EÖTVÖS LORÁND UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF PEDAGOGY AND PSYCHOLOGY

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MANAGING MASTER TEACHERS' REFLECTIVITY

THESISES OF PhD DISSERTATION

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INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The quality of public education systems is not only influenced by teachers' individual performance but by the professional community's ability of creating knowledge together, wherein individual competences do not only add up but they create new and valuable knowledge. In knowledge-intense organizations like schools, the individuals' and the community's professional development based on reflection is essential since it provides the foundation for the organization's learning capacity. The institution will be able to adapt to constant change through organizational learning since "one can only react to the various and changing challenges of pedagogical practice by renewing regularly[1]".

In Hungary teachers face every day challenges alone and they often try to find solutions to their problems individually (Baráth, 2017; Vámos et al. 2018) however, appropriate support from the organization would be able to bring teachers' - who "work behind closed doors" - work together (Eraut, 2004; Wenger, 2000, Mulford és mtsai 2004, Mulford, 2008; Hargreaves és Fullan, 2012; Bush, 2018; Harris és Jones, 2018). Teachers' professional development should be supported by a coherent process in which professional development is based on the competencies that should be acquired and on different phases of the career path. This would create a planned and organizationally supported way of career improvement which starts at higher education. Teachers can only be interpreted in an organizational context, not individually; hence the organizational conditions and cultural elements should be taken into consideration regarding professional development and it is the executives' responsibility to constantly improve the above mentioned factors (Radinger, 2014; OECD, 2018).

Supporting the heads of institutions is becoming more and more important in the EU's educational policy - besides supporting teachers' professional development - since they can contribute to learners' success through their impact on learning conditions and teachers' professional development (Mulford et al. 2004; Harris&Jones, 2018; OECD, 2016, 2018). Heads of schools play an important part in institutional improvement and cooperation within the school and in between schools and with the various other parties (parents, management, field representatives, etc.). Conscious planning, improvement and support of the career path of

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[1] *Útmutató a mesterpedagógus fokozatot megcélzó minősítési eljáráshoz*. Oktatási Hivatal. Budapest. 2016. 10.o. URL: https://www.oktatas.hu/pub_bin/dload/kiadvanyok/mesterpedagogus_utmutato.pdf

the heads of institutions, defining their profession in the educational sector has just started, and in Hungary it is not a well-covered topic in the professional-political discussions.

The model of teacher's career path which was introduced in 2012 in Hungary evaluates teachers' individual performance however, with creating the master teacher grade, there is an opportunity to focus on institutional and organizational effects and the leading role and competencies. Master teachers who primarily identify themselves as managers (i.e., they choose managerial profiles) are the ones in the national public education system who - beside consciously and reflectively controlling their own development – are able to plan, support and evaluate the development and improvement of their fellow teachers, of the professional community and of the regional institution systems (Educational Authority, 2018), which means that they can influence the present and the future of the public education system by designing an improvement plan that impacts not only themselves but the whole education system when they create their application documents.

It is essential for the national teacher research to investigate and understand master teachers' impact on the interpretation of managerial roles, of the inside and regional working if institutions and of the system itself when evaluating the success of the public education system. Hence the aim of this research is to investigate what kind of managerial self-image teachers construct thanks to the expectations expressed in the model of the teacher's career path. The research aims to investigate teachers' reflectivity which could help us understand more the picture they create about their professional development and about themselves as managers and it also helps us to understand how sensitive they are to the expectations that come from the public education system.

THE AIM OF THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

The main aim of this research is to investigate master teachers' reflectivity, who are in managerial roles, along the lines of communal and organizational levels of perception. Furthermore, the research wishes to achieve an understanding of how these teachers think and how they plan their professional development, and what part reflectivity plays in that process; it also wishes to describe to what extent we can regard the managerial role as a profession in Hungary based on these teachers interpretation of the role.

RESEARCH METHODS AND TOOLS

I planned to use quantitative and qualitative methods (Table 1). Mixed methods are used in the research, explanatory sequential design.

