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Abstract

This article identifies the main problems faced by two groups of Chilean school principals involved in a succession process. Problems reported by novice public school principals (n=94) were compared to those reported by their more experienced peers (n=120). Data were gathered through an online survey and eight in-depth interviews. Findings showed that groups did not differ in the overall pattern of responses when problems were categorized at the system level (45%), interactions with people (33%), at the school and territory levels (15%), and within themselves (7%). Differences were observed when comparing the extent to which each group reported problems managing up (interactions with the municipal department of education and Ministry of Education) and managing down (initiating changes in the school's culture and structures). For novice principals, managing up was more challenging and for experienced principals managing down was more pressing. The high frequency and types of problems reported at the system level indicate the need to align policy reforms addressing leadership practices at intermediate and school levels. The findings also suggest guidelines for the professional development programs that extend beyond normative practices for effective school leadership, by also responding to country specific social and organizational structures.

Keywords	novice school principals; experienced school principals; school leadership; school management; educational policies; principal succession
Taxonomy	Educational Policy, Leadership in Education, Education, Educational Administration
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Submission Files Included in this PDF

File Name [File Type]

- cover letter IJEDprincipal problemR2.docx [Cover Letter]
- response to reviewers.docx [Response to Reviewers (without Author Details)]
- Research highlightsR2.docx [Highlights]
- author page IJED principal.docx [Title Page (with Author Details)]
- IJED PAPER REVISIONS R2 UPLOADED.docx [Manuscript (without Author Details)]
- Table 1 Problems PrincipalsR2.docx [Table]
- Table 2 problem principals R2.docx [Table]
- Table 3 problem principals R2.docx [Table]

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Research Data Related to this Submission

There are no linked research data sets for this submission. The following reason is given:
The authors do not have permission to share data

January 27, 2018

Dr. Stephen P. Heyneman, Editor-in-Chief

International Journal of Educational Development

Dear Dr. Heyneman

We are pleased to submit a revised version of manuscript Ref: EDEV_2017_447: **Moving the School Forward: Problems Reported by Novice and Experienced Principals During a Succession Process in Chile**. We appreciate the reviewer's comments that allowed us to strengthen this manuscript. As you will see, we have taken all of them in consideration.

Sincerely,

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Response to reviewers

Reviewer 1	Response
<p>While the purposes of the study are valuable they appear only in page 9, leaving the reader unaware of the relevance of the literature review to the study. Indicating that " we compare the problems identified by experienced principals (n=93) and novice principals" is insufficient; I could not understand the purpose of the study before I got to page 9.</p>	<p>In the second and third paragraph of the manuscript we write:</p> <p>Understanding their role as a pillar to support other school improvement initiatives, policymakers in Chile have become increasingly interested in public school principals. Increased privatization, decentralization, neoliberal forms of accountability, and the implementation of a more demanding national curriculum are key features of the educational system (Flessa, Bramwell, Fernández, and Weinstein, 2017; Authors 2015). Principals' key roles in the implementation of educational reform suggest the importance of understanding policy supports they need in meeting expectations (Crow, 2007; Pashiardis and Johansson, 2016; Shaked and Schechter, 2017).</p> <p>The current paper examines this issue by (a) identifying the types of problems reported by experienced principals (n=120) and novice principals (n=94) during their first three years leading municipal schools in Chile; and (b) by examining if the types of problems reported are associated with their career stages. These research objectives address a gap in the literature as an important body of work has examined the problems reported by novice principal, but little is known if these are different from, and if so how, those reported by principals in mid and late career stages. Research comparing these two groups of principals is very limited in quantity.</p> <p>The fourth paragraph addresses the significance by stating:</p>

	<p>In a large number of public schools in Chile, therefore, over the last five years a principal succession process has taken place. The arrival of a new principal presents both an opportunity and a challenge to the school, as well as to the principal who seeks to move the school forward. Considering that the main practices advocated for effective school leadership, have been developed in “Western, industrialized countries and on their related social and organizational structures” (Floyd and Fuller, 2016: 251), research investigating school leaders’ experiences in different national settings is needed (Lumby, Pashiardis and Crow, 2008). School leadership is sensitive to cultural contexts as well as to policy contexts “such as the legal framework in which a principal works, or a principal’s working status.” (OECD, 2016a: 17).”</p>
<p>2. What is the value of this study? Why is it important to compare the problems of novice and senior educational leaders? I believe the researchers could use the literature about career stages to justify their own study.</p>	<p>The previous response situates the significance of the study in a broader context of the key roles of school leaders in reform implementation. The importance of looking from a career stage perspective is stated at the end of the literature view:</p> <p>This review of the literature suggests some similarities in the problems reported by novice and experience principals. From a career stage perspective, however, we would expect to find differences as each stage in a person’s professional trajectory can be “characterized by differences in work attitudes and behaviours, types of relationships, employees’ needs and aspects of work valued by the employee.” Oplatka (2012:130). The dearth of studies comparing both populations of principals, however, does not provide sufficient empirical evidence on these alternative outcomes. The studies cited above have</p>

