giroux, 1989b, p. 143).

5. Cultural Forum, Empowerment, and Public Intellectual

The project of cultural politics commands schools to serve as public spheres in which all social members are treated equally, so that both teachers and pupils are provided with a free space to engage in dialogues probing the relations between legitimate texts and power, which shape their subjectivities:

> No longer viewed as merely the repository of consciousness and creativity, the self is constructed as a terrain of conflict and struggle, and subjectivity is seen as the side of both liberation and subjugation. (Aronowitz & Giroux, 1991, p. 76)

In order to accomplish this emancipatory authority, language, and experience are situated in central categories of schooling because they enable dominated students to retrieve their subjectivities, which function as the point of a political inquiry (Giroux, 1989b). Accordingly, classrooms need to establish democratic discourse, permitting students to develop their independent values through the exercise of metacognition. This student-based pedagogy addressing critical thinking requires teachers to curtail their authority and initiate a shared power project, creating mutual pedagogy that draws on a variety of lexicons, and encouraging teachers and students to undertake meaning negotiation and interpretation:

> These self-selected issues are "generative themes" in a Freirean sense, because they were generated out of student experiences and writing, based on their perceptions of their social lives, good for generating critical discussion about larger issue. (Shor, 1996, p. 46)

As such engagement can link "I" to the text through negotiating and reconceptualizing the meanings of popular ideas and values, this critical action underpins students' construction of self-knowledge (Vasquez, 2004). Critical pedagogy can thereby be characterized as engaged pedagogy ensuring students have opportunities for meaningful learning through exploratory, narrative and creative learning activities. The practice of engaged pedagogy calls for empowering of both teachers' and students' voices to secure two-way interactions (hooks, 1994):

> Authority in this view becomes a mediating reference for the ideal of democracy and its expression as a set of educational practices designed to empower students to be critical and active citizens. (Giroux, 1988, p. 88)

As students are still in need of teachers' guidance in a democratic context (Giroux, 1988), teachers do not act as inert agents but active guiders who help students complete socialization through the curriculum (Shor, 1992a). This change indicates a movement in authority from a traditional to an emancipatory form. Teachers hereby need to enact as transformative intellectuals who are empowered to constantly undertake self-reflections that assist them to undertake critique of ideologies in order to fashion students' critical minds (Giroux, 1989a, 2004):

> Central to the category of transformative intellectual is the necessity of making the pedagogical more political and the political more pedagogical….Within this perspective, critical reflection and action become part of a fundamental social project to help students develop a deep and abiding faith in struggle to overcome economic, political and social injustices, and to further humanize themselves as part of this struggle. (Giroux, 2004, p. 209)

Reflections provide teachers with a vital toolkit for interpreting and redefining the meanings of their experiences, so that transformative intellectuals are not directed by perceptions, but by a desire to reexamine theories and social values (Giroux, 1983). Their mission is to fight for social equity in economic, political, and social arenas by detecting social discourses embodied in school textbooks. A workable way of completing this assignment is to cross the existing textual boundary and then to reconstruct new texts suitable for all types of students from different social backgrounds (Giroux, 2000, 2004). As this assignment needs to align critiques with the macro issue of moral and political discourses, transformative intellectuals need to be levelled up to become "public intellectuals" who exercise the strategy of truth-telling to awaken the public to question prevailing ideas such as neoliberalism:

> Such a pedagogical task suggests that educators speak truth to power, exercise civic courage, and take risk in their role as public intellectuals. (Giroux, 2014, p. 42)

6. Critique

Interest in critical pedagogy has attracted many researchers to conduct empirical studies, the findings of which have consistently documented the notions described above. It has been reported that the praxis of critical pedagogy is influenced by a variety of factors, including internal elements, such as teachers' attitudes towards and understanding of critical pedagogy (Magill & Salinas, 2018), beliefs, identity, knowledge, teaching experiences, and external factors, such as curriculum freedom and school cultures (Behizadeh et al., 2019). However, workable strategies for developing conscientization have been developed through transformation of classrooms into democratic public spheres, which move pedagogy from a banking approach to one of problem-posing (Wink, 2005). Furthermore, as the self is shaped by the politics of culture, it has been shown that the project of consciousness is attainable through dialectical pedagogy between knower (subject) and the known (object) in dialogue language (Kincheloe, 2008). This project has been confirmed by Alfrey and O'Connor's (2020) finding that when teachers were invited to engage in criticality, they changed their philosophy, moving their focus from performance to the cultivation of critical minds as they transformed traditional curricula into a broader critical agenda through the use of engagement and enactment driven by critical dialogue. This approach promoted freedom by allowing students to choose their forms of assessment and to have opportunities for undertaking critical reflections and creative thought. This shared power consequently enhanced students' participation in teaching processes.

When teachers developed critical consciousness, they enacted the role of reflexively critical educators through their ability to apply epistemological assump-

tions to expose oppressive ideologies enshrined within the school curriculum. This orientation led to a more inclusive pedagogy, notable for permitting students to partake in the construction of knowledge and classes to depart from the predetermined curriculum (Magill & Salinas, 2018). Being reflexively critical also means that educators are able to apply the strategy of problem-posing, as illustrated by studies showing how teachers developed students' independent values through problematizing issues with which they were familiar (Shor, 1992b; Wink, 2005). Other research has demonstrated that the practice of problem-posing needs to operate in an atmosphere of open dialogue, because this condition helps teachers to situate students' experiences within problematic issues, such as socio-political or cultural events, which in turn stimulates them to express their viewpoints. This method also created safe and open contexts, within which the students developed a sense of inclusivity and demonstrated critical knowledge associated with social justice (Rodriguez & Huemmer, 2018). Other related studies suggest that the exercise of open dialogue requires the support of empowerment. This is manifest in the findings of Jeyaraj and Harland (2019) that empowerment ushered in a trusting environment, aiding teachers to cultivate pedagogic ownership. This belongingness then reinforced teachers' confidence in the exercise of problem-posing, which subscribed the practice of free dialogues with students through engaged pedagogy. It was also discovered that self-reflexivity and peer review led empowerment not to instructive pedagogy but an engaged one (Jeyaraj & Harland, 2016). Without a pedagogy that embraced open dialogue, more oppressive contexts predictably provoked resistance among working-class students (Ashendon et al., 1987; Chiang, 2019; McLaren, 1989a; Ogbu, 2003, 2004; Willis, 1977) and among teachers (Simmons, 2016).

Numerous studies also show that oppression is becoming more visible in the regime of neoliberal governmentality. For example, it can be seen in teachers' apparent motivation to become "self-improvers" (Lissovoy, 2017; Säfström, 2005) or "enterprising subjects" (Ball, 2016; Chiang, Thurston, & Lee, 2020) through participation in performativity practices, and eagerness to acquire dignity, honor and pride by demonstrating excellent performance (Ball, 2006). In this case, critical pedagogists rightly argue that agency functions as a crucial element in disclosing dominant ideologies embedded within discourses in the tactic of the politics of culture. This argument was verified by a research finding that while university lecturers were constrained by neoliberal performance management, they applied agentic dialogue to understand learners' inner worlds to ensure their confidence when returning to higher education. This recipe yielded many advantages, such as generating enthusiasm for reflection on the relationship between class and gender and commitment to ameliorating educational inequity. These findings indicate that dialogue produced dual functions of critical pedagogy, namely conscientization and praxis (Hedges & Kadi-Hanifi, 2019). A similar picture, reported in McElearney (2020), revealed critical pedagogy serving as a medium for bridging structure and agency, as learners engaged in a kind of apprenticeship that enhanced their participation in issues raised by teachers. Such participation stimulated their reflections on the relations between self and others, enabling them to become impassioned about social justice and student empowerment.

Although the robust evidence presented above has confirmed the concepts of Freirean critical pedagogy, its advocates appear to confine their theories to the sphere of independent values, which are taken as the basic philosophy for protecting a democratic society. More specifically, classical theories they have drawn upon, including those of cultural hegemony, resistance and discourse, all address values, rather than the academic curriculum that regulates social mobility and functions as an index for measuring educational inequity. Gramsci (1971), for instance, argues that ruling groups dominate society mainly through the establishment of hegemonic cultures rather than through the economic-political mechanisms postulated by K. Marx. In order to achieve this, they need to firmly seize leadership of the society's intellectuals, as a means of fusing their own values into mainstream social culture and beguiling the public into voluntarily accepting their leadership. Organic intellectuals come to complete this cultural construction by disseminating common goods, which they are able to achieve because of their professional knowledge and widespread connections with civil society. However, the public will eventually discern the deceptive coercion of cultural hegemony through their daily life experiences, and this is likely to generate resistance through questioning of how this hegemony functions to shield the sovereignty of ruling groups. In order to ameliorate this potential political crisis, ruling groups have no choice but to constantly employ organic intellectuals to build new forms of cultural hegemony by conceding short-term interests that are able to convince the public. This perspective thus reconceptualizes one-way domination from superstructure to base (Marx, 1969) as two-way interactions comprised of domination and resistance. This insight inspired Hall (1993) to propose the idea of "cultural consumption," a two-way process of encoding and decoding that denotes a moving equilibrium between the text producer and the consumer. The School of CCCS Hall advanced has become renowned for its studies of "lads" (Hebdige, 1979), "teds" (Jefferson, 2000), "skinheads" (Clarke, 2000), "counter-school culture" (Willis, 1977), and "resistant strategies" (Corrigan, 1979). The findings of these studies clearly show that resistant actions are employed by working-class youths to sustain their collective identities and enact mastery over their own behavior. Some American researchers have also started to scrutinize the social meanings of working-class youth cultures since the notion of cultural

hegemony was imported to the USA by S. Hall in the early 1980s.

The points outlined above indicate that Gramscian researchers focus on the aspect of sub-cultures associated with identities and values. Likewise, the notion of discourse is concerned with values as discernable in the power-knowledge formula. This is exemplified in the issue of how sexuality is disciplined by medical knowledge (Foucault, 1990), the objective of which is to hatch "docile bodies" who strongly support the existing value system (Foucault, 1991). In his late work, Foucault elaborates this power-knowledge prescription by proposing the concept of "governmentality" to explicate how the self serves as the core element in constituting "biopolitics," governance which takes populations as its subject and object. When governance becomes reflexive (*raison d'État*; Foucault, 2010), transforming people into rational self-monitors becomes the core assignment of government, and this underwrites the development of policy that serves as a toolkit for administrating people's lifestyle (Foucault, 2009). The constitution of self is achieved through the "art of self" that installs care of self into people's self-knowledge via their "souls." This is achieved through a series of tactics evolving from attending to oneself, looking at oneself, concerning oneself (*epimeleia heautou*), and knowing oneself (*gnōthi seauton*) to caring of oneself (Foucault, 2005) which are exercised through truth-telling (*Parrēsia*). As truth-telling means to tell people about ethics, it harnesses the symbolic value of personal example, serving as a political means for politicians to win people's trust through their exemplary demonstrations (Foucault, 2011). The transmission of ethics is mainly reliant upon civil society because it requires consensus between social members (Foucault, 2003)

Although developing students' independent values is very important for sustaining a democratic society, it is very difficult for this value-led perspective to improve inequity in education results because social mobility is mainly determined by professional knowledge/skills driven by scientific development in the labor market (Livingstone, 1987). This is evident in changing conceptualizations of the labor force structure, from meritocratic society (Young, 1961), industrial society (Dahrendorf, 1959), and modern society (Goldthorpe et al., 1987) to artificial intelligent society (Brown & James, 2020). In light of this association, we need to look at the character of the social division of labor. According to Durkheim (1933), scientific development leads to specialization in the social division of labor in order to meet a variety of social needs:

> An industry can exist only if it answers some need. A function can become specialized only if this specialization corresponds to some need of society. But all new specialization results in increasing and improving production. (Durkheim, 1933, p. 272)

Beside knowledge and skills associated with production, social equilibrium in modern society requires collective sentiments, termed organic solidarity, functioning as a sense of morality that is rooted in occupations:

> This is what gives moral value to the division of labor. Through it, the individual becomes cognizant of his dependence upon society; from it come the forces which keep him in check and restrain him. In short, since the division of labor becomes the chief source of social solidarity, it becomes, at the same time, the foundation of the moral order. (Durkheim, 1933, p. 401)

When society moves from a primitive stage (mechanical solidarity) to a modern form (organic solidarity), schools take over the functions of primitive institutes, such as religions and families, transmitting knowledge/skill and social norms in order to advance social civilization (Durkheim, 1956), the missions of which are accomplished through selection and socialization of schools (Cohen, 1968; Parsons, 1961). Selection is carried out to ensure learners' mental abilities match the stratified system of knowledge in the education system. Socialization refers to how learners internalize the social value system into their personality, the origin of which is social norms (Parsons, 1937, 1951). In short, stable social operation requires two crucial components—knowledge/skills and values. Based on these associations, Bernstein (1990) put forward the notions of "regulative discourse" and "instructional discourse," which together constitute "pedagogic discourse," in order to depict how the logic of knowledge transmission in classrooms (framing) is regulated by social values:

> We shall define pedagogic discourse as the rule which embeds a discourse of competence (skills of various kinds) into a discourse of social order in such a way that the latter always dominates the former. We shall call the discourse transmitting specialized competences and their relation to each other instructional discourse, and the discourse creating specialized order, relation, and identity regulative discourse….In this sense regulative discourse is itself the precondition for any pedagogy discourse. It is of course obvious that all pedagogic discourse creates a moral regulation of the social relations of transmission/acquisition, that is, rules of order, relation, and identity, and that such a moral order is prior to, and a condition for, the transmission of competences. (Bernstein, 1990, p. 184)

In this sense, educational practices are a cultural relay that legitimately reproduces the bias of class relations through the internal logic of classification (power and knowledge) and framing (control and transmission). Classification refers to a voice determining what type of knowledge is legitimate and authentic. This relationship

is regulated by power that is exercised through the process of recontextualization, which reorganizes knowledge units into the form of a neutral discipline through processes of delocation and relocation. Because power creates singular forms of disciplines which possess exclusive and distinctive features enabling them to be discriminated from each other, there are insulating boundaries between these disciplines, which can be framed in classification. Framing is about who obtains control over the processes of knowledge transmission, so that the logic of knowledge transmission is regulated by social relations between and within transmitters and receivers (Bernstein, 1996). While both classification and framing illustrate the relations within knowledge reproduction and knowledge transmission, theories of cultural reproduction posit a top-down domination of power, so that their focus is power external to education rather than relations within:

> 'Relations within' refers to the rules whereby the 'privileging text' has been internally constructed. 'Relations within' tells us about the relationship within the 'privileging text,' that is the rules whereby that text has been constituted, which makes the text as it is, which gives it its distinctive features, its distinctive relations, its mode of transmission and acquisition. (Bernstein, 1990, p. 176)

"Relations within" is thus inscribed within curriculum knowledge, which acts as a nexus linking class power to educational attainment, and in turn legitimizes the status of the aristocracy in modern society. In other words, class power structure is reproduced through academic curricula, comprehension of which demands a specific form of reasoning ability that is regulated, in Bernstein's terminology, by the combination of "rules of recognition" and "rules of realization":

> Recognition (ground) rules create the means of distinguishing between and so recognizing the speciality that constitutes a context, and realization (performance) rules regulate the creation and production of specialized relationships internal to that context. (Bernstein, 1990, p. 15)

This quotation indicates that if students cannot identify the speciality of contexts, they cannot produce legitimate texts expected by teachers. Unfortunately, the knowledge structure of an academic curriculum, termed "sacred knowledge" or "vertical discourse," features theoretical and systematic concepts, the understanding of which generally require a logical reasoning ability that is regulated by coding orientations (Bernstein, 1999). Because restricted code, often used in families of low socioeconomic status, is contextually dependent, collective, and substantial, it has a close relation with practical curriculum, termed "horizontal discourse," the features of which are practical, substantial, manual, and unorganized. In this sense, children possessing a restricted code are impeded from comprehending academic subjects (vertical discourse), meaning that difficulties at school might be partly attributable to such students' linguistic competence (Bernstein, 1977). From this viewpoint, when class power is embedded within academic curricula, inequality in educational results will be perpetuated. Sadly, most teachers cannot detect such "relations within" and apply instrumental rationality to interact with students. This scenario was confirmed by a study finding that the purpose of schooling exercised through academic curricula was aligned with professional identity among teachers that was predicated on appreciation of academic performance, so that intellectual students became the source of teachers' identity. As the majority of the working-class students in the study failed in academic curricula, teachers employed their authority to control them, unfortunately marginalizing them in the process (Ashendon et al., 1987). Other studies have revealed that such identity was associated with teachers' concerns with effectiveness, as evidenced by a finding that an elaborated code (often found in middle-class students) expressly fostered engagement by teachers in interactions with students (β = .325, p < .001). This code also secured a high level of student-based teacher authority (β = .019, p < .001), which was a key component enabling the practice of weak framing (Chiang, Thurston, Zhao, et al., 2020). Another study portrayed a similar picture in which teachers' attitudes toward excellent students' coding orientation significantly contributed to teachers' ideas in instrumental rationality (β = .279, p < .001). In contrast, a restricted coding orientation (often found in working-class students) substantially impeded teachers from fluently implementing their pedagogic practices (β = −.431, p < .001; Chiang et al., 2021). These findings show that instrumental rationality steers teachers' minds and teaching strategies. It has been argued that the such techno-efficient minds can be attributed to the framework of teacher education, which is mainly based on psychological courses associated with teaching techniques rather than sociologic disciplines related to cultural consciousness (Apple, 1988, 1990). Giroux (1981) also acknowledges this association:

> While the interests behind the historical development of technocratic rationality are rather clear, it appears that the historical roots of its more contemporary versions have been forgotten by many teacher-educators. (Giroux, 1981, p. 150)

As a result, teachers are molded into the role of implementers, concerned primarily with teaching efficiency, rather than that of critical educators. Therefore, if critical pedagogists want to alleviate the phenomenon of cultural reproduction, they need to engage with teachers' critical minds to explore the knowledge structure of academic curricula and heighten awareness of why inequity in educational achievement is anchored in

the internal logic of knowledge production and knowledge transmission.

7. Conclusion

The paramount mission of critical pedagogy is to develop students' independent values with the goal of establishing and maintaining a democratic society. This attempt can be achieved if education accomplishes its emancipatory function through the strategy of problem-posing, which motivates students to pursue self-reflections through free dialogues. This can be achieved by creating classrooms that serve as cultural forums whereby negotiated/engaged authority empowers both teachers and students to apply the politics of culture to engage in critical reflections on familiar issues through desocialization. While independent values are the core element in exercising education's emancipatory function, there are also other functions, including concern for productivity that prescribes the necessity of academic curricula transmitting scientific knowledge/skills required by the social division of labor. Because power relations have been enshrined within academic curricula, inequity in educational results is rooted in the knowledge structure of academic curricula, which privilege certain reasoning abilities that serve as a precondition for learning. This knowledge is articulated in the notion of "relations within" that regulates the logic of knowledge transmission in pedagogic practices. This concept accounts for the inner logic of knowledge of academic subjects (vertical discourse) and the social relations between teachers and students, which constitute a mode of pedagogic practices orienting to either transmission or acquisition. In this regard, "relations within" sorts out the major shortcoming of the theories of cultural reproduction that posit a top-down mode of power structure, describing how learners are situated in their "relations to" legitimate pedagogic communication. More importantly, developing critical strategies through pedagogic practices to decode the knowledge structures of academic curricula serves as a gateway for alleviating inequity in educational results, and the consequent social inequity with its associated poverty, crimes and diseases. Unfortunately, this structural constraint is reinforced by teachers' ingrained instrumental rationality, which leads them to view this knowledge structure as being natural. While they may apply more critical minds to develop students' independent values, this approach cannot help improving students' academic performance, which regulates their social mobility. All of these associations highlight a principle that if critical pedagogists want to mitigate the phenomenon of cultural reproduction, they should develop new strategies for pedagogic actions that can assist teachers to transform the academic curriculum (vertical discourse) into practical knowledge (horizontal discourse), and thus make it accessible to students from all types of social backgrounds. As this transformation expands the emancipatory function of education from independent values to students' academic attainment, it is consistent with the mission of critical pedagogists to ameliorate educational inequity. With the remarkable dedication and talents of those working in this field, this project is certainly achievable.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

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About the Author

Tien-Hui Chiang has produced over 130 articles related to globalization and education policy, sociology of education, and sociology of curriculum. Currently, he is the vice-president of RC04 (Sociology of Education) in UNESCO's International Sociological Association, a constitutional standing committee of UNESCO's World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). He is also an associate editor of the *International Journal of Educational Research* (SSCI) and international advisor for a number of international academic bodies, such as IAFOR, SGEM, and ELLTA.

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Article

A Phase 2 Exploratory Trial of a Vocabulary Intervention in High Poverty Elementary Education Settings

Maria Cockerill [1,*], Allen Thurston [1], Andy Taylor [2], Joanne O'Keeffe [1] and Tien-Hui Chiang [3]

[1] School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast, UK;
E-Mails: maria.cockerill@qub.ac.uk (M.C.), a.thurston@qub.ac.uk (A.T.), j.okeeffe@qub.ac.uk (J.O.K.)
[2] Fischer Family Trust Literacy, UK; E-Mail: literacy@fft.org.uk
[3] School of Educational Science, Anhui Normal University, China; E-Mail: thchiang@ahnu.edu.cn

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
This article reports results of a phase 2 exploratory trial of a vocabulary program delivered in elementary schools to improve student's reading ability, including their comprehension. The intervention was tested as a targeted intervention in classrooms with children aged 7–10 across 20 weeks during one school year, with eligible students learning in small groups of four. Teachers and support staff received training in this cooperative learning approach to develop children's vocabulary with particular focus on Tier-2 words. School staff received additional support and resources to equip them to develop and implement the vocabulary instruction sessions to targeted students. The trial was undertaken with a sample of 101 students in seven schools from three English district areas with high levels of socio-economic disadvantage. A standardized reading test was used to measure reading outcomes, with significant gains found in student's overall reading ability, including comprehension. Owing to the positive results found in this trial, including positive feedback about implementation of the technique, next steps should be a larger trial with 48 schools to avoid the risk of sampling error due to limited number of schools.

Keywords
elementary education; literacy; reading comprehension; teacher development; vocabulary

Issue
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1. Background

The value of a developed vocabulary for students in lower elementary grades increases as they learn to read (Apthorp et al., 2012), and an extensive vocabulary predicts reading attainment (Biemiller, 2003). Research supports vocabulary instruction and identifies a very high correlation between comprehension and vocabulary intercepts, suggesting that reading comprehension and oral vocabulary knowledge can be understood as reflecting a single higher order language construct (Ricketts et al., 2020).

In 2019, only 51% of disadvantaged students in England achieved the expected reading standards at age 11, compared to 71% of all other students (Department for Education, 2019a). For some years, research has indicated that lower vocabulary expertise in children from high poverty areas adds to attainment failure (Becker, 1977), as they often have smaller vocabularies than their peers, and that this difference in outcomes grows as children age (Beals, 1997; Waldfogel & Washbrook, 2010). Evidence continues to link a significant proportion of children who do not reach their full academic potential with socioeconomic status (Gorard

et al, 2019; Pishghadam, 2011). Although the issue may lie in a lack of literacy experiences outside of school, a form of literacy poverty, schools need to seek effective means to address these inequalities.

There are challenges for any intervention which aims to enhance literacy for students who have not had rich experiences of literacy in their development. One challenge is how to bridge the gap between current linguistic and literacy abilities, and those skills that are needed to interrogate and make sense of text, particularly in a formal and academic setting. The nature of texts used in school often requires the meaning to be interpreted abstractly. This can be problematic if pupils have not had previous experiences in school or in the home where more complex vocabulary is acquired, and abstract conceptualisation is common. Bernstein (1990) saw the essential link between literacy and abstract conceptualisation of meaning as being mediated by familiarity with elaborate codes where children regularly have experiences of being asked to make these links.

Classroom observations from US research suggest that vocabulary teaching in elementary schools is not prevalent (Wanzek, 2014). Yet instruction about word learning has the capacity to be taught well (Duke & Moses, 2003) and have positive impact (Beck & McKeown, 2007), as demonstrated by positive effect sizes (ES+0.91) from a summary of 41 studies (Stahl & Fairbanks, 1986). More recently, research confirms the efficacy of vocabulary teaching to improve word knowledge proficiency (ES+0.29 to 1.21) and text understanding (ES+0.10 to 0.50; Elleman et al., 2009; Marulis & Newman, 2010). Comprehension ability is aided by children's vocabulary knowledge, and instruction benefits children to develop an extensive picture vocabulary enabling them to understand words (Verhoeven et al., 2011). A recent study of struggling readers as they leave elementary settings supports the potential of vocabulary learning with positive assessments of narrative and vocabulary of between +0.15 and +0.26 (Joffe et al., 2019). This builds on earlier studies that showed the benefits of oral vocabulary instruction for both improved vocabulary (+0.02–0.26) and listening comprehension (+0.15–046) from the earliest elementary stage (Fricke et al., 2017).

The study presented here measures the effects of children's reading attainment when exposed to a new vocabulary intervention designed for targeted use in English elementary schools, using a Medical Research Council (2000) phase 2 exploratory randomized controlled trial (RCT).

2. The Intervention

Students aged 7–10 in UK schools receive the intervention implemented by teachers and support staff who have been trained to deliver the program. This includes two days of training and support from delivery experts Fischer Family Trust Literacy (FFTL).

Staff training focuses on the knowledge, skills, and understanding required to implement the vocabulary intervention to the selected students who require it. Staff learn about vocabulary instruction research and about using a multi-strategy methodology in vocabulary instruction. This contains a teaching sequence, varied vocabulary activities, teaching elements including identifying words to teach and using Tier-1 words as an introduction to more complex Tier-2 words (Beck et al., 2013), example session plans, and formats to plan and record sessions. Staff learn about the teaching sequence of revise, teach, practise, and apply, for vocabulary instruction in elementary classrooms. Marzano's six-step cycle for vocabulary instruction developed for use in high schools includes: explain, restate, show, refine, discuss, and play (Marzano & Pickering, 2005). These elements are redistributed in the sequence when adapted for use in elementary settings.

The intervention addresses children's knowledge of words/vocabulary and their ability to use them appropriately, rather than the specific syntax and grammar of standard English which often focuses on sentence construction. Nevertheless, the focus on vocabulary does raise issues which are pertinent to the issue of standard English and grammar. During staff training, therefore, it is emphasized that no vocabulary intervention is likely to work if it involves denigrating, however subtly, the speaker's natural language, their home register. So non-standard forms and word choices are seen as a resource and a starting point for learning new vocabulary. Staff are trained to celebrate the richness and diversity of language in all its forms, whether Tier-1 English words or from another language, whilst expanding the range of registers and the associated vocabulary that will give children access to more conversations and more complex dialogue. In this sense, a non-standard dialect, with its characteristic vocabulary, is an asset and is considered another form of Tier-1 vocabulary, just as the home language of a standard English speaker is likely also to be dominated by Tier-1 forms and choices. The intervention focuses on giving children opportunities to learn a wider range of vocabulary and use more Tier-2 vocabulary, appropriate for more formal and more academic dialogue. Staff training explicitly identifies Tier-1 vocabulary, which would include non-standard forms and dialect words, as a bridge to the more formal register which is opened up by Tier-2 vocabulary choices.

Activities reinforce children's home language as rich resource. These include drama activities and role play to explore how messages need to be conveyed differently according to the formality of the situation, the audience and players, and the purpose, etc. Role play and the word choices are then examined through discussion. Similarly, an activity like "word cline" might include dialectal vocabulary choices which are ordered according to criteria (e.g., best words from a selection to describe something to friends, as compared to an unknown audience; the same words might be discussed but the order

would differ according to the audience and purpose of the conversation). Other activities explore words by linking them to their related words or, as in the "SAME thing" activity, examine synonyms and antonyms.

Other aspects of the vocabulary intervention which are relevant to grammar teaching and non-standard forms are that (1) emphasis is given on idiomatic phrases, which are rarely very formal but often used in formal situations, like news bulletins to give colour and make more vivid a more abstract point—non-standard expressions would potentially be examined as part of this, as the words chosen for consideration can be sourced from newspapers, media and books as well as topics of interest—and that (2) the program highlights the importance of learning about "word families," often moving from a single word to explore how it changes, usually according to its function in the sentence, into a range of other words (e.g., "ladder tracker" activity).

As well as making explicit (but natural) use of grammatical terminology—noun, adjective, adverb, etc.—as a kind of meta-language to be able to talk about words and their function, these activities highlight the importance of morphemes, the smallest units of meaning in words, which transform a noun into an adjective, etc. A prefix and suffix chart is also included in the program resources to facilitate conversations about language and how words derive from each other.

Students are selected by their teachers if they have limited or poor vocabulary, and if their comprehension of texts is less advanced than their decoding skills. The intervention is delivered in small groups (approximately four). Students receive clear induction into the focus words, using familiar Tier-1 words as a bridge to learning less familiar Tier-2 words, using focus words in instances which illuminate meaning. Students repeat pronunciation and meaning, identifying words with comparable meaning, and search for associated words. The group then often undertakes a cooperative learning activity to use and explore the word (e.g., a game, drama, or listening and speaking activity). Students then practice their knowledge application. For example, they may invent phrases using new words in context, and will use the words again at the beginning of the subsequent lesson. The words are consolidated by students and displayed in the classroom to help students use them during subsequent instruction time. Over two terms (approximately 20 weeks with a minimum of 12 weeks), staff in English elementary classrooms deliver vocabulary instruction in small groups, for 15–20 minutes, three times per week (minimum), and daily if possible (optimal). During each week, five new words with a related meaning are introduced.

The FFTL staff training to deliver the intervention includes:

- Tools to diagnose children with less developed word-knowledge.
- The lesson sequence format.
- Training on Tier-2 words as the focus (Tier-1 words used as bridge).
- Guide templates for initial teaching and introducing new words.
- Guidance on teaching approaches which enable students to transit from learning new vocabulary to using it with confidence.
- A resource box of student support materials.

Table 1 summarizes the vocabulary program. Students allocated to the treatment arm of the trial receive the vocabulary program instruction, while students allocated to the control arm do not receive it and continue to receive their usual literacy instruction.

3. Theory of Change of the Vocabulary Program

Inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the program are described in the logic model (Figure 1). This includes the theory of change, and how delivery factors link up to program outcomes.

3.1. Theory of Intervention and Change

The theory of intervention and change of this program is illustrated in the logic model (Figure 1), which aims to expand student's vocabulary to improve their understanding of text to enhance reading ability.

3.1.1. Theory of Intervention

There is evidence that vocabulary is a predictor of literacy outcomes (Moody et al., 2018; Moore et al, 2014), that vocabulary instruction can enhance word knowledge and reading abilities in children (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Moody et al., 2018), and that vocabulary and background knowledge can contribute to comprehension ability (Apthorp et al., 2012; Cromley & Azevedo, 2007; Moody et al., 2018). Furthermore, researchers recommend teaching flexible word-learning strategies and techniques for self-monitoring to improve reading comprehension and to facilitate word knowledge across a variety of contexts (Wright & Cervetti, 2017). In line with evidence that quality professional training can change teacher practice (Coe et al., 2014), teachers in the present study are trained in the necessary vocabulary strategies and pedagogies to deliver instruction in elementary classrooms. Staff training in the vocabulary program equips teachers with the required knowledge to change the practice of vocabulary teaching, including spaced regular delivery, modelling learning for children, and nurturing cooperative learning structures during sessions whilst providing appropriate scaffolding. Program implementation and student selection are important elements during staff training. Staff from various schools are trained together to implement the program and receive bespoke visits per school to support classroom delivery.

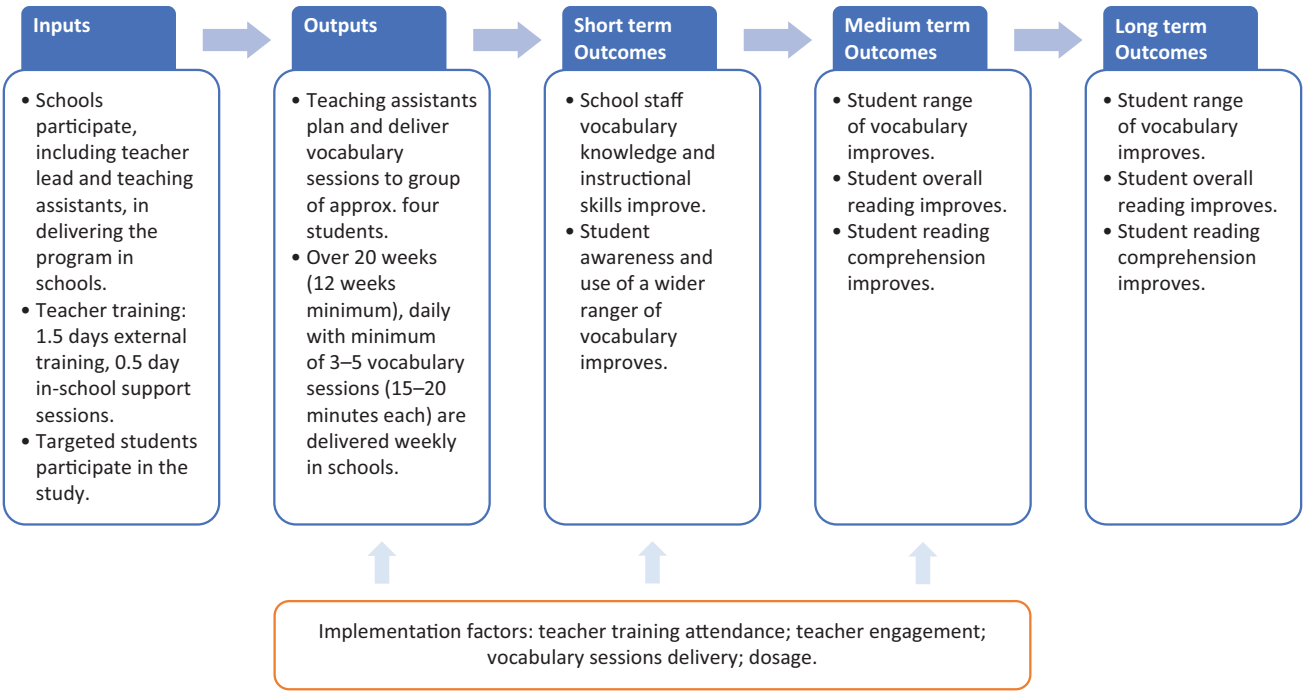

Figure 1. Vocabulary program logic model.

The vocabulary program instruction thus includes a multi-varied flexible approach focusing on a teaching sequence, a variety of activities, and teaching elements, including knowing which words to teach, with focus on Tier-2 words (using Tier-1 words as a bridge; see Beck et al., 2013). The focus on Tier-2 words is supported by research as an effective instruction approach (Coyne et al., 2018). Training includes example lesson templates, and teachers learn and are supported in planning and recording template usage.

