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Finnish principals: Leadership training and views on distributed leadership

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This study looks at the views of Finnish comprehensive school principals on distributed leadership and presents discussion on the leadership training required by principals and looks at it in relation to the views of principals. In Finland the qualification requirements for principals are based on their experience as teachers, and studies in educational administration. In general, studies in leadership are not mandatory. In terms of distributed leadership, one relevant question is the way distribution happens. Is it based on delegation of tasks or does it happen in interaction between teachers and principal? The data were principals' responses to an electronic survey (n=71). The respondents represented 71 schools around Finland. The results showed that principals viewed distributed leadership differently depending on the type of question. In the Likert-scale questions they (n=71) emphasised distributed leadership as an interaction between principal and teachers and their situations, whereas in open-ended answers (n=44) the delegation had a bigger role. In terms of training background, the results indicate that principals (n=13) having university studies in educational leadership and administration emphasised more distributed leadership as an interaction than principals having other types of training. This paper poses questions concerning the content and structure of educational leadership training. Further, this study implies that there is a growing need to examine educational leadership in terms of training, and views concerning leadership structures and practices in schools.

Key words: Distributed leadership, educational leadership, leadership training, principal.

INTRODUCTION

The tasks and responsibilities related to principals' work have expanded and have become more complex during recent decades, and that observation also applies to Finnish principals. In general, the duties of Finnish comprehensive school principals include multiple administrative tasks and meetings, responsibilities related to the organization of school level education, curriculum work, and support for the development of the whole work community (FNBE, 2013). This internationally-identified trend in the role of a school leader has led to examinations and theory-building concerning the profession itself. There have been various approaches to educational leadership that aim to conceptualize the phenomenon (Dinham, 2016), and to support and

develop the field of educational leadership.

This article focuses on distributed leadership that has been one popular way to solve the challenges met by principals in their everyday work for some decades. Distributed leadership has been understood in this study through two aspects: distributed leadership as delegation of predetermined tasks and distributed leadership as interaction between principals and teachers and their situations that take place in the official and unofficial structures of school environments. The data are Finnish comprehensive school principals' responses to principal survey in 2017 (n=71). This paper looks at the principals' views on distributed leadership, and in addition, considers whether the leadership training influences principals' views on distributed leadership. This article answer the following three research questions, first, to what extent do the principals view distributed leadership as interaction between the principal, teachers and their situations? Second, to what extent do the principals view distributed leadership as the delegation of predetermined tasks? And third, does the leadership training principals have undertaken affect their views on distributed leadership?

Defining distributed leadership

Due to the simultaneous development of classical leadership theories and public school from the beginning of the 20th century, it is not surprising that the views on leadership dominating the industrial branch influenced the way leadership was realised in the school contexts as well. That approach emphasised strong top-down management in which the leader told the subordinates what they needed to do, and these orders were not to be questioned (Brasof, 2017). Consequently, these trends have affected research done in the field, and for a relatively long period of time, the research interest has been in the actions of leaders holding the top positions. During the past few decades, research and theory-building have increasingly started to take an interest in the leadership structures in schools, such as the work of leadership teams and distribution of leadership tasks. Evidently, leadership no longer belongs to principals only but has been understood as a wider phenomenon including all professionals working in school communities (Dinham, 2016). Furthermore, recent research indicates that distribution of leadership tasks may support teachers' professional capacity building, and through that develop their teaching and learning (Brasof, 2017; cf. King and Stevenson, 2017). Also, principals have found distributed leadership as meaningful aim for development, and they see that it is important to encourage teachers to participate more in leadership processes (Dinham et al., 2018)