	<p>either examined the problems encountered by principals without attending to potential differences associated with career stage, have focused exclusively on novice principals or they have focused on problems associated with the succession process. One study in Australia compared new and experienced principals in one district, finding that experienced principals were more likely than their novice counterparts to identify conflicts between district-level policies and practices needed at the school-level (Bogotch and Reidlinger, 1993).</p> <p>The study reported in this paper examined the following research questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What are the types of problems reported by principals during their first three years leading a municipal school? 2. Do principals at different their career stages (novice and experienced) differ in the types of problems reported during their first three years leading a municipal school?
<p>3. The second section (after the introduction) presents educational policy in Chile, the context of this study, and then the third section presents the theoretical and empirical literature about novice principals. First, the order should be reversed – locate section 3 after introduction as theory precedes context. Second, as there are (too) many pages about novice principals, no attention is given to senior principals (i.e., later career stages). Why?</p>	<p>The order of the text has been arranged following this reviewer’s advice. We have reduced the review of research on novice and added what we found for experienced principals, noting that the topic has received very little empirical attention.</p>
<p>4. The paper is too long, especially its discussion and is built around three findings, instead of insights that share commonalities and contrast. I believe the</p>	<p>The full manuscript has been shortened by some 150 words (from 6333 words without references and tables to 6192). This reflects that although we eliminated text, new</p>

<p>discussion should be tighter and more focused on the major interesting findings of this study. While the context is mentioned sometimes, it is not structured within the findings; I would like to know more about the unique educational contexts of Chile and their impact upon novice and senior principals' problems and difficulties during the career cycle.</p>	<p>information was added to address the reviewer's concern about an incomplete review of extant research as well as suggestions to add data produced through interviews and to compare groups on "hard" data). The discussion is now presented in two sections: managing up and managing down, addressing both contextual factors as well as what international research shows regarding what is entailed when managing up and down. The discussion and conclusion sections were reduced from 2467 words to 1550 words</p>
<p>5. The conclusion section is too long for conclusions. I lost my way...</p>	<p>The conclusion section was reduced from 868 words to 296.</p>
<p>-Reviewer 2</p>	
<p>You have touched upon an important and clearly under-examined issue: the challenge of principal succession in Chile. An important strength of your paper is the rich contextual portrait you paint of the contextual and political factors--specific to Chile--that impact the work of principals. Furthermore, the findings related to the shared challenge of both novice and experienced principals in regards to navigating the "system" are interesting as is the distinction you make between the "managing up" (and issue more salient to novices) and "managing down" (the focus of experienced principals). Despite these strengths, more work is needed rhetorically, conceptually, and empirically to make it clear why these findings matter. In that vein, I offer you the following suggestions:</p>	
<p>1) I recommend that you provide a clearer rationale in the early pages of why studying principal suggestion matters (within the larger realm of studying the experiences of principals) and what this greater insight will help to accomplish both generally and within the Chilean context. I also recommend</p>	<p>How we have addressed this concern is explained in our response to a similar concern expressed by Reviewer 1</p>

<p>that you put forth your Research Questions much earlier in the manuscript. Currently they are not introduced until p. 10.</p>	
<p>2) While the data you report is indeed interesting, I believe that your manuscript requires additional data points both to strengthen the robustness of your current findings and for the purposes of interpretation. For example, are you able to link the experiences of the novice and experienced principals in the survey to any hard outcomes at the school level (e.g. student SIMCE scores, grades, teacher retention etc.)? Alas, connecting the perceptions of principal challenges with actual administration of schools and impact on students and teachers would provide hints as to how, and to what extent to tinker with principal induction and principal successions in Chile.</p>	<p>Following this suggestion “external vs internal problems” groups were compared on SIMCE test scores for the 2015 school year. Results indeed showed a statistically significant difference but the data collected does not allow us to explain the difference. This finding merits additional research.</p>
<p>Additionally, your findings are weakened by the relatively small sample size offered by your survey as well as the lack of insight they provide into the mechanisms—according to the meaning-making of these principals—behind their reported challenges. Is there any way to increase sample size and or/ report qualitative findings (were there any key informant interviews or focus groups conducted?)?</p>	<p>We completed a second round of data collection in 2017 by contacting, through the online survey, nonrespondents from the database used in 2016. The number of cases in each group increased from 68 to 94 among novice and from 93 to 120 among experienced principals. Additionally, in-depth interviews were conducted with four experience and four novice principals from the 2017 pool of respondents. These were randomly selected and their responses have been included in the results section.</p>

Research highlights

- Novice and experience public school principals in Chile reported confronting similar problems during a succession process.
- For novice principals, managing up is more challenging and for experienced principals managing down is more pressing.
- In contrast to studies conducted in other part of the world, in Chile an important challenge for school principals are students' and teachers' strike. This calls attention to organizational and structural features particular to a country, an aspect often ignored in the recommendations for the development of effective school leadership practices.
- Independent of level of experience, schools where principals reported greater intensity of problems associated with their interactions with the intermediate level (municipal department of education) attained lower scores on the national testing program for student achievement (SIMCE), as compared to schools where the main problems related to managing down.
- Findings highlight aspects to be addressed by professional development programs in Chile, in particularly skills for managing up and meeting administrative demands.
- Findings highlight that policies designed to strengthen school leadership and management need to be coherent with leadership and management practices at the intermediate level of the system that leverage school-level decision making.

**MOVING THE SCHOOL FORWARD: PROBLEMS REPORTED BY NOVICE
AND EXPERIENCED PRINCIPALS DURING A SUCCESSION PROCESS IN
CHILE**

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Tony Bush is Professor of Educational Leadership at University of Nottingham, with responsibilities in the UK and Malaysia. His research interests include all aspects of educational leadership, including leadership theory, leadership development, leadership for learning, and comparative and international school leadership.

Felipe Aravena is a research associate at the Centro de Liderazgo para la Mejora Escolar at the Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. His research interests include school leadership and school principals.