Research supports sustained vocabulary instruction to make a substantial impact on children's lexical development (Beck & McKeown, 2007; Biemiller, 2003). There is agreement about the benefits of vocabulary instruction to nurture preliterate phonological abilities in young children (Walley et al., 2003). The rationale in respect of the lexical hypothesis is that when younger children learn new vocabulary their depiction of words is refined, leading to phonological awareness and reading fluency (Metsala & Walley, 1998) which becomes embedded through extended literacy opportunities (Walley et al., 2003). In respect of older elementary children, the lexical quality hypothesis suggests exposure to words helps students develop high quality word representations leading to reading proficiency which improves through using new words repeatedly (Perfetti, 2007; Perfetti & Hart, 2002). To improve children's reading and comprehension it is recommended for children to encounter the new words in an active manner (Apthorp et al., 2012). This includes repeatedly providing students with the target word context and meaning (Beck et al., 2002). This research is supported by recent RCT studies with early adolescent struggling readers who found positive effects of +0.15–0.26 (Joffe et al., 2019) and early elementary readers who found positive effects of +0.02–0.26 for improved vocabulary and +0.15–0.46 for listening comprehension (Fricke et al., 2017).

It is important to distribute and scaffold learning by using small groups and cooperative learning structures to practice the cycle of learning new words and embed these in children's usage to self-monitor their understanding. This kind of meta-cognitive development, which is evident from about 5–6 years of age and increases from age eight (Veenman, 2016), can have a positive impact on learning outcomes of ES+0.7. It has the greatest success when learning is scaffolded by teachers and includes cooperative group structures (Higgins et al., 2014). The psychology literature supports the effectiveness of learning using systematic spacing in which learning sessions are implemented with time intervals between them, rather than being delivered in one block of learning time.

Since Ebbinghaus (1885/1964) in the late 19th century, the field of cognitive psychology has found benefits in spacing learning. More recently, meta-analyses estimate that about 75% of 400+ verbal learning studies in the distributed practice literature show a spacing advantage (Cepeda et al., 2006). Verbal learning in elementary school, where spaced or distributed learning is used, appears to be most beneficial for learning simple word recall (Seabrook et al., 2005) and word and fact learning (Sobel et al., 2011), including vocabulary and text comprehension. A recent study identified an effect size of +0.85 for the benefit of spaced learning with verbal contents (Wiseheart et al., 2019). Thus, the vocabulary program is implemented using

a structure of 3–5 weekly sessions of 15–20 minutes each. Scaffolding, identified as an effective approach (van de Pol et al., 2010), is integral to the teacher's modelling process during instruction, and is grounded on the theory developed in the early 20th century by Vygotsky (1978) about learning within the "zone of proximal development." Scaffolding support used in literacy learning continues to be recommended by evidence-driven organizations in England (Education Endowment Foundation [EEF], 2021a). Vocabulary instruction in the present study therefore includes mediation and teacher facilitated support, as children work collectively in small groups of approximately four.

Students learn cooperatively sharing a common goal, including active participation in group activities facilitated by teachers. Research supports cooperative learning structure when activities are correctly aligned to the student's capabilities. Such interaction during vocabulary sessions enables co-construction of word meanings whilst students learn together. Social interdependence theory (Johnson & Johnson, 2012; Johnson et al., 2010) underpins student's cooperative learning and has been tested for its effectiveness over many years, where meta-analyses identify the benefits of implementing this approach in schools (ES +0.19 to +0.91; Johnson et al., 2000). This is supported by more recent meta-analyses with findings of ES+0.44 (Igel, 2010) and ES+0.59 (Capar & Tarim, 2015) for the use of cooperative learning. Evidence is supported by the EEF synthesis of meta-analysis findings of between +0.09 and +0.91 (EEF, 2018), and the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit which identifies an average of five months additional progress for students who engage in cooperative learning (EEF, 2021b). Positive evidence of cooperative learning for literacy instruction in elementary schools with effect size of ES+0.20 is found in a meta-analysis including 18 studies in elementary schools (Puzio & Colby, 2013). Most recently, literacy trials using cooperative learning approaches to improve Reading outcomes also support this approach with positive effect sizes of ES+0.13–0.25 (Thurston et al., 2020) and ES+0.24 (Thurston et al., 2021).

The vocabulary program designed with its multi-strategy approach is hypothesized to enhance vocabulary skills and thus improve student's reading ability and comprehension outcomes and is tested in this study using a digital reading measure which is standardized.

3.1.2. Theory of Change

A structured vocabulary program supported by staff training can change the teaching of vocabulary, if training impacts on teacher's knowledge and actions, and their pedagogies change. This in turn impacts on student vocabulary development resulting in improved reading.

Vocabulary instruction dosage, staff questionnaires, and staff training attendance are used to understand the implementation factors and mediators for outcome change.

3.2. Criteria to Recommend the Vocabulary Program for a Phase 3 Definitive Randomized Controlled Trial

To determine the vocabulary program's readiness for a definitive RCT (phase 3) in elementary schools, the criteria outlined below were used:

- Staff training is deliverable as specified.
- The program is deliverable to students as specified.
- Consideration for scale-up will include whether staff evaluate the program positively enough.
- A positive effect size is reported in students who received the vocabulary program, when compared to control group students who did not receive it.

4. Research Questions

Decisions about whether the vocabulary program should be scaled to a phase 3 trial will be informed by addressing the questions below:

1. Can the vocabulary program be implemented in elementary schools?
2. Do students' reading ability improve when they receive the vocabulary program?
3. Does the impact of the vocabulary program differ significantly depending on variations in implementation fidelity (process evaluation)?
4. Should the vocabulary program be scaled?

5. Randomized Controlled Trial and Process Evaluation Design Summary

A logic model was produced (Figure 1) to help guide the process evaluation and enable interpretation of RCT findings for the vocabulary program intervention. To structure the trial, SPIRIT (2015) guidelines were consulted.

In the RCT evaluation, primary outcomes were investigated using ANCOVA. The RCT examined differences in pre- to post-test reading scores on the New Group Reading Test (NGRT). The ANCOVA assessed post-test reading scores for the intervention group who received the program and compared them to control group scores, using pre-test reading scores in the ANCOVA. Results were calculated for each of the main outcome measures and are presented as *effect sizes* (calculated as Cohen's *d*).

The process evaluation was guided by the Medical Research Council guidelines on the development of RCTs for complex health interventions (Moore et al., 2015) and supplements the RCT to assess whether the program was implemented with fidelity. Vocabulary program staff training attendance data (naturally occurring data from the trainer), teacher engagement data, and dosage of program delivery data were collected. A post-program questionnaire was completed by staff, including questions about control group learning during the program.

6. Methods

Pre- and post-intervention tests were completed by all participating students (intervention and control groups). Schools were given guidance to select up-to a maximum of 16 students from years 3 and 5 combined (aged 7–8 or 9–10), with good decoding skills and poor comprehension and vocabulary.

6.1. Reading Outcome Measure

A pre- and post-intervention standardized reading test was undertaken under exam conditions with the selected children. The NGRT (digital version) from GL Assessment was used. This adaptive test with high reliability (Alpha values 0.9; GL Assessment, 2018) assesses children's reading ability, using sentence completion and reading comprehension scales. The pre- and post-test data from the intervention and control groups obtained were used to determine the differential effects of the program on student reading attainment level. The sentence completion and passage comprehension sub-scales in the NGRT combine to provide an overall reading score. Analysis was undertaken on both sub-scales and the combined overall reading score.

6.2. Dosage Record

To assess fidelity of implementation teachers completed a 20-week implementation plan collected at post-test, recording weekly vocabulary instruction information.

6.3. Teacher Questionnaire at Post-Test

School staff involved completed the online questionnaire (Lime Survey) at post-test. The questionnaire included 19 questions: 11 questions with a 4-point scale with the poles only marked from *strongly agree* to *strongly disagree*, five open answer questions and three closed answer questions, each with forced choice options about instruction implementation.

6.4. Training Delivery Naturally Occurring Data

Program trainers collected staff attendance records. Table 1 summarizes the instruments and measures.

6.5. Sample

North East England has the second highest low income and deprivation rate after inner London (Bradshaw, 2020). The funder identified this area for research owing to high levels of disadvantage here and three high poverty district areas within this region were selected. Elementary schools with above 15.8% national average levels of students eligible for Free School Meals (Department for Education, 2019b) from the selected three high poverty district areas in this region were invited to participate in this study. Given the funding restrictions, seven schools participated in the trial with completed Memorandum of Understanding agreement. This group of schools had an average school level of eligible FSM students of 49%, compared to the national average figure of 15.8%.

In total, the study included 104 children from seven schools in North East England from the three high-poverty area districts where recruitment to the trial took place. Students aged 7–10 from two year groups were recruited for the trial, with up to eight students from years 3 and 5 respectively (up to four participated as intervention and four as control from each year-group), giving a total of up to 16 from each school. The demographic nature of the sample was composed as follows: 56 female and 48 males; 38.5% (40 of 104) were entitled to FSM; eight out of 104 reported they were special educational need students under a health and care plan; 25 out of 104 had English as second language; ethnic balance was 77 white British, three white other, 14 Pakistani, two Other Asian, one Afghani, one African, one Chinese, one Indian, one Bangladeshi, three not specified. Schools who agreed to participate were provided with guidance to select eligible students, and as instructed, selected the students for this trial who were

Table 1. Measurement tools.

Outcome	Instrument	Completed by	Alpha values
Reading comprehension	NGRT: Passage comprehension subtest	Pupil	>0.9 (GL Assessment, 2018)
Overall reading	NGRT	Pupil	>0.9 (GL Assessment, 2018)
Reading accuracy	NGRT: Sentence completion subtest	Pupil	>0.9 (GL Assessment, 2018)
Implementation factors			
Dosage	20-week implementation (60–100 minutes weekly)	Teacher	n/a
Teacher engagement	Training attendance	Trainer	n/a
Teacher engagement	Teacher online survey	Teacher	n/a

Table 2. Sample.

	Condition		
	Control	Treatment	Total
Year 3	27	24	51
Year 5	27	26	53
Total	54	50	104

good decoders but had poor comprehension with poor vocabulary (see Table 2).

6.6. Randomization

Randomization to condition was undertaken at the individual level; each student was listed alphabetically within each year group and by school. A whole number was generated between 0 (control) and 1 (vocabulary intervention) using a software program for the generation of random numbers (Random Number Generator for iPhone, version 5.0 by Nicolas Dean). Even numbers of intervention and control participants were ensured in each arm of the trial by assigning the first student to condition in year 3 followed sequentially by the other seven students, and then in year 5 respectively, per school. This was true randomization and no minimization was used, as students were assumed to be evenly distributed in control and intervention groups.

6.7. Sample Size Calculation and Analysis

The sample size for the study was calculated to detect an effect size of +0.33, with ANCOVA, with $p > 0.05$ and 80% power (Soper, 2019). In calculating this sample size, it was assumed that:

1. There was even distribution of sample between control and intervention groups.
2. Loss of sample due to attrition would be <5%. Missing data was to be treated as missing completely at random if levels remained under 5%.

We consider an effect size of +0.33 to be reasonable based on evidence from previous reported effect sizes from experimental studies using vocabulary instruction where the average reported effect sizes range from +0.29 to +1.21 for the impact on vocabulary and +0.10 to +0.50 for the impact on reading comprehension (Elleman et al., 2009; Marulis & Newman, 2010).

6.8. Ethics

Two ethics procedures were undertaken to approve the trial. The participating school Headteachers approved the testing and intervention of the trial. The matching of the process of data, and the merger and analysis of the secondary data set was approved by the Ethics Review Board at the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast.

Before the trial a protocol for the work was developed and accepted for publication (Cockerill et al., 2019).

7. Results

The vocabulary intervention effects on sentence completion, passage comprehension, and overall reading score.

In total, 104 children were randomized to intervention or control group. Missing data were below 5% of the sample. Three students were missing at either pre- or post-test (who left the school). Therefore, the data were assumed to be missing completely at random (due to the N of the sample, it was not possible to explore this statistically). In total, 49 students were left in the intervention and 52 in the control group. The demographic nature of the sample which completed the NGRT at post-test was composed as follows: 56 female and 46 males; 38.24% (39 of 102) were entitled to FSM; eight out of 102 reported they were special educational need students under a health and care plan; 25 out of 102 had English as second language; ethnic balance was 75 white British, three white other, 14 Pakistani, two Other Asian, one Afghani, one African, one Chinese, one Indian, one Bangladeshi, three not specified. Note that in the following analyses, degrees of freedom change as two more students (one from each arm of the trial) did not receive a score on one of the sub-scales at either pre- or post-test. This is because the adaptive test switches to a phonics-based assessment to calculate overall reading scores if the performance of students indicates that a floor effect may occur as they are not able to respond correctly to the easiest of questions as the main test progresses. Therefore, the slight variation that occurred in the numbers of scores are available for analysis in sub-scales. We excluded the two students who did not receive sub-scale scores from the final analysis.

The vocabulary intervention group improved reading significantly compared to the control group. Descriptive statistics for pre- and post-test results in the NGRT reading tests are presented in Table 3. Pre-test reading scores, although slightly higher for the control group, did not differ significantly ($F(1, 102) = 0.26$, $P = 0.871$ not significant). However, due to the slight elevated mean score difference in favour of the intervention, and to enhance power in the analysis, we used ANCOVA, rather than ANOVA, in the analysis of data.

Improvements were observed for the vocabulary group on all NGRT reading sub-scales and the overall reading scale. Overall, the NGRT reading score showed positive effects for the vocabulary intervention over the control. ANCOVA analysis of NGRT scores, indicated that there was a significant gain on overall reading scale ($F(1,98) = 6.11$, $p < 0.05$), sentence completion scale ($F(1,98) = 5.05$, $p < 0.05$), and the passage comprehension scale ($F(1, 98) = 5.05$, $p < 0.05$), with observed power at 68.7%. There was some evidence of clustering effects on mean NGRT overall reading scores within the sample at pre-test at the school level ($F(6, 102) = 6.97$, $p < 0.001$).

7.1. Process Evaluation

Survey responses were received from each school involved in the study, with 11 staff responses received in total (four teachers, six teaching assistants, and one senior manager).

10 respondents indicated that they *strongly agreed* that they had followed the program as instructed in the professional development sessions, and one *agreed*. Eleven respondents *strongly agreed* (6) or *agreed* (5) that the program was easy to follow. Eleven respondents *strongly agreed* (6) or *agreed* (5) that they would keep following the program after the project had finished. All respondents indicated they would recommend it to schools.

Eleven respondents *strongly agreed* (9) or *agreed* (2) that they felt engaged when using the program. Eleven respondents *strongly agreed* (7) or *agreed* (4), that the school received the required support. Comments from respondents indicated that students engaged with the program. Respondent 3 noted: "Children engagement in identifying new words. Children have completed extra work at home linked to the work they have completed as part of the program." Respondent 7 indicated that "the children were eager to engage in lots of conversations about new words and looked forward to hearing the 'new word' of the day." Respondent 10 reported: "Providing children with the chance to use vocabulary unfamiliar with them but in an informal environment, where the children could have fun and were unthreatened."

Average length of sessions was 18.64 minute (*SD* 2.34 minutes). Average number of weekly sessions was 4.09 (*SD* 0.70). All schools delivered the program as per the specification (15–20 minutes per week, 3–5 session per week). No schools were out of these ranges.

7.2. Cost

The program was implemented with a sample of 101 students in seven schools (including a wait-treatment control group) and cost £1,806 per school. This is equivalent to £125 per child, which is a low cost using the EEF Teaching and Learning Toolkit (EEF, 2021c). These costs included staff training but excluded costs which would not usually be undertaken when engaging with the program, such as teacher cover, evaluation, and testing.

The cost of program implementation included resources and staff time for program delivery. Implementation costs were estimated per student over one-year and included staff training and support (two days), manuals, and resources.

8. Discussion

This RCT of vocabulary instruction in elementary schools had not been tested before and was conducted successfully. The intervention demonstrated that reading improved for students who received the intervention when compared to the control students. Although differences in the sample at pre-test were detected between the control and treatment groups these were not significant. Owing to the slight elevated pre-test mean score difference in favour of the intervention, and to enhance power in the analysis, ANCOVA, rather than ANOVA, was used in the analysis of data. Improvements were

Table 3. Pre- and post-test results in NGRT reading tests.

	Mean NGRT Sentence Completion		Mean NGRT Passage Comprehension		Mean NGRT Overall Reading Score	
	Pre-test score (SD)	Post-test score (SD)	Pre-test score (SD)	Post-test score (SD)	Pre-test (SD)	Post-test (SD)
Control (n = 52, N = 7)	254.79 (54.32)	275.40 (54.56)	255.36 (60.10)	274.69 (54.86)	250.79 (56.68)	269.96 (53.48)
Vocabulary intervention (n = 49, N = 7)	258.64 (49.84)	298.61 (59.50)	246.24 (69.23)	289.80 (72.98)	252.56 (53.47)	292.73 (61.44)
Mean change in raw scores vocabulary intervention vs. control	19.81		24.34		21.36	
Mean change as effect size vocabulary intervention vs. control	+0.36		+0.42		+0.38	

Note: n (number of students) = 101 and N (number of elementary schools) = 7.

observed for the vocabulary group on all NGRT reading sub-scales and the overall reading scale. Overall, the NGRT reading score showed significant positive effects for the vocabulary intervention over the control group, on the overall reading scale (effect size +0.38), sentence completion scale (effect size +0.36), and passage comprehension scale (effect size +0.42). The connection between vocabulary development and improved reading is well established (Blachowicz, 1985; Ricketts et al., 2020). Having effective pedagogies tried and tested for teachers that allow effective vocabulary development is essential (Coyne et al., 2018; Hunt & Beglar, 1998).

All schools implemented the vocabulary intervention within their existing timetable and met target delivery specifications. The staff survey suggested that teachers were able to embed the vocabulary program instruction specifications effectively into their vocabulary teaching. The positive staff responses evidenced that they implemented the key elements of the vocabulary program during instruction. Respondents reported that they both implement the vocabulary program according to specification and would be willing to continue using it and to recommend it. This leads us to conclude that the vocabulary program is suitable for elementary school implementation and can be embedded in schools. Whilst power was at 68.7%, the effect size was large enough to allow significant changes to be detected.

It was demonstrated that the technique can be used in elementary schools. All staff respondents were unanimously positive about the vocabulary program's suitability to their school setting and reported that implementation was straightforward, including negligible effects on workload. Though a sample of only seven schools, those surveyed included a varied spectrum: senior managers, teachers, and teaching assistants. Therefore, beyond the current sample the program demonstrates promise for scalability. In terms of limitations, then it must be acknowledged that despite the randomized design and use of independent measures, there may be a risk of sampling error due to the limited number of schools and students in this efficacy trial. In addition, what remains unknown is potential clustering effects that may occur if implemented at scale. The way to explore these issues is to plan a larger trial capable of taking account of clustering effects. If this were to happen, then to detect an effect size of +0.36, assuming eight students per school, then 48 schools would be required, with alpha at 0.05 at 80% power. This may be necessary as there were clustering effects at the school level at pre-test, despite randomization at the individual level.

The vocabulary program technique had higher effects than simpler reading techniques using cooperative learning, such as peer tutoring in elementary school that detected effect sizes of +0.24 in a cluster randomized trial in 129 elementary settings in Scotland (Tymms et al., 2011). The trial can now be recommended to move to a phase 3 definitive trial, including larger sample. This would give higher power in analysis and allow any potential clustering effects to be modelled in the absence of any risk of "leakage" or "contamination" to the control group, that is a risk with within school control students. This form of group-work or cooperative learning to improve vocabulary shows promise. This approach, as seen with other forms of cooperative learning, provides a transformative pedagogy with weak framing (Bernstein, 1973), enabling children to develop their key capabilities necessary to flourish in society (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1992).

Promoting the ability to read is important and literacy development is a social entitlement, a key determinant of well-being and a goal of human development (Sen, 1999). The ability to learn and develop (including literacy development) are moulded by the transition periods of student's lives from one stage of competence to another. Students exposed to situations where they can develop a competence and are given freedom to exercise it in cooperation with others, can improve their functioning and form more complex competence sets (Vygotsky, 1978, pp. 85–86). Interactive and participatory approaches to teaching are recommended in early studies supporting the social aspect of learning where students develop their understanding in conjunction and dialogue with peers or adults (Vygotsky, 1978). Children's deepening skills of communication and thinking cooperatively are considered key for their development as full social actors (Biggeri & Karkara, 2014).

Children's participation in economic and social life as adults requires the ability to read with understanding. It has been well documented that linguistic abilities regulate cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978; Wells, 1985; Wood, 1998). In his analysis of code theory, Bernstein (1982) reviewed the range and type of language structures used by families and within schools. In Bernstein's classification, of codes, an elaborate code requires an environment with rich language and discourse where children can articulate themselves effectively. This theory provides a convincing insight into the linkage between cognitive development and linguistic abilities. Specifically, living in a particular environment requires complying with the requirements of the "code" of the context, as this enables communication between members of that social context/family unit to be understandable and workable (Bernstein, 1990; Bolander & Watts, 2009). Therefore, the close connection between a linguistic code and the environment in which it occurs is evidenced by the differences in linguistic expression between those who grow up in environments with differing approaches to linguistic and literacy development (Bernstein, 1982; Bernstein & Henderson, 1973). Those living in linguistically/literacy stimulated environments develop and extend their language to a greater extent than those who do not (Bernstein, 1990, 1996). This language-rich culture facilitates children's development of an elaborated code that helps them undertake logical reasoning and decode the theoretical, and often abstract, concepts embedded within texts to which they are exposed in school.

A language-rich culture is particularly important when learning more complex vocabulary and comprehension, moving from the words and text to abstract conceptualisation of meaning. Children with poorer vocabulary and comprehension skills may well lack the development of this required "scholastic" code. In this manner, texts can be conceptualized as vertical discourse, and characterised as theoretical, systematic and logical (Bernstein, 1999). By contrast, those growing up in linguistic or literacy poverty where their language may not be stimulated to the same extent as children from more literate backgrounds, may experience fewer opportunities to expand their ability to express abstract terms in verbal discourse, developing the required lexicon and comprehension to fully articulate with school-based texts (Bernstein, 1999). This environment results in the development of a restricted code, including features such as unorganized and unsystematic discourse. Because a restricted code differs greatly from written language, it can then be difficult for students with less well developed language skills to understand the abstract meanings of texts (Wells, 1987). To improve their outcomes when learning, weak social relations such as that which occurs during groupwork/cooperative learning (weak framing) can help to transform vertical discourse (strong classification) into understandable information (Bernstein, 1996; Southgate & Aggleton, 2017). Findings from this study suggest that groupwork/cooperative learning, along with academic learning comprising language rich experiences, are two core elements in developing the linguistic structures and competency for successful comprehension. The language exposure in the processes of vocabulary instruction, by which complex words and discourse about text in a suitably structured environment are shared, provides a good context and medium in which to develop linguistic and literacy skills for children who have been unable to develop these skills previously.

The vocabulary program in this study provides such exposure, including through exposure to Tier-2 words. Providing students with opportunities for vocabulary development can improve outcomes for struggling readers (Coyne et al., 2018; Fricke et al., 2017). Tier-2 words are those which appear infrequently enough that they will probably not be learned incidentally by students and may benefit from direct instruction to promote the use of processes (Beck et al., 2002). Tier-2 teaching and learning benefits from being combined with collaborative work where students have extended opportunities to interact with the vocabulary being learnt together with others (Stahl & Kapinus, 2001). It is this rich process between access to instruction in Tier-2 words and the linkages made with Tier-1 words which are already known, and structure to consolidate learning cooperatively, which provides the opportunity to build the human capabilities for literacy development to which all children and adults must have access to fully participate in society (Nussbaum, 2000; Sen, 1992).

Importantly, the process of vocabulary expansion promoted through the vocabulary program technique used in this study identifies at-risk students to receive a targeted intervention focused on learning Tier-2 words, which are then consolidated using a collaborative process. Building on previous literature, the technique used in this study resulted in improved reading, including decoding and reading comprehension for those children who engaged in the program. Such an approach to vocabulary development could be a significant contributor to reading development and capability development which require literacy skills, for children from socially disadvantaged areas.

9. Conclusion

The study established that the vocabulary program is implementable across a variety of elementary schools from three district areas and was well received by all staff. Using the technique resulted in improved reading ability overall for the intervention group, measured through an independent, standardized reading test not aligned to curriculum materials. The overall reading score, including for comprehension, showed positive effect sizes for the students who received the vocabulary program, compared to those who did not. We therefore cautiously recommend that this program be used by schools, whilst carefully observing effects in their own elementary settings. The criteria to recommend the vocabulary program be scaled were met and the suggested next steps are a larger trial with 48 schools to avoid the risk of sampling error due to limited number of schools, and to take account of clustering effects.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Maria Cockerill (PhD) is senior research fellow at Queen's University Belfast (UK) and visiting professor at Universidad de Los Andes (Chile) and Pontificia Universidad Javeriana (Colombia). Her research interests comprise of experimental research design for education trials in schools, to improve academic and wellbeing outcomes for students in high-poverty areas aged 3–18 (including current projects in Chile, Colombia, and the UK). She is associate editor of *Education 3–13* (Taylor & Francis) and editorial board member in the *International Journal of Educational Research* (IJER-Elsevier).

Allen Thurston holds research interests in undertaking experimental research design for educational trials and trials of health initiatives in schools. Theoretically, his work focusses on pedagogical perspectives surrounding using cooperative learning, peer tutoring and improving literacy for students living in high poverty communities aged 3–18 (including current projects in Colombia, Chile, Lesotho, and South Africa). He is the editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Educational Research* (IJER) and is on the editorial board of *Technology, Pedagogy and Education* and *Educational Psychology.*

Andy Taylor is the training and development manager of FFT Literacy, part of the Fischer Family Trust. His role includes developing, and providing training on, effective literacy intervention programmes for schools which improve children's and young people's outcomes in reading and writing. Using the best available research evidence and working closely with colleagues from Queen's University Belfast, FFT Literacy has recently developed programmes on reciprocal reading, reading fluency, and vocabulary development, providing initial CPD and support for implementation.

Joanne O'Keeffe is post-doctoral researcher in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. She is interested in research with children and young people in the area of academic attainment, health, and wellbeing, in particular those children and young people from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds. Her work mainly involves using randomised controlled trial methodologies and evidence-based programme evaluation in education. She currently supports the University's Widening Participation Unit (WPU) on suitable evaluation strategies of outreach delivery.

Tien-Hui Chiang has produced over 130 articles related to globalization and education policy, sociology of education, and sociology of curriculum. Currently, he is the vice-president of RC04 (Sociology of Education) in UNESCO's International Sociological Association, a constitutional standing committee of UNESCO's World Congress of Comparative Education Societies (WCCES). He is also an associate editor of the *International Journal of Educational Research* (SSCI) and international advisor for a number of international academic bodies, such as IAFOR, SGEM, and ELLTA.

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Article

Saudi and Bahraini Mothers' Experiences of Including Their Autistic Adolescent Sons in Education: A Capabilities Approach

Wid Daghustani [1] and Alison MacKenzie [2,*]

[1] Department of Learning and Developmental Disabilities, Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain; E-Mail: widhed@agu.edu.bh
[2] School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast, UK; E-Mail: a.mackenzie@qub.ac.uk

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have both signed the 2006 UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and have a number of acts and policies which support inclusive education for children with disabilities. However, achieving the goals of equitable education at all levels remains a challenge, especially for autistic children. This article reports on the experiences of mothers from Saudi Arabia and Bahrain in trying to find schools or autism centres for their autistic adolescent sons. The research is based on in-depth interviews with 17 mothers, the majority of whom reported that educating their sons is challenging, and that the schools and centres are inadequate or expensive, with the result that a number of participants' children had to stay at home to the detriment of the boys and their mothers' wellbeing. The findings are interpreted using the capabilities approach, a normative, evaluative framework on questions of social justice and individual flourishing. A capability evaluation reveals that many mothers experience capability corrosion as a result of gender, cultural, and legal restrictions, as well as difficulties in accessing appropriate education, with respect to three central capabilities: bodily integrity, affiliation, and control over one's environment.

Keywords
autism; Bahraini mothers; disability rights; equitable education; guardianship laws; Saudi Arabian mothers; UNCRPD

Issue
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1. Introduction

In this article we explore the challenges that mothers of adolescent autistic sons confront trying to find educational settings in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain that recognise their sons' fundamental entitlement to receive "inclusive, quality and equitable education" (United Nations Convention on the Rights of People With Disabilities [UNCRPD], 2016, Article 2). We report on three specific areas: mothers' experiences of formal support for their autistic adolescent sons in schools and autism centres; the extent to which they felt their children were included; and the barriers to their sons' inclusion. Our interest in autism stems from our research and teaching in the field of special needs education with a focus on autism, additional support for learning, and our commitment to socially just inclusion for young people who have been traditionally excluded from, or marginalised within, mainstream education and society.

The accounts were drawn from in-depth, semi-structured interviews with 17 mothers, 10 from Saudi Arabia, seven from Bahrain. The two countries were chosen for comparison because one of the authors is from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and works in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The two countries are also closely geographically located, connected by the King Fahd Causeway, but are very different to each other with respect to their cultural and legal norms. Further, and of interest, given

that it was a closed and restrictive country until very recently, Saudi Arabia is also attempting to liberalise its economy and relax some of its strict religious and cultural practices by allowing, for example, women to drive, the ban against which ended in 2018. The prohibition against women driving had a significant impact on the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools, as we will demonstrate in this article. Bahrain, by contrast, is a more progressive society than Saudi Arabia, where women can fully participate in society and have almost the same rights as men, in law at least. The experiences of mothers in both countries will be contrasted to explore the extent to which their capacity to support and care for their autistic sons is enabled by the social and political structures, and disability laws and rights of their respective countries. However, because the impact of restrictions on women's rights was so far reaching, Saudi Arabia will be foregrounded.

The philosophical focus of our analysis will be on "capability opportunities" to realise "valuable functionings" in areas that are essential to human flourishing and preserving human dignity (Nussbaum, 2006). We will apply the capabilities approach, an evaluative framework concerned with issues of social justice and comparative quality-of-life assessments. Application of the approach entails a range of normative exercises on individual wellbeing, social arrangements, such as the provision of, and access to, inclusive education, and the design of social, political, or economic policies that enable or advance wellbeing and justice (Robeyns, 2016). The specific normative exercise in which we will engage will draw on Nussbaum's (2006) version of the approach, specifically on what she determines are the "ten central capabilities" (Nussbaum, 2006, pp. 76–77). Each capability is necessary for human dignity and is the answer to the question: "What is this person able to do or to be" given her circumstances? Combined, the ten central capabilities protect fundamental areas of freedom, the removal of which would render a life "not worthy of human dignity," according to Nussbaum (2011, p. 31). For the purposes of this article, we will evaluate mothers' flourishing against three of the ten central capabilities, namely: *bodily integrity* (no. 3), *affiliation* (no. 7), and *control over one's environment* (no. 10).

This is the first study of its kind in terms of its subject, focus, and analytical framework. There are virtually no research articles on mothers' experiences of raising adolescent autistic sons, and we could find none other than Daghustani (2019) that took a capabilities approach perspective. Research from the region on disability or autism tend to focus on the challenges associated with the condition, and children and young people's integration into schools; the research is also primarily quantitative in nature. For that reason, when we discuss our findings, we interpret them against the approach itself, rather than established research.

2. Provision of Inclusive Education in Bahrain and Saudi Arabia: Legislation, Policy, and Planning

The UNCRPD is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century. The Convention marked a paradigm shift from the traditional medical model of disability to a human rights-oriented social model of disability. This shift moved away from paternalistic and assistive disability policies, whereby persons with disabilities were regarded as passive recipients of charitable interventions, to recognising them as autonomous human rights holders, capable of being full and active members of society. In 2016, UNCRPD issued General Comment No. 4 on Article 24, the right to inclusive education. Article 24.1 provides that "State Parties recognise the right of persons with disabilities to education. With a view to realizing this right without discrimination and on the basis of equal opportunity, State Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels" (UNCPRD, 2016, p. 1). The UNCRPD was ratified by Bahrain in 2007 and Saudi Arabia in 2008.

Both Saudi Arabia and Bahrain have made progress towards inclusive education systems. The Constitution of the Kingdom of Bahrain of 2002 is the primary basis for guaranteeing the rights of all groups, including persons with disabilities. Article 5(1) of the constitution stipulates the provision of "educational opportunities for every individual to develop their capabilities and skills to achieve the best of their potentials [sic] and play an active role in their society" (Bahrain's Constitution of 2002 with amendments, 2017). Article 7(10) states that that there should be diverse educational opportunities to meet the needs of all learners and "caring for students with learning and developmental disabilities by following their progress and integrating those who have the ability into the general education" (Bahrain's Constitution of 2002 with amendments, 2017).

According to UNESCO (as cited in Crabtree & Williams, 2010, p. 200), Bahrain has "excellent integrative policies." The rights of children with disabilities to education "represent a distinct criterion of social development in this society, in keeping with equal opportunities" (Crabtree & Williams, 2010, p. 200). In 2008 the Ministry of Education guaranteed that all students with disabilities would be included in the national education system and offered specialist provision for students with special needs with "remedial" schools for "slow learners and low achievers according to the school's need for these classes" (Ministry of Education, 2020). The Directorate of Special Education also has responsibility for finding specialist provision for students with "mental retardation" who are "deaf" and "blind" and have "speech defects" (Ministry of Education, 2020).

The most important constitutional document in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is *The Basic Law of Governance*. Article 26 of this document, for example, states that "the state shall protect human rights in accordance with Islamic Shari'ah" law, which promotes concepts of justice

and equality and "prohibits discrimination on any basis, including disability" (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2020). The basic law also makes provision for educational services to all students with disabilities at all stages in proportion to their capabilities and needs, "as well as respecting the advanced capabilities of children with disabilities and their right to preserve their identity, and facilitating the services provided to them with continuous improvement" (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2020). One of these provisions is the inclusion of students with disabilities in mainstream schools, with supportive educational and rehabilitation services (Government of Saudi Arabia, 2020).

In Saudi Arabia, close to 750 state schools have special education classrooms that provide services for students with "mild to moderate intellectual disabilities," and "mild to moderate autism," while those with "severe disabilities" attend special schools (Aldabas, 2015). Royal Decree No. 37 (2001) approved the system of "caring for persons with disabilities" and makes a number of broad provisions, including the provision of education and educational services at all levels (from pre-school to higher education) commensurate with the capabilities and needs of persons with disabilities, and adopting laws affirming that regular schools are the natural environment for the education and teaching of "handicapped" students, into which people with disabilities should be "integrated" (Arab Committee on Human Rights, 2016, p. 60).