Despite being a multifaceted concept lacking one solid definition (Tian, 2016), distributed leadership in its various conceptualizations shares some core features that are characteristic to it. Firstly, distributed leadership emphasises the group or network as quality of leadership, and secondly, it makes leadership available to various groups. Thirdly, it assumes that knowledge and know-how are qualities of many rather than of just a few. In general, existing approaches to distributed leadership reveal the variety of understandings concerning its essence. For example, distributed leadership can be defined as a continuum consisting of two opposite ends, of which one is defined as authoritarian leadership and the other as chaos (Kyllönen, 2011) or it may be formulated around two conceptualizations, leader-plus and practice (Spillane and Healey, 2010). In the leader-plus and practice approach, leader-plus defines leadership distribution as happening through formal positions in which principal shares leadership tasks with assigned individuals, such as curriculum experts and leadership team members, whereas practice focuses on the composition of the leadership structure, who and how many participate in the leadership (Spillane and Healey, 2010). This latter practice also pays attention to principals, leadership team members, and others coming from the formal positions, but it widens the scope. It emphasises the aspect of interaction within them, and further, between them and the others working in the same school community (Spillane and Healey, 2010). Moreover, it looks at leadership distribution between the actors who happen to be in the right time in the right place (situation) and who have the knowledge (ability) needed for successfully carrying out the task at hand (Sergiovanni, 2007). In addition, it has been stated that the real meaning of distributed leadership is located in the recoginition and development of teachers' expertise which may be stay unrelased and underdeveloped if the ficus is purely on redistribution of responsibilities (Dinham, 2016).

This study employs the approaches of leader-plus and practice. Distributed leadership is understood and examined as a structure, a phenomenon consisting of two aspects of which one has been formed from a school's official structures (e.g. leadership team) and the tasks delegated by the principal, and the other emphasises interactive situations between the principal and the leadership team, and also interaction within the official and unofficial structures of the school. This interpretation of distributed leadership has already been examined in a study conducted in a large Finnish city, in which Lahtero et al. (2017) looked at how the views of principals and leadership team members on distributed leadership settled on this structure divided between views on delegation and interaction. In that study, results showed that when the views on distributed leadership as delegation increased, the views on it as interaction in situations decreased, and further, when the view emphasising delegation decreased, it increased the views on it as interaction in situations.

The study introduced here widens the scope used in

the earlier (Lahtero et al., 2017) study that focused only on one Finnish city promoting distributed leadership as a local definition of policy for educational leadership in comprehensive schools and examines whether there are differences in how the principals view leadership distribution around the country. However, the premise in this study regarding this aspect is that principals have an understanding about distributed leadership, and further, most of them realise it at some level. This pre-understanding is based on an observation stating that the Finnish principals generally share and distribute their tasks (Taajamo et al., 2014), which is in line with education policy guidelines that define distributed leadership as a precondition for the realization of pedagogical leadership in basic education context (FNBE, 2013).

Within this frame that understands distributed leadership as a structure consisting of aspects described as delegation and interaction, delegation may be interpreted as being the first step towards the actual distribution of leadership (Fonsen, 2014), and when put in the context of this study, delegation of separate leadership tasks seems to be the most typical way to realise distributed leadership in Finnish schools (Kyllönen, 2011). Nevertheless, delegation certainly improves the quality of the decisions that are made, especially then when the knowledge guiding the decision-making process the participating subordinates have exceeds that of the principal. In principle, delegation of minor tasks can lighten a principal's work load, and give the principal more time and energy to concentrate on their other duties. Even though certain tasks are undoubtedly tied to the official leadership position, successful leadership as a whole is supported through teachers' active participation in the school's development work, and benefits from this. Therefore, it is fruitful to approach distributed leadership from a perspective of dynamic interaction between the principal and teachers, and not diminishing its potential by limiting it to narrowly-delegated leadership tasks among selected individuals. In its interactive form, distributed leadership will become visible not only in formal and in advance settled structures but also in informal roles and relationships between all working in the school community (Duif et al., 2013). Moreover, it is important that discourses concerning the challenges met in the school community engage its members rather than alienate them. It is equally important that the school structurally is a place that opens up opportunities for people to transform emerging ideas into actual practices, and invites them to do so (Brasof, 2017). Within that frame, leadership finds it form and essence in the interaction between the principal and teachers, and not in isolated actions conducted by the principal alone. Further, the leadership as such will have a different meaning when the decision-making process is guided by collective discourses instead of by hierarchical structures (Juuti, 2013), and ongoing interaction also increases the possibility for people ending up having a shared understanding about the practices in their organisation. Therefore, from a research perspective it would be important to pay attention to leadership practices formed from the interactions between principals, teachers, and their situations, not just to isolated leadership acts (Spillane and Healey, 2010).

