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THE IMPACT OF AN IMMERSION PROGRAMME IN CAMBODIA FOR AUSTRALIAN PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS

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Abstract: Australian teachers are required to teach students from diverse cultures, and pre-service teachers are reported to feel culturally unprepared. The Australian Government's New Colombo Plan aims to increase pre-service teachers' cultural competency by providing funding for cultural and educational experiences in the Asian-Pacific region. This paper reports on the impact a short-term cultural immersion programme in Cambodia had on the development of cultural competence for ten pre-service teachers. The programme included visits to Cambodian schools and a university, and cultural immersion activities such as Khmer lessons and visiting cultural icons. The cultural competency framework was used to analyse the impact of the programme on pre-service teachers' cultural competence before, during, and after the programme. Findings show that the programme had a significant impact upon meaning-making as the pre-service teachers reflected upon their experiences in Cambodia. The use of focus groups was found to be powerful, supporting pre-service teachers in a safe environment to learn from each other. The article contributes to the growing interest in the effectiveness of immersion programmes in enhancing the development of cultural competency in pre-service teachers. Recommendations include evaluation of the long-term impact of such programmes on pre-service teacher cultural competence.

Keywords: cultural impact, pre-service teachers, educational standards, cultural competence

Background

In today's multicultural classrooms Australian teachers require a deep understanding of cultural diversity and of managing diversity in a culturally competent manner. Being culturally competent involves being aware of one's worldview, having a positive attitude to cultural difference, and developing knowledge of cultural practices across cultures (Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations [DEEWR], 2009). Cultural competence is recognized across five of the seven Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (Clinton, Asheton, and Moelle, 2018). Standard 1.3 states that "Graduate teachers must demonstrate knowledge of teaching strategies where students are from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious and socio-economic backgrounds" (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Learning [AITSL], 2014, p.10). Although cultural competence is considered an important capability for effective teachers, research has identified that pre-service teachers (PSTs) in their final year of their teaching degree feel ill-prepared for teaching culturally diverse students and responding to racial prejudice (Australian Council for Educational Research, 2010; Hudson and Hudson, 2011). A lack of knowledge about cultures, confidence in teaching about diverse cultures, and ensuring teaching is authentically linked to culture have been identified as key challenges for

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Australian teachers (Australian Human Rights Commission, 2016). Opportunities for PSTs are needed in relation to teaching students from culturally diverse backgrounds.

The Australian Government's New Colombo Plan (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade [DFAT], 2016) is one such initiative. The programme aims to increase PSTs' knowledge of culture by providing short-term scholarships to travel to an Asian-Pacific country and participate in a cultural immersion programme. The programme aims to:

- deepen relationships culturally, educationally, and economically between Australia and these countries; and
- provide opportunities for PSTs to be more employable; and expose PSTs to their new roles as teachers.

Such experiences are likely to be engaging and challenging in many ways—emotionally, socially, cognitively, and culturally (Trede, Bowles, and Bridges, 2013). The DFAT (2016) describes study in these countries as a highly valued endeavour that provides a “rite of passage” (p. 2). Such experiences are likely to challenge PSTs' beliefs, values, and behaviours about culture, and assist them to become culturally competent.

This study presents findings from a 16-day cultural immersion programme for ten PSTs undertaken in November 2014 in Cambodia, and funded by the New Colombo Plan. The aim of this study was to identify the impact of this programme upon the ten PSTs' thinking as they were immersed in Cambodian culture, language, and teaching. Deardorff's (2006) model of cultural competence was the conceptual framework used to analyse the impact of the immersion programme upon PSTs' cultural competence. The findings were based on a questionnaire completed before going to Cambodia, three focus group meetings held in Cambodia, and a post-questionnaire following return to Australia.

Cultural competency, while recognized as a key capability of an effective teacher in the Australian classroom, is currently under-researched (Clinton et al., 2018). This study addresses this gap by extending the theoretical work of Hare Landa, Odón-Holm, and Shi (2017). Applied knowledge relating to the impact of immersion programmes, such as those in the New Colombo Plan, to enhance cultural competency in PSTs, offer distinctive insight into the process of cultural competency development. The study contributes to the growing interest in the impact of immersion programmes in enhancing the development of cultural competency in PSTs.

The article begins with an overview of the expectations, challenges, and insights of the cultural immersion programme, followed by a description of Cambodia's culture and education system. Deardorff's framework (2006) for understanding and evaluating cultural competency in PSTs is presented and the methodology articulated. The research findings are presented and conclusions and implications are drawn.

Expectations and Challenges of a Cultural Immersion Programme

The internationalization of education has increased as global mobility has grown (Murray, Hall, Leask, Marginson, and Ziguras, 2011). This mobility is transforming Australian society, requiring teachers to have strategies responsive to students from diverse linguistic, cultural, religious, and socioeconomic backgrounds as per the Australian Professional Standards for Teachers (AISTL, 2014). The DFAT's (2016) initiative to provide opportunities for PSTs to be immersed in Asian-Pacific countries reflects the need to develop ways of thinking, respecting, accepting, and appreciating the diverse cultural practices of the Australian population. However, it remains unclear what the immediate and long-term impact of such short-term mobility programmes are for PSTs, and how they influence their teaching in the long-term (Clinton et al., 2018; Murray et al., 2011).

To understand the impact of PSTs' experiences in a country with a different culture to their home country requires an understanding of what is meant by 'culture'. Culture as described here is “the

learned and shared values, beliefs, and behaviors of a community of interacting people” (Bennett, 2014, p.1). This process of learning about one’s culture incorporates multiple variables (Bennett, 2014). Education and learning are significant in shaping our understanding of culture and humans behave differently in different cultures; that is, culture shapes decision-making about how we choose to see, live, feel, and behave in the world (Wadham, Pudsey, and Boyd, 2007, p.3). Therefore, when PSTs experience a society that has a different culture to their own they can expect to be challenged regarding the behaviors of people in that country, and seek to understand the culture (Wadham et al., 2007). This is likely to shape their view of their own teaching. However, PSTs may experience challenges if they experience an overwhelming culture shock (Marx and Moss, 2011). Disorientation in this new culture may provoke ‘outsider status’—a common experience for students in culturally different countries (Trilokekar and Kukar, 2011; Wadham et al., 2007). It is therefore important that a cultural immersion programme provides support for PSTs when they are immersed in another culture to assist them to safely reflect upon their own cultural values, underlying assumptions about cultural practices, and how these align (or not) with their cultural framework and subsequent practices. Fostering critical reflection can enable students to make meaning of their experiences, thus transforming their learning to guide ongoing understanding and appreciation (Mezirow, 1997). Indeed, PSTs have reported: significant benefits of a heightened sense of understanding of their own learning; increased self-confidence, efficacy, and empowerment; and raised awareness of their philosophy of teaching and professional identity (Chinnappan, McKenzie, and Fitzsimmons, 2013; Miller and Gonzalez, 2010; Sharma et al., 2012).

Cambodia’s Culture and the Education System

Cambodia is among the world’s poorest nations. It suffered genocide under the four-year Khmer Rouge regime from 1976–1979, during which time between one million and three million people lost their lives—more than a quarter of the population (Heuveline, 1998). Cambodia suffered ensuing civil unrest, thought to have impacted upon social disorientation (Zimmer, Knodel, Kim, and Puch, 2005). This genocide targeted the elite and educated, resulting in the loss of 80% of the nation’s professional classes, including 80% of the nation’s teachers (Brinkley, 2011).

The recovery of the education system has been a slow and difficult process (Brinkley, 2011; Bunlay, Wright, Sophea, Bredenberg, and Singh, 2010), with English-speaking ‘international’ schools now providing an education for children of the upcoming middle class. English-speaking teachers are often employed from outside of Cambodia to teach in international schools, as Cambodia does not have enough English-speaking teachers. Cambodia is different for Australian PSTs from a cultural, socio-economic, political, linguistic, and educational perspective. These differences can be confronting for PSTs on a short-term immersion programme, and this paper investigates the impact of such a programme upon PSTs’ learning.

Methodology

This research is based in the qualitative paradigm as it focused on questions involving the development of an understanding regarding meaning of people’s social worlds (Fossey, Harvey, McDermott and Davidson, 2002). A case study approach was the focus for this study: the case being a New Colombo Plan cultural and educational immersion programme for ten Australian PSTs in Cambodia. Yin (2017) maintains that a case study allows for retaining of meaningful and real-life events in a holistic manner. Methods were selected based on the most suitable tools to address the key research question:

How does a short-term cultural immersion programme impact the development of cultural competence in PSTs?

According to Clinton et al. (2018), cultural competency is displayed through attitudes, beliefs, and expectations; therefore, formative, self-rating, and self-reflection data collection methods were used to evaluate the characteristics of effective teachers—in this case the characteristic of cultural competence. Deardorff (2006) identifies that questionnaires are a suitable tool for judging an individual's feelings, thoughts, and attitudes relating to the evaluation of the development of cultural competency in an individual. This aligns with the qualitative paradigm of research.

The data sources informed the construction of the case study. Data were collected from the PST participants via questionnaires, and focus group meetings during the cultural immersion period in Cambodia. Questions for these tools were developed drawing from past research (Deardorff, 2006; Hare Landa et al., 2017). The PSTs participated by completing a questionnaire prior to departing Australia, contributing to the three focus groups, and completing a questionnaire upon returning to Australia. Together this mix of data sources provided for a range of PSTs' perspectives over time.

The study followed conventional ethical protocol, including the de-identification of respondents. Ethics approval was received from the authors' institution prior to commencing data collection.

Context

Thirteen people, including the ten PSTs, two academics and a Cambodian host—were involved in this programme. Ten Australian PSTs were immersed for 16 days in Cambodia with the two academics (two of the authors of this paper) in 2014.

The Cambodian host of the programme introduced the PSTs to the language and culture of Cambodia and shared his experience as a survivor of the Khmer Rouge. The host shared this experience with the group, explaining his perspective of the country's current socio-economic, educational, and political situation. The host organised the visits to five schools; a Cambodian University; and to the sites of cultural interest in Phnom Penh: the Royal Palace, the National Museum, the Killing Fields, S21 Tuol Sleng Genocide Museum, and the Children's Restaurant (a safe haven for impoverished children to have a daily meal).

Theoretical and Analytical Framework

Being culturally competent involves being aware of one's worldview, having a positive attitude to cultural difference, and developing knowledge of cultural practices across cultures (DEEWR, 2009). Developing cultural competency is considered a complex process, whereby individuals transform from having attitudes of cultural difference, to acquiring cultural knowledge and skills, to intrapersonal awareness which includes adapting to cultural environments, using appropriate communication and having an ethno-relative view, to achieving positive and productive interpersonal interactions (Deardorff, 2006; Hare Landa et al., 2017). This study draws from Hare Landa et al.'s (2017) adaptation of Deardorff's 2006 model of cultural competence development. Hare Landa et al. (2017) investigated the development of cultural competency in future teachers after attending immersion programmes, either domestically or internationally. They found that cultural competence is developed when PSTs apply the knowledge gained from "emotionally compelling, deeply reflected on cultural encounters" (p.21). Their Cultural Competence Framework (CCT) identifies that requisite attitudes, knowledge and comprehension (and skills), desired internal outcomes, and desired external outcomes are useful to measure cultural competency. The current study applied the conceptual framework of Hare Landa et al.'s (2017) cultural competence to analyse PSTs' reflections about experiences to evaluate cultural competency through attitudes, beliefs, and expectations.

Participants

The ten PSTs were chosen from 150 applicants across the early childhood, primary, and secondary teacher degrees. The PSTs were successful academic achievers, ranging in age from 20 to 49 years; there were nine females and one male. All students had successfully completed at least one Professional Experience placement in Australia- this was a criteria for selection. For eight of the ten PSTs, this was their final university experience prior to graduation.

All PSTs visited five schools that were related to their teacher training area. All schools were privately-owned and three were international English-speaking schools. These schools conducted all classes in English. The other two schools had English-speaking classes in the morning, and Khmer-speaking classes in the afternoon. The PSTs were welcomed into the classes by the teachers and the Principals, where they observed teaching and assisted as requested. Various expectations were made of them: some PSTs were asked to assist with teaching and interact with the children, while others were invited to teach the class some key aspect of Australia— for example, Australia’s national songs such as *Waltzing Matilda*, or introduce Australia’s native animals. Table 1 outlines the participants’ characteristics. To protect participant identity the PSTs were given pseudonyms.

Table 1: Participant Demographics

Student’s name (Pseudonym)	Teacher training area	Gender	Prior foreign travel? Yes/No
Judy	Primary	Female	Yes
Maryanne	Primary	Female	Yes
Gina	Primary	Female	Yes
Jenna	Early Childhood/Primary	Female	Yes
Kylie	Early Childhood/Primary	Female	Yes
Grace	Secondary (English)	Female	Yes
Ellie	Secondary (Music)	Female	Yes
Jordan	Secondary (Physics)	Female	No
Brian	Secondary (Environmental Science)	Male	Yes
Lydia	Secondary (Visual Arts)	Female	Yes

Methods: The Questionnaires and Focus Groups

The pre-questionnaire asked students to identify their expectations and prior knowledge of Cambodia’s culture and educational system, as well as their goals for the programme. The post-questionnaire, completed upon return to Australia, asked students to reflect upon their learning regarding the Cambodian educational system, teaching culture in Australia, their goals, and the benefits and challenges of the programme. The questions that were analysed for this study are presented in Table 2. The responses involved short open-ended responses and were qualitative in nature. Thus this study maintained a qualitative approach to the research design as it investigated beliefs, feelings, values and expectations.

Table 2: Questionnaires

Pre-questionnaire	
	What do you expect to learn on this trip to Cambodia?
	What do you know about education in Cambodia?
	Please describe your understanding of teaching diverse cultures in Australia
	What are your goals for this trip to Cambodia? (list 3-5)
	What do you think will be the most challenging part of this immersion programme to Cambodia?
Post-questionnaire	
	What were five key points you learnt on this trip to Cambodia?
	Please describe your understanding of teaching diverse cultures
	Will the immersion trip influence your teaching in Australian schools? If so, in what way?
	What was challenging in this immersion programme to Cambodia?
	In the pre-survey you were asked about setting goals for the trip. Did you achieve your goals? Please explain.

The aim of the three focus groups was to share expectations and experiences, encourage critical reflection, and discuss associated challenges. Focus groups were identified as the ideal way to collect data in this study (Parker and Titter, 2006). As fostering critical reflection has been shown to support meaning-making to guide ongoing understanding and appreciation (Mezirow, 1997), the researchers intended for the PSTs to experience the benefits of a heightened sense of understanding of their own learning as well as a raised awareness of their philosophy of teaching and professional identity (Chinnappan et al., 2013; Miller and Gonzalez, 2010; Sharma et al., 2012). These focus groups were held on days 4, 9, and 15 of the 16-day programme. Each focus group was recorded, capturing the PSTs' initial perceptions (day 4), their thoughts at the mid-way point (day 9), and at the end of the programme (day 15). The PSTs were invited to participate in the focus groups, and were advised that attendance was not compulsory; however, all attended the focus groups and gave consent for recording. The venue chosen was a quiet area of the hotel away from other guests. The researchers posed broad, open-ended prompts to explore the PSTs' experiences of the Cambodian culture and educational system. The broad open-ended questions were similar to those in the pre and post questionnaires (see Table 3). The academics focused on encouraging the PSTs to share their expectations, drawing out the PSTs' views of their experiences in Cambodia to critique their understanding and learning. The academics encouraged every person to speak/respond to others in an effort to ensure the PSTs felt ownership of the discussion. The researchers aimed to provide a platform for the students to safely share their experiences and for this, in turn, to stimulate critical reflection of their values and beliefs. During the focus groups the PSTs took turns to speak one at a time, listening to their colleagues' views, which in turn prompted further responses. These rules were explained at the start of the first focus group.

Data Analysis

The data from the questionnaires, and the recordings from the focus groups (which were transcribed) were analysed. The complete time frame for data collection was seven weeks. To analyse the data the researchers read, and re-read the data firstly, the participants' views of Cambodia in the pre-

questionnaire and, secondly, changes in participants' perspectives with the post-questionnaire. Each researcher read and re-read the data through an iterative process. Co-authors' analyses were reviewed until agreement was reached on meaning. The CCT was applied to analyse the data under four headings: requisite attitudes (stage 1), knowledge and comprehension (stage 2), desired internal outcomes (stage 3), and desired external outcomes (stage 4) (Hare Landa et al., 2017). All three authors understood the context for the research as each researcher had been part of the New Colombo Plan cultural immersion programme with PSTs. They thus shared a mutual understanding of the context of being in the cultural and educational system in Cambodia.

Findings and Discussion

Cultural Competency Framework Stage 1—Requisite Attitudes

The initial responses from the PSTs in the pre-questionnaire which inquired about expectations and goals during the cultural immersion programme indicated that the PSTs wanted to learn about: Cambodian culture; the education system to inform their own teaching in Australia; and the Khmer language, food, and Cambodian history—with a particular interest in understanding how the recent history of civil unrest in Cambodia has affected the culture and educational systems. The PSTs expected to be challenged about the language, cultural, and educational differences, and the lack of resources for education. For example Judy's response was common regarding expectations:

I expect to observe the different ways in which children learn within their cultural setting. I also hope to learn a variety of different teaching and behaviour management strategies teachers use within this cultural setting. I will also very much enjoy learning more about the Cambodian way of life.