The language used by both ministries still tends to assume a medical approach to disability, despite the fact that both countries have signed the UNCRPD (2006), which disavows the medical model of disability. The use of deficit language (what a person is unable to do or what a person lacks) suggests that policy makers have yet to move away from describing students with disabilities in medical and deficit terms, to language that describes them as autonomous and agentic, and which reflects the individuality, dignity, and equality of the person.

3. The Status of Women in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain

To understand the impediments to inclusion in both countries, it is important to consider the status of women since they remain the primary carers of their children; this is particularly pertinent in Saudi Arabia. Until recently, and unlike Bahrain, sex segregation was strictly enforced in Saudi Arabia by religious police and conservative clerics to prevent any kind of "intimacy" and "informality" with unrelated men (Aart et al., 2012). To maintain moral probity, sex segregation was enforced throughout the education system and in public. Women had their own private places in almost every public institution in which they were employed and there were women's sections in restaurants, banks, airports, and charitable organisations (Daghustani, 2017). These practices are changing, however, as Saudi Arabia promotes a programme of rapid social liberalisation, prompted in part by Saudi women rights activists who began an online campaign in 2016 to end male guardianship (Thorsen & Sreedharan, 2019). The country has slowly eased restrictions on sex segregation. Restaurants and concert halls, for example, are no longer compelled to enforce segregation. Some fundamental restrictions remain, however.

At the time of data collection (2016) the male guardianship law Al-Mahram was the most restrictive law in Saudi Arabia (indeed, in the Middle East region). Irrespective of a woman's age, marital status, education, or socio-economic status, she had to have a male guardian (*mahram*). A woman was the responsibility of her father or brother, and then her husband, even her son when he reached 18; if none of these relatives were available, her uncle, grandfather, nephew or any other *mahram* male relative would be assigned as her "protector'' (Daghustani, 2017). Under the male guardianship system, women were reduced to the status of a permanent dependent minor (Aart et al., 2012). Consequently, the male guardian had, and still has, almost unlimited power over a woman, able to control her life from birth until her death. Almost every critical choice or decision a woman could make had to have the written consent of her male guardian, whether that is to obtain an education for her child or herself, marry freely, receive medical treatment, or apply for a job (Thorsen & Sreedharan, 2019). Women are, effectively, the property of their male guardians (Hartley, 2016). While sex segregation restrictions are easing, the guardianship law means that women cannot apply for a passport or travel outside the country without the permission of her male guardian, and employers are not penalised if they request the guardians' consent to employ women. Guardianship also means that women can be trapped in abusive marriages, vulnerable to domestic violence without recourse to the law (Human Rights Watch, 2019b). According to Human Rights Watch (2019a), the state "facilitates domestic violence by granting male relatives a huge amount of control over women's lives." Indeed, the power even to control a woman's movement is, itself, "a form of domestic violence that the government enforces" (Human Rights Watch, 2019a). In the UK, it would be deemed to be "coercive control" and is against the law. As will be reported here, many of the Saudi participants in this study were denied fundamental rights because their husbands did not support of their aspirations or even those of their children.

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain are socially, religiously, and politically similar, which is unsurprising given their geographical propinquity. However, while there are restrictions and regulations which limit women's freedom and rights in Bahrain, they have significantly more freedom than do women in Saudi Arabia. Bahraini society is more pluralistic, cosmopolitan, and less tribal than other Gulf states (Singh, 2013). The Bahraini constitution, for example, states that women should be treated as equal citizens with respect to rights and duties (Singh, 2013). Saudi Arabia, by contrast, does not have a constitution as

such; instead, the law is based on the Qur'an. Women's rights are not documented since the country relies on tradition and custom to judge what women can do and be. If the Qur'an does not address a certain subject, the clerics will tend to err on the side of caution and render it *haram* (forbidden). The driving ban was a good example of this kind of Qur'anic interpretation—and resulted in a powerful obstacle to gender equality and women's freedom of movement. Like Saudi Arabia, Bahrain does not have a good public transport system but does permit women to drive their own cars, an important freedom giving women mobility and access to public spheres. In this study, as we shall report, forbidding Saudi women to drive (as of 2018 they now have this right) had a surprising and far-reaching impact on their capacity to support their children's education and protect them from abuse or neglect while in school.

4. The Capabilities Approach

The capabilities approach is an approach to "quality-of-life assessment" and to "theorizing about social justice" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18). The approach entails two core normative claims: "that the freedom to achieve well-being is of primary moral importance" and that this freedom "is to be understood in terms of people's capabilities," or their authentic opportunities to pursue "what they have reason to value" (Robeyns, 2016)—to be educated, to enjoy supportive social relationships, or to succeed in school as a child with disabilities. The key question that a capability theorist asks is: What is this person "able *to do* and *to be*" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 18).

The capabilities approach contrasts with other approaches to wellbeing that focus on, for example, numeric assessments of wealth (such as the GDP) or subjective accounts of happiness—these approaches cannot necessarily assess whether a society is just. The approach asks about "functionings," or various states of "doings" and "beings." "Doings" can include travelling, voting in an election, or caring for a child, aspects of life that GDP or theories of welfare cannot ask. "Beings" include being well-nourished, literate, and healthy. The approach is "pluralist" about values. This means that whatever makes any life valuable is not based on a single or total conception, such as might be described by a theocracy, a single party state, ruling elite or a community. People value different things and have different views about what makes life valuable, and the capabilities approach respects this. In contrast to functionings, capabilities "are not just abilities residing inside a person," they are "the freedoms or opportunities created by a combination of personal abilities and the political, social, and economic environment" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 20). For example, travelling (or driving) is a functioning, the opportunity to travel (or drive) is the corresponding capability—freedom to travel. Functionings are the realisations of the capabilities. Underpinning the approach is a regard for the inherent dignity of, and respect for, the person, and entails, among other things, respecting that she has different goals, aspirations, outlooks, and life plans that are distinctly her own and different to what others might choose to do.

A central feature of Nussbaum's approach is the ten central capabilities which are necessary for a life "worthy of human dignity" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 32). In brief, the ten central capabilities are: *life*; *bodily integrity*; *bodily health*; *senses, imagination, and thought*; *emotions*; *practical reason*; *affiliation*; *other species*; *play*; and *control over one's environment* (Nussbaum, 2011, pp. 33–34). Any minimally just government will ensure that the country's citizens have a "threshold level of functioning" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 31) in each of these; and in recognising these capabilities and in providing threshold levels of functioning, the person is regarded *as an end*, not as *a mere means* to achieving another's end. What this means in practice is that the means to good health (the end) is a decent diet and access to primary health care (at least) and education. However, girls and women, in many parts of the world, must forgo both enough food to sustain good health and education for the sake of their male relatives and siblings, as well as to preserve custom. They become *mere means* to their male relatives' wellbeing. The capabilities are non-fungible, meaning that one capability cannot be traded for more of another, and are inter-dependent: Corrosion in one capability reduces the fertility and fertile functioning of all the rest. Thus, women who are repeatedly exposed to domestic violence and who cannot escape because the laws of her country do not permit her to flee, are vulnerable to having their *bodily health* corroded, which in turn will impact on the capability for *emotions*, defined as "being able to have attachments to things and people" and "not having one's emotions blighted by fear and anxiety" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 33). Capability corrosion in these two areas of freedom will have repercussions for *practical reason*, that is, "being able to form a conception of the good and to engage in critical reflection in the planning of one's life" (Nussbaum, 2011, p. 34), and so on. Poor health, fear and anxiety, lack of control of her environment, can restrict a woman's capacity to reason about courses of action that best safeguard her dignity and protect her from harm.

5. Research Design

The aim of this research was to explore the experiences of mothers of autistic adolescents (12–21 years of age), including their problems with formal and informal social support, and what they regarded as good support. The research was conducted for the first author's doctoral research (Daghustani, 2017). For the purposes of this article, we report on the mothers' experiences of formal support for their autistic adolescent sons in three specific areas: in schools and autism centres; the extent to which they felt their children were included; and the barriers to their inclusion.

5.1. Participants

Seventeen women volunteered to participate, ten from Saudi Arabia and seven from Bahrain. In Saudi Arabia, the mothers came from three major cities—Makkah, Jeddah, and Khobar—and one small town, Haddah. In Bahrain, because it is a small island, no cities were specified. The target age for the autistic adolescents was from 12 to 21. While sex was not a criterion to participate, it was very difficult to find mothers who had autistic daughters. Two reasons may account for this: There are fewer girls diagnosed with autism and these are societies with traditional views about girls.

The mothers were aged between 30 and 55. Only one mother was in her 50s (Fatima; see Table 1). Eight of the mothers described themselves as housewives; three were teachers and the remainder had a variety of professions, including diplomat and university administrator. The mothers and their sons were all given pseudonyms to protect their identities. It is important to note that socioeconomic status or age were rarely a guarantee against hardship or discrimination, particularly in Saudi Arabia. What was significant was gender: Merely being a woman, a mother, and a mother of an autistic child ensured that these women had difficulty getting and maintain the formal and informal support they needed.

5.2. Recruitment

Participants were recruited through purposive and snowball sampling. An autism centre in Makkah provided a list of names and telephone numbers of potential participants. The first author met with six mothers in person and had telephone interviews with four. Five mothers were from Makkah, three from Jeddah, one from Haddah, and one from Khobar. The mothers in Jeddah and Khobar were contacted through the author's personal contacts. The data was collected in June 2016.

When the data collection in Saudi Arabia was complete, the author contacted an autism centre in Bahrain which put her in touch with a mother who had an autistic adolescent. This participant provided the author with the numbers of other mothers who had autistic sons within the targeted age group. The author also contacted the supervisor of another autism centre who added her to a WhatsApp mothers' group. As with the Saudi mothers, the Bahraini mothers were given the choice of either meeting in person or conducting the interview by telephone. The author met four mothers in person and had telephone interviews with the other three. The interviews were audio-recorded.

Mothers were recruited through autism centres because in both countries they are privately owned. Had the mothers been recruited through the school

Table 1. Summary of participants' biographical details.

Pseudonym	Children	Autistic children	Marital status	Occupation	Background
Fatima (SA)	5	2	Divorced	Housekeeper for an all-girls' school	Fatima is illiterate and comes from an impoverished background.
Huda (SA)	6	1	Married	Teacher	Huda has a bachelor's degree. She is financially secure.
Nora (SA)	6	1	Married	Housewife	Nora did not pursue her studies. She lives in financial difficulty.
Amal (SA)	2	1	Married	Government service	Amal has a PhD. She is financially secure.
Noha (SA)	3	1	Married	Housewife	Noha has a high-school degree. She is financially secure.
Rasha (SA)	9	1	Married	Housewife	Rasha wanted to go university, but her husband did not permit her. She experiences financial difficulties.
Nada (SA)	2	1	Married	Principal of an autism centre	Nada has a master's degree. She is financially secure.
Asma'a (BA)	2	1	Married	Teacher	Asma'a has a bachelor's degree. She is financially secure.
Maha (BA)	1	1	Divorced	Government official	Maha gave up university to raise her son until he was old enough that she could complete her degree. She is financially secure.

Note: SA stands for Saudi Arabia, BA is for Bahrain.

system, the first author would have had to apply to the Ministries of Education of both countries for permission to contact the schools and submit the interview schedule for approval. This could have restricted academic and research freedom. As it was, only the owner of the centre had to give consent. Further, while both countries are making good progress towards including autistic and disabled children in mainstream schools, the majority are still educated in autism centres. An additional consideration was time and ease of recruitment: Recruiting through centres, rather than through individual schools, was quick and efficient since many mothers could be contacted through single sites.

5.3. Data Analysis

The interviews lasted between 40 minutes and almost three hours. After completing the interviews, the author wrote the first four complete interviews in Arabic. Each interview was translated from Arabic into English. The first author listened to the audio again to compare it to the English text, making additions and corrections as necessary. Because the transcription and translation of the first four interviews took so long, the author modified her approach, realising that it would take months to transcribe and translate every word of every interview. The new approach entailed listening many times to each recording and summarising the data. The extracts, however, are reported verbatim. The result was 17 sets of notes and extracts of between 5000 and 8000 words for the Saudi interviews, and between 2000 and 4000 words for those conducted in Bahrain. The Saudi transcripts and notes were longer than the Bahraini ones because the mothers experienced such acute and persistent difficulties obtaining good support for their sons.

As the most used method in qualitative data analysis approaches for identifying, describing, and interpreting themes that offer "thick descriptions" of lived experience, we adopted Braun and Clarke's (2006, p. 79) six stage-thematic analysis.

5.4. The Ethics of Sensitive Research

The mothers were vulnerable either because of the disability of their adolescents or the cultural norms and regulations with which they had to negotiate. Vulnerable people are those who are at heightened susceptibility to being harmed or wronged through discrimination, exploitation, disenfranchisement, and so on. Especially prone groups are women, children, people with disabilities, and ethnic and religious minorities (Andorno, 2016). The participants, Saudi mothers in particular, experienced gender discrimination, inequality, and unjust laws, rules, and regulations. Many of the mothers became upset when they described their struggles. Some cried, particularly when they expressed fears about their sons' future or expressed hope that their sons would die before them; while others seemed lost and confused about what to do in the best interests of their children against significant odds.

Ethical thinking with respect to research is "based on principles or values… theorized to guide decision-making" (Farrimond, 2017, p. 76). Farrimond lists a core set of ethical principles: respect for persons (autonomy, protection of the vulnerable); justice (treat people fairly); beneficence (do good); nonmaleficence (do no harm); fidelity (do not lie/fabricate, be trustworthy); and academic freedom. The first author of this article rigorously adhered to the core principles, explaining to the mothers not only the purpose of the research, but also that she hoped to raise awareness about caring for autistic children. She gained the mothers' trust by, for example, sharing her expertise on autism, suggesting resources to read, and providing the mothers with names and contact numbers of autism centres. The first author also shared her own personal experiences to help the mothers relax and confidently discuss their experiences. They were assured that confidentiality and anonymity were paramount, and that every effort would be taken not to have them identified. Evidence that these strategies worked and that the interviews were beneficial was that the mothers expressed their relief in sharing their experiences, and that the interviews were therapeutic.

6. Findings: Barriers to Inclusion in Schools and Autism Centres

The majority of mothers in both countries enrolled their sons in specialised autism centres, while others preferred mainstream settings in order to include their sons in the educational system. Several of the mothers had no choice but to send their sons to other countries such as Egypt and Jordan because services for autistic adolescents were unavailable or deficient. In other cases, the child had to stay at home because his parents did not have the financial means to enrol him in an autism centre (they are all run privately).

Because the mothers in Saudi Arabia had to contend with imposed immobility and the male guardianship laws, they could not access schools. Three could not take their sons to school because they could not drive, hire a driver, or did not have the appropriate consent form to enrol their sons. Fatima, who struggled with the guardianship system and sex-segregated schools, explained why she could not enrol her children in school:

> I cannot enrol my children in schools without the signature of their father since he is the male guardian of the family. However, because I am in the process of getting Sak i'eala'a [an official deed, obtained from the court if the mother is a widow or divorced, to prove her marital status to have control over her children] the school accepted my older son's signature.

Nora, likewise, experienced many difficulties because of the rules and regulations in the country:

> I called the school and talked to the teacher and told him that Ahmad was very excited to come to school, and that he waits outside the house every morning for the driver to pick him up. But the teacher yelled at me and said, "We do not talk to women. Have your husband come and talk to us!" and he hung up the phone. I tried so hard to get Ahmad's father to go to school and talk to them, but he wouldn't go. So, Ahmad is at home again, and I do not know what to do.

Amal, however, circumvented some of the Saudi rules because of her good financial and social status:

> I was able to ask the teachers to come to my place to discuss any concerns about Kareem. I was in regular contact with his teachers. He had about five, and they change every year.

Three of the Saudi mothers had financial difficulties and could not afford centre fees. Fatima, for example, who was paid very poorly, had to pay a driver to transport her and her five children:

> I need to pay a driver to take me to work, take my daughter to university and take my other girl to the special education centre….I found a private autism centre for my son, but I cannot enrol him because of my financial situation.

Rasha had similar experiences to Fatima:

> We do not have any public centres for autism. When Sami received the diagnosis, we couldn't afford to enrol him in a private centre. The centre, though, connected us to people who sponsor children in financial difficulty. I asked the principal of the centre to find us a sponsor… and I enrolled Sami in the centre. Soon after, they told me that the sponsor was not available anymore and that I had to pay.

Other mothers faced issues such as bullying, lack of learning, and teachers' lack of experience, as Huda explained:

> Ali is older than his classmates. When they bully or hit him, and he defends himself by hitting back, but he gets all the blame….I don't want him to be expelled from school because he will have nowhere to go. There are no alternatives. Our education system is very poor, and all schools are the same….At least he is in a school even if he is not benefiting from it.

As an autism centre principal in Saudi Arabia, Nada advises mothers to leave the country if they have the financial resources because, in her view, Saudi Arabia does not have good schools for autistic children:

> Regardless of the fact that Adel [her son] goes to an expensive private school, he was treated badly. Once, his classmates offered him sweets in exchange for taking off his clothes, and he agreed to it. I was shocked!...I called the school, my husband went there and threatened to call the police and we found out who did it to him….We agreed not to complain if they helped to protect him.

Noha sent her son to Egypt where he got a lot of support but had to bring him back when the 2011 revolution erupted:

> After Khalid returned from Egypt, I put him in a private school specialising in disabilities. I didn't take him to learn anything; I simply took him because I didn't want him to stay home….I even went to one of the autism centres and asked them to offer mothers workshops on how to deal with their children, but nothing happened. My son is 15 years old now, and still there is nothing. These centres offer only empty words.

Three of the Bahraini mothers had similar problems with respect to cost, quality, and availability of the centres. Asma'a explained that although she enrolled her son in a private preschool "they did nothing to help him." Several of the mothers believed that the autism centre was empowering their sons. Maha's son, for example, was training to be a teaching assistant because the autism centre in Bahrain recognised how well he got on with young children:

> They started teaching him practical skills and when they noticed he was good with young children, they trained him to be a teacher assistant. They started giving him a monthly salary for his job, until, of course, the centre closed its doors.

7. Discussion

While the Bahraini mothers encountered many frustrations in finding good schools for their sons, it is fair to say that their frustrations were not as intense or as pervasive as those experienced by the Saudi mothers. Their children did not enjoy inclusive, equitable provision in accordance with the UNCRPD (2006, 2016), or even according to the laws and policies of the countries. They were often kept at home because there were no schools or centres for them to attend. Consequently, the ten central capabilities of the mothers and the children were compromised and resulted in a reduced range of functionings.

Because it features so strongly in the interviews with the Saudi mothers, we begin with capability no. 3, *bodily integrity*, defined as "being able to move freely from place to place; to be secure against violent assault, including sexual assault and domestic violence" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 76). While Bahraini mothers have freedom of movement, Saudi mothers do not. Public transportation is under-developed, and mothers found themselves in a

very difficult situation if they did not have a supportive husband or did not have the financial resources to hire a driver. By contrast, freedom of movement for mothers in Bahrain is such a basic liberty that the issue is not how the child will get to school, but which school their child will attend.

The absence of this capability had a major effect on mothers' lives in terms of accessing vital support. It is a capability failure when a woman must endure imposed immobility, when she cannot do something so basic as taking her son to a hospital, for example, or to school, but must rely on her husband, male guardian, or driver to take her and her children to these primary institutions, and inevitably significantly restricts her choices. Low incomes meant that some of the mothers (Fatima, Nora, and Rasha, for example) could not afford to hire a driver which increased their difficulties in getting their children to school or elsewhere. Four of the Saudi mothers had the financial means to hire a driver (including Amal and Noha), so they did not suffer from mobility issues to the extent that the less well-off mothers did and were less dependent on their husbands. However, this situation does not diminish the fact that all women were subject to a law that restricted their freedom of movement and that it is contingent good luck that some women have husbands or male relatives on whom they can rely: The capability was not universally or personally secure. In this regard, the women in Saudi Arabia do not have a threshold level of functioning with respect to *bodily integrity*—frequently, neither do their children. Capability failure in this domain has a direct impact on the active realisation and fertile functioning of the next capability.

Capability no. 10, *control over one's environment*, is defined as "being able to participate effectively in political choices that govern one's life….Having property rights on an equal basis with others; having the right to seek employment on an equal basis with others" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 77). Travel restrictions, sex segregation, and dependency on male guardians clearly impacted on Saudi mothers' capability to control their own environments and make decisions that authentically reflect their values and desires—what they want to do and to be. An active functioning is being able to access their sons' schools to enquire about their progress or to make a complaint, but their sex could debar them from contacting the school or receiving information they have the right to know, as Nora for example, reported. Their effective exclusion from this sphere of their sons' lives meant that they could not intervene in ways that could meaningfully support their children, not without the intervention of their husbands. Further, although both Saudi and Bahraini mothers have little control over their environment because of poor awareness about autism, effectively reducing their capacity to make informed decisions (a situation that impacts on capability no. 5, *practical reasoning*, being able to resolve what one ought to do), the failure to fertilise this capability is particularly acute for mothers in Saudi Arabia.

These issues, along with the male-guardianship law (which is upheld by custom, as much as by law), is also linked to capability no. 7, *affiliation* which is "being able to live towards each other, to recognise and show concern for other human beings, to engage in various forms of social interaction" (Nussbaum, 2006, p. 77). Again, Saudi women have no control over this law: They still need permission to marry, they can still be barred from leaving the country and divorce is more difficult to obtain for women than for men. Women still do not have the right to be the legal guardian of their children (Human Rights Watch, 2019a). In public, and within social institutions, women were disabled from equally representing themselves or their interests, including their children, or from asking for their basic human entitlements. Saudi Arabia's social arrangements mean that functioning at this basic threshold level can be very difficult when women are regarded as legal minors in law and by custom: In capability language they are not "fully human," unable to live a life worthy of human dignity. In either country, if children with disabilities are unable to find schools that respond and adapt to their needs, respect them as persons, and who see them only through the prism of the medical model of disabilities, then their children's opportunities for affiliation may mean that they are disbarred from making friends, having social contact, and simply flourishing as young human beings, who have prospects. These forms of insidious exclusion have real impacts on the wellbeing of their mothers, as they have attested in this study.

8. Conclusion

The value of the capabilities approach lies in highlighting how unfair social arrangements affect individual wellbeing and place barriers against achieving minimal threshold levels of functioning, such that women struggle to do and do be in ways that carry authentic value to them. Despite the legal provision of fair and equitable education, and the provision of disability rights in Saudi Arabia and Bahrain, autistic young people can struggle to find educational settings that cater to their needs (a situation that pertains in the UK and elsewhere; see UNESCO, 2020). These difficulties have ramifications for the wellbeing of their mothers, ramifications which impact corrosively on their functionings and capability opportunities. The impacts were particularly acute for participants in Saudi Arabia, primarily because of highly conservative values that placed severe restrictions on women's rights to do and to be. The ban on driving, a gender-based violation of the right of movement, was a particularly egregious example and which reverberated throughout almost all aspects of these women's lives. It remains to be seen how the liberalisation of Saudi society will improve the lives of women; but educational provision for autistic children has some way to go before it meets the standards set by the UNCRPD (2006, 2016).

Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Wid Daghustani is head of Department of Learning and Developmental Disabilities at the Arabian Gulf University, Bahrain (AGU), with autism as her area of speciality. Her research foci include vulnerable and marginalised groups, special education, social justice, and research ethics. Wid is a member of Bahrain Association for Intellectual Disability and Autism and is also an editorial board member of the *International Journal of Educational Research Open*.

Alison MacKenzie, senior lecturer, is in the School of Sociology, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast (QUB). She is the director of the programme Masters in Special Needs Education and Inclusion. Alison's research interests include social justice for marginalised groups, epistemic injustice, epistemology of ignorance and deceit, and children's rights. She is a member of the Centre for Children's Rights at QUB and supports CARA as a mentor for Syrian refugees in Turkey.

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Article

Demystifying Subjective Well-Being of Academically At-Risk Students: Case Study of a Chinese High School

Tianjun Cheng [1,2], Jin Jin [1] and Junjun Chen [3,*]

[1] School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, China; E-Mails: chengtianjun@njnu.edu.cn (T.C.), 190601004@njnu.edu.cn (J.J.)
[2] Centre for Sociology of Education, Nanjing Normal University, China
[3] Department of Education Policy and Leadership, Education University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong; E-Mail: jjchen@eduhk.hk

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
Student subjective well-being (SWB) is increasingly incorporated into today's education policies and positive education movements. There is a growing interest in how well schools promote student well-being, especially for disadvantaged students, e.g., the academically at-risk, and which factors affect this process. This study investigates how teachers and academically at-risk students perceive SWB and its influential precursors in a high school in China. The influential precursors in the present research were allocated into four dimensions, namely contextual factors, school factors, family factors, and individual factors. Via semi-structured individual interviews with 12 teachers and 18 students for about one hour and content analysis of the interview data, the responses revealed that while students tended to have a superficial understanding of well-being, traditional concepts about studying, blind filial piety, peer relations, and self-efficacy were important factors shaping and influencing their SWB. These findings can inform the development of inclusive education policies concerning student SWB and the intervention and prevention systems of schools in both local and international contexts. Recommendations for organising lectures for parents and implementing programs providing instruction on SWB-related skills for students are proposed to support academically at-risk students, aiming to achieve the educational goal of success for all.

Keywords
academically at-risk students; China; inclusive education; sociology of education; subjective well-being

Issue
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1. Introduction

School education should not only concern cognitive output but also attend to student well-being (Seligman, 2011). Studies show that student well-being is vital for their learning process, and high-quality subjective well-being (SWB) is always linked to better physical health, better interpersonal relationships, and a lower risk of psychological problems (Diener et al., 2018). SWB also leads to intrinsic motivation, internal locus of control and fewer school-discipline problems (Bücker et al., 2018). Given the importance of well-being, the discourse of student SWB has been gaining impetus recently, especially in the fields of education, health, child protection, and policymaking (McLeod & Wright, 2015).

The current situation of student SWB in China appears unrevealed. According to PISA 2018 data, only 59% of students from mainland China reported satisfaction with their lives, which is lower than the average percentage of the OECD countries of 67% (OECD, 2019). However, studies on student SWB conducted in China are rare. Most previous studies focused only on one or

a few influential SWB factors, resulting in a lack of understanding of which factors influence SWB and how they do so (Jia, 2020). Furthermore, there is a critical need for research on the SWB of high school students because, at ages ranging from 16 to 18 years old, they are more likely to experience SWB difficulties than younger students. Moreover, at this age, typically, they apply for university and thus experience enormous pressure coupled with precipitous social change in their lives (Graham et al., 2016). As a result, high school students, especially academically at-risk ones, may experience more academic pressure and a lower level of SWB (Bücker et al., 2018). One of the main ways to evaluate SWB has been through self-report rating scales; however, this approach may contain biases and provide limited access to the personal feelings and emotions of students (Diener et al., 2018). Accordingly, this project targets academically at-risk students aiming to understand the current state and influential factors of their SWB in a high school in China.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Conceptualising Subjective Well-Being

Although philosophers and researchers have explored human well-being for millennia, no clear consensus has been reached on its definition. Researchers tend to deem it as a complex concept with multiple dimensions related to health, psychology, and quality of life (Ryan & Deci, 2001). SWB is a term frequently mentioned when well-being is investigated. In 1969, Bradburn gave momentum to the investigation of well-being by defining SWB as the relationship between positive and negative emotions (Hascher, 2008). Extending from this, Diener (1984) argued that SWB should include both a reflective evaluation of life (e.g., life satisfaction) and emotional responses to life. He equated SWB to happiness and divided it into three dimensions: positive affect, negative affect, and global life satisfaction (Diener et al., 2018). Extensive studies have been carried out in school contexts (e.g., Govorova et al., 2020). In addition to positive feelings and life satisfaction, self-optimisation, potential actualisation, and goal achievement have also been proposed as key elements of student SWB (Borgonovi & Pál, 2016). However, because most of these seminal studies on SWB have been conducted outside of China—the context of the present study—they have not addressed its unique cultural, social, and educational background. Specifically, Lu (2010) pointed out that China is a collectivist nation and is largely influenced by Confucian philosophy. Accordingly, unlike western countries, the notion of "I" has long been obscured in traditional Chinese concepts and well-being is more associated with societal obligation and social embeddedness. Jia (2020) proposed that, since ancient times, Chinese people have attached great importance to studying. Therefore, academic success has been deemed as the crowning glory. Besides, his research findings indicate that the Chinese education system is characterised by severe competition, heavy academic burden and high-stake examination. Given these facts, more insight is needed to understand how Chinese students conceptualise well-being.

Historically, two distinct, yet complementary paradigms have developed in the research field of well-being. One is called "hedonism," proposed by a Greek philosopher named Aristippus who advocated maximising pleasure in life and believed that happiness was the sum of all the hedonic moments (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Early followers of this philosophical hedonism emphasised the pursuit of bodily pleasure, human appetites, and self-interests (Kahneman et al., 2003) while, later on, preferences and pleasure of mind were also taken into account by psychologists (Ryan & Deci, 2001). The other paradigm was termed "eudemonism" by Aristotle, who identified happiness with living well and the highest good (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Eudemonia is achieved through virtuous actions and fulfilment of ones' potential. Extended from this, Waterman (1993) maintained that the eudemonic conception of well-being was related to activities that enable personal growth and improvement. Ryff (1995) believed that well-being was achieved through personal perfection and potential realisation. Although some researchers equated SWB to hedonic well-being (Kahneman et al., 2003), others criticised this simplified notion for failing to uncover the complexity and philosophical concepts of SWB (Berezina et al., 2020). Berezina et al. (2020) proposed to endorse a eudemonic view while investigating SWB by listing three main factors that foster SWB, namely pleasure, meaningful activities, and engagement. For students in the present research, in addition to immediate pleasure and subjective happiness, meaningful actions, such as the pursuit of goals and personal striving, which fall into the eudemonic paradigm, are also crucial constituents of their life and contribute to their well-being. As such, a synthesis of these two paradigms is employed to understand student SWB.

2.2. Influential Factors of Student Subjective Well-Being

Although high-quality SWB is desirable, how it can be achieved is complex. Pollard and Lee (2003) identified five domains of student well-being, and they are respectively physical, economic, psychological, cognitive and social. The operational measurement model of student well-being by Fraillon (2004) was classified into two dimensions: the intrapersonal dimension and interpersonal dimension. A review by Diener et al. (2018) summarised the most frequently researched factors underpinning SWB, including genetic effects, fulfilling of needs, income, life circumstances and community, and societal factors—these aspects could be further categorised into subjective factors and objective factors (Jia, 2020). The above research findings helped to clarify the composition and measurement construct of SWB technically, however, they may not be the best choice when the

respondents' experience and feelings are required to understand their SWB. Kahneman et al. (2004) proposed a bottom-up theory that posits that the SWB level of each specific domain of one's life contributes to the overall SWB. This approach proved to be effective in producing accurate emotion recall and will be used in the present project. Factors are categorised into four domains, namely contextual, school, family and individual aspects.

2.2.1. Contextual Factors

Contextual factors, e.g., social, cultural, and organisational, can affect student SWB (Diener et al., 2018). Cross-cultural research has found that people tend to be happier if they possess a character that is highly valued in society and the domains that are value-congruent account for a larger proportion of SWB than the less valued congruent domains (Oishi et al., 1999). Researchers have also discovered that the value of academic excellence is a key moderator when the relationship between academic achievement and student SWB has been investigated (Bücker et al., 2018). Traditionally in China, school success is of great importance, leading to Chinese students suffering great pressure and anxiety while studying for examinations (Huang & Zhou, 2019). Thus, such traditional values are noteworthy factors for SWB.

2.2.2. School Factors

Scholars have identified several school factors that have an impact on student SWB. These include school conditions (Merga, 2020), school-levelled policies (Shek & Wu, 2016), class composition by age and ability (Belfi et al., 2012), justice in the classroom (Honneth, 2004), and academic stress (Zhu, 2020). One study showed that a supportive learning context enhances adolescents' happiness (Hascher, 2008). Similarly, Jia (2020) found that, in China, a cooperative rather than a competitive climate was more beneficial for student SWB. Further, he claimed that a heavy academic burden can lead to students' academic pressure and a low level of SWB. Therefore, a supportive learning context with a lower academic burden can reduce students' anxiety and dissatisfaction.

2.2.3. Family Factors

Family factors, such as parents' educational and vocational background (Ge, 2015), family support (both tangible and intangible; Schnettler et al., 2014), family configuration (Potter, 2010), and parenting style (Stavrulaki et al., 2020) are all predictors of student SWB. For example, research findings have indicated that parenting style, characterised by caring and empathic parents devoid of excessive intrusion and infantilisation, is correlated with good family functioning and high-quality SWB (McFarlane et al., 1995). A Chinese study also found parents' educational background was linked to student SWB (Ge, 2015). In conclusion, family plays a vital role in high school students' lives and nearly every aspect of family is closely connected with student SWB.

2.2.4. Individual Factors

Several personal factors including age, gender, temperament, and ethnicity, have been shown to have an impact on SWB (Diener et al., 2018). Preliminary investigations have revealed that there are consistent and robust associations between SWB and positive traits, for instance, love, zest, curiosity, gratitude, and high self-efficacy (Peterson et al., 2005; Strobel et al., 2011), and a higher level of SWB was discovered among female students (Shek & Lin, 2017) and younger students (Elmore & Huebner, 2010). Some research findings have shown that there is a positive correlation between personal academic functioning and student SWB (Steinmayr et al., 2015). Similar results were also found in China. For example, by analysing data from PISA 2018, Jia (2020) showed that students with a lower reading score had a lower level of SWB assessed by their sense of belonging. This finding illustrates that academically at-risk students may need more attention and care. Despite this finding, however, few studies have been conducted regarding student SWB. Thus, this project aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the current situation regarding the SWB of academically at-risk students guided by the following research questions: How do teachers and academically at-risk students perceive SWB in a high school in mainland China? What factors influence the SWB of academically at-risk high school students?

3. Method

This study used in-depth semi-structured interviews to answer the research questions.

3.1. Sample and Instrument

A convenience sampling of 12 teachers and 18 students from a high school in mainland China was approached through professional connections (Table 1). The sample school is of medium level among all the high schools in the city. It provides a diverse sample of students, defined in terms of their academic performance and family backgrounds. After briefing the principal about the project, we obtained permission to recruit teacher and student participants voluntarily. The sample teachers were recommended and coordinated by the principal. Among the 12 teachers, there were four males and eight females. Nine had bachelor's degrees and three had master's degrees. The sample students were selected by their class teachers. All students should rank in the bottom 20% of the class and therefore were considered academically at-risk based on their academic grades. The sample of 18 students consisted of five boys and 13 girls ranging from 15 to 17 years old (M = 15.8). At first, the student

sample was intended to cover all three grades to make it more diversified. However, considering the high pressure and heavy work in the third year, the principal suggested only choosing students from the first two years, and eventually, the student sample consisted of nine students in their first year and nine in their second year.