Table 1: The type, methods, tools of the research and the sample

	Type of research	Method	Tool	Sample
1.	Quantitative[2]	Content analysis	Factors for analysis	Master teachers' general and partial plans (N=813)
2.	Quantitative	Content analysis	Factors for analysis	Master teachers' career path and summarizing analysis, reflection (N=119)
3.	*Qualitative[3]*	*Interview*	*Interview questions*	*Heads of institutions (N=10)*

In 2015 1200 teachers created their application documents and uploaded them into the electronic system of the Educational Authority to earn their master and researcher teacher status within the framework of project number TÁMOP-3.1.5/12-2012-001. These documents were not written for research purposes hence, the teachers had to give their consent to use their documents for the sake of research. The portfolios – application documents – were analyzed with the teachers' consent during the Research of Master Teachers ("Mesterpedagógus-kutatás", from now on referred to as MeK which was lead by Dr. Judit Szivák) the Educational Authority and the Faculty's Board of Ethical Research gave their consent as well. 813 teachers' documents were analyzed (these teachers were awarded the master teacher status).

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[2] Master teachers' general and partial plans were analyzed during a piece of research carried out by the Institution of Education Studies at ELTE. In this dissertation the database was reanalyzed.

[3] The qualitative part of the research could not be accomplished.

1. In my dissertation with the consent of the research group I reanalyzed the database created during the MeK research. The general and partial plans of the master programs and the teachers' CVs were analyzed during the MeK research. The recording of the data was done based on a preset coding system; its main categories were the parts of the master programs. The parts analyzed in my dissertation are the following: *the background of the master program, review of the current situation, the aim of the master program, areas of improvement, areas connected to professional development and possible outcomes.*

2. The contents of professional career paths and summarizing analysis and the content of reflections (N=119) were analyzed. The text was coded according to a preset coding system in which the topics of the texts were the different units. Data regarding the frequency of the different codes was collected then analyzed based on the distribution (Szokolszky, 2004).

3. Interviews conducted with 10 heads of institutions would have been the third phase of the research, which could have further broadened the interpretation of the results of the research since the results of the quantitative research could have been validated along the lines of their reflections and it could have provided valuable information about particular managerial practices in connection with the most important research results. However, the interviews could not been recorded since the use of the master teachers' application documents for the purposes of research was set in an agreement with the Educational Authority which expired during the research. The renewed agreement had even stricter rules regarding the handling and use of the data which made it impossible to identify the 119 master teachers in managerial positions. The focus of the dissertation is measuring the reflectivity of the sample therefore, it did not seem relevant to conduct interviews with heads of institutions who did not get the master status. Due to lack of resources it was not possible to systematically call the country's public schools to get the sample.

SAMPLE

The whole database contained 813 people of which 119 people were in managerial positions. After cleansing the data in my own database after its aggregation with the database of the MeK research 114 teachers were found who chose managerial profile and 694 who chose other

profiles such as the profile of trainers, mentors, innovators. Those master teachers' materials were not used who did not have all the documents that were to be investigated.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS AND THE RELEVANT RESULTS

1. *How can the managerial activity and professional development of master teachers' in managerial roles be described?*

Situation analysis, which is an essential part of diagnosis and improvement, appeared in most of the programs of master teachers who are in managerial positions (85,1%, N=97). According to Reynolds & Vince (2004) reflective learning at the workplace can be achieved through the social discovery of experience. The importance of sharing social experiences is emphasized by Daudelin (1996), Eraut (2004) and Senge (1990) too. Managing teachers' master programs rely on the professional community in the organization, there are many elements about the community's cooperation in their programs. The master programs are realized on the organizational level (84,2%, N=96), however, the results are not specific to the organization; they focus on smaller groups and teams (82,7%, N=91). The master programs hardly contain any factors that are related to the whole organization; managers focus and reflect more on the managerial tasks related to smaller groups.

Teachers' work has a direct impact on the quality of the public education system (Harris&Jones, 2018), which means that it is of significant importance that **39,5% of managing teachers do not include a professional self-improvement plan in their programs.** This does not mean that they cannot realize their weaknesses or areas for improvement or to identify the direction of improvement for themselves with which their tasks could be planned, however, it leads to the conclusion that they not reflect on their own professional development in necessary depths. Elements of professional self-improvement can be identified in 70,1% of the master programs in some way but in 39,1% of these the related tasks are missing which means a lack of directing their professional self-improvement. **Since these teachers with managerial responsibilities do not mention consciously planned tasks related to their professional development, presumably, during their every day work, they do not reflect - to a satisfying extent - on the support of their colleagues' professional development.**

Sharing knowledge could be identified in the programs to a larger extent (93,9%) than professional development (70,2%). There is a significant number of managing master teachers in whose programs the occurrence of elements related to professional development is accidental. This is the most common among those who have been in the profession for the longest time. A point can be identified in managing master teachers' lives from which they are less motivated to improve themselves professionally.

