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Editor's Preface

From September 6 to 9, 2023, the WERA Task Force Global Research in Extended Education Conference 2024 was held in Bern, Switzerland. Researchers and practitioners from across the globe gathered to present their work, sharing insights that contribute to the advancement of future research and offer practical implications in the field.

This issue features a carefully curated selection of high-quality papers presented at the Bern conference. It continues a longstanding tradition in which researchers present their work at the conference, receive feedback from the audience and experts, and revise their papers for inclusion in a special issue of our journal.

Through this special issue, we also celebrate the collaboration between the journal's editors and the guest editors who organized the conference. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Michelle, Regular and Lynn, who played vital roles as guest editors. They invited conference presenters to submit abstracts if they were interested in publishing their work in the journal. Following an initial review of these abstracts, eligible authors were invited to submit full papers for further peer review. Throughout this process, the guest editors were instrumental in recommending distinguished academic reviewers, greatly aiding the quality of the final papers.

As a result, five outstanding papers, each having undergone a thorough review process, have been published in this special issue. These papers exemplify high academic standards and align closely with the themes of the Bern conference. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the authors of these excellent papers, as well as to the reviewers whose insightful feedback helped refine the papers. For a deeper understanding of each paper's key findings and its academic and policy implications, I encourage readers to read the introductions provided by the guest editors.

Looking ahead to 2025, two major conferences in the field of extended education will take place. The first, organized by the Global Extended Learning and Youth Development Association (GELYDA), will be held at Reykjavik University in Iceland from June 11 to 13, under the theme The Science and Practice of Extended Learning, Youth Development, and Wellbeing. The second, organized by the WERA Task Force Global Reseach in Extended Education in collaboration with Linköping University in Sweden, will take place from September 25 to 27, on the theme Extended Education in the Future: Opportunities and Challenges.

I wish both conferences great success and look forward to an enriching exchange of ideas, where scholars and practitioners from around the world will present and discuss high-quality research, gaining valuable insights that will advance the field.

Sincerely,
Sang Hoon Bae, Editor-in-Chief
International Journal for Research on Extended Education (IJREE)

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Special Section

Introduction to the Special Issue "Quality in Extended Education"

Michelle Jutzi, Regula Windlinger*, Lynn Bolliger**

Extended Education defined as all services provided to support children's education outside of regular school hours (Schüpbach, 2018), is growing in number and importance in many countries. Studies show that participation in extended education programs can have a positive impact on students' academic or socio-emotional development, depending on the quality of the program (e. g. Fischer & Theis, 2014; Lilla & Schüpbach, 2019). While school quality has been a focus of research for several years, the study of quality in extended education is relatively new in our field. This research gap needs to be filled, especially as there many expectations from different stakeholders in the extended education sector, such as the reduction of educational inequalities. The WERA TASK FORCE Global Research in Extended Education Conference 2023 took up this challenge and discussed over 50 contributions on quality in extended education, five of which are presented in this special issue.

Early research on international comparisons in extended education shows that the development is often culture and context specific and rooted in political and pedagogical discourses (Allemann-Ghionda, 2009). Yet, in terms of the quality of extended education, several countries have developed specific quality frameworks (e. g., Australian Children's Education and Care Quality Authority, 2024; National Afterschool Association [NAA], 2011) or curricula (Fischer et al., 2022). Nevertheless, there is a need for a global understanding of quality. Therefore, parallel to the input-process-output model of school quality (Scheerens, 1990), a model with three dimensions of quality can be used to describe quality in extended education (Fischer & Kielblock, 2021; Willems & Becker, 2015). Structural quality is tied to context and includes all aspects of quality that are visible at first glance, such as infrastructure, opening hours and staff-child ratios. Process quality describes aspects of quality that are in the hands of staff: interactions, rules and rituals, activities offered and means of communication (Fischer et al., 2022; Strätz et al., 2003). Output quality, which is often called "orientation quality" (Annen et al., 2017) describes goals that extended education programs can strive for, such as providing students with academic support, helping them develop socially or individually, or, at another level, contributing to gender equality by providing childcare outside of school hours (Fischer & Klieme, 2013). All these aspects emerge from the research and literature on quality in extended education and vary in importance depending on the perspective. The articles presented in this issue can be grouped according to these dimensions and further separated by the focus perspective: the extended education staff perspective and the children's perspective.

The first three contributions focus on the staff perspective. The contribution by Knut Løndal, Siv Lund and Kirsti Riiser focuses on a specific aspect of structural quality – that of

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professionalisation. Their analysis of interviews with staff in Norwegian extended education institutions points to the need for professionalisation measures to improve quality in extended education. The authors conclude that there is a need to introduce qualification requirements for extended education staff. The contribution by Laurin Bremerich, Gunther Grasshoff, and Markus Sauerwein follows this line and argues that the shortage of formally qualified staff makes it necessary to also employ people without the desired qualifications. Therefore, they are interested in the structural and personal integration of such "lay educators" in all-day schools. The results of their mixed-methods study conducted in Germany show that the integration and belonging of lay staff plays an important role for quality. The contribution from Sweden by Christina Grewell and Björn Haglund also focuses on the staff perspective and examines how a structural aspect of quality, namely the physical learning environment is related to the teaching in school-age educare (an aspect of process quality). Staff in school-age educare centres in Sweden were interviewed about the teaching practices in the physical learning environment provided. The results show that aspects of structural quality – such as limited space – are important for the development of good process quality. Furthermore, the subordination of extended education staff to school staff, which also shows up in the use of the physical environment, can be limiting.

The other two papers consider a perspective that is often overlooked: the children's perspective. The contribution by Jasmin Näpfli and Kirsten Schweinberger focuses on all dimensions of quality. Through photo tours and group discussions with 194 children in extended education facilities in Switzerland, their subjective point of view is taken into account. The results show that children talk more often about aspects of the process dimension of quality than about structural aspects and that they are most concerned about relationships, autonomy, and participation. The contribution by Taylor Michelle Wycoff, Sandra D. Simpkins and Alessandra Pantano provides another shift in perspective by looking at the perspectives of minoritized adolescents in extended education settings regarding their perceptions of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Focusing on process quality enables a closer look at what kind of practices can be included in specific activities and how they are connected to the orientation or output quality of the whole after-school program. The authors describe that extended education settings can become more culturally responsive by using diverse teaching practices.

The different papers in this special issue all point to important dimensions and aspects of quality and use both qualitative and quantitative methods. The focus on a particular perspective or aspect of quality allows for an in-depth analysis and the formulation of recommendations for further development. Furthermore, all contributions connect their findings to different aspects of quality. Nevertheless, the question remains, whether a more global approach to quality and the development of an international quality framework also spark a common discussion and a global vision for the future of extended education.

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Children's perspectives on the Quality of Extended Education Offerings

Jasmin Näpfli, Kirsten Schweinberger**

Abstract: The intended effects of Extended Education Offerings (EEOs) depend on their quality and structure. As a result, there is an increasing focus on examining concepts of quality in extended education. Children's views on the quality of EEOs can differ from those of adults, as they have specific knowledge about EEO. This study investigates children's views on quality aspects of EEOs to obtain a solid background from which a learning environment can be created conducive to the promotion of children's well-being. The database for this article consists of 46 photo tours and group interviews with 194 children participating in nine different EEOs in one Swiss canton. Based on the CIPO model, the results indicate that the main dimensions of process quality are: relationships, autonomy, and participation. Structural aspects are mentioned less frequently, but ensuring sufficient space for a variety of needs is important for children's well-being.

Keywords: extended education, quality, children's perspective, well-being

Introduction

An increasing number of children are spending more time in extended education offerings, which are continuously expanding worldwide (Bae, 2018). As the various forms of extended education encompass a variety of learning and educational arrangements both in and out of school we will follow the suggestion of Schuepbach et al. (2017, p. 58) and consistently use the term *Extended Education Offering* (EEO).

Expectations associated with the expansion of EEOs are high, ranging from social and intercultural learning to fostering inclusion, improving individual skills, and enabling care for dual income families (Bae, 2018; Stecher, 2018). Empirical findings demonstrate that extended education in its current form does not always have the expected effects (Sauerwein et al., 2019; Schuepbach et al., 2012) and that the outcomes depend on its quality and structure (Zuechner & Fischer, 2014).

Recently, has been an increasing focus on examining quality in EEOs in the German-speaking countries (Brückel et al., 2017; Fischer et al., 2012; Landwehr, 2015; Sauerwein, 2017) but also internationally (Fischer et al., 2022). The quality frameworks applied share similar dimensions and are mostly based on the adult perspective. However, perspectives and judgments of children may differ from those of adults (Hauke, 2019). Children have a unique view on process factors of quality, which helps to better understand EEOs. Therefore, it is important to consult children as central actors in EEOs in matters that affect them, especially since it is stipulated in Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

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Existing studies on the perspective of children on quality in EEOs (Cartmel et al., 2023; Fischer et al., 2022; Klerfelt & Stecher, 2018; Nentwig-Gesemann et al., 2018) emphasize the importance of referring to children's voices. These studies reveal meaningful insights about children's perceptions of quality (Cartmel et al., 2023, p. 8). Further results show that children's interests, ambitions, and ideas should be more integrated in the institutional practices to enhance overall quality (Pálsdóttir, 2019; Simoncini et al., 2015). Klerfelt and Stecher (2018, p. 60) conclude that research is needed on the child level "to investigate in what way school-age educare contributes to children's wellbeing and making of meaning."

Note that the quality and structure of EEOs represent only part of the equation. Alongside these factors, the way children *use* these offerings plays a crucial role as the offer-and-use model shows for teaching (Helmke, 2009). This is another reason for considering the perspective of children attending an EEO, as adults can only provide a second experience opinion in this regard.

Quality of EEOs should foster as output children's well-being – which is often described as a hallmark of the quality of EEOs – and development (Brückel et al., 2017; Fischer et al., 2022). Former research concludes that there is a need for gaining a deeper understanding of children's well-being in EEOs, discerned from children's own perspectives and their subjective perceptions of well-being (Chiapparini, 2017; Klerfelt & Stecher, 2018).

After discussing the quality dimensions that children refer to, this paper examines their perspectives on the quality aspects of EEOs, with a particular focus on how different quality dimensions are linked to well-being as a key outcome.

Quality in Extended Education

The discourse on quality often revolves around the distinctions made in the classical dimensions of structure, process and output (Donabedian, 1980; Eckhardt & Egert, 2020; Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020). The foundation of this categorization is the *CIPO*-model of school quality (Scheerens, 2015) which states that *C*ontext influences *I*nput, *P*rocess, and *O*utput quality. These core components should be considered independently and in relation to one another (Fischer et al., 2012).

Structural Quality

Structural quality in EEOs refers to the conditions under which the education process occurs and includes organizational conditions, personnel resources, and infrastructure. Organizational conditions describe aspects such as work concepts, deployment or schedule planning, management tasks and leadership responsibilities (Brückel et al., 2017; Landwehr, 2015) as well as the degree of accessibility and the extent of usage opportunities (Donabedian, 1980).

Personnel resources involve not only the ratio of children to staff but also the qualifications and competencies of the personnel (Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020).

Infrastructure comprises the physical environment and the available material resources. The amount, variety and adaptability of spaces should cater to the needs of children. Creating an environment that provides not only care and security for the children, but also opportunities

for movement, self-determined activities and peer-relationship building is fundamental (Landwehr, 2015; Nentwig-Gesemann et al., 2018). Spaces should allow for play, rest, retreat, movement and creativity. Research shows that it is easier to organize movement activities than to provide spaces for quiet activities (Deinet et al., 2018; Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020).

Whether children are organized into fixed groups or not and the rhythm of offerings both affect the balance of free play and guided activities. Structuring elements in the daily schedule, such as lunch breaks and homework time, provide further rhythm. Additionally, homework time relieves family demands and increases equal opportunities, especially for those lacking homework support at home (Fischer et al., 2016).

Structural conditions are crucial for EEOs quality, but they do not ensure it entirely. Having many activities does not guarantee quality; it is more how they are designed and delivered (process quality, Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020).

Process Quality

Process quality includes social relationships, cooperation and opportunities for children to experience autonomy and participation. Social relationships encompass the interactions among children and friendship-building as well as the relationship between staff and children; high interaction quality between staff and children determines output dimensions such as autonomy, well-being (Ahnert & Eckstein-Madry, 2015) and individual development (Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020, p. 62).

Cooperation within the EEO but also multi-professionally between teachers is linked to job satisfaction (Näpfli & Schweinberger, 2022) and can contribute to a positive school climate (Fischer et al., 2012). Communication and cooperation with parents and other institutions involved in the EEO are also process quality aspects (Brückel et al., 2017; Fischer et al., 2012; Landwehr, 2015; Sauerwein, 2017).

Experiences of autonomy and participation are crucial aspects of process quality in EEOs (Brückel et al., 2017; Fischer et al., 2012; Landwehr, 2015; Sauerwein, 2017). Participation can be generally defined as the ability of children to influence their living and learning contexts (Prengel, 2016, p. 10), and specifically, being able to find out about concrete participation opportunities and experiencing these in action (Guglhör et al., 2020, p. 57).

Output Quality

Output quality refers to the objectives that should be achieved. In a narrow sense, this refers only to the outcomes directed at child development and children's well-being, understood as the fulfillment of basic needs. According to self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), the basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence and social integration must be satisfied to achieve well-being (Legault, 2020). In a broader sense, EEO quality can include outcomes relevant to other stakeholders such as parents, teachers and staff (Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020, p. 73).

This study focuses solely on children's well-being as a central output quality. In addition to experiencing positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction, the definition of well-being also includes functioning well, including "development of one's potential, having some

control over one's life, having a sense of purpose, and experiencing positive relationships" (Ruggeri et al., 2020, p. 1, see also; Huppert, 2009). It is a multidimensional construct encompassing physical, emotional, and social dimensions and is related to health (Ohlbrecht & Winkler, 2018). National and international education programs focused on well-being as an important concept (OECD, 2019). Child well-being is vital for society, as it is linked to doing well in school, developing social skills, and becoming resilient (OECD, n.d.). Student well-being is considered both an enabling condition for positive learning outcomes and an essential educational outcome itself (Hascher & Hagenauer, 2011; Morinaj & Hascher, 2022).

Furthermore, there is a need for a deeper understanding of children's well-being in EEO that is derived from their own perspectives and their subjective perception of well-being (Chiapparini, 2017). So far, we know from one case study in Switzerland that children's well-being is closely tied to the quality of food, perception of equality, and the shaping of their environments in EEOs (Chiapparini et al., 2018a). We follow the demand by Fischer et al. (2022) demand that the children's perspective in particular should be taken into account when examining well-being.

Context of the Study and the Situation in Switzerland

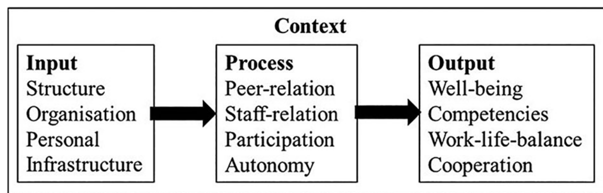
The fact that Switzerland is a confederation of individual cantons means that there are no national guidelines for the structure and quality of EEOs. Thus, the state of EEOs in Switzerland is heterogeneous.

Our data stem from one Swiss canton in which EEOs are already strongly anchored and organized within their own quality framework. In this canton, the EEOs are part of school life; the pedagogical concept of the EEOs is a component of the school curriculum and regulates, among other things, the organization of the offerings, participation, quality management, and cooperation. The task of the EEOs is to design voluntary and supplementary offerings to regular classes. The offerings are tailored to the needs of the pupils and provide opportunities for non-formal and informal learning, which is also known as play-based or child-centred pedagogy (Hedges & Cooper, 2018). The focus of the EEO is on social skills and it does not have a specific curriculum. The EEOs are leisure-oriented but can provide homework support. It's important to note that while the EEO is part of the school, its purpose is not to emphasize academic outcomes and there is no curriculum for the EEOs – the children can mostly choose what they want to do. The use of a child-centred and play-based methodology supports a holistic development in children (Lunga et al., 2022). The fact that EEO is non-compulsory and the lack of a curriculum for the EEOs highlight the difference from other countries as for example Germany or Sweden where existing quality framework include pedagogical aspects like classroom management or curricula for EEOs (Fischer et al., 2012; Sauerwein, 2017).

Research Questions

Quality frameworks of other pioneering states, such as the EduCare-System in Sweden or the all-day school system in Germany, cannot be applied in Switzerland due to structural differences. In figure 1 the main quality dimensions from different frameworks, which seem important for the specific context, are arranged according to the CIPO-Model (Scheerens, 2015).

Figure 1. CIPO-Model with Main Dimensions of EEO Quality Frameworks



This paper aims to address the following research questions:

(1) Which quality dimensions are important for the children and which concrete aspects do they refer to?
(2) What links do the children see between structural, process and output quality dimensions?