The interview protocol consisted of two main issues: (a) participants' understanding of SWB and (b) the factors that affect the SWB of academically at-risk students. Each interview, conducted individually, lasted for about one hour and was audio-recorded with participants' permission beforehand. The participants' demographic information (e.g., age, gender, grade) was also taken into consideration to gain a better understanding.

3.2. Data Analysis

Content analysis was employed to analyse the data to make valid inferences (see Elo et al., 2014). In text coding, the teacher participants were labelled T1–T12 and student participants S1–S18. We used a code (P1, P2, etc.) to indicate the page number for all interview data and the same rules were used for the line numbers. The two research questions were employed to code the data. The deductive analysis involved four phases, namely preparing, organising, reporting and checking (Elo et al., 2014). In these phases, the unit of analysis was selected, coded, tested and discussed (Table 2).

4. Findings

Our coding of the interview transcripts generated the findings and in each of the following sections, teachers' opinions will be presented first, followed by students' perceptions.

4.1. Conceptualisation and Current Situation of Subjective Well-Being of Academically At-Risk Students

The teacher participants stated their understanding of student SWB and the student participants also shared their perceptions. From the teachers' perspective,

Table 1. Backgrounds of the participants.

Teacher No.	Gender	Age	Years in teaching	Teaching subject	Academic qualification
Teacher 1	F	42	20	Chinese	Bachelor
Teacher 2	F	45	22	History	Master
Teacher 3	F	43	21	Physics	Bachelor
Teacher 4	F	47	24	Chemistry	Master
Teacher 5	F	48	24	Chemistry	Master
Teacher 6	M	48	25	English	Bachelor
Teacher 7	F	34	8	Biology	Bachelor
Teacher 8	F	50	26	Chinese	Bachelor
Teacher 9	F	38	16	English	Bachelor
Teacher 10	M	40	17	Mathematics	Bachelor
Teacher 11	M	54	32	English	Bachelor
Teacher 12	M	51	29	Physics	Bachelor

Student No.	Gender	Grade	Age	Only child?
Student 1	M	1	16	Y
Student 2	F	1	15	N
Student 3	M	1	15	N
Student 4	M	1	15	N
Student 5	F	1	16	N
Student 6	F	1	15	Y
Student 7	M	1	16	N
Student 8	F	1	15	N
Student 9	F	1	16	N
Student 10	F	2	16	N
Student 11	F	2	16	N
Student 12	M	2	17	Y
Student 13	F	2	16	Y
Student 14	F	2	16	N
Student 15	F	2	16	N
Student 16	F	2	16	N
Student 17	F	2	17	Y
Student 18	F	2	16	N

Table 2. Excerpts from the interviews about student SWB and its influential factors.

Influential factors of SWB	Teachers	Students
Contextual factors	Students are judged only by their academic scores and I think this has something to do with *traditional Chinese concepts* (T3-P12-L22).	I like dancing, but my parents didn't allow me to attend dance classes because they thought it would distract me from studying (*concepts about studying*; S18-P5-L5).
School factors	*Peer relations* are more important compared to other relationships at this age. Peers' recognition and acceptance will greatly enhance student SWB (T7-P2-L12).	The *school timetable* is not reasonable. I have to get up very early every morning and I feel tired (S7-P1-L43).
Family factors	Most parents foster *high hopes* for their children without considering their competence (T12-P5-L15).	I feel really depressed. My parents control me in every aspect of my life, and I am like under their intense surveillance. It makes me feel like I am a prisoner (*parenting style*; S8-P2-L35).
Individual factors	SWB is related to *self-expectation*. Students who have high expectations for themselves show a low level of SWB (T1-P6-L1).	Of course, a low academic score affects my mood, but it won't last for long. I always recover from the sadness soon. What I will do is to identify the problem and try to solve it (*character*; S1-P2-L30).

SWB refers to subjective positive feelings. As one teacher shared:

> Well-being is feeling happy. The criteria for it are personalised. For example, when you are satisfied with your life, then you enjoy high SWB. It does not matter how others conceive it. (T11-P1-L34)

He added later that SWB was also related to a meaningful life and peaceful state, and sometimes required restraint:

> Well-being is not only about enjoyment or indulgence. It should also be related to inner peace and a harmonious state. But that does not mean people should be content with the status quo and make no progress. Try to enrich your life and experience and that will bring you true happiness. (T11-P6-L10)

Another teacher pointed out the discrepancy between high school students and adults regarding the conceptualisation of SWB:

> Students' understanding of SWB tends to be superficial. Their happiness usually comes from some trivial things, for example eating delicious food or playing computer games. They do not think that some meaningful activities can bring happiness, for example studying and goal pursuing. (T9-P1-L37)

To some extent, this opinion could be verified by the students' answers. As one student shared:

> Welling-being is doing what I like to do, such as chatting and hanging out with friends, reading novels and playing computer games. (S1-P2-L3)

It can be seen that both teachers and students agree that SWB is concerned with mental and bodily pleasure, which coincides with the hedonic psychology of well-being. However, teachers could easily identify well-being achieved through meaningful actions, whereas students mainly focus on the instant and superficial pleasure of their body and mind. Students' concept of well-being is more associated with being relaxed and away from problems. Very few students recognised and mentioned pleasure in meaningful activities and hard efforts. One student recalled:

> I think well-being is a kind of feeling. For example, yesterday, I encountered a difficult question while doing homework. I spend a lot of time figuring out the answer, trying different methods and consulting the textbooks, and finally I made it. At that time, I felt a strong sense of well-being. (S3-P2-L5)

According to the eudemonic view, some experience, though challenging and laborious, could also bring SWB by achieving personal growth and fulfilling valuable tasks.

Apart from personal experience and emotions, some students also mentioned the connection between SWB and relationships with others. One student shared:

> SWB comes from a good relationship with people around you. I am a sensitive person, and my emotions are easily influenced by others. I always feel happy

> when I am accompanied by my friends or I get along well with others. (S17-P6-L23)

It can be seen that interpersonal relationship is a key element of SWB. For students, it includes relationships with peers, teachers and parents.

Concerning the current state of SWB of the academically at-risk students, most teachers held a comparatively negative opinion. They believed that academic performance did have a considerable impact on student SWB. A teacher conveyed:

> I think, in general, academically at-risk students will experience a lower level of SWB. After all, their main task at this moment is studying. Academic success may bring students more confidence and recognition from others. (T2-P3-L23)

However, the attitudes of students were quite different. Though the students interviewed were academically at-risk students, they did not seem too bothered by their academic performance and held quite a positive opinion about it:

> Of course, a low academic score affects my mood, but it won't last for long. I always recover from the sadness soon. What I will do is to find out the problem and try to solve it. (S1-P2-L30)

While talking about their current state of SWB, male and female students demonstrated different responses. Male students tended to be reserved and gave positive answers and simple explanations, like "I feel quite happy" and "everything is going on well" (S1-P1-L40). Female students, however, were more willing to express their negative emotions and share their problems and confusion. One reason for this may be that, for Chinese students, boys are expected to be strong so they tend to hide their weaknesses in front of strangers.

4.2. Factors Influencing Subjective Well-Being of the Academically At-Risk Students

Teachers and students identified several influential factors of student SWB and shared examples. Factors are organised into four aspects, namely: contextual factors, school factors, family factors, and individual factors.

4.2.1. Contextual Factors

The contextual factors reported include traditional concepts, values and social norms. Most teachers stated that traditional Chinese beliefs about studying are a key contextual factor. One teacher recalled:

> One student in my class wants to be a chef, but his parents do not agree. From his parents' perspective, being a chef is not a decent job. They want him to be a doctor or work for the government. They ask him to concentrate on studying to get into a good university. (T12-P5-L13)

Another teacher also pointed out that "students are judged only by their academic score and… this has something to do with traditional Chinese concepts" (T3-P12-L22). Traditional credentialism has considerable influence on students, for example, academic scores become the only criteria to evaluate a person and entering university becomes a unified goal for all students without considering their interests and abilities. A female student also recalled a similar unhappy story with her parents:

> I like dancing but my parents didn't allow me to attend dance classes because they thought it would distract me from studying….I have tried to talk to my parents and persuade them, but I failed. They are my parents after all, and I have to obey them. (S18-P5-L5, S18-P5-L7)

In this excerpt, the students unwillingly acquiesced to their parents' demands despite having different opinions. This phenomenon is very common in Chinese families and it should not only be attributed to the traditional authoritarian and controlling parenting style but also to the culture and norms in Chinese society.

Many of the interview responses demonstrated that parents' traditional beliefs about studying and blind filial piety reduce students' life satisfaction.

4.2.2. School Factors

The factors related to school include the school environment, academic stress and peer relations. The teachers stated that a fair and just environment is vital for students, especially for the academically at-risk ones. For example, a teacher reported:

> Teachers tend to pay more attention to high-performing students by giving them more guidance and instructions, but sometimes the academically at-risk students are more in need of attention and a little praise or even some eye contact would make them feel like they are being equally treated and cared about. (T7-P2-L2)

Classroom discrimination and unfair treatment can put students in a marginalised position. The academically at-risk students, though sometimes appearing nonchalant, are still in desperate want of equal attention from teachers. Peer relation is another key factor related to school, with most teachers stating that it had a great impact on student SWB. For example, one teacher stated:

> Peer relations are more important compared to other relationships at this age. Peers' recognition

> and acceptance will greatly enhance student SWB. Students who can get along well with their classmates are usually in a positive mood and a good mental state. (T7-P2-L12)

Peer relation was also identified by students as a key influential factor in their well-being. A girl shared:

> My classmates are quite friendly and helpful. For example, if I have trouble with my studies, they won't laugh at me but tell me how to solve it patiently….I like school because I can stay with my friends here. (S13-P3-L9)

Both teachers and students highlighted the importance of peer relations. Good peer relations promote student well-being and make students feel welcome and included at school. However, some students reported having interpersonal problems, for example, "being bullied," "being gossiped about," and thus "experiencing a tough period" (S8-P7-L17). School bullying is not a rare phenomenon and was reported by a few students. The bullying tactics included social exclusion and rumour-spreading, which can impair student SWB by destroying their confidence, making them feel isolated, and even arousing a hatred for school.

Policies and regulations were also mentioned by students. One student complained that "the school timetable is not reasonable. I have to get up very early every morning and I feel tired" (S7-P1-L43). According to the student, the morning class begins at 6.40 AM. Some students live far away from school and it takes more than one hour on the road. So, they have to get up at around 5 AM. Insufficient sleep and long commutes not only exhaust students but also damage their health. According to previous research, physical health is a major constituent of SWB (Pollard & Lee, 2003).

In the excerpts above, teachers appear more concerned with classroom justice or the whole environment of the class while students pay more attention to peer relationships or school regulation. The reason may be that they are in different positions: teachers are regulators of their classes while students are members of them. Thus, both class circumstances and peer relations are significant indicators for SWB.

4.2.3. Family Factors

Family factors consist of parenting style, family support, family configuration, and parents' educational and vocational background. From the teachers' perspective, high parental expectations regarding academic performance are the main precursor for students' unhappiness in the Chinese context. As stated by one teacher:

> Most parents foster high hopes for their children without considering their competence. From Chinese parents' perspective, being admitted into university is glorious while entering higher vocational college is shameful. Such vanity will bring enormous pressure for students, especially for the academically at-risk. (T12-P5-L15, T12-P5-L18)

Influenced by credentialism, parents sometimes hold expectations beyond their children's ability and are difficult for them to live up to. The resulting dissatisfaction can give rise to low student SWB.

Parenting style is the family factor that was most frequently mentioned by students. They complained about the authoritarian and controlling parenting style and deemed it as a sign of distrust and disapproval:

> I feel really depressed. My parents control me in every aspect of my life and I am, like, under their intense surveillance. It makes me feel like I am a prisoner and I am not trustworthy. (S8-P2-L35)

Teenagers at this stage are at a critical period in life when they need to be cared for and supported more than ever by their family; however, such a controlling parenting style can deprive students of their autonomy and make them feel like they are not being trusted. The interview responses demonstrated that family plays an important role in students' SWB with parental expectations and parenting style being the most crucial factors.

4.2.4. Individual Factors

Personal factors such as age, gender, character and academic functioning have an impact on SWB. However, academic performance was seldom identified as the key influential factor, despite the teachers attaching great importance to self-efficacy. They collectively stated students should be able to establish goals and feel confident in achieving them, and during the process, their SWB should be promoted. One teacher shared his thoughts on this:

> It is important for students to have clear short-term or long-term goals. Life in high school is stressful and exhausting as students are overwhelmed with loads of work and exams. A clear goal can help them realise the meaning and hope in their tedious lives. (T12-P1-L11)

Another teacher also suggested that SWB is related to self-expectation. He stated that "students who have high expectations for themselves show a low level of SWB" (T1-P6-L1). It should be noted that people with high expectations are more likely to establish challenging goals that are far beyond their competence. If their attempts failed, they would feel desperate and upset.

While discussing the future, most of the students had mixed feelings. On the one hand, they were looking forward to it, but on the other, they were at a loss. They had no goals or interests and were struggling in their tedious

school life with low spirits. Only one student shared his dream proudly and excitedly:

> I want to be a forensic scientist. This major requires students to study physics in high school. Although I am not good at it, I am trying my best to work on it and things will get better. (S8-P10-L28)

The data show that goal progress is a predictor of SWB enhancement and fewer symptoms of depression, while high self-efficacy regarding valued and suitable goals is usually linked with a high level of SWB.

5. Discussion

This article investigates the SWB of Chinese high school students. With a particular interest in academically at-risk students, the article provides insight into their understanding of SWB and its influential factors. Through a conscious examination of the unique cultural, social, and educational background in China, the concept of SWB in the Chinese context is elaborated. According to the major findings of the present study, there are three key influential factors of SWB in academically at-risk students, namely, traditional concepts, peer relations, and goal-pursuing. In the following sections, each of these aspects is analysed and discussed.

First, findings of this project indicate that traditional concepts play a vital role in shaping students' concepts of SWB and predicting its level, which coincides with previous findings showing that social values are a moderator for SWB (Oishi et al., 1999). However, few studies have explored how Chinese culture affects student SWB. Historically, Chinese people value learning. As an old saying goes "reading books is superior to everything." Under this way of thinking, the ultimate goal of learning is not to enrich one's life, but to be an official. This notion was shared by one teacher who said that parents hoped their children could get into a good university and work for the government. However, for a large number of students, such expectations from parents are too high to satisfy.

On one hand, there is fierce competition in the college entrance examination in China. According to the data published by the Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, in 2020, the gross enrolment rate in higher education (including university, college, and higher vocational education) is only 54.4% (Ministry of Education of the People's Republic of China, 2021). That means nearly half of students were rejected by universities or colleges and did not have the chance to receive higher education. The result coincides with previous findings from research in China (e.g., Jia, 2020; Zhu, 2020). On the other hand, academically at-risk students are in an unfavourable position in this competition, because of their limited competence in studying and competitiveness in exams illustrated by their previous academic performance. Thus, irrational expectations from parents would cause more pressure and anxiety for them and destroy their well-being.

Another factor related to social values is parenting style. In Confucian societies, filial piety is deemed as the guiding principle governing socialisation. Influenced by this traditional belief, a relatively authoritarian and controlling parenting style is prevalent in Chinese families (Lieber et al., 2006). This parenting style is featured by mandatory rules, absolute obedience, and less reciprocal parent-child communication. Even when ones' parents' opinion is unreasonable, children must obey them when disagreement occurs, attested to by the girl interviewed in this project who gave up her dancing. Obeying and honouring one's parents unconditionally is an unyielding principle (Ho, 1994). In this process, children lose their true selves and are deprived of autonomy. From the eudemonic perspective of well-being, autonomy is both a key element of well-being and a basic psychological need. Fulfilling such needs fosters psychological growth and SWB (Ryan & Deci, 2001). However, an authoritarian parenting style constricts autonomy and relations with parents, which can impair student SWB (Yeh & Bedford, 2003).

Second, peer relations were reported by most students as affecting their SWB, in line with previous research (Hascher, 2008). An investigation in Hong Kong also highlighted the ultimate primacy of relationships on Chinese SWB (McAuley et al., 2004) because of the emphasis on interdependence in Chinese society (Lu, 2010). Although research on students in the West has noted the importance of peer relationships on student SWB (e.g., Belfi et al., 2012), social failure is more devastating in the Chinese context. One reason for this could be that China is a collectivist nation. The concepts of "I" and "true self" remain vague for Chinese students and are inherently bound to others. Consequently, the Chinese paradigm of well-being is socially oriented, emphasising more on the welfare of the community and role obligations of individuals (Lu, 2010). In such circumstances, students will try their best to fit into school, family and society to seek harmony with the environment and pursue well-being at the same time. However, bad relations at school, such as being bullied, will jeopardise this interpersonal harmony and signals a failure of role-playing at school. It not only reduces student well-being but also arouses resentment for school, sometimes leading to psychological problems. The link between peer relationships and SWB may also be explained by Honneth's recognition theory (Honneth, 2004), which identifies three modes of recognition—love, rights and solidarity—and states that recognition is linked to happiness. This may explain why one student (in our interviews) felt happy about being helped by classmates. The student was slightly sensitive and felt inferior to others for not being good at studying, but her classmates did not laugh at her but warmly gave her support, which promoted her SWB by making her feel loved, respected, and acknowledged.

Finally, one interesting finding is that academic achievement does not seem to be that important for the SWB of academically at-risk students. The data showed that academic performance was rarely reported by students as an influential factor in their happiness. This is contradictory to a previous study (Jia, 2020). Possibly, it was out of pride that students were unwilling to admit that they were troubled by their unsatisfactory academic performance. That is, they would act like they don't care. But more importantly, it could be inferred that it was the high self-expectation, instead of academic achievements, that had a direct impact on SWB. Academically at-risk students are not necessarily less happy, as supposed by the teachers in the interview, unless their self-expectation concerning studying is too high to be lived up to, and high achievers might also demonstrate a low level of SWB for not achieving their goal. In addition, among all individual factors, both teachers and students stressed the positive relationship between goal progress and SWB. In one excerpt, the student who described her dream of being a forensic scientist seemed excited and confident, which fits with previous theories about feelings of efficacy regarding goals leading to greater positive emotions and well-being (Ryan & Deci, 2001). In the Chinese context, school education is characterised by severe competition and a heavy academic burden. Students, especially high school students, easily feel depressed under such intense pressure. According to the satisfaction of goal theories, clear goals can help individuals feel motivated and less depressed (Diener et al., 2018). When goals are achieved, SWB is also enhanced.

It could be seen from the findings that the constituents of hedonism, such as positive feelings, are important indicators of well-being, and the totality of such hedonic pleasure greatly influences students' evaluation of their whole life and their long-term SWB. Such findings are similar to previous results on hedonism (e.g., Ryan & Deci, 2001). However, while investigating the influential factors of student SWB, most of them could be explained by the theory of eudemonism, for example, the factors related to goal-pursuing, autonomy, personal growth, recognition from others and fulfilment of one's potential. Even though SWB emphasises subjective individual feeling, the eudemonic approach provides a more profound insight into the understanding of well-being and makes it justified and possible to promote SWB by giving guidance and support. These results are different from some previously observed (e.g., Kahneman et al., 2003), but similar to others (e.g., Berezina et al., 2020; Ryff, 1995).

6. Implications and Conclusion

Based on the findings of this project, implications can be drawn for parents, teachers and policymakers. The study can contribute to the understanding of the current situation and the influential factors of SWB affecting academically at-risk high school students. The findings can also help inform the development of inclusive education policies related to student SWB. We found that traditional beliefs held by parents may be impairing student SWB; therefore, lectures for parents should be organised to help them acquire more appropriate parenting skills. Curricula and programs for students should also be implemented at schools to give instructions on skills related to SWB, for example how to deal with peer relations. The research findings also highlight the value of defining goals and goal pursuit in improving SWB. It is proposed that parents and teachers should pay more attention to the function of goals in improving student SWB. They are advised to help students to find their interests and strengths and encourage them to establish an optimally challenging goal. The curriculum can also be formulated to give guidance on how to make plans to achieve the goals and how to deal with the problems that might be encountered in goal progression. These suggestions can give better support to academically at-risk students, helping to achieve the ultimate educational goal of success for all while promoting social inclusion and equality.

In sum, this study explores the SWB of Chinese high school students and uncovers how it is affected from both the students' and teachers' perspectives. We focused on academically at-risk students and carried out a comprehensive investigation based on various aspects of their life. Limitations should be noted. First, the project used only one school as a case study, which cannot ensure the generalisability of the findings and may lead to sample bias. In the future, multiple case studies could be carried out to achieve greater validity, and more schools and other types of students (e.g., elite students) could be investigated so that comparisons between them may be made. Another limitation of the present research would be over-reliance on interviews. Although interviews could give a relatively vivid and accurate depiction of participants' SWB, it is not always reliable. For example, sometimes it is unclear whether one problem posed by the interviewee is exaggerated or objectively reported. Thus, in future research, a mixed-method or observation research design may enrich the findings based on this kind of qualitative research. Finally, although our participants' responses indicate a different understanding of well-being, our emphasis in the current study is not on the social-cultural perspective. However, this should be explored in future studies in particular so that we can provide appropriate support to our students for better wellness.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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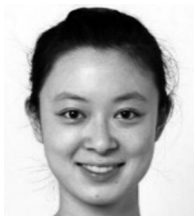
About the Authors

Tianjun Cheng (PhD) is the vice-principal of Nanjing Normal University, and the dean and Changjiang Scholar distinguished professor at the School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, China. He is the vice-president of the Chinese Association for Sociology of Education. His current research interests are sociology of education, educational policy, teacher professionalisation, and rituals in schooling.



Jin Jin is a PhD student in the School of Education Science, Nanjing Normal University, majoring in educational studies. Her main research interests are sociology of education, student well-being, and language learning and education, with a particular focus on disadvantaged students. She did her MA at the University of York in language learning and education speciality.

Junjun Chen is an associate professor in the Department of Education Policy and Leadership at the Education University of Hong Kong. Her current themes of research include teacher well-being and development, school principal well-being and development, systematic literature review, and psychometric measurement.

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Article

An Exploratory, Cluster Randomised Control Trial of the PAX Good Behaviour Game

Joanne O'Keeffe [1,*], Allen Thurston [1], Frank Kee [2], Liam O'Hare [1] and Katrina Lloyd [1]

[1] School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work, Queen's University Belfast, UK; E-Mails: j.okeeffe@qub.ac.uk (J.O.K.), a.thurston@qub.ac.uk (A.T.), l.ohare@qub.ac.uk (L.O.H.), k.lloyd@qub.ac.uk (K.L.)
[2] Centre for Public Health, Queen's University Belfast, UK; E-Mail: f.kee@qub.ac.uk (F.K.)

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
This article presents the findings of an exploratory randomised controlled trial of the PAX Good Behaviour Game (PAX GBG) in Northern Ireland. The PAX GBG is an evidence-based universal prevention programme designed to improve mental health by increasing self-regulation, academic engagement, and decreasing disruptive behaviour in children. The study was designed in line with the Medical Research Council guidance on the development of complex interventions and is based on the Medical Research Council framework, more specifically within a Phase 2 exploratory trial. The study used a cluster randomised controlled trial design with a total of 15 schools (19 classes) randomised to intervention and control. This article reports specifically on the outcome of self-regulation with 355 elementary school pupils in year 3 (age M = 7.40, SD = 0.30). Participating schools in the trial were located in areas of socio-economic disadvantage. The teachers in the intervention group received training in the delivery of the PAX GBG and implemented the PAX GBG intervention for 12 weeks. A range of pre- and post-test measures, including child reported behaviours, were undertaken. After the 12 weeks of implementation, this exploratory trial provided some evidence that the PAX GBG may help improve self-regulation (d = .42) in participating pupils, while the findings suggest that it may offer a feasible mental health prevention and early intervention approach for Northern Ireland classrooms. However, a larger definitive trial would be needed to verify the findings in this study.

Keywords
elementary school; good behaviour game; mental health; primary school; self-regulation; students behaviour; universal prevention

Issue
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1. Introduction

1.1. Child Mental Health

It is reported that ten to 20% of children experience mental health problems and half of all mental problems begin by the age of 14 (Kessler et al., 2005; WHO, 2018). A recent survey by the National Health Service (2017) on the mental health of children and young people in England reports that one in eight (12.8%) of five- to 19-year-olds had at least one mental disorder when assessed in 2017. The report also details that there has been a slight increase over time in the prevalence of mental disorders, rising from 9.7% in 1999 and 10.1% in 2004 to 11.2% in 2017. The report also notes that emotional disorders have become more common in five- to 15-year-olds, going from 4.3% in 1999 and 3.9% in 2004 to 5.8% in 2017 (National Health Service, 2017). Children's mental health problems are frequently linked to the increased likelihood of other problems in later life, such as poor

educational attainment, antisocial behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse and involvement in criminal activity (NICE, 2016). Mental health and behavioural problems have been identified as the primary drivers of disability and those affected are at a higher risk of attempting and completing suicide (Hawton et al., 2003; Lozano et al., 2012).

In Northern Ireland, poor mental health is the largest cause of ill health and disability, and the Public Health Agency has been keen to address this. According to the *Making Life Better Report* (Department of Health Northern Ireland, 2015), Northern Ireland has higher levels of mental ill health than any other region in the UK with one in five adults having a mental health condition, a 25% higher prevalence rate than England (Department of Education Northern Ireland—DHSSPS, 2015). Recent statistics for Northern Ireland have also shown that about 45,000 young people have a mental health problem and that >20% of young people suffer significant mental health problems by the time they reach 18 (Department of Education Northern Ireland—DHSSPS, 2015). The Young Life and Times Survey conducted in Northern Ireland suggested that the mental health of young people had deteriorated between 2008 and 2013 (ARK, 2014). The mental health of children and young people in Northern Ireland has become an increasing concern for families, schools, the Department of Education Northern Ireland (DENI), and policy makers (DENI, 2017). In 2015, 318 suicides were registered in Northern Ireland, the highest figure since records began in 1970 that also indicates that suicide rates in the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland are three times higher than in the least deprived (Torney, 2016). Young people from households in more deprived areas of Northern Ireland have a 14% higher percentage risk of serious personal emotional or mental health problems than those from better off households (Schubotz, 2010).

School prevention programmes are becoming an increasingly popular means through which to address problematic behaviours, many of which are effective and show positive results (Katz et al., 2013). As reported by Wells et al. (2003) in a systematic review of universal approaches to mental health promotion in schools, the importance of developing resilience and focusing on mental health promotion in schools can help with prevention of mental health issues in later life.

1.2. Mental Health: Prevention and Early intervention

It is widely recognised that prevention and early intervention is a key step in addressing mental health in children and young people. In 2015, the four UK Children's Commissioners recommended to the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child that there should be investment in universal preventative and early intervention children's services to prevent an increase in mental health problems among children (UK Children's Commissioners, 2015). It is reported that children and young people who develop good mental health are better able to deal with emotional challenges now and in later life. They are also reported to recover more quickly from illness, and are less likely to engage in behaviours, which may put their health at risk (Chanfreau et al., 2008; Davies, 2012).

School-based prevention and early interventions are an increasingly common means through which educators, researchers, and policy makers are trying to address the issues of mental health in children and young people (Katz et al., 2013; Surgenor et al., 2016). A systematic review by Bonell et al., (2013) found that school-based interventions show the potential to improve young people's health particularly regarding violence, aggression and physical activity. Failure, however, to address problematic behaviours in childhood can have immediate and long-term effects on mental health. This may explain why many school-based interventions are designed to target problematic behaviour in the first instance, which is traditionally linked to mental health problems in adolescence and later life (Kellam et al., 2008, 2011).

Research frequently indicates positive links between self-regulation skills and pro-social behaviours (Buckner et al., 2009; Eisenberg, 2000; Hagger et al., 2009), with problematic behaviours and mental health in later life linked to children's ability to self-regulate their behaviour and emotions at a young age (Kellam et al., 2008). Research has shown, however, that 70% of young people who experience mental health problems do not have appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early age (4Children's Society, 2008). It would appear, therefore, that the classroom environment is an ideal place to address some of these issues, allowing children to acquire new skills and knowledge whilst learning to cooperate with their peers. In doing so, they may learn a range of social, emotional and behavioural skills that enable them to self-regulate, manage their thoughts, emotions and behaviours so that they can cope better with difficulties in later life (Durlak et al., 2011). One promising intervention is the PAX Good Behaviour Game (PAX GBG) on which we report here.

2. The PAX Good Behaviour Game

Interest in the GBG has led to a number of trials taking place within the UK and Ireland (Chan et al., 2012; Coombes et al., 2016; Humphrey et al., 2018; O'Donnell et al., 2016). Evidence from the USA, and more recently in international settings (Dijkman et al., 2015; Kellam et al., 2008; Leflot et al., 2013; Smith et al., 2018), has shown the GBG to be effective in preventing mental (cognitive), emotional and behavioural problems amongst children. The GBG was originally designed by a teacher, Muriel Saunders for her year 5 class (age 9–10) to address disruptive behaviour. This original version of the GBG was a simple invention where the pupils in a classroom were divided into teams, utilising peer competition and group rewards to reduce out-of-seat and talking-out behaviours (Barrish et al., 1969). More recent versions

of the GBG, such as the PAX version, focus on giving children the mental ability to sustain attention, self-regulate, cooperate with others intentionally, and create peace, productivity, health and happiness for self and others (PAXis Institute, 2015).

Research from randomised trials in the USA, Belgium, and the Netherlands has shown that the PAX GBG is effective in improving a wide range of public health and educational outcomes (Dijkman et al., 2015; Kellam et al., 2008; Leflot et al., 2013; Petras et al., 2008; Poduska et al., 2008; Smith et al., 2018; Wilcox et al., 2008). Studies have also shown that the PAX GBG is effective at targeting a range of behavioural issues when implemented with pupils aged 6–12 from grade one to six (Barrish et al., 1969; Harris & Sherman, 1973; Medland & Stachnik, 1972). The impact of PAX GBG is highest among pupils with higher initial levels of aggression (Petras et al., 2008), and studies amongst PAX GBG pupils have shown reductions in children's (particularly boys) externalising behaviour and improvements in positive peer relations when compared with control-group children (Jiang et al., 2018). These reductions in externalising behaviour appear to be partly mediated by the improvements in peer acceptance (Witvliet et al., 2009). Overall, the GBG in all formats has shown evidence of effectiveness in preventing childhood disruptive behaviours and promoting long-term health and well-being.

There are currently two manualised versions based on the original GBG, the American Institutes of Research (AIR) GBG and the PAX GBG. The PAX version of the GBG is primarily driven by the pupils who set out the rules of their classroom. The behaviours are referred to as "PAX" and "Spleems," and use gamification and fun learning to teach pupils self-regulation, self-control, and self-management in the context of collaborating with others. Things that pupils would like to happen more often in their classroom are called "PAX" (peace, productivity, health, and happiness) and things that they would like to happen less often are called "Spleems." Children quickly understand the difference between PAX behaviours and Spleems, an ability that is vital for learning sustainable self-regulation (PAXis Institute, 2015). The game is composed of a number of evidence-based "Kernels" (components or building blocks). These Kernels include games and rewards. The full details of the PAX GBG composition and rules used in this trial are published in the trial protocol (O'Keeffe et al., 2017).

3. Theory of Change

The theory of the intervention is illustrated in the logic model (Figure 1) by O'Keeffe et al. (2017). The primary aim of the PAX GBG is to increase self-regulation, which can lead to an improvement in behaviour, self-esteem, and peer relations. This is achieved by using rewards for good behaviour and positive reinforcement, encouraging the children to maintain attention and adhere to the classroom vision that they compiled and agreed with their teacher. The differentiating component of PAX GBG compared to other versions of the GBG is the focus on improving the self-regulation of participating pupils. Self-regulation is also referred to as self-control and self-discipline (Duckworth & Seligman, 2005), and implies an ability of the self to control or change responses in order to regulate behaviour, thoughts and emotions. Self-regulation also includes the ability to control impulses, to manage short-term desires and to make better choices by looking forward and delaying gratification (Ainslie, 1975; Mischel & Underwood, 1974; Zimmerman, 2001).

Rather than assuming that environmental factors are the critical determinants of learning and classroom management, the programme gives ownership of the learning process to the learner. Pupils who participate in PAX GBG are guided by their own suggestions on acceptable behaviour (the PAX vision chart) in relation to what they want to see, hear, do, and feel more or less of in their classroom (PAXis Institute, 2015). Through meta-cognition and self-regulation, the PAX GBG helps pupils to think about their own behaviour and the content of the classroom vision chart that they compile together. The cognitive processes of effort and monitoring of behaviours are driven by an interest in winning the PAX game for rewards, Granny's Wacky Prizes (GWP), and receiving positive reinforcement. These are intrinsic (intangible) rewards and recognition that reinforce a sense of achievement for the pupil. By winning a GWP, the pupil reflects on their individual and collective actions according to the vision chart, which reinforces the positive behaviour (PAXis Institute, 2015; Zimmerman, 2010).

In the PAX GBG, positive reinforcement and social interdependence support and promote co-operative learning and peer relationships. The PAX GBG uses rewards for good behaviour and positive reinforcement to encourage children to work cooperatively, maintain attention and comply with the classroom vision. The classroom vision is made up of all the acceptable and unacceptable behaviours that the pupils collectively compile and agree with their teacher. This collective process is underpinned by the theory of social interdependence (Johnson & Johnson, 2012; Johnson et al., 2010), which infers that when pupils work together cooperatively they work harder and develop positive relationships with their peers. This process helps pupils by promoting improved social and emotional wellbeing, such as mental health, self-esteem, the ability to manage stress and adversity (Johnson & Johnson, 1999). Pupils also develop the ability to self-regulate their own behaviours and work cooperatively as part of a team in a manner that is conducive to both them and the whole team. This repeated process, in the long term, has been shown to help improve behaviour and self-esteem in participating children.