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MOVING THE SCHOOL FORWARD: PROBLEMS REPORTED BY NOVICE AND EXPERIENCED PRINCIPALS DURING A SUCCESSION PROCESS IN CHILE

1. Introduction

Increased societal expectations for schools to reach a more diverse student population, as well as national and international testing programs that rank schools and countries, have contributed to making the school principalship a highly demanding role (Cowie and Crawford 2008; Crow, 2006; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Increased demands on school principals are grounded in research that has shown a positive relationship between effective leadership practices and students' academic achievement (Leithwood, Harris, and Hopkins, 2008; Hargreaves and Shirley, 2012; Robinson, Hohepa, and Lloyd, 2009).

Understanding their role as a pillar to support other school improvement initiatives, policymakers in Chile have become increasingly interested in public school principals. Increased privatization, decentralization, neoliberal forms of accountability, and the implementation of a more demanding national curriculum are key features of the educational system (Flessa, Bramwell, Fernández, and Weinstein, 2017; Authors 2015). Principals' key roles in the implementation of educational reform suggest the importance of understanding policy supports they need in meeting expectations (Crow, 2007; Pashiardis and Johansson, 2016; Shaked and Schechter, 2017).

The current paper examines this issue by (a) identifying the types of problems reported by experienced principals (n=120) and novice principals (n=94) during their first three years leading municipal schools in Chile; and (b) by examining if the types of problems reported are associated with their career stages. These research objectives address a gap in the literature as an important body of work has examined the problems reported by novice principal, but little is known if these are different from, and if so how, those reported by

principals in mid and late career stages. Research comparing these two groups of principals is very limited in quantity.

With the promulgation of Law 20.501 in 2011, Chilean educational policy has provided municipalities with new tools to manage public school principals' work. Following procedures established by the Civil Service, a more rigorous and transparent selection process (ADP) has been implemented. Among 3.993 public schools eligible to hire principals through the ADP process (*in Spanish: Alta Dirección Pública*), 1.492 (37%) had completed a selection process by 2015. An additional 422 (or 11%) schools initiated, but did not complete, this process (Errázuriz, Kutscher and Williamson, 2016).

In a large number of public schools in Chile, therefore, over the last five years a principal succession process has taken place. The arrival of a new principal presents both an opportunity and a challenge to the school, as well as to the principal who seeks to move the school forward. Considering that the main practices advocated for effective school leadership, have been developed in "Western, industrialized countries and on their related social and organizational structures" (Floyd and Fuller, 2016: 251), research investigating school leaders' experiences in different national settings is needed (Lumby, Pashiardis and Crow, 2008). School leadership is sensitive to cultural contexts as well as to policy contexts "such as the legal framework in which a principal works, or a principal's working status." (OECD, 2016a: 17).

Understanding the problems principals in a specific context confront, when attempting to move their schools forward, may illuminate issues of recruitment, selection, preparation, and induction. All these have been identified as critical stages to develop effective principals (Authors, 2002; OECD; 2016a; Darling-Hammond, Meyerson, La Pointe, and Orr, 2010). Examining these issues from a career stage perspective allows us to highlight contextual, as

opposed to personal, issues that need to be addressed by system level interventions to support a decentralized approach to school improvement.

Next, we review research on the problems reported by school principals with a short discussion on issues that emerge during leadership succession and the problems typically reported in studies on novice and experienced principals. Key characteristics of the school leadership context in Chile are described, followed by a description of the methodology used in the study. The article continues with the results from the online survey, providing some excerpts from interviews conducted with eight participants. After a discussion of the findings and their implications for research and professional development, the conclusion summarizes key findings that suggest the need for policies to address other components of leadership across the educational system.

2. Review of Research on Problems Reported by School Principals

2.1 Principal Succession

Understanding the performance of schools in a long-term perspective entails analysing the arrival of the new school principal, not just as an individual episode (Bengtson, Zepeda and Parylo, 2013; Fink and Brayman, 2004; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Hargreaves (2005) points out that leadership succession is a critical aspect of school improvement and it has to be approached from a systemic perspective, considering that it has effects on the entire staff (Dorman and D'Arbon, 2003). Principal succession is crucial because it intensifies efforts to maintain trajectories of school improvement based on long term practices rather than individual efforts, personal positions and change agents (Peters-Hawkins, Reed and Kingsberry, 2017). A succession process changes the web of relations and power dynamics characteristic of a particular school culture ((Fink and Brayman, 2004; Hart, 1991; González, Nieto and Portela 2003).

Incoming school principals have to construct their own role and reconstruct their school's culture and structure in this transitional stage. The school's previous principal has defined what are acceptable work routines that may create problems that the new principal must confront (Crow, 2007). This implies that change and continuities need to be balance in a dynamic and cyclical process as each incoming principal may want to be different from their predecessors (Hargreaves 2005; Hobson et al., 2003; Northfield, 2013).

2.2. Novice principals

Challenges in meeting complex demands of school leadership and management may be intensified for novice principals, due to their lack of relevant experience and incipient development of managerial skills (Oplatka, 2012). A number of studies have identified the problems novice principals confront, as well as how they negotiate practices as they experience socialization into their new school's culture, while simultaneously trying to transform cultural aspects that they believe hinder school improvement. García-Garduño, Slater and López-Gorosave (2011) concluded that the main problems of early headship, in countries such as Australia, Canada, England, Scotland and the United States, are similar to those in the developing world (China, Mexico, South Africa, Thailand and Turkey). They summarized the problems into five main areas: (a) feelings of being unprepared; (b) unanticipated issues; (c) the legacy of the previous principal; (d) interpersonal relations with and among staff; and (e) feelings of isolation. Notwithstanding these similarities, the intensity of these issues differed by country.