Finnish principals' qualification requirements and professional development

What is common at the European level is that qualification requirements for principals in most countries often include aspects of administration and a teaching background in terms of both education and work experience (Kumpulainen, 2016). Furthermore, in the Finnish education context, the municipalities responsible for organizing education are autonomous actors, and therefore the educational leadership structure and the degree of school autonomy vary between municipalities and sometimes even between schools within the same municipality. Consequently, teacher and substitute teacher recruitment may also be included in the principals' duties (FNBE, 2013). Across Europe, the degree of autonomy of schools varies between the EU countries, and so does the autonomy and responsibilities of school principals. In general, there seems to be more autonomy in the principals' work in deciding on course content and school budget allocations than in deciding on teaching staff recruitment. In Finland many principals also teach along with their leadership duties, which may not be the case in some other European countries, such as Sweden, Norway, and Estonia (Taajamo et al., 2014).

According to the current decree on educational personnel (Asetus opetustoimen henkilöstön kelpoisuusvaatimuksista 986/1998) the qualification requirements for principals comprises four main areas which are a master's degree, a teaching qualification relevant to the educational level in question, work experience as a teacher, and a certificate in educational administration approved by the Finnish National Board of Education (15 credit points), university studies in educational leadership and administration (minimum 25 credit points) or other knowledge on educational administration. These alternative forms of training have the same basic core, namely an education degree approved by the Finnish National Board of Education. That degree is formed around five focus areas including studies in public law and administration concerning municipalities, education, personnel, and finance. University studies on educational leadership and administration add to that an introduction to the principal's work by becoming familiar with the literature and research concerning educational leadership, and doing interviews with experienced principals (Taipale, 2012, 26).

Local education organizers (that is often municipalities) have their own policies and aims for professional development, and they may prefer certain training programmes. The professional leadership programme is one of the programmes that local education organizers provide to their principals. This programme is partly subsidized by the state, and is convenient for municipal councils due to its low cost. The professional leadership programme consists of two parts of which one is obligatory and the other optional. The obligatory part is about practicing leadership, and participants may choose one optional topic from among human resource management, customer management, production management, and network management (FNBE, 2011). In principle, this is a valid training program for leaders. However, it is not about leadership in educational contexts and it does not include any pedagogical aspects of leadership. Therefore, it is not an academic training programme for school leaders. The participants in this programme are evaluated by professionals who happen to have strong professional knowledge in the area of leadership within which the evaluation is done (that is, the four optional parts of the programme).

In addition to these aforementioned training opportunities, the principals may participate in other in-service training programmes. However, the in-service training for Finnish principals is mainly short-term, and participation in a long-term training focusing on aspects of pedagogical leadership is only occasional (Taipale, 2012). In international comparison, Finnish comprehensive school principals on average seem to be less educated in terms of educational leadership competence than their peers in other OECD countries (Kumpulainen, 2016).

Research questions

This study looks at educational leadership from the perspective of its distribution. The aim is to approach the distribution by following the conceptualizations used in an earlier study by Lahtero et al. (2017), and to examine the extent to which Finnish comprehensive school principals see distributed leadership as an interaction between the principal, teachers, and their situations, and the extent to which it can be seen as delegation of predetermined tasks. In addition, this study examines the leadership training that principals have and whether it affects their views on distributed leadership. The research questions are the following:

RQ1: To what extent do the principals view distributed leadership as interaction between the principal, teachers and their situations?
RQ2: To what extent do the principals view distributed leadership as the delegation of predetermined tasks?
RQ3: Does the leadership training principals have undertaken affect their views on distributed leadership?