The overall aim of this study was to use a randomised controlled trial design to explore the effectiveness of the PAX GBG programme within the context of

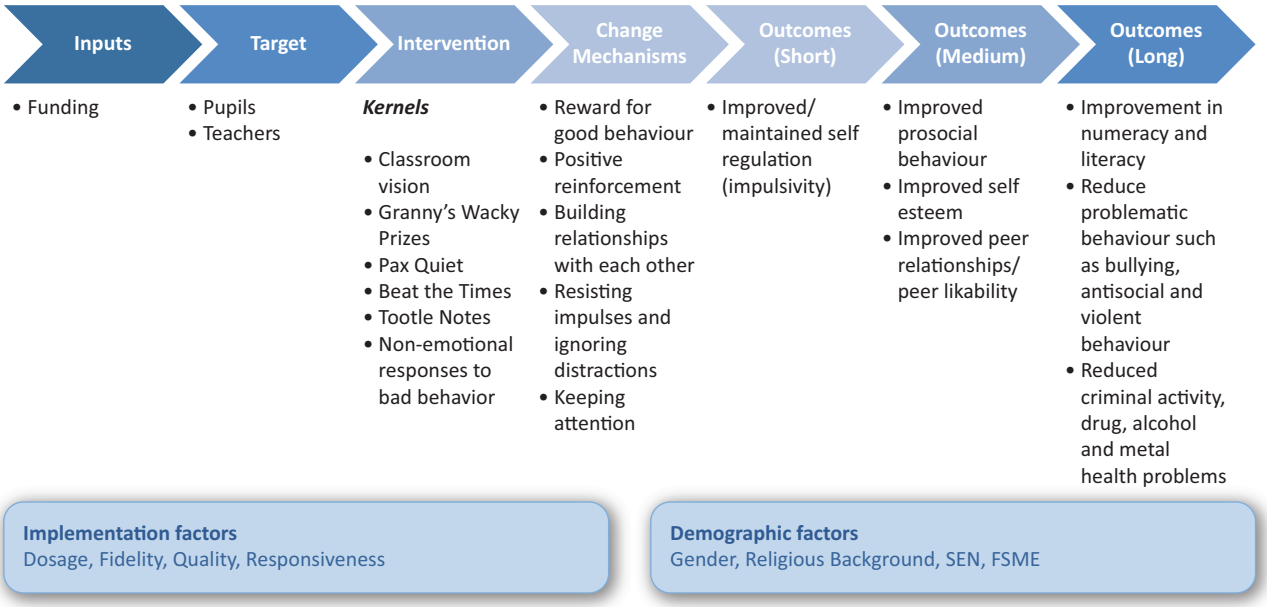

Figure 1. Logic model for the PAX GBG intervention (O'Keeffe et al., 2017).

disadvantaged schools in Northern Ireland. This article looks specifically at the outcome of self-regulation.

4. Methods

4.1. Trial Design Summary

A research protocol outlining the proposed design for this trial was collated according to the SPIRIT (2015) guidelines and is published in the *International Journal of Educational Research* (O'Keeffe et al., 2017). This study was designed in-line with Medical Research Council guidelines on development of complex interventions, more specifically within a Phase 2 exploratory trial (Moore et al., 2015).

The schools recruited for the exploratory trial were randomised to one of two conditions: (a) implementation of the PAX GBG for 12 weeks and (b) continue with normal classroom activity (without PAX GBG implementation). The target population was Northern Irish year 3 elementary school children (age 6–8) living in disadvantaged areas within a 10-mile radius of Belfast city. The main aim was to measure any improvements, as a result of the intervention, on child reported self-regulation.

4.2. Intervention

Three of the authors of this article became PAXis Institute accredited trainers. The training was delivered by the PAXis Institute and lasted one week. The training was intensive and consisted of a mixture of theoretical and practical elements. The training covered the theoretical underpinnings, the game construct and main elements known as the Kernels and how the game works in practice. The training was led by a range of professionals, including the programme developer, Dr. Dennis Embry, PAX partners, teachers, and staff from the PAXis institute. Teachers in the PAX GBG condition received training and were provided with a PAX GBG kit.

The training was condensed by drawing upon the key elements of the game Kernels that would be implemented as part of the trial. All the key information and instruction was extracted from the 139-page manual around the seven Kernels (PAX classroom vision, PAX language, PAX quiet, PAX game, GWP, transition games, tootle notes). A 2-day training schedule was designed and training slides were developed with sample videos of PAX GBG in action. The training had a logical sequence, taking the teachers through the programme step by step. Day one consisted of background, theory behind the programme, and all the Kernels. Day two focused on ensuring that the teacher fully understood the programme and how to implement it once they returned to the classroom. This involved practical sessions, a short test to ensure they fully understood the main concepts of the programme, and a question-and-answer session with the trainers.

The PAX GBG was played three times per day starting at 10 minutes, stretching to 40 minutes over the 12-week period, as the children's self-regulation and behaviour improved. A classroom playing the PAX GBG typically has three to five PAX teams at any given time. The PAX GBG encourages pupils to work through the existing curriculum co-operatively and efficiently. It promotes rules of pro-social behaviour and peer concern for classmates by rewarding teams for maintaining behaviour standards (Chan et al., 2012). The teacher can generate the teams either randomly or deliberately, depending on the context of the game. The teams can be given identity in a number of ways by, for example, the use of coloured armbands, fun names or simply by seating location. The teams should be balanced to ensure that all children

are represented as well as possible. Every team can win if it has three or fewer Spleems during a PAX GBG of a defined duration. The teacher, an adult or a designated class PAX leader can record the Spleems (PAXis Institute, 2015). A TiDier checklist table (Hoffmann et al., 2014; O'Keeffe et al., 2017) outlining all the elements of the PAX GBG programme implementation is shown in Figure A1 of the Supplementary File.

5. Recruitment and Randomisation

5.1. Recruitment

A list of elementary schools was obtained from the DENI. School selection was based on the percentage of children entitled to free school meals (FSME) defined by DENI statistics. The Belfast area was identified as having the highest percentage of elementary school children receiving FSME, 57.4% in comparison to a national average of 29.2% across the rest of Northern Ireland. The elementary schools in the sample were targeted to ensure recruitment from schools with a minimum class size of 15, a minimum enrolment of 140 for the year group undertaking the intervention, higher than 47% FSME, and within a 10-mile radius of Belfast city centre. A total of 56 schools met the inclusion criteria and were contacted for the main trial. Nineteen schools were recruited after invitation to the trial (enrolment range between 143 to 635 and a FSME of 49.77% to 86.26%). Consent was obtained from all of the participants involved in this PAX GBG trial. Teachers and principals gave consent through consent forms issued at the recruitment stage. Consent forms were sent out by the school to the parents/guardians and consisted of an "opt out" format. This trial was approved by the Ethics Committee in the School of Social Sciences Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast prior to any contact with schools or pupils.

5.2. Sample

A total of 424 year 3 children aged between six and eight years took part in the trial. The pupils were drawn from 24 year 3 classes spread across 19 schools. Two schools dropped out before the trial began and pre-testing took place (one control school and one intervention school). Two schools dropped out after allocation to condition (one from each arm of the trial). This left a sample of 15 schools and 19 year 3 classes, with n = 355 and these are included in the final intention to treat analysis. In the final sample there were no significant differences between the intervention and control groups on the basis of school size (t (13) = −0.37, p = .72) or FSME (t (13) = 0.10, p = .92). Table 1 summarises school size, class size, and FSME of control and intervention group in the final sample. The sample, attrition and experimental processes are summarised in accordance with the CONSORT guidelines (see Figure A2 of the Supplementary File; Schulz et al., 2010).

The mean Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure (NIMDM) scores for both control and intervention were similar {M_c = 4.50 (SD = 0.84) and M_i = 4.54, (SD = 0.96)}. The intervention and control groups were also comparable in terms of the deprivation scores of the children's place of residence (Table 2).

The breakdown of the sample by gender, special educational needs (SEN), ethnicity, English as an additional language (EAL), and the NIMDM average is summarised in Table 3. The pupil (n) refers to the number of pupils who sat the pre- and post-test. There are notable differences between the groups in terms of the numbers dropping out prior to pretesting. Gender balance is similar in both groups. The control group had a slightly higher percentage of children from ethnicities other than white, a slightly higher percentage of children with EAL (8%) and a slightly larger percentage of Asian (1.3%) and other ethnicity (1.9%) compared to the intervention.

Table 1. Sample summary.

	Control	Intervention
Number of Schools (N)	7	8
Number of classes (n)	8	11
	Mean (SD)	Mean (SD)
School size	320 (119)	*361* (182)
Class size	21 (4.66)	24 (2.91)
FSME	67.5 (.011)	61 (0.09)

Table 2. Mean NIMDM.

Control		Intervention	
n	Mean (standard deviation)	*n*	Mean (standard deviation)
242	4.50 (0.84)	162	4.54 (0.96)

Table 3. Sample characteristics.

Characteristic	Group			
	Intervention group		Control group	
	n	%	*n*	%
Total number of pupils	268	63.2	156	36.8
Gender				
Female	139	51.9	83	53.2
Male	128	48.1	73	46.8
SEN				
Yes	86	32	44	27
No	183	68	97	59.5
Not specified			22	13.50
Ethnicity				
White	263	97.8	145	93.5
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	3	1.1	2	1.3
Asian/Asian British	0	0	2	1.3
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	3	1.1	3	1.9
Other ethnic group	0	0	3	1.9
EAL				
Yes	4	1.5	13	8
No	265	98.5	150	92

5.3. Randomisation

Randomisation took place at the school level. Randomisation was undertaken using both "blocking" and "minimisation" to minimize Type I error (Stolberg et al., 2004). Assignment to condition used minimisation to achieve a close balance of single/double form entry. After first rank ordering the schools in order of FSME and school size, their ranks were then block minimised to ensure an even distribution of sectors and disadvantage based on percentage FSME. They were then assigned to condition using true randomisation within these groups.

5.4. Sample Size Calculation

The estimation of power for the PAX GBG was provided by Optimal Design software. To detect a standardised effect size of 0.41, with 80% power, assuming alpha 0.05 and ICC of 0.07 (and with J = 20 clusters and average class size n = 25) required 500 subjects across the two arms. The effect size of +0.41 was used to model power and sample size. This effect size was used as previous effects sizes ranged from 0.12 to 0.57 (O'Donnell et al., 2016) and 0.56 to 0.83 (Ghaderi et al., 2017) for measures of pupil behaviours. A conservative estimate of 0.41 appeared to be reasonable to ensure analyses were not left underpowered. The ICC is in line with similar programmes such as Family Skills (Hussain et al., 2017), which have shown ICCs of between 0.02 and 0.15. The calculation also allows for a 5% attrition level at the individual or cluster level, and still being able to detect an effect size of +0.41.

5.5. Measures

The primary outcome of the trial was self-regulation, which corresponds to the logic model of the programme (O'Keeffe et al., 2017). The primary outcome measure chosen was the child self-control rating scale (Rorhbeck et al., 1991), which was selected on the basis that it was relatively short, well-validated, and designed to assess how well children self-regulate. The 33-item scale was modelled on the teacher and parent self-control rating scale (Kendall & Wilcox, 1979), and previous studies have indicated good reliability with a Cronbach's Alpha (α = 0.9). It uses a 5-point Likert scale, which ranges from *not at all like me* to *a lot like me*. The questionnaires were compiled online using a custom design that was user friendly for young children and the data collection was collected using iPads, with this method tested in a small feasibility study prior to commencing this exploratory trial. All pupils in both the intervention and control groups were tested in their classroom one week prior to teacher training and were tested again just one week after the intervention finished. The children gave their consent for participation before data collection began.

5.6. Implementation Fidelity

A thorough process evaluation was conducted for this exploratory trial to measure the fidelity of delivery and acceptability of the programme, following the Medical Research Council framework (Moore et al., 2015) and the relevant CONSORT statement (Moher et al., 2001). More

details of the process evaluation plan are available in the trial protocol (O'Keeffe et al., 2017).

6. Analysis

The statistical analysis was guided by the intervention logic model, as previously outlined in the trial protocol, (O'Keeffe et al., 2017). Data were captured via Lime Survey and transferred to STATA 15. The raw data were anonymised using an assigned unique ID. Internal reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha (α = 0.92), which is in line with that found in previous studies. The main analysis was based on complete cases (children deleted from analysis if they had missing pre or post-test scores). The missing data per variable lay between 0.6 and 26.8%. In subsidiary analysis, as per Rubin's (1976) framework, we assumed data to be missing at random, and used Multiple Imputation by Chained Equations (MICE) to conduct a sensitivity analysis. The NIMDM (NISRA, 2015) was calculated using each child's postcode via the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency area profiles. The measure is ranked from 1 (*most deprived*) to 5022 (*least deprived*).

Descriptive statistics {means (SD); medians (IQR)} were generated for each outcome and any changes in the intervention group receiving the 12-week GBG programme was compared to the control group using pre- and post-test measures. Initial effects of the PAX GBG implementation on the outcomes were analysed on an-intention-to-treat basis. We also examined the effect of clustering on the outcomes.

The difference between mean scores for the intervention and control were tested using hierarchical linear modelling (HLM). HLM was used to account for clustering effects in the data. The main effects of clustering were determined to be at the school level and so two-level model was used to take account of clustering. HLM used the post-test score (dependent variable) with group assignment and the related pre-test scores as independent variables. HLM analysis was also used to control for in the data. The effect sizes (Cohen's *d*) were calculated using the Campbell effect size calculator (Wilson, n.d.) using the standardised mean difference, the unstandardised regression coefficient (B) from intervention group and the standard deviation (SD) of the pre-test whole group.

7. Results

7.1. Intervention Effects on Self-Regulation

An independent sample t-test based on complete cases was used for initial exploration of pre- to post-test change in each of the means of the primary outcome scales. This analysis was exploratory on the main outcome only, and a fuller analysis of data taking account of interaction of variables follows. The results provided some evidence of effectiveness through maintenance of self-regulation during the 12-week period, in that there was a decline in self-regulation in the control group and no change in the intervention group, as shown in Table 4.

In an HLM model (Tables 5, 6, and 7), the adjusted post-test to pre-test differences were compared between the control and intervention groups controlling for clustering on the self-regulation outcomes within schools. The developed model is presented across these tables showing how school (cluster) and individual effects were taken into account in the final models presented in Table 8.

After determining that there was a clustering effect to explore, HLM was undertaken, with and without multiple imputation, to assess the effects of missing data on outcomes. The effect sizes of the resultant model are presented both with, and without, multiple imputation for missing data in Table 6. The observed data model (β = .2, 95% CI .206 to .642; *d* = .42) and the model

Table 4. T test.

Outcome	Control or Intervention	N	Mean	SD	SE	t	df	Sig.
Pre test self-regulation	Intervention	224	4.02	0.713	0.048	3.05	256.333	0.003
	Control	131	3.76	0.768	0.067			
Post test self-regulation	Intervention	224	4.02	0.673	0.045	3.94	233.017	< .001
	Control	131	3.69	0.814	0.071			

Table 5. HLM model of self-regulation.

Source	SS	df	MS	
Model	58.17	2	29.08	Number of observations = 355
Residual	137.95	352	0.39	F(2, 352) = 74.21
Total	196.12	354	0.55	Prof > F > 0.0001
				R-squared = 0.30
				Adjusted R-squared = 0.29
				Root MSE = 0.626

Table 6. HLM main effects model for pre-post changes test on self-regulation.

Post-self-regulation	Coef.	Standard error	t	P > t	95% CI	
Main effects	0.20	0.07	2.93	0.004	0.07	0.34
Pre-self-regulation	0.51	0.05	11.19	> 0.001	0.42	0.60
Constant	1.178	0.18	9.90	> 0.001	1.42	2.13

Table 7. ANOVA showing between school clustering effects on self-regulation.

Source	SS	df	MS	F	Prob > F
Between school	22.04	14	1,57	2.95	0.0003
Within school	193.17	362	0.53		
Total	215,21	376	0.57		
Estimated SD of school effects = 0.20 Estimated SD individual effects = 0.73					

generated with multiply imputed data (β = .2, 95% CI .009 to .40; d = .42), both indicate that self-regulation may have improved as a result of the intervention. The similarity in the outcomes and effects sizes from the observed and imputed models, indicated that missing data was not having a substantive effect on findings.

The ICC for this sample is 0.01, which is considered low in comparison to similar programmes such as Roots of Empathy (Connolly et al., 2018). An ICC of less than 0.40 indicates poor intra-class correlation (how strongly units in the same group resemble each other; see Cicchetti, 1994).

8. Discussion

In summary, this exploratory trial provided some evidence that the PAX GBG helped improve self-regulation in participating pupils. This trial is, to date, the only randomized controlled trial (RCT) of the PAX GBG to be conducted in Northern Ireland and Ireland. Although a recent large scale RCT took place in the UK of the AIR version of the GBG, it measured mainly reading improvement and behaviour. This trial looked specifically at the PAX GBG, which uses age specific, non-material, fun rewards that are cost effective and sustainable in the long-term. The PAX version of the GBG claims to go beyond the traditional conceptions of behaviour modification, with the main outcome of improved self-regulation.

Informed by the logic model outlined by O'Keeffe et al. (2017), this trial was designed to explore the effect of the PAX GBG at post-test and at the end of the programme on the primary outcome of self-regulation. A number of secondary outcomes including cooperative learning, self-esteem and behaviour were also assessed but are not reported in this article. The trial also explored whether the PAX GBG had a differential impact on pupils depending on their gender and their EAL, SEN, and socio-economic status.

The use of the pupil driven PAX vision chart may have encouraged the pupils to think about their own behaviours in the classroom through meta-cognition. The PAX GBG encouraged pupils to reinforce each other for group success in the game, driven by an interest in winning the PAX game rewards (GWPs) and receiving positive reinforcement. Pupils interact together and, in doing so, improve social skills and competencies and promote each other's success (Johnson et al., 2010; Roseth et al., 2008). This in turn would have enhanced their sense of self-satisfaction and motivation to continue to improve and regulate their behaviour (PAXis Institute, 2015; Zimmerman, 2010). The improvement in self-regulation may be attributed to the start-stop cognitive processes or the intrinsically reinforcing GWPs. The rewards for individual and collective efforts may have encouraged the pupils' desire to learn more self-regulation (Embry, 2016; PAXis Institute, 2015). The fun factor may also have contributed to the detected improvement in self-regulation; the quirky elements of these Kernels, such as the GWPs, PAX quiet, and Beat the Timer, are considered to be the key elements in

Table 8. Summary of effect sizes on observed and MI data (cluster control).

Outcome			Observed					MI				
	Sample size		β	p	CI	CI	d	β	p	CI	CI	d
	Intervention	Control	Regression Co-Eff				ES	Regression Co-Eff				ES
Self-regulation	224	131	0.20	**0.04**	**0.206**	**0.642**	**0.42**	0.20	**0.04**	**0.009**	**0.40**	**0.42**

this programme (Embry, 2004; Embry & Biglan, 2008). The evidence-based Kernels in the PAX GBG may have driven the change mechanisms as shown previously in Figure 1. The effect size detected for self-regulation may also be explained by the team-working and cooperative learning element of the PAX GBG. As noted previously, pupils have the opportunity to play and cooperate with their peers whilst practicing goal-directed behaviour, all of which are fundamental to the development of self-regulation (Vohs & Baumeister, 2011; Vygotsky, 1978).

The findings from this trial are reflective of those outlined in a recent systematic review and meta-analysis of 49 randomised clinical trials, evaluating 50 self-regulation interventions (Pandey et al., 2018) which concluded that interventions such as the PAX GBG are effective in children and young people. Academic achievement, mental health, behavioural improvements are reported as some of the main outcomes of self-regulation interventions.

It is worth noting that in an exploratory analysis, there was some evidence that gender, SEN, EAL and socio-economic status predicted post-test score for self-regulation when accounting for pre-test score. However, given the small sample size and small numbers within these subgroups, the interaction effects must be treated with caution. In addition, given the large number of tests undertaken in relation to exploring interaction effects, this may have increased the likelihood of a type I error (false positive). The findings are only exploratory, with the aim of identifying any patterns of interest that may be useful to consider in a larger phase 3 definitive trial.

The findings of this exploratory trial of the PAX GBG in Northern Ireland appear to have met the success criteria by partially supporting the first (proximal) step in the logic model, that is, the improvement of self-regulation in the short term compared to those in the control group. This may serve as a promising indication for subsequent steps for a phase 3 definitive trial.

9. Limitations

There were a number of limitations to this study, the first of which is that the researcher in this trial was also the trainer and evaluator. This may have introduced some unconscious bias into the study. Ideally, if a future phase 3 definitive trial was to be conducted then these responsibilities should be separated.

Missing data were also an issue and the reason for missing data was due to some of the teachers not filling in the pre-test questionnaires on time. The post-test child questionnaires were completed in the last two weeks of June and some children were absent from the classroom. Teachers noted that some families were taking holidays before the peak holiday period, which would explain some of the missing data from children at post-test. To overcome this, MICE was used for imputation and analysis was conducted on both imputed and observed sets. In future studies, consideration should be given to the time of year when testing in the classroom, as this would help avoid the times when pupils are more likely to be absent. In addition, a future trial of the PAX GBG would benefit from recruiting a larger number of schools, with over recruitment to allow for attrition.

A key limitation is that the trial only lasted 12 weeks between pre- and post-test, which is a very short time to fully implement such a substantial programme. As per the logic model, the evidence-based Kernels of the game aimed to develop pupils' ability to self-regulate their behaviours and work as part of a team. It was suggested that this repeated process, in time, would help improve behaviour and self-esteem in participating pupils. Future studies of the PAX GBG would benefit from a longer implementation period of two years such as that in the AIR GBG study by Humphrey et al. (2018).

10. Conclusion

This exploratory RCT assessed the PAX GBG as a potential early intervention for children in Northern Ireland classrooms to prevent mental ill health, in particular among those living in areas of high socio-economic disadvantage. The main aim of this study was to explore the effect of the PAX GBG on self-regulation among year 3 elementary school children. The study used a cluster randomised controlled trial design with a total of 15 schools (19 classes) randomised to intervention and control. The main aim of the data analysis was to explore the effect of the PAX GBG on the outcomes and produce an estimate of an effect size for a larger phase 3 definitive trial.

The PAX GBG did show promise and actually improved the first step (proximal) outcome (self-regulation) in the theory of change model for participating pupils. This study looked primarily at the short-term effect of the PAX GBG. However, there is a recognised link between self-regulation and mental health in later life. The ability to strengthen self-regulation may also be important for longer-term outcomes such as suicide prevention in later life (Brüdern et al., 2016; Gottfredson & Hirschi, 1990).

Many of the GBG studies have originated in the USA and have focused mainly on children's aggressive behaviour at school and were conducted with pupils from low income, urban areas that were predominantly African American. In contrast the studies in Europe with Dutch and Belgian children took place with predominately children from middle- to high-socio-economic backgrounds. However, it would appear that previously reported gains in these studies can be replicated in high poverty schools in Northern Ireland (Dijkman et al., 2015; Leflot et al., 2013; Werthamer-Larsson et al., 1991).

A larger scale trial would be beneficial to further investigate the modest effects that emerged from this trial and, indeed, to further explore the medium-term outcomes of the theoretical model as outlined by O'Keeffe et al. (2017). It is hoped that the findings in

this study will contribute to the existing literature on the PAX GBG and offer a basis on which to conduct a phase 3 definitive trial of the PAX GBG in Northern Ireland. In doing so, it may make a positive contribution to the health and wellbeing of children and young people by helping to improve self-regulation in the short term, and mental health in later life.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare that they have no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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About the Authors

Joanne O'Keeffe (PhD) is a post-doctoral researcher in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. She is particularly interested in research with children and young people in the area of academic attainment, health and wellbeing, in particular those children and young people from socio-economic disadvantaged backgrounds. Her work mainly involves using randomised controlled trial methodologies and evidence based programme evaluation in education. She currently supports the university's Widening Participation Unit (WPU) on suitable evaluation strategies of outreach delivery.

Allen Thurston holds research interests in undertaking experimental research design for educational trials and trials of health initiatives in schools. Theoretically, his work focusses on pedagogical perspectives surrounding using cooperative learning, peer tutoring and improving literacy for students living in high poverty communities aged 3–18 (including current projects in Colombia, Chile, Lesotho, and South Africa). He is the editor-in-chief of the *International Journal of Educational Research* (IJER) and is on the editorial board of *Technology, Pedagogy and Education* and *Educational Psychology.*

Frank Kee is the director of the Centre for Public Health in the School of Medicine, Dentistry and Biomedical Sciences, and previously directed one of the UKCRC Centres of Excellence for Public Health Research (2008–2018). Professor Kee's interests span a wide range of subjects in epidemiology, public health, health services research and complexity science, and in finding better ways to evaluate the impact of our academic endeavours, both methodologically and in terms of knowledge mobilisation that can impact policy and practice.

Liam O'Hare (PhD) holds research interests in the area of social and educational innovation. Generally, his work explores the design, implementation, and evaluation of intervention programmes and supports, which aim to improve population level outcomes such as educational achievement, social behaviour, and wellbeing. He has a particular focus on improving outcomes for children and young people in disadvantaged schools or communities. His methodological expertise lies in the prevention and early intervention methods such as logic modelling, participatory co-design, implementation science, psychometrics, and randomised controlled trials.

Katrina Lloyd (PhD) is a lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, Education and Social Work at Queen's University Belfast. Her main research interest is in children's mental health and wellbeing, and she developed—and runs annually—an online survey of 10 and 11-year-old children in Northern Ireland, the Kids' Life and Times.

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Article

Education in Confinement: The Reintegration of Young People in Prison in La Araucanía, Chile

Claudia Huaiquián-Billeke [1,*], Violeta Sánchez-Toledo [2], Romina Quilodrán-Contreras [3] and Juan Vera-Urra [4]

[1] Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education, Catholic University of Temuco, Chile; E-Mail: chuaiquian@uct.cl
[2] Scole Creare School, Chile; E-Mail: violetasanchezt@gmail.com
[3] Integra Foundation, Chile; E-Mail: rominavquilodran@gmail.com
[4] Education Department, Municipality of Temuco, Chile; E-Mail: juan.antonio.vera.u@gmail.com

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
This article addresses the social reintegration of young people studying in the prison of La Araucanía, Chile. Our objective is to describe the social representation of young people between 19 and 29 years old, who are currently serving a custodial sentence, in their reintegration process after secondary education. We start off with the acknowledgement that both social mobility and educational career are historically marked by the reproduction of sociocultural inequality: Educational structures do not fulfill the mission of providing tools for a persons' life. Our article is based on a unique case study in which a current phenomenon is investigated; in this case, social reintegration within an authentic context—prison. Semi-structured interviews were applied during our research and participants' narratives were methodologically triangulated. Our article concludes that, given the presence of homogenizing and inefficient study plans, young people demand deep changes that are linked to a social pedagogy, which values their skills and life project through an awareness process. This process would enable them to explore their reality and cultural action in order to become conscious young people and co-creators of their future once in freedom.

Keywords
correctional education; educational lag; inclusive education; prison education; social mobility; social reintegration; students' motivation

Issue
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1. Introduction

We begin by clarifying the question: What does imprisonment mean? Its distinctive features are found inside prisons and, therefore, daily life under imprisonment is determined by the characteristics and routines of a prison regime based on segregation and security (Foucault, 2002). The reality of imprisonment in Chile is characterized by being at the base of a punitive society in which power control mechanisms categorize the person who breaks the law as a criminal, as an enemy of society, and in which crime is a civil war act, an attack on society. This makes it possible to justify public action as a defense mechanism that is complemented by imprisonment by suspending civil rights, erasing the offenders' citizenship, imposing an invisible power mark on him; a change of status that imposes a persons' diminution (Foucault, 2016).

Social reintegration in Chile has a utopian character because the Chilean state has not assumed its responsibility to provide an educational policy relevant to its reality. That is also one of the reasons why we decided to address this issue in our research. The problem of

imprisonment constitutes an invisible mark of power sovereignty over a person. The analysis of a penal system reveals the nature in which a society develops around power. Crime is an attack on society that justifies daily non-criminal coercion; a form of control that is linked to punishment through institutions that not only subtract the person but also set productive and normalization structures (Foucault, 2016).

Education within confinement contexts is a concept used in Chile when accessing education in the penitentiary space, in institutions for young people, and in closed addiction care centers. The goal is to safeguard peoples' human rights beyond the judicial condition in which they are found. Both social mobility and educational trajectory are historically marked by the reproduction of sociocultural inequality: Educational structures do not fulfill the mission of providing tools for a persons' life.

According to statistical data from the Chilean prison system in 2021, there are 45,176 people in prison at present. In Temuco, 47% of the incarcerated population corresponds to young people, which is a representative sample that reflects the reality of the prison system in Chile. For this research, the sample inclusion criteria were the following: They had to be young people (men) who were serving a sentence corresponding to crimes of greater social connotation (robbery, theft, sexual crimes, homicide, drugs, and domestic violence); they had to be attending secondary education; their age range had to fluctuate between 19 to 29; and they had to be governed by behavior standards of the penitentiary center (Chilean Gendarmerie, 2021; National Statistics Institute, 2019).

Imprisonment pedagogical meanings, according to Bourdieu's postulates, are evident in this social reality, in which pedagogical action is also a selection of meanings through the contents, study plans, and educational guidelines. People who break the law are imprisoned. Like all social agents, they have different types of social, economic, cultural, and symbolic capital. In Bourdieu, capital is understood as a type of value, which is a wealth of the field of struggles, and its appropriation and control is the objective of the struggle of forces within each space. Thus, each capital will have a specific value within the space that constitutes each field. However, there are some capitals that have certain value in different social spaces. These are: economic capital (money, properties, goods, investments), social capital (relationships, contacts, kinships), cultural capital (information, knowledge, socially validated knowledge), and symbolic capital (honesty, respect referred to honor, social recognition; Bourdieu, 2008).

The concept of imprisonment points out only to those total institutions that share logic and operating practices, which correspond to a penitentiary center, whose purpose is the total control of young people, and security is its axis. Constant contradictions are addressed in the Chilean prison system and educational centers, because management decisions depend on the institution that establishes security standards (Gaete, 2018).

Education is a process that must be conceived for young people as a permanent commitment to humanization and their life project (Freire, 1970). Our object of study in this article is the process of social reintegration of young people in prison, and how the educational process responds to their needs by analyzing the relevance of study plans. The research participants are young people who are in an educational process while in confinement.

The education of young people and adults in Chile is ruled by study plans. A utopian proposal is clearly visualized in this discourse, which promises to guarantee social reintegration; however, reality does not reflect this. Therefore, it is impossible for education to become a tool for a persons' growth (Lucio-Villegas, 2017).

When reviewing scientific studies on incarceration, it was found that the learning experiences of young people in prison account for a diversity of jobs, including artistic and sports competencies that they need to acquire, which are not mobilized or included in the study plans (Sandoval & López de Maturana, 2017).

The different perspectives of prison education subjectively affect and resignify the time of confinement, which does not lead to reducing the crimes committed by young people, but rather promotes the possibility of solving the problems that threaten social peace (Schneider, 2018).

It is pertinent to rethink the study plans, since they are not situated in the reality of incarceration, hindering the possibilities of social reintegration of young people, therefore, the challenge is to guarantee equity and equal opportunities. Paradoxically, the mission of both institutions has different operating logics, since one position promotes the principle of freedom, while the other conditions and limits it (Echegaray, 2018; Francisco & Sieiro, 2017).

Preparing students for a life in freedom is a challenge for prison education. Young people need to develop a genuine prosocial behavior, which leads them to motivation, autonomy, responsibility, and adherence to educational processes with different purposes (Lorenzo et al., 2017). The challenge of transforming prisons into a place that allows social mobility and that meets standards of educational excellence requires permanent learning. In this sense, education in prison is both for the young people who are actually "learning" and those who belong to the educational community more broadly (De Maeyer, 2019).

A fundamental aspect is the permanent education of those who make up the educational community: teachers, directors, and prison administrators. The latter play an essential role since they are the ones who are in direct contact with young people in prisons, therefore, their continuous education is a priority, since each gesture or word directly expressed influences the educational process (De Maeyer, 2019). The study plans of education in imprisonment must pay attention to young people's knowledge and self-assessment, foster their hopes, and

guide them in their life project formation. It is important to refer to the fact that prisons must have specialized personnel, that is, experienced professionals who provide adequate support to young people.

This article presents the findings of the reality of youth incarceration in La Araucanía. Our key focus is the social representations of young people in their reintegration process and the relevance of the study plans to the educational reality.

2. Theoretical Framework: The Challenge of Social Reintegration in Prison

Imprisonment has been historically addressed to understand the treatment and conditions, from the perspective of correctionalist characters, and re-socializing, allowing socially adaptive behavior (Rubio, 2012).

According to Foucault (2002), the penitentiary model has its point of origin in the sanction mechanisms that seek to correct a person's behavior through self-management. Behavior is imposed through permanent surveillance. Power seeks to act through the surveillance, control, and correction of citizens.

In this article, to understand the process of social reintegration in imprisonment, the Chilean prison model is analyzed. This model reflects the reality in Latin America based on a legislative framework that established unattainable ideals and endorsed such commitments as the right of all people to be treated with dignity, respect for everyone's ideological freedom and personal privacy, ensure that everyone has access to information, education, and culture in legal conditions (UN General Assembly, 1948).

Social reintegration is considered a process of systemic actions that contribute to the reduction of recidivism and promote social mobility. This process begins during the execution of the sentence and continues when the young people resume their life in their community. It is characterized by the development of individual, social and work skills. However, in practice, the proposed actions lack a humanizing sense and socially adaptive behaviors (Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, 2021).

The access of incarcerated young people to the educational system occurs with a series of significant barriers that hinder their inclusion processes, especially to those who are in an irregular situation facing difficulties to enter the school system and progress (Ministry of Education of Chile, 2021).

The normative frameworks that study plans for the education of young people in prison establish must be flexible when considering the educational and life trajectory peculiarities, guaranteeing security and social reintegration.

Educational centers are obliged to modify their regulations, granting various opportunities that contribute to the development of cultural capital (Caride & Gradaílle, 2013; Government of Chile, 2016).

The process of social reintegration should consider that young people have needs, interests, and specific difficulties, and that only through education process of social mobility is enriched (Brosens et al., 2020).

If we analyze the foundations of the critical pedagogy school in Latin America, its proposal allows the possibility of interfering reality to transform it, providing educational tools for freedom and relating the perspective of access *to* education, which promotes equal opportunities. The approaches differ from the educational reality of young people in prison because they are not considered in the existing study plans (Freire, 1969; Murillo, 2017; Schmelkes & Street, 2015).

Education based on social pedagogy implies the true value of a person: a conscious being who is constituted in its transcendence, intentionality, and openness, since it is open to the whole world. A person is realized in human acts; they are constructed in a cultural context (Fuentes, 2009; La Chica, 2015; Scheler, 2001). In this way, social pedagogy trains young people in awareness, gives them the tools and prepares them in action and permanent reflection (Correa, 2012).

To investigate what young people think of their educational reality in imprisonment, it is pertinent to access their social representations, which supposes a subject-subject dialogical link, as a proper construction of a sense of mobile identities which fluctuate within a framework of social performance (Weisz, 2017). For a better understanding, the three types of social representations must be clarified. These are: (1) emancipated representations, which are typical of groups with new visions and criteria of the world; they bring with them the seed of a possible change, are flexible and dynamic over time; (2) hegemonic representations, which are typical of identity phenomena and act as a map-guide, almost unconsciously, upon the behavior of communities, ethnic groups, and nations; and (3) controversial representations, which are the result of manifest antagonism among specific groups that are configured around relevant facts or objects that constitute the center of intergroup conflicts (Moscovici, 1985).