Research on novice principals working in Africa suggests that interpersonal and personal issues appear to be less pressing as their main challenges are linked to social problems such as violence and poverty in the communities served and to the lack of resources (Authors, 2006; Kitavi and van der Westhuizen, 1997; Mobegi, Ondigi and Oburu, 2010).

Kim and Parkay (2004) found that generating effective interactions with teaching staff was the most difficult problem to solve for six novice principals in Korea. In Hong Kong, based on a larger study on the work lives of 10 novice principals, Cheung and Walker (2006) found that one key challenge was self-regulation and self-management. Saidun, Mo and Musah (2015), from their study with eight novice school principals in Malaysia, concluded that developing an identity as principals seemed key to helping them to understand the culture of the school they were leading. These studies bring to the forefront personal and interpersonal dimensions of principals' work that represent specific challenges for novice principals.

Research on the problems of novice school principals in Chile is scant. Weinstein et al (2016) surveyed 76 novice principals, with 81% reporting that their leadership role was "very difficult" or "difficult". Three main factors accounted for this: (a) external demands (political and municipal restrictions and barriers, control and limited autonomy); (b) internal demands (the school's cultural context, dealing with the staff, problem-solving skills, among others); and (c) personal skills (knowledge, competences and limitations of themselves as leaders). Authors (2017) examined the challenges faced by nine principals serving elementary schools that exhibited different levels of readiness for change. The conclusion of the study was that principals' inexperience, coupled with lack of support from the municipal department of education, and a school's culture characterized by lack of will and skills to improve, was the right mix to increase the likelihood of a failure in leadership.

2.3 Experienced principals

In contrast to research focused on challenges faced by novice school principals, research on the problems reported by experienced principals is scarce (Robertson, 2017; Rhodes and Brundett, 2009). This may be because, in some studies, the career stage of participating principals is not a variable of interest. Ulloa, Nail, Castro and Muñoz (2012) concluded that the majority of problems reported by their sample of 44 principals in Chile could be attributed

to external factors not directly connected with classroom-level processes. These included insufficient autonomy to make decisions on personnel and budgetary matters. They reported lacking time for pedagogical leadership, as they needed to meet administrative demands; a finding also reported by López, Ahumada, Galdames and Madrid (2012). In Ulloa et al's study, the sample included principals with less than 5 years of experience, as well as those with more than 31 years of experience, but in López et al. that information is not provided.

Preston, Jakubiec and Kooymas (2013), through a systemic review of literature between 2003 and 2013, noted that in a rural context experienced principals faced a hiring disadvantage if they did not have a historical connection with the community. Additional challenges included juggling diverse responsibilities, lack of professional development and resources, gender discrimination, and issues surrounding school accountability and change. Robertson (2017) asserts that New Zealand's experienced principals have to deal with internal issues, specifically with the transformation of their own professional identity and analyzing their personal growth. Cardno and Youngs (2013) cited several studies that reinforce the notion that experienced and long-serving principals can benefit from professional development that addresses their personal and relational capabilities, focusing on skills to develop effective teamwork.

Evans, Bosire and Ajowi (2012) concluded that the main challenges faced by experienced principals in Kenya are low salaries, staff with poor performance, being overworked, lack of housing, and walking a long distance to school. In the Philippines, the most predominant concerns are connected with the diverse external demands from the Ministry of Education (Brooks and Sutherland, 2014). School principals do not have the possibility to maintain effective support networks because other demands inhibit collaboration among schools, thwarting possibilities for lateral learning among principals.

This review of the literature suggests some similarities in the problems reported by

novice and experience principals. From a career stage perspective, however, we would expect to find differences as each stage in a person's professional trajectory can be "characterized by differences in work attitudes and behaviours, types of relationships, employees' needs and aspects of work valued by the employee." Oplatka (2012:130). The dearth of studies comparing both populations of principals, however, does not provide sufficient empirical evidence on these alternative outcomes. The studies cited above have either examined the problems encountered by principals without attending to potential differences associated with career stage, have focused exclusively on novice principals or they have focused on problems associated with the succession process. One study in Australia compared new and experienced principals in one district, finding that experienced principals were more likely than their novice counterparts to identify conflicts between district-level policies and practices needed at the school-level (Bogotch and Reidlinger, 1993).

The study reported in this paper examined the following research questions:

1. What are the types of problems reported by principals during their first three years leading a municipal school?
2. Do principals at different their career stages (novice and experienced) differ in the types of problems reported during their first three years leading a municipal school?

3. School Leadership Context in Chile

Chile exemplifies a central-local governance model for the education system. The Ministry of Education orients and regulates all public schools in terms of pedagogical matters, designing and implementing school level interventions intended to improve quality and equity.

Administratively, however, infrastructure, personnel and budget decisions are the responsibility of the municipal department of education (DEM). There is a national curriculum and a national testing program that targets private and public schools.

The level of coverage in primary and secondary education is high and provided through two types of public schools and two types of private schools. Municipal public schools, accounting for about 38.5% of total enrollment, are funded through a state per-pupil attendance-based voucher. About 1% of public schools are administered by a private provider and funded through the same voucher. The majority of students (51%) attend private schools owned and administered by a private provider and funded through the same voucher. About 10.5% of the students enroll in private schools fully funded by parents (OECD, 2016b). The voucher amount is variable according to the poverty level of the student as well as the concentration of low income students per school. Considering this funding formula, low enrollment in public schools presents an important challenge for the municipality as well as for the school principal (Authors, 2015).