Methods

A distinctive feature of recent childhood research is the fact that children, rather than being studied, are explicitly asked for their views (Mey, 2013, p. 53). Qualitative research methods are best suited to determining children's subjective perspectives on their living environment (Heinzel, 2000, p. 22). In addition to the semi-structured group interviews, first, a photo guided tour was conducted, in which the children accompanied the researchers through the EEO. In this tour the children pointed out places and things they like. This method is well suited as an introduction to data collection and provides a neutral stimulus for discussion (Nentwig-Gesemann, Walther, & Thedinga, 2017, p. 20). Like Klerfelt and Haglund (2014) we also found that the children had fun and that the intention of giving them a voice was fulfilled with this method. Additionally, the group setting helps to minimize power imbalances between adults and children. The discussion guide was composed of thematic blocks derived from the cantonal quality framework for EEOs.

A total of 46 photo tours and group interviews were conducted with 194 children between the ages of five and twelve from nine different EEOs in one Swiss canton (Dockett et al., 2009). The recruitment and group allocation of the children was carried out by the EEO staff, based on the consent of parents and children to participate. The EEO's staff was responsible for forming the groups, which were mixed in terms of age and gender to ensure maximum diversity, based on their knowledge of the children. Children who didn't actively participate were directly asked for their opinions to ensure a wide range of perspectives. However, there

may still be some children who didn't share their opinion (Dockett et al., 2009) but we can argue that saturation was achieved across the different location and the 46 conducted group interviews.

The group interviews and photo-tours were audio-recorded and transcribed. The data was analysed using qualitative content analysis (Kuckartz, 2012). Quality dimensions of the cantonal framework for EEOs were used as deductive content-related categories (see Table 1) for the data analysis. A sample of the same material was coded and compared by two researchers for the purposes of intersubjective comprehensibility. Subsequently, the agreement was examined, and inductive categories were formed. The expanded category system[1] was applied to another sample of the material and again checked for agreement.

Table 1. Deductive Categories

Main Categories	Subcategories	Exemplary cases
Structural quality	Staff / Leadership	Fluctuation: "I'm sad when staff leaves, which I like."
	Rooms	Craft room
	Activities	P: In here, we usually look at small books.
	Food	P: And we always eat in the other room! (.) One room is always, exactly at one open and we always eat in the other room.
	Material	What I think is cool are these [Kaplas].
	Organisation	Guided activities P: So, now, our theme is 'Indians', we are going on excursions, last time we did a treasure hunt, there. Yeah.
Process quality	Staff interaction	she can... be nice. Sometimes she asks a lot of questions and it's kind of annoying like yesterday: I was in a bad mood and really didn't want to talk
	Relationships	I: Have you made friends through the EEO, so you can be with children from different classes? S: Yes.
	Climate	How do you get along with each other? Good. Good.
	Autonomy	Uh. So, with games or books, we can actually decide for ourselves which ones we want to look at. When we go outside, we can also decide for ourselves.
	Participation	We have a wish box and there you can, for example, write notes,
Output quality	Well-being	I feel well here.

1 See Annex

Results

In the results section, we first explore the quality dimensions associated with well-being, then delve into the structural and process quality aspects that children consider important for their well-being. This leads to the identification of several recurring patterns in line with the CIPO-Model.

Output quality

Overall, most children feel comfortable in the EEOs and enjoy attending them. Key factors contributing to this broad sense of well-being include social interactions which are more spontaneous than those occurring outside school settings. Children can interact with peers of other classes and ages, which enriches their individual social experiences. The presence of friends in the EEO is often mentioned in connection with the feeling of well-being.

"P: No. Everything necessary for a good EEO is here.
I: Wonderful.
P: There are children, there are adults. An EEO is an EEO." (C11, P. 214)

Other reasons for the sense of well-being include: the presence of kind and attentive staff; the climate perceived as a welcoming and safe environment with clear rules and a wide variety of activities, games, materials, and trips offered — more than children typically have access to at home. Children also value the freedom and autonomy they experience in EEOs. Some children consider this as superior to school or home life as they counteract feelings of loneliness or boredom. It appears important that diverse activities are available to cater to the varying needs of the children. They appreciate being allowed to choose autonomously what they want to do and having leisure time:

"... well, that I have free time. Because, when I'm at home, I don't have as much free time, but more training and stuff. At home, I don't have much time to relax and so on. But here, I do." (I8, P. 30)

They particularly value the opportunities for co-creation, such as participating in projects, creating posters, drawings or structures that will be exhibited, and getting involved in activities, for example, in the school garden. Moreover, they enjoy feeling responsible for the EEO and like to make spaces their own.

Factors that could potentially affect well-being negatively include the absence of friends or a lack of stimulating activities. Some children dislike participating in guided activities, which again emphasizes the importance of autonomy. Others find the EEO environment too noisy. Dissatisfaction with the food served, a desire to be at home with their parents, unfamiliarity with the EEO or the perception of spending too much time in an EEO might also diminish well-being.

Structure Quality

Children appreciate the various facilities provided by the EEOs to cater to their different needs. They enjoy playing and appreciate the variety of play equipment, such as table tennis or table soccer, as well as board and card games, which allow them to discover new games. In addition, children enjoy creative play materials such as painting tools, ironing beads, crochet threads and construction materials such as Lego and magnetic plates. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to build huts or houses using movable objects.

Children often cited the sports hall and the outdoor area as spaces where they feel well and enjoy spending time. These areas enable them to expend their energy and engage in loud, active play – activities that are essential for their well-being:

"For moving around. We are children, we have a lot of energy." (C10, P. 66)

A crucial aspect is playing freely without any danger; children express dissatisfaction with areas where potential harm could occur.

A chill room or a quiet area with comfortable seating, where they can relax, read or have conversations, is another feature children often mention. Retreat spaces are important to older children, who prefer to converse and engage in activities without disturbance. They appreciate having an exclusive retreat room whereas younger children rather need quiet rooms, primarily for rest and to reduce noise. But fulfilling these needs in the EEO often poses challenges.

There is an important issue regarding the noise level in EEOs, especially when different activities such as participation in loud and quiet activities occur in the same room, leading to conflicts that can negatively impact well-being:

"If you're only in the gym, you have to read in the gym, and that's very difficult. Because then everyone is running around, sometimes screaming." (D1, P. 24)

In some EEOs, the staff creatively offer rooms such as the kitchen or the office as quiet spaces for children. In this respect, the outdoor area is also crucial for children as it allows for the simultaneous satisfaction of various needs, including rest and retreat, without their coming into conflict with one another.

The structure of EEOs differs. In some, children are in fixed groups where guided activities are provided, while in others, they choose autonomously from a variety of activity zones. Fixed groups are typically organized according to age. Every EEO, however, carves out timeslots for free play and guided activities such as crafts, football tournaments, baking and off-site excursions. These excursions usually happen only on Wednesdays when children do not have to attend school in the afternoon. Although some children complain about the repetitive nature and the extended duration of these trips, most enjoy the chance to step outside the school.

Children rarely comment on the child-to-staff ratio but indirectly suggest suggest the need for more, active staff. Staff turnover is problematic, causing distress among children and scepticism toward new staff unfamiliar with existing rules.

The food is generally considered to need improvement, with the vegetarian meat substitutes being rated the worst. Children like "unhealthy" food more, which they describe as "food for children".

Process Quality

Children mention a good social climate in EEOs:

“We’re not exactly best friends with everyone, but we are still nice to each other.” (G2, P. 66)

Children learn to distinguish between friends and peers. They can deepen friendships with existing friends (from the same class) or find new friends (from other classes). There are more reports of the former and there is often not much gender mixing. Having friends in the EEO is crucial for the well-being of the children. Peers are liked as playmates along with the possibility of playing in large groups.

Children also point out social conflicts, often involving specific children not adhering to the rules. Other conflicts may arise due to age differences, especially, for instance, when children of different ages or from different groups do not have the same rights, or conflicts may occur due to different needs or scarce resources, thereby making certain materials or spaces exclusive.

The relationship with the staff is generally good. They prefer to have a fixed person they can turn to. The staff fulfil a range of roles such as helping to resolve social conflicts, supervising, being a play partner or, less often, being a person to whom the children can confide their problems.

During free play time or when the EEO is organized into different activity zones, children can experience autonomy in choosing what they want to do and whether to play independently or in groups.

Autonomy allows them to fulfil their needs, thereby enhancing their well-being. Some children, however, find autonomy overwhelming, causing them to feel unsure about what they should do. Others experience a sense of monotony because they always participate in the same activities. Thus, some prefer guided activities because they dislike playing alone. But overall, children enjoy being allowed to make decisions for themselves and enjoy the freedom and independence that autonomy provides.

Participation is a key factor for well-being and children mention different forms: they can propose their ideas in the form of wish boxes, wish lists for material, activities or food. Furthermore, children can express their opinion, sometimes formalized in children’s meetings. There are also examples of taking initiative, such as collecting signatures against disliked food or conducting satisfaction surveys about the food. Very popular are the co-design of spaces by hanging pictures or rearranging furniture as well as preparing the afternoon snack. Moreover, democratic decision-making is mentioned in connection with the sports hall or in choosing music. They also learn that participation has rules and boundaries:

“Yes, it really depends on what it is. Going to Europa Park (a popular theme park in Germany) is not exactly feasible.” (H3, P. 102)

It is important that children know where and to what extent they can experience real participation as sham participation hinders their well-being. Children sometimes misinterpret participation in the sense that it exists only when their opinion prevails.

Chains – set of conditions

In this section, we will examine the links between structural, process, and output quality, which interact in the form of a set of conditions or chains. Since not all children have the same experiences and opinions about quality aspects and well-being, we tried to identify different patterns to avoid oversimplifying children's opinions (Clark et al., 2005), showing various possibilities instead. Quality judgments are influenced by personal assessment within a specific context. This leads to decisions being made in situations where there are conflicting interests or demands. Nevertheless, different quality chains perceived by children to enhance their well-being have been identified (Table 2). An outdoor area which is occasionally freely accessible facilitates the conduct of diverse activities without causing conflict or needing negotiation. Here, the staff serve mainly as supervisors.

The sports hall, mostly accessible voluntarily, is a space where different activities can be pursued, based on consultation with other children and they can decide democratically what they want to play. Children with a need to pursue loud and wild activities can use the gym, while children who need more peace and quiet go to other rooms. Staff serve either as supervisors or guides for activities. If the EEO follows the concept of activity zones, where there are different rooms for different needs with corresponding rules, staff mainly have a monitoring role. Children can exercise autonomy in deciding what they want to do and where, which impacts positively on their well-being as it allows them to engage in activities that meet their personal needs. This further promotes the co-existence of varied activities without conflict.

Flexibility in attendance allows parents to choose modules catering to their work-life-balance requirements and introduces an element of variability with broader implications. This flexibility influences group composition and staff organization in the EEO and fosters diversity. If the organization accommodates a diverse range of ages, staff members need to assist children in forming friendships. Organization into fixed groups allows children to form trusting relationships with the staff as the latter would be accountable for a specific group of children.

Activities in EEOs can be structured as free play where staff members take on the role of supervisors and define a framework for self-determined actions. This approach influences process quality and ultimately leads to output quality by allowing children the freedom to choose playmates and activities based on their needs. A guided activity with an opt-out option has implications for the staff, who must organize activities and supervise those not participating, which requires more resources as it involves double-tracking. But children experience self-determination and, depending on their decision, they can freely choose playmates and activities, or experience new things in the guided activity. If these guided activities have no opt-out options, children may have no autonomy but do have new experiences, which may enhance their well-being as well.

Regarding materials and room usage, clear and visible rules for access and use are essential, for example, whether free access is granted, or specific access restrictions apply. This system supports children's autonomy and gives them a defined framework for self-determined action, which also permits fair access to toys and materials. Furthermore, children can creatively shape their environment and take ownership of the EEO, which in turn cultivates pride in their own achievements.

Table 2. Chains

Structural quality			Process quality			Output quality
Room/Material	**Organisation**		**Staff**	**Autonomy**	**Participation**	**Well-being**
Outdoor area (sometimes free access)	Activity zone or free-play time	Different activities possible without their colliding with others or consulting other children	Supervision	Self-determined decision making		Possibility to satisfy different needs without conflicts
Sports hall (voluntary access)		Different activities possible in consultation with other children	Supervision, guides		Democratic decision: voting processes – decide about activity	Being able to determine where to be, based on personal needs
Different rooms for different needs		Different rules for different rooms	Monitoring			Different activities possible
	Flexibility of attendance times. Different compositions of peer and staff groups	Different ages	Necessary support in forming friendships			Can choose friends freely
		Fixed groups of same age	Responsibility for children in a certain group			Relationship of trust with staff and deepen friendships within a smaller group
	Free play		Supervision	Defined framework for self-determined action		Freedom to choose playmates and activities
	Guided activity with opt-out option		Organizing activities and supervision; requires more resources		Propose, express an opinion, vote	New experience

Structural quality		Process quality			Output quality
Room/Material	**Organisation**	**Staff**	**Autonomy**	**Participation**	**Well-being**
	Guided activity without opt-out option	Organizing activities	No autonomy		
Materials and use of room	Clear and visible rules on access/use: free access/use vs. asking for access/use	Support children's autonomy	Defined framework for self-determined action	Fair access to toys and materials	Be able to shape the surroundings creatively, take ownership of the EEO/ pride in own achievement

Discussion

This study examines children's views on various quality aspects of EEOs in a Swiss canton to establish a foundation for creating a learning environment which is conducive to the promotion of children's well-being, since this can be viewed as necessary for other output quality dimensions.

Regarding the first research question, results show that while children perceive quality dimensions like those described in the frameworks, they add different aspects: having enough spaces to fulfil their different needs without their conflicting with one another. Children's needs include creativity, movement, rest, retreat and play – as noted in other studies (Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020; Walther & Nentwig-Gesemann, 2022). It is noticeable that children perceive the EEO as a place for their leisure time – which is also found for Sweden and Germany (Fischer et al., 2022). As well as in Australia, where with regard to the perspective of children passive leisure is now implemented in the curriculum for School-Age Care (Cartmel et al., 2023). This is in line with the perception of EEO staff but contrasts with the expectations of teachers, who perceive homework support as a central function of an EEO. This could stand in the way of efforts to bring about multi-professional cooperation between EEO staff and teachers (Authors, 2022).

The need for movement and for play to be loud and wild is fulfilled in all investigated EEOs, whereby it is important to ensure that children cannot harm themselves. Children pointed out that a lack of quiet spaces for rest and retreat negatively affects their well-being – a finding that aligns with other research (Deinet et al., 2018; Fischer et al., 2022; Gulghör-Rudan et al., 2020). However, a difference between older and younger children's needs for quiet activities and rest areas was found. Older children prefer having an exclusive room where they can relax, engage in self-guided activities and build peer relationships independently. Younger children a require the quiet space primarily for resting. Spaces or corners that the children can design themselves and movable objects with which they can construct huts, or other things contribute to well-being.

Process quality dimensions that children mention above all are having friends to interact with, but also peers and a friendly atmosphere, which confirms results from other contexts (Fischer et al., 2012; Pálsdóttir, 2019; Walther & Nentwig-Gesemann, 2022). Good relationships with the staff are important, but primarily as support in social conflicts. This contrasts with findings from Germany where a greater emphasis is placed on staff relationships as a determinant of well-being (Ahnert & Eckstein-Madry, 2015).

Autonomy and participation are related to well-being, and this confirms research findings which show that suggestions for activities, EEO rules and room designs are some areas to which children can contribute (Guglhör et al., 2020, p. 57). When children have free playtime or select activity zones, it's vital that clear and visible rules govern room access and usage of material. As other research indicates, children like to have free play time (Cartmel et al., 2023; Elvstrand & Närvänen, 2016; Fischer et al., 2022).

Interactive features like children's assemblies, anonymous suggestion boxes and creative project work can facilitate democratic experiences for children. Participation also involves taking responsibility for the EEO or having a sense of ownership of the space, which can be facilitated through familiarization with the EEO. This can be achieved, for example, by hanging up pictures, providing space for personal belongings or decorating rooms.

Overall, children more frequently mention process dimension aspects in relation to well-being rather than structural aspects. This confirms research that process quality is crucial for EEO effectiveness (Chiapparini, 2017; Fischer et al., 2022). The theoretical framework of the CIPO-Model shows the importance of looking not only at dimensions but also at the chains which derive from the model. The results show that structural decisions do have an impact on process quality and on output quality. The balanced interaction of design decisions at both the structural and process levels allow children not only to experience positive emotions such as happiness and satisfaction but also to function well, including the development of their potential, autonomy, and fostering positive relationships (see Ruggeri et al., 2020).

The perspectives taken by the children are noteworthy as they evaluate all aspects of the EEO regarding its alignment with their needs. This underlines once again how important it is to consider the children's perspective to ensure that the EEO is designed in a child-friendly way.

Limitations and Future Research

There are limitations to consider in the current study. The data originate from a canton that offers a specific form of EEO. This raises the questions of: "To what extent does the form of the EEO influence the results?" And thus, "To what extent can the results be transferred to other forms of extended education?" However, the numerous agreements with the quality dimensions are encouraging.

Furthermore, there is a possibility that some children may have simply agreed with the group's opinion. Therefore, it could be enlightening to also examine the views of individual children by selecting specific (profiles of) children – for comparing different groups of children with respect to their attendance time or their social background. It should also be noted that the consent of both parents and children was a prerequisite for participating, and EEO leaders may also influence the selection of children.