DATA AND METHODS

The data were gathered with a survey of school principals, a semi-structured electronic questionnaire, sent to principals at 88 Finnish comprehensive schools with the upper grades (that is, grades 7-9). The principal survey was one part of a national sample-based 9th graders' learning to learn assessment in 2017. The principal survey was sent to all 88 schools that were selected to learning to learn assessment, and thus, the schools represented by the principals were determined accordingly. One of the authors was part of the research team conducting the assessment. The response rate was 80.7% (n=71), and 42% (n=31) of respondents were women and 58% (n=40) men.

The respondents represented two types of comprehensive school, those having all grades from 1 to 9 (n=29) and schools having only the upper grades from 7 to 9 (n=42). The total number of these schools in Finland is 687 (Statistics Finland 2018). In general, schools in Finland are relatively small, and 19 of the respondents led schools having fewer than 300 pupils, 27 having 300-500 pupils, and 25 of respondents led schools that had over 500 pupils. Geographically the school sample represents Finland well, but the number of principals participating in this survey is relatively low in terms of the total number of comprehensive school types our respondents represented.

In terms of the studies on leadership, 58 of the respondents had a certificate in educational administration approved by the Finnish National Board of Education, 28 had undertaken the professional leadership programme, and 13 university studies in educational administration (25 credit points). Further, three of the aforementioned principals having the professional leadership programme qualification mentioned earlier also had university studies in educational administration (min. 25 credit points). In addition, nine respondents reported having 'other education' than the ones specified in the survey, and that category consisted of short courses in leadership and leadership experience gained in the national defence forces.

The principal survey consisted of a Likert scale and open-ended questions that were based on earlier research (Lahtero et al., 2017) and the theoretical approach to distributed leadership introduced earlier in this article. For the principal survey used in this study the Likert-scale and open-ended questions were modified to better meet the national context as the earlier research had been conducted in one Finnish city only. Further, this modification was needed because the research design of Lahtero and colleagues' research differed from the study at hand. Factor analysis was used in order to structure the answers from the Likert scale questions and to clarify distributed leadership as a phenomenon. Further, it enabled the comparison with previous research (Lahtero et al., 2017). The open-end questions were analysed using summative content analysis (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005), in which the certain words and contents related to distributed leadership were located, and the meanings given to them were examined and organized into various themes within the distributed leadership theory used in the study (Ojasalo et al., 2015). In order bring out the principals' own voices some excerpts from their written comments have been included, and the individual respondents have been referred to according to the survey question number (Q20) and the respondent number (e.g. P45 referring to principal number 45 in this study). All the excerpts have been translated from Finnish into English by the authors.

RESULTS

Based on the Likert scale questions, two factors were formed. Factor one, Distributed leadership as interaction

Table 1. The factors linked to the first and the second research question.

Factor 1. Distributed leadership as interaction between principal, teachers and their situations	Factor 2. Distributed leadership as delegation of predetermined tasks
Leadership ought to be distributed among the whole school community	The leadership tasks that are distributed ought to be accurately defined
In an appropriate situation, every teacher at the school can participate in leadership	A teacher who does not possess any official leadership position cannot participate in leadership on any occasion
Distributed leadership is not restricted to the official structures of the school	In terms of practice, it is easiest to restrict the leadership to include only the principal and the leadership team
Leadership can also be distributed to teachers who do not occupy an official leadership position	The distribution of leadership tasks to teachers ought to be based on a clear delegation decision
Distributed leadership can take place spontaneously when needed	-

between the principal, teachers and their situations (RQ1) was formed from five variables, and the second, Distributed leadership as delegation of predetermined tasks, (RQ2) from four variables (Table 1).