A number of policies have increased accountability and regulations to codify public school principals' roles, functions and priorities. These include the Framework for Good School Headship and School Leadership (MBDL), introduced in 2005 and revised in 2015; Indicative Performance Indicators for Schools and their Administrators, introduced in 2014 for school inspections; and performance-agreement contracts for principals in municipal schools, introduced in 2011. The five-year performance contract, for example, emphasizes the role of the principal in increasing the school's performance on the national standardized testing system (SIMCE) as well as on indicators of school climate, increasing enrolment, and parents' satisfaction (Authors, 2015). Meeting targets may lead to financial incentives, and failing to meet them may result in the termination of the principal's contract.

The MDBL (Ministry of Education, 2015) organizes what principals should know and be able to do into the following dimensions: constructing and implementing a shared strategic vision; developing professional capacities; leading teaching and learning processes; developing the school community and participation; developing and managing the

organization; and personal resources. The explicit expectation is that principals will give more attention to instructional matters and less to administrative and managerial tasks. Law 201.501 stipulates provisions for affording principals greater autonomy in decision-making regarding staff hiring and firing. For example, a new principal can hire directly a member of the school leadership team and can dismiss up to 5% of the staff deemed as underperforming.

4. Methods

This paper draws on data gathered in a larger three-year study (2014-2016) on the work of novice school principals, that included a first phase of longitudinal case studies with a sample of 13 principals. During the third year of the study, an online survey was sent to all Chilean principals hired through the ADP process from 2013-2016. The survey component of the larger study is reported here.

4.1 Participants

The national database of all public schools (N=914) that had hired a principal in the years covered by the study was obtained from the Civil Service office that administers the ADP selection process. The survey was sent in October 2016 to this roster of potential participants and, to increase sample size, again in October 2017 to non-respondents. Additionally, in November 2017, in-depth phone interviews were conducted with four novice and four experienced respondents who were randomly selected.

Among the 321 responding to the survey in 2016, 161 participants self identified as meeting the criterion of being new to their current school and provided data on the variables under investigation in the current paper. In 2017, 118 additional responses were obtained of which 60 met criteria for inclusion, for a total sample of 221. Among them, 214 indicated that they had experienced significant difficulties in leading and managing for the attainment of the school's goals (two novices and five experienced principals reported no major problems).

Among the 214, 94 indicated their first appointment as principal between the years 2013 and 2016 (novice group), whereas 120 had been in the position prior to 2013. Among women, 51% were novice and among men 38%. Novice principals, on average, were younger (mean age 45.6) than their experienced counterparts (mean age 55.2). Among novice principals, 59% reported that, prior to this appointment, they were members of a school management team. Classroom teachers represented 24%, some with middle level leadership experience, and 16% were working at the district central office, local regional ministry office, or teaching at a university. The majority (79%) were serving in elementary schools (grades Kindergarten- 8th), 15% in secondary (grades 9-12th) or K-12 comprehensive schools, and 6% in special or adult education schools.

4.2 Data sources and procedures

A survey was developed from a review of extant literature on principals' work (for example, OECD Teaching and Learning International Survey (TALIS); Quong, 2006; Walker and Dimmock, 2006; Walker and Qian, 2006), and from data produced through the case study phase of the larger study. Five national experts reviewed items for content validity and, lastly, the instrument was piloted with a sample of 13 novice principals. They were asked, among other things, to write down the main problems they were facing as they worked to meet their school's goals. Additionally, respondents were asked to indicate if they had been working at the schools in the previous year, the year of their first appointment to a principal post, and demographic and work trajectory data. Each participant received, over a six-week period, up to three reminders inviting to answer the online survey.

For the phone interviews, participants were asked to elaborate on the problems they had identified in the survey, as these represented internal (managing down) and external

problems (managing up). Their responses provide greater insights regarding the nature of the interactions with internal or external actors deemed as presenting challenges to be addressed.

4.3 Data analysis

The description of the problem provided by each participant in the survey was assigned three codes. The first two were emergent codes associated with two topics: (a) Who is the agent of the problem (or actor) and (b) what is the problem. After the initial set of emergent codes was agreed upon, two researchers independently coded responses. Through an interactive process, both jointly refined the final code assignments (Maxwell, 2005). A third code was later assigned drawing on the four categories that Wildy and Clarke (2008) proposed as a heuristic tool to understand principals' work related problems. Again two researchers independently assign this third code, later resolving any differences. Table 1 presents the coding scheme and sample responses.

Wildy and Clarke (2008) proposed four categories of problems: place, people, system, and self. The first category *place* includes physical and cultural in the wider community, and social and structural aspects within the school organization. The *people* category refers to the range of complex interactions with staff, students, parents, teachers, community members, among others. These interactions are in line with an interpersonal dimension of the role because it relates to work on building relationships. The third category, *system*, is connected with bureaucratic regulations, policies, protocols, paperwork, among others. This category includes dealing with external demands from a political dimension placing in balance local needs with system requirements. Finally, *self*, addresses the personal dimension of the job. This category embraces confidence, self-efficacy, resilience, self-regulation, and personal motivation, among others. These categories express the highly demanding role of the

principal as a “complex interplay of personal ideologies, relationships with staff (and significant others), and the demands of the school situation.” (Wildy and Clarke, 2008:735)

INSERT TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE

5. Results

As can be observed in Table 2, across both groups problems were most often identified in the system categories (45%), followed by the people (33%), place (15%), and self (7%) categories. Chi-square analysis showed no statistically significant association in terms of how groups distributed themselves across these categories. This would suggest that, using this taxonomy, the types of problems are independent of level of experience as a school principal.