This article focused solely on well-being as an output quality. This raises the question: What should be the aim of EEOs? If the EEOs are leisure-oriented and follow a child-centred approach well-being seems to be the central output quality. However, if the aim of EEOs is more (academic) learning-oriented, well-being should not be the only focus. Future research should also consider other aspects of output quality, such as social and personal skills, cooperation between teachers and EEO staff, and parental work-life balance. In addition, it would be interesting to compare children's views with the views of staff or parents to gain a holistic perspective.

Conclusion

Various structural and process quality aspects such as social interactions, autonomous decision-making, varied activity options, conflict management measures and adequate staff involvement were deemed relevant for the well-being of children. Several recurring patterns emerge in which various factors such as space, materials, organization, staff, autonomous decision-making and participation intertwine to impact children's overall well-being. To

enhance children's well-being within EEOs, we suggest the provision of a safe environment that permits a variety of autonomous activities, a stable and positive staff-child relationship, the promotion of social interactions and the fostering of children's meaningful participation.

Quality is a reflective concept that necessitates ongoing discussions across different actors to define its dimensions accurately within a specific context. Our results indicate that process quality dimensions hold more significance for children compared to structural dimensions, yet we identified paths showing relationships between both. Given this, quality dimensions must not be viewed in isolation.

Furthermore, children provide their unique perspectives on these dimensions, offering insight into shifting quality markers. Encouraging dialogue among all EEO actors about quality and aim of EEOs, including children, can help shape EEOs that address children's needs, while also meeting parents' needs for care and staff and teachers' expectations. Factors including sufficient room for diverse needs, quality food and a consistent staff presence significantly impact quality. Encouraging child participation at different levels is crucial and can be readily achieved. Given the substantial amount of time many children spend in these settings, amplifying their involvement in the decision-making processes pertaining to EEOs appears to be even more crucial.

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“We decide on the fly, based on previous experiences”: Staff members’ occupational practices in after-school programmes

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Abstract: Research indicates that high-quality after-school programmes (ASPs) can offer good care and foster academic and socio-emotional development in children. Staff has been identified as a critical factor in ensuring quality of ASPs. This article explores how Norwegian ASP staff members consider their occupational practices and analyses whether the group working in ASP can be considered a profession. Focus group interviews among staff members at seven ASPs were conducted, and theory of professions made up the theoretical perspective. The results suggest that the staff members’ occupational practices were based on their perceived mandate as caregivers and facilitators of activities for the children. Although the work communities were described as collaborative, the staff members’ occupational practices during ASP are described as individualised. The practices are decided “on the fly” and are derived from practical knowledge and shared occupational values established in everyday experiences rather than from practical syntheses that also include theoretical reflections and research-based discussions among colleagues. The results indicate a lack of practical syntheses that characterise professionalism and reveal a need for professionalisation among Norwegian ASP staff. The study demonstrates the importance of professional competence among ASP staff and indicates a need to introduce qualification requirements for employment in ASPs.

Keywords: After-school programme, staff member, occupational practices, professionalism, quality

Introduction

An international trend shaped by societal changes is the increasing number of schoolchildren attending after-school programmes (ASPs; Schuepbach, 2018). Whether an ASP can be considered a high-quality programme depends on factors such as curricular consistency, active forms of learning, a broad variety of activities and well-planed content based on the aims of the programme (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Schuepbach, 2016). Occupational staff has also been identified as a critical factor of good-quality ASPs (Vandell & Lao, 2016), and Schuepbach (2016) stated that “a central factor is the qualifications, education, training, and further training of the educators/staff persons” (p. 5). In this article, we explore how Norwegian ASP staff members consider their occupational practices and discuss their considerations against established professional standards.

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Starting in 1997, it became mandatory for all Norwegian municipalities to facilitate ASPs for primary school children aged 6 to 10 (Ministry of Church, Education and Research [MCER], 1998). The Norwegian ASP was established as a voluntary programme outside of compulsory school hours, and the Education Act (1998) stipulated that the programme should provide children care and supervision, and offer them opportunities for play, as well as cultural and leisure activities. The demarcation between school and ASP was stated clearly; no specific educational aims were given, and no requirements for pedagogical education for employment in ASPs were set. The 1998 version of the Education Act established the only formal aims of the Norwegian ASP until 2021, when the Framework plan for Norwegian ASP was implemented (Norwegian Directorate for Education and Training [NDET], 2021). According to the framework plan, ASP must still provide children care and supervision. Additionally, the programme must provide opportunities for holistic development and learning. In line with the United Nation’s (1989) Convention on the Rights of the Child, the framework plan emphasises the inherent value of childhood and highlights that ASP should facilitate meaningful leisure time and play. This implies that staff members should adopt a child-centred perspective, based on children’s right to self-determination and co-determination, when providing activities. Despite these expectations, no formal education or competence requirements for ASP staff are formulated (Løndal, in press; NDET, 2021).

Previous Research

In international research, ASPs are investigated within the field of extended education (Schuepbach, 2018; Stecher, 2018), and research indicates that high-quality programmes can offer good care and foster academic and socio-emotional development in children (Vandell & Lao, 2016). Research in several countries has shown that ASP staff’s educational backgrounds vary from professional education to no education at all (Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger, & Gausling, 2016; Klerfelt & Stecher, 2018). This situation might affect professionalism in ASPs, but it depends on how groups of employees collaborate and whether staff members undergo a professionalisation process. According to Stecher (2018), employees in German all-day schools constitute a heterogeneous group. This is described as a positive characteristic of the occupational cohort, since a multi-professional group can bring about diversified teaching practices and student contacts. However, this is not a universal situation. When Böhm-Kasper et al. (2016) investigated how multi-professional groups collaborate in German all-day schools, they found that patterns of collaboration between groups are underdeveloped.

Researchers in the Nordic countries have investigated how ASP staff members experience their occupational roles. Pálsdóttir (2012) found that ASP employees in Iceland interpreted their occupational roles as unclear but that they held caregiving, social development support and facilitation of play and leisure activities as the most important occupational tasks. In Sweden, a joint curriculum for school and ASP was implemented in 2011 (Klerfelt, Haglund, Andersson, & Kane, 2020). In this curriculum ASP are conceptualised as “school-age educare”, indicating that school and ASP have integrated aims for children’s development and learning. An increasing number of research articles have described staff members’ interpretations of their occupational roles in educare. Haglund (2015) found that they held traditional values concerning practices in educare, with a particular focus on providing good and safe care, sharing joy with the children and giving opportunities for free play. Other studies

have indicated that staff members experience cross-pressure between fulfilling traditional roles and their commitments to the educational aims of policy documents (Ackesjö, Lindqvist, & Nordänger, 2018; Lager & Gustafsson-Nyckel, 2021).

Research has indicated that the quality of Norwegian ASPs varies considerably between municipalities, and that the variability applies to factors such as clarity of aims, content, collaboration between ASP and school and staff competence (Caspersen et al., 2024; Wendelborg et al., 2018). Wendelborg et al. (2018) found that 42% of staff members had completed at least one year of higher education but that only 9% had completed pedagogical education. Moreover, they found that 27% of the staff members held an upper secondary school-level trade certificate as a *childcare and youth worker.* A recent study, conducted after implementation of the *Framework plan for Norwegian ASP* (NDET, 2021), shows that the proportion of staff members with certificate as childcare and youth worker has increased significantly, to 50% (Caspersen et al., 2024). It is worth noting that ASP employees experience a lack of collaboration between school and ASP, especially between teachers and ASP staff members. The study also reveals that most staff members experience a need for increased competence in areas necessary for their practice as ASP workers. Research shows that few employees have participated in formal competence development measures during their time as ASP employees (Wendelborg et al., 2018).

Compared with other countries, Norway stands out with a clear demarcation between compulsory schooling and ASP, and an absence of educational requirements for employment in ASP (Løndal, in press). While employees in Swedish school-age educare, for example, are expected to contribute to the school's educational aims, Norwegian ASP staff members are expected to facilitate the children's leisure time. The strong position of caregiving and play is, however, a prominent common feature of ASP in all the Nordic countries.

Aim of the Study

Staff members consider caregiving and facilitating friendship among children to be the most important aspects of Norwegian ASPs, followed by offering play and creative activities (Caspersen et al., 2024; Wendelborg et al., 2018). We have less knowledge about how staff members consider their occupational practices in ASP. The present study contributes to filling this knowledge gap. The main research question that guided the study was: *How do staff members consider their occupational practices in Norwegian ASPs?* Based on the answers to the main research question, we intend to discuss staff members' considerations against established professional standards. Therefore, we also asked an analytical research question: *To what extent can the occupational group working in ASP be considered a profession?* In referring to "staff members", we refer to all employees who participate in daily work with children during their ASP time. This includes assistants without formal education, certified childcare and youth workers, employees with pedagogical or other higher education and ASP managers. In line with Higgs (2019) *occupational practices* refer to the *enactment of roles* of an occupational group.

Theoretical Perspective

As its theoretical perspective, this study utilises sociological theory of professions. Hence, the concepts of *profession*, *professional practice*, *professionalism* and *professionalisation* are highlighted. According to Evetts (2013), professions are essentially knowledge-based occupations. Other researchers have elaborated on this and have claimed that professions are characterised by a specialised knowledge base consisting of (1) theoretical and research-based knowledge acquired through higher education, and (2) practical knowledge expressed as specialised skills, “know-how” and tacit knowledge (Grimen, 2008a; Little, 2015). *Professional practice* refers to “the enactment of the role of a profession or occupational group in serving or contributing to society” (Higgs, 2019, p. 8). The role of a profession is closely linked to the mandates given by the society, but also “involves inhabiting and realising the role in ways that pursue quality and fulfilment” (p. 5). Since professional practice always takes place within established norms and values, professional ethics are also considered an important feature of professions (Evetts, 2013; Grimen, 2008b). The mandate given by the authorities is the very basis for norms and values that apply within professions. However, these are also shaped by the social associations that constitute an occupational group. On the macro level, a value system for a professional field is established through societal regulations, management documents and control mechanisms that frame the mandates of the profession. On the micro level, socialisation in workplaces develops and shapes shared values and identities. This involves how employees identify themselves as workers and how their occupational *identities* are shaped. According to Heggen (2010), the development of such an identity is both a personal and a collective affair. The first relates to what constitutes “me” as a professional and deals with the personal integration of knowledge forms and values associated with professional practice. The latter relates to “us” as a professional group.

Freidson (2001) emphasised that employees act with autonomy based on their professional judgements. This requires that they act based on the integrated interrelation between specialised theoretical and research-based knowledge, practical knowledge and professional ethics. Practice based on such integration has been highlighted as a typical feature of professionalism. Grimen (2008a) utilised the concept of “practical synthesis” in exploring professional workers’ multifaceted knowledge base in professional practice. He argued that theoretical and practical knowledge should not be seen as dichotomies but rather as interacting knowledge dimensions. However, he emphasised that the practical aspect is particularly important in the development of an integrated knowledge base; professionalism is characterised by a coherent knowledge base synthesised through practical and personal experiences.

Qualification for professional practice can take place through both formal education and occupational practice (Grimen, 2008a; Little, 2015). However, it is emphasised that such professionalisation should serve as the bridge between arenas and synthesise theoretical and research-based knowledge, practical knowledge and professional ethics. It is also worth noting that the multifaceted knowledge base for professions and professionalism develops over time. Through the professionalisation process, workers develop their ability to integrate critical thinking and skilful and responsible actions into practical situations (Little, 2015).

Schuepbach (2016) defined professionalism in ASP as “the qualifications, capacities, and competences that are required for successful practice within a profession” (p. 5). The mandate given ASP by the authorities forms the basis for these characteristics and should act as guidelines when considering relevant theoretical knowledge, practical knowledge and ethical values for professional practice. According to Schuepbach (2016) professionalisation among ASP staff members includes “the attempt to gain the characteristics associated with professions” (p. 5). With the Norwegian ASP as an example, professionalism and professionalisation should involve other theoretical and practical knowledge than what is most prominent for teaching in school. In line with the aims of ASP, professionalism should imply knowledge about appropriate caregiving for children aged 6 to 10, facilitation of child-managed play, and how to provide holistic development and learning (NDET, 2021). Additionally, it presupposes ethical values that clearly recognise the rights of the children.

Methods

This article reports on a sub-study among staff members at seven ASPs that participated in an intervention study aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of a course programme for ASP staff in supporting physical activity among first graders in ASP. The programme consisted of two introductory sessions led by the researchers, focusing on children’s physical activity play, and was followed up by a municipal physiotherapist with monthly meetings at each ASP throughout one school year. The protocol of the study and its results have previously been published (Riiser, Helseth et al., 2017; Riiser, Richardsen et al., 2020). The participating ASPs were strategically selected to achieve variation in institution size and location (i. e. urban and rural areas; Table 1).

Table 1: Participating ASPs

	Urban or rural*	School size**	Persons in focus group
ASP 1	Rural	Small	7
ASP 2	Urban/rural	Medium	4
ASP 3	Urban	Small	6
ASP 4	Urban/rural	Large	5
ASP 5	Urban/rural	Medium	8
ASP 6	Rural	Large	5
ASP 7	Rural	Medium	5

* Urban = dense urban area, rural = provincial region with closeness to nature area, urban/rural = densely built area but close to nature area
** Small < 250 students, medium = 250 – 450 students, large > 450 students

In the present sub-study, we aimed to access staff members’ considerations of their occupational practices in ASPs. In searching for information about qualitative aspects, such as human beings’ considerations, understandings and experiences, various types of interview methods are available (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015). Since we wanted information on how

employees who worked together enact their shared mandates, we chose focus group interviews. Focus groups should consist of members from “the same milieu or the same interpretative community” (Bohnsack, 2004, p. 216), and the interview type is characterised by the researcher’s restrained role. The researcher’s task is to facilitate conditions for conversations among the group members, to introduce themes by asking initial questions directed to the entire group and allowing the group members to discuss them together (Bohnsack, 2004).

Sampling and Sample

All staff members involved in the intervention study were invited to participate in the focus group interviews. All participants were engaged in working with first-grade children, but they also had responsibility for the older children. In total, 40 staff members consented to participate in the interviews. The focus groups consisted of 4 to 8 participants (Table 1). A large proportion of the interview participants were female staff (Table 2), reflecting the predominance of female employees in the participating ASPs. Participants were between 18 and 60 years old, and 26 had more than 6 years of work experience in ASP.

Table 2: Background information, given in numbers of participants

Sex	Female	37
	Male	3
Age	< 20 years	2
	20 – 29 years	5
	30 – 39 years	7
	40 – 49 years	14
	50 – 59 years	8
	Unknown	4
Experience in ASP	< 1 year	3
	1 – 5 years	9
	6 – 10 years	12
	> 10 years	14
	Unknown	2

Only seven participants had an education beyond upper secondary school, of which four had a pedagogical education (Table 3). Additionally, 20 had been educated as childcare and youth workers, and another 3 were apprentices. Half of the participants had other vocational experiences before their employment in ASP.

Table 3: Participants' highest education, given in numbers of participants

Education	Participants
Pedagogical education at university level*	4
Other education at university level**	3
Educated childcare and youth worker	20
Under apprenticeship toward Child Care and Youth Worker	3
Other education at upper secondary school level***	4
No education beyond lower secondary school level	5
Unknown	1

* Affiliated at two of the ASPs (two at each)
** Engineer, economist, social educator
*** Vocational education (graphic work, hairdresser, childcare, health care)

Data Collection

The focus group interviews were arranged at the participants' workplaces ahead of normal ASP time, and two members from the research group served as moderators. According to the recommendations made by Bohnsack (2004), the moderators introduced themes by asking the group initial questions and allowing group members to discuss them together. Examples of initial questions were as follows: What are your responsibilities as staff members of an ASP? How are your enactment of occupational roles discussed and distributed between staff members? The moderators adopted a restrained position but followed up with supplementary questions during the interviews to acquire additional information related to the topic of the study. The interviews lasted between 45 and 65 minutes and were recorded using a digital voice recorder.

Transcription and Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim by a professional transcriber, and the transcripts were analysed by the researchers according to the stages involved in *thematic analysis* (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Focus was placed on revealing the contextual meaning of the staff members' utterances during the interviews. The researchers searched for statements that revealed themes about what the participants considered their mandate as ASP workers, the diversity of occupational roles they adopted at ASP, how they justify their enactment of these roles, and how distribution of tasks and occupational practices are discussed among colleagues. This was initially done inductively. Additionally, a deductive analysis was carried out according to the concepts of profession, professional practice, professionalism and professionalisation.

Trustworthiness

In line with Merriam (2009), we aimed to provide thorough and transparent descriptions of the investigated context, sampling, data production and data analysis. The second author of this article participated in the data production process, offering a unique perspective on the data.

However, all authors actively took part in the analysis. We revisited the interview transcripts several times and discussed different interpretations of the materials. In line with recommendations made by Johnson (1997), we also identified explanations that stand apart from our initial ones.