The consistency of the factors was measured with explorative factor analysis that indicated Factor 1 Distributed leadership as interaction between the principal, teachers and their situations having reliability of 0.81 (Cronbach alpha) and Factor 2 Distributed leadership as delegation of predetermined tasks 0.69 (Cronbach alpha). Thus, both factors had acceptable internal consistency, and the respective summative variables were formed.

Viewing distributed leadership as interaction and delegation

For Distributed leadership as interaction between principal, teachers and their situations, the mean for Factor 1 was 3.72, and for Distributed leadership as delegation of predetermined tasks, the mean for Factor 2 was 3.06. Thus, the respondents viewed distributed leadership as being more like interaction than delegation. Further, the linear correlation between the factors appeared negative (Pearson Correlation -0.62), and hence, 38% of the variation in Factor 1 can be explained with Factor 2 variation. Therefore, it seems like the more distributed leadership is viewed as delegation, the less it is viewed as interaction, and then again, the more views on distributed leadership are based on characteristics of interaction, the less they are based on delegation (Figure 1).

The respondents were also asked to explain their views on distributed leadership with their own words by answering a question 'In general, how do you view

distributed leadership in a school context? In your opinion, how is distributed leadership related to decisional power, responsibilities, and taking into account all concerned? Please, explain and justify your answer.' Over the half (n=44) of the respondents answered to this question. Principals' responses were coded under two main categories that described the different ways to distribute leadership, and their attitudes towards leadership distribution in general (Table 2).

In their answers, the principals saw distributed leadership as something that cannot be avoided in the modern school context. Further, it was interpreted as being in line with the definitions of policy given in the relatively recent National Core Curriculum (FNBE, 2014) that has been implemented gradually from 2016, starting from the lower grades of comprehensive school. Moreover, the principals believed that distributed leadership would engage teachers and increase their motivation to work because distributed leadership provides a feeling that one can have an influence on one's own work. Distributed leadership seemed to increase well-being and the feeling of meaningfulness of work in an expert organization like a school. One principal described this as the following.

People working in schools have many kinds of knowledge and know-how. There is a lot of work [in a school], and we need many people in order to get the work done. Distributed leadership engages, and the principal does not have to do everything or be able to do so. The capacity of the whole community increases through the distribution of leadership (Q20P2).

Despite distributed leadership being seen mainly in a positive light, and described as facilitating the task of leadership in many ways, three respondents stated that leadership should not be distributed at all.

At its worst, distributed leadership can lead to a
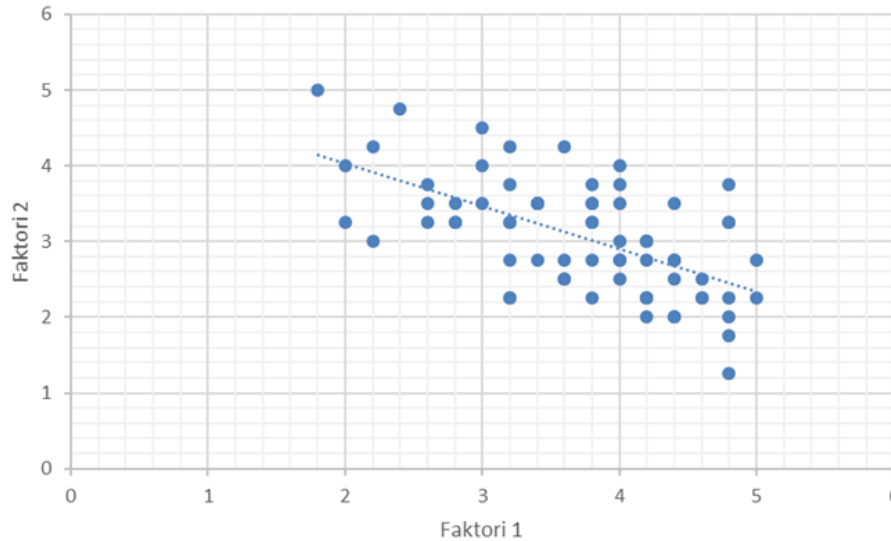
Figure 1. The linear correlations between Factor 1 and Factor 2.