INSERT TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE

5.1 System category

Within this category, the most frequent problems (41%) related to bureaucracy at the municipality that led them to spend too much time on administrative tasks and delayed the influx of needed resources. Whereas the law afforded principals with certain levels of autonomy, participants reported that they lacked the necessary autonomy to hire or dismiss staff to ensure necessary human resources aligned with the school’s improvement plan (24%). According to Ministry of Education regulations, the funding assigned to each school for the implementation of the school improvement plan can be largely managed at the school level. In practice, however, in several DEMs this was centralized at the municipal level and not all the funding went to the school (23%).

Principals understood that the relationship to be established with DEM was strategic. When asked about the problems they confronted at the system level, the principals interviewed described the multiple layers of administrative accountability that operate over schools, as well as tensions between school's and DEM's priorities:

The main obstacle for me is DEM, not just with the provision of resources, also in how we must account for their expenditure to the accounting office, to the superintendent. (...) The obstacle is too much control [external] and with DEM where they are not teachers. In our case, the head of DEM is an accountant. They are too concerned with money and they do not attend to the results of implementation of those resources

I have good relations with DEM but there are problems in how resources are assigned. Another major problem is that in public schools it is very difficult to remove teaching staff (...) you have to get the agreement of DEM and if the teacher does not have the disposition [to leave], remains (Female novice principal).

For me it has been difficult to manage up because everything is very unpredictable concerning procedures. For example, when I want to purchase something, you are asked for more and more paperwork to shelter from certain situations [accusations of fraudulent use of monies]. (...) I have to work strategically with DEM to improve infrastructure, which is a major issue here. (...) They will listen (...) but the system will not respond because it has collapsed. (Male novice principal).

5.2 People category

As shown in Table 1, interactions with three different groups of actors concentrated the most frequent sources on interpersonal conflicts. Within this category, most often principals reported teachers' (64%) competencies, commitment and absenteeism (teachers' strike as well

as medical leave) as main problems to achieve the goals. A second source of problems related to the lack of parental involvement and support for schoolwork (31%).

5.3 Place category

Within this category, problems distributed themselves fairly equal along the school's culture, structure and legacy of the previous principal. Structural problems related to basic processes that were not in place, such as clear roles and responsibility for various staff positions as well as planning time for collaborative work. Culture related to low expectations, as well as school climates marked by conflicts, distrust and violence. Few mentioned problems associated with the territory (6%) in which the school was located and these were reported in isolated communities where recruiting teachers or increasing enrolment was difficult.

As the following excerpts show, teachers' resistance to change may be linked to the way the previous principal managed the school. The difficulties associated with organizational socialization involved in a succession process are highlighted by a principal who points to the complexity of making decision while he is still learning about the context:

I realized that the school lacked several processes, teachers did not plan their lessons, did not teach their assigned hours, there was no monitoring, really there was no pedagogical work. (...) When I took the post, I began to put order and the teachers did not like that because they did not like to plan, they could no longer ask for administrative leave for any reason (...). I put several procedures in place (...) teachers did not like that and I was accused of labour harassment but, little by little, I have won people over. Not all [some really need to step leave] (Female, experienced principal)

When you arrive to a new school the adjustment period is the hardest. If the school is complex, it can take up to six months to a year. When I talk about adapting, you have

to know the school culture, understand how teachers' work (...). When you arrive there will always be people who are happy that you arrived, but there will be some who will resist possible practices or actions you would like to implement. (...)

Management is complex, [you do not] have enough information to, initially, make good decisions (Male experienced principal)

5.4 Self category

Overall, 7% of the responses related to problems within the personal dimension of the role. All responses related to the amount of work. Particularly problematic was for principals not to be able to control their agenda as too many unplanned demands emerged each day. Principals noted they had to spend too much time on administrative tasks, whereas their interest was on instructional leadership.

5.5 Problems internal and external to the school

When the problems identified by participants were regrouped into the broader categories of external and internal to the school, a statistically significant difference associated with level of experience was found ($\text{Chi-square}=4,30(1)$, $p=.038$). Internal problems included those related to people, school's culture and structure as well as self (54% of responses across groups). External problems included those related to the municipal department of education, ministry and territory. As shown in Table 3, among novice principals, 54% of the difficulties were located in their interactions with external factors (system and territory). This was reported by just 40% of the experienced principals. Within external factors, novice principals (50%) were more likely to report problems in dealing with the DEM, as compared to experience principals (33%).

SIMCE national testing program scores for the 2015 academic year were used to compare schools where principals had reported that their main problem was external or

internal. Statistically significant differences ($t_{(120,11)}=2,73$, $p=.007$) were found such that schools where the main problems were external showed lower attainment as well as greater dispersion in SIMCE scores ($M=237$, $SD=54,84$). In school where principals reported greater internal problems attainment was higher ($M=253$, $SD=22,16$). SIMCE is not administered in special education or adult education schools.

INSERT TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE

6. Discussion

This study examined the problems reported by principals in different career stages who were undergoing a succession process. Results show that, independent of their career stage, the problems reported by this sample of principals in Chile highlight factors that make this a complex role. Similarities across career stages highlight how principals' practices are particularly susceptible to the influence of the school governance model in which a principal works (OECD, 2016a).

These two groups of principals differed with respect to the intensity with which they reported experiencing two broad types of challenges. For novice principals, interactions with organizations that have tutelage over principal's work (managing up) presented a more pressing challenge. For experienced principals, interactions with various actors within the school (managing down) presented a more pressing challenge. Possible explanations and implications of these findings are discussed next.