Ethical Considerations

Before this study was carried out, the project proposal was examined by the *Norwegian Data Protection Official for Research* and assessed to be in line with the Personal Data Act. Prior to the interviews, we obtained informed consent from the ASPs' management and from the participating staff members. We guaranteed their confidentiality during the research and publication process. Therefore, the names of neither ASPs nor staff members appear in the article. Throughout the analysis and writing process, ethical guidelines for compliance in research were followed.

Results

The analysis revealed that the focus group participants highlighted two main occupational roles when discussing their mandates as ASP workers: 1) roles towards the children and 2) roles as members of a work community. Furthermore, themes related to their enactment of these main roles emerged. These themes are introduced under separate headings below.

Enactment of Roles Towards the Children

All focus groups placed the greatest emphasis on the staff members' roles as caregivers, but the role as facilitators of activities was also highlighted. There was consensus on this point within the groups, and the following quote from a staff member at ASP 2 reflects a typical statement:

My most important task is to ensure that the children feel seen and listened to, that the children can be safe. I want to facilitate a good afternoon for them.

The Caregiving Role

"Being present" and "helping the children" were stated as important aspects of enacting the staff members' caregiving role. This became clear from the conversation among staff members (SM) at ASP 4:

SM 1:
I have to see the kids. Be there when they need help.
SM 2:
Yes, to be present for the children.
SM 3:
The most important thing is to be available to the children. Be there with them here and now.

Helping the children to thrive was highlighted by all focus groups, and special emphasis was placed on the children's desire to play with friends. Hence, staff members must ensure that all children have someone to play with during the ASP time. A participant from ASP 3 elaborated on the discreet approach employees should adopt to ensure this:

If a child is alone, we must help her to engage in play with others in a way that doesn't interfere too much with the other children's play, if that play is going well. We don't want to interrupt good play, so it's better for me as an adult to play with that child instead. It works like a magnet on other children.

The staff members' practice is portrayed as two-sided: they must help individual children become involved in play with friends, but at the same time, they must preserve the spontaneous play of the other children. Active involvement in children's activities emerged as a key focus in the interviews, emphasising staff members being present and ready to assist, but with an aim to facilitate safe and social activities for the children.

The Facilitator Role

The analysis clearly revealed the emphasis placed on facilitating activities according to the children's own choices. This seems to be linked to the notion that ASP are, after all, children's leisure time. This was made apparent in the focus group conversation between staff members in ASP 2:

SM 1:
So much is expected of the children throughout a school day. When they come to an ASP, I think it should be a free haven. The children must have the opportunity to make their own choices, building with Lego, playing football, or not doing anything.
SM 2:
The organised leisure activities start so early, often before school age. […] It's not that we don't initiate activities. We do, but it is important that the children can make the choices themselves.

The staff members highlighted the difference between school and ASP but also between ASP and organised leisure activities. They claimed that they *initiate* various activities rather than instruct on or manage activities. Instead, they must make time, places and equipment available for self-chosen and child-managed activities. This was referred to in several groups as "'Tricking' the children into taking part in something" (quote, ASP 3), "giving advice rather than giving solutions" (quote, ASP 1) and "participating *together* with the children rather than directing the activities" (quote, ASP 6).

Given that the staff members emphasised the children's right to choose activities, spontaneous play seemed to be the most obvious form of activity to facilitate, as exemplified by a quotation from the interview at ASP 2:

The children start early in organised exercise, football or gymnastics and things like that. So, they should play when in an ASP. We arrange activities that they have to sign up for, but everything is voluntary. I think it is important to facilitate play.

Although spontaneous play was highlighted, the group members in all ASPs said that they initiated sign-up activities. They seemed to be particularly concerned with organising outdoor physical activities. However, according to the staff members, they had "to be restrained with direct decisive involvement in the children's activities" (quote, ASP 1). Despite great agreement about the children's right to free play in ASP, a few staff members opposed a sole focus on spontaneous child-managed play. They argued for management and interventions

during ASP time, emphasising the potential for activities to impart educational value. They shared, "After all, we can't only play with the kids" (quote, ASP 1). Their scepticism was first and foremost justified by the need to include all children in social activities. They stressed the responsibility of staff in ensuring inclusivity, which they asserted is not guaranteed in free play.

To summarise, there was a great deal of agreement both within and across the focus groups concerning staff members' roles towards the children and how the roles should be enacted. The interviewees stated clear positions on their practices, but the analysis rarely discovered statements based on curricular aims or theoretical accounts. Nor did the analysis reveal patterns based on disparities between ASPs or between staff members based on age, education or work experience.

Enactment of Roles in the Work Community

The interviewees also showed a commitment to the work community at their ASPs and argued that all employees should feel good at work. An example occurred in the conversation in ASP 1:

It is important to have a good time with colleagues and to have someone to go to if there is anything wrong. Yes, and to help if needed.

All the focus groups agreed that openness and good collaboration between staff members are vital to their work. They generally considered themselves to excel in these aspects, as illustrated by the following quote:

We have worked together for a long time, so I believe that we work well together. [...] We have a good dialogue, and that's because we trust each other.

Collaboration relies, according to the interviewees, on a shared understanding of the ASP's main aims and recognition of the diverse strengths and weaknesses among staff members. This informs the assigning of daily responsibilities, such as registering participating children, assigning observation duties and determining tasks for outdoor and indoor activities. Formal policy documents were not mentioned in this regard. The staff members recognised that despite a joint understanding of the most important aims of ASP, they are different as individuals. The differences mentioned are not, however, linked to disparities based on knowledge acquired in occupational or professional training. Instead, they pointed out various strengths and weaknesses in practical activities and individual opinions of what children should do in ASP.

The staff members' discussions indicated that collaboration with the host school was limited to administrative matters, for example regarding shared equipment and activity regulations. Collaboration and discussions with teachers regarding common aims and occupational practices were not mentioned. None of the groups reported on collaboration with external partners, apart from the meetings with the municipal physiotherapist established through the intervention study. Several of the focus groups referred to this collaboration as interesting and educative, particularly because the physiotherapist contributed with knowledge regarding children' development and recommendations on activities and practices.

All the participating ASPs had a manager who was responsible for day-to-day operations. The staff members explained that the manager outlines the general scope of the employees'

tasks. However, the staff members perceived a significant degree of autonomy in their practices while interacting with the children. Staff members in ASP 5, for example, claimed that each person must decide how to solve various tasks and that choices must be made based on what is relevant to current situations:

SM 1:
It is the ASP manager who assigns each person tasks. But I am constantly around the children, and I must find solutions myself—on the fly.
SM 2:
Yes, we are assigned tasks, but we must choose what to do and how to do something ourselves.

Despite a collaborative environment, each staff member's choices concerning their occupational practices during ASP time are described as individualised. The decisions are made on the fly, relying on individual strengths and weaknesses drawn from practical experience rather than from discussions with ASP colleagues or other occupational groups.

Discussion

The results of the present study reveal some interesting issues regarding ASP staff members' occupational practices. Below, we discuss these issues against profession theory and societal mandates for Norwegian ASPs.

Staff Members' Considerations of their Mandate as ASP Workers

The results of the present study show consensus among staff members regarding their mandate as ASP workers, and this was closely linked to their roles as caregivers and facilitators of child-managed activities. When emphasising the children's freedom in leisure time, their right to be seen and listened to, and their opportunity to participate in play with friends, they adopt a child-centred approach. Their joint commitment in ensuring the children good care and activities together with friends, seem to form a common value system associated with occupational practice in ASP.

Drawing on theory of professions, we find reason to refer to how ethics in professional groups are shaped (Evetts, 2013; Grimen, 2008b). The mandate given by the authorities is, on the macro level, the very basis for norms and values that apply within professions. On the micro level, however, also socialisation in workplaces shapes shared values and identities. The staff members in our sample did not relate their mandate as ASP workers to formal documents about rights of the child or other societal mandates. Instead, general values such as "looking after the children", demonstrating "care by being present" and supporting "togetherness and child-managed play with friends" emerged consistently in the interviews. With reference to Evetts (2013) and Heggen (2010), we will argue that these values, shaped on the micro level, have formed the basis for a joint occupational identity. Hence, the value system delineating the occupational mandate of ASP staff is built upon common understandings, understandings that Grimen (2008b) referred to as general norms. This finding aligns with research indicating that ASP employees are not particularly familiar with societal aims and regulations that apply to Norwegian ASP (Wendelborg et al., 2018; Caspersen et al, 2024).

The staff members’ occupational identities and common values, seem to be related to a common-sense understanding of children’s need of care and supervision during leisure time. In terms of workplace socialisation, this seems to translate into a child-centred occupational practice, allowing freedom for the children and upholding all children’s right to be included in play. Since the identified value system is weakly connected to mandates given at the macro level, we cannot characterise it as a basis for *professional* ethics.

Practice Based on Practical Knowledge Established in Everyday Experiences

The staff members’ considerations of their occupational practices are closely associated with a shared understanding of their mandate as ASP workers. Despite a shared identity and a unified grasp of essential values and mandates, the comprehension and selection of practices are individualised. Each staff member decides on occupational practices spontaneously, relying on the appropriateness in various situations. According to profession theory, professionalism is characterised by autonomy in occupational situations (Freidson, 2001; Grimen, 2008a). Although the staff members in the present study showed extensive practical knowledge, and capabilities to act with autonomy in upcoming situations, the basis for what Grimen (2008a) described as “practical syntheses” did not appear solid. Practical syntheses involve a process in staff members where interrelation between theoretical and research-based knowledge, practical knowledge and professional ethics are integrated. Analyses of the focus group interviews did not reveal statements and arguments that point back to occupational or professional training, theoretical considerations or mandates formulated in international conventions and societal management documents. Surprisingly, the analysis did not reveal clear disparities regarding this matter either between ASPs or between staff members based on the characteristics introduced in Table 1, 2 and 3 (p. 6). We will suggest that this result can be traced back to a lack of higher education directly aimed at ASP. Previous research has also revealed that ASP employees’ familiarity with management documents is relatively low, and that few of them have participated in competence-enhancing measures (Wendelborg et al., 2018; Caspersen et al, 2024). Occupational practices appeared to be exclusively grounded in the practical knowledge gained from daily experiences and micro level workplace socialisation. Hence, relying on the theory of professions, we cannot say that the ASP staff in our sample are part of a profession.

The one-sided influence of practical knowledge on occupational practices in the present study differs from results of research carried out in other Scandinavian countries, where staff members are shown to draw from both practical and theoretical knowledge in occupational practice (Ackesjö et al., 2018; Haglund, 2015; Lager & Gustafsson-Nyckel, 2021). Despite the conflicting demands faced by staff members in these countries in juggling traditional caregiving roles and a commitment to educational aims, both practical and theoretical knowledge are evident in practice. This suggests that a professionalisation process that influences practice has progressed further in countries other than Norway. The extended availability of higher pedagogical education for workers in ASP and educare centres in Sweden and Denmark, along with established joint curricula for schools and ASPs and educare centres, might explain this difference (Klerfelt & Stecher, 2018; Øksnes et al., 2014).

Lack of Arenas for Professionalisation

The results of the present study indicate that staff members' occupational practices are decided on the fly based on everyday experiences. Theoretical perspectives on phenomena relevant for professional practice in ASP, such as caregiving, play, learning and rights of the child were rarely mentioned during the focus group interviews. The absence of such perspectives suggests lack of a coherent, synthesised knowledge base and reveals a need for professionalisation processes (Grimen, 2008a). This may seem surprising, given that half of the participating staff members hold a certificate as childcare and youth worker. Childcare and youth workers are, however, educated within a vocational programme with more emphasis on practical performance than theoretical and research-based reflection, and are not directed exclusively towards work in ASP. When staff members at only two of the ASPs had pedagogical education at university level, it appears plausible that the discussions in the focus groups mainly concerned practical knowledge (c.f. Table 3).

Professionalisation can take place through both formal education and occupational practice but requires a synthesis process where theoretical and research-based knowledge, practical knowledge and professional ethics are integrated (Little, 2015). The results of the present study indicate a lack of arenas for professionalisation of ASP staff and align well with results in other studies concerning professionalisation measures in Norwegian ASP (Caspersen et al., 2024; Wendelborg et al., 2018). Only one of the participating ASPs had been involved in competence-enhancing measures initiated by the municipality, and limited time was set aside at the ASPs for formal discussions about occupational issues. With few employees at each ASP holding relevant higher education-based qualifications, it is unlikely that discussions drawing on theoretical perspectives and research-based knowledge will become commonplace. Furthermore, given that staff members neither reported collaboration with teachers working at the host schools, it seems that arenas for professionalisation are limited. This aligns with the findings of Böhm-Kasper et al. (2016), who found, based on studies on how multi-professional groups collaborate in German all-day schools, that staff consisting of different educational groups must be closely coupled if professional forms of collaboration are to be established. It is worth noting that several of the focus groups in the present study referred to collaboration with a physiotherapist, and that this was seen as interesting and educative. This suggests a potential for professionalisation in ASP if various occupational and professional groups are coupled in a formal collaboration.

Strengths and Limitations

One strength of this study is the method utilised for data collection. Through focus group interviews, participants were encouraged to share their individual and collective experiences of working in ASP. The conversations generated both well thought-out reflections and spontaneous statements. Unlike direct methods, such as observation, focus group interviews only provide indirect information about the employees' occupational practices. This should be considered a limitation of the study.

The study included small, medium and large ASPs from urban and rural locations. In retrospect, we note that the 40 participants in our study had a similar distribution in terms of gender, age and educational background as reported in other studies on employees in Nor-

wegian ASPs (Caspersen et al., 2024; Wendelborg et al., 2018). We perceive this as a strength regarding the transferability of the results to other ASP contexts. The sample was, however, drawn from a limited number of ASPs and only from the south-eastern region of Norway, and constitutes a limitation regarding transfer of the findings.

Sampling from participants in an intervention study entailed that the focus group members knew the researchers who moderated the interviews. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2015), this can cause participants to perceive interviews to be relaxed, which in turn can create good conditions for sharing considerations and experiences. However, we acknowledge that participants may have been influenced by their involvement in the broader study, potentially compromising the transferability of the results derived from statements about active play.

Concluding Remarks

This study investigated staff members’ considerations of their occupational practices in Norwegian ASPs and asked whether the occupational group working in Norwegian ASP can be considered a profession. The staff members claimed that their main mandate as caregivers and facilitators of activities for the children serves as a foundation for their practices. Practical knowledge from everyday experiences of working in ASPs and joint values for such work seem to shape a strong work community and a shared occupational identity. Occupational identity was evident both as a personal and a collective matter in championing child-centred practices, freedom during “leisure time” and the right of children to be included in play. The staff members expressed that their occupational practices during ASP time was individualised and situational, based on strengths and weaknesses in fulfilling practical tasks. Staff members expressing a shared occupational identity while also experiencing individualised practices may seem contradictory. The application of the theory on professionalism and professionalisation aids in understanding this contradiction. Coherent professional practices require the integration of theoretical and research-based knowledge, practical knowledge and professional ethics. The staff members’ occupational identity, occupational ethics and occupational practices, as they appear in the present study, were derived mainly from practical knowledge acquired through everyday experiences and lacked practical syntheses that characterise professionalism.

Based on the results of the study, we cannot say that the occupational group working in Norwegian ASP can be considered a profession. The newly introduced national *Framework plan for Norwegian ASP* clarifies the aims and content of ASP, emphasising the need for dedicated time for knowledge-based planning and discussions among ASP staff members. If the dimension of professionalism is emphasised in the implementation of the framework plan, the resulting changes might facilitate professionalisation among ASP staff and contribute to increased ASP quality. However, the Norwegian authorities have not followed up with requirements for professional education and competence for ASP employment. We argue that addressing this shortcoming is crucial to professionalisation and quality enhancement of Norwegian ASP.

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Quality beyond Professionalism. Insights into German All-Day Schools

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Abstract: The research project "LAKTAT – Non-Professionals in German All-Day Schools: Qualifications, Orientations, Institutional Integration" examines the role and impact of non-professional staff in all-day schools, focusing on their pedagogical orientations and organizational integration. The study explores critical questions: How does a sense of belonging influence knowledge about the quality of after-school activities? What factors contribute to a sense of belonging? How do staff cope with the lack of belonging? A mixed-methods design was employed in the research, integrating quantitative data from Sub-study A and network analyses from Sub-study B. Sub-study A evaluated the socio-spatial level of educational personnel, taking into account demographic characteristics and the influence of belonging on quality knowledge. Sub-study B examines cooperation and networking among staff. The findings indicate that engagement is a significant predictor of quality knowledge, while age is negatively correlated with it. Work experience and full-time employment do not have a significant impact on engagement. These findings underscore the importance of fostering a sense of community and engagement among non-professional staff to improve the quality of afterschool programs. The study provides valuable insights into the need for multi-professional collaboration and institutional support to improve educational outcomes in all-day schools.