Managing master teachers relate their professional development mostly to an effective learning-centered school management (35%) which fits their profile, however, most of the tasks were about the sharing of knowledge. This can indicate that teachers in managing positions regard the tasks within the organization as important, they support the development of professional groups and they see their role as the ones who are in charge of sharing knowledge. The most common are of improvement identified by them was the cooperation between colleagues (77,2%). **Overall, they do not focus a lot on their own professional development, they do not identify the organization as the field of their own development.**

2. *What different patterns can be identified in managing master teachers' and not-managing master teachers' improvement plan?*

Situation analysis was significantly more common in managing teachers' master programs [$\chi^2(1)=12,161$, $p<0,001$]**.** The number of programs that do not contain situation analysis is twice as much among not-managing teachers (30,8%), however, their 15% can be regarded as high. A diagnosis is important not only from the organization's perspective but from the individual's perspective as well since understanding and investigating a particular situation has a key role in reflection (Szivák, 2014; Ersozlu, 2016).

There was a significant difference between the two groups in the ratio of the problems raised [$\chi^2(3)=12,351$, $p<0,01$] (managerial profile: 75,7%; not managerial profile: 61,8%). Diagnosing, identifying challenges, problems are necessary in planning the operation of the institution and setting the direction of its improvement, all of which are part of the responsibilities of a managing role. An effective manager's qualities in the literature include the strategies of improvement, implementation and maintenance, and it is emphasized that they cannot pay attention to all the strategies listed above at the same time. Based on the context, the given situation of the school and the goals of

the school, they can decide which strategy they pay attention to (Day, Gu & Sammons, 2016). However, without analyzing the situation and setting goals, the development of organizations can become accidental. The ability of reflection plays an important part in the process of identifying and solving problems. Without reflection, managers will face challenges when describing problems and trying to solve them (Densten & Gray, 2001; Brookfield 1998; Katznelson, 2014). **The fact that raising problems was part of their master programs for the majority of managing teachers indicates that these teachers reflected on their managerial roles.**

The importance of collecting and analyzing data is emphasized by Garvin (2000) because their role in problem solving. The number of data based on evidence was low in both groups (Table 2).

Table 2: Measurements and evaluations in the situation analysis

	Managerial profile	Not managerial profile	χ^2	df	p
External measurement and evaluation in the diagnosis	25%	15,4%	5,253	1	<0,022
Internal measurement and evaluation in the diagnosis	33,3%	19%	9,696	1	<0,002

This means that opinion based thinking is dominant among master teachers since they do not rely on the results of measurements and evaluations when defining the direction of the areas of improvement.

Edmondson (2003) primarily interprets the role of reflection in group learning based on the process and the evaluation of results. In the case of master teachers the element of process can be interpreted on the level of tasks, in which there is no significant difference between the two groups. Regarding the results there were significant differences in connection with the impact on the organization [$\chi^2(2)=27,493$, $p<0,01$] and its environment [$\chi^2(1)=52,278$, $p<0,01$] among managing teachers whereas teachers who chose the other three profiles focused primarily on their own development regarding the results. **This means that the choice of a managing role is linked to a stronger focus in the programs on the organizational level instead of the individual level. Those who chose the managing role paid attention to elements strongly**

connected to the operation of the organization when identifying the areas for improvement.

3. What describes managing master teachers' reflection?

There are 8% of 'summarizing analysis, reflection' where reflection could not be identify. There are no more than 1.75% of 'career path' where reflection could not be identify.

The results suggest that the presence of deutero learning is not significant which means that the elements of the individual's judgment system are not analyzed hence, the chance of changing their pedagogical culture and their conscious improvement is accidental. The results show that most of the managing master teachers' professional decisions are conscious, deliberate and reflected. They try to work on alternatives, which means that their pedagogical or managing culture is constantly expanding. The fact that having an effect on the way of thinking rarely appears as a goal, in correlation with the results of the levels of reflection (the dialectic level rarely appears), indicates that the elements of the judgment system are not reconstructed; most managing master teachers' system of beliefs, views and activities remains fixed even if they interpret reflection as a cognitive strategy which is the basis of their professional development.