Table 2. The main categories and codes used in the classification of open-ended responses.

Category definition	Codes	Principals' open-ended responses
Principals' descriptions concerning the ways to distribute leadership	Distribution of leadership as delegation	17 principals
	Distribution of leadership as interaction	6 principals
	Distribution of leadership defined as both delegation and interaction	2 principals
Principals' attitudes towards the distribution of leadership	Descriptions including positive expressions concerning leadership distribution	41 principals
	Distribution is unnecessary and not needed	3 principals

situation in which no one takes responsibility. The school is primarily a unit lead by the chief, the principal (Q20P66).

Distributed leadership was mainly viewed as delegation and not so much as interaction in the written responses of the principals. Thus, interestingly their views described in their own words contradicted the results gained through the Likert scale that emphasized more interaction. However, the number of respondents to the open-ended question was lower, and therefore these differences are speculative to some extent.

Over one third (=17) of the principals answering the open-ended question described distributed leadership purely as delegation. They explained that clearly defined responsibilities and task descriptions were the prerequisites for delegation, and if these steps are neglected, the risk of arbitrary leadership would increase. In their view, distributed leadership can mainly occur through a different type of leadership structure, such as leadership teams, subject-based teams and having vice or assistant principals.

Some parts of the leadership [at school] have to be

defined clearly, such as who takes responsibility. At the official level, the leadership is distributed between the principal, the vice principal and the leadership team in our school (Q20R66).

Only six principals viewed distributed leadership as interaction. These views emphasized leading professional capacity, tolerating uncertainties, good quality and mapping the strengths of all working in the school community.

The aim of this study is to become a school that emphasises humanity and is efficient, and that bases its work on leading the capacity. We believe that through this approach it is possible to find everyone's specific area of expertise (Q20P55).

Only two respondents described distributed leadership as including both aspects, delegation and interaction.

Some parts of the leadership must be predefined. In other words, one has to know who has the official responsibility for certain issues. Otherwise leadership can be distributed according to situations calling for it, and for example, one teacher can take the lead at a meeting or take over some task units (Q20R69).

Leadership training and principals' views on distributed leadership

The respondents' leadership training background was looked at in relation to the leadership structures in the schools. It appeared that if the principal had undertaken either the professional leadership programme or university studies in educational leadership and administration (min. 25 credit points) it was more likely that the school had a leadership team (professional leadership programme 82%, university studies 84%) whereas at schools where the principal had only the certificate in educational administration approved by the National Agency of Education (15 credit points) only 60% had utilised this form of leadership team in their leadership structures.

Moreover, the principals' leadership training backgrounds in relation to their views on distributed leadership were examined. The results indicate that the answers of principals who had undertaken university studies in educational leadership and administration (min. 25 credit point) had the highest value (4.15) emphasising distributed leadership as interaction between principals and teachers and their situations in contrast to answers from principals with other backgrounds in leadership training (3.62). Among the respondents who had completed university studies in educational leadership and administration, the linear correlation was negative (Pearson Correlation -0.78) between Factor 1 and Factor 2, and 60.8% of the variation in Factor 1 can be explained with variation in Factor 2. Therefore, it was concluded that in this setting, the negative correlation between Factors 1 and 2 was higher than the corresponding correlation among all respondents. Hence, the views on distributed leadership as interaction were slightly stronger among principals who had completed university studies in educational leadership and administration. However, the number of respondents having undertaken university studies in educational leadership and administration was relatively small (n=13), and therefore, this result cannot be given too much weight. Yet, it is an interesting observation that professional leadership programme did not have similar effect on the principals' views on distributed leadership.