Keywords: All-Day Schools, Extended Education, Staff Qualification, Quality in Extended Education, Qualitative Network Analysis

Introduction

In general, a variety of models of extended education are being proposed and discussed across Europe. In this context, corresponding legislation is being enacted with the objective of expanding and improving the provision of all-day/extended education (Bae, 2019; Stecher et al., 2018). In general, these reforms exemplify the European trend of promoting extended education and expanding education and care services with the objective of enhancing the quality of education and equal opportunities. These reforms in European countries share similar intentions and are a response to recent social challenges. Primarily, the reforms aim to improve the balance between work and family life and to support, in most cases women's caring responsibilities beyond childcare. Secondly, they are part of strategies to reduce educational inequality through extracurricular activities. Thirdly, the reforms seek to improve children's learning opportunities.

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For instance, in Greece, reforms have been implemented in primary schools and kindergartens to extend school hours and to integrate new programs and activities to broaden the scope of educational content and enhance the quality of care (Eurydice, 2024a). Additionally, Finland is implementing novel school models, including all-day schools, with the objective of modernizing its educational infrastructure (European Investment Bank, 2024). In German-speaking countries all-day schools have constituted the prevailing form of extended education over the past two decades. Switzerland has witnessed a gradual yet consistent expansion of all-day schooling in recent years (Chiapparini et al., 2019; Schüpbach & Lilla, 2020; Schüpbach, 2014). In Austria, current research and reforms have concentrated on the expansion and enhancement of all-day school programs. A significant undertaking commenced in 2017 with the objective of augmenting the care rate in all-day educational institutions from approximately 22% in 2016 to 40% by 2025. (Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Forschung (BMBWF), n.d.; Eurydice, 2024b). In Germany, where our study is conducted, the "Ganztagsförderungsgesetz" (GaFöG), which is scheduled for enactment in 2021, will gradually introduce a legal entitlement to all-day care for children of primary school age, with the first cohort of beneficiaries anticipated to commence their studies in 2026/27.

Nevertheless, the quality of extracurricular learning is a pivotal element in enhancing educational prospects. Opportunities outside the conventional classroom setting facilitate the cultivation of competencies in domains that are not typically encompassed within the school curriculum. However, legislative frameworks diverge with regard to the assurance of quality in this expansion. A recurring aspect that is discussed but little researched is the (necessary) qualification of staff in extended education offers.

The present study draws on findings from the LAKTAT[1] (Non-Professionals in German All-Day Schools) study. This article presents the theoretical challenges regarding the quality of extracurricular activities and the qualification and professionalization of staff in all-day schools. The article offers valuable insights for the discussion on professionalization in extended education. The preliminary findings indicate that those without pedagogical qualifications (i.e., lay educators) tend to prioritize school structures, whereas those with formal qualifications are more inclined to prioritize children's needs in their professional orientations (Danner & Sauerwein, 2023; Sauerwein & Danner, 2024; Sauerwein et al., 2024).

Theoretical Perspectives on Quality in Education

An understanding of quality in education necessitates an analysis of the various theoretical perspectives and models that inform this concept. A rough distinction can be made between a Nordic and an Anglo-Saxon model, whereby the German all-day school landscape cannot be assigned to any of these and represents a third variant: The Nordic model emphasizes democratic values, equality, and a unified approach that integrates care and education. This model, prevalent in countries such as Denmark and Sweden, focuses on child well-being and cultural diversity (Karila, 2012; Kuusisto & Garvis, 2020). In contrast, the Anglo-Saxon model, common in the United States and the United Kingdom, emphasizes market-oriented approaches, school autonomy, standardized testing, and accountability (Klein, 2017; Lingard &

1 Funding: LAKTAT is funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) (project number 454196803).

Lewis, 2016). These models aim to improve educational outcomes through competition, but have been criticized for potentially reinforcing inequalities (Simpson et al., 2017).

The all-day school landscape in Germany does not fit neatly into either the Nordic or the Anglo-Saxon model. This divergence is due in part to the intersection of two distinct fields: the school system and child and youth services, which have traditionally been organized separately in German-speaking countries (Graßhoff & Sauerwein, 2020). The school system focuses on academic education, while child and youth services emphasize social support and development. This separation gives rise to a distinctive organisational structure that is incongruous with the prevailing international models. For a long time, input-based ideas dominated, but they were increasingly replaced by the influence of the idea of output management (Anglo-Saxon model). Nevertheless, the child and youth services with large NGOs how promote childcare offers (e. g., welfare organisations, churches) claim for another idea of education beyond school and effectivity (e. g., Otto & Rauschenbach, 2008). Connecting to the welfare organisation the idea of the need for skilled workers in extended educational programs has persisted, (also with the support of trade unions). But these ideals can no longer be sustained in the face of the shortage of qualified workforce in all-day education.

This duality creates a complex environment in which integrated approaches, such as the Nordic model, are difficult to implement. Instead, Germany's approach to all-day schools reflects a blend of educational and social perspectives, resulting in diverse practices and outcomes. Given this complexity, it is clear that quality in all-day education is a multifaceted construct, subject to different demands and expectations from stakeholders. This multifaceted nature requires an approach that can encompass different levels of quality, including input, process and outcome dimensions.

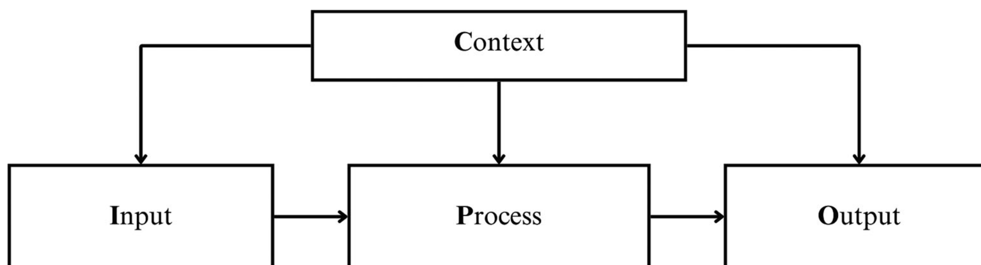
The Context-Input-Process-Output (CIPO) (e. g., Stufflebeam, 1972; Scheerens, 2004) model is particularly well suited to this task. By including both process and input quality, the CIPO model provides a comprehensive framework that helps to differentiate and analyse these elements. As a result, it serves as an effective tool for examining the various factors that influence quality in the context of all-day learning, as will be explored in the following article.

The CIPO Model: A Comprehensive Framework

The CIPO (Context-Input-Process-Output) model has been widely used in educational research, especially on educational and school effectiveness, to analyse the various factors that influence the quality of education (Stufflebeam, 1972; Scheerens, 2004). Educational effectiveness broadly refers to the extent to which educational goals are achieved through schooling (Scheerens, 2015). While this definition does not prioritize any particular type of goal, there is a prevailing view that quality should primarily be evaluated based on cognitive outcomes (Scheerens, 2015; Scheerens et al., 2011). Nonetheless, outcomes are not the only important factors considered. The model divides evaluation into four components and emphasizes the need to distinguish between variables that schools and their educational communities can influence (process variables) and those that are beyond their control (context and input variables). Context variables include the socioeconomic and cultural environment of the

school and its members, while input variables include the personal and economic resources available and the background of the students (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Basic CIPO-Model for School-Quality
Notes: Figure 1 was created by the authors in reference to Stufflebeam (1972)



For the purposes of this article and in the context of all-day schools, staff qualification can be seen as both an input and a process element within the CIPO model. As an input, it encompasses the essential resources available at the outset, including the expertise and qualifications of teachers and staff, which are fundamental to quality education. As a process element, it encompasses the interactions between staff and children, particularly the quality of the extended educational process, which can significantly affect student outcomes.

Process-Quality Concepts at Extended Education

As mentioned above, in contrast to school education with a homogeneous concept of quality at its core in the form of the generic dimensions of teaching quality developed by Klieme (Praetorius et al., 2020), the discourse on quality in extracurricular offerings is more heterogeneous (Fischer & Klieme, 2013; Fischer et al., 2022; Sauerwein & Fischer, 2020). This difference is firstly due to the objectives of extracurricular offerings, including concepts of learning, leisure and care, as well as content from sports, games and the arts (Fischer et al., 2013; Holtappels & Rollett, 2009). Second, at least two institutions are involved in extended education in Germany: a) schools and b) child and youth services. Historically, these institutions have mostly developed separately in theory and practice (Graßhoff & Sauerwein, 2020; Stecher et al., 2018; see introduction). However, there are now also several studies focusing on extracurricular offerings (Fischer et al., 2022; Sauerwein, 2016, 2017; Sauerwein, 2019).

These studies examine several key characteristics of good extracurricular activities considering generic dimensions of teaching quality as well as the specific access to education as discussed in the youth welfare sector (e.g., Sauerwein & Fischer, 2020). High-quality extracurricular programs are characterized by effective classroom management, which ensures a structured and engaging environment; (cognitive) activation, which stimulates intellectual growth and student's activities; support for student autonomy, which promotes independent learning. High-quality programs also relate to students' everyday lives, encourage their participation, and recognize children's need to relate to others, treat them fairly,

and provide opportunities to demonstrate their competencies (e.g., Sauerwein & Fischer, 2020). Quality extracurricular programs also offer a variety of learning methods and activities to meet the diverse interests and needs of students. These features foster both cognitive and social skills and provide students with extensive learning and development opportunities (Kielblock, 2015; Sauerwein & Fischer, 2020).

However, achieving and maintaining a high quality in extracurricular programs relies heavily on the qualifications and competencies of the staff involved. This brings us to the important role of input quality, specifically the qualifications of the workforce, which extends beyond formal professionalism.

Input-Quality: Qualification beyond Professionalism

Good afterschool programs should address both instructional quality and non-formal education aspects (Sauerwein & Fischer, 2020). However, it remains largely unclear to what extent these quality aspects are understood and implemented by staff in practice. The process quality of out-of-school time provision may be influenced by the qualifications of staff. Research in the North American context suggests that children perceive higher quality in extracurricular programs when they are run by qualified staff (Gottfredson et al., 2007; Cross et al., 2010).

Beyond the quality of the activities themselves, the integration of staff into the all-day school environment is also important and is related to multi-professional collaboration and related influencing factors (Hochfeld & Rothland, 2022). Studies show that all-day schools often work with a diverse team of staff, including lay educators, which presents both challenges and opportunities (Steiner, 2013). These schools are expected to maintain educational quality while managing collaboration among diverse staff. This requires a clear definition of roles and responsibilities, as well as specialized training to enhance staff skills and understanding of educational requirements (Seemann & Titel, 2022).

A recurring debate, often led by the trade unions and welfare organisations, is the question of whether extracurricular activities should be provided exclusively by formally qualified staff, especially in view of the growing demand for qualified staff. However, due to the shortage of qualified personnel, the staff of all-day schools often includes people without formal pedagogical qualifications or relevant professional training (Bock-Famulla et al., 2021; Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer, 2021; Rauschenbach et al., 2024). In recent years, it has become clear that the growing demand for personnel in all-day schools cannot be met by pedagogically qualified staff alone (Graßhoff & Sauerwein, 2021; Rauschenbach et al., 2021; Fischer et al., 2011). Studies estimate that, depending on parental demand, approximately 100,000 educators, social workers, and other educational professionals will be needed (Bock-Famulla et al., 2022; Rauschenbach et al., 2021). Consequently, people without specific qualifications will also be employed. The proportion of such staff varies between 15 and 35 percent, depending on the region and specific calculations (Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer, 2021; Altermann et al., 2018).

This raises the question of whether non-educational staff have the necessary competencies to ensure high quality extracurricular activities. While they may lack formal qual-

ifications, our study aims to identify elements that could support non-qualified staff in the context of all-day education. One such element may be close collaboration with qualified staff and fostering a sense of belonging within the all-day school environment (Sauerwein & Danner, 2024). The integration of pedagogical staff into the school organization varies according to their qualifications. This is reflected in the level of communication with school stakeholders, as more highly qualified staff tend to have more frequent meetings (ibid).

The quality of extracurricular offerings depends not only on formal qualifications, but also on pedagogical orientations and experiences. Lay educators can enrich extracurricular offerings with their specific expertise and perspectives (Steiner, 2013). However, their role, which is often focused on core activities such as lunch and homework supervision, should be critically evaluated to ensure a positive contribution to the overall educational environment (Danner & Sauerwein, 2023).

Altogether, the diverse experiences and specific competencies that lay educators bring to the table are crucial to the quality of educational work in all-day schools. As these schools continue to expand, it is important to consider how lay educators are integrated both structurally and personally. This requires an expanded understanding of quality in order to effectively address the challenges and opportunities within all-day schooling (Rother et al., 2024).

Input-Quality: Collaborations

The importance of multi-professional collaboration in all-day schools is increasingly recognized as essential to the quality and effectiveness of all-day schools. In recent years, numerous studies and professional articles have explored the theoretical underpinnings, practical implementation, and challenges and opportunities of this collaboration. Definitions of multi-professional cooperation often refer to the definition of Spieß (2004), where multi-professional cooperation refers to the conscious and communicative collaboration of professionals from different occupational groups to achieve common goals and tasks (Speck et al., 2011). In particular, multi-professional cooperation is defined as collaboration between individuals from more than two different professions (Breuer, 2015). The expansion of all-day schools and extracurricular offers leads to the integration of more educational personnel into the daily school activities and increases the opportunities and necessities for in-school co-operation (Cramer et al., 2020; Rothland & Biederbeck, 2020). This collaboration requires trust, autonomy, and a reciprocal relationship between the participants. In the context of all-day education, multi-professional collaboration often includes teachers, social pedagogues, educators, school social workers, and other educational professionals (Böhm-Kasper et al., 2016). Expert and policy papers as well as education policy programs consider multi-professional collaboration to be necessary in order to meet the complex demands and goals of all-day schooling (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (BMFSFJ), 2006; Bundesjugendkuratorium (BJK), 2005). These include the promotion of academic and social learning, the improvement of the teaching and learning culture, and the individual support and social integration of students (Speck, 2020). Overall, multi-professional coop-

eration is considered highly relevant, especially in the context of expanding all-day schools and establishing an inclusive school system (Demmer & Hopmann, 2020).

Empirical studies have shown that the successful implementation of multi-professional collaboration in German all-day schools is often still in its early stages, despite collaboration being a central determinant in the research discourse on all-day schools (Richter, 2007). Böhm-Kasper et al. (2016) found in their studies that cooperation between teachers and other educational professionals is often characterized by challenges, including different work standards, working hours, and contract lengths. These differences lead to a high need for coordination and can make collaboration difficult. Research from the Study on the Development of All-Day Schools (StEG) shows that multi-professional collaboration varies depending on the type of school and the structure of the all-day program. While more intensive cooperation is observed in bound all-day schools, educational professionals are often solely responsible for extracurricular activities in open all-day schools (StEG-Konsortium, 2016). Another important finding of the research is that multi-professional collaboration has positive effects on the individual competence development of the participants and the relief of teachers by delegating non-teaching tasks to other educational professionals (Böhm-Kasper et al., 2016). However, significant problems of collaboration are also highlighted, such as different expectations and professional cultures, as well as insufficient involvement of collaboration partners in content issues (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Kinder- und Jugendhilfe (AGJ), 2008; Beher et al., 2008).

The structural embedding of multi-professional collaboration is a major challenge. Studies show that fixed cooperation times and joint training are not established in all all-day schools (StEG-Konsortium, 2016). In addition, there is often a lack of clear coordination processes and systematic links between classroom and extracurricular activities. A crucial framework for successful multi-professional collaboration is the support of school leadership and the provision of resources for collaboration (Speck, 2020). These include time and human resources as well as physical and financial resources.

Research Questions

From the empirical findings it can be concluded that, for the reasons mentioned above, it would be appropriate to employ only qualified staff in all-day schools. However, the shortage of qualified staff raises the question of how non-qualified staff can be (better) integrated in order to provide high quality extracurricular activities. The literature often highlights that multi-professional collaboration (Hochfeld & Rothland, 2022; Speck, 2020) and the existence of clear roles and responsibilities can strengthen the sense of belonging (Böhm-Kasper et al., 2016; Richter, 2007). There is also evidence that personal in extracurricular offerings are less integrated into school structures (Fischer et al., 2013; Tillmann, 2020, Tillmann et al., 2021).

The following research questions are critical to understanding the challenges and opportunities of integrating non-qualified staff into all-day schools and improving the quality of extracurricular offerings. They will be addressed using quantitative data from Sub-study A and network analyses from Sub-study B.

1. What influence does the sense of belonging have on the knowledge of quality in extra-curricular activities?
2. What factors determine the sense of belonging?
3. How does personnel cope with the lack of a sense of belonging?

Method

The aim of the project "LAKTAT – Non-Professionals in German All-Day Schools: Qualifications, Orientations, Institutional Integration" was to analyse the significance of laypersons in all-day schools, their pedagogical orientations, and their organizational integration within the school. This analysis was carried out using a mixed methods design, both quantitative and qualitative. The goal was to synthesize the findings into an exploratory theory of laypersons and the process of *layization* in schools.

Quantitative and qualitative research strategies were systematically combined in order to comprehensively analyse the phenomenon of laypersons and the *layization* of all-day schools. The aim was to obtain multi-perspective research results on the current situation of lay pedagogical staff, their organizational integration, and their pedagogical orientations and attitudes.