Gina's response to the question about understanding teaching diverse cultures in Australia highlights the understanding that the PSTs had prior to leaving Australia. Gina stated:

Teachers need to be open-minded and challenge their preconceived assumptions about the cultures of their students and families. There needs to be an open communication process between parents, communities, students and teachers. All cultures evolve, therefore teachers also need to evolve and adapt their teaching practices accordingly; there is no such thing as a homogenous society or students.

These comments that were typical of the PST cohort align with the first stage of the cultural competence framework (Hare Landa et al., 2017) regarding requisite attitudes; that is, the PSTs expressed interest in the "diverse, cultural and behavioural norms of students, families and communities" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.6), along with a strong desire to know or learn more about Cambodia, its people and the Cambodian education system.

Cultural Competence Framework Stage 2—Knowledge and Comprehension

Only one of the PSTs (Jordan) had visited Cambodia previously, however she admitted that she did not have a deep understanding of the culture of Cambodia. It was evident at the first focus group (Day 4) that the PSTs felt a sense of initial bewilderment as conveyed by Brian:

I feel so out of place in a way but I have to protect myself—these poor street urchins selling wares. I feel a lot of compassion for them but I am a little bit torn about what, if there's anything, I can do. I am embarrassed to be a wealthy westerner—I really feel like an outsider.

Here we see Brian expressing what is referred to as ‘outsider status’, as identified by Trilokekar and Kukar (2011), which aligns with the CCT’s second-stage element: “possess an awareness of one’s own cultural origins, identity, and practices” (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.7). Maryanne too shared her thoughts about the people of Cambodia, especially the children:

I couldn’t help looking at the children and wonder what life is like through their eyes.

Grace, wondered about the children in Cambodia, reflecting back on how immigrant children who come to Australia feel:

It helps us to understand a little about the children who come to Australia. I realize how lucky we are and I will bring that understanding to my future classrooms.

These PSTs’ comments indicate a new knowledge and comprehension of the differences between Australian and Cambodian cultures, while also feeling ‘bewildered’. They were trying to be ‘in-tune’ with the Cambodian culture as they compared Australian culture with what they observed in Cambodia.

Lydia talked about comparing opportunities between Australia and Cambodia:

It’s hard not to compare the opportunities we have in Australia to the opportunities they have here. I find myself putting my Western values judgement on their lives. (Lydia)

Remembering that the PSTs had not yet visited a Cambodian school but had witnessed children begging and the impoverished conditions of living in parts of Siem Reap, Maryanne demonstrated a desire to increase her knowledge and comprehension of teaching practices in Cambodia:

I want to know how much of the teaching is influenced by the West? Is it a more Westernized learning focus or is it coming up through the culture? We are learning to be very sensitive to different cultures [in Australia].

Like Maryanne, Jordan also demonstrated her reflections when she contributed her thoughts about being uninformed:

We don’t have the cultural background—you can use your teaching practices which are good, but we don’t have the cultural knowledge. I feel like I have a different lens on and am learning a lot more than if I were on holiday as a tourist.

It was evident that Lydia, Maryanne, and Jordan felt that Australian culture was the better culture and were questioning how the Cambodian context shaped their views of their own culture. As Wadham et al. (2007) state, “our own beliefs are viewed as natural” (p.21). The sense of being an outsider, and not knowing the cultural values, as expressed by Brian and Maryanne, continued throughout the focus group.

The overall sense of the focus group was that there were many unknowns, with many questions the PSTs did not have answers to. Nonetheless, they were critically reflecting, trying to find meaning as they interpreted their experiences in the Cambodian culture (Mezirow, 1997).

This growing knowledge and comprehension, described in the cultural competence framework as “immersing oneself in knowledge of the sociocultural practices associated with students’ heritage countries and ethno-racial identifications and becoming metacognitive of the sociocultural expressions of the dominant culture” (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.8) and recognizing “the diversity of cultural origins identities, and practices that exist in schools, communities, and children, and understanding the sociocultural practices that shape them” (p.8), can be seen from the above comments being expressed by the PSTs.

Five days later, on day 9 of 16, after the PSTs had visited two international English-speaking schools. The focus group's discussion mostly centered on educational practices that had been observed over the past four days, including teacher-centeredness and behavior management. Ellie commented on classroom management:

90% of the classes I saw were disengaged students, especially in music. There were kids not even doing it, hiding in the back corner, climbing over tables—it was chaos. Like assessment, I just don't know how they're assessing. They couldn't answer us either when we said, "How do you know you're effective and your kids are learning?"

The practice of teacher-centeredness as opposed to student-centered learning, such as group work, was an ongoing moot point, as Kylie explained:

They were saying that if they made a mistake, they rubbed it out and showed them the answer rather than trying to explain it. The little girl I saw kept writing three around the wrong way—and she [the teacher] just kept rubbing it out, and she ended up grabbing her hand and writing it with her.

The focus group discussion centered on whether ineffective teaching was related to the teachers being untrained. As Maryanne mentioned:

I think their intentions were good, they just don't have a lot of skills to manage it. There wasn't any real differentiation that I could see. There was no scaffolding or checking. She was just walking around marking the kids' work when they said they were finished, and that was it.

The PSTs wanted to share their observations. Several PSTs made generalisations, concluding that certain observed behavior/s happened in every school across Cambodia. But not all PSTs concurred, offering contradictory examples. For example, after hearing Brian talk about a physics teacher who was teaching incorrect knowledge, Gina provided an example of having observed an 'excellent' lesson:

It had a good introduction, guided discovery, and reflection; and it was on teamwork, so the students actually got to work in groups.

The value of the focus group discussion provided a platform for ongoing critical reflection of making meaning of the PSTs' differing observations. This evidently challenged their desire to generalize about the teaching and teachers. However, Kylie was very sure that children learn best in certain ways; for example, that young children learn best through play. Kylie, an experienced early childhood educator and training to be an early childhood teacher, expressed dismay that young children, 2–3-year-olds, were being given letters to learn and homework:

From an early childhood perspective it's blown me away that there is such a difference between the way we teach and the way they teach, or the way that we educate. We don't actually teach children: they learn through play. Here it's forced upon them.

However, this approach of encouraging children to learn through play was challenged by other PSTs who recalled the academic success of Asian school students in Australia, and wondered whether this was a result of this early academic approach. Even Kylie reflected on this:

You do question whether the Australian way is right, or their way is right, because are they academically better off? Even the handwriting in the year one class was amazing, compared to a year one Australian class room. The pencil grip was amazing. I wondered whether it's

because they spend so much time explicitly teaching that they're able to hold the pencil grip. You look at Australia—some kids in year six still can't even hold a pencil.

This focus group exemplified PSTs being both critical and supportive of Cambodian teaching practices. These responses aligned with stage 2 of the CCT framework, highlighting the ongoing aspect of developing a cultural awareness that will influence a PST's role as an educator. In particular, they show a further deepening of their knowledge and comprehension, where they are "constructing a sociolinguistic knowledge of both dominant and non-dominant linguistic practices used within schools and classrooms with the 'emerging awareness of the cultural norms and practices in cultural groups other than one's own'" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.8).

Cultural Competency Framework Stage 3—Desired Internal Outcomes -Adaptability

By day 15 (of 16) of the cultural and educational immersion programme the PSTs had visited five schools, and completed cultural experiences within Cambodia (see table 1). They had visited the Royal Palace, the National Museum, the Genocide Museum, and the Killing Fields. The PSTs' reflections on their immersion programme demonstrate that their learning changed their values while being in Cambodia. Their reflections demonstrated PSTs suggesting evidence of the characteristics of stage 3 of the cultural competence framework. For example "recognizing that diverse pedagogical practices occur in different cultural contexts" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.9) and accepting this as something that can be "embraced when facing cultural norms that are different from one's own" (p.9), was evident when Judy explained how observing the teachers had taught her new ideas for her teaching:

It was really nice to see the individual teachers had their own teaching styles...and to see a variety of different teaching styles for me has been really good, it sort of made my learning a little bit more cemented...I was sort of having light bulbs going off and thinking "Oh I could do this".

Jenna also reflected on the diversity of teaching practices and how she had developed an understanding of the Cambodian worldview:

It's been just very diverse, and I think that's been a really good thing to see. Maybe some teaching styles I won't embrace but then [there are] others that I might.

Jenna's quote not only demonstrates that adaptability, but it also shows how Jenna had developed deeper knowledge and comprehension of the cultural and education system of Cambodia, as explained by stage 2 of the CCT. There was an ongoing sense of acceptance of difference as the PSTs recognized that teaching practices differed significantly both within Cambodia, and between Cambodia and Australia. Kylie continued to question and reflect upon the best way for young children to learn:

They [children] are actually able to comprehend what they are taught and it's just drilled into them. It might be the right way for them. I don't know. Are we doing it the wrong way? Is this why you see your Asian students excelling because they are drilled from such a young age?

Maryanne described how her perspectives on the education practices had developed and changed, demonstrating the stage 3 CCT characteristic of "recognizing that pedagogical practices that occur in one cultural context may be transferable to others" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.8), but also demonstrating her knowledge and comprehension (Stage 2 of the CCT) stating:

At first I was comparing how I would be instructing the class and the strategies I would use. Then I stopped and asked myself: why are they doing it the way they're doing it? I guess when

I was sort of being critical about the teaching, the school's structure, the teaching method, then I think particularly after getting a glimpse of what happened in the Pol Pot era and how the education was pretty much wiped out, it's given me appreciation of how they are performing. It's given me more insight to their challenges, so I feel that I've got a lot of value out of that I can take back.

Acknowledging the Cambodian contexts of the schools the PSTs had visited—that is, English-speaking international schools catering for the middle classes of Cambodia—the PSTs identified the tensions within these schools with unqualified teachers, who mostly were not from Cambodia. Parents choose these schools for their children to learn English, yet many teachers are unqualified to teach. These tensions are an example of embracing an “ethno-relative perspective when facing cultural norms that are different from one’s own” (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.8). For example, Lydia continued to feel that the students were very compliant, and wondered if this was a function of Cambodian culture:

What struck me the most was how compliant the students were. Like in the older schools, they listened to instructions and followed through. They barely mucked up. And in class today, one of the teachers asked the students how they could make their classroom better and what things would make Phnom Penh better. They were all looking at each other, so it wasn't an easy conversation. But there was one brave kid. So I wonder about that whole compliance in culture, are they are a very compliant culture?

Grace demonstrated how she had the capability to adjust and adapt to cultural differences, comparing the Cambodian culture to Australian culture, which aligns with the CCT’s stage 3 element of “adapting to the dynamic expression of cultures within educational institutions, communities and classrooms and flexibly accommodating intercultural complexity” (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.8), stating:

I think they embed culture really well here. And they embrace their culture. Whereas I don't feel we do it quite as well in Australia. Like someone said to me: What's the Australian dance? Well, what is the Australian dance? Culture in Australia, apart from embracing Indigenous culture, people are unaware of it.

When the PSTs were asked what advice they would give to another group of PSTs coming to Cambodia, Maryanne’s comment provides an apt summary of the PSTs’ thinking and aligns closely with the features of stage 3 of the CCT:

Think broadly. Question your beliefs, your values against what you do in the classroom, what you see. And then challenge and reflect. You really have to reflect on practices. And then once you go home I think that process will continue and continue, and it will be good for our professional development for a long time to come.

During the focus groups the power of this discussion approach was clear: the PSTs appeared to be learning from each other. One would begin talking about a topic and this would cause a flurry of comments from others. The PSTs clearly felt safe to share their thoughts with each other and the academics.

Stage 3 of the CCT (desired internal outcomes—that being primarily adaptability) was shown by all ten students. The emergence of empathy in relation to the way the PSTs were now seeing Cambodia and its people was also evident in the data collected from this focus group. Being able to “empathise with children and families about their lives” and also to be able to “embrace an

ethnorelative perspective when facing cultural norms that are different to one's own" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.8) are two very significant features of stage 3 of the CCT.

Analysis of the post-questionnaire (see table 2) show PSTs reported feeling more competent after the cultural immersion programme regarding education and culture in Cambodia, having overcome the 'outsider status' feeling (Trilokekar and Kukar, 2011). The PSTs said they felt more confident communicating with students of diverse backgrounds, however this confidence seemed to not translate to teaching in Australia, even though all PSTs agreed that Australia had many diverse cultures. This is a point to ponder, and a possible direction for future research; because of this experience, do the PSTs feel less confident teaching diverse cultures in Australia because they have a deeper understanding of the complexity of culture?

Nonetheless, the PSTs said they felt they could communicate teaching and learning experiences more effectively—including diverse cultures—and that they could relate well to students from diverse cultures. This suggests characteristics of stage 4 of the CCT; that is, as "an educator that they could proactively and responsibly negotiate intercultural contexts" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.9), as they begin to work in educational settings with communities and individual students. This presents as a limitation of this study- the self-reporting on the post-questionnaire is contradictory. Perhaps this is due to the relief the PSTs felt about returning to Australia, a common experience to be back on one's own culture after being confronted with cultural diversity.

Cultural Competence Framework Stage 4 - Desired External Outcomes

A significant shift appeared to occur in PSTs' beliefs: that they felt more competent to provide feedback to students from diverse cultures. The PSTs concluding remarks demonstrate how their beliefs and values about culture and education before, during, and after the cultural and educational immersion programme had changed. This suggests an alignment with stage 4 of the CCT regarding the growing capacity to "achieve valued goals through sustained positive and productive interpersonal communications, while negotiating cultural norms and practices in intercultural contexts" (Hare Landa et al. 2017, p.9). The comments below from the post-questionnaire suggest the deep learning that occurred and the impact of this cultural and educational programme. Lydia wrote about the challenges of wanting to compare her ideology with Cambodian practices:

The most challenging part of the immersion programme to Cambodia was seeing educational systems and practices that did not align with my own ideas about best practice. It was difficult to keep an open mind without giving advantage to my own Western cultural ideas and beliefs.

Maryanne expressed revelations of understanding the importance for teachers to be aware of students' cultural backgrounds:

Ideology driving education is shaped by so many factors. Just because something works in the West does not mean we can transpose it into the East and vice versa. It would be wise and mindful for a teacher and school to gain understanding for the education background, experience, and ethos that has shaped each student's learning.

Kylie commented on how the programme had forced her to challenge her beliefs and values about pedagogy:

This immersion programme has helped me look deeply into my pedagogical practices and helped me form ideas to share with my team on education. I thought I was very open-minded about culture, but this trip proved me wrong. When I was visiting each school I found myself questioning the Australian way. Is our way of teaching the right way? Are our children allowed enough freedom and choice?

The above comments highlight the journey these PST's took over this short-term cultural immersion programme, which from the data presented suggests that the programme had an impact upon their learning, and challenged their attitudes, values and beliefs. The data suggests that many PSTs were exhibiting the "requisite intrapersonal and interpersonal skills of cultural competence... and ...the ability to engage in positive and productive interpersonal interactions" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.5), however it is important to be mindful of the limitations of this study which will be further discussed in the conclusion.

Limitations, Recommendations and Conclusion

This study aimed to identify the impact of a cultural and educational immersion programme in Cambodia on the development of cultural competence for ten PSTs. When analysed through the CCT, the data from the participants suggest that this short-term cultural immersion programme had an impact upon the development of the PSTs' cultural competence (Hare Landa et al., 2017). Indeed several PSTs in this study experienced this immersion programme as being 'life-changing'. It is possible to conclude that the PSTs developed cultural competency to some degree, and different aspects of cultural competency to different degrees, such as having a knowledge and comprehension of the educational system in English speaking schools in Cambodia. That said, the PSTs' cultural competence development appeared to align with stages in the CCT, moving from "foundational attitudes toward cultural differences, to the acquisition of cultural knowledge, to intrapersonal awareness, and, finally, to the ability to engage in positive and productive interpersonal interactions" (Hare Landa et al., 2017, p.5). However there are limitations in this study that need to be addressed.

It is not possible to conclude that PSTs attained knowledge and comprehension (CCT2) of the Cambodian cultural and educational system. However it is clear that the cultural immersion programme had an impact upon PSTs' attitudes to cultural diversity. They were developing knowledge of cultural practices across Cambodian culture (DEEWR, 2009) while demonstrating uncertainty and grappling with becoming knowledgeable in this context.

The study was limited, as the existing values, morals, and beliefs of the PSTs were not fully considered. While an effort was made to capture the attitudes of the PSTs prior to travelling to Cambodia, it is not possible to conclude that the programme challenged the internal assumptions necessary to develop a high level of cultural competency. This requires ongoing professional learning in Australia. As Australia is a multicultural country, the opportunities to experience diverse cultures exist however, they need to be made more explicit in the curriculum. Otherwise Australia will continue to perpetuate the finding that teachers feel ill-prepared (Hudson and Hudson, 2011) to teach culturally diverse students.

The cultural competency framework developed by Deardorff (2006) provided a useful model to analyse the recorded experiences of PSTs in a cultural immersion programme in Cambodia. Exposure to a culture different to one's own is bound to raise many challenges to one's values and beliefs. Over time these challenges will be assimilated and understood. This programme was for a short time. This is a limitation of the study. The authors plan future research to investigate long term impact of this programme. Additionally, this study is now part of a longitudinal five year study where further data collected will build a larger sample that may help to address the limitations of this initial study.