6.1 Managing up

Managing up, according to Fitzgerald, Matarić and Condon (2015), entails an intentional approach to working with your boss to attain mutually agreed upon goals. As a

school leader you work strategically to influence your manager to obtain resources needed to achieve outcomes that benefit the school and the district. This is highly complex for someone who has limited technical and political expertise (Daresh and Male, 2000; Schein, 1992). The findings of the current study suggest that learning how to negotiate with the intermediate level, including how to exercise power properly, is necessary, to align their school's and DEM's priorities (Bolam, Dunning, and Karstanje, 2000). Developing these kinds of competencies, however, is probably best accomplished through an induction program, or a planned succession process, aspects deemed critical for effective transition in leadership (Bengtson et al., 2013; Authors, 2011; Earley and Bubb, 2013). Neither of these aspects had been considered by policies designed to strengthen the school principal workforce in Chile.

Principals face an intensification of accountability associated with the adoption of neoliberal forms of school governance (Brooks and Sutherland, 2014; Hobson et al, 2003; Weindling and Dimmock, 2006; Hansen and Roza, 2005). In Chile, financial accountability has increased sharply with the decentralisation of school improvement planning and implementation. With regulations coming from the Education Superintendence, from the Comptroller General of the Republic and from DEM, an excess of external controls to prevent misuse and mismanagement of public funds are reported by our participants. A staff position to deal with budgetary issues, including financial accountability, is not available in schools, placing these demands on the school principal. Notwithstanding, legally the principal is ultimately responsible for the correct use of resources.

The finding that novice principals in Chile are more concerned than their experienced peers with managing upwards needs further investigation. Perhaps, upon arrival, new principals focus more attention on administrative issues which, in the Chilean context, need to be resolved with the DEM. Lacking experience to resolve them with a greater level of independence, they seek out more assistance than their experienced counterparts. Studies in

the United States have noted that, concerned with surviving in their own organization, novices have fewer possibilities to negotiate upwards (Caruso, 2013; Cheung and Walker, 2006; Fink and Brayman, 2004). This discrepancy could reflect differences in the governance and financial structures that are in place in different countries to regulate the relationship between the schools and the intermediate level of the system.

The prevalence of difficulties in dealing with the intermediate leadership level, the municipal department of education, shows evidence of discontinuities generated by the governance model for public schools in Chile. At the administrative level, municipalities' main concern is budgetary. Regarding educational outcomes, accountability policies locate the responsibility at the school level, not at the municipal level. If a school repeatedly fails inspection, or attains low scores on the national testing program, the school may be subject to closure or probation but there are no direct sanctions for the municipal department of education (such as the state taking over a DEM that has too many of their schools failing).

Other studies have shown that there is too much variability among municipal governments regarding their capacity to provide adequate financial and technical support (Valenzuela, Bellei and de los Ríos, 2014). This variability may explain the differences in SIMCE scores when comparing principals who identified internal versus external problems. This finding may suggest that in lower performing school the external support from DEM is most pressing and/or more difficult to access. The explanation for this finding merits additional studies.

Findings suggest that, contrary to the policy emphasis on leadership and management, the administrative demands of the role ought to receive greater attention in principal preparation programs. The normative focus on instructional leadership seems a regulatory ideal that is far removed from the everyday demands faced by principals in Chile. This gap

between policy and practice creates frustration and stress among principals, making a difficult job even harder.

A contextual problem, with internal repercussions, not reported in other studies on the work on novice principal, was the social movements that have led to repeated students' and teachers' strikes. In Chile the secondary student movement is a powerful social movement protesting the marketization of education that has impacted not just school principal's work but policymaking as well (Bellei, Contreras, and Valenzuela, 2010). In 2015, in response to a law proposal to define a career trajectory for teachers, Chile's teachers' guild called a strike lasting 10 weeks in public schools. Given that school finance is based on a daily per-pupil attendance funding formula, students' and teachers' strikes have important consequences. Long strikes have resulted in decreases in public school enrolment and every day of missed classes entails less funding for covering fixed costs. Based on the longitudinal case study component of the larger study, elsewhere we have documented how principals were caught between the teachers' strike and their DEM, which insisted that schools remained open even though teachers were absent (Authors, 2015). Myburgh, Poggenpoel, and Kgabo (2017) examined school principals' experiences when managing unionised schools in South Africa, showing how conflicts with unions had important negative effects on their ability to manage the school. These contextual political factors evidence the importance of tailoring principal preparation programs to address local organizational and structural institutions beyond what has been suggested by normative expectations based on research on effective leadership practices conducted in mostly in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom (Floyd and Fuller, 2016).

6.2 Managing down

Managing down refers to generating productive interactions with various actors within the school. Fitzgerald et al. (2015) focus particularly on the importance of managers' practices to harness the talents of individuals at the service of the organization's goals and strategic priorities. Compared to their novice peers, experienced principals reported more problems when attempting to change their new school's culture and structure. This finding is of concern as principal's impact on a school's outcomes is through their ability to influence teachers' commitment to a shared strategic vision (Urlick and Bowers, 2014). Work conducted in New Zealand shows why working productively with staff is a competency to be developed across various career stages (Cardno and Youngs, 2013).

The extant research conducted in other countries suggests possible explanations, all meriting further research. At the survival stage, novice principals' greater concerns centre on their ability do the job as they experience shock at the volume and diversity of their workload (Parkay, Currie and Rhodes, 1992; Oplatka, 2012; Spillane and Lee, 2014). Novice principals are still in the professional socialization phase, learning the role. Experienced principals are in an organizational socialization phase, which focuses greater attention on specific values, norms and behaviours in their particular school (Crow, 2006; 2007).