Sub-study A focused on a comprehensive assessment of the pedagogical workforce in all-day schools at the socio-spatial level. The aim was to generate general and up-to-date data on the situation of pedagogical staff in order to obtain a systematic overview of the personnel situation in the all-day sector. In addition to examining the sense of belonging of all-day school staff, the study also examined demographic characteristics of the profession, such as age, professional experience, professional qualifications, and type of employment (full-time/part-time). This sub-study also aimed to understand how sense of belonging influences staff knowledge and how conversations within the all-day environment mediate this effect. This preliminary study also had pragmatic research implications for the further research process. In Sub-study B, network analyses (Herz et al., 2014; Peters et al., 2019; Truschkat et al., 2011) at the organizational level examined the cooperation and networking of staff in the all-day sector. It was also explored how staff cope with a lack of sense of belonging and provided insight into both the positive and negative aspects of professional integration and interaction. In the context of this project, qualitative structural analysis (QSA) was chosen, a specific method of qualitative network analysis that systematically combines certain standards of structural analysis with those of qualitative social research (Herz et al., 2015; Peters et al. 2016). The specificity of this methodological approach lies in the combination of narrative-generating interviews (Schütze, 1983) with egocentric network maps, which have a certain structure based on concentric circles (Herz et al., 2015). In the context of the mixed methods approach, the qualitative egocentric network map interviews were conducted with a variety of pedagogical laypersons, selected contrastively on the basis of initial results from a quantitative sub-study (Danner & Sauerwein, 2023). This strategic selection aimed to ensure that the interviews in sub-study B represented cases that reported a sense of belonging within the all-day setting, thereby providing a more nuanced understanding of this phenomenon.

Study Sample and Context

The pedagogical staff (N = 317) at all-day schools in three contrasting municipalities in Lower Saxony were surveyed via an online questionnaire between March and July 2022. A total of 317 individuals from 53 schools participated in the survey, distributed across the following school types: 27 primary schools, 8 grammar schools, 7 comprehensive schools, 5 secondary schools, and 3 each of intermediate and special education schools.

There were 177 respondents from city A, 83 respondents working in schools in district B, and 33 respondents working in district C. On average, respondents are 43 years old (*SD* = 13.7) and have been working in the all-day sector for 6.2 years (*SD* = 5.27), with 4.7 years (*SD* = 4.53) at their current school. The majority of respondents (76.3 %) identified themselves as female. A large proportion of respondents (70 %) are employed full-time in the all-day sector.

The results show that 23.5 % of the staff have an academic pedagogical degree (e. g., social work) and 19 % have vocational pedagogical qualification. In summary, 42.5 % of the all-day staff have pedagogical qualifications (excluding teachers). Conversely, this means that the majority (57.5 %) do not have a formal pedagogical degree. However, some of these individuals (9.2 %) are currently enrolled in an educational science (or similar) qualification program and are therefore currently undergoing qualification. Approximately one fifth (22.8 %) of all-day educators have completed at least 160 hours of specific training for the all-day sector. A quarter (25.5 %) of all-day staff lack formal pedagogical qualifications and have not attended any specific trainings.

Scales

To address the first sub-question, the dependent variable, Engagement (Table 1), Conversations (Table 2), the knowledge about quality (Table 3) and the occupational demographic variables (Table 4) presented initially.

Table 1. Engagement Scale

	M (SD)	Cronbachs α	CFI	RMSEA	N
Item					
When I have a question, I know whom to ask.	3.70 (0.50)				269
I have little contact with others employed full-time. (reversed)	3.57 (0.81)				272
I often feel left alone in the full-time setting. (reversed)	3.40 (0.81)				270
Scale: Engagement	3.56 (0.51)	.51	1	0	317

Notes. Question: “Do you feel engaged at school? To what extent do the following statements apply to you?” The scale for measuring engagement in all-day schools (based on question 21 from StEG further pedagogical staff (Furthmüller, 2014) for the staff of the surveyed schools comprises 3 items and can be answered on a 4-point scale (1 = does not apply to 4 = applies).

The scale has a mean of $M = 3.56$ ($SD = 0.51$). The Cronbach's α value is 0.51 indicating mediocre internal consistency (George & Mallery, 2003). The fit indices from the confirmatory factor analysis show a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 1, indicating excellent model fit (Kline, 2016). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0, suggesting that the model represents a perfect approximation of the data (Kline, 2016).

Table 2. Conversation Scale

	M (SD)	Cronbachs α	CFI	RMSEA	N
Items					
Teaching Workforces	2.75 (1.08)				273
Management/ Responsibles for the All-Day School Operations	3.10 (1.05)				265
Colleagues in All-Day	3.51 (0.89)				271
Scale: Conversations	2.80 (0.73)	.66	1	0	272

Notes. Question: "Think back to the last four weeks: Did you have a brief conversation with any of the following groups of people in the form of a Tür-und-Angel-Gespräch'? By 'Tür-und-Angel-Gespräch' we mean unplanned and spontaneous conversations that take place in everyday life and last about 5 minutes."

The scale for measuring conversations in all-day schools comprises 3 Items that can be answered on a 4-point-scale (1 = no, 2 = 1–2 times, 3 = 3–4 times, 4 = more than 5 times). The scale has a mean of $M = 1.80$ ($SD = 0.73$) and a Cronbachs alpha of .66, which indicates a mediocore internal consistence (George & Mallery, 2003). The fit indices from the confirmatory factor analysis show a Comparative Fit Index (CFI) of 1, indicating excellent model fit (Kline, 2016). The Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) is 0, suggesting that the model represents a perfect approximation of the data (Kline, 2016).

The knowledge about the quality of personnel in extended education was collected using case vignettes. The question could be answered with free text: "Please describe in a few bullet points what you consider important in the concrete implementation of an offer. Please name 6 central quality dimensions." From the answers, the composite categories Time Utilization/ Structuring, (Cognitive) Activation, Autonomy Support, Participation, Daily Life Orientation, and Recognition were formed via text mining. Each category corresponds to 1 point; a maximum of 6 points could be achieved (Table 3).

Table 3. Knowledge about Quality Scale

	M (SD)	N
Category		
Time Utilization/Structuring	0.53 (0.50)	160
(Cognitive) Activation	0.30 (0.46)	160
Autonomy Support	0.33 (0.47)	160
Participation	0.56 (0.50)	160
Experience Realm Orientation	0.59 (0.49)	160
Recognition	0.42 (0.50)	160
Scale: Knowledge about Quality	2.73 (1.05)	160

Notes. Question: Translate and Rephrase: The scale “Knowledge about Quality in All-Day Schools” was collected through a case vignette and analysed using text mining in R.

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of the Occupational Demographic Variables

	M (SD)	N
Professional Experiencen (month)	56.13 (54.36)	317
Age	43.1 (13.65)	308
Full-Time Employment	0.70 (0.46)	311
Conversations	2.80 (0.73)	274

Notes. Question: “Do you feel engaged at school? To what extent do the following statements apply to you?”
* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

Results Sub-Study A

To answer the first research question about the influence of the sense of belonging on knowledge of quality in extracurricular activities, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. This analysis aimed to predict knowledge of quality based on the predictor variable engagement. The results are presented in (Table 5). The regression analysis revealed that engagement has a significant positive influence on knowledge about quality ($B = .168$, $SE = .517$, $\beta < 1.031$, $p < .05$). Regarding the control variables, there is a significant negative influence between knowledge about quality and age ($B = -.219$, $SE = .007$, $\beta = -.017$, $p = .02$). For the variables professional experience ($B = .087$, $SE = .001$, $\beta = -.002$, $p = .25$). and full-time employment ($B = .138$, $SE = .179$, $\beta = .312$, $p = .08$) can no significant relations be found. The model explains a minor proportion of the variance in engagement (Cohen, 1988), The results suggest that higher levels of engagement are significantly associated with greater knowledge about quality and lower age.

Table 5. Multiple Regression Analysis: Influence of Knowledge about Quality (Dependent Variable) on Engagement (Independent Variable) and Occupational Demographic Characteristics

	B	SE	ß	p	95% – CI
					lower upper
Knowledge about Quality					
Engagement	.168	.517	1.031	.046	[.017; 2.045]
Professional Experience	.087	.001	.002	.251	[-.001; .005]
Full-Time Employment	.138	.179	.312	.081	[-.038; .663]
Age	-.219	0.007	- .017	.018	[-.030; -.003]
N				.303	
R^2				.09	

Notes. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .947; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .033.

To address the second research question about the factors that determine the sense of belonging, another multiple regression analysis was conducted. This analysis aimed to predict engagement based on the predictors: conversations, work experience, age, and full-time employment. The results are presented below (Table 6). There is a significant positive influence of conversations on engagement ($B = .741$, $SE = .111$, $\beta = .216$, $p = .05$). Professional experience does not significantly influence engagement ($B = .007$, $SE = .000$, $\beta = .000$, $p = .91$). Similarly, age does not have a significant effect on engagement ($B = .046$, $SE = .001$, $\beta = .000$, $p = .61$). Lastly, full-time employment does not significantly affect engagement ($B = -.050$, $SE = .014$, $\beta = -.009$, $p = .51$). The results suggest that conversations significantly enhance engagement among school personnel, while professional experience, age, and full-time employment status do not have a significant impact. The model explains a relevant proportion of the variance in engagement (Cohen, 1988).

Table 6. Multiple Regression Analysis: Influence from Engagement on (Dependent Variable) Occupational Demographic Characteristics and Conversations (Independent Variables)

	B	SE	ß	p	95% – CI
					lower upper
Engagement					
Professional Experience	.007	.000	.000	.914	[-.000; .000]
Full-Time Employment	-.050	.014	-.009	.514	[-.035; .018]
Age	.046	.001	.000	.609	[-.001; .001]
Conversations	.741	.111	.216	.050	[-.001; .433]
N				303	
R^2				.268	

Notes. * $p \leq .05$, ** $p \leq .01$, *** $p \leq .001$. Comparative Fit Index (CFI) = .710; Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA) = .124.

Results Sub-Study B

The empirical investigation of the cooperation and network structures of non-professional educators in all-day schools is carried out with the help of qualitative network analysis, which has established itself as an open methodological approach within the otherwise more quantitatively oriented network research (Gamper et al., 2012; Glückler & Hammer, 2011).

The different qualifications of the staff are not only reflected in the quantitative distribution, but are also subjectively processed differently by the interviewees. Less pedagogical qualifications are always associated with less methodological skills and knowledge:

> "I think a lot of times when you start doing that, you get thrown into the deep end. And that's what I see here, I think, even though I'm new colleagues. You always don't know what you're ultimately getting yourself into. Many people have children of their own and think, yes, that empowers them. But it's just something different. Strange children, everyday school life and so on. I think you are left alone to a certain extent" (TN 456–460- Translated by Authors).

In addition, it has been shown that schools rarely compensate structurally for the lack of pedagogical training of this part of the staff. There are hardly any comprehensive and formally secured forms of induction. Elsewhere, it is also recommended that staff focus on teachers as "role models" (and not, for example, on social pedagogues):

> "Many of us are career changers. And then I think it's such a shame that we should copy that from teachers. Some are not necessarily good role models. Yes, I have to say it quite bluntly" (KF 235–238 – Translated by Authors).

Workforces in extended education often have a desire for further pedagogical training or qualifications. In this relation, the interviews point not only to a lack of opportunities for further qualification, but also to structural limitations. For employees, it would be crucial that further qualification is not only a "private matter", but that it is financially and temporally made possible by the schools, independent providers and municipalities that act as employers:

> "I would definitely like something now-. Sure, the issue of payment is one thing. But if there is a shortage of skilled workers, it would also be nice, for example, to not only offer further training to become a pedagogical specialist, but I already have a degree, I have completed one, so I have several training courses. But if you're a-. or otherwise, part-time with the same salary, if you could somehow manage to become an educator" (CE 705–710 – Translated by Authors).

The hierarchy of groups working all day is established in everyday life. Pedagogical training and/or qualifications play a central role in determining where one feels one belongs within the school structure:

> Well, I also notice that with those, especially with the substitute teachers here who still work with us, that they have the feeling that they are not taken seriously because they are just substitute teachers. And for us it's a step lower because we're just pedagogical employees. Which is of course always difficult to understand because we are also studying to become teachers (JL 608–613 – Translated by Authors).

Hierarchies and power imbalances within all-day school staff are also symbolically reproduced in various ways:

> "But now you don't get introduced in the staff room or anything like that. We actually have a wall with all the employees, we're not on it either, so the pedagogical employees aren't, I think the substitute teachers are." (JL 657–659 – Translated by Authors).

The different or missing professionalization paths of the staff during the day have consequences that have to be negotiated individually by the different actors. It is not only a matter

of "diffusion of responsibility", but also of collective and individual recognition of the activity throughout the day.

Discussion

The results suggest that the quality of all-day schools is not only determined by the formal qualifications of the staff, but also by the extent to which they belong and are integrated into the school environment. However, there is a correlation between qualifications and the sense of belonging to the all-day school (Sub-study A). Sub-study B also shows that differences in staff qualifications are perceived differently, both quantitatively and subjectively. A Lack of recognition is complained about by unqualified staff. Teachers are often seen as role models for the unqualified staff, rather than early childhood educators or social workers. This could pose a risk to the expansion of education, as a sole focus on school-based learning does not represent an expansion of educational opportunities. The results also highlight the existing hierarchies and power imbalances between different professional groups in the all-day sector, which affect the sense of belonging and the sharing of responsibilities in everyday school life. These imbalances need to be addressed by actors individually and collectively.

Due to the Context-Input-Process-Output (CIPO) model, these findings have several implications. The study suggests that quality in extended education is not just an "input" matter defined by qualifications and available resources. It also underscores the importance of "process" elements, such as collaboration among workforces in extended education. In this context, process quality, influenced by staff integration and a sense of belonging, plays a central role in determining the overall effectiveness of extended education.

Faced with a growing shortage of qualified educators, all-day schools are increasingly relying on non-professional or lay educators. This reality calls for an expanded understanding of quality that goes beyond traditional notions of professionalism. It is essential to develop structures that facilitate the integration of lay educators into the school system and foster a sense of belonging that encourages commitment and collaboration. Specific trainings could be an opportunity to increase the quality of the not-qualified staff (Sauerwein & Danner, 2024).

For several years, theoretical discussions of schooling have highlighted the fundamental tension between schools as formal professional organizations and the "people-processing" nature of educational interactions, which are inherently difficult to structure (Drepper & Tacke, 2012). In terms of organizational theory, the findings of this study suggest that all-day schools may operate as "loosely coupled systems" in which extracurricular components are only loosely linked to core school functions such as instruction (Emmerich & Feldhoff, 2022).

However, as the results show, the integration of extended education into the formal school organization is often limited. The extended education segment tends to operate somewhat independently, detached from other core school processes. This raises the question of whether the term "loose coupling" is even sufficient to describe this dynamic, or whether the extra-curricular component of the all-day school should be considered an independent organizational unit.

Limitations

Reflection on the findings shows that the study provides valuable insights into the importance of belonging for quality in all-day schools. The combination of quantitative analysis and qualitative network analysis made it possible to identify both general patterns and deeper insights into the everyday interactions of staff. However, the study also has methodological limitations: for example, the use of an online questionnaire in Sub-study A is susceptible to selective participation and may introduce biases in respondents' self-assessment. The qualitative network analysis in Sub-study B is less generalisable due to the smaller sample size. Despite these limitations, the complementary methods strengthen the validity of the findings by allowing quantitative findings to be complemented by qualitative perspectives.

Further Research

The results of this study make a considerable contribution to national practice and international understanding of extended education. On a national level, the results make clear that the integration and commitment of non-pedagogical qualified staff make a decisive contribution to the quality of extracurricular programmes. This implies that all-day schools in Germany should develop more strategies to promote their integration and improve the sense of belonging among staff. Providing training programmes and targeted team development could help to ensure the quality of extended education, also in the light of the existing shortage of qualified workforces. Internationally, the study makes a valuable contribution to the debate on the role of non-professional staff in extended education. While in many countries the focus is on formally qualified staff or on university and high-quality alternative certification routes for unqualified staff, the results show that, if properly integrated, nonprofessional staff can also make a crucial contribution to the quality of education. This is particularly relevant for countries that also face shortages of qualified staff in education. This study yields several implications for further research. For example, long-term analyses could examine how belonging and integration affect the quality of all-day education. In addition, a cross-national comparative analysis would be of interest to examine whether the mechanisms identified in Germany have similar effects in other educational systems and cultural settings.

Conclusion

The results of this study emphasize that the quality of extracurricular activities in all-day schools goes beyond formal qualifications. While qualifications are undoubtedly important, they are only one aspect of quality. Our findings show that institutional integration and a sense of belonging among staff also play a crucial role. Therefore, quality needs to be viewed not only through the lens of formal qualifications, but also in terms of how effectively lay educators and professionals are integrated into the school environment. Nevertheless, there is a correlation between qualification and sense of belonging.

In contrast to the common model of a fully integrated all-day school, the forms of integration for other educational staff reconstructed here are minimally influenced by the formal school structure. Networking among staff is often informal and individualized rather than structurally secured. This informality allows staff to access resources outside the formal organizational and procedural structure. For example, in case study A, informal networking facilitates pedagogical reflection and collegial exchange, while in case study B, it provides access to various material and social resources within the community.