The rights and responsibilities of heads of schools decreased thank to changes in the educational policy and this implies changes in the managerial role. Although in the last decades managerial tasks (operative managing) were dominant (Balázs, 1998; Baráth&Szabó, 2011), it can be expected that the strategic side (leadership) will become more dominant than it is now, which will mean that managers will have an impact on the improvement of learning outcomes through shaping the organizational culture and making changes in the organization. All elements of the Central5 framework are crucial regarding the school's success. The concept of operational and strategic leading of change hardly appeared in the master programs from which the following conclusion can be drawn: **managers do not pay enough attention to the vision of the school, achieving goals, adapting to the changing conditions and to sharing managerial responsibilities with other members of the organization. Currently reflection the ability of reflection on characteristics of the management role characterizes the managing master teachers' way of thinking.**

SUMMARY

For 20 years the EU and OECD countries pay a lot of attention to school management since the socio-economical and social changes and the related public educational improvement interventions makes changes in the management of institutions necessary. As the expectations of the conditions of education change, the role of school management is being redefined. The international tendency is decentralization which means that the educational policy delegates the definition of strategic goals, the monitoring of results and the management of processes to a local level. The managing role is being redefined in the context of the national public education as well even if the direction of the changes is the opposite compared to the international tendency. The national system of professional-political expectations is not expanding the responsibility and the role of the heads of institutions but decreasing them. The responsibilities and the decision making rights of the heads of institutions decreased a lot as the public education system became more centralized. According to the results of the research this new type of manager can be best described as an **executing manager**:

- Some of the managing master teachers seem to be adapting to this professional-political context, they do not plan their own professional development, the organizational viewpoint appears only accidentally in their master program, their ability to reflect is limited and superficial, they mostly serve to solve a problem that appears in a given situation. They do not interpret the social impact of the educational institution, they do not focus on necessary changes.

- There are two more dominant groups of managing master teachers. **Managers who share their knowledge**, most of them are close to the end of their professional life, they relate their professional development with the improvement of the organization only accidentally, they do not regard the knowledge within the organization as a source of their own learning. They think of themselves as the owners of the knowledge. They support the professional community's development, they channel their own experiences into the organization.

- The group of **learning managers** is small, they plan their professional development consciously, they reflect on the needs of the organization, they analyze the situation of the institution, being fact- and data-based is important for them. They not only share their own knowledge with the members of the professional community but they use the members' knowledge to improve themselves as well.

It can be said about all the three groups that reflection which is deeper, takes social context into consideration and generates cognitive changes does not characterize them. Since their system of judgment does not change, their system of beliefs, viewpoints and tasks stays fixed. This means that their reflectivity cannot be described as professional.

Supporting the development of the professional community is closely linked to managerial responsibilities, however its success can only be limited if the manager uses the same pattern during reflection. The managers' learning will not reach the level of deutero learning hence, their ability to effectively support the development of their colleagues or organization and the refreshing of the pedagogical and organizational culture can be questioned.

CONCLUSIONS

- The results described in the dissertation draws our attention to the lack of a model of a managerial career path. The managing role is only one element of teachers' model of career path, therefore, it is not interpreted separately from pedagogical competencies despite the fact that successful teachers and successful managers need very different competencies which means they would need different supporting systems.
- Managing can only be regarded as a half-profession (Etzioni, 1969; Kleisz, 2002; Németh, 2015). Some proofs for this are listed below:
    - lack of a career path that can be well-planned.
    - lack of description of competencies that are separate from teachers'
    - less and less autonomy
    - decreased decision-making rights
    - strong outside control
    - during the selection process the importance of professional aspects is accidental.
- Reflection cannot overstep the professional-political context, not even among master teachers which can be explained by the lack of support coming from the system.
- Their reflectivity is not professional they only link it with their own professional development and the improvement of the organization accidentally.
- Managing master teachers seem to agree with the dominant viewpoint in national public education, i.e., the success of the organization depends on the performance of individual teachers. Hungarian professional policy regards professional development as an

individual task and not the responsibility of the organization where the teacher works. The status of master teacher could open doors to knowledge transfer between institutions but most managing teachers can only see the strictly defined knowledge-sharing.