The current study also highlights the importance of the legacy of the previous principal during organizational socialization (Crow, 2007). Several experience principals in the current study had come to understand problems as organizational rather than as attributes of individuals. Research has shown that frequent principal turn over engenders among teachers greater levels of resistance to change (Macmillan, 2000, cited in Fink and Brayman, 2004). Balancing change and continuity seems critical to sustain school improvement during principal succession (Bellei, Morawietz, Valenzuela, and Vanni, 2015).

Other studies have shown that experienced principals have greater control over their

work agenda, are focused on long-term strategic leadership, rather than resolving emergencies that may result from novices' underdeveloped managerial competence, and increased likelihood of making mistakes (Oplatka, 2012; Weindling and Dimmock, 2006; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Perhaps, in the give and take of mutual influence during succession, experienced principals move to exert their influence with stronger convictions as they have a clearer vision for how an effective school works (Hart, 1991; Schein, 1992). In Chile, performance agreement contracts for principals have individual consequences for them although the goals they must meet (i.e. increase SIMCE tests scores) result from collective work. This individual level accountability may lead principals to implement fast changes that, unproductively, ignore these more collective dimensions of school improvement (Authors, 2017).

Conclusion

This study yields three main findings. First, the problems reported by experienced and novice Chilean principals are largely similar, echoing those reported around the world. However, one problem, specific to the Chilean context, relates to managing teachers' and students' strikes. Second, novice school principals experience more problems in "managing up", notably in relationships with the municipal level. Third, in contrast, experienced principals report more problems when "managing down" as they seek to influence teaching staff. Considering that this sample was largely composed of elementary school principals, further research is needed to understand the extent to which these findings account for problems specific to secondary school principals.

Whereas educational policy in Chile has sought to strengthen school leaders' roles and responsibilities, it has not addressed the leadership and management roles at the municipal department of education that defines work priorities for the principal. Evidence from other

studies has shown good leadership at the intermediate level impacts on school- level results (Waters and Marzano, 2006; Fullan, 2015; Hargreaves and Ainscow, 2015). Further studies need to examine the problems reported by principals in the current study, from the perspective of municipal leaders.

The current study exemplifies that improving educational outcomes for all students entails reforms in principals' work, concomitant with policies that provide breadth, depth, length, alignment, and coherence in other components of leadership across the system (Fullan and Quinn, 2015; Hargreaves and Fink, 2006). Policymakers' demands on school principals may be underpinned by unrealistic assumptions about the transformational role of school principals, when international research (e.g. Leithwood et al., 2008) shows that principal leadership accounts for only 5-7% of differences in pupil achievement. Improving the quality of the public school system requires a root and branch review of leadership capabilities, involving all actors in this complex educational system.

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Table 1 Coding Scheme with Sample Responses

Category	Actor	Sample of responses associated with each code
People	Parents' Commitments	It has been difficult to mobilize parents so they collaborate actively with the improvement of results. (Novice Principal)
	Staff's Dispositions	A rejection of changes on the part of teachers. Initially, all new proposals were rejected even before examining their potential for success. (Novice Principal)
	Staff's Absenteeism	Taking on the leadership of a group of teachers who can easily go on strike, which interrupts the attainment of the school's improvement goals. (Experienced Principal)
	Staff's Absenteeism	The large number of medical leaves makes it impossible to do all the classroom observations that have been planned. (Experienced Principal)
	Staff's Skills	Language arts teacher hired this year has low competence in classroom management (Experienced principal).
Place	Students	Lack of motivation and interest among some students makes our teachers' pedagogical work difficult. (Experienced Principal)
	School's culture/ structures	A school climate with interpersonal relations deteriorated, with a lack of clear roles and functions for the majority of staff. (Novice Principal)
	School's culture/ structures	Practices implemented for a long time by the previous principal (24 years). (Experienced Principal)
	Territory	Lack of connectivity as the school is located on an island with transportation, phone and internet services below the quality found mainland. (Novice Principal)
Self	Excessive demands	The lack of time to attend to the school's goals given the large number of demands that makes me remain behind my desk. (Experienced Principal)
System	Ministry's Demands	The excess of demands for actions and priorities external to the school, coming from the Ministry of Education, the provincial department of education [ministry] and DEM. (Novice Principal)
	Municipality's Autonomy	Not having the autonomy to make decisions regarding staff as they are hired by the city mayor without regards to their qualifications. (Novice Principal)
	Municipality's Priorities	DEM privileges financial aspects over pedagogical and management aspects needed to improve our school's performance. (Experienced Principal)
	Municipality's Management	The main problem is not being able to use the school's [funding] resources on school activities as almost 50% is retained by the DEM. (Novice Principal)

Table 2 Distribution of Problems by Category, and Level of Experience

Category	Groups				Total	
	Novice		Experienced		f	%
	f	%	f	%		
System	50	53	47	39	97	45
People	26	28	45	38	71	33
Place	13	14	19	16	32	15
Self	5	5	9	8	14	7
Total	94	100	120	100	214	100

Table 3 Distribution of Problems by Location, Actor and Level of Experience

Factor	Actor	Group				Total	
		Novice		Experienced		f	%
		f	%	f	%		
Internal	Parents	7	7	15	13	22	10
	Self	5	5	9	8	14	7
	Teachers	18	19	27	23	45	21
	Students	1	1	3	3	4	2
	School's						
	culture/structure	12	13	18	15	30	14
	Sub Total						
	Internal	43	46	72	60	115	54
External	Ministry	3	3	7	6	10	5
	Municipality	47	50	40	33	87	41
	Territory	1	1	1	1	2	1
	Sub Total						
	External	51	54	48	40	99	46
Total		94	100	120	100	214	100