These analyses prompt further reflection on the theoretical positioning of all-day schools. It raises the question of whether current methods of structuring all-day schools truly integrate extended learning opportunities into the core school processes, or whether they run the risk of maintaining the traditional separation between regular classes and extracurricular activities, thus limiting the potential of a truly holistic all-day school model.

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Quality Aspects of the Physical Learning Environment in Relation to Teaching in Swedish School-age Educare

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Abstract: The curriculum states that Swedish school-age educare (SAEC) should offer students a meaningful leisure time and stimulate their development and learning through SAEC teaching, which is defined as a combination of care, development, and learning. In recent decades SAEC has relocated from a social to an educational arena with a different governance, teacher qualifications, terminology, physical location, and integration within schools (Boström & Augustsson, 2016). Studies have highlighted problems related to the conditions of the physical learning environment (Boström & Augustsson, 2016; Lager, 2020), although the empirical research in this field is limited. The aim of this study is therefore to investigate how the physical learning environment, from a staff perspective, enables or limits teaching in four SAEC centers. This is important, in that according to Harms et al. (2014), pedagogical quality in extended educational settings arises in interaction between features that include physical, organizational, and social aspects. The study concludes that regionalization, dimensioning, layout of the premises, and organizational aspects, together with the staff's psychological ownership and/or subordination, have a clear impact on the nature and quality of teaching, the staff's opportunities to develop their teaching, and the students' possible choices and activities.

Keywords: extended education, premises, psychological ownership, structuration theory, teaching, staff perspectives

Introduction

SAEC is a part of the Swedish education system, governed by the Education Act (SFS 2010:800) and the curriculum for compulsory school, preschool class and SAEC (SNAE, 2022a). It includes approximately 480,000 children aged between 6–12 years (SNAE, 2022b). The Swedish SAEC of today is a result of various policy changes that have taken place over the past 25 years. These changes have meant a shift from a social pedagogical focus emphasizing play, leisure, and social relations, to a more pronounced learning assignment (Gustafsson Nyckel, 2024). These changes involve the introduction of the concept of teaching, which was not part of the social pedagogical assignment. Teaching in SAEC should though be interpreted broadly, where care, development, and learning, should be considered as a whole (SNAE, 2022b). SAEC work should be based on the needs, interests, and experiences of the students, to stimulate their development and learning and offer them meaningful leisure time before and after school. SAEC is thus part of the growing international research

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field of extended education, which is interested in learning in different types of institutions/ activities outside the regular school system (Bae, 2020; Stecher, 2020).

Today, Swedish SAECs are predominantly integrated within primary schools in terms of activities, staff, and premises, although studies have also highlighted problems related to the conditions in the physical learning environment. The physical learning environment is defined as the result of interactions between physical resources and people in different contexts (Velissaratou, 2017) and is here, like Kirkeby (2006), primarily considered as the servant of pedagogy.

Very few studies have adopted a holistic approach to the indoor physical learning environment in SAECs, although some have identified shortcomings in relation to the physical learning environment (Grewell & Boström, 2020). These shortcomings include the unequal conditions between different SAECs, that the SAEC's physical learning environment is often under-prioritized and offers limited opportunities for activities that students perceive as meaningful (Boström & Augustsson, 2016; Boström et al., 2015). A governmental inquiry (SOU 2020:34) states that deficiencies in room dimensions and functionality negatively affect the quality of SAEC activities through limited didactic conditions, an increased control of students, a tighter structuring of activities, high noise levels and overcrowding. At the same time, the Education Act states that students should be offered a good environment, premises and equipment, suitable for the purpose, and characterized by security and tranquillity (SFS 2010:800). Overall, this means that policy documents and research emphasize the importance of a good physical learning environment. However, government reviews and research in the area have shown that the teaching conditions for SAEC are often inferior, which can lead to shortcomings in educational quality.

According to Harms et al. (2014), pedagogical quality in relation to the physical learning environment is a result of the conditions offered and how teachers and students make use of them. Some international studies indicates that the quality of the physical learning environment in extended education programs have improved with through adding different material resources and pedagogical ideas (Barretto et al., 2017; Fadool, 2009; Fields & Kafai, 2009), as well as involving pupils for improvement of the physical learning environment (Smith & Barker, 2000).

Plantenga and Remery (2017) state that examining quality can mean studying structural quality, (i. e. group size, the number of children per staff member, and staff training levels), or process quality, which refers to the environment in which children play, learn and interact.

This introduction outlines the aim of the study, which is to investigate how the physical learning environment enables and/or limits teaching and SAEC quality from a staff perspective. This is investigated using the following research questions: 1) Which conditions in the physical learning environment of the SAEC are perceived as important for the teaching? 2) How does the physical learning environment contribute to the quality of the teaching? In the following section, previous research on SAEC teaching and how the physical learning environment can be related to teaching is presented.

Teaching in SAEC

The SAEC curriculum's (SNAE, 2022a) broadened definition of teaching as a combination of care, development, and learning has opened for a variety of approaches and interpretations.

The shift in pedagogical focus, from social care and development to teaching, has resulted in teaching-related research, where both the social and educational pedagogical traditions are made visible. Development is described in terms of how SAEC teachers use documentation as a method to develop conditions for building good relationships (Lager, 2018), and in relation to systematic quality work (Lager, 2020a; Lager et al., 2016). Learning is made visible by how didactics, as a theory and research area in SAEC, has emerged over the past ten years. Boström, Orwehag, et al. (2022) highlight an awareness of didactic aspects, but also state that few empirical studies have explored the complexity of SAEC didactics.

Dahl (2021) argues that teaching in SAEC is often based on play-oriented elements, and that a child focus can be seen as a strategy for creating an exploration of different knowledge, where teachers' sense of intonation, leadership, and participation create conditions for learning. Lager (2015) highlights that teaching in SAECs is characterized by a social pedagogical discourse in which children's perspectives and interests form the starting point.

Ackesjö and Haglund (2021) describe how SAEC teachers flexibly move in a field of tension between tradition and the intentions of new educational policy. Teaching is partly centred around play, child focus, and adapting to the situation. It also emphasizes the teaching and evaluation of children's learning. This indicates an expansion of the concept of teaching over time. Ackesjö and Haglund's conclusion is that the teacher's control in terms of intentionality, interactivity, and intersubjectivity is central to whether the activities that are carried out, can be defined as teaching.

Boström and Berg (2018) show that teaching in SAEC involves a combination of leadership structures, traditional SAEC activities, and a reactive checking of steering documents. They conclude that professional SAEC practice has a lower status than traditional school activities, and that staff, in their work, experience several stressful conflicting pressures that hinder the realization of the curriculum's intentions.

In summary, while teaching is an expanding concept and field within Swedish SAEC, the concept is still, according to previous research, diverse, which signals that the broadened teaching concepts of care, development, and learning have not yet found their right level in the field of tension between tradition and new educational policy intentions.

The physical learning environment and teaching in SAEC

Horton et al. (2023) have investigated the relationships between the physical and organizational environment, resources, and social relations in school settings. Their study showed that the dimensioning of the physical environment in relation to the number of students is affected by various factors at different levels, such as architectural design, the availability of materials, a lack of staff resources, scheduling, and teachers' ability to supervise, and that they all have an impact on students' social relationships. Studies (cf. de Laval et al., 2019; Falkner & Ludvigsson, 2019) also indicate that staff in SAEC deal with problems of overcrowding in combination with scattered premises, an increased structure in the form of groupings, transfers, scheduling, and a tighter control and more limited choice of students' activities. A significant part of the staff's time is spent in organizing and conducting logistics, which reduce the flexibility of teaching and limit the choice of activities (de Laval et al., 2019; Elvstrand, 2013). The pedagogical focus thus shifts from planning the content of the activity

to organizing and structuring where the students should be (Boström & Berg, 2018; de Laval et al., 2019).

Littmarck et al. (2023) have specifically studied how physical learning environments at SAECs are designed and developed by staff to create different choices of action for students. The study shows that SAEC teachers' intentions are that the physical learning environment should be designed for play, creating, learning, safety, rest, and building relationships. The active approach described by Littmarck et al. seems to be close to Dahl (2014) description of SAEC teachers' creation of spaces that promote communities of practice, such as "rooms within the room", or spaces for smaller groups, and undisturbed play. Dahl concludes that staff strive to afford free choices and meet children's wishes, but that the physical conditions of premises, space, and play materials determine the activities that are possible and can contribute to limiting children's play (Dahl, 2014). A conclusion is that it seems to be important to offer children time and access to environments that contain and offer different choices.

The conditions of the physical learning environment can contribute to the development of norms and rules for how students can use the environment and materials and can limit the number of activities offered (cf. Grewell, 2022; Kane & Petrie, 2014). For example, both Lager (2020) and Horton et al. (2023) show that the conditions for varied activities are limited in SAECs that completely or partially lack their own premises. It is also difficult to get the classroom environment to support creative expression, and the participation and influence of SAEC students can be limited due to a lack of conditions (Andersson, 2013). Littmarck et al. (2023) argue that having their own premises appears to be an important prerequisite for SAEC activities based on students' interests. In summary, the design of the physical learning environment is an important aspect of how teaching in SAEC can be conducted.

Theoretical Point of Departure

The study uses two theories to analyse the data. Giddens (1979, 1984) theory of structuration and the theory of psychological ownership [PO] (Pierce & Brown, 2020; Pierce et al., 2004).

The theory of structuration is used to describe and analyse how actions are influenced by structures in the form of rules and resources, which in the interaction between individuals, shape power relations and contribute to the production and reproduction of activities that create the social system. (Giddens, 1984). The use of PO is motivated by feelings of ownership, (or lack of ownership), identified in the data. Such feelings have been hypothesized to have an effect on staff performances such as commitment, empowerment, experienced meaningfulness, and belongingness and organizational change (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003).

The theory of structuration (Giddens, 1984) assumes that people have the ability to act, but neither can act unhindered. Based on structuration theory, people, and the actions they take, are in a dialectical, mutually dependent, relationship, with the structures in which they operate. Giddens (1984) describes structures as various forms of rules and resources that can be both obstructive and enabling. Rules are seen as unwritten norms for how individual actors should act, and as meaningful codes, visible through actors linguistically descriptions of the social practice (Giddens, 1979). The rules may differ depending on the temporal and/or spatial aspects, which Giddens (1984) describes as regionalization. Resources are described by

Giddens (1984) as potential opportunities to exercise power; in relation to other actors (authorizing resources) or in relation to the physical environment in the form of premises or material (allocative resources).

Pierce et al. (2001, 2003) describe PO as a self-developed perception of owning something, tangible or intangible. It serves four fundamental human latent needs: efficancy, self-identity, belongingness (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003), and stimulation (Pierce & Brown, 2020). These needs make an individual ready to engage in a relationship whereby certain objects become part of the extended self (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). Three experiences have been theorized as leading to the emergence of PO: experienced control over, intimate knowing of and investment of the self, into the target (Pierce et al., 2019). These experiences tie the individual psychologically to the object/target so that it becomes a part of the extended self and manifests through feelings of ownership. Ownership can be affected by structural changes (Dawkins et al., 2015), how well space is organized for the activities (Barrett et al., 2019) and the autonomy staff have over their workplace (Pierce & Brown, 2020).

Structuration theory, including the concepts of regionalization, rules, and resources, describes the possibilities for actors to act in a workplace such as SAEC. This is, in some respects, close to the theory of psychological ownership with its concepts of experienced control over, having a deep knowledge of, and investing in the goals of the workplace. Investing in the workplace can occur in several ways, "including investment of one's time; ideas; skills; and physical, psychological, and intellectual energies. As a result, the individual may feel ownership and a strengthened self-identity (Pierce et al., 2003). In contrast, the absence or lack of ownership can lead to negative attitudes and behaviour, diminished status, role, and self-esteem.

Design of the Study

The study is cross-sectional (De Vaus, 2001) and explores the SAEC staff's possibilities and constraints in relation to the physical learning environment. The research team consisted of a doctoral student (A) who carried out the empirical data collection, transcription, initial analysis and thematization, and a senior researcher (B) who participated in the further analysis. The selection of SAECs is strategic in that it aims to capture the staff's perspectives of the physical learning environment as broadly and diversely as possible to answer the research questions with satisfactory breadth and depth (Patton, 2015). The geography, responsible authority, socioeconomical aspects, the staff's educational levels, integration in school and design of the premises vary between the SAECs. The number of students in the SAEC vary from 50–79 and the ages from 6–11 years. The data collection was done as follows: One week of field studies (afternoons) in each SAEC (43 pages of fieldnotes and 83 photos). One group interview in each SAEC (a total of 5 hours of recordings), with 18 staff members (9 SAEC teachers, 3 preschool teachers and 6 other staff). For the interviews, a variant of Post Occupancy Evaluation [POE] (de Laval, 2014; Preiser, 1995) and walk and talk conversations (Christensen, 2006; Haglund, 2015b; Klerfelt & Haglund, 2014) were conducted with the SAEC staff in the indoor physical learning environment. In every room the staff first reflected individually, and then discussed the possibilities and constraints of the physical learning

environment, with the opportunity for further discussions during the succeeding group interview. All the reflections and discussions during POE/walk and talk conversations and group interviews, were recorded and transcribed.

The study's ethical considerations are based on good research practice, which includes information requirements, consent requirements, confidentiality requirements, and utilization requirements (Vetenskapsrådet [The Swedish Research Council], 2024). A consideration of ethical review was made jointly by the doctoral student and the main supervisor after contact with Mid Sweden University's research ethics expert. As the study does not involve the processing of data that is subject to ethical review, the assessment was made that ethical review was not necessary for this study. Consent was obtained from all the participants after they received information about their participation and how the principles of research ethics would be respected in the study. To ensure confidentiality, fictitious names were assigned to all the participants early in the research process. All consents are kept in a locked filing cabinet at the institution. The empirical data, consisting of field notes, photos, audio recordings and transcripts are stored on the institution's secure data storage server.

The data from the interviews with the staff were analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) which enables identification of patterns across the data set, (Braun & Clarke, 2019). The focus of the analysis was on highlighting the possibilities and constraints of the physical learning environment. The analysis was conducted through the six-phase approach developed by Braun and Clarke (2019). This involved a familiarization with the data followed by a more detailed and systematic engagement with the data by searching for repeated patterns of meaning trying to generate codes. The next phase involved searching for potential themes and checking whether the themes were appropriate in relation to the coded extracts and the research questions. The next phases were directed to revising and defining themes and "clarify the essence and scope of each theme" (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p.855) which then could be interpreted and analysed in relation to the theoretical starting points. The last phase was directed to producing the report.

Empirical Results

The results are presented in two themes for each SAEC: The design and functionality of the physical environment and the organization and content of the teaching. These two themes were chosen because the empirical data indicated that the design and functionality of the physical environment influenced the organization and the content of the teaching.

SAEC A

The Design and Functionality of the Physical Environment

The SAEC residence is shared with the preschool class and consists of one large and one smaller room. In addition to these, two adjacent classrooms are sometimes used. In another building, a sports hall, an art classroom, a recreation room, and a technical workshop are available for use. Breakfast and snack meals are served in the canteen two floors down, but the

Figure 1. The larger room in SAEC A has a kitchen interior [not shown in the photo], a few tables, a carpet and is equipped with materials for building and creative activities.

Figure 2. The smaller room in SAEC A has a sofa, shelves, cupboards, and two tables, as well as board games and materials for play.

staff can also serve snack meals outside if they wish. The toilets are located on the ground floor. The staff have no staffroom.

During the walk-and-talk session, one of the SAEC teachers, Anna, described that the residence was functional for after-school activities but too small in relation to the number of students. She also said that the amount of educational material was limited and that many of the toys were old and worn out. Several of the staff pointed to problems with the lack of toilets close to the residence, and limited space for recovery and private play. The hallway outside the residence was narrow and easily became overcrowded, which contributed to conflicts and made it difficult for students to keep their clothes and things in order.

The Organization and Content of the Teaching

The sharing of premises with preschool class and school meant that the teaching had to be adapted to the premises that were currently available.

> The teaching is organized in such a way that during the first hours of the afternoon the students can go outside or choose between some (1–3) activities in different premises (field note 2020–04–02). Available premises vary, according to the staff, from day to day and can be changed at short notice. (Håkan).

The structure and content of the teaching was determined by the conditions of the premises. SAEC teacher Håkan described that he felt that the school had "a right of possession over the premises" and could only be used by the SAEC "during residual time". "Then you have to adapt the teaching activities to logistics or scheduling, more than pedagogy, I think." (Håkan).

Håkan described the school activities as superior and taking precedence over the SAEC activities. This organization was time consuming and resulted in counting, monitoring, and grouping the students. The staff described that it also limited the students' choices and entailed teaching that was characterized by short and limited activities instead of longer projects.

> On this day, the students are served snack meal outdoors. After that, the younger students (aged 6–7) go to a nearby playground, while the older students can choose between staying outdoors, playing indoor football in the sports hall or drawing in the art room. At 4 pm, when most of the students have gone home, the remaining students gather in the SAEC residence. The activities that take place there are drawing, playing board games, talking to each other and the staff, and building with construction materials (field note 2020–04–02).