3. Method

This is a qualitative study from the point of view of the presence of researchers, who investigate the sociocultural particularities of young people in prison (Gibbs, 2012).

The purpose of this study was to discover and understand the reality of young peoples' social representations regarding their social reintegration and the relevance of their study plans during incarceration. Emphasis was placed on young people qualities and the predominance of subjectivities, underlining the nature of the socially constructed reality in imprisonment (Flick, 2007).

The study sample was a total of 25 young people (men) who were attending secondary education. Their age range is from 19 to 29 years old. Participants were

categorized with good behavior according to prison regulations and manifested the desire to participate voluntarily by signing an informed consent.

This is a dense descriptive study—a unique case study design focused on the prison of the city of Temuco, an institution that granted us access to the application, collection, and interpretation of the stories of the young people in prison.

The semi-structured interviews were approved by the scientific committee of the Universidad Mayor de Temuco. The interview scheme was designed in an open way and validated by expert judgments. Semi-structured interview type was chosen, with the purpose that the researcher, through questions, promotes the description of daily experiences of young people in prison (Kvale, 2011).

The ethical dimension of this study provided security in the confidential treatment of information and private data, through the informed consent of voluntary participants (Mansilla & Huaiquián, 2020). Another ethical aspect was a strict interaction protocol authorized by the regional direction of the penitentiary center and the Directorate of Municipal Educational Administration of Temuco (González, 2002).

The analysis of the research data is qualitative; version 8.0 of the Atlas.ti software was used for open coding and grouping the stories of young people in prison into categories (Flick, 2007).

This software allows expressing the circular meaning of qualitative analysis and gives the possibility of incorporating the data sequentially, without the need to collect all the material at the same time. For this reason, the software allows us to carry out the theoretical sampling necessary to carry out the analysis. Axial coding was implemented, which is the process of relating subcategories with a category, building code networks that emerge from the established categories to finally integrate and refine these categories with the aim of building theory (Mansilla & Huaiquián, 2020).

4. Discussion of Results

To gain a deeper understanding, the researchers chose to answer: What are the social representations of young people about the process of social reintegration? The answers allow us to approach the life trajectories of young people in prison and the consequences of their social behavior in all its complexity. This investigative process review aims at projecting imprisoned young people in the exercise of their role as a citizen after the completion of their sentence. Therefore, it allows the construction of public policies that contribute to social reintegration. The most representative codes are: cultural capital, life project in freedom, awareness, educational backwardness and free time (see Figure 1).

The cultural capital code can be found in the following textualities:

> What I learn [teaches me] different lessons: the use of money, moving around the city. I think even to go buy food. To take the bus. (speaker 11)

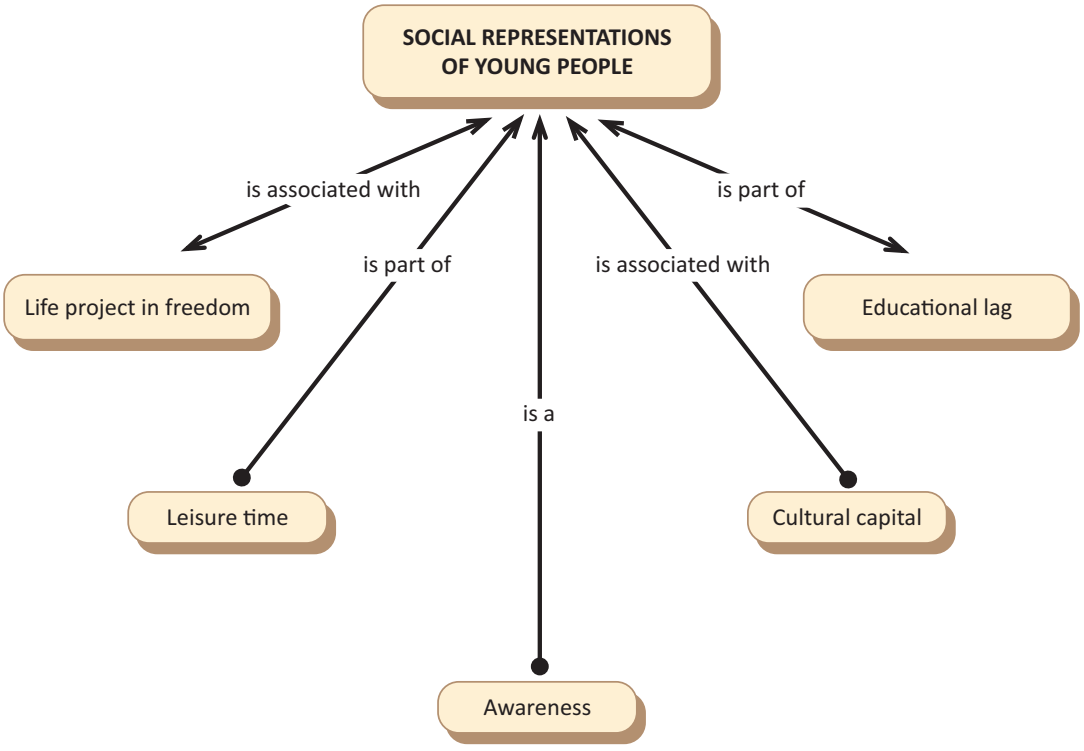

Figure 1. Network, social representations of the process of reintegration in imprisonment in La Araucanía. Analysis network built with Atlas.ti 8.0 software.

> If you do not know which bus to take, learning the use of [the] language helps you communicate and ask questions, request information from the driver, for example, then you have to know about mathematics, also to understand an address. (speaker 17)

> Language helps you write well and communicate in a different way, to develop yourself in society. (speaker 20).

The project code of life in freedom is visualized in the following passages:

> Now that I am incarcerated, I think it is necessary to educate myself. I would like my wife and I to study a short career and get a better job, to improve our quality of life together. (speaker 7)

The consciousness code is visualized in the following passages:

> Now that I am in prison, I project my life when I regain my freedom; I am going to worry about the values my son learns, so he does not make the same mistakes as me. (speaker 14)

> I think, for one, despite one's age, one never stops learning, but what I would like to learn, to value the people that I have by my side. If one learned to read what people feel. I want to be aware of what I have and I need to value. (He/she) is sad because I can see it in his/her mood. (speaker 16)

> I want to understand people's reality, be more of a person, be more understanding. (speaker 8)

The educational lag code is reflected in the following passages:

> Because society demands you to continue your studies, to learn English, to learn mathematics. The teachers teach you so that you can express yourself better, but they demand of you things that you had not seen before, the teachers or they repeat the subjects, which I have not managed to understand. (speaker 6)

> They are constantly reinforcing things that I have not learned. I feel that I am behind if I compare myself with my mates. (speaker 11)

The leisure time code is reflected in the following textualities:

> I value gym hours to de-stress. I like to play ping pong. I am interested in exercising or having an instructor like we had in high school, when I was not in prison. (speaker 3)

> I like to attend music workshops, the intention to learn to play guitar. (speaker 8)

5. Conclusions

Scheler's (2001) essentialist axiological approach was visualized in the codes that were raised. The participant's social representations focused on education as a means for the formation of a personal life project, based on values and for life.

Social representations are particularly established as the set of mechanisms carried out by social, cultural, and psycho-symbolic studies; therefore, they have the ability to enhance the deployment of common sense and subjectivity, which are characteristics of qualitative research, with the purpose of understanding and interpreting the sense and meaning that the participants give to the social reintegration process. Observing the reality of young people who are imprisoned and analyzing the purposes of education represent a challenge and a form of action that emerges from critical reflection and the permanent struggle to provide opportunities for social mobility and that represents the need the participants feel.

Analysis of the data reveals a limited educational proposal on imprisonment. To achieve this reality, an educational process aimed at developing knowledge and skills on a personal level is pertinent. Therefore, the priority of education in imprisonment is the formation of young people life projects to achieve their social reintegration. In this sense, for young people learning goes beyond the acquisition of knowledge, since it requires transformation into action, which in turn *becomes* learning.

In imprisonment education, study plans with a socio-educational perspective are valued because from imprisoned young peoples view, it is considered a protective and integral factor in the formation of those who are educated in this context. The effective implementation of the study plans for incarcerated young people requires the commitment of all the actors within the educational center, overcoming the obstacles given by society itself that provoke confrontation between the different missions and visions, such as security versus rights, punishment versus rehabilitation, bearing in mind that educating in incarceration, although it has an associated economic cost, hardly will this be greater than the social cost of crime (Iturralde, 2018).

Educational lag is a pending task for the authorities, since it implies a social problem that is not eradicated only through palliative actions. This must be analyzed from a qualitative and critical approach that allows a review of imprisonment policies, since young people are made invisible by the dominant groups who design educational policies (Frausto, 2017; Tilley, 2019).

The social reintegration of young people in prison must address diversity and its implications in participation in order for young people to achieve their freedom. Freedom does not have to do with being physically enclosed; rather it is found from within a person, in their

human essence. This idea is reinforced through education (Boff, 2002; Panitsides & Moussiou, 2019).

The social representations that were revealed regarding the implementation of study plans, from imprisoned young peoples' perspective, are emancipated representations. Given the possibility of a change in the educational center, the data coincide in prioritizing the design of new study plans which are flexible to the times and the local context. The social account considers that the study plans demanded by young people must consider their motivations and urgently integrate leisure and recreation spaces. Its cultural capital arises in the training actions that were received from family upbringing and the cultural environment (Bourdieu, 2008). Young people, lacking the cultural capital demanded by the knowledge society, become oppressed young people in which the socio-political system does not allow them social mobility, so the only option for human liberation is through a radically transformative praxis (Freire, 1969).

Young peoples' social representations are limited by a low cultural capital that restricts their motivations towards the construction of a life project in freedom. That is linked to the life project that is conceived as a structure made up of real expectations and strategies that are expected within a social context. The life project is based on the options that a young person has and that are the expression and guarantee of freedom (Sánchez-Cascado, 2020). In this sense, the life project represents the relationship of a person with themselves and with the community to which they belong, defining the possibilities to achieve those aspirations; therefore, this requires a process of consciousness through which young people explore their reality and cultural action in order to be conscious young people and co-creators of their future in freedom. Hegemonic social representations are appreciated in the valuation of young people to traditional disciplines such as language and mathematics, which allow cultivating the human essence and cultural capital, granting access to knowledge as a way to the liberation process from within (García-Yepes, 2017).

There is a permanent tension between social poverty and the state responsibility to educate in imprisonment. Education must not bear the consequences but must guarantee young people to safeguard their human dignity by having their right to education, contributing to a just society. Education is a social and cultural political practice, which makes us frequently rethink the questioning of the forms of subordination that create inequities in imprisonment contexts (Barragá et al., 2018).

Imprisonment education requires rethinking. To achieve a true transformation, there must be a change of thought, which is reflected in educational practice, guaranteeing a deep socialization of the person through social pedagogy. This allows the person in the course of their life to integrate cultural forms and contents into their personality and gradually incorporate themselves into society.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors do not declare conflicts of interest.

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About the Authors

Claudia Huaiquián-Billeke (PhD in educational sciences), is an associate professor of the Department of Educational Sciences, Faculty of Education (Catholic University of Temuco, Chile), as well as the director of the Center for Assessment and Early Stimulation at the Catholic University of Temuco (CEETU-UCT). Her line of educational research is based on diversity and social justice.

Violeta Sánchez-Toledo (MS in education) is a teacher of differential education at Scole Creare School, with a specialty in transitory special educational needs and mental deficiency (Catholic University of Temuco, Chile). She has a master's degree in educational sciences, specialized in curriculum and evaluation (Mayor University, Chile).

Romina Quilodrán-Contreras (MS in education) is a kindergarten educator at Integra Foundation (Temuco, Chile). She also has a master's degree in educational sciences, specialized in curriculum and evaluation (Universidad Mayor, Chile).

Juan Vera-Urra (MS in education) is a titular teacher at the Department of Education of the municipality of Temuco. He has a master's degree in educational sciences, specialized in curriculum and evaluation (Universidad Mayor, Chile), as well as a diploma in chemistry for science and chemistry teachers (Pontificial Catholic University of Chile).

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Article

Inclusive Leadership: Good Managerial Practices to Address Cultural Diversity in Schools

Inmaculada Gómez-Hurtado [1,*], René Valdés [2], Inmaculada González-Falcón [1] and Felipe Jiménez Vargas [3]

[1] Department of Pedagogy, University of Huelva, Spain; E-Mails: inmaculada.gomez@dedu.uhu.es (I.G.-H.), inmaculada.gonzalez@dedu.uhu.es (I.G.-F.)
[2] Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Andres Bello University, Chile; E-Mail: rene.valdes@unab.cl
[3] Faculty of Health and Social Sciences, University of the Americas, Chile; E-Mail: fjimenez@udla.cl

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
Educational inclusion of foreign pupils has become a priority objective in recent years in many countries worldwide. Attending to the cultural diversity of pupils and providing an inclusive educational response is now a main goal of education systems. In this context, educational leadership is a key factor for school improvement. Management teams face the difficult mission of responding to the diversity of people that make up the educational community in a scenario marked by the expansive increase in migrant families and the scarcity of inclusive and intercultural government programmes. This article explores good management practices for cultural diversity management in six early childhood and primary education centres in Spain and Chile from an inclusive leadership approach. Factors that influence the development of inclusive leadership and the process deployed to carry out diversity management are examined. Through a qualitative methodology, six case studies were carried out using the interview, participant observation, and document analysis as instruments. The main outcomes show the importance of leaders in promoting an inclusive collaborative culture, in classroom practices focused on the knowledge and cultural capital of foreign pupils, the development of organisational and didactic strategies based on the recognition and participation of the educational community, its commitment to social justice, a management of diversity based on collaboration, and a shared concept of educational inclusion. The conclusions show four common dimensions in the good practices of each country: professional development of the community, school participation, inclusive school culture, and positive management of diversity.

Keywords
cultural diversity; diversity in schools; inclusive leadership; management teams

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1. Introduction

Responding to the diversity of migrant students and building inclusive schools are nowadays essential needs for the different education systems worldwide. Inclusive education has thus become an essential issue in the international scope (Ainscow, 2020). Specifically, goal 4 of the 2030 agenda for sustainable development calls upon us to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (Agenda 2030, 2015). To achieve this aim, school practices based on inclusive values are needed, establishing a clear and common concept of inclusive education for the entire educational community (Booth & Ainscow, 2015).

One of the urgent issues in terms of inclusion is the management of cultural diversity: an inherent element of today’s schools and one which therefore requires educational practices that meet the needs of foreign pupils

and migrant communities (Essomba, 2006). Although social and educational policies try to promote attention to diversity from an intercultural perspective, we note that this does not always translate into practices that bring with them the principles and values of interculturality and inclusive education.

Managing cultural diversity is therefore an essential task, particularly for management teams, who must oversee a greater number of tasks, roles, and responsibilities (Rönnström & Scott, 2019). However, some studies reveal that management of cultural diversity is left in the hands of professional specialists, falling back into deficit-centred models that emphasise the role of the expert and move away from inclusive approaches (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2018).

The specialised literature on inclusion acknowledges the relevance of the leadership of school management teams for the development of inclusive and intercultural schools (Essomba, 2006; Morrissey, 2021). However, to date, there is insufficient evidence of effective inclusive leadership practices for managing cultural diversity. For this reason, it is interesting to add research to discuss the role of the management team in the inclusion of foreign pupils and the promotion of interculturality. To this end, the focus of this article is to highlight good practices of management teams in promoting and addressing cultural diversity, understanding this as the set of cultural differences that coexist and interact in the school and which, in the case of this study, are mainly based on the foreign population (Jiménez, 2014).

It is precisely in this current scenario that this work presents the outcomes of research which, although carried out in two distant and different geographical contexts (Santiago de Chile and Andalusia in Spain), and despite the fact that Spain has more experience and a longer track record in the migration–school relationship, share important conditions and concerns regarding the management of cultural diversity (Gurpegui & Mainer, 2013; Jiménez & Valdés, 2021): (1) The migratory phenomenon is consolidated in their respective education systems; (2) the absence of a universal policy for the inclusion of foreign pupils has created a scenario of self-directed response by schools; and (3) in both countries, educational measures for the attention to diversity have been affected by the gradual incorporation of market-based education, to the detriment of public education. In line with the above, it is empirically relevant to explore the practices of school leaders in managing cultural diversity. This is in addition to the fact that two research teams, one from each country, share a concern for the role that inclusive leadership plays in the implementation of educational practices that contribute to the development of interculturalism and inclusion (Valdés & Gómez-Hurtado, 2019). It is based on this shared concern of both research teams and the interest in developing a collaborative alliance that, thanks to the funding of the respective research efforts, this study was conducted.

Using a qualitative approach and based on a multiple case study (six schools), the results allow us to understand the relationship between leadership and inclusive and intercultural practices with new empirical evidence (Section 4). Finally, Section 5 attempts to show how this international research makes an interesting contribution to the field of study between migration and school, insofar as it explores elements which, despite the abundant literature available, have not been submitted to the in-depth study required.

2. State of the Art

2.1. Managing Cultural Diversity in School

Consolidation of the migratory phenomenon in current educational systems, as is the case of Spain in Europe or Chile in Latin America, combined with the diversification of nationalities of origin and the absence of formal models for cultural diversity management, has created a scenario where schools adopt a self-taught response to the issue of schooling foreign pupils (Jiménez et al., 2020). Along these lines, it is possible to point out that schools experience the inclusion of foreign pupils as a kind of "tutored abandonment" (Jiménez & Valdés, 2021). In other words, this occurs in a scenario characterised by a lack of resources, training, and spaces for accompaniment. This self-taught effort has given rise to a set of school practices to respond to the needs of these pupils, including welcome classrooms, hiring interpreters, programmes for Spanish as a second language, interactive groups, and welcome protocols, among others (Valdés et al., 2019). Recent literature highlights that the self-taught logic in migration issues leads to a set of difficulties related to design, implementation, and evaluation. In addition, it is relegated to teachers and certain professional specialists who apply assimilationist or monocultural actions (Jiménez, 2014; Stang-Alva et al., 2021), which is why it is necessary to extend the set of school stakeholders and position school leadership as a key aspect in addressing cultural diversity.

We understand cultural diversity management from an inclusive and intercultural perspective. In other words, one that allows students belonging to majority and minority and/or foreign cultures to be brought together in the same educational context and in the same system of activity, without the need for pupils to be separated by levels or even by establishments, as in segregationist schools (Carrasco & Coronel, 2017), or served under a compensatory logic, as in the assimilationist school (Jiménez, 2014). Thus, the school, through its commitment to the educational inclusion of all pupils, manages to appropriately and harmoniously resolve the tension presented by multicultural educational contexts between the development of comprehensiveness and attention to diversity, avoiding inequality and exclusion (Jiménez & Valdés, 2021).

In order to move towards a school that manages diversity interculturally, it is necessary to position management teams committed to inclusion. To this end, school leadership has been considered by the scientific community as one of the key elements to promote the development of educational improvement (Weinstein & Muñoz, 2019). Although we are currently witnessing a political and educational moment where diversity is valued and celebrated (Ainscow, 2020), we still come up against practices and different forms of exclusion that occur in relation to the management of diversity and culture within schools. This therefore brings with it formative, paradigmatic, and cultural challenges for management teams (Gardiner & Enomoto, 2006). In this context, it is not enough to exercise good school management, i.e., to give sustainability to the organisational conditions of an educational institution, but to advance in leadership, which is characterised by articulating and achieving shared objectives and goals with other people in the school through contextualised practices (Valdés, 2020). Thus, educational leadership should promote the development of measures to address cultural diversity in the school based on mobilisation of the educational community and collaborative working (Hajisoteriou, 2012). In this way, school management teams have the mission of becoming promoters who work to build culturally responsive schools.

School leadership as a key agent in addressing cultural diversity means that management teams are essential in developing practices that respond to and manage the needs of immigrant pupils (Andersen & Ottesen, 2011), opting for inclusive and culturally responsible leadership that promotes the values of an inclusive society, thus fostering the development of policies of equity, equality, inclusion, and social justice (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010; Blackmore, 2006; DeMatthews, 2015; Devine, 2013; Stevenson, 2007).

Among the practices that stand out in the construction of an inclusive school, reference is made to the collaboration of the whole community and the construction of a common meaning of inclusive education (Ainscow et al., 2006). However, we sometimes find that school managements show lack of interest in responding to cultural diversity and the development of measures that meet the needs of all students in the school, manifesting an assimilationist vision and a "false inclusion" whereby the lack of use of specific measures in favour of the inclusion of pupils is justified, preferring, on the other hand, the figure of the specialist as a professional who attends and responds to cultural diversity (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2018), thus committing to compensatory education (Díez, 2014). From this standpoint, it is perceived that cultural diversity is not a school-wide issue (Devine, 2013; Lumby, 2006).

According to Gómez-Hurtado and Coronel Llamas (2021), school administrations should become more involved in the management of cultural diversity, which would allow the development of a school culture sensitive to issues related to differences and equity, where management teams set up coordination mechanisms between teachers and other educational community stakeholders involved in cultural diversity management, thus promoting that immigrant students do not feel socially and academically isolated by performing specific tasks related to their inclusion process.

The commitment to inclusive leadership can lead us to a safe path where culturally diverse students feel part of the school and are part of the processes that take place in it.

2.2. Inclusive Leadership as a Response to Cultural Diversity

The research takes pains to emphasise the role of leaders as essential and fully involved in promoting, designing, and implementing inclusive practices in schools (DeMatthews, Billingsley, et al., 2020; DeMatthews, Serafini, & Watson, 2020; León, 2012; León et al., 2018; Ryan, 2016; Valdés, 2018; Valdés & Gómez-Hurtado, 2019; Yildirim, 2021). The leadership exercised by the management team in relation to diversity management has a fundamental role to play (Ainscow & West, 2006; Booth & Ainscow, 2015; Fernández-Batanero & Hernández-Fernández, 2013; Fernández-Batanero et al., 2014; Leithwood, 2005; León, 2012).

School leadership is acknowledged as a fundamental aspect in school improvement and in the consolidation of pupil learning (Ainscow & Sandill, 2010). Leadership practices arise from interactions among school members based on common interests and the context in which they are developed (Spillane & Ortiz, 2017). The concept of leadership practices is thus dynamic and contextualised (Uribe & Celis, 2012), as these practices are formed through the collaboration that takes place between people in an organisation, which is why their definition is linked to the context in which they are carried out (Spillane, 2005).

The implementation of good leadership practices has led to significant processes of change and transformation in schools (Hallinger & Heck, 2011). However, in the case of this article, we consider that school improvement must necessarily be inclusive (Valdés, 2018) and that the consolidation of pupils' curricular learning is not the only relevant dimension, especially from the point of view of inclusion and interculturality. Therefore, we are committed to the development of inclusive leadership (Valdés & Gómez-Hurtado, 2019) that guides the management of cultural diversity, celebrates difference, advocates for diverse learners, and culturally develops the school at the personal, contextual, and curricular levels (Ladson-Billings, 2014). Commitment to inclusive leadership can be a sure path to genuine and timely care for migrant communities and the rest of their members.

According to González-Falcón (2021), one of the current challenges for school management consists of becoming more involved in the management of cultural

diversity. On occasion, we find that school administrations show a lack of interest in responding to cultural diversity and developing measures that address the needs of all pupils in the school. They rely on an assimilationist vision and a simulacrum of inclusion reinforced by the figure of the specialist as a professional who attends and responds to cultural diversity (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2018), while settling for a compensatory education. It thus follows that cultural diversity is not a school-wide issue (Devine, 2013) and that inclusive leadership is therefore not a priority.

We share Morrissey's (2020) position that different types of leadership are necessary to build an inclusive school. The literature on good practices of inclusive leadership focuses on the fact that the actions of inclusive leaders target those pupils who present learning problems or are in priority conditions of exclusion, connect with the educational community (whether inside or outside the school), install a shared discourse of inclusion, create environments of mutual support and collaboration between teachers and non-teaching professionals, and professionally develop the people who work in the school context through training, instances of reflection and training, etc. (Glenda et al., 2014; León et al., 2018; Porakaria et al., 2015; Valdés, 2020). However, the information is less specific in relation to cultural diversity management, and it is therefore useful to provide new empirical evidence to discuss the inclusion of foreign immigrant pupils in better terms.

3. Method

The research presented here is part of two projects financed by competitive tenders from the countries involved (Spain and Chile). The main objective was to explore good management practices in cultural diversity and attention to immigrant pupils from an inclusive leadership perspective. The study is framed within a qualitative methodology. Specifically, through six case studies in six early childhood education and primary schools in Spain and Chile, comprising four basic schools in the metropolitan region (Chile) and two early childhood education and primary schools in Andalusia (Spain). The cases were purposively selected based on the following selection criteria: (1) their track record in practices of attention to cultural diversity and (2) the flow and enrolment of immigrant pupils in the schools. To gain access to the schools, letters of introduction were first sent out, then an initial interview was held with the school principals to explain the purpose of the study, and then the fieldwork was carried out. A case study with purposive sampling was used (Patton, 2002) with three key criteria for the selection of schools: (1) their track record in practices of attention to cultural diversity; (2) having an inclusive and intercultural educational project; and (3) a high enrolment of foreign pupils (over 30% of the total roll). The case study method was used, as according to Flick (2015) and Velasco and Díaz de Rada (2018) it has the advantage of providing greater possibilities to further the practices in the cultural manifestations of the participating spaces and allows the use of a wide range of techniques depending on the study objective.

The instruments used were developed by the two teams of researchers and validated beforehand. In the case of the individual in-depth interviews, a thematic script was prepared with topics of theoretical interest using the key dimensions of the inclusive leadership style as reference (Valdés & Gómez-Hurtado, 2019). The interviews lasted approximately one hour, were held in the participants' workplaces and the saturation interviewing technique was used (Morse, 1995). Interviews were first conducted with formal leaders (principals and management teams) and then with informal leaders (support teachers and non-teaching professionals). In addition, participant observations took place in formal and informal spaces along with analysis of official documents (see Table 1). The research teams stayed in the schools for 12 weeks, where 36 visits were made (three per week). In the case of the interviews, the participants signed an informed consent of willingness and anonymity, documents approved by the ethics committee of the institution sponsoring the research.

For data analysis, an inductive process of analysis and coding was carried out using Atlas.ti statistical software. This categorisation and analysis process was applied by contrasting the data gathered in both research projects, deriving four common categories: (1) fostering of intermediate and informal leadership; (2) engagement in diversity management; (3) development of organisational strategies based on collaboration; and (4) developing a culture of inclusion. To meet the validity and plausibility criteria outlined by Flick (2015), we conducted a triangulation of researchers. This involves sharing the quotes and codes between the people in charge of both projects in order to minimise any over-interpretation. The result of this triangulation revealed majority agreement in the categories that will be presented in the results. In addition, the validity criterion also entails making visible the actions that the analysis has facilitated to promote transformative agency and empower educational collectives to act. This criterion is observed in the results and was confirmed after the research through a process of delivery and analysis of outcomes with the schools.

These categories, which at the same time function as shared and underlying dimensions, also make it possible to project a series of good practices, which are presented in the next section on results.

4. Results

In this section, we report on four dimensions common to all management team practices. We shall describe each dimension and exemplify the most relevant practices of school leaders.

Table 1. Systematisation of data production.

	Chile			Spain			
Techniques	School 1	School 2	School 3	School 4	School 5	School 6	Total
Individual interviews	6	6	7	4	8	8	39
Participant observations	16	16	16	12	24	24	108
Documents reviewed	2	1	1	3	1	1	9

4.1. Fostering Intermediate and Informal Leaderships

This dimension refers to a set of practices related to the professional development of the community with a defined focus on inclusion and interculturality and based on the promotion of informal leaders, intermediate leaders—defined as individuals embodying roles of both leader and follower—and other relevant actors for decision making within the school space. Some of the most common practices are as follows: hiring people with an inclusive profile, placing good teachers in conflictive courses, detecting talents and taking advantage of them for the organisation, managing skills training for teaching and non-teaching professionals, and encouraging emergent and informal leaderships. This last point is particularly key for cultural diversity management in the participating schools and should be emphasised. The management teams from the six schools promote the positioning of the professionals involved in the inclusion of foreign pupils.

The role of teachers who teach Spanish to immigrants in Spain (hereinafter ATAL teachers) or special education teachers in Chile is highlighted as an essential element in the educational response to foreign pupils. The management teams agree on a positive assessment of the functions to be performed by these teachers with foreign pupils. The ATAL teacher in Spain is a reference for immigrant pupils, "a very important reference for them; even some non-immigrants want to go to the ATAL teacher," said a teacher (school 5). They tend to be professionals who are actively involved in the response to immigrant pupils and lead or participate in tasks. These include adaptation of foreign pupils to the school, didactic and linguistic support in the specific classroom or in regular classrooms, and mediation with families. The actions carried out by these teachers are supervised and supported by the management team: "The ATAL teacher acts as a key connector between the different teachers and the community to promote intercultural actions" (principal, school 6). The special education teacher in Chile is also a relevant reference, as in the absence of a national strategy to address cultural diversity, special education teachers make their knowledge, resources, and schedules available to migrant pupils, with the support of the principal and the head of the technical teaching unit: "The specialist teacher is providing a lot of support there with the migrant children, with their assessment, in the collaborative work with psychologists and psychopedagogues; the group of special education teachers gives us a lot of support there" (principal, school 1).

As we were able to demonstrate in both countries, in these schools there is a characteristic appearance of key intermediate leadership in the work with immigrant pupils. In the case of Chile, in the work of special education teachers, and in Spain, of the ATAL teachers. Despite the empowerment of these professionals, there is a risk that, in some cases, they may represent a model of experts in the face of diversity, which would imply an individual and specific response rather than a collective and inclusive one.

4.2. Involvement in Diversity Management

This dimension brings together a series of practices aimed at making differences visible, making resources available to the community, addressing needs from a pedagogical perspective, celebrating diversity, and implementing actions to compensate for curricular gaps or needs of foreign pupils. In the case of a Chilean school, the creation of a reception classroom, created and installed by the principal and coordinated by the head of the technical unit, is noteworthy. The reception or welcome classroom corresponds to the creation of a specific space for learning the schools' vehicular language. It is managed by a teacher of Dominican-Haitian origin. It is a device designed for students who have not been previously enrolled in our education system and who consequently have a very poor command of Spanish, a situation that prevents them from following the normal educational processes in their respective classrooms. As the principal from school 2 points out: "It is a strategy that helps improve core curricular learning and she [the Haitian teacher] works in coordination with the technical director.''

In the case of Spain, the actions promoted by school management to encourage the collaboration and participation of immigrant families in schools are highlighted. Among them, coordination with the school parents' association to organise training activities to meet the needs and demands of immigrant families (learning Spanish, cultivation of the mother tongue, computer literacy, etc.), advice on functioning and formulas for participation in schools, the holding of intercultural days or weeks, or the creation of the figure of a parent tutor in class to support pedagogical actions: "In the promotion and development of actions with immigrant families, the

ATAL teacher continues to be a key figure, who mediates between them and the school families' association or the management team" (field note 7, school 6).

In both countries, the management team is concerned with trying to improve the educational attention given to immigrant pupils and increasing the pedagogical and human resources that make it possible to better manage cultural diversity. The approach continues to rely on ATAL teachers, but also promotes the collaboration and participation of families. However, the compensatory actions aimed at immigrant pupils and their families stand out more than those based on their experiential and cultural background. Opportunities that positively manage cultural diversity and contribute to the promotion of inclusion and interculturality among all members of the educational community are thus lost (González-Falcón, 2021).

4.3. Development of Collaboration-Based Organisational Strategies

This dimension refers to a set of collaborative practices and strategies designed to address cultural diversity in schools. They are driven and coordinated by school management, as they affect bureaucratic structures and educational management. Some of the most representative actions are as follows: schools open to the community, support networks, intercultural teacher assessment guidelines, and welcoming protocols, among others.

One of the most important common actions promoted by the management teams in Spanish and Chilean schools is the development of reception plans and protocols that respond to the needs of foreign pupils arriving at the school. In the development of these plans/protocols, both the linguistic facilitators in the case of Chile and the ATAL teacher in the case of Spain play a fundamental role as the educational and emotional link between the school and the child who joins the centre. The management teams develop internal links with certain educational agents that coordinate specific actions in the educational process. The protocols are an internal institutional management tool that takes care of culturally diverse pupils and both their design and execution call for tasks and roles of different school professionals (such as psychologists, intercultural mediators, or social workers, etc.). The following quote is from a social worker who participated in the creation of a protocol:

> You see, there are several parts. There is a part that is purely administrative and which has to serve as a kind of guide to what should be done by someone who has just arrived in this country with the intention to stay. Then you talk to them about visas, consulates, documentation….Apart from that, there are their rights, with the possibility of being a priority, with the right they have, and on the other hand, there is the educational issue, which has to do with the fact that the children arrive and we have to see what level they should go into, if they have their studies legalised, and all of this is overseen by the head of the technical unit. (social worker, school 1)

The organisational strategies of the management teams operate not only internally, but also with different outside agents, which corresponds to another of the concrete actions promoted by the management teams to attend to cultural diversity. The participation of associations, local authorities, delegations, NGOs, and universities means the creation of collaboration networks that allow better attention and response to the needs of foreign pupils: "We have a close relationship with associations; we work very well with the city council, the social services as well, although in terms of actions, you could say they were more of a cultural nature" (counsellor, school 5). In addition, the management teams are committed to creating meeting spaces where aspects related to intercultural issues are reviewed. The main actors are the teaching staff, ATAL teachers, the management team, and the school guidance counsellors.

The development of collaboration strategies with different internal and external agents is undoubtedly one of the main concerns of the management teams in both countries. In Spain there is a more consolidated network in this sense, also fostered by greater institutional support than in Chile. Headway is being made, particularly in the creation of schooling and educational care protocols, although in the participation processes there is less involvement of pupils and families, and the issues are less focused on the celebration of cultural diversity.

4.4. Developing a Culture of Inclusion

This dimension brings together a series of discourses and practices that seek to prioritise inclusive values (such as trust, fairness, and respect) in school decisions, work in community and create a healthy and safe environment for professional development. This is especially evident in the concerns that management teams have about addressing diversity. In other words, leaders defend certain school practices because of the values involved. Values such as rights, love, honesty, and trust were particularly promoted by the management team of a Chilean school and accepted and supported by the rest of the staff:

> Yes, the human quality of the people, the collaborative work, the complementary nature of everything, because we all have to take care of everything, you know? We all have the confidence to address a superior....It is a very trusting job, very much a team effort, and if something doesn't work out, we are very self-critical; since the work was everyone's responsibility, never blaming anyone. And they always approach it as a way to improve. (head of technical unit, school 4)

The principal of one of the schools' notes: "Promoting values is also worked upon in the pedagogical area" (field

note 1, school 3). This implies that even the most technical decisions, such as curricular adaptations, are guided by values, especially those related to the school's educational project.