- Boosting of knowledge sharing and supporting one another cannot be spread by managing master teachers only since they are not obviously professional in their managerial role, or in their reflectivity, or in connection with their professional development.

- It can be concluded from the above that the expectation system of the master teacher status will only accidentally lead to the expected results.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF THE HYPOTESIS AND ITS RESULTS

Hypothesis	Verification	Result
1. *How can the managerial activity and continuous professional development of master teachers' in managerial roles be described?*		
H1: Managing teachers' improvement plans are based on situation analysis.	+	85,1% of managing teachers' improvement plans are based on situation analysis, H1 was verified.
H2: The description of problems appearing in managing teachers' situation analysis correlates with the planned results.	+	The description of problems appearing in managing teachers' situation analysis correlates with the results in their improvement plans. Specific results in master programs were identified in a significantly higher ratio among those managers who described problems in their situation analysis compared to those who did not include description of problems in their situation analysis. This means that H2 was verified.
H3: Background variables (gender, the location of the school, number of years in the profession) correlate with the appearance of the characteristics of managerial tasks (positioning of the institution, management tasks-administration, supporting cooperation, improving the management of the institution, evaluation) and the appearance of self-reflection and the analysis of their own tasks.	-	Background variables did not correlate with the characteristics of managerial tasks, correlation was only found regarding the potential of position and evaluation; and between number of years in the profession and the improvement of the management of the institution. H3 was not verified.
H4: In managing master teachers' improvement plan their own professional development is consciously planned.	+	Professional self-improvement in connection with becoming a master teachers was identified at 60,5% of managing master teachers. Which means that the majority of managing master teachers plan their professional development consciously which verifies H4. However, it must be emphasized that there is a significant number of

		managing master teachers who do not plan their professional development consciously.
H5: Among managing master teachers planning their professional development correlates with the analysis and reflection of their tasks.	-	H5 was not verified since planning of the professional development cannot be related to the tasks in connection with reflection and the analysis of their own tasks among most of managing master teachers.

2. What different patterns can be identified in managing master teachers' and not-managing master teachers' improvement plan?

H6: Managing teachers raise a higher number of problems in their senior programs which contain situation analysis.	+	More managing senior teachers raised problems related to the senior program. This verifies H6.
H7: Managing teachers' improvement plans are more fact- and data-based than not-managing master teachers' one.	+	The majority of improvement plans are not fact- and data-based, however these features characterize managing teachers more which justifies H7.
H8: Managing teachers mention the impact of knowledge sharing and their professional development on their own organization more often than not-managing teachers.	+	H8 was verified since managing teachers mentioned the impact of knowledge sharing and their professional development on their own organization significantly more often than not-managing teachers.
H9: Managing teachers' improvement plan contain more effective school characteristics in connection with the learning organization.	+	Managing teachers mentioned every features in their master programs in connection with effective school characteristics regarding the learning organization significantly more often.

3. What describes managing master teachers' reflectivity?

H10: The highest level of the model describing the levels of reflection (Taggart-Wilson, 2005) is the dialectical level and it appears significantly more often in managing teachers' master programs.	-	The dialectical level, the highest level of reflection, (Taggart-Wilson, 200) appeared the least often which does not verify H10.

H11: The starting point of managing teachers' own professional development is reflection which can be identified as a cognitive strategy in master programs.	+	Reflection as cognitive startegy which is the starting point of managing teachers' own professional development, can be identified in master programs. H11 is verified. However, managing teachers reflectivity does not support the changing of their pedagogical culture.
H12: Managing teachers's reflection mostly focus on themselves, their system of beliefs, views and tasks together with a dominant appearance of organizational level.	+/-	Managing teachers's reflection mostly focus on themselves, their system of beliefs, views and tasks The dominant appearance of the organizational level was not justified, thus H12 was not verified entirely.
H13: The key characteristics of the leading and managing change appear mostly out of the elements of the Central 5 framework.	-	Leading and managing self appeared most commonly out of the elements of the Central 5 framework and the leading and managing change the least commonly which does not verify H13.

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