What this study did find is that, in the case of this Cambodian experience, the benefits of the programme for PSTs offered by the Australian Government, facilitated the learning described in the AITSL standards, as necessary to develop culturally competent teachers. Consequently, programmes such as the New Colombo Plan may be seen as a means to address the gap that currently exists between PSTs and university education courses, offering PSTs opportunities for authentic engagement for learning and transformation, leading to Australian teachers with enhanced cultural competence. It is currently not possible to offer such programmes to all training teachers. It was clear that the PSTs initially lacked knowledge around Cambodian culture and so Australia could consider developing a broader curriculum to enable all PSTs to undergo professional learning in cultural competency.

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HIGHER EDUCATION GOVERNANCE AND REFORMS IN INDONESIA: ARE THE MATRICES OF AUTONOMY APPROPRIATE?

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Abstract: *This paper describes the current state of governance and reforms of Indonesia's higher education system. It seeks to identify the impact of and the constraints on the national higher education reform agenda with respect to institutional autonomy for public universities. Under the prevailing government regulations, 11 public universities have been converted to autonomous institutions and given financial and organizational autonomy. Financial autonomy means a change of the public funding mechanism from line-item budgeting to lump-sum funding, thereby accentuating the importance of outputs and performance, competition and market orientation. In response, the need for a spirit of innovation to increase research outputs and to achieve internationalization has become an important driver for universities. Managerial autonomy entails a loosening of state control in internal university governance. In autonomous universities, the Board of Trustees now holds most authority, representing a range of stakeholders, including the Government which appoints 35% of the members.*

Keywords: *Autonomy, governance, higher education reforms, Indonesia*

Introduction

Indonesia's higher education system has experienced significant change over the past two decades. The Asian financial crisis of 1997, the political fall of the Suharto regime in 1998, and the rapid advance of globalisation, have all been major factors leading to higher education reform. Importantly, this reform has enhanced the financial and managerial autonomy of public universities.

Financial autonomy basically means budget cuts. It conveys a change of the public funding mechanism from line-item budgeting to lump-sum funding, thereby accentuating the importance of outputs and performance, competition and market orientation (Ngo, 2013). Cutbacks have challenged public universities to become more entrepreneurial to generate more funding. Autonomous universities are allowed to set their own tuition fees but at the same time ensure equal access through cross-subsidies; they are strongly urged to undertake collaborative research with industry and special projects with foreign universities; they can get research funding from the government through competition (Nizam, 2006). In response, the need for a spirit of innovation to increase research outputs and to achieve internationalization has become an important driver for universities. Managerial autonomy entails a loosening of state control in internal university governance. It implies no state control over internal university governance. Autonomous universities can select their own rector through internal election.

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This paper describes the current state of governance and reforms of Indonesia's higher education system. It reviews the rationale behind the national higher education reform agenda with respect to institutional autonomy for public universities, and it seeks to identify the impact of and the constraints on that agenda.

The National Higher Education Setting

The higher education sector, which is the focus of this paper, is large and diverse. Based on statistics for 2018-19 (Higher Education Database, 2019), there are 4,734 higher education institutions (HEIs) in Indonesia, of which 4,294 are private-sector institutions and only 438 are public-sector institutions (see Table 1). Since the 1970s, the number of private HEIs has grown spectacularly, from below 400 in 1975 (Welch, 2007) to 4,734 in 2018-19. According to Welch (2007), this growth, at least up to 2007, occurred because "the state budget was manifestly insufficient to respond to spiralling demand, across Indonesia's scattered archipelago" (p. 671).

Table 1 Numbers of Indonesian HEIs In 2018-2019

TYPES	PUBLIC	PRIVATE	TOTAL
University	81	518	599
Institute	65	158	223
College	85	2,467	2,552
Polytechnic	124	161	285
Academy	77	977	1,054
Academy Community*	6	15	21
Total	438	4,296	4,734

*Vocational education (Diploma 1 and 2)

Source: Higher Education Database (2019)

In 2019, there are more than 5.8 million students enrolled in HEIs in Indonesia, with approximately 2.5 million students (43%) studying at public universities (Higher Education Database, 2019). The data show that girls are more likely to enrol in higher education institutions (HEIs) than are boys (54% and 46%, respectively) (Higher Education Database, 2019), with no significant variation in this regard across all types of HEIs. In 2019, there are 293,775 academic staff members, an increase from 237,837 in 2016, but only 42,497 of these staff members had earned a doctoral degree (Higher Education Database, 2019), leading to a low number of staff members holding professorial appointments (there are currently only 4,167 professors in Indonesia) (Science and Technology Index, 2019).

The Government allocates 20% of Indonesia's national budget to the education system. The value of the budget allocated to higher education has increased over recent years, but, as reported by the OECD in 2015 (p. 205), "the share spent from the overall budget for education on tertiary education has been reduced from 50.48% in 2013 to 48.97% in 2014." Based on the 2017 annual report of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, the 2018 budget allocation increased to Indonesian Rupiah (IDR) 41.27 trillion from IDR 39.73 trillion in 2017.

Private HEIs receive only a small subsidy from the Government. They rely heavily on student tuition fees, which may be anything up to five times higher than the tuition fees paid by students attending public HEIs. Private HEIs are relatively independent of the State. They exercise control over their own resources and staffing appointments, including the appointment of their own rectors. There

are, however, various regulations applying to them. The Directorate General of Higher Education (DGHE) exercises responsibility through its 14 provincial Offices for Coordination of Private HEIs for ensuring compliance by private HEIs with these regulations. Private HEIs recruit potential students by means of institutional entrance exams. To maximise recruitment, many private HEIs are not very demanding in terms of their admission requirements, which has implications for quality.

Since 1975, the Government has routinely issued Higher Education Long Term Strategies (HELTS) for periods of up to 10 years. In HELTS III, covering the period from 1996-2003, the Government launched a fresh vision for the higher education system, described by Fahmi (2007, p. 3) as an attempt to establish a “new paradigm in higher education management, requiring improvements in quality and relevance, as well as geographical and social equity.” This new paradigm involved five pillars: quality, autonomy, accountability, accreditation, and evaluation (DGHE, 2003). Before HELTS III could be properly implemented, however, the economy was gripped by the Asian financial crisis of 1997, and then by political instability after the fall of the Suharto regime in 1998. In these circumstances, universities were left more or less to themselves to define their role in society and a traditionally centralised approach to directing public HEIs became increasingly obsolete (Ngo, 2013). Institutional autonomy, accountability and transparency became the new strategic issues for higher education (Rosser, 2016).

Academic accountability in Indonesia is implemented in the form of accreditation systems managed by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education, established in 1994. Further, Law No. 12 of 2012 concerning Higher Education regulates higher education quality assurance and accreditation. Based on Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education Regulation Number 32 of 2016, in carrying out its functions, the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education has an Accreditation Assembly (of eight members) and an Executive Board (of five members).

By March 2019, the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education had accredited 20,309 study programmes at all levels offered by HEIs (the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education, 2019). At the postgraduate level, there are 2,299 Master’s programmes and 514 Doctoral programmes which have been accredited. The results of the accreditation process show that 3,080 study programmes and 87 HEIs evaluated obtained an A-grade rating. Those programmes obtaining A-grade ratings represented 39.4% of all accredited programmes offered by the public sector, but only 8% of all accredited programmes offered by the private sector.

Higher Education Reforms towards Autonomy

In July 1999, the Government enacted both Regulation 60/1999, concerning “changes in the administration of HEIs”, and Regulation 61/1999, concerning “the establishment of [public] universities as legal entities”. These Regulations sought to transform public universities by making them autonomous (Rosser, 2016). Regulations were issued to provide legal entity status for the University of Indonesia in Jakarta, Gadjah Mada University in Yogyakarta, Bogor Institute of Agriculture in Bogor, and Bandung Institute of Technology in Bandung. Each was given a five-year transition period in which to become a fully autonomous institution.

In HELTS IV, covering the period from 2003 to 2010, the Government extended legal entity status to more public universities, which were then encouraged, or some might say ‘forced’, to become less financially and managerially dependent upon the State. Public universities were, in effect, being required to become more cost-efficient and more entrepreneurial. As reported by Susanto and Nizam (2004, in Nizam, 2006, p. 41), and by Welch (2007, p. 680), public universities were forced to adopt a variety of strategies for financial survival. These strategies included: cost-savings, such as freezes on staff recruitment; cost-sharing, principally in the form of cross-subsidies between programs within individual universities; resource mobilisation, involving the delivery of programmes on a full-cost recovery basis, the provision of contract research services, and the provision of consultancy services; efficiency enhancing measures, such as changing resource allocation policies, increasing the emphasis placed on accountability, and insisting on evaluation procedures for the assessment

of performance; the imposition of ‘special’ fees, such as additional fees imposed above and beyond the regular tuition fees; and the conduct of various other income-generating activities, for example, selling staff members’ services, publishing textbooks and selling student guides.

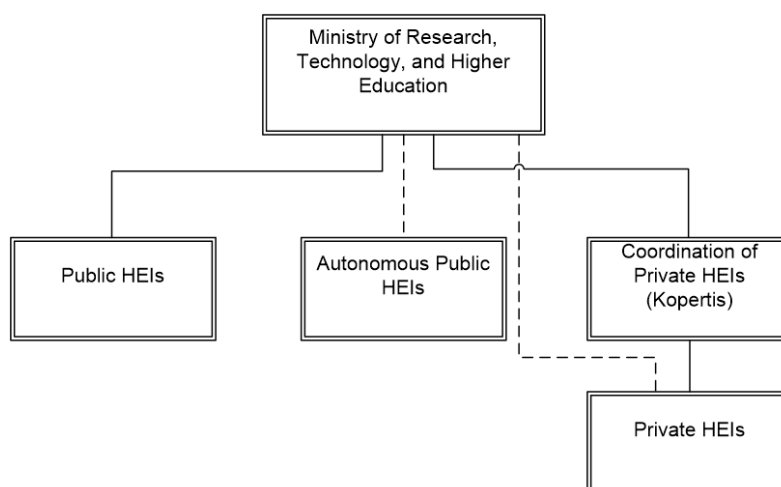
In 2009, all public higher education institutions (*Badan Hukum Milik Negara*) were given Educational Legal Institution (*Badan Hukum Pendidikan*) status, but this situation was subsequently reversed. Based on Act No. 12, 2012 about Tertiary Education, the label of Educational Legal Institution was cancelled and replaced by the label of State Higher Institutions-legal entity (*Perguruan Tinggi Negeri-Badan Hukum*). Currently, there are 11 public HEIs with the label of State Higher Institutions-legal entity (Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, 2017), accounting for about 10% of all higher education enrolments. This status enables them to raise and manage their own funds, including block grants given to them by the Government. They are also able to appoint their own rectors. In contrast, other public HEIs, as part of the Government bureaucracy, have negligible managerial and financial autonomy.

Institutional Autonomy and its Challenges

Over the past decade, higher education in Indonesia has undergone rapid expansion and its economic significance has changed. The Government elected in October 2014, with Joko Widodo as President, separated the DGHE from the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) and merged the DGHE with the Ministry of Research and Technology. Presidential Regulation 13/2015 subsequently established a Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education, within which the DGHE remained responsible for the higher education sector.

As shown in Figure 1, public HEIs, if not declared autonomous, are directly accountable to the State, hence the solid line. Autonomous public HEIs remain subject to indirect steering by the State, hence the dotted line. Steering refers here that the fact that the Government retains the capacity to intervene through resource allocation and other mechanisms. The State does not, however, become directly involved in the internal governance and management of the autonomous public HEIs. Neither does it directly control the private HEIs, hence the dotted line for these institutions in Figure 1, but, as mentioned earlier, private HEIs are subject to coordination by provincial offices which are responsible for ensuring the implementation of rules and regulations by private HEIs concerning matters such as curriculum design, the establishment of new study programmes, programme accreditation, and research.

Figure 1 Simplified Organisational Structure of the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education



Source: MRTHE (2019)

Prior to these reforms, all public universities were service units of the State, with negligible financial autonomy, no staffing autonomy, highly restricted administrative autonomy and limited academic autonomy. After the reforms, public universities declared to be autonomous were given the freedom to function as independent legal identities, each responsible to its own Board of Trustees, with authority to develop institutional policies in areas of human resource management, financial management, and general administrative affairs.

The autonomous universities were also permitted to appoint and dismiss executive staff members; to approve and legalise strategic plans, working plans, and annual budgets; and to supervise and control institutional management. Boards of Trustees were appointed to represent key stakeholders (based on Government Regulation 61/1999, chapter VI section 7), including the Ministry, the Academic Senate, the community at large, and the institution's employees and students. All members of Boards of Trustees, except for student representatives who were appointed for one year only, were appointed by the Ministry for a period of five years. Rectors were declared to be 'ex-officio' members, and Boards of Trustees were required only to deliver an annual report to the Ministry and to make suggestions to the Ministry regarding university management.

Academic Senates have also changed. These bodies, which are comprised of the institution's rector and vice-rectors, deans, professors, the head of the library and representatives of the academic employees, are responsible for all academic decision-making. All members of an institution's Academic Senate, other than the rector and vice-rectors, are required to be elected by the university community. Each faculty may nominate a maximum of two professors. The Chair is elected from the members of the Senate for a period of two years and can be re-elected twice. Senate duties include: establishing academic procedures; establishing academic norms; establishing rules of academic freedom and scientific autonomy; supervising and controlling academic quality; establishing rules for ethics and for discipline regarding campus life; establishing procedures for evaluating or judging academic achievements and the capabilities and characteristics of *Civitas Academica*; providing suggestions to the Board of Trustees about the work of the members of the university executive in the academic field; and providing suggestions to the rector and vice-rectors in developing strategic plans, working plans and budgets. Senates may also give suggestions to the Ministry about the work of the Board of Trustees.

A third important body is the Board of Auditors. This is an independent body that evaluates the results of internal and external audits. At autonomous public universities, this Board reports to the Board of Trustees. Its members are appointed for five-year terms and can be dismissed by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Auditors receives and audits the institutional budget, which is then distributed to faculties by the rector. In return, each faculty dean is required to produce a semester-based financial report for the rector, who then compiles a budget monitor which is sent to the Board of Auditors for review and eventual transmission to the Board of Trustees. The duties of the Board of Auditors include: establishing internal audit policies; evaluating the financial results of audits; and making recommendations about institutional finances to the Board of Trustees.

The University Executive consists of the rector and vice-rectors – there are usually three vice-rectors, but this depends on the size of the university. The rector has dual roles, that is, as an academic leader and as the chief executive officer of the university (Nizam and Nurdin, 2014). The rector is in charge of academic affairs, administrative and personnel affairs, student affairs, matters relating to alumni, and research and development affairs. Rectors of autonomous universities are not directly appointed by the State, but are instead appointed by the Board of Trustees – representing a major break from past practice. The selection process begins with faculties and departments proposing potential candidates to the Academic Senate. To become a rector, several conditions must be met. Prospective candidates must be regular university staff members with a doctoral qualification, and must have demonstrated high levels of competency, integrity, and commitment to deliver the vision and mission of the university. Candidates should also have strong leadership and management skills, and cannot be older than 60 years of age or have a criminal record. They must be mentally

and physically healthy (with proof required from a medical practitioner). The Academic Senate recommends a minimum of two prospective candidates to the Board of Trustees. The candidates must then publicly present and explain their vision and plans for the future development of the university. Voting for a new rector involves the Board of Trustees, the Academic Senate and certain external parties (chair of the Student Executive Council and some community leaders). Based on Decree 33 of the Ministry of National Education, issued in 2012, concerning electoral voting rights, the Government representatives appointed by the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education control 35% of the votes, the Academic Senate controls 35% of the vote, and the external parties have 30% of the vote. Finally, the Board of Trustees appoints the successful candidate for a five-year term.

Questions have been raised about both the lack of student participation on Boards of Trustees and the prominence of the Government's role in determining the appointment of rectors of autonomous public HEIs. The Government's response is that there are already two student representatives appointed to Boards of Trustees, and that the Government's control of 35% of the votes for the appointment of a rector is considered to be democratic – and that, if it is not satisfactory, then all of the votes should be under control by the Minister because autonomous public HEIs are wholly owned by the State. Engagement by the Academic Senate and certain external parties in the election of rectors represents a significant advance on what used to happen in the past, but a large share of the power remains in the hands of the Government, meaning that governance and leadership in the system of autonomous public HEIs in Indonesia remains effectively centralised in the hands of the Government (OECD, 2015).

The nature of the separation of powers between a rector and the Board of Trustees was resolved following a conflict in 2011 at the University of Indonesia concerning the matter of which Government regulation should apply to the formation of the Academic Senate. In 2011, the Rector established the University Senate, based on Government Regulation No. 66 of 2010. The Board of Trustees then re-established the Academic Senate, based on Government Regulation No. 152 of 2000. There was, therefore, the prospect of two Academic Senates, each with the same function. The Ministry of National Education (MoNE), acting in a mediating role, proposed a solution that would allow the Rector and the Board of Trustees to resolve the conflict. A transition team was formed, and the two Senates were each dissolved. The University then agreed to adopt Government Regulation No. 152 of 2000 as the basis for establishing a new Academic Senate. The conflict here pointed to the overlapping power of the main stakeholders in selecting a legal basis for the establishment of an Academic Senate. Based on the principle of autonomous university governance, the Board of Trustees was accepted to be the governing authority for the University. The Rector, who was accepted to hold the highest executive authority with respect to administration and management at the University, was considered to be responsible for establishing the internal rules and regulations for the University. In terms of the regulatory hierarchy for the University, however, the Rector's powers were judged to be subsidiary to those of the Board of Trustees.