The promotion of inclusive values and principles is also present in the Spanish schools analysed. In both cases, there are direct allusions to this in the educational and management projects of both schools. As stated by one of the principals (school 6): "We advocate the promotion of empathy, altruism, and equity, as they are indispensable for an inclusive school." In this sense, the number of complementary activities related to education in values is noteworthy and, specifically in one of the schools, the implementation of specific initiatives for the development of prosocial behaviour among the pupils. In them, pupils voluntarily help each other to achieve different academic, sports, cultural or leisure ,and free time objectives (explaining content, teaching chess, playing instruments, teaching cooking, etc.). In this way, friendly relationships among peers are encouraged, not from a strictly academic point of view, and collaboration inside and outside the school is promoted, a factor which, as we will see below, constitutes a cornerstone of the inclusive school.

5. Discussion

The question of how to manage cultural diversity from the perspective of inclusive leadership opens up a suggestive set of discussions of a different kind. We have organised them along three axes: discussions of a theoretical-conceptual nature, of a practical-projective nature, and of a methodological nature.

First, the results show that, despite the abundant educational research currently available, it is necessary to delve deeper into the different forms of collaboration that are established in schools. The self-taught logic that characterises the response of Chilean schools not only operates at the institutional level but is also replicated in certain actor-professionals who also, on their own individual initiative, make decisions related to cultural diversity management and implement strategies for its improvement. This raises a troubling tension between an approach focused on collaborative leadership and professional encapsulation. As Erausquin and D'Árcangelo (2018) point out, professional encapsulation can become extremely harmful if it becomes entrenched in the school culture, insofar as it does not consider the multiplicity of voices that characterises the school as a system of activity (Sannino et al., 2016). As we have presented, there are practices that are in line with collaborative work where different professional voices converge, practices that require maximum acknowledgement if they are to be maintained and expanded to other dimensions of school management.

In relation to the above, it is not only necessary to strengthen internal forms of collaboration, in which leadership is clearly key, but also to complement them with external forms of collaboration. As Chaiklin and Hedegaard (2013) represent with the three quarters metaphor, educational agents do not necessarily have all the knowledge, skills, or procedures necessary to bring about the transformations that the reality of each school poses in a situated manner. Thus, the necessary completeness (the remaining quarter) is obtained by working together with other professionals, through the construction of relational agencies (Yamazumi, 2009). In this sense, and from a comparative discussion of the results, if there is something that the Chilean school should learn from the Spanish school it is precisely its capacity to link itself with its surroundings, forge alliances with other schools in the district, set up channels of collaboration with universities, and so forth. This type of inter-professional agencies that give rise to the emergence of new inclusive leaderships are key to better respond to the educational needs of pupils belonging to foreign minorities.

Second, in order to move towards a more transformative model of research that goes beyond a merely descriptive contribution, we define the practical actions that can have an impact on the reality of the schools examined. In this sense, and always from the standpoint of inclusion as a process in continuous development (Ainscow, 2020), the analyses carried out allow us to highlight some significant achievements, as well as the need to advance towards more inclusive management practices. In all schools, both Spanish and Chilean, intermediate leadership stands out. The management teams have been able to deploy different actions to collaborate with other internal and external agents and delegate their leadership to other members of the educational community. Specialist teachers stand out, and especially Spanish teachers, who—even in collaboration with others—centralise these functions. Although their role is considered a key factor in the inclusion of immigrant pupils and the promotion of interculturality, it is necessary to emphasise the participation and leadership of other teachers and informal leaders, such as families and pupils themselves (González-Falcón, 2021). In this regard, it is pertinent that management teams make progress in talent detection, beyond the teaching staff, to support inclusive pedagogical practices. Practices that cannot consider only compensatory proposals that would reinforce the deficit theory (Gómez-Hurtado et al., 2018), but must also foster a positive conception of diversity, acknowledging the contributions that everyone can make to improve educational and inclusive processes. In this respect, it is important not only to increase the material and human resources from outside the school, but also to train teachers and members of the educational community themselves in order to empower them as innovative and transforming agents of their own contexts. From the school management, and as supported by the specialised literature, ongoing training programmes on inclusive intercultural competencies aimed at teachers and the rest of the community could be promoted. This way, progress could also be made in

the active participation of pupils and families. Not only in the different schooling protocols and programmes for educational attention to immigrant pupils, but especially in the formulation of an authentic inclusive culture. Participation would assume its most systemic formulation, advancing from collaboration with teachers to the formulation of proposals, initiative taking, and leadership of pupils and families. Participation is advocated not only in academic aspects but also in collaborative networks with the territory and in which the diversity of routes, processes, experiences, languages, and cultures of the school is celebrated as a value to be highlighted for the school and its community.

Third, from a methodological point of view, we believe that the study of leadership in educational inclusion needs to move towards a more participatory research format (Nind, 2017) that not only considers the school actors as research subjects, but also as active participants in the research, as co-constructors. Although our respective data production processes involved the participation—and voice—of students, teachers, and other education professionals, they were not involved in the research design or data analysis. We consider this a challenge for future research from an ethical-political perspective, as we must leave the logic of extractive investigation behind in order to move towards a more participatory kind of research. This is not only because of an ethical-political issue that is undoubtedly currently gathering momentum, leaving behind the logic of extractive research, but also because it enhances the quality of the data produced (Muñoz-Proto et al., 2020). The voices, approaches, and points of view of the members of the educational community are better incorporated and processes of reflection, self-evaluation and transformation are encouraged. Processes that will become more systemic and systematic with other complementary formulas such as shadowing, and which go beyond the textuality of the speeches and the emic perspective of participant observations. Formulas, in short, that make it possible to include the school's day-to-day activities, spontaneity, and the emergent and unscheduled tasks of the principals.

6. Conclusions

The research carried out has revealed some of the key factors linked to the development of inclusive leadership in cultural diversity management. The importance of school management and various leaders in promoting a collaborative inclusive culture, the development of organisational and didactic strategies based on the recognition and participation of the educational community and the commitment of schools to social justice, prosocial behaviours, and values such as friendship and companionship are emphasised. Management teams are increasing their strategies and commitments in favour of educational inclusion, although it is still necessary to be attentive to practices that may degenerate into mere compensation and the sole action of specialists. In this sense, the commitment to the articulation of collaboration and cooperation networks with the different members of the educational community is clear. The participation of families and, especially, of immigrant pupils in schools, is a priority focus in cultural diversity management. In this sense, management teams should emphasise educational practices focused on the knowledge and cultural capital of foreign pupils, as well as on the recognition and celebration of cultural diversity (González-Falcón, 2021). The school must reinforce its role as a promoter of equality, culture, education, and social justice, as pointed out and reinforced by Theoharis (2007). The school must reinforce its role as a promoter of equality, culture, education, and social justice. It must stimulate processes of social and educational change and transformation, and in this task the role of management teams continues to be fundamental.

In this regard, we also call for a more proactive role of the academic community, committed to a twofold dimension: (1) formative research (Englund & Price, 2018) on the one hand, anchored locally and whose results can be put at the service of school improvement in the same context in which they were produced (Jiménez et al., 2017) and (2) comparative analyses on the other hand that help, not to generalise results, but rather to further the understanding and keys to the phenomena studied. In short, researching and acting from a more participatory, inclusive, inter-professional, and transformative perspective. Research conducted from this perspective will contribute to our knowledge of leadership and inclusion, and to the discussion on the preparation and training of inclusive leaders (DeMatthews, 2015).

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

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About the Authors

Inmaculada Gómez-Hurtado is an associate professor in the area of Didactics and School Organization of the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Sports Sciences of the University of Huelva. Her main lines of research are developed in the field of inclusive education, inclusive leadership, attention to diversity, and teaching innovation in primary education.

René Valdés (PhD) is professor and researcher of the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences at the Andrés Bello University, Chile. He was also a special education teacher (2010), holds a master's in special education and psychopedagogy (2013), and a doctorate in psychology (2019). His main lines of research are developed in the field of school learning, inclusive education, school leadership, and interculturality.

Inmaculada González-Falcón is an associate professor in the area of didactics and school organization in the Faculty of Education, Psychology and Sports Sciences, at the University of Huelva. Her main lines of research are developed in the field of intercultural education, inclusive leadership, and teaching innovation in early childhood education.

Felipe Jiménez Vargas is a researcher who studies migratory processes within the school system from a historical-cultural approach. The research carried out to date has informed the educational administration of the main difficulties in the schooling of non-Hispanic speaking students and of the main strategies developed by the educational communities. His line of research has provided tangible inputs for multi-level culture-related decision-making.

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Article

Upward Mobility in Education: The Role of Personal Networks Across the Life Course

Nicolas M. Legewie

Department of Sociology, University of Pennsylvania, USA; E-Mail: nlegewie@sas.upenn.edu

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Abstract
How do individuals achieve upward mobility in education despite the well-documented mechanisms that foster reproduction of inequalities? This question presents a fundamental puzzle for social science researchers and has generated an increasing body of research. The present article tackles the puzzle using a life course and personal network lens. Studying educational trajectories in Germany of students whose parents have low educational degrees, it asks: What paths did students take through the education system, what personal network factors were important for their educational attainment, and how did these factors change over students' life courses? In contrast to most studies that zoom in on a specific transition or time period, the article uses data from 36 retrospective in-depth interviews that allow a sweeping view of respondents' educational careers. Thanks to a systematic case selection scheme, the data also enables comparisons between students who became upwardly mobile and those who replicated their parents' low educational degrees. Findings suggest four types of trajectories: direct upward mobility, indirect upward mobility, direct non-mobility, and indirect non-mobility. I discuss four personal network factors that seem to drive these trajectories: support with academic efforts, encouragement, support with solving problems, and role models. Upwardly mobile students showed combinations of two or more of these four factors that established higher education as the students' goal, and provided them with tools and support to reach that goal. With these findings, the article contributes to literature on inclusion in education, social inequality and mobility, personal networks, and the life course.

Keywords
education; inclusion; life course; personal networks; upward mobility

Issue
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1. Introduction

How do some individuals achieve upward mobility despite the well-documented mechanisms that foster intergenerational reproduction of inequalities? This question not only presents an important puzzle for social science researchers, it connects to the fundamental issue of social inclusion through equality of opportunity. Upward social mobility has generated an increasing body of research over the past two decades. Some studies focus on macro-level trends and the impact of structural factors, such as how rates of mobility have changed over time (Blau & Duncan, 1967; Chetty, Hendren, Kline, Saez, & Turner, 2014; Legewie & Bohmann, 2018), how differences in educational institutions impact educational mobility (Alba et al., 2011; Crul, 2013), or how rates of mobility differ among regional contexts (Chetty & Hendren, 2018; Chetty, Hendren, Kline, & Saez, 2014). Other scholars focus on individual characteristics as factors for upward mobility, such as intelligence or other cognitive abilities (Deary et al., 2005; Heckman et al., 2006), preference for educational tracks (Breen & Goldthorpe, 1997; Goldthorpe, 1987), or personality (Damian et al., 2015). Still others scrutinize people's social environments, where factors such as socialization within the family (Lareau, 2003), transmission of aspirations, narratives, and plans for the future (Harding, 2011; Legewie, 2016), or access to social support and cultural

knowledge (Lareau, 2015; Stanton-Salazar, 2001) have been key concerns. This article focuses on such social environment factors for understanding upward educational mobility.

I study educational trajectories of disadvantaged students in Germany. With "disadvantaged," I mean that students' parents had low to medium educational degrees and no experiences in higher education. I ask: What paths did students take through the education system, what personal network factors were important for their educational attainment, and how did these factors change over students' life courses? The article uses data from 36 retrospective in-depth interviews that allow a sweeping view of respondents' educational careers, in contrast to most studies that zoom in on a specific transition or time period. Interviews were conducted in Berlin, Germany, which comprises an ideal context for studying upward mobility because it represents a least-likely scenario (see Section 2.2).

My findings suggest four types of trajectories: direct upwardly mobility, indirect upward mobility, direct non-mobility, and indirect non-mobility. I discuss four personal network factors that seem to drive these trajectories: support with academic efforts, encouragement, support with solving problems, and role models. My analysis of these factors over time suggests that there is considerable variation in the extent to which students have access to network-based resources, and timing of that access vis-à-vis choices, events, and transitions plays an important role in whether students can use resources on their way to upward educational mobility and inclusion.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Upward Educational Mobility, Personal Networks, and the Life Course Perspective

A fruitful perspective for exploring the impact of social environments on upward mobility are personal networks, which focus on an individual's social relations with others. From this perspective, the question of why some people achieve upward mobility can be answered by looking at (1) the network structure, i.e., the configurations of social relations that make up a personal network, and (2) network content, i.e., the knowledge, skills, and world views that alteri bring into the network.

Research on network structure has focused on the size of the personal network and its impact on mobility (Lin et al., 1999), whether ties provide bridges between usually separate networks and thus give access to new information or resources (Granovetter, 1973; Wuthnow, 2002), and density of personal networks, which increases the cohesiveness of norms and values virulent in a network and may thereby foster upward mobility (Coleman, 1988; Fasang et al., 2014; Morgan & Sørensen, 1999).

Regarding content in personal networks, crucial dimensions for upward social mobility are material resources (Kibria, 1994; Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008, p. 22), academic and cultural knowledge (Crul, 2013, p. 63; Lareau, 2015), goal orientations, interpretations, and modeling behavior (Harding, 2011; Kao & Tienda, 1998; Legewie, 2016), and recognition and emotional support (Malecki & Demaray, 2003; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2005). By transmitting such diverse kinds of content, most types of social relations, such as family and peer relations, can either foster or hamper upward mobility (Lareau, 2003, pp. 165–181; Ream & Rumberger, 2008; Sokatch, 2006). Formal and informal mentors have received special attention because they provide ego with access to knowledge and resources otherwise unavailable to them (Crul, 2002; Erickson et al., 2009; Stanton-Salazar & Spina, 2003).

Using these two facets as analytical lenses, scholars have described how personal network factors, which usually contribute to reproducing inequalities, can sometimes be connected to upward educational mobility. For instance, parents with low educational degrees can usually provide less help in their children's educational careers. Still, such parents sometimes contribute to their children's upwardly mobile trajectories, e.g., by close parental monitoring to maintain children's focus on education (Jarrett, 1995, pp. 122-123; Maton et al., 1998, p. 651) or by investing scarce family resources to provide children with support in their schooling (Ceballo, 2004, p. 176; Modood, 2011, p. 476; Portes & Fernández-Kelly, 2008, p. 22). In a similar way, peer networks usually contribute to inequalities because students from low-status families have less college-bound peers in their network (Sokatch, 2006). However, peer networks can still foster upward educational mobility if they are composed of students with a strong focus on education (Ream & Rumberger, 2008; Smith, 2014). A third set of personal network factors contributing to upward educational mobility are bridging ties (Granovetter, 1973; Putnam, 2007, p. 143); what others call "horizon-expanding ties" (Morgan & Sørensen, 1999) or "brokers" (Burt et al., 2001). Bridging ties connect a person to someone who provides access to knowledge, strategies, and resources otherwise unavailable to them; e.g., people from different socio-economic backgrounds. Disadvantaged students can get access to bridging ties through avenues such as older siblings (Bettie, 2002, p. 413; Crul, 2013, p. 62), mentoring (Grossman & Tierney, 1998; Langhout et al., 2004; McDonald & Lambert, 2014), and ethnically bounded, status-diverse, institution-based networks (Bankston & Zhou, 1996; Kasinitz et al., 2008, pp. 171, 347–348; Zhou & Kim, 2006).

As this overview shows, network theory suggests multiple ways in which personal networks may foster educational attainment and upward mobility. But because studies of upward educational mobility often focus their analysis exclusively on upwardly mobile participants (e.g., El-Mafaalani, 2012; Farrokhzad, 2010; Raiser, 2007; Tepecik, 2011), they may identify personal network factors that form a trivial part of explanations of upward mobility. Such factors seem to be relevant

because they appear in upwardly mobile participants' accounts of their educational careers, but in fact the same factors are present in educational careers of people who did not become upwardly mobile. My article addresses this issue by employing a structured case selection that enables systematic cross-case comparisons.

A further contribution of this study is its holistic, life-course view of educational careers. Upward educational mobility is a process that spans twenty to thirty years. Hence, instead of studying specific episodes or isolated educational decisions, the life course perspective suggests to focus on processes over a long time (Elder, 1985; Mayer, 2009, p. 414) and be mindful of turning points during the life course (Legewie & Tucci, 2021). In this article, I take a sweeping view of upward mobility in education, which allows me to describe different educational trajectories of upward mobility and non-mobility, identify relevant personal network factors looking at entire educational careers instead of discrete decisions, phases, or transitions, and analyze the importance of timing of personal network factors vis-à-vis events and transitions during educational careers.

2.2. The German Educational System

Compared to other educational systems, the German educational system stands out regarding three characteristics that affect disadvantaged students' inclusion. First, contact hours are limited, i.e., students spent less time in school (Alba et al., 2011, p. 402f). Schools provide a relatively homogeneous learning environment, compared to other contexts such as the family (Cooper et al., 1996; Downey et al., 2004). Thus, students from disadvantaged backgrounds profit from school systems in which students spend more time in school in terms of the duration of the school day and summer vacation. Although primary schools with full-day programs have become much more common in recent years, this change did not affect any of the respondents in my study because they attended school before that change took effect.

Second, Germany has a "dual" educational system, with a general education track and a vocational school track. In contrast to many other societies, in Germany learning a vocation is highly formalized, with institutions and their curricula and exams regulating entry to many professions. This characteristic is relevant because the vocational branch of the education system promises a quick transition into the labor market, and studies show that students from low socio-economic backgrounds often decide against higher education and instead opt for vocational training (Becker & Hecken, 2009).

A third important characteristic is tracking, which refers to mechanisms through which education systems sort students into different school types or classes according to their prior performance. Tracking practices differ in terms of timing and rigidity (Alba et al., 2011), and in Germany, it happens early (around age twelve), is highly formalized, and quite rigid (Alba et al., 2011, p. 401; Ditton, 2008, p. 250). For readers unfamiliar with the different tracks of the German education system, Supplementary File S1 provides a brief description, as well as an illustration. Important to note here is that to access higher education, students have to earn the Abitur, a degree from a higher-tier secondary school. The most common way to do so is to get tracked into such a school at the transition from primary to secondary school, at age twelve in most Berlin schools. A further way to earn the Abitur is through vocational secondary schools or night schools that operate as second-chance routes to higher education.

Because of these three characteristics, the German educational system can be seen as a least-likely scenario for upward educational mobility, and thus offers especially interesting analytical leverage (Gerring, 2008, p. 659); personal network factors relevant here are more likely to play an important role in educational careers elsewhere, too.

3. Data and Methods

I draw on a data set of 36 in-depth interviews from a study on educational attainment among former students in Berlin, Germany. My data set includes only respondents from families whose parents both had low educational degrees (at most ten years of general education). To ensure comparative leverage, I included 24 cases of upward mobility and twelve cases of non-mobility. "Upward mobility" refers to students who earned at least a Bachelor's degree; "non-mobility" is defined as everything below a Bachelor's degree. Supplementary File S2 provides an overview table of cases in my data set. One respondent in the non-mobile group had enrolled in a law program by the time of the interview, and was hence treated as an upward mobility case, leading to a final data set of 25 upwardly mobile and eleven non-mobile cases.

To collect data for this study, I used in-depth retrospective interviewing, which enables reconstructing educational careers as well as the role of personal networks during those careers (see Supplementary File S3 for a brief discussion of challenges in retrospective interviewing). Interviews focused on a diverse array of topics that I tracked along respondents' life courses, including respondents' educational careers, family backgrounds, as well as their personal networks. Although I used a list of topics and follow-up questions as an interview guide (see Supplementary File S4), the interviews were unstructured in that the respondents were able to guide the conversation based on their interests and recollections.

I used qualitative data analysis software (ATLAS.ti v.8.1) to code all 36 interviews (see Supplementary File S5 for the list of codes). My findings are based on three analytic steps. First, I reconstructed respondents' educational careers, using a case-centered analytic approach (e.g., George & Bennett, 2005; Lareau, 2015) and treating educational careers as sequences of decisions, events, and crucial phases and transitions (Elder et al., 2003).

The result from this analytic step are detailed case reconstructions that form the basis of the trajectory types I present in Section 4.1. Second, I used within- and cross-case comparisons to analyze relevant social ties and personal networks, and conceptualize ways in which ties may have impacted respondents' educational careers. This analysis produced the four types of personal network factors of upward educational mobility that I discuss in Section 4.2. Third, I analyzed the broader patterns of connection between personal network factors and upward educational mobility in my data set, using simple co-occurrence tables. While such tables do not provide representative findings, they can structure the analysis by showing overall patterns, as well as cases deviating from those patterns. The co-occurrence tables also suggest that none of the identified factors can explain upward educational mobility by themselves. Rather, they may be understood as positive "risk factors" that increase the chances that students achieve upward mobility. To illustrate the patterns in my data, I will provide numbers from these co-occurrence tables when discussing each personal network factor.

4. Findings

4.1. Educational Trajectories

The educational trajectories I found can be grouped into four different types, based on their outcome (student earned degree in higher education or not) and the route traveled (a straight line or an indirect route). "Straight line" refers to the normative and institutionalized "common route" to university or an early labor market entry. "Indirect route" refers to deviations from such default routes. Figure 1 illustrates the four trajectory types.

The straight-line upward trajectory includes respondents who went from primary school to higher-track secondary schools and on to university, with a maximum gap of one year between these steps (e.g., the formerly mandatory German civil or military service, a year spent abroad as an *au-pair*, or working before starting university studies). Most of these respondents went to a university, while some chose a technical college (*Fachhochschule*) or a dual program offering a combination of university studies and work experience. Most respondents in this type had no major problems in school and earned above-average grades throughout their school careers, while some completed this trajectory despite severe difficulties. Seventeen of the 25 respondents who were upwardly mobile showed this trajectory.

The indirect upward trajectory includes respondents who made their way to higher education through second-chance educational programs. Their trajectory involved at least one turning point, in the course of which the respondents decided to abandon their trained profession or job and go back to school. Eight out of 25 respondents showed such an indirect upward trajectory.

The straight-line non-mobility trajectory describes respondents who did not enter higher education but instead earned a low or intermediate educational degree, and did so through a direct route. From primary school, these respondents entered non-university-track secondary schools, and went on to a vocational training

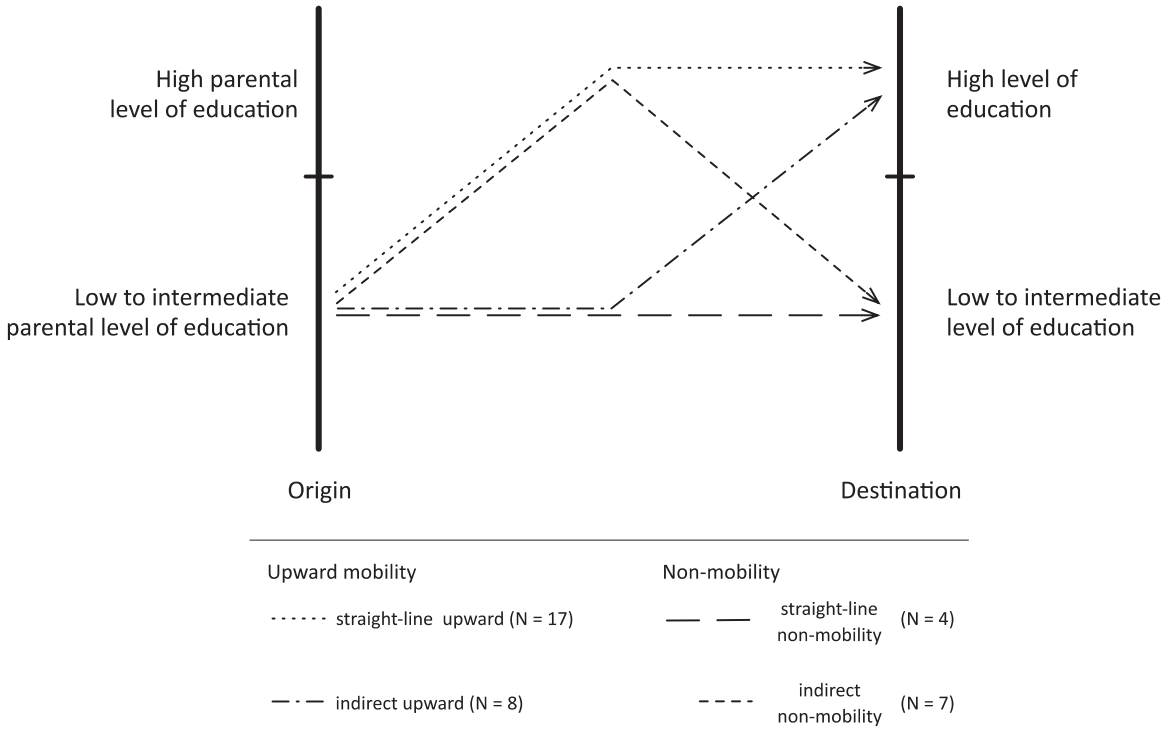

Figure 1. Educational trajectories.

and/or the labor market. Some of these respondents considered going to university, while others never thought about this option. Out of the eleven respondents in my data set who were non-mobile, four showed this straight-line non-mobility trajectory.

Finally, the indirect non-mobility trajectory describes respondents who did not earn a higher educational degree, but were en route to do so at some point. Through a turning point their trajectory took a downward swing. Seven out of eleven non-mobile respondents in my data set showed this trajectory. This is especially interesting because these students passed the initial hurdle of being tracked into university-track secondary schools, but were unable to follow this route all the way to higher education.

4.2. Personal Network Factors and Upward Educational Mobility

In the following, I discuss four personal network factors that, according to my in-depth case analysis and cross-case comparisons, played important roles in upwardly mobile students' educational careers across their life courses: support with academic efforts, encouragement, support with solving problems, and role models. These four factors provide either orientation for what goals to pursue, or concrete know-how or support for how to achieve these goals. In this sense, they provide complementary resources and advantages that help disadvantaged students becoming upwardly mobile, especially in their combination. I will expand on each factor in turn, using brief case descriptions to illustrate broader patterns present across my data set.

4.2.1. Support with Academic Efforts

With support with academic efforts, I refer to help respondents received from any tie in their personal network, which targeted directly the respondents' responsibilities in school; i.e., homework and studying for exams. Examples are respondents working through homework assignments with their parents, or teachers providing extra tutoring after school. Such support is mundane for students from affluent families, which they receive mainly through their parents. In contrast, for disadvantaged students access to such support is often scarce and thus crucial for educational upward mobility because their parents often cannot support them in school. In my data set, 16 out of 25 upwardly mobile respondents had received strong support with academic efforts. Among non-mobile students, the ratio was three out of eleven respondents.

Support with academic efforts that mattered in cases in my data set came in three different categories. Sometimes, it was about correcting mistakes. Other times, support came in the form of explaining difficult content. Some parents who could afford to do so organized a paid tutor for their child, as Natascha describes: "I had tutoring in physics, from seventh to ninth grade. And through that I saw that I could actually get it. That was this really nice guy, a neighbor, he explained everything really well." In yet other cases, support took the form of showing strategies. Umut, who graduated from a fine arts university program, explains:

> I chose history as an advanced class for Abitur. And [the principal] really helped me with that. He showed me how to structure an essay and things like that.… What quotes to choose to learn for an exam. You know in advance what the topic of the exam will be. So he showed me how to pick the right literature.

An important aspect was whether support was stable throughout respondents' educational trajectories. This is not trivial because students moved through different life stages that entailed changes in institutional demands and personal network composition (Bidart & Lavenu, 2005; Mayer, 2004, p. 163). This dependence on life course stages made support with academic efforts fragile. The passing of time and change of demands affected the support respondents received with their academic efforts in two ways. First, in primary school parents were often a vital source of support with academic efforts for respondents. However, as respondents progressed through the education system, this support tended to fizzle out. After primary school, or the first years of secondary school at the very latest, respondents had surpassed their parents in the years they attended school and the material they learned. Thus, the parents lost the ability to provide substantial help. In addition, some parents lost their ability to pay for professional tutoring (while others were not able to do so in the first place).

A second way in which support with academic efforts was fragile to the change of life stages was because such changes can sever ties to non-family supporters such as teachers, other non-family adults, or peers. One way this happened was through changing contexts of interaction. As students changed schools, the ties established to supportive teachers usually did not persist. As a result, respondents showed different patterns of support with academic efforts over their educational careers. Some had constant support from a stable set of ties; others had constant support, but from a changing set of ties. Still others did not have constant support, but received support during crucial moments or transitions. And finally, some respondents received little or no support with academic efforts after primary school. In line with expectations, the latter mostly applied to non-mobile respondents.

4.2.2. Encouragement

With Encouragement, I refer to ties in a respondent's personal network communicating approval for that respondent's accomplishments or providing them with comfort in the face of setbacks. Encouragement fostered

upward educational mobility in my data set by helping to set high educational goals, reinforcing upwardly mobile trajectories, or resetting non-mobility trajectories to a route to upward mobility. In my data set, 19 out of 25 upwardly mobile cases received strong encouragement during their educational careers, compared to three out of eleven non-mobile cases.

To understand the role of encouragement, consider the case of Hamit, a 29-year-old MA student of economic engineering. Hamit faced a crucial period in his young life around the age of 17. After a conflict-ridden time in primary and secondary school, he had found a vocational training position, but failed the first year. In fact, he was on the brink of being expelled from the program. At the same time, he was facing serious trouble in his private life. For a while he had been stealing car radios with his closest friends to have more spending money.

A key factor in Hamit's turn-around was positive feedback and reassurance he received from his job supervisor, Ahmed. Hamit met Ahmed through Hamit's sister, who was working for Ahmed as a tutor. Ahmed helped Hamit with a math problem from school and told him to come back any time he needed help. Soon, he offered Hamit a job and a close relationship began to form. At the core of this relationship was a brotherly affection Hamit felt for Ahmed; an affection that was fed by Ahmed's constant expressions of faith in Hamit's abilities and positive future. Hamit elaborates:

> Our relationship became closer, somehow. He became like family. I felt at home with him.… He wanted me to show people that I wasn't a loser.… He kept telling me: "I'm so happy that you do this [getting the Abitur]. Don't let anyone drag you down. You have great potential." And to keep hearing things like that, that's just great.

After having finished his vocational training, Hamit faced several stages at which he had to choose between entering the labor market or pursuing further education: after his vocational training, after graduating from a second-chance Abitur institution, and upon finishing his BA degree. At each stage, entering the labor market would have seemed like the easier, more obvious choice, given Hamit's earlier experiences with the education system. His supervisor's encouragement played an important role in defining higher educational degrees as the goal to pursue, and making them seem attainable for Hamit:

> I'm really indebted to him, he was one of the key people who pushed me to enter university. He kept motivating me, and just wanted.…He had a vision for me, let's put it that way. He believed more in me than I believed in myself. He kept pushing me.

Importantly, the positive influence of encouragement depends on its timing vis-à-vis crucial phases in respondents' trajectories. The case of Jochen, a 31-year-old student of psychology, illustrates this point. Jochen grew up with his parents and his two half-sisters in a lower-income neighborhood in the northeast of Berlin's inner city in the former GDR. His parents had both graduated from Realschule and completed a vocational training. After German reunification, when Jochen was six years old, both parents lost their jobs and remained unemployed.

Throughout primary and secondary school, Jochen was an able student (he even was outstanding in chemistry), but pursuing the Abitur or higher education was never a topic. This is not surprising from a personal network perspective, since neither his family relations nor his school peers transmitted such an education as a goal. For instance, recalling the transition to secondary school, Jochen states:

> Back then we had to show all exams to our parents. And they said: "Good." But that wasn't really a big deal. [With a bad grade,] they said: "Well, you could have done more," or "Next time might be better." But those things didn't really matter.…Choosing a school was a practical question. There's a school, that's the closest. Done. There was no "you should definitely get the Abitur," or anything.

Jochen did receive strong encouragement from a teacher during lower secondary school, which could have served as a reset of his trajectory. However, this encouragement came after Jochen had already decided to enter vocational training. The encouragement thus did not lead him to attempt earning the Abitur after his graduation:

> And she thought it was, she felt a little disappointed at the end of tenth grade, that I started a vocational training and did not try the Abitur. [During the graduation party] she said: "We are looking for a certain someone who could have a chance to earn the Nobel prize in chemistry [laughs], but who decided to start his professional career." Something like that.… She just felt a little disappointed, that I kind of...that I didn't pursue my talent.

Instead, Jochen started a vocational training. As this example illustrates, misalignment of encouragement and institutional transitions can curtail the positive impact of encouragement.

4.2.3. Solving Problems

The concept of solving problems refers to situations in which ties in a respondent's personal network took care of a problem that would otherwise have jeopardized that respondent's educational attainment. Examples are a teacher preventing incipient expulsion from school, or a supervisor at work accommodating a student's need for flexible work hours to enable that student to remain in school while earning an income. Eleven

out of 25 upwardly mobile respondents in my data set showed at least one incident of someone solving a problem crucial for the respondent's educational advancement. Among non-mobile students, this only happened in one case.

The problems to be solved took many forms in the cases in my data set, ranging from conflicts with teachers or peers, to administrative issues, to balancing school and work needs, to incipient disciplinary sanctions. Respondents received support with solving these problems in the form of intervention, mediation, or bending the rules. The people providing this support were either influential insiders (often teachers) or expert outsiders (for instance, government agency professionals or weak ties through organizational networks).

To illustrate the impact solving problems can have, consider the case of Dilara, daughter of Turkish-born parents. Dilara grew up with five older siblings (four brothers, one sister) in the south-eastern part of Berlin. In 1995, when Dilara was eight years old, her father suffered a heart attack that forced him into early retirement and plunged the family into poverty. The mother became the family's sole breadwinner until Dilara's older siblings were able to contribute to the family income. Among other factors, a teacher solving a crucial problem in school was key for Dilara's upwardly mobile trajectory. During her last year of secondary school, in the preparatory phase for the Abitur, Dilara was in conflict with her history teacher. This conflict was especially problematic because Dilara had to write an important final exam that this teacher was to grade. The grades she would receive for those exams, in turn, would greatly influence her final grade point average and, by extension, her ability to enroll in her preferred academic career. A teacher helped Dilara with her studying efforts by advising her on her outline. However, the more crucial support in this episode was the teacher's willingness to step in as Dilara's examiner. In doing so, he prevented Dilara's exam grade to be subject to the good will of a teacher who, as Dilara recalls, clearly disliked her.