DISCUSSION

This study looked at principals' views on distributed leadership, and it built on theoretical understanding of distributed leadership used in previous research (Lahtero et al., 2017). In addition, this study considered the leadership training influence on principals' and leadership team members' views on distributed leadership. In this study, the scope was widened to include schools around Finland in order to examine the views at the national level in contrast to the earlier research (Lahtero et al., 2017)

focusing on one city that had a rather top-down approach for defining policy concerning leadership distribution, and educational leadership structures in general. The principals participating in this study represented a range of municipalities and therefore several local education policy contexts. Finland is rather low-hierarchical and decentralized, and therefore every local education organizer has considerable decisional power concerning local arrangements and applications of national norms (Simola et al., 2017).

There appeared to be some similar patterns but also some differences, between the two Finnish studies. Firstly, both studies indicate that when principals' views on distributed leadership as delegation increase, their views on it as interaction between principals and teachers and their situations decrease. And further, when principals' views on distributed leadership as delegation decrease, their views on it as interaction increase. Therefore, in terms of an individual school, distributed leadership consists of a combination of predetermined tasks that the principal delegates to the school's official leadership structures, and of interaction that happens between the principal and the teachers, and the official and unofficial structures of the school. The emphasis of these two aspects of distributed leadership depends on each individual school context. Secondly, in the Likert Scale questions used in this study, principals' views emphasized distributed leadership as interaction, and in the open-ended questions their descriptions of distributed leadership had more elements of delegation. Thus, their views differed depending on the type of question. However, there were fewer answers in the open-ended questions, hence, that may have had some influence on the results. Anyway, the results of this study differ slightly from those in Lahtero et al. (2017) study where the principals had more emphasis on distributed leadership as delegation in both types of question. However, the research designs were not identical as the study at hand focused only on principals, and therefore left out the views of leadership team members that were included in the study of Lahtero et al. (2017). Therefore, in the future it would be beneficial to widen the scope of the research at the national level to include both leadership team members and all school teachers because that would enable to examine how different professionals working in schools view the same phenomenon. That would be a fruitful setting for looking at the differences and similarities appearing in the views of people working at various positions within the same school contexts. That might reveal how teachers with different roles in relation to leadership experience leadership (Wan et al., 2018).

This study also scratched the surface concerning the leadership training school principals in Finland are required to have undertaken. In general, to be a principal one has to be a qualified teacher, have teaching experience, and (at least) have the certification in educational administration (15 credit points) approved by

the Finnish National Board of Education. Thus, the minimum studies required do not include any aspects of leadership in educational contexts. The present results indicate that principals who have undertaken university studies in educational leadership and administration (min. 25 credit points) viewed distributed leadership more as interaction between principals and teachers and their situation than their peers not having done the studies. In other words, university-level studies seem to provide a different basis for viewing distributed leadership than participation in short-term in-service trainings or having completed the professional leadership programme. It has been noted elsewhere that in distributed leadership, the main question is the way the distribution happens (Halttunen, 2009). Further, in terms of viewing it as delegation or interaction, delegation seems to be the first step on the path to distributed leadership (Kyllönen, 2011). Moreover, the distribution of leadership ought to become visible in relationships between people working together in the same organisation, not in formal roles and responsibilities (Dinham, 2016; Scribner et al., 2007). Thus, the interaction within an organization makes the distribution of leadership genuine (Juuti, 2013). In practice, this means providing time, space and opportunities to act accordingly, and further, it requires sensitivity in terms of decision making situations that require participation of the work community (Duif et al., 2013). Therefore, the results following from leadership distribution are not necessary predictable by their nature but stem from the dynamics of the school community (Scribner et al., 2007). Viewing distributed leadership as interaction may result in fresh ideas and innovation.

The results of this study reinforce earlier observations (Lahtero and Kuusilehto-Awale, 2015) indicating that it would be more important to emphasise the holistic and integrative nature of educational leadership than to concentrate on individual tasks or skills related to a principal's work. In educational leadership training curricula, the leadership should not be divided into unconnected components but rather represented as their combination. The results concerning how the educational leadership training influences principals' views on leadership structures are only suggestive, and therefore, more research is needed in order to map this terrain properly (cf. Tian, 2016).

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The authors have not declared any conflict of interests.

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