Financial Autonomy and its Challenges

Public HEIs have traditionally received nearly all their income from the State (Rosser, 2016). Since the introduction of autonomous public universities in the late 1990s, this situation has changed. Public autonomous universities now receive about one-fifth of their income from the State. They derive the balance of their income from tuition fees (about 60%) and the sale of services (about 20%). These services include the provision of consultancies and on-campus services such as parking, cafeterias, bookstores and the like.

Tuition fees are another important way to generate income for autonomous universities. Although tuition fees were already common before the transition to autonomy, in the new situation, the autonomous institutions are supposed to collect tuition fees directly from the students. This new

financial freedom encountered strong resistance from university student organisations, academics, and parents. 'Privatisation and commercialisation' of public institutions definitely made the tuition and fees at public institutions climb (Rosser, 2016). Society protested that the State put the burden of funding education onto students' and parents' shoulder. The position of leaders of autonomous university was said to be like 'meat in a burger'. Seen from the Government's perspective, the new freedom forced the 'true' academic leaders to be more innovative and creative in generating institutional revenues. It was not a comfortable position for the rectors concerned because they generally lacked experience in acting as entrepreneurs. At the same time, students, parents, and academics protested against the tuition-fee increases.

In addition to government funding, autonomous higher education institutions are free to generate income through consultancy or cooperation with industry. To address the concern, the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education is increasing the share of competitive funding programmes available to all universities. These new funding mechanisms emphasise the importance of performance and the attainment of outcomes. By being available competitively, they also stimulate competition between all HEIs, whether public or private, and they engender a more market-oriented approach to achieving State priorities (Nizam, 2006, p. 41).

In direct response to global competition, there is in general a push from Government and a perceived need within the sector to increase the level of internationalisation with a view to, amongst other things, improving research outputs. Internationalisation is valued for many reasons, not the least of which is the extent to which it can create new opportunities for academic staff members to collaborate with scholars from abroad in publishing research results. The OECD (2015, p. 202) reports that there has been an increase in research output from Indonesia, particularly in the form of peer-reviewed research papers in recognised international journals, often written collaboratively with foreign scholars. In January 2017, the Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education (2018) launched Science and Technology Index (SINTA) which is a web-based research information system which offers a quick, comprehensive and easy access to journals published by Indonesian higher educational and research institutions and citations of journal articles to measure the performance of researchers, institutions and journals in Indonesia.

There are, however, important constraints, of which the most fundamental is simply the lack of funding (Suryadarma, Pomeroy and Tanuwidjaja (2011). It is a condition that has been impacting on Indonesian HEIs for ages. Limited core funding from the Government for public HEIs does not provide a sufficient basis for them to plan independent research agendas and to choose long-term research projects. Researchers engage, therefore, in short-term contract-based research projects. An over-reliance on these kinds of projects means that researchers often face difficulty in covering their ongoing costs and in providing for institutional capacity building. Consequently, research groups in many public HEIs often turn to other work in order to supplement their incomes. It is not only a question of limited budgets but also of limited time being available to conduct research. Furthermore, Suryadarma, Pomeroy and Tanuwidjaja (2011) indicated that research staff members showed a greater tendency to spend a large share of their time on non-research-related activities. Related to this problem is, of course, a poor command of English, which is the most common language for reporting internationally on research. Researchers in Indonesia not only lack time to do research, but they also lack time to master English, which is the language they need to utilise to have an impact internationally and they have limited access to international publications (Rakhmani and Siregar, 2016).

In addition to insufficient funding and limited time, research projects are mostly irrelevant to the development of local industrialization. Moeliodihardjo, Soemardi, Brodjonegoro, and Hatakenaka (2012) indicate some flaws in university operations that hamper their ability to develop industrial partnerships. Most of the time universities see industries as too profit-oriented and lacking idealism, while industries see universities as ivory towers and too bureaucratic to provide useful assistance. The inflexible financial management and cumbersome bureaucratic procedures in universities are

incompatible with the rapid responses required in the dynamic industrial world. Universities do not fully support individual academics who initiate industrial partnerships.

Conclusion and Recommendation

One of the breakthroughs in Indonesia's recent experience of higher education governance and reforms has been the extent of the freedoms now afforded to the autonomous public HEIs. Are the matrices of autonomy appropriate? No, the higher education system is not yet, however, at a point where it could be said to enjoy full democracy. Neither is the exercise of the autonomy that is available to public HEIs running as smoothly as it could. The Government retains a significant influence over the public autonomous HEIs through its capacity to control 35% of the votes for the election of rectors. The general view from within the higher education system is that the Government has never really lost control of the public autonomous universities, and that it is simply exercising its control in a softer way than would be evident if it simply assumed all control over the appointment of rectors.

Conflicts emerging between students and university leaders point also to inadequacies in the implementation of autonomy by the Government. Autonomous public HEIs are being required to function as businesses, even though they are not privately owned, and even though university leaders are not entrepreneurs. Because of limited public financial support, autonomous public HEIs must generate additional income as best they can. One of the easiest ways of generating this revenue is by raising tuition fee levels. However, these increases never appear to result in commensurate improvements in quality, and a lack of transparency not only in their financial management but also in their general processes of policy development compounds the problem. Not surprisingly, students resist increasing tuition fee levels, and they fail to understand why certain policies have been adopted. In many respects, the leaders of autonomous public HEIs are inadequately prepared for the challenges that autonomy from the State has created for them.

Increased tuition fee levels bring with them an additional challenge, that of autonomous public HEIs becoming less accessible by capable young people from poorer home backgrounds. The Indonesian Constitution clearly stipulates the right of all citizens to obtain an education, but this right can be inaccessible if university attendance is unaffordable. Autonomous public HEIs are, therefore, placed in a position of being seen to favour those from better-off home backgrounds who can afford high tuition fee levels, at the expense of those who are clever enough to attend university but whose families are not financially capable of supporting them.

The need to be financially self-reliant also impacts on the research profile of autonomous public HEIs. Teaching generates more income for these institutions, and so it naturally becomes the main priority area. The activities of the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education, which focus on the accreditation of study programmes, accentuate the need for teaching to be the main priority. As a consequence, research in Indonesian public HEIs is neglected.

Some recommendations may be proposed in light of these circumstances. First, there is a pressing need to improve the management capability of senior officers in Indonesian autonomous HEIs. The management of a large corporate university requires ability in creating innovative visions and in making sure that good management is exercised at all levels within the university. Top managers in autonomous public HEIs need to leave behind a mindset associated with financial dependency on the State and need to develop a mindset associated with entrepreneurship. Second, continuous improvement and sustainability should be maintained. In order to ensure the continuity of education. Universities need great efforts to find and generate financial resources to finance all their activities. They also need to be creative in opening profit-oriented units by having collaboration with companies. In this regard, they must achieve a balance between educational services and commercial businesses. Third, there are issues concerning accountability and transparency. Universities cannot exist separately from the society to which they belong. They are not 'ivory towers'. While seeking to secure their autonomy, they must also embrace the community as one of their major stakeholders by engaging it in each step and activity undertaken. It follows that universities will need to be transparent and to provide public accountability. To foster a high level of community trust is not

easy. Society has become increasingly selective in choosing universities based on their quality. Therefore, universities should be really open to receive opinions, suggestions and positive inputs regarding their contribution to education.

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RESEARCH IN VIETNAM: THE EXPERIENCE OF THE HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

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Abstract: Vietnam's low level of research productivity is especially pronounced in the humanities and social sciences. Though previous research has suggested various possible explanations, to date there has been no detailed investigation of the topic. This investigation explored the publishing experiences of a selected sample group of 20 high-achieving and well-regarded Vietnamese scholars from the humanities and social sciences. For these participants, a commitment to research and publishing derived mainly from a personal sense of academic identity, a desire to complement their teaching role by doing research, and a wish to contribute to Vietnam's social and economic development through their research. Few of them reported feeling institutional pressure to publish, though some reported that their university was now providing financial incentives for publishing in high-impact journals. Disincentives to publishing included funding limitations, and especially limitations associated with approval mechanisms within universities. Interference with the freedom to publish was reported to occur, but none of the participants appeared to be too concerned about political censorship. It was widely considered to be easier to have research reported in national than in international peer-reviewed journals because of the difference in academic standards. A lack of confidence with writing in English was also reported by some participants to be a constraint on publishing in international journals.

Keywords: higher education, humanities and social sciences, research productivity, Vietnam

Introduction

Vietnam's research performance, though now making steady progress, continues to fall well short of expectations, given the size of Vietnam's higher education sector and given also that faculty members at public universities in Vietnam are expected to devote one-third of their employment hours to scientific research (Hien, 2010; Nguyen and Pham, 2011; Nguyen, Ho-Le, and Le, 2017; Ministry of Education and Training [MOET], 2014). Many factors have a bearing on this situation. While qualification levels are rising at a rapid pace, it remains the case that over three-quarters of all faculty members do not yet have a doctoral qualification (MOET, 2017). In addition, there has been a tradition in Vietnam for universities to be teaching-only institutions, and many Vietnamese universities have not yet made the conversion to becoming more research-oriented (Pham, 2013). Mechanisms for the distribution of research funds within and between universities in Vietnam have also constrained research productivity because of the cumbersome nature of their administration (Nguyen, 2013; Pham, 2013). In addition, progress with research has tended to be contained by the continuing existence of a large number of small, specialised, mono-disciplinary research institutes which are a legacy of the Soviet period of influence and which function outside the higher education sector. These institutes are not well positioned to contribute to the kinds of large-scale

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multidisciplinary research projects which increasingly are pivotal to national research and innovation success in Vietnam (Hien, 2010; Pham, 2013).

In the humanities and social sciences, Vietnam's research performance has been especially poor. According to Scimago (2018), only 740 (12.2%) of the 6,031 cited documents from Vietnam in 2017 came from the humanities and social sciences (including arts and humanities, business and management, economics and finance, psychology, and social sciences). Thailand, in contrast, had a higher proportion (13.6%), as did Malaysia (34.6%), and as did Australia, Canada, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the United States, each with a proportion ranging from 23.8% to 31.3%. China, in contrast, had an even lower proportion (5.1%) than Vietnam.

Despite the fact that research productivity in the humanities and social sciences in Vietnam has been poor, the topic not attracted much more than passing attention in the scholarly literature. Pho and Tran (2016, p. 16), reported on a survey of faculty members from across eight disciplinary areas in the humanities and social sciences at a large university in Ho Chi Minh City. Though the lecturers surveyed appeared to regard research and publishing to be important, their enthusiasm for doing research and for publishing was dampened by perceived obstacles in the form of a lack of funds, a lack of time, and difficulties associated with deciding on a research topic and an appropriate journal in which to publish. When considering the prospect of publishing internationally, they were also concerned about writing in a foreign language, as well as about finding an appropriate journal in which to report their research. Le (2016), whose main focus was the development of an academic identity among lecturers in Vietnam, reported that the main concerns of lecturers from the humanities and social sciences across four site universities in the north of the country were the lack of financial support, a fear that their English skills were not sufficiently well developed for the purposes of publishing in peer-reviewed international journals, and a need felt to avoid research topics which might prove to be politically sensitive. In contrast, lecturers from the natural and applied sciences appeared to be more accomplished, more confident, and more cosmopolitan in their approach to research and publishing (Le, 2016, pp. 158-159). Vuong et al. (2017) addressed factors considered likely to impact on research productivity in the humanities and social sciences. These factors included gender, age, research experience and status as the leading (or corresponding) author. Drawing upon ten years of Scopus data, the researchers concluded that the only variables impacting directly on the academic productivity of scholars in the humanities and social sciences were age and status as a corresponding author.

This investigation seeks to throw more light on the topic. Its specific focus is the publishing experiences of a selected sample group of scholars who were identified by their peers as having achieved, or as being likely to achieve, scholarly prominence within a humanities or social science discipline. Based upon an analysis of these experiences, the investigation identifies circumstances which may be impacting adversely on the publishing profile of accomplished Vietnamese scholars from the humanities and social sciences.

Research performance is defined in this paper as the number of peer-reviewed publications per researcher. As Abramo and D'Angelo (2014) explain, however, this definition is limited in scope because it takes no clear account of publishing quality. A better definition would focus on citations achieved per peer-reviewed publications per researcher. In Vietnam, though, there is no reliable bibliometric data base for the purposes of counting citations, particularly for counting citations for publications written in Vietnamese. It is necessary in this investigation, therefore, to rely on a less informative definition of research productivity.

The Setting

Vietnam's higher education sector is attracting increased attention in the scholarly literature. Recent accounts of the sector's development have been provided by Pham and Hayden (2015) and by Le and Hayden (2017). There is much to be explained about the sector, but for reasons of brevity only

three aspects of the sector, each relating closely to the topic of the present investigation, will be addressed here.

The first is that university-based research in Vietnam is acquiring an increased level of status and importance. In 2012, the *Higher Education Law* declared the need for Vietnam to develop a multi-tiered higher education sector, with research-intensive universities comprising the top tier. This regulatory pronouncement reinforced policy aspirations which have been repeatedly expressed since at least 2005 about the need for Vietnam to have a select group of research-intensive universities capable eventually of achieving 'world-class' status. There are now at least 20 leading public universities in Vietnam that are striving to become 'world-class'. Mechanisms being applied to boost research productivity within these institutions include schemes to provide financial and other rewards for faculty members who succeed in publishing in peer-reviewed international journals. In general, faculty members from the natural and applied sciences have been the leading providers of these kinds of research publications (Le, 2016).

The second is that, though details of the expenditure patterns by the Ministry of Science and Technology are not readily accessible, the flow of public research funds in Vietnam has almost certainly favoured the natural and applied sciences. To an extent, this pattern is inevitable, given Vietnam's need for scientific knowledge to underpin its rapid economic development. The funding advantage given to these scholars has, however, enabled them to achieve a high proportion of all peer-reviewed publications in international journals, and hence to dominate avenues of access to research funds routinely being made available competitively through the National Fund for Science and Technology Development (NAFOSTED), a research funding agency which became operational in 2008. Obtaining funds for research from NAFOSTED requires evidence of prior success in achieving peer-reviewed publications in international journals. Scholars from the humanities and social sciences have been at a relative disadvantage in this regard.

The third is that faculty members in Vietnam do not, in general, have much depth of research experience. Traditionally, universities in Vietnam have been teaching-only institutions, with responsibility for research assigned to specialised public research institutes. Over recent years, the Government has become more supportive of the importance of research in public universities. Under Project 911, for example, 20,000 faculty members are being assisted to obtain doctoral qualifications, with at least one-half of these faculty members permitted to study abroad. The proportion of PhD-qualified faculty members (MOET, 2017), though low by international standards at only 21.6% in 2016, has doubled within the past decade, but these newly-qualified faculty members are not yet experienced as researchers. Furthermore, many of them are assigned to academic management positions, or find that they cannot continue to develop their research skills in Vietnam because of infrastructure and funding deficiencies. The emergence of research-intensive universities is likely, therefore, to be a slower process than policy pronouncements would suggest.

Methodology

To explore in detail the experiences of publishing by faculty members from the humanities and social sciences, a qualitative investigation requiring the conduct of semi-formal, in-depth interviews with a selected sample group of scholars from across a range of relevant disciplinary backgrounds was designed and implemented. The sampling technique required initially the identification on a convenience basis of a handful of humanities and social science scholars known to the lead author to be highly-regarded researchers in a humanities or social sciences discipline. These scholars were then invited to recommend other scholars for interview. The selection criterion was that the scholars recommended should be already, or should be likely to become, prominent for their research within an academic discipline from the humanities or social sciences.

This 'snowball' sampling technique (Patton, 2002, p. 237) is cost-effective and relatively efficient as a means of recruiting a sample group of suitable participants for a qualitative investigation. A clear limitation, though, is that it is a non-probability form of sampling. Findings generated relate

exclusively to the perceptions and circumstances of the members of the selected sample group, but that does not mean that the insights discovered are irrelevant to an understanding of the experiences of a wider group of people. It is important, though, that any transfer of insights from this research to other settings is done by the reader, and not by the investigator (Lincoln and Guba, 1985, p. 316).

The interviews took place during the second half of 2017. They continued up until such time as it became evident that data saturation had been reached. At this point, no fresh insights were emerging from the interviews. More than 20 interviews were completed before data saturation became evident. Several interviews had to be discarded, however, because it became apparent that the interviewees concerned had not met the selection criterion. A total of 20 participants were finally selected for inclusion in the investigation.

The research design for the investigation was constructivist and interpretive. Of interest were the individual accounts provided by the participants concerning their personal experiences of academic publishing. These accounts were then analysed for the purposes of extracting key themes. This kind of research design is based on Lincoln and Guba's (1985) methodology of *Naturalistic Inquiry*, which strongly emphasises the importance of achieving trustworthiness of the findings from an interpretive investigation. Trustworthiness is more likely to be achieved if various standard procedures for the collection and analysis of data are adopted. These procedures include: conducting interviews in a manner which reassures the participants about the importance of the topic and the value of their insights; promising participants that nothing being reported by them will be attributed personally to them; allowing the participants to determine how and when they would like to be interviewed; providing each participant with an opportunity to review the information provided to the researcher; and permitting each the participant to comment on key themes to emerge from the investigation. Each interview was summarised shortly after it took place, and this summary was sent back to the participant in question for verification. Triangulation was also employed by checking significant claims made against relevant documentary and web-based evidence. All research materials collected and developed were maintained in a format suitable for auditing.