In contrast, consider the following account of Balcan, a 36-year-old office clerk, who also had a conflict with a teacher, but who had no one solving this problem:

> That teacher, he had some strange notions. I think we were talking about the Nazi regime or something.… Well, and since I'm a foreigner and he's German, it was something about that. We had a real fight, during class. And I felt really offended and went to the principal after class. He really liked me and also knew my parents. I felt safe there. So I went to him and complained. I think I even cried because that had really disturbed me.… So the principal talked to the teacher, and after that he called me in again. And he said that I must have misunderstood something. He tried to calm me down. But the problem stayed, nothing changed. So I stopped going to that class.

Balcan describes how she collided with her teacher because of the teacher's "strange notions" regarding the Nazi era and Balcan's background. Her teacher's attitudes, which she perceived as racist, deeply disturbed her. The example illustrates how two members of an institution (a teacher in Dilara's case, the principal in Balcan's case) were in similar situations in that they were presented with the problem of a student. In Dilara's case, the teacher took measures that solved the problem, thus disposing of an obstacle that was complicating Dilara's successful graduation. In Balcan's case, the principal took measures that did not solve the problem, but rather tried to appease Balcan. Ultimately, this tepid response led to the conflict becoming a major obstacle between Balcan and her graduation.

4.2.4. Role Models

With "role models" I refer to a person admired and imitated by a respondent. Role models fostered upward educational mobility either by setting educational goals and reinforcing an internal locus of control, or by providing examples of specific positive strategies, skills, or behavioral patterns respondents imitated. Among upwardly mobile respondents, 13 of 25 showed a role model important for their educational careers, in contrast to only one example out of the eleven non-mobile students.

A case example can illustrate the impact role models had on some respondents' educational trajectories. Melanie had her future figured out. After finishing the intermediate maturity degree at a comprehensive school, she would spend a year abroad as an *au-pair* before starting her vocational training as a bookseller. In her cohort in secondary school, the prevalent topic of discussion was not whether to go on to upper secondary school or do a vocational training; peers only talked about which vocational training to choose:

> I attended a comprehensive school, and there were only three people out of 30 students who wanted to do the Abitur. Nobody even talked about going to university. When we talked about what we wanted to do, nobody said "lawyer" or something like that. It was about jobs like florist, midwife, or nurse. Even though I had good grades and could have gone to get my Abitur, that didn't even occur to me.

Melanie describes a crucial transition in her educational trajectory: After tenth grade, most of her peers decided to start a vocational training instead of going for the Abitur. The quote illustrates how Melanie's personal network, through the conversations in her peer group and the choices those peers made, played an important part in her decision to also start a training ("even though I had good grades and could have gone to get my Abitur, that didn't even occur to me").

Melanie's plans changed dramatically during her stay as an *au pair* in Venezuela. In this new environment, her

friends were mostly university students, and she came to envy their seemingly carefree, independent life. More importantly, her host was an immigrant from Colombia whose parents had worked as taxi drivers. The host had earned a university degree and now owned several businesses and worked as a motivation coach for business managers. In him, Melanie saw embodied the rewards of a good education: moving up the social ladder and working in an interesting job that grants personal freedom:

> He worked hard to move up, mainly through his university education. He had several businesses, and he obviously enjoyed his work. I found that fascinating.… My decision to go to university-track secondary school was definitely linked to Venezuela. Because the country is very much about the differences between rich and poor, that divide. And I felt like the only chance to move up was through education.

Melanie's role model relation to her host captures perfectly how a role model can open an entire new horizon of possibilities and thus can profoundly change educational trajectories, especially during transitions. Melanie's choice to do an *au pair* year in Venezuela at the age of 16 might be uncommon and therefore the circumstances of her meeting her role model may seem idiosyncratic. But young students can meet people who inspire them in countless ways, many of which are much more mundane than the example of Melanie. The other cases in my data set are testimony to that, with respondents describing their parents, teachers, siblings, soccer coaches, or extended family members as role models.

5. Conclusions

This article studied educational trajectories in Germany of students whose parents have low educational degrees, in order to understand what paths students took through the education system, what personal network factors were important for their educational attainment, and how these factors changed over students' life courses. The article used data from 36 retrospective in-depth interviews for a sweeping view of respondents' educational careers. Findings suggest four types of trajectories: direct upwardly mobility, indirect upward mobility, direct non-mobility, and indirect non-mobility. I described four personal network factors that seemed to drive these trajectories: support with academic efforts, encouragement, support with solving problems, and role models. These four factors provided either orientation for what goals to pursue, or concrete know-how or support for how to achieve these goals. In this sense, they comprise complementary resources and advantages that, especially in their combination, help students to become upwardly mobile. There was considerable variation in the extent to which students had access to network-based resources, and timing of that access vis-à-vis choices, events, and transitions played an important role in whether students could use resources on their way to upward educational mobility and inclusion.

The findings enable an interesting perspective on inclusion in the German educational system and beyond. As I described in this article, students whose parents have low educational degrees require specific resources to achieve upward educational mobility. However, beyond the mere provision of such resources through personal network ties, the timing of resource provision is crucial, which allows us to ask: Are schools aware of the needs of disadvantaged students, as well as the timing of when resources are especially needed? For instance, in the German educational system the transition from primary to secondary school is pivotal. Disadvantaged students who are able to enter university-track schools face additional challenges because after the transition, demands of schools on student performance increase, but parental support often decreases because parents may not be able to support their children with the more advanced class material. At the same time, secondary schools and their teachers often provide less support to students compared to primary schools. These parallel developments present additional challenges to disadvantaged students that can lead to them failing to complete their upward route, as the trajectory types discussed in this article have shown. Said challenges may be addressed systematically, e.g., through appropriate public support programs. Reform could create support programs that take into account demands of the school curriculum, students' needs, as well as typical changes in personal network support over time. Further research could explore this critical juncture in more detail.

Future research may also build on the presented findings using complementary methodological approaches. The retrospective in-depth interviews approach I used in this study provided a good balance between detailed data and comparative leverage, but it has limitations. First, respondents' accounts of events and circumstances long past may be tinged by recall bias and active construction and re-interpretation of memories. Second, retrospective accounts do not allow for causal analyses of the connection between personal network factors and upward educational mobility. Third, it is unclear whether findings from my study generalize beyond cases in my data set. To address these limitations, future studies could employ ethnographic revisit studies (Smith, 2006) to allow for recurrent hypothesis testing and theory development. Another fruitful avenue is to employ a longitudinal survey approach in order to test generalizability of my findings to the population level.

With these and other options, research on upward educational mobility that studies the role of personal network factors from a life-course perspective promises to add important insights to our understanding of social mobility and inclusion in education.

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Conflict of Interests

The author declares no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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About the Author

Nicolas M. Legewie is a visiting fellow at the Sociology Department of University of Pennsylvania. His research focuses on the role of social environments, such as personal and neighborhood networks, on educational and occupational attainment, and on upward mobility. He also writes and teaches about migration, the life course, research ethics, and research methodology such as video data analysis, mixed methods, digital social science research, and qualitative comparative analysis (QCA).

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Article

Double Burden of Disability and Poverty: Does Vocational Rehabilitation Ease the School-to-Work Transition?

Nancy Reims [1,*] and Silke Tophoven [2]

[1] Joblessness and Social Inclusion Research Department, Institute for Employment Research (IAB), Germany; E-Mail: nancy.reims@iab.de
[2] Faculty of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies, University of Applied Sciences Duesseldorf, Germany; E-Mail: silke.tophoven@hs-duesseldorf.de

* Corresponding author

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Abstract
Poor young people more often face health difficulties, (learning) disabilities, and are overrepresented in special schools. Consequently, youth from poor households disproportionately frequently participate in disability-specific programs aiming to improve their educational levels and labor market opportunities. They face a double burden of disability and poverty. In our study, we look at poor and non-poor youth with disabilities (YPWD) who participate in vocational rehabilitation (VR) and whether VR helps them (a) in transitioning into employment and (b) in leaving poverty. We examine the association between the receipt of initial basic income support (BIS) as a poverty indicator, later labor market outcomes, and earned vocational qualification using administrative data. We make use of a sample of all persons accepted for VR in 2010 (N = 36,645). We employ logit models on VR attendees' labor market outcomes three and five years after being accepted for VR as well as on their earned vocational qualifications. Beside initial poverty status, we control for educational level, type, and degree of disability and program pattern during the VR process. Our findings show that YPWD from poor households have a decreased likelihood of a vocational certificate and employment. Additionally, they are more likely to receive BIS than young people not from poor households and thus more likely to remain poor. In conclusion, VR seems to support poor YPWD less in their school-to-work transitions. Thus, disability-specific programs should be more tailored to the social situations of participants, and counsellors should be more sensitive to their social backgrounds.

Keywords
basic income support; Germany; labor market integration; school-to-work transition; vocational rehabilitation; youth

Issue
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1. Introduction

In Germany, 14% of all children under the age of 18 grow up in poor households. Forty percent of poor young people under the age of 25 live for four years or more in poverty households (Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2021a, 2021c). Growing up in poverty can have several negative consequences in different spheres of life, e.g., lower educational opportunities or higher risks for disabilities (particularly learning disabilities; see, e.g., Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997). In addition, poor children have a higher risk of poverty later in life (Groh-Samberg & Voges, 2014). Protective factors against poverty include education (Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997) and employment (Groh-Samberg & Voges, 2014). Therefore, first labor market experiences are meaningful for subsequent employment biography (Schmillen & Umkehrer, 2017). This applies particularly to disadvantaged youth such

as those with disabilities and those from poor families (Osgood et al., 2005). Thus, the school-to-work transition (STWT) for those with disabilities from low-income families is twice as challenging (Enayati & Karpur, 2018). This is particularly relevant, as studies on the STWT often neglect persons with disabilities as a group. However, based on statistical documentation, we know that in 2020 in Germany, 34,576 young people with disabilities (YPWD) started vocational rehabilitation (VR) to support their STWT. The yearly number of young people in VR is approximately 130,000. Among those, the relatively high proportion of young adults living in (parental) households receiving basic income support (BIS; 23% in 2020) is striking (Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2021b).

The link between poverty and disability in the labor market transition has not yet been systematically addressed in the context of VR. Therefore, we stress the intersection of poverty and disability and shed light on a group of young people starting their STWT with the double burden of poverty and disability. Against this background, we examine whether VR supports youth initially receiving BIS in their own or their parents' household (a) in transitioning into employment and (b) in leaving poverty.

2. Social-Legal Background for VR and Previous Research

2.1. Vocational Rehabilitation as Support for the School-to-Work Transition Among Youth With Disabilities

Various social policy programs in Germany focus on disadvantaged youth and their labor market integration (Achatz et al., 2020). VR, according to Social Code IX, focuses on YPWD, aiming to improve their labor market chances while providing programs with disability-specific support (e.g., psychological, sociopedagogical). Therefore, VR has been an important instrument to achieve the full labor market integration and social inclusion of YPWD according to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2008 (Shakespeare et al., 2018). In Germany, YPWD in their STWT access VR through local employment agencies and job centers; clinics, doctors and psychiatrists, as well as schools, also function as important gatekeepers. Aiming to support the STWT of YPWD, VR is mainly financed by the Federal Employment Agency (FEA) and implemented by VR departments in local employment agencies. A precondition for receiving VR is having a disability according to Social Code III, which defines eligible individuals as "individuals whose prospects of participating or continuing to participate in working life are substantially impaired, other than temporarily… and who consequently need help to promote their labor market participation, including persons with learning disabilities" (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2020, p. 36).

2.2. Previous Research

YPWD participating in VR are very heterogeneous. Approximately half of the participants have learning disabilities; in addition, a large and increasing proportion have psychological disabilities, and a smaller proportion have physical, mental and sensory disabilities (Reims et al., 2018). Qualitative results show that many YPWD face multiple disabilities (Tisch et al., 2017) that call for specific requirements in VR (Tophoven et al., 2019). Furthermore, different individuals with the same disability may differ significantly in the extent of limitations and manifestations of disability. This heterogeneity makes it necessary for YPWD to receive tailored and individual support during VR. There are a broad range of VR programs, including technical assistance, individual coaching, psychological counseling, sheltered workshops, and prevocational and vocational training programs. Most vocational training programs within VR take place in vocational institutions at specific service providers with different shares of in-company phases (71%), but vocational training can also be performed as (subsidized) in-company training (29%; Reims et al., 2018). Previous results found that approximately half of YPWD participated in vocational training and about two third of them completing VR are employed (Reims & Gruber, 2014; Tophoven et al., 2019).

Almost one-third of YPWD in VR are former special school students (Reims et al., 2018). Seventy-two percent of the graduates of special schools did not receive a general education certificate (KMK, 2020). The lack of certification leads to poorer opportunities in the training and labor market (Gebhardt et al., 2011; Niehaus et al., 2012; Pfahl & Powell, 2011). Thus, for many YPWD in VR, obtaining general school qualifications and vocational training perspectives is crucial (Reims & Gruber, 2014). In 2011, in Germany, a recommendation on the inclusive education of children and YPWD in schools was adopted, referring to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of 2008 (KMK, 2011). Since then, the number of students at special schools has decreased slightly, but at the same time, the number of students with special educational needs has increased. However, in 2018, 58% of students with special educational needs attended special schools. Most of them were assigned to a special focus on learning (35%). Previous findings show that children in special schools with a focus on learning often come from families with low material resources (Heimlich, 2017) and that students with special education learning needs are often affected by poverty later in life (Rosenberger, 2017). Additionally, children from low-income households have a higher risk for worse general and mental health (Lampert & Kuntz, 2019). Furthermore, having children with disabilities is a possible poverty risk for families (Vinck & Van Lancker, 2019). In Germany, the intergenerational transmission of poverty and life-course risks has been shown (Groh-Samberg & Voges, 2014). Several programs focus

on the STWT, but they do not seem to be tailored to the individual circumstances and aspirations of *all* young people. This is true especially for young people leaving school without qualifications and those from families on long-term BIS (Achatz et al., 2020). In addition, in Germany, the segregated school and vocational education system perpetuates differences based on social origin (Protsch & Solga, 2016). These studies do not particularly consider YPWD.

Enayati and Karpur (2018) examine how participation in social policy programs with a focus on the STWT can generally support YPWD from welfare-receiving households. They find that participation leads to higher employment rates and lower criminal behavior but also to lower wages. In Germany, however, there is little evidence on the specific situation of YPWD in VR in terms of achieving successful labor market integration and overcoming the need for BIS. With regard to the relationship between poverty and participation in VR, a first comparison based on the regular reporting of the statistics of the FEA (Statistik der Bundesagentur für Arbeit, 2021b) already shows some differences. Labor market prospects were found to be worse for YPWD in VR who were receiving BIS than for those who were not receiving BIS. Twelve months after completing VR, 72% of those not receiving BIS were employed, and nine percent were registered unemployed; among those with the initial receipt of BIS, only 42% were employed, whereas 27% were registered unemployed. These findings motivate us to particularly investigate poor YPWD in VR. Therefore, we focus on YPWD with and without initial BIS, either in their parents' or their own households, as poverty indicator and apply multivariate analyses to look at their labor market outcomes, vocational qualifications and poverty situations three and five years after starting VR in 2010.

3. Theoretical Considerations

Social policy aims at societal inclusion and participation of all members of a society regardless of their ethnic origin, religion, age, disabilities, gender, and sexual orientation (Bäcker et al., 2020). Social origin can be added here. Inclusion refers to the participation of *all* members of a society in the political process, in the access to resources, but also in the opportunities to increase and shape these resources. Inclusion should target the socially excluded (e.g., people with disabilities and poor people) and link the existing debates (Boeckh et al., 2017, p. 138). From a human rights perspective, there is a clear framework for inclusion and participation of persons with disabilities established in the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This also results in the demand for an inclusive educational system (article 24). In Germany, there is still a need for reforms, as the right to inclusive education is in conflict with the deeply rooted segregated school and special school system (Blanck et al., 2013; Klemm, 2021). In addition, since education policy in Germany is a matter for the 16 federal states, appropriate implementation must take place in all 16 states. Furthermore, there are still many blind spots regarding transitions of people with disabilities to vocational education and training and the implementation of inclusion in these areas, and thus ultimately for labor market entry and opportunities (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, 2021).

Thereby education and labor market participation are key elements for sustainable inclusion and participation. However, educational and labor market opportunities are not equally distributed. In Germany, the social background plays a key role in mediating these differences. The different resources available at home are related to educational inequalities and decisions (Becker & Lauterbach, 2016). This is again reinforced by the segregated German school system, which focuses on homogenization of performance at an early stage (Protsch & Solga, 2016). In poor households, there is an undersupply of economic resources, which is often related to an undersupply in other areas like health and educational opportunities as mentioned above (e.g., Brooks-Gunn & Duncan, 1997; Heimlich, 2017; Lampert & Kuntz, 2019). The STWT is classified as a sensitive (Blossfeld, 1988) and critical (Marshall & Mueller, 2003) shift in status in all individuals' life courses. In transition processes like the STWT, existing social inequalities are seen to be further reinforced (Rosenberger, 2017). The paths chosen and subsequent successes and struggles determine further labor market success and are related to individual life opportunities. Compared to those with better starting conditions, for vulnerable youth, this transition process can be like "a minefield" (Osgood et al., 2005, p. 2). Moreover, Pisoni (2018, p. 289) describes a possible Matthew effect within social policy programs for vulnerable youth: "The least-disadvantaged individuals among a targeted group are more able to benefit from social policy schemes than their more-disadvantaged counterparts.''

Shifting these perspectives to poor YPWD participating in VR, their accumulating challenges in the process of labor market integration become clear and may even intensify over time or during critical transitions. Poor YPWD have to cope with their health, develop their career prospects and catch up on qualifications with limited financial, educational and social resources. Thus, they must be assumed to have a higher level of vulnerability than those in more financially secure conditions. Therefore, for poor YPWD, we assume a smaller benefit from participation in VR regarding labor market integration and a risk of continuing to rely on BIS and therefore remain poor.

4. Data and Methods

For our analyses, we used the Reha-Process Data Panel (RehaPro). This data set is based on administrative data from the FEA and the only representative data set for young VR participants (Reims et al., 2018). The observa-

tion period for VR information ranges from June 2006 to April 2016. The data include (disability-specific) information on all VR applicants financed by the FEA within this period. Variables on daily information on the VR process, participation in active labor market programs (ALMP) and vocational training, and periods of (un)employment before and after VR are included, as well as the previous school biography. We restricted the data to those individuals accepted for VR in 2010 and individuals with information for the variable *initial receipt of BIS in the household/role of recipient* (exclusion of 1,272 cases). Furthermore, we excluded those with mental disabilities (n = 7,270) from the sample, as we observed unplausible effects, possibly because persons with mental disabilities automatically transfer from sheltered training during VR to sheltered employment. Our final sample contained 36,645 individuals.

As a poverty measure among the VR participants, we observed *initial receipt of BIS in the household/role of recipient* as the central independent variable. According to Social Code II, BIS provides means-tested minimum income benefits for those below the defined subsistence level (Nullmeier, 2018). BIS is granted at the household level. The amount of support considers the existing income of all employable household members. BIS, as financial assistance, can also be paid in addition to (employment) income. Receiving BIS results in an income that is very close to the income poverty line for all household members and is therefore a poverty indicator (Munz-König, 2013). This variable described whether YPWD were part of a household receiving BIS and their role within the household at the beginning of VR, thus, whether they lived on their own or together with their parents. As further dimensions of SES, we include schooling certificate and the requirement level of the aspired occupation within vocational training programs in VR. This variable ranged from unskilled or semiskilled activities to specialist activities (at least two years of vocational training) to complex specialist activities (qualification as master craftsman or technician, graduation from a professional academy or university bachelor's certificate) to highly complex activities (completed university studies of four years; see Paulus & Matthes, 2013). However, as not all YPWD take part in vocational training during VR, we observed this information for 58% of the population.

Furthermore, by observing the whole VR process, we generated a variable for *type of main program pattern in VR* as we often observed participation in different programs (the mean was approximately 2.3 programs). Thus, we considered that typical program combinations exist (Reims et al., 2018). Additionally, we used different sociodemographic information such as gender, age, and further disability characteristics: status and type of disability. The type of disability did not indicate multiple diagnoses but rather the disability that was mainly responsible for the individual receiving VR. Another variable that we only used for the sample description was *reasons for ending VR*. This information is recorded at the end of the VR process by the VR counsellor and does not include information on receipt of BIS.

To observe the labor market transition of YPWD after VR, we defined five outcome categories for three and five years after the beginning of VR in 2010: "basic income receipt," "employment," "sheltered employment," "still/again in VR" and "no information." The latter category could indicate, e.g., periods of economic inactivity, periods of child rearing or vocational training at full-time schools. As some outcome statuses could exist simultaneously at the measured point in time, we applied a hierarchy of statuses. In a further model, we observed the outcome "vocational certificate earned during VR.''

To examine our research questions, we conducted multinomial logistic regression analyses for the labor market outcomes three (see Supplementary File) and five years after VR started in 2010 (see Table 2). Thus, competing outcome statuses could be observed simultaneously and were measured in reference to each other. We estimated the labor market outcomes in reference to our independent variable of interest, i.e., *initial receipt of BIS in the household/role of recipient*, and controlled for further characteristics. We present the results as the average marginal effects (AMEs) to ensure the comparability of results (Long & Freese, 2014). The AME is interpreted as the difference between the likelihood of transitioning into one outcome status and the likelihood of transitioning into any other outcome status. Additionally, the outcome "vocational certificate earned during VR" was estimated using logistic regression (see Table 2). We conducted all analyses using STATA 16 with robust standard errors.

5. Results

5.1. Descriptive Analyses

Our population of YPWD beginning VR in 2010 consists of more men than women and most of them were aged between 17 and 20 (Table 1). 35% came from households receiving BIS: 11% formed their own households and 24% lived with their parents. Fifty-seven percent achieved a lower secondary schooling certificate, 24% had no schooling certificate. Almost half of the population started VR directly after school: 25% came from special schools, 5% attended regular schools, and 17% attended vocational schools. Ten percent had an officially acknowledged severe disability or equal status; in terms of the type of disability, 68% had learning disabilities, 17% had psychological disabilities, and 14% had another type of disability.

Observing the whole VR process, we see that 50% of the YPWD participated in prevocational training programs followed by vocational training, 24% participated in prevocational training only, and 9% participated in vocational training only. Seven percent were accepted for VR but did not take part in any program. Within the

vocational training programs, the occupational requirement level was registered. Most of the occupations were at a medium level in terms of complex specialist activities (44%).

It was interesting to observe the differences based on the initial receipt of BIS in the household/role of recipient regarding reasons to end VR due to a lack of cooperation or a lack of prospective integration (total 32%). Among YPWD coming from poor households, 37% of those living in their own household and 41% of those living with their parents ended VR due to a lack of cooperation or a lack of prospective integration, whereas for YPWD not receiving BIS, these reasons were reported in only 26% of cases.

With reference to the labor market outcomes five years after VR began, 23% were employed, 18% were unemployed and receiving BIS, 17% were still in VR, and 25% could not be found in the register. Regarding the outcome "vocational certificate earned during VR," we observed that 46% earned an occupational certificate during the VR process (Table 1).

5.2. Multivariate Analyses

In our multivariate results, we focus on the fifth year after VR began in 2010, as we would like to take a long-run perspective (for results in the intermediate perspective after three years see the Supplementary File; we

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of the population.

Total (%)		Total (%)	
Initial receipt of BIS in the household/role of recipient		Gender	
household without BIS	65	male	61
household with BIS	35	female	39
… role: own household	*11*	Type of program pattern in VR	
… role: living with parents	*24*	other	10
Officially acknowledged severe disability or equal status		only prevocational training	24
yes	10	only vocational training	9
no	90	no participation	7
Type of disability		prevocational and vocational training	50
psychological disability	17	Occupational requirement level	
learning disability	68	missing	42
other disability	14	unskilled/semiskilled activities	11
Age group		specialist activities	44
under 17	26	complex specialist activities	2
under 17	55	highly complex specialist activities	1
21 to 24	14	Reason for ending VR	
25 and older	4	did not yet finish VR	10
Schooling certificate		maintained employment	5
no schooling certificate	11	found employment	22
certificate from a special school	13	transitioned to sheltered employment	6
lower secondary schooling certificate	57	medical rehabilitation/sickness	7
medium secondary schooling certificate	14	withdrawal of VR application	4
higher secondary schooling certificate	4	lack of cooperation/integration perspectives	32
Status before VR		other reasons	15
career counselling	15	*Outcome variables*	
registered unemployed or in search for work	22	Status five years after the beginning of the VR process	
employment	5	BIS	18
vocational school	17	employed	23
regular school	5	sheltered workshops	4
special school	25	still in VR	17
prevocational training program	4	no information	25
participation in a general ALMP	7	other	14
		Vocational certificate earned during VR	
		yes	46

Source: Own calculations based on administrative data from RehaPro. Note: N = 36,645.

only refer to the three-year-perspective where it adds to the results). Model 1a refers to determinants to be in one of the five alternative labor market outcomes five years after starting VR (Table 2). Persons receiving BIS after five years were more likely female, older than 20, with low schooling level. Thus, persons without any schooling certificate and those who graduated from a special school had the highest chance of relying on BIS later. The receipt of BIS specifically depended on the type of program pattern during VR. In particular, those who took part only in prevocational training programs and not any vocational training showed a five PP higher chance of receiving BIS. We observed the strongest effect in YPWD from poor contexts. In particular, persons who were already receiving BIS at the beginning of the VR process—independent of whether they personally formed their own household (14 PPs) or lived in the parental household (11 PPs)—were very likely to receive BIS three and five years after VR began in 2010.

Whether VR is generally considered successful—by financers, service providers or supported—is closely related to *employment* after VR. The model shows that those initially receiving BIS have lower chances to be employed. The program pattern attended during VR was an important predictor for employment. Those who participated only in vocational training programs without prior prevocational training had an eleven PP higher chance of being employed after five years than those without any program participation. Those participating in prevocational training followed by vocational training had comparably low chance of employment. This can be explained by the fact that their VR process took longer; regarding the outcome "still/again in VR," we observed that those showing this program pattern were most likely to be in VR after three (57 PPs) and five years (24 PPs). Furthermore, persons with psychological disabilities were less likely to receive employment after five years.

Programs with sheltered workshops very often lead to an automatic pathway toward *sheltered employment*. If YPWD conducted their occupational orientation and qualification within sheltered workshops (other program patterns), they were 34 PPs more likely to continue their employment there. Furthermore, they were less likely to take up (regular) employment but were also less likely to receive BIS according to Social Code II, as they fall under the responsibility of the Social Code XII.

(Still/again) in VR were especially those who participated in the pattern "prevocational and vocational training" reflecting the longer duration. There is no clear relationship to initial poverty in terms of BIS receipt.

Finally, the outcome category, "no information" comprises those without any information in the registered data after five years. They were more likely to be 25 or older, to not have a schooling certificate (3 PPs), and to be accepted for VR but not take part in any program. Furthermore, those were more likely to have psychological disabilities (7 PPs) and were less likely to initially receive BIS. Thus, they are persons with very low institutional attachments.

To sum up, initial poverty whether in the own or parental household is a strong predictor for receiving BIS five years after starting VR. Additionally, poor YPWD have a decreased likelihood for employment.

Model 2 shows the likelihood for earning a vocational certificate during VR. We found that the higher the schooling certificate was, the higher the chance of earning a vocational certificate. Relatedly, those aspiring to achieve an occupational requirement level of "complex specialist" or "specialist" showed the strongest effects. But even under control of schooling certificate and the occupational requirement level, persons from households receiving BIS in their own household had a five PP lower chance of earning vocational certificates than those not receiving BIS. Persons from households receiving BIS in their parents' household had a three PP lower chance of earning vocational certificates than those not receiving BIS. Furthermore, persons with psychological disabilities had the lowest chances of earning vocational certificates, having a 5 PP lower chance than those with learning disabilities.

6. Discussion

In this study, we shed light on an often-overlooked population: YPWD facing the double burden of disability and poverty in their transition to the labor market. Therefore, we used large-scale representative German administrative data on YPWD starting VR in 2010 and followed their employment trajectories for five years in order to draw a holistic picture. Nevertheless, some personal characteristics, e.g., complete household information for all participants, occupational limitations, and subjective ratings, e.g., of health, were missing.

Our results show that there is a large difference in employment chances between poor and non-poor YPWD after VR: Poor YPWD less often take up vocational training opportunities and employment and are more often in poverty contexts after five years. Related to this, they end VR more often due to a lack of cooperation with VR personnel at public employment agencies, case managers at job centers, and educational service providers. Therefore, poor YPWD do not seem to profit from VR in the same way as other YPWD. Thus, disability-specific programs should be more tailored to the comprehensive social situations of participants, and counsellors should be more sensitive to their social backgrounds. In addition to previous findings (Tophoven et al., 2019), we find that young people with psychological disabilities in VR have the lowest chance of earning vocational certificates in the context of VR, which might be a reason for their low employment chances despite higher initial qualifications.

The current support system seems to fulfill the complex needs of poor young people and those with psychological disabilities to a lesser extent than those of

Table 2. Results of the multivariate analyses.

	Model 1a: Multinomial logistic regression: Labor market outcomes five years after VR began in 2010					Model 2: Logistic regression: Vocational certificate earned during VR
	BIS	Employment	Sheltered employment	(Still/again) in VR	No information	
Initial receipt of BIS in the household/role of recipient (ref.: no receipt)						
in own household	0.14***	−0.04***	−0.01***	−0.02*	−0.03**	−0.05***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
living with parents	0.11***	−0.04***	−0.01***	0.01**	−0.03***	−0.03***
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Gender (ref.: female)						
male	−0.06***	0.06***	0	0.01	−0.01*	0.01**
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)
Age group (ref.: 17 to 20)						
under 17	−0.04***	−0.01**	0	0.04***	0	0.01
	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
21 to 24	0.07***	0.02**	0*	−0.06***	0.01	0.01*
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
25 and older	0.07***	0	0	−0.07***	0.04**	−0.02
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Schooling certificate (ref.: graduation from special school)						
no	0.03***	0.01	−0.01***	−0.06***	0.03**	−0.06***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
lower secondary school certificate	−0.03***	0.03***	−0.01***	0.01	−0.01+	0.1***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
higher secondary school certificate	−0.07***	0.04***	−0.02***	0.05***	−0.03***	0.18***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
university entrance qualification	−0.08***	0.04**	−0.02***	0.01	−0.03**	0.25***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Disability status (ref.: no)						
severely disabled	−0.02+	−0.01	0	0.03***	0.02*	−0.01+
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Type of program pattern in VR (ref.: no participation)						
other	−0.12***	−0.18***	0.34***	0.18***	−0.11***	−0.14***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
only prevocational training	0.05***	−0.04***	0	0.02***	−0.04***	−0.09***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
only vocational training	−0.04***	0.11***	0	0.07***	−0.12***	0.22***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
prevocational & vocational training	0	−0.04***	0+	0.24***	−0.17***	0.21***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Type of main disability (ref.: learning)						
psychological	−0.01	−0.09***	0	0.03***	0.07***	−0.05***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
other	−0.04***	−0.03***	0.01***	0.05***	0.03***	0.02***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)

Table 2. (Cont.) Results of the multivariate analyses.

	Model 1a: Multinomial logistic regression: Labor market outcomes five years after VR began in 2010					Model 2: Logistic regression: Vocational certificate earned during VR
	BIS	Employment	Sheltered employment	(Still/again) in VR	No information	
Requirement level of occupation (ref.: unskilled or semiskilled)						
no information	0.08***	−0.17***	0	−0.11***	0.18***	−0.17***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
specialist	−0.02***	0.01	−0.01***	0.01*	0.01	0.12***
	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
complex specialist	−0.05***	0.01	−0.03**	0.07***	0	0.16***
	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
highly complex	−0.03+	0	−0.01	−0.02	0.07***	0.05*
	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.01)	(0.02)	(0.02)	(0.02)
Observations	36,557					36,557
Pseudo R²	0.1887					0.2752

Source: Own calculations based on administrative data from RehaPro. Notes: AMEs, standard errors are in parentheses: * p < 0.05, ** p < 0.01, *** p < 0.001; the category "other statuses" is not displayed.

other YPWD. Thus, our findings are in line with those of Pisoni (2018), as some of the young people most in need of support are unable to benefit from social policy programs, reflecting a Matthew effect within the target group. Therefore, the state support system must also be researched in more detail to provide suitable individual holistic support approaches. For example, findings from Sweden regarding youth with complex needs identify central barriers within the system of specialized support services to be fragmented support and a lack of continuity (Almqvist & Lassinantti, 2018). Furthermore, our study shows, as already addressed by other studies (Schreiner, 2018), the overwhelming path dependency into sheltered workshops away from the first labor market for some individuals, and this seems to be independent of the type of disability. Given the demand for inclusion, it is necessary to consider the extent to which German transition systems need to be changed and how institutional support systems can be established to accompany people with different needs throughout their lives (Rosenberger, 2017).

7. Conclusion

Although poor YPWD find their way to VR, our study shows that many of them end VR due to a lack of cooperation and a large portion do not seem to find their way into vocational training and employment but rather continue to receive welfare benefits over a very long period. We conclude that poverty and disability support should not be examined separately, as they are interrelated. In addition, we need a more holistic perspective on disability and the individual needs and rights of those in VR (Shakespeare et al., 2018), particularly regarding support systems. Future research should focus on the exact barriers that YPWD from poor households face and how these young people can be reached more appropriately in the context of VR counseling. Through qualitative research, YPWD, VR counsellors at public employment agencies, case managers at job centers, and experts at educational service providers should be questioned about these barriers to find solutions to these interrelated challenges. Regarding the STWT of YPWD and young people in disadvantaged situations in general, we need to look even more closely at the actual inclusiveness of the German school and vocational education system including the VR process. This is not limited to YPWD. Further reforms should aim at the inclusion of *all* young people and their individual needs, and give them labor market perspectives.

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Conflict of Interests

The authors declare no conflict of interests.

Supplementary Material

Supplementary material for this article is available online in the format provided by the author (unedited).

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About the Authors

Nancy Reims (PhD in rehabilitation science) is a senior researcher at the Institute for Employment Research in Nuremberg, Germany. She works in the Joblessness and Social Inclusion Research Department. Her research focuses on transition processes of young people with disabilities from school to work in the context of vocational rehabilitation and the vocational reintegration of people with health limitations and disabilities.

Silke Tophoven (PhD in sociology) is a professor of social policy in the Faculty of Social Sciences and Cultural Studies at the University of Applied Sciences in Duesseldorf, Germany. Her research focuses on the situation of children and adolescents in poverty as well as on vocational rehabilitation and the participation of people with support needs in the labor market.

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