Appendix A presents a profile of the 20 participants in the investigation. The participants are referred to by number to preserve their anonymity. Characteristics reported in Appendix A include the participant's field of study, gender and age bracket, academic title and highest academic qualification, and publication details. The extent of descriptive information provided about each participant's publications is restricted to avoid any possibility of the participant concerned being identified.

The participants came from universities located in the north, centre and south of Vietnam – except for one participant who was not currently attached to a university. They represented a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and applied social sciences. Fifteen participants had a PhD qualification. Four participants were younger scholars in the process of completing a PhD program – all at foreign universities. Nine participants were female. All the participants had experience of publishing peer-reviewed works, but four of them had published only or mainly in Vietnamese. Several of the participants were well-known and celebrated in Vietnam for their contributions to scholarship in the humanities or social sciences.

Ten of the participants identified themselves as belonging to the humanities. These participants included three whose expertise was based in the discipline of economics. It is unusual for economists to regard themselves as humanities scholars, given the applied nature of most economic research, but these participants insisted that they were mainly interested in the theoretical aspects of economics, and so preferred to identify as humanities scholars.

The interviews were conducted in ways which responded to the preferences of the participants. Some interviews were conducted in person. Most interviews, however, were conducted by telephone. In several cases, the participants preferred to respond by email to the questions in the interview schedule. In general, whether conducted in person, by telephone or through email correspondence, the interviews were successful in obtaining "rich, detailed, and concrete description" (Patton, 2002, p. 473), as is essential to the success of a qualitative investigation.

Following Spradley's (1979) directions regarding ethnographic interviewing, the guiding questions for the interviews were mostly open-ended, with no restriction placed on how each participant might respond. The questions were as follows:

- What does your current work as an academic involve – teaching? research? administration? Does your work as an academic formally require you to do research?
- Have you published any articles in peer-reviewed academic books or journals? In international or in Vietnamese peer-reviewed academic books or journals? Written in which language (English? Vietnamese? Other?)
- How important is research to you in your role as an academic? Why?
- Have you ever received funding for your research? If so, how much and from which sources?
- What do you see to be the conditions which encourage and support you to produce research outputs?
- What do you see to be the conditions which discourage and constrain you from producing research outputs?
- Could you please share your experiences about the submission of your papers/books/book chapters to domestic and international peer-reviewed journals or similar outlets?

Most interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, the native language of the participants and of one of the authors. Some participants preferred, however, to be interviewed in English, which had become the medium for their scholarly work. Eight interviews were digitally recorded with permission from the participants concerned. All reasonable care was taken during the interviews to ensure that the participants were not exposed to any potential emotional or reputational risks.

Findings

In the following account, key themes to emerge from the interview data are documented. All participants are referred to simply as lecturers. To retain the authenticity of their comments, the actual words used by participants (translated into English where necessary) are reported.

Valuing Research

One of the striking features of the comments made by participants was the intensity of their personal attachment to the importance of research. Representative remarks included:

Doing research is natural to me as I do it all my life. It is never boring as it always presents something new. (Participant 4)

Doing research is very important to me. It helps updating knowledge and exchanging ideas with other academics in Vietnam and abroad; it expands our understanding and [allows us to] come to resolutions theoretically and practically; and it supports my teaching role. (Participant 5)

Research plays a critical in my professional career. It helps me improve teaching quality, international exchange, professional development and my findings have contributed to important projects in Vietnam. (Participant 13)

It was clearly the case that one participant after another gained enormous personal satisfaction from an engagement with research. Research was reported by them to have satisfied a passion for discovery, a need to achieve personal professional development, a wish to be a better teacher, and a sense of obligation to contribute to Vietnam's socioeconomic development. In explaining how he felt about research, one of the most published of the participants commented:

My motivation for research . . . includes a passion for discovering meaningfulness as well as for contributing to policy development, supporting learners, and achieving academic

recognition. At the bottom of my heart, I feel that research is kind of my “karma”. I am afraid that if I did not continue to engage with research, my commitment to learning and to work would be wasted. (Participant 1)

His remarks captured most of the elements referred to by the others. Research was important as a foundation stone for personal and professional identity. In addition, it was important in contributing to policy development in Vietnam.

Incentives for Publishing

The participants’ accounts regarding the incentives for undertaking research suggested strongly that their commitment to research was self-motivated. Some participants provided details about incentive schemes devised within individual universities to provide motivation to publish in high-impact international journals. Mostly, though, the participants reported either that they did not know about these schemes or that they were not hugely motivated by them. The main driving force for their engagement with research was said to come from within their own sense of passion for research.

The existence of extrinsic motivators was, however, acknowledged. The participants acknowledged the increasing importance of the role being played by research publications in academic promotion decisions. As one participant reported:

In Vietnam, we have a system that counts the reputation of each journal by a score [an impact factor]. Only publications in highly-scored journals are counted for obtaining promotion to a professorship. The higher the score, the more demanding is the quality of the papers. (Participant 8)

This participant was not alone in recognising the existence of a points system for obtaining advancement to associate professor and to professor appointments. Currently, for example, promotion to associate professor requires the attainment of at least 6 publication points, and promotion to professor requires the attainment of 12 publication points, with points allocated as follows: from 0.25 to 1.0 point for each national publication, and 2.0 points for each peer-reviewed international publication. Of interest here is that all the participants satisfied the publication points-test for promotion to associate professorship, and most of them also satisfied the points-test for promotion to professorships. Five of the participants were already associate professors, and two were already professors. There are, of course, other requirements for promotion to these academic levels.

Many participants reported, however, that research achievement was not explicitly acknowledged as being important to career success at the universities at which they were employed. One participant explained, for example:

Research is not being appreciated sufficiently in the university environment. It has NOT been a prerequisite for promotion or for obtaining a more senior management role in universities. (Participant 13)

In fact, however, research publications are supposed to be a pre-requisite for promotion to senior academic levels, as documented in *Decision No. 20/2012/QĐ-TTg* (MOET, 2012). Of interest, therefore, was the fact that Participant 13 and at least six other participants referred to research achievement as not being important to career success. Participant 11 commented, for example: *“My major responsibilities are teaching and research. Research is required for this job, but it is not a demand of the institution. I mean, if I did not do research, there would be no problem. I would still keep my job.”* Participant 2 commented: *“My work is teaching, research, and management. I’m encouraged by my institution but not required to do research.”* It was not uncommon for the participants to refer to an expectation of their employing university that they should be involved

in research, with at least one-half of them reporting that this expectation existed for them. The prevailing view, though, was that the decision to undertake research, and specifically to produce peer-reviewed publications, was largely a matter of personal choice, with nobody likely to be too concerned if they did not engage in publishing.

Various participants reported on financial incentives being provided within universities to encourage the attainment of research publications. Some of the incentives were remarkably generous. Participant 9, for example, reported that: *“The encouragement [to publish] is strong at my institution. My university gives a reward of 40 million VND [about \$1,720 US Dollars(USD)] per article.”* Participant 10 reported that his university provided *“20 million VND [about \$860 US] per article published in ISI journals.”* By comparison, the salary for a professor in Vietnam is within the range from USD \$4,800 US to \$7,200 per annum. Most participants, however, made no mention of these financial incentive schemes, suggesting either that the schemes were not widespread across the higher education sector or that the incentives were not especially significant in decision making about publishing.

As many as 14 of the participants reported that they had received external funding in support of their research activities. The funds were reported to have come from a remarkably wide range of sources, including ministerial and institutional research grants, grants from NAFOSTED, grants from provincial authorities, and grants from various foreign governments and non-government organizations.

Only three of the participants referred explicitly to the size of the grants received. They reported receiving grants of between USD \$4,000 and \$6,000. These participants were among the most highly published of the 20 participants in the investigation.

Disincentives for Publishing

The participants were invited to comment on what they considered to be the conditions discouraging or constraining them with respect to academic publishing. Participants 7 and 10 reported experiencing no disincentives or constraints on their publishing activities, but these were the exceptions. For a majority of the participants, disincentives and constraints were considered to exist. Participant 19 referred, for example, to the *“lack of funding, lack of facilities, lack of support and attention from management, and lack of intellectual freedom.”* His overview reflected broadly the range of disincentives and constraints reported by many of the other participants.

The lack of funds was referred to by more than one-third of the participants, but seldom in isolation from other related concerns. Participant 4, for example, was concerned not only with the lack of funds but also with deficiencies in the research funding process. She commented: *“The funding application process is too complicated and too bureaucratic.”* Participant 12 also reported on the lack of funds, and he too was critical of the bureaucratic hurdles: *“Bureaucratic procedures, especially those related to financial claims and reimbursement.”* Participant 20 expressed a similar point of view, adding that she had little confidence in the people making the funding decisions: *“The research funding procedures are inappropriate. Members of selection boards [for determining grants] are not open-minded, vary greatly in terms of their research knowledge, and operate with no supervision regarding the quality of their decision making.”* Participant 11 went one step further, claiming that the institutional funding process for research operated under a cloud of corruption: *“The research funding mechanisms are weak . . . [and] are affected by ‘xin-cho’ [providing financial benefits in exchange for favourable decisions], which encourages corruption. Officials need postgraduate qualifications to obtain higher-level appointments, but they corrupt the system by not complying with academic norms.”* Participant 11 was referring here to the fact that government officials were influential in determining the flow of funds to programs and research projects in universities, and so then felt entitled to be able to ask for certain privileges in return.

The question of intellectual freedom was referred to by about one-third of the participants. In general, they expressed confidence that they were able to find ways of avoiding political censorship.

Of more concern to them was the way in which committees with responsibility for approving institutional research grants and for vetting research publications interfered to the extent of telling individual researchers how they should conduct their research and which findings were important to report. Participant 2, a younger academic who had already acquired extensive international experience, explained the situation as follows:

The constraints do not come from external forces but from people inside the academic system, especially the evaluation committees approving research grants and research results. As a consequence, we have to do things the way they want to see rather than the way we have learned and that are internationally accepted. (Participant 2)

Another participant who was also concerned with institutional impositions on intellectual freedom saw the matter as being symptomatic of a collectivist mind-set which gave rise to a lack of risk-taking by individual scholars. In his view:

The limitation of academic freedom is the major obstacle not only for academic productivity in the social sciences and humanities but also for national human development. I am not talking here about interference by the authorities, but about the barriers that exist within the minds of individual academics. There is a collectivist mind-set which is threatening to individuals who dare to be different. (Participant 15)

In general, while none of the participants referred to blatant political censorship, about one-third of them drew attention to the existence of political sensitivities. Negotiating these sensitivities appeared mainly to be part of the challenge of having research plans approved at an institutional level.

Experiences of Getting Published

All the participants had something to say about their experiences of getting published. Some accounts were lengthy and detailed. Several key themes emerged.

One of these concerned the nature and extent of the differences between publishing in national and publishing in international peer-reviewed journals. It was widely accepted that it was more difficult to have articles published in international than in national journals. The difference was attributed mainly to the fact that the expectations of international journals were seen to be much higher. Participant 3 commented, for example: *“Domestic journals are much easier for getting a paper accepted because there is no language barrier, but the international peer-reviewed journals also have stricter norms and higher standards.”* Participant 5 added: *“It is harder to have our findings published in international peer-reviewed journals because the review process is more strictly implemented.”* Participant 12 commented: *“International journals are more demanding on quality and it is hard to find suitable [international] journals for submission my manuscripts.”* Some participants noted, however, that the gap was closing, especially in the case of leading national peer-reviewed journals. Participant 2 reported, for example: *“The peer review procedures of the domestic journals are now almost similar to those of the international ones, though less strict.”* Participant 5 commented also: *“High quality journals in Vietnam have adopted reviewing procedures that follow international norms.”* Several of the participants were themselves journal editors. They reported how their reviewing procedures increasingly mirrored practices adopted by international journals.

There was extensive speculation about the reasons why it was easier to get papers published in Vietnamese journals. Participant 12 claimed: *“Vietnam has the same review process [as in Japan], however it is done superficially because of the lack of a mature academic culture. Reviewers [in Vietnam] do not work in alignment with academic norms but are instead influenced by non-academic values.”* Participant 10, who was remarkably well published in international peer-reviewed journals, referred bluntly to unethical practices: *“Peer review in domestic journals is easier. What bothers me, though, is that the quality of research published in this country is questionable. Articles*

are accepted because of a 'relationship' rather than by going through a strict screening." Several others made similar comments. Participant 9, for example, reported: "I used to submit articles to a domestic journal, but the reviewers' comments showed me that they did not know what they were talking about." Participant 5 stated: "Others [Vietnamese journals] remain very easy in reviewing papers – sometimes I do not know if the editors have even read the papers. . . The procedure of submission and review is unprofessional, and it is difficult to contact the editors." Participant 2, who was a member of an editorial board, when asked directly if he had heard of editors of Vietnamese journals being bribed to accept articles, responded: "Yes, I have heard such a rumour, but I myself have never experienced that [situation]."

Two participants who were PhD candidates in a developed English-speaking country at the time of the interviews commented from a comparative perspective on their experiences of publishing in Vietnam. Participant 17 was especially detailed in her remarks:

In Vietnam, I only had experience in submitting manuscripts to the journal of our university. I received editors' comments and I did make [edits] to improve the quality of the manuscripts. I think that process [is] acceptable in the context of Vietnam. Submitting papers to international peer review journals is a totally different experience. In an international competition, in order for a paper to be accepted . . . I need to do [the process] strategically by conducting a quality study – investigating the focus of the journal, board of editors, acceptance rates, potential readers. Receiving [a] rejection letter was not a comfortable experience at all. But right after that, I had to talk to myself: I am not allowed to give up, I am not allowed to let my and other team members' effort to nowhere, and I must find a home for manuscripts.

Participant 16, another PhD candidate at the time of the interviews, also referred to the impact of receiving a rejection letter for an article she had submitted for publication: "For me, learning how to handle peer review, including dealing with rejection, is very important. I myself got rejected several times [and continue to] find [the] peer review stage daunting and demotivating!"

Comments made by various other participants suggested that the incidence of manuscript rejections in Vietnam was much lower. Participant 3, who edited a journal in Vietnam, when asked if she ever rejected manuscripts, responded by saying: "Most of the papers I review are those which [have] already [gone] through a screening process, so their quality[is] usually accepted. Sometimes I review papers written by PhD students, which might be in poor condition and I usually give them very detailed comments." Not immediately evident in these remarks, but consistent with the tone in which they were communicated, was the message that everything possible was done by her and by other journal editors in Vietnam not to reject outright articles submitted for publication. In this regard, journal editors in Vietnam were regarded as being more willing to compromise than journal editors for international journals.

Another key theme to emerge concerned the difficulty of achieving the proficiency levels in English which were generally required by international journals which had English as their medium of communication. Limited English proficiency was also reported to adversely impact upon an ability to understand papers written in English in international journals, that is, when international journals were even able to be accessed from Vietnam. Participant 13 spoke about the problem:

Language capacity is a significant barrier. Accessibility to [an] international literature is also limited in Vietnam. It is difficult, therefore, to catch up with the latest knowledge and developments in the field, and it is difficult to find appropriate topics for research and then publish in reputable [international] journals. This is not a problem for domestic publishing. Publishing in international peer-reviewed journals is harder for humanities and social science scholars, but it is not impossible. If we had resources and an appropriate academic environment, we could publish internationally, though maybe not in the top journals.

Participant 3, who had studied in Russia, referred more explicitly to the difficulties associated with having a limited mastery of English: *"I studied in Russia and have several research articles published in Russian. Later in my career, I studied English, and now I can use English in my work. But publishing in English journals is challenging."* Publishing in English was reported to be challenging by most of the participants, but some, such as Participant 1, had become so fluent in English that it had become their working language for research.

Several participants referred to the advantages of obtaining either collegial or professional assistance with English as a basis for getting research papers published less stressfully. Participant 14 reported, for example: *"Submission to international journals is hard if we do it alone. Much easier with support of international colleagues/co-authors."* Participant 16 commented: *"English used in social sciences research tends to have a high level of sophistication. It is so hard to get published in an international outlet without language assistance."* Though the matter was not explored systematically with the participants, it did generally appear that, especially in the social sciences, co-authoring papers with an English-speaking colleague enhanced productivity in terms of achieving international publications. For participants in the purely humanities disciplines, such as aesthetics, literature and history, co-authorship was more difficult because their publications were more likely to be concerned with arguing the author's distinctive and creative interpretation of a particular aesthetic, literary or historical phenomenon.

Conclusion

Vietnam's research performance is generally regarded as being poor. It has been estimated by the Ministry of Science and Technology that Vietnam has about 2,000 organizations engaged in research and development activities, yet Vietnam's performance in terms of research documents produced and patents recorded is not commensurate with either the country's size or the size of its higher education sector (Hien, 2010; Nguyen and Pham, 2011; Nguyen, Ho-Le, and Le, 2017). Vietnam's research performance in the humanities and social sciences is especially poor, and it is against this background that the present investigation was initiated.

The investigation's purpose was to document the publishing experiences of a selected sample group of scholars from the humanities and social sciences with a view to throwing light on these practices. The scholars interviewed were selected on the basis that they had already achieved, or were likely to achieve before too long, prominence for their research within an academic discipline from the humanities or social sciences. These scholars were not, therefore, representative of scholars at large in Vietnam. They represented an elite in the context of the humanities and social sciences in Vietnam, though perhaps the four participants who were PhD candidates could not yet be described in this way, though they had already published extensively.

The participants provided insights relating to a number of matters of specific interest to the investigation, including: institutional expectations regarding an engagement in research and publishing; the nature and extent of their publishing experience to date; the importance attributed to research and publishing with respect to the role of an academic; sources and amounts of research funds received; conditions perceived to be encouraging and supporting, or discouraging and constraining, with respect to the completion of research and the publication of research findings; and experiences of getting published. The data for the investigation were obtained by means of individual, in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the selected participants. These participants represented 10 different disciplinary areas from across the humanities and social sciences.

Various attributes of the participants have been highlighted in the paper. One of these was the strength of their personal commitment to the importance of research and publishing. This commitment was based on a personal sense of academic identity, a desire to complement teaching responsibilities, and a wish to contribute to Vietnam's social and economic development. Curiously,

though, few participants reported feeling pressure from their own university to publish, though many of them reported that doing research was formally an expectation placed on all faculty members. Universities were reported to provide financial incentives for obtaining publications in high-impact journals, but this practice did not appear to be widespread.

Disincentives to publishing included funding limitations, and perhaps even more importantly, limitations associated with the ways in which research funding was administered within institutions. In general, there was reported to be a lack of transparency in the ways in which research funds were distributed by government agencies, other than NAFOSTED, and within universities. Interference with the freedom to do research and to publish was reported to occur within institutions, but none of the participants appeared to be too concerned about political censorship. They conveyed a well-developed understanding of how far they could go in terms of making claims that might be considered to be politically or socially provocative.

The participants conveyed optimism regarding improvements in the quality of peer-reviewed journals in Vietnam, but there was also wide acceptance of the fact that it was easier to have research reported in national than in international peer-reviewed journals, with the standards of scholarship expected by international peer-reviewed journals reported to be demanding. Some participants reported experiencing difficulty in attaining the level of proficiency required to publish in international journals from English-speaking countries.

The findings of the investigation are generally consistent with earlier findings reported by Pho and Tran (2016) and Le (2016). Common themes include a perceived lack of financial support, concern about locating appropriate national and international journals, and feelings of inadequacy regarding the challenge of publishing in a foreign language. However, a big difference between the participants in this investigation and the participants in the other two investigations was that the participants in this investigation were all quite well published compared with most of their peers in the humanities and social sciences. The obstacles and constraints identified by them could not, therefore, be easily dismissed as excuses for not publishing, and so need to be taken more seriously.

There are lessons to be learned from the experiences reported by the participants. First, the process of scholarly publishing in Vietnam needs to attain more trust in the eyes of humanities and social science scholars. Peer-review processes need to reflect better the processes adopted by international journals; the feedback provided by reviewers needs to be better informed and more detailed; members of editorial panels must be selected solely for their scholarly achievements; editors must be willing to reject articles have been judged independently to lack quality; and the developmental potential of scholarly reviews of manuscripts submitted must be more widely cultivated. These needs provide a strong case for professional development programs to be conducted across the higher education sector and within individual institutions, the purpose of which should be to elucidate quality standards relating to the submission, review and publishing of scholarly works.

Second, scholars in the humanities and social sciences in Vietnam require assistance to be able to have their voice heard in the global flow of ideas and information. The main form of assistance required is with English, but they also need to be able to access international journals and participate in international meetings of scholars. Building collaborative publishing partnerships with foreign English-speaking scholars would appear to be a most sensible avenue to pursue. Funds are required to establish scholarly academies in the humanities and social sciences in Vietnam, and these academies must seek to integrate the scholarly community in Vietnam with a global scholarly community. Humanities and social science scholars in Vietnam need to be given opportunities and encouragement to publish their research internationally.

Third, scholarly academies in Vietnam must nurture and protect individualism, in the form of disciplined and creative analysis of social and cultural issues which are of national and international significance. In general, the participants appeared to be unaware of the role scholarly academies in Vietnam might play. These academies must strive to secure academic freedom, so that scholars

from Vietnam in the humanities and social sciences feel no need even to be self-censoring in the pursuit of knowledge and insights regarding topics of scholarly significance.

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Appendix A

Profile of the Participants

Participant Number	Field of Study	Gender and Age Bracket in Years	Academic Title and Highest Academic Qualification	Publication Details
1	Economics	Male 30-35	Assoc. Prof. PhD	More than 100 peer-reviewed articles and reports in international books and journals, and multiple reports and conference papers written in English and Vietnamese for scholarly audiences globally.
2	Education	Male 30-35	PhD	More than 5 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, and multiple reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam.
3	Education	Female 50-55	Assoc. Prof. PhD	More than 50 peer-reviewed articles in Vietnamese books and journals, and some peer-reviewed articles now appearing in international journals.
4	Education	Female 55-60	PhD	More than 10 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, and multiple reports and conference papers written in English for international audiences.
5	Finance	Female 45-50	Assoc. Prof. PhD	More than 10 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, and multiple reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam.
6	Education	Female 25-30	MEd	More than 2 peer-reviewed articles in international journals and more than 5 reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam.
7	Education	Male 25-30	MEd	Several peer-reviewed articles in Vietnamese journals and more than 5 reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam.
8	Education	Female 25-30	MEd	Several peer-reviewed articles in Vietnamese journals and more than 5 reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam.
9	Economics	Male 50-55	Assoc. Prof. PhD	More than 10 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, and multiple reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam.
10	Economics	Male 40-45	PhD	More than 60 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, and more than 100 reports and conference papers written in English and Vietnamese for scholarly audiences.

11	Literature	Male 35-40	PhD	More than 10 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, and multiple reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam.
12	Geography	Male Over 65	Professor PhD	More than 30 peer-reviewed articles in international journals, and more than 20 reports and conference papers written in English and Vietnamese for scholarly audiences.
13	Linguistics	Male 50-55	Assoc. Prof. PhD	Multiple reports and conference papers written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences in Vietnam, and more than 3 peer-reviewed articles in international journals.
14	Economics	Female 50-55	PhD	More than 5 peer-reviewed publications in international journals, and more than 30 reports, and conference papers written in English and Vietnamese for scholarly audiences.
15	Linguistics	Male Over 65	Professor PhD	More than 3 books written in Vietnamese, and many articles written in Vietnamese for scholarly audiences.
16	Education	Female 30-35	MEd	More than 10 peer-reviewed publications in international journals, and more than 10 papers presented in English and Vietnamese to scholarly audiences.
17	Education	Female 45-50	MEd	More than 5 peer-reviewed publications in international journals and books, and more than 10 papers presented in English and Vietnamese to scholarly audiences.
18	History	Male 55-60	PhD	More than 5 books in English and Vietnamese.
19	Political Science	Male 40-45	PhD	More than 15 peer-reviewed publications in international journals, and more than 20 papers presented in English to scholarly audiences.
20	Archaeology	Female 50-55	PhD	More than 10 peer-reviewed publications in Vietnamese journals, more than 1 peer-reviewed paper in international journals, and more than 3 books in Vietnamese.

THE ROLE OF CARING IN SCHOOLS: A TANZANIAN CASE STUDY

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Abstract: *School-based research and practice in international education has emphasized academic outcomes, to the exclusion of other important aspects of education, such as caring in schools. In this case study, we consider the role of caring in a successful Tanzanian primary school. The practice of caring promoted by the school's leadership, rooted in identifying and meeting needs, is found to impact not only student academic success, but also to have moral and organizational implications. This includes the need for teachers to be empowered with the ability and dispositions to solve problems in schools. Further analysis of caring in schools is needed to enrich teacher education and policy planning for quality education.*

Keywords: *primary education; school quality; caring*

Introduction

Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 has shifted policy and programmatic interventions in education to focus not only on access, but more widely on quality education, particularly in low and middle income countries. However, scholars in comparative education and international development have observed that most large-scale educational programs, monitoring indicators, and policy development in pursuit of quality education have pursued a narrow focus on easily measurable phenomena (such as time on task, class size, reading fluency) and improving basic literacy and numeracy skills (Alexander, 2015; Bartlett, Dowd and Jonason, 2015; Sayed and Ahmed, 2015). One emerging criticism of this focus on what is easily measured is that educational development should embrace wider aspects, including social justice, inclusive education and pedagogical processes (Alexander, 2015; Nikel and Lowe, 2010; Sayed and Ahmed, 2015; Sayed and Soudien 2003). In this paper, we too seek to widen our field's perspective on what constitutes quality education. We propose that the notion of care and caring in schools, including its possible implications for academic success, has been neglected in comparative and international education. In this exploratory paper, we examine the role of caring in one compelling case study, with the aim to raise this important aspect of schooling to the attention of researchers, teacher educators and policy makers, and to provoke further study and theorization in international contexts.

Over the past several decades, research and practice in comparative and international education has emphasized access and student academic outcomes. International bodies and government ministries have championed a specific focus on student academic achievement as an instrumental means for promoting economic development (see, for example, World Bank 2011; MOEVT 2014). Significantly less attention has been paid to the emotional contexts of learning. Although the well-

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being of teachers and aspects of care for children in early childhood learning contexts have begun to receive a small measure of scholarly and programmatic attention in the past two years (see, for example, Veronese et al. 2018; Liu, Song and Miao 2017; Campbell-Barr 2019), these areas are still underdeveloped. Recently, Socioemotional Learning (SEL) was highlighted by the World Bank in the 2018 World Development Report. The report explains SEL as work-related skills such as “perseverance” and “team work” which “various measures have been shown to significantly predict earnings” (p. 47). Thus, SEL is considered in terms of economic development and not a broader sense of well-being. In this paper, we highlight a slightly different concept of caring in education, by examining the role of caring by school leaders in fostering success for students. We consider the role of caring in a successful Tanzanian primary school to offer a novel and promising lens for widening concepts of school quality and to encourage the use of practitioner knowledge to inform policy and teacher education programs.

Context of the Study

Tanzania’s education system is very typical of Sub-Saharan contexts and outcomes in certain respects. Parallel systems of public and private schools exist, reflecting a class divide in society, with public schools often (though with some exceptions) being under-resourced and low performing. Within mainland Tanzania, the government and parents judge school performance by students’ average outcomes on national examinations, particularly the terminal examinations at the end of primary, lower secondary and upper secondary schooling. The public school system struggles with high pupil-teacher ratios and a lack of teaching materials including desks and textbooks (World Bank 2016; BEST, 2017). Though educational policies have promoted learner-centered and competence-based practices, our observations in primary schools suggest teaching still tends to rely on lecturing, question-answer, copying notes from a blackboard and use of corporal punishment. In general (compared to countries like the US), there is a respectful tone as an indicator of a clear hierarchical power gap in relations between teachers and students/adults and children.

However, Tanzania also has a unique history in education compared to many developing countries, due to the vision of its founding president, Mw. Julius Nyerere. Nyerere promoted what was termed “Education for Self Reliance” (ESR) as a part of the country’s socialist project. Nyerere gave ESR an actively decolonizing purpose of making formal education relevant to local communities, breaking down inequalities that had been fostered by the colonial education system, and leading national development through cooperation. Nyerere’s vision for education was based in a humanist philosophy strongly emphasizing social values as well as productive skills, in which education’s purpose is to:

...foster the social goals of living together, working together, for the common good. It has to prepare our young people to play a dynamic and constructive part in the development of a society in which all members share fairly in the good or bad fortune of the group, and in which progress is measured in terms of human well-being, not prestige buildings, cars, or other such things, whether privately or publicly owned. (Nyerere, 1967, p. 4)

While the problems faced in implementing ESR have been well documented (Cooksey, 1986; Galabawa, 2001, 1990; Morrison, 1976), Tanzania did achieve Universal Primary Education and 91.4 % adult literacy by the 1980s (IIEP, 1990). More importantly for education quality, the country in that period had regular systems and practices of ongoing professional development for teachers and collaborative analysis of test data (Mwakalinga, personal communication, October 24, 2017); practices which largely disappeared during the structural adjustment period of the 1990s and early 2000s, when school enrollment and literacy rates dropped significantly. In this period, Tanzania like other countries, was influenced by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank to shift toward neoliberal approaches to governance and education. The government’s vision for

education as expressed in the latest Education and Training Policy has also shifted in recent years to a more human capital approach, which sees the central role of the education sector as providing the human resources that will enable the country to reach its goal of middle-income status by 2025 (MOEVT, 2014).

In 2015, the government (re)abolished school fees and primary school net enrollment rate has again consistently risen above 90% since at least 2012 (BEST, 2017). Large-scale interventions have been launched by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and its development partners, including revision of the primary school curriculum since 2014; with Standards 1 and 2 eliminating subjects such as English and Science to focus almost exclusively on Mathematics, Reading and Writing in the national language, Swahili. Teacher training on technical literacy and numeracy instruction and materials development as well as school management training and information systems are at the center of large-scale development aid to primary schools in most regions of the mainland (for example, Department for International Development's EQUIP-T, the United States Agency for International Development's *Tusome Pamoja* (Read Together), and the teacher inset accompanying the new curriculum roll out, supported by the Global Partnership for Education, GPE). In this paper, we use the term 'technical' teaching strategies or 'technicism' to refer to teacher training or pedagogical practices that focus on the introduction and student mastery of cognitive skills (such as how to teach phonics in reading, or addition in lower primary mathematics).

In Tanzania's education system at the time of this writing, primary school comprises standards 1 – 7, with children usually starting Standard 1 between ages 5 and 7. Pre-primary classrooms are being added to existing primary schools to provide one to two years of pre-primary education; which has already begun in some schools. This means the general age of children in Tanzanian primary schools is 4 – 14 years old. While the national average for primary school student to teacher ratio is 43:1 (World Bank, 2016), actual class sizes vary considerably, from less than 20 to over 100 students per classroom/per lesson. This is influenced by a range of factors, including rural vs. urban location, the number of classrooms available at a school, and school performance. Enrollment in Tanzanian government schools is open/not limited to neighborhood residence. The enrollment at the school in this study has nearly doubled since the school started to perform well, while lower-performing schools in the same neighborhood have significantly smaller class sizes. There is a national, standardized assessment at Standard 4 and at the end of Standard 7 there is the Primary School Leaving Exam (PSLE) – a high stakes national examination. According to national data, between 2008 and 2013, 40-70% of primary school children failed the PSLE (BEST, 2013). In 2015 and 2016, this had improved to 68 -70% of examination takers passing (BEST, 2017), though the highest performing schools are private or religious rather than public government schools. However, the school in this case study provides an interesting exception to this trend.

Context of the School

The government school Ukombozi Primary is one of the highest-performing primary schools in the nation; with 99 to 100% of its students passing the PSLE with Grade A, B or C each year since 2009 (NECTA n.d.) and the school receiving national recognition for its performance each year from 2012 to 2017. The school consistently ranked in the top five (out of 49) schools in its district from 2012 to 2017, often being the only public school to achieve this rank (NECTA n.d.). The teaching staff are entirely government-trained teachers, and 90% are female. The school, located on the peri-urban edge of a mid-size town (a regional capital in agricultural highlands), has around 750 students. Due to a lack of classrooms, each grade level has only one stream. This means there are 80-115 students per lesson at this school, and Standards 1 and 2 share one classroom, operating on a double shift. The school's high performance has attracted transfer students, leading to a mixed student population in terms of economic standing. Slightly less than half of the students come from the local neighborhood, and the others are mainly children of civil servants and middle-class professionals who live in town. The local neighborhood families have lower economic means, and

tend to engage in farming, informal or semi-skilled labor. Nearly one third of the school's student population are orphans being raised by extended family members.

A number of features about the school may contribute to its high performance, including the close attention to student attendance and performance, teachers offering free, extra lessons during holidays, and flexible daily teaching schedules to allow teachers to complete topics and assess whether content is understood by all students. However, we want to focus on an aspect which is striking and explicit at this school, yet often ignored in national and international development literature on educational quality: that is, the school leadership's commitment to caring. In this article, we set out to explore what form caring takes in this leader's practice, and what its implications may be for teachers as well as for educational planners, teacher educators and policy makers. We argue that caring is an aspect of education receiving inadequate attention in the current flurry of technical school reforms.

Caring in Schools: A Literature Review

In this section, we critically examine the extant literature on educational caring. We conclude with several observations about the state of the literature and how this study may contribute.

Within comparative and international education, a review of flagship journals reveals that caring has been foregrounded in very few studies, and tends to arise as a guiding concept only when it is acutely called for (i.e., in situations involving sexual violence or conflict, education of refugees, or communities heavily burdened by HIV/AIDS) or in studies with a focus on gender. At the 2017 Annual Meeting of the Comparative and International Education Society, where this paper was first presented, caring appeared in the program mostly in reference to very young children, and disappears as a concern after about age three. In short, caring has received little attention in comparative and international education research, thus, many of the theoretical positions outlined here stem from a North American context simply because caring in schools has been researched more in North America than elsewhere. While the nature of caring is doubtlessly specific to particular contexts, the theories that have been developed can still serve as a starting point, for considering caring in other contexts, including Tanzania.

Nel Noddings is the most frequently cited theorist on educational caring (Noddings 2001, 2013). Noddings articulates caring as a way of being in relation with somebody else (2013). Her vision of care is rooted in the family: good educational caring is analogous to care in a family setting (2002). Importantly, caring is also intersubjective: both the person trying to care and the person being cared for must recognize the action as caring. Noddings distinguishes this true, intersubjective caring from what she calls "virtue caring," where one party professes to care even if their actions are not received as caring (Noddings 2001, p.36).

Caring, in Noddings' conception, must also respond to (inferred or expressed) needs. Often, Noddings notes, there can be conflicts between expressed and inferred needs that prevent a caring relation from occurring: "[i]f [as the one-cared-for] my expressed needs are not treated positively, or at least sensitively, I will likely not feel cared for. Attempts to care frequently misfire this way" (2005, p.148). The need for teachers to respond to student needs is a consistent theme throughout the literature on caring (Noblit, Rogers, and McCadden 1995; Howard 2001; Demaray and Malecki 2002; Ancess 2003; Cassidy and Bates 2005). The support created by teacher caring is the "glue that binds teachers and students together and makes life in classrooms meaningful" (Noblit et al. 1995, p.680). Ancess (2003) found that in a school characterized by a high level of academic press, teachers offered students emotional support by changing the structure of daily routines¹ (p.608).

Increasingly, caring is understood to be culturally grounded and not universal. Thompson (1998) criticizes Noddings' vision of family care as being too situated in a white, western, middle-class vision of family. Just as families act and interact in very different ways, so too must there be a variety of ways to care for and about students. Caring amidst marked cultural differences between students and school staff members has been an area of focus for other scholars as well. For example, Antrop-

González and De Jesús (2006) advance a theory of *critical care*, which focuses on a combination of high academic expectations for students, high-quality relationships between students and school staff, and especially on privileging “the funds of knowledge that students and their respective communities bring to school” (p.409).

Gholami, Kuusisto, and Tirri (2015) explore teachers’ ethical sensitivity in Finland and Iran. They find that although “caring by connecting to others” is a culturally invariant construct central to ethical sensitivity in both countries, ethical sensitivity is “represented in different ways” based on cultural contexts (p.903). For example, they find that “taking the perspective of others” is dependent on culture, and especially a cultures’ level of power distance and collectivity. Specifically, in their comparative survey study, the items on caring relate to maintaining good relations with other people and promoting their wellbeing, while the items on perspective-taking relate to tolerance of different opinions or ways of thinking. This may suggest that one way caring is culturally mediated is that some cultures may have narrower boundaries around the acceptable ways to give and receive care (see also, Gholami, 2011).

Tronto (2010) critiques Noddings from the perspective of organizationally-based caring. Specifically, Tronto points out that while the purposes of care in families and the power relationships between members of families are often taken as unproblematic, the same cannot be said of care in organizational settings. In particular, Tronto (2010) argues that caregivers in organizations must be attentive to the particular needs of those they are caring for, lest they use their position of superior power to define care in a way that doesn’t serve those being cared for. The purposes of care are thus *locally defined and particularistic*.

Although the primary focus of the literature on educational caring has been on the ways that adults strive to care for students, there is a growing focus on the ways that caring for students impacts adults. Hargreaves (1998) emphasizes that caring for students is a form of emotional labor. The effort of caring can be positive or negative- it may demand that teachers subjugate their true emotions in the interest of performativity. However, caring that flows from student to teacher (in response to teacher caring for students) has significant benefits for teachers. As Hargreaves suggests, “the concept of emotional labor puts care into context. It takes care beyond being a personal choice, or moral imperative to an act of work that can be supported, made difficult or turned against the person exercising it ... depending on the context in which the work is performed” (Hargreaves 1998, p. 840). Through a poststructural approach to the role of emotions in teacher identity, Zembylas (2003) highlights how the emotional labor of caring is done in ways shaped by the political and organizational context. Specifically, he suggests that teacher identity is a political process- teachers are heavily influenced by the organizational and social environment in which their teaching occurs. As Zembylas puts it, “a poststructuralist view opens up a space between self-consciousness, and the interrogation of the discursive and affective conditions of a claim to identity (Bhaba 1987). Identity is formed in this shifting space where narratives of subjectivity meet the narratives of culture” (p.221). In schools, emotional rules permit and encourage some emotions in teachers, while proscribing others. The construction of these emotional rules is fundamentally a political process. Zembylas suggests that the discourses within schools attempt to reduce teacher identity to teacher *roles*, but that roles do not constitute identity- identity deals with *investments*. Zembylas’ critique of the reduction of teacher identity to roles in the US context bears affinity with the ‘technicist’ critique of educational reform and teacher discourses in international development education (Welch, 2003, Tao 2015). Both essentially argue that there is more happening in schools than the imparting of academic or technical skills and content through prescribed or desired teacher roles.

There is a small extant literature on caring educational leadership, although this is an area of growing focus (see Louis, Murphy and Smylie, 2016; Smylie, Murphy and Louis, 2016). Educational leaders have been seen to demonstrate caring through advocating on students’ behalf (Bass 2012), high visibility in the school and community (Khalifa, 2012), and embedding an ethic of care in school policies and school environment (Cassidy and Bates 2005). Other scholars who studied administrators driven by an ethic of care found that organizational practices (such as mandatory

discipline regardless of context) often stymied caring, and so these administrators were driven more by relationships than other leaders (Marshall et.al., 1996). Roffey (2008) highlights the importance of modeling interpersonal relations for school administrators who are striving to develop a caring community, and suggests that administrators who relate to teachers in a respectful and inclusive way will foster these same traits in student-teacher relations.

As noted above, one glaring shortfall in the existing literature on educational caring is that most of the theoretical and empirical work has been carried out in the United States. Given the growing recognition that caring is a culturally-rooted concept, there is ample room to foreground additional diverse and particularistic notions of care. Moreover, society expects schools to be caring places, but, “its meaning in schools is vague, ambiguous, unsettled, and weakly explicated” (Louis et.al. 2016, p.312). This is particularly true with respect to the way that national and transnational education policy bears on the ways that caring is enacted in schools. Smylie et.al. (2016, p.1) point out that, “in this time of accountability and top-down approaches to leadership and reform, caring is often neglected”. In this study, we hope to open space for the further exploration, both in terms of theorization and practice, of caring in schools in the context of comparative and international education.

Research Methods and Data Analysis

School Selection and Data Collection Methods

We employed a purposeful sampling strategy in order to select a school and school leader who were strong exemplars of caring (Patton, 2005). Initially this school was selected to be part of a different study focused on pedagogy and teacher-student interactions. It was recommended by local municipal officials because of its reputation as the highest-performing public school in the district. The primary focus of this study is on the behaviors and beliefs of the school leader, and how these behaviors and beliefs foster a caring school environment.

In initial conversations with the head teacher (Mwakalinga), as the researcher asked about the school and its success, he made a remarkably blunt statement. Mwakalinga stated that only the children of poorer families come to public schools – anyone who can possibly afford it sends their children to private school - so his goal is to ensure that these children at his public school can compete and do not become the slaves of private school graduates. He also stated that the most important aspect of school success is love – love for the children. While the other study carried on, the clear and incisive purpose driving this school leader and the acknowledgment of love being the key ingredient driving success inspired this exploratory study of caring and its role in educational success. Because this school both emphasized caring and has a reputation for academic success, we felt it would be a suitable site to raise the issue of the role of caring.

This study draws on several sources of data. We conducted one long semi-structured interview with the school leader, our co-author, followed by several informal follow-up interviews. To the extent possible, we heeded Kvale and Brinkman’s (2009) exhortation that interviews are self-contained narratives that are fully explicated within the context of the interview. We supplemented these interviews with several sessions of participant observation at the school (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). The observation was intended to undergird the school leader’s articulation of the way caring matters in school with a richer understanding of how this vision was (and was not) being carried out in practice. Sometimes these observations were followed by brief conversations with the school leader. The observations were part of the larger research study mentioned above, and were carried out over four months in 2017.

Perceptions of a caring environment at the school, particularly involving the head teacher were evident even in the two initial meetings: Students were observed approaching the head teacher without fear, to ask questions or to report a problem. Similarly, graduates who are now in secondary

school and college were observed coming back to visit the head teacher. As the researcher spent more time at the school in 2016 and 2017, additional signs of caring were noted. Firstly, in this school, in contrast to other schools observed in the larger study, the standard four teachers know all 94 children in class by name. Teachers were observed providing snacks and school supplies - on their own volition - for students with difficult home situations, and checking in with students who appeared tired or to not feel well in class. The head teacher was observed on several occasions following up on students with illness/injuries personally, and encouraging teachers to do so. When talking about students, the head teacher openly uses the word 'love' and 'care'. The head teacher also ensures the teachers are cared for—when part of the staff room was burned in a fire in 2017, he personally mobilized parents to donate money for repairs and within a week the room was fixed up better than it had been before. He also strove to keep up the teachers' morale by consistently encouraging them, and prioritizing the finding of teaching materials to replace those lost in the blaze. Thus, the initial signs that caring is regularly demonstrated in this school and by its leadership were borne out through the longer observation period.

Data Analysis

The findings presented below come primarily from the 2015 meetings and observations and 2016 interview about caring, supplemented by observations in 2017. We analyzed both interviews and observations according to the general guidelines offered by Miles and Huberman (1994). We adopted Rubin and Rubin's (2011) guidelines for coding responsive interviews, first summarizing the interview, then coding for major themes and concepts, and sorting and resorting within and between codes. We met several times during and following the coding process to discuss emergent findings. Because the first author of this paper interviewed the school leader and performed the participant observation, the second author was able to adopt a naive stance and question the first author's assumptions. We attempt to thoroughly contextualize our findings and conclusions so that readers can appropriately decide whether the findings apply to their context (Merriam and Tisdell 2015, p.267).

As Maxwell (2012) suggests, researcher positionality—"the fact that the researcher is part of the world that he or she studies" is a "powerful and inescapable influence" (p.109). The three authors of this paper are, in order: an American citizen who has lived most of her adult life in Tanzania, working mainly in international schools and teacher training, an American former teacher and researcher who has never set foot in Tanzania, and a Tanzanian school leader with almost 40 years experience in the Tanzanian public education system. Each of the authors harbors a personal commitment to improving educational quality, and the diverse viewpoints of the authors afforded a rich jumping-off point for discussions about the role of caring in schools. Interviews and observations were conducted in Swahili, and subsequently translated by the first author for analysis. Emergent findings were discussed by all three authors (meaning, the interviewee and interviewer/researchers) in English and Swahili, with the first author (due to proximity) often acting as a go-between.

Findings

When asked about the success of his school academically, one of the first aspects Mr. Mwakalinga mentions is caring. ("*Upendo*" in Swahili can be translated as "caring" or "love" in English). According to Mwakalinga, one shows caring by, firstly, respecting each child, and secondly by being near them – talking to them, asking them how they are doing, what they think; whether they are in class, in a meeting or on the school grounds. Indeed, when one spends time in the school, one sees that students, while respectful, are also close to the head teacher and come to him directly, rather than fearing to speak to him. Caring is a driving force at the school, as well as being an important aspect of making children feel safe and secure at school.

“Caring Shortens a Teacher’s Journey” Caring and Academic Performance

One key theme which emerges from the interview data is the connection between caring and motivation, which impacts both students and teachers, though in different ways. Mwakalinga emphasizes that while good teaching skills are prerequisite, teachers’ caring for students “shortens the teacher’s journey”, or makes the process of teaching and learning easier and swifter due to the good relationships fostered between students and teacher.

For teachers, caring about students motivates investigation. Mwakalinga argues that caring about the child is what inspires teachers to find ways to identify and then meet students’ needs. These needs may be academic, physical or emotional. He characterizes the action of a caring teacher as research, particularly when students are not performing well: *“In every stage of childhood, whenever you teach, it should be like doing research about each student – that is your job every day ... you must go back and find out what the problem is.”* Thus, academically, caring may take the form of regularly assessing students to identify those that need special instruction or extra help. The approach is *“especially taking care for those who are not doing well; to find out why they are failing. The reason for this student may be different from that other student – If you carry them all, the [school] performance will be high.... That is how to ensure your school is successful.”* Mwakalinga also adds that on the other end of the spectrum students who do very well in a subject must also be given intellectual challenges. Thus, context matters in the particularity of each child’s situation. Caring in this form does not lend itself to standard or universal prescriptions, but rather, careful understanding of individual needs and creative use of the resources available.

Mwakalinga notes that when a child receives care from a teacher, their motivation to please the teacher and do well in school increases. *“If a child gets the love he/she hopes for from the teacher, it will enable him/her to trust, to love and to listen to the teacher.”* In terms of physical and emotional needs, Mwakalinga points out that what may seem small gestures from a teacher’s perspective can have a large impact on students. In the subject formerly called *Haiba na Michezo* (Sports and Character education) and now called *Uraia na Maadili* (Civics and Moral Education), Standard 3 and 4 children are explicitly taught social expectations of cooperation and communication, including social obligations to help relatives or neighbors in times of illness, funerals or celebrations, and school rules such as the rule that children should carry a teacher’s bag/equipment for the teacher. Usually, the showing of respect through special greetings, fetching equipment and listening rather than speaking would be expected from a child toward an adult, and not the other way around. However, Mwakalinga encourages his teachers to show the same respect for students: *“If a child is sick, and s/he lives near school, go home and see them. First, they’ll be surprised. ... they will get better quickly. ... they’ll say – ‘mom, I’m better, I want to go to school’. ... Just because you (the teacher) went to see them. So, these things all help a lot.”* In Mwakalinga’s experience, it is small yet significant actions which “shorten the journey” of educating children.

Often, the physical, emotional and academic needs of students are intertwined. This is particularly evident in the lives of orphans who are impacted by the stigma of HIV/AIDS and family members’ suspicion that the child may have been infected from birth. Mwakalinga has found such children to be particularly in need of, and responsive to, positive attention and encouragement. In this case, meeting the child’s needs can include building their sense of belonging and of self-worth, which usually also leads to improved performance. Mwakalinga shared the story of one student who was consistently performing poorly in her classes:

There was one girl, ... and there was a time she was failing in school. I tried talking to her and she said to me that she has wounds/sores; and it was true. I gave her first aid and the sores got better. She was surprised. She said she stays with her aunt, and never had her aunt even touched her, even when she showed her aunt her sores. She said her aunt told her she had a disease that her aunt wanted nothing to do with. She explained a lot. She said, you’re just my teacher, yet you gave me first aid and helped me get better. When she became close to me,

her performance rose. She became free to ask questions. And now she's gone on to secondary school. And every time she's on school vacation, she comes back to visit me. You see.

When the head teacher took the time to talk to her and to provide a simple first aid ointment available at school, it caused the girl to open up and explain the lack of care she received at home, where she was being raised by relative who would not touch her due to HIV/AIDS stigma. The care she received from school turned around both her attitude and her performance. If schools and teachers focus solely on covering academic content and skills without attention to the physical and emotional needs of students, academic learning may decrease. This should not be interpreted to mean that schools and teachers burdened with large classes and few resources can or should meet every need of a child. Rather, the significance is that being aware of needs and willing to show caring in the small ways that are feasible may contribute toward improving a child's academic success through increasing their personal motivation.

Thus far, we have discussed the importance of caring for student needs in order to motivate and improve learning. In the next subsection, we acknowledge the non-academic aspects of schooling – themes related to the moral dimension and the importance of guiding vision for the purpose of education beyond merely passing examinations or learning for learning's sake.

“They Are My Children” Moral Aspects of Schooling and Teacher Education

The responsibility of caring as portrayed by Mkwakalinga implies a moral purpose to education. The role of a teacher is not only to impart technical skills and knowledge. The teacher and all school staff are implicated in the upbringing of children and children's right to be cared for. This head teacher likens the nature of the profession itself to a religious calling: *“This work [teaching] is a calling. Because it is from God, really. It is like those priests, bishops, the way they work, that is also like our work. You have to love the children.”*

Furthermore, the job of a teacher goes beyond merely purveying academic knowledge and skills, to include caring for the child as a person: *“It means that the love of parents, the care a child gets from parents, now it comes from the teacher. That is how it is,”* he states. In the context of Ukombozi School students, it is not uncommon for children to spend far more time with their teachers than parents. Most children are at school from early morning until late afternoon on school days and again on Saturday mornings, and even when children go home, their parents and guardians often do not reach home until late evening. Because teachers have a parental role, according to Mwakalinga, it is a professional matter that there be no permanent enmity between a teacher and a child. If they have a conflict, this must be resolved in order to maintain the caring relationship and to allow the teacher to focus on teaching the class. Mwakalinga takes very seriously the analogy of teacher as second parent, and expects teachers to do the same. *“...you have given me all these children and they are **my** children – I have to make sure each one of them, from here, I am taking care of them – I am promoting each one to reach his/her full potential to succeed academically – every single one.”* Mwakalinga feels he has to cultivate both this sensibility and technical teaching skills in the teachers who are assigned to his school in order to ensure the school's success.

Considering the teacher's role as a moral responsibility entails putting the child's needs above material concerns: *“You have to love the children, don't love things more. Don't put things first. You must do the job you've been given with the children. – if you say, ‘what is in this for me?’ you destroy everything.”* Thus, for this school leader, the moral obligation of caring for children outweighs economic calculations. According to Mwakalinga, this awareness of the need for teachers to care for others, and to see teaching as a calling forms a key difference in the preparation of teachers in Tanzania between the present and the period in which he was trained, i.e. the Education for Self Reliance (ESR) era of President Nyerere in the 1970s and 1980s.

...in past years my country was training teachers very well; when we studied, in the years I went to teachers' college, we student teachers were reflecting and evaluating ourselves. When you were at college, you could find you're not fit to be a teacher, just because of the way you are [your nature/personality], so you find that person is not happy at teachers' college, and gains self-awareness... You find the teachers we get now are not like the teachers used to be. Nowadays, they are here just for work; They don't care about children, they'll just cane the child and move on.

From this perspective, a teacher who is 'just doing their job' – the technical job of imparting academic content - could see a child's mistakes as laziness or inaptitude and thus be comfortable to cane them and carry on teaching, whereas a teacher driven by a caring, moral purpose would feel obliged to investigate why the child is not performing as expected, and to find a lasting solution. This does not mean there is no corporal punishment in a school driven by caring within the Tanzanian context, but that such punishment is used sparingly². Mwakalinga points out that the view of teaching as 'just a job' and what's more, as an occupation of last resort is captured in the common Swahili phrase asked of jobless graduates, "*umekosa hata elimu?*" which translates as "you could not even become a teacher?" When teaching is seen just as a job to earn income, the commitment inherent in *caring* about children may be lacking.

A clear vision as to the larger purpose of education can also support teachers' cultivation of a caring commitment to their profession. Mwakalinga notes this is another distinction between the ESR period and the more recent educational milieu. He notes that a clearly articulated vision for education can influence the way in which teachers carry out their work. If one's vision is limited to carrying out a contractual responsibility to present and assess an academic curriculum on a daily basis, and teacher training emphasizes only technical skills and accountability for test scores, without any sense as to larger or moral purposes of schooling, the result can be the lack of an ethic of care in schools and possibly correspondingly lower levels of learning.

Caring and Leadership

In considering the aspects of morality, purpose and academic performance highlighted by Mwakalinga, caring is seen to have many implications for school leadership. At an institutional level, the head teacher must monitor, inculcate and facilitate positive teacher and student relationships. The school leader must have a clear vision as to the purpose of their profession, and according to Mwakalinga, this purpose is not only to have a high-performing school academically, but ultimately to ensure that students are prepared for a positive and fulfilled future; that they are ethical people, able to meet their own and their families' needs, and that they can compete within society – often against more privileged children with access to better-resourced, private education.

The headteacher's caring becomes both a model and an expectation for teachers, and teachers are to be treated in the same caring manner as students. *"...as head teacher – the way you handle students, should be the way you handle the teachers – because each teacher has their own problems. If you divide the staff, you have destroyed the school. If you appear to not care for even one of the teachers, you've destroyed it. It is just like with the students – you have to care about the teachers, and to value what each one brings to school. One will have this talent, one will have another talent."* Thus the spirit of research, of investigating needs and strengths extends to the school staff as well as to students for this caring school leader.

Discussion and Implications

Our findings highlight several implications about the nature of caring in this particular Tanzanian school context. One implication is that caring is revealed as an *investigatory* practice in this school. The

head teacher and school staff members enact caring by actively seeking to ascertain and understand student needs. Intention – what Noddings (2001) terms “virtue caring” - undergirds this practice even in cases where teachers are not ultimately successful in meeting student needs. According to Noddings (2001), “virtue caring” is a situation where one party *intends* to care even if that intention is not understood as caring by the person on the receiving end. Noddings derides virtue caring as insufficient: according to her, authentic caring is fundamentally an intersubjective practice that must be both intended and received as care. However, even if virtue caring is not sufficient for authentic care, it is certainly a necessary condition. Teachers’ intentions to care for their students motivates action on behalf of those students. According to the experience in Mwakalinga’s school, authentic caring is also grounded in curiosity: teachers must wonder how they can better serve particular students who are struggling.

Perhaps most importantly, authentic caring in this context is founded on a sense of one’s own ability to solve problems and exercise power on behalf of students. Not only the head teacher, but each teacher in a school must believe that, once they have developed a sense of challenges facing students, they can find an intervention or remedy that will help that student. In other words, caring actions which may improve children’s experience of or performance in school are more likely to be engaged in by teachers who have a sense of agency, using agency in Biesta, Priestley and Robinson’s (2015) sense of “something that people do” rather than a quality a person has (p. 626). In this case, the head teacher, Mwakalinga, leads by example in taking action to meet students’ needs, and he expects and encourages teachers to do the same. In Cassidy and Bates’ (2005) terms, the head teacher has consciously embedded an ethic of care in the school environment, largely through the form of role modelling that was also noted by Roffey (2008) in the Australian context. Through Mwakalinga’s exemplar, caring becomes a general characteristic of interactions in the school, and not simply a characteristic of particular relationships.

A closely tied implication is that caring is a highly contextual and particularistic practice (Valenzuela, 1999; Tronto, 2010; Gholami, Kuusisto and Tirri, 2015). As seen in some of the examples above, individual students have highly particular needs, and so the purposes of care may differ significantly from student to student. So, too, may the amount of energy teachers need to expend on behalf of students. Additionally, to the extent that teachers are researchers of the students in their care, they must also strive to be researchers of their families and community in order to fully apprehend students’ needs.

Caring is definitely not a transactional practice. By transactional, we refer to a sense that good behavior is rewarded and poor behavior is sanctioned without respect to context or efforts at addressing root causes. The findings of this study reinforce the notion that caring is rooted in meeting needs rather than merely a means to an end. Authentic caring often achieves the desired academic improvement, and Mwakalinga heavily emphasized academic gains as a main aim of caring. However, achieving lasting changes in academic disposition goes beyond one-off encounters. Those teachers who give a consequence to behavioral infractions and move on may miss a chance to address an underlying problem, whereas an investigatory approach to care may yield a more effective solution.

Caring is also not merely a technical practice. In the same way that students (ones cared for) have particularistic needs, school adults (ones caring) have particular ways of meeting those needs. Although training can certainly strengthen the social and instructional toolkit available to teachers, the way teachers wield these strategies will be based in their own strengths and experiences. In many ways, a caring approach actually increases the demands on teachers because it moves the emphasis from skillful delivery of curriculum to using social and pedagogical knowledge to solve novel and diverse problems. At the same time, it highlights the need for expanding teachers’ locus of control and capacity for solving these problems, not as a matter of technical ability but rather in the manner of *bricoleurs* (improvisers) (Weick 1993). The need for this dynamic set of teacher skills

also highlights the importance of teacher identity formation, and the role of emotion within that process (Zembylas 2003).

Analysis and theorization of practices and implications of caring in schools are needed to enrich teacher education and policy planning for quality education. In particular, to the extent that the discourses of teaching culture that teachers are exposed to appear sterile and technicist, and to the extent that these discourses appear incompatible with local discourses of culture, teachers' narratives of subjectivity are likely to become contradictory, fractured, and transactional. In emphasizing technical solutions to problems that may or may not be applicable in the teachers' particular context, teachers may not have the broad set of tools, strategies and dispositions necessary to meet these needs. When narratives about the culture of teaching are about empowerment and determining and meeting needs, teachers' narratives of subjectivity are more likely to produce emotional investment in student personal and academic outcomes (Luttrell, 2013; Rolon-Dow, 2005).

Viewing education through a caring lens thus emphasizes the need to expand teachers' sense of their own ability to solve problems, and expand their ability to act as improvisers to implement solutions based in the particular needs they identify. This suggests that for school leadership to foster an ethic of care, educators in a school must be both empowered and equipped to meet these needs. The expertise of proven, local practitioners such as Mwakalinga can play a role, or at the least be drawn upon as a resource, in the planning and development of education policies and teacher education. For policymakers, this begs the question of how best to centrally generate discourses focused on local improvement, and how to embed an ethic of caring in educational discourses in ways which can be responsive to local, particularistic needs. While this study has merely scratched the surface of noting and theorizing forms of caring and its implications, it will hopefully open the door to further studies to inform policy development and teaching practices in a more comprehensive pursuit of quality in education.

Notes

¹ Note, in the case of flexible lesson period lengths at Ukombozi Primary mentioned above, the motivation is not direct care for students' emotional state, as suggested by Ancess (2003), but rather for teachers to complete a lesson and cover the syllabus, which often takes longer than the standard 40 minute period with a large class size, if the teacher attempts to give more students a chance to answer questions and to mark their exercises in class.

² Corporal punishment is legal under Tanzanian law: Corporal Punishment Regulation of 1979, which was updated to limit its severity and to require recording of punishments, in the early 2000s.

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BOOK REVIEW

Transcending Self and Other Through *Akogare* (Desire): The English Language and the Internationalization of Higher Education in Japan. By Chisato Nonaka (2018), 200pp. ISBN: 978178892170, Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

In this rather slim book Chisato Nonaka discusses the relationship between English learning (as a second language) and internationalisation of education as a political choice by the Japanese government. She introduces the concept of “*akogare*”, which is genuinely Japanese as an idea and a word, so that she may build an operational framework by which she would describe and analyse such emic and etic perspectives, as sociocultural and sociolinguistic relations between individual learners and the state policies on higher education. She then goes on to suggest the future possibilities of Japanese internationalisation as more than a mere description, and translates the term *akogare* to *desire*.

In the Introduction, she refers etymologically to the Japanese term *akogare* and explains why and how she refers to her own personal concern with the notion, that is, as an emotional matter with a person and a keen interest in English. She defines the key concept of *akogare* as “*a sentiment in which we desire to pursue our dreams whether they be a person or an object (tangible or intangible) that is tantalizingly out of reach from us* (p.10.) She assumes a heuristic possibility of the concept in developing her research. Her empirical methodological standpoint is explained as that of a constructivist, and choosing TESOL, or Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages as the main research field, she uses narrative analysis in examining the collected materials. In chapter 2, while introducing her study participants and comparing their experiences and understanding of *akogare* with that of her own, she finds much difference among the remarks given by them, and at the same time more confluence among them. She assumes the highly applicable possibility of the conception of *akogare* as a heuristic key term and a generative leading idea in advancing her research.

In chapter 3, the author refers to and examines the resources from which she deduced a hypothetical assumption of *akogare* as the theoretical framework of analysis of the remarks and responses from her study participants. Her research framework defined *akogare* in these four dimensions; (a) in working abroad, (b) in English conversation schools, (c) in study abroad and (d) in TESOL. She recognised her *akogare* assumption as “*A Space where an Individual pursues a Person or an Object that is tantalizingly out of research from His / Her View*”. (p.26.) Upon setting such, the author intends to apply the framework to the internationalisation of Japanese policy in higher education. In chapter 4 the author discusses and explains her theoretical details. Explaining the methodological perspectives, she refers to constructivist approaches and to story-analysis. Narrative analyses are used, and while taking the story-analysis as a thread, the author tries to weave all the themes to compile them into a collective story, that is, the findings of her study. In chapter 5 the link between *akogare* and gender is discussed: asking if *akogare* is a gender-bound concept. The discourses in this chapter consist of (a) introductory statements on some Japanese female learners’ attitudes towards some type of Western men and (b) the standard of beauty. The core concern for the author is not the scholastic and metaphysical standards of beauty but more of a vernacular sexual preference. Some supplementary references, touching the sensitivity to the western-otherness, are less explanatory in her discourses.

In chapter 6, the author talks about “the Precarious Japan”. The topic is about a mixed-race Miss Universe Japan 2015 title holder. The author asked her study participants, the Japanese young

men, what they felt when they looked at the photo of this Miss Universe. The responses revealed a somewhat unstable standards of Japanese men's acceptance of "non-Japanese-ness".

In chapter 7, the internationalisation of higher education is discussed from the view- points of one's capability of communication in English, and of structural reorganisation of higher education institutions. Particular attention is paid to Christian colleges and universities in way of asking if the colleges have been really open to internationalisation. The author invites the readers to pay special attention to the remark 'floating understanding of herself' made by a faculty member when responding the author's enquiry. (pp.122-124.). Nonaka stresses the importance to keep and innovate the space where the traditional binaries may be overcome. Lastly in chapter 8, she concludes her research on *akogare* and recommends re-imagining Japan and internationalisation.

Speaking generally, the book is worthwhile for English teachers. In one sense or another, this can be an introductory book for non-Japanese readers to discover Japanese education, and for Japanese readers to reflect upon themselves and their education. I felt somewhat alien to her English expressions but the book is well written. I have read the book with some academic concerns and would like to put down some points so that I may firstly deepen my understanding, and secondly, with the hope that the author enriches her discourses in the future.

First, a tentative definition of Self and Other should have been given. The author refers to transcendence of the binary of self and other. It may be necessary for the author to show the readers how transcendence might be possible. Mere juxtaposition does not provide this. What kind of theological tensions can there be between the Self and the Other, for example? It has often been observed that the two notions were brought into a type of dialectical relation by a medium of the Third that is superior or transcendental to the Self (e.g. Christian God). It has also often seen that the first person (I) was related to the second (you) and the third (he /she/ them) persons in linguistic space, where the Self should stand to or with the Other, that is a plural construct of the second and the third persons. How can there be a linguistic triangle consisting of three kinds of persons? In highly- secularised European world views, reason (light of nature) can work as the medium by which the Self might exist against or, with the Other. A nexus, at least triadic dynamics, may prove a transcendence. In this case the Self and the Other are nominally men of a quality, whose world-views are nominally of common value. Such an absolute abstraction of human beings guarantees a composition of abstract dynamic space where the notions of individuality and collectivity may survive and work.

The reviewer assumes that the author might have discussed more about the required space where Self and Other in her definition could survive and function. Nonaka refers very briefly to Kant and Hegel but tells nothing about how and why the Kantian and Hegelian ontology and epistemology could provide a logical scheme for her *akogare*-construct. There can be another dichotomy in comparative studies in education; that is, insider-outsider binary scheme. Although I think Nonaka's *akogare* cannot easily be a paradigm (paradigm in Kuhn's definition is not a *pattern* of problem solution), it is worthwhile for the author to meditate upon a feasibility to expand her frame of reference (*akogare* frame) in order for hers to embrace another heuristic dichotomy.

We know that existentialism attacked and destroyed modern (Kantian and Hegelian) ontological and epistemological structures which was based either on Christian theology or, on reason. Nowadays we see diverse religious faiths and theological doctrines crossing borders on one side, and hyper-globalised marketisation of information (which is another rationalism based on Western Reason) on another. The problems of dichotomy of the Self and the Other have become more complex than ever. In addition, they lie in the deep shadows of post-colonialism. Are the Selves, Asian, African and even Western-- liberated from political and economic tyranny? In these situations, what kind of new space does linguistic of Self and Other realise in the ontological sphere worldwide? Is there any possibility to set the dichotomy of the Self and the Other(s) on any stable philosophical foundation? If not, what should we provide or prepare?

Second, on etymological reasoning of the word *akogare*, I share the author's interpretation. At the same time, I think that it could have been more useful for the author to pay attention to

another lexical explanation given the term in the dictionary. It reads there that the word *akogare* (noun) was derived from the verb *akogareru*. The word *akogareru* came from *akugaru* (verb). The basic meaning of the verb *akugaru/akogareru* was that (a) a man wanders or roams leaving his place, wanders nowhere, and that (b) his mind being haunted by a dim idea of another place or directions toward unknown, he roams out from home (*Kokugo dai-jiten*, grand Japanese dictionary, volume 1, p. 245.). Giving priority to this explanation, we may postulate another scheme for enhancing narrative analyses. The 20th century was the time of grand migration and even today we observe a large scale, and in higher frequency the thrives and drives of immigrants who go across the borders. Towards the end of the 20th century, some coined the phrase ‘Japanese diaspora’ which symbolised the emergence and growth of new Japanese personalities. In the USA, many books on modern diaspora were published. In the age of grand migration, another interpretation of the old Japanese verb might suggest us to employ the notion and strike an innovative framework for interpreting, educationally for example, in the international setting. The author’s questioning: *which country’s interviewees would choose to be born or to be*, could be more productive in gaining insights into their zests for acquiring higher capability of English language usage.

I close this review by raising a remark about TESOL. TESOL asks teachers to apply its six principles--accepting them as the practical methods of teaching English to those whose mother tongues are not English, I would like to know what kinds or types of English can or should be taught. In my memory which goes back to the era from 1946 to 1972, my English teachers’ methods were rudimental. Watching and reading the passages on the blackboard, then, oral questions; stringent English grammar lessons in English and English composition, among others. I had non-native English teachers in Japan. My grammar teacher was highly acquainted with the lexical knowledge and usages of vocabulary. At an international language school in London, I found the basic methods were the same as my secondary school English lessons, though one was new to me: I heard English in recorded audio instead of written messages on the blackboard or in print. In terms of grammar, the type of teaching at the London school was weak. In my secondary school in Japan, my teachers recommended English literature from the UK and the USA. In London, my tutor supervised my essay-writing. Judging from my personal experiences of learning English, it is a key for any learners to be acquainted with good English or encountering highly educated teachers at once in English, and in other disciplines for that matter.

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