The SAEC teachers Anna and Håkan both described that there was no place that "was" SAEC, since the need for the school premises took precedence over the SAEC. This was further reinforced by the fact that much of the staff's time and work was directed to work in the school, and that SAEC lacked its own budget and had to ask for materials from the school management, preschool, or school.

> What I find difficult is that we don't have any premises that can be used exclusively for SAEC. SAEC is a time, it is no longer a physical place. It's like "Where should we be? There or there? Where can we sit?" The fact that it's not one physical place makes me think… that you lose a little soul… (Håkan).
> It's noticeable concerning the children as well. I have a student; she doesn't know the difference. So, she asks me every day "Has SAEC started now?" She doesn't notice when after-school starts. Because it's just a time. And she can′t keep track of time, yet. (Anna).

Håkan and Anna said that the lack of a residence of their own affected both the staff and students on an emotional level, which Håkan referred to as "lacking a SAEC soul". Nisse described how this affected the teaching and activities in the residence.

> And then there's also the fact that once they're playing here, all the stuff must be removed at the end of the day, because the next day the preschool class is here. They can never continue building their big castle or whatever. (Nisse)

The staff described that they experienced a greater freedom and flexibility in relation to the premises during the school holidays. Nisse said that the sports hall could be open and that materials were easily accessible, which made the environment feel like their own. Anna said that it made her feel free and more relaxed in her teaching role. Håkan pointed out that it gave opportunities for spontaneity and work on long-term projects. The orientation of the rooms in relation to each other also affected the teaching.

> I would like to work like this; here we have a music group, a creative group, a technology group or a sports group or something … yes, like that. But then we would need many small rooms, but close to each other so that we can have an overview of all the children. But now we're in two different buildings. (Anna).

Anna described that even though there were available premises, it was difficult to make full use of them due to supervising and staffing all the rooms. It also made it harder for the staff to collaborate, supervise, and be flexible in their teaching.

SAEC B

The Design and Functionality of the Physical Environment

The SAEC residence is shared with two preschool classes and consists of twelve rooms in different sizes, including a cloakroom and kitchen. The staff have a staffroom with personalized workplaces for all staff members.

Breakfast for all and a snack meal for grade 3–6 are served in the kitchen, while a snack meal for preschool class and grade 1–3 is served in the nearby canteen. The nearby sports hall is used frequently. Other school premises, including classrooms, a room with computers and a room for wood and metal crafts, could be used when needed (field note 2020–01–22).

Figure 3. The kitchen is located in the centre of SAEC B.

The staff described that they had created spaces based on different themes, i. e. building, play, creative work, etc. They emphasized the importance of plurality, diversity, and easy access to materials, so that the students could be inspired and initiate activities independently. The smaller rooms were particularly popular amongst the students, but the staff said that they had adapted the doors to make it easier to monitor the activities.

The Organization and Content of the Teaching

The teaching was organized in a way that allowed the students to choose what they wanted to do among the free, and organized activities, indoors or outdoors. A weekly creative activity was offered, as well as teacher- and student-led activities in the sports hall. Various themed activities were also regularly organized. Norms and rules were mostly related to enabling students to act independently and with responsibility in relation to the physical environment.

The staff position themselves in the environments, indoors and outdoors and are involved in the students' activities. They describe that they aim to inspire, support, lead and challenge the students with their division of labour, approach,

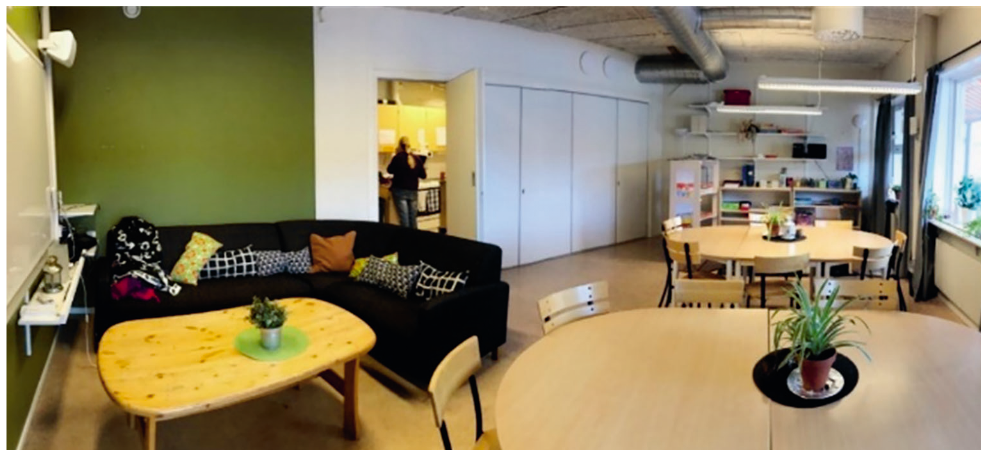

Figure 4. A room in SAEC B for eating breakfast, playing boardgames etc.

Figure 5. A small room for creative work in SAEC B.

and learning environments. Some of the students participate in preparing and serving breakfast and snack meals (field note 2020–01–24).

Cecilia described that they had good opportunities to be flexible and accommodate the students' wishes.

I think that's really important. We have to look at the environment based on the children we have. What do they want? What do they need? (Cecilia)

We are lucky to have the premises we have. That's an advantage, because it means that we have opportunities to make changes in the physical environment. Some SAECs only have classrooms and can't arrange, rearrange, and have control over the premises. (Eva).

But, also, we're all SAEC teachers and preschool teachers, which is great. We're all pedagogically educated and trained, so in that way we have an equal foundation to depart from. (Barbro).

Figure 6. A small room for play in SAEC B.

Figure 7. One of the preschool classrooms in SAEC B, with tables, a small stage for performances, a reading corner, and an artists' corner.

Yes, we are reflecting over the environment. If there are untrained staff, the environment might be considered as "it is what it is", without reflecting why. (Anders).

The staff described that they reflected continuously and developed the physical learning environment based on the interests and needs of the students. They emphasized the good diverse physical environment, the ability to arrange and furnish the premises as they saw fit and that everyone in the team had a teacher education. They also highlighted that their team had worked together for a long time.

SAEC B had its own budget for purchasing materials, but also used compensation received for training teacher candidates. Daisy said that they prioritized buying a lot of material,

even if it was expensive, because that inspired, stimulated, and activated the students. However, the use of some material was limited due to difficulties of obtaining enough creative material. They were dependent on material donations by staff and parents and were trying to teach students to handle the play materials carefully and clean up after themselves.

SAEC C

The Design and Functionality of the Physical Environment

The SAEC consists of two large and one medium-sized rooms. The staff have access to a staff room with some tables and chairs.

> The SAEC residence consists of a large cloakroom, two toilets, three large rooms, and a staff room. The rooms are in a row with doors between them and to the cloakroom. In addition, the nearby sports hall is used, and if needed classrooms, including a music room are available. Breakfast and snack meals are served in the school canteen close to the SAEC (field note 2020–01–27).

Figure 8. The largest room in SAEC C combines several functions: a creative area with a sink, a kitchen, and a resting/reading corner (the latter not visible in the photo).

The staff said that they were satisfied with the physical learning environment, although the fact that the rooms were in a row and had several doors between them inspired the students to run between the rooms, which made it difficult to monitor the students′ activities. They were happy to have their own work and staff room and said that it strengthened their team spirit. Gun, a qualified preschool teacher, said that the SAEC's physical learning environment was given lower priority than the school's physical environment.

> The school has had projectors in every classroom for many years now, which we also want because you can use them for dance and movement programmes. But we always get last priority, that's how it is. (Gun).

The staff appreciated the creative room, the spacious cloakroom and that the rooms offered a variety of activities. Gun emphasized the importance of materials being readily available so that the students could act independently. She also said that the sofas had multiple purposes, such as chatting, resting, and playing. Several of the staff members addressed a challenge in

Figure 9. One room in SAEC C is set up for building Lego and playing board games and has a desktop computer (the latter not visible in the photo).

Figure 10. A third room in SAEC C is set up for play with rugs, a sofa, and some toys.

motivating students to take care of and keep the materials in order. Gun explained that they therefore had fewer materials on display and instead, at regular intervals, replaced materials, which in her opinion made the students more focused on the material that was available.

The Organization and Content of the Teaching

The SAEC afternoon activities start with some compulsory outdoor time, after which the students are free to choose what they want to do, indoors or outdoors. They do role play, watch films, draw, paint, create and build with Lego, play on a computer and with board games, or just talk to each other and the staff. The staff often position themselves in the kitchen area where they have a view of several of the rooms. They talk to the students, help them with materials and open and take out equipment in the sports hall (field note 2020–01–27).

Gun said that previously they had teacher- and student-led activities, but that they currently did not have such structure in the teaching. This was due to an absence of staff and that

substitute staff often lacked pedagogical training. The lack of teacher-led activities was also reinforced because their work during school hours made them exhausted.

> But now, for a long time, SAEC staff have had to work in class during school hours and go straight from there to the SAEC … without a break. That's how it's been for most of us, for several weeks. Which leaves you completely exhausted. (Gun).

Gun said that it would be good to have a better balance in the collaboration between school and SAEC, so that the competencies of each professional category could be utilized in a better way. Currently it was only the SAEC staff who supported the school and not the other way around.

Challenges the staff mentioned were to plan activities based on the interests and ages of the students. Their work had been supported by quality indicators developed by the municipality, which they used as a benchmark for what to focus on: language, student influence, reducing conflicts, etc. They had designed rules aimed at creating order, well-being, fairness, and monitoring the students, i. e. asking the staff to use certain materials, cleaning up after themselves, staying within the SAEC premises, and not playing in the cloakroom. Student participation and influence were described as consisting of having the opportunity to choose and request activities, participate in the planning, and lead activities for younger students and families in the SAEC.

SAEC D

The Design and Functionality of the Physical Environment

The SAEC residence consists of a cloakroom, two large rooms, two smaller rooms, two student toilets, one staff toilet and a very small staff study room.

> Breakfast and snack meals are served in the school canteen in another building. In addition to the residence, the SAEC, in collaboration with school and other SAEC departments, uses three sports halls, an opening and closing department, and a canteen with a stage (field note 2020–02–13).

The staff said that it was good to have a residence of their own that allowed them to arrange the learning environment as they pleased, i. e. create thematic zones of different activities, place materials so that they were easily accessible, furnish the rooms to avoid clutter. They considered that it was good that the main rooms were spacious and allowed students to be inspired by each other's activities. This also made it easier for the staff to monitor several groups of students at the same time. However, the residence was too small in relation to the number of students, had only one sink and no kitchen and few and unpleasant lavatories. According to Hedda and Henry, the cramped cloakroom made it difficult to keep clothes and personal belongings in order and caused overcrowding, conflicts, and loud noise levels. Hedda also said that several smaller rooms were needed, where the students could find peace and silence and play undisturbed. But such rooms were also challenging for the staff because it was difficult to keep an eye on what was happening behind closed doors.

According to the staff the budget for purchasing material was insufficient, and there was a lack of foresight for major investments, which they dealt with by repairing and rectifying furniture removed from the school. The availability of material was reasonable for the time being, but the number of students had increased over time. The amount of material and the

Figure 11. One of the rooms in SAEC D is furnished in zones for different types of activities, playing board games, drawing, and sewing. There are also some laptops, and a small sink. The students have a drawer for personal storage.

Figure 12. In another room in SAEC D, there is a table for creative activities, mats for building blocks, a corner for building Lego, a sofa, and a projector for showing films. The environment is decorated with the students' and staff's own work.

organizational variation of the three SAEC departments meant that students regularly experienced a lack of material. "Let's say that next year, when there will be more students, then there won't be enough, I don't think so [general agreement]". (Henry).

The Organization and Content of the Teaching

The afternoon starts with a snack meal in the canteen. The noise is loud, and the staff apply "five minutes of silence" to reduce the noise level. This means that a number of 5-minute hourglasses are passed between the tables and when the hourglass arrives at the table the students have to be quiet for five minutes. The hourglass is passed to the next table and the students can talk again (field note 2020–02–10).

This method involved staff interrupting students' natural conversations based on the necessity to limit the noise levels.

After the snack meal the students can choose between activities, such as playing outdoors, being in the sports hall, or engaging in creative activities in the residence. The student mark on a board where they go to make it easier for staff and parents to find them. These activities go on for 1–1.5 hours when the number of students is at its peak. At four o'clock everyone gathers in the residence and at five o'clock the remaining students go to another SAEC department that functions as an opening and closing department in another building. In the residence and in the opening and closing department the students are able to freely choose what they want to do based on what the learning environments offer (field note 2020–02–12).

Planning activities, staffing, and grouping students posed several challenges and took time. Activities scattered in different buildings made it difficult to monitor the students and collaborate with each other. Helens said that it also contributed to a feeling of "not belonging anywhere". Students moving between buildings was sometimes perceived as unsafe by younger students and was cumbersome when someone has forgotten things in other buildings. They also described that the school's need for premises was prioritized over those of the SAEC.

We need to take the children out of the residence due to the overcrowding. So the students are told that "we're going to have this activity in the sports hall". But when we arrive there with 50 children, the school has, with short notice, started an activity there. So then we have to either cancel the activity or wait until the school is finished. (Henry).

The phrase "need to take the children out" indicated that it was the avoidance of overcrowding and high noise levels that primarily guided the organization, rather than an educational planning based on the interests and needs of the students in line with the curriculum.

The SAEC staff worked in school classes and with break activities during the school day and in the SAEC in the mornings and afternoons. However, in this academic year the staff did not work with the same students during the school day as during SAEC hours, which they described as negative.

I can think that my most important, main mission, it is to create relationships and security. But…, some days for me are like this, I'm one hour with the sixth graders, then I'm one hour with the four graders, then I'm outdoors, then I join the snack meal with the preschool class and then I'm in the SAEC residence on my own. It is very, very strange and is incredibly time consuming. As it is now, I feel so inadequate, because engaging in several completely different activities makes it very difficult to know where to focus. (Hedda).

The staff also said that they lacked an overview of how the students' school day had elapsed and that they lost coordination gains, such as being able to create extracurricular activities that built on what had been done in school or being able to bring all the SAEC students together during the school day. They argued that they had tried to influence the situation, but without success. This was perceived as the school management's lack of understanding of the aims and purposes of the SAEC.

Analysis based on the theoretical frameworks

In this section the results of the study are presented and concluded with an in-depth discussion in which the results are problematized. The reasoning of the results is initially directed towards describing SAECs A and D and then SAECs B and C. The reason for this division is that the former SAECs' regionalized rules, in the form of physical or social boundaries, are more prominent than for SAECs B and C, which have their own, sufficiently dimensioned, nearby premises. Subsequently, the prerequisites for good quality teaching in the SAECs studied are compared and discussed.

SAECs A and D: Subordination, Limitations, and Lack of Ownership.

SAEC A does not have a residence of its own and the shared residence is too small, whereas SAEC D has a residence of their own, but undersized in relation to the number of students. This means that other school premises need to be used in addition to the residence. Some of the other premises are in buildings other than the SAEC residence and the teaching is organized in time slots, like a school schedule. The flow of students is governed by a combination of the available rooms and staff resources, authoritative and allocative resources, and students' interests. For example, there are outdoor activities due to the lack of premises. Breakfasts, snack meals and optional activity sessions are held in other premises, and, in SAEC D, there is a separate residence for opening and closing hours together with the other SAEC departments.

In both SAEC A and D, educational planning is framed by constraints related to the premises. These constraints are often based on the needs of the school, rather than the needs of the SAEC. For example, school staff/school management with greater authoritative and allocative resources than the SAEC staff are able to determine which premises can be used, and which norms should be applied there (cf. Giddens, 1984). Added to this, SAEC staff perceive themselves to have limited authoritative resources in relation to the work (school or SAEC teaching) that should be emphasized. The result is that the SAEC staff do classroom work at the expense of SAEC work, which Boström and Berg (2018) describe as SAEC staff being exposed to several stressful cross-pressures that make it difficult for them to realize the intentions of the curriculum.

The codes of meaning (Giddens, 1984) that the staff use to describe their work include rules that constrain both themselves and the students: compulsory outdoor time (when the available space is insufficient), maximizing the number of participants in activities (when the space is too small), and methods/prohibitions aimed at regulating order and/or reducing noise levels. The rules deal with spatial aspects, such as which rooms are available and where they are located, and temporal aspects such as when and for how long they can be used, the time needed for organizing, transfers, and restoring materials and rooms. The codes of meaning that are articulated show that the staff's possibilities for cooperation, flexibility, and positioning in relation to the students are affected. With the support of norms and regionalized rules for supervision, attendance, transfers, movement, and toilet visits, the staff control and limit the students' agency by limiting the variety of activities and the possibility for students to flexibly switch between different activities during their SAEC time. This situation is reminiscent of several other studies describing an increased structuring of SAEC activities (de Laval et al.,

2019; Elvstrand, 2013). The prioritization of students' interests and needs is limited due to the structures developed from the existing norms and regionalized rules. This is in line with the findings of de Laval et al. (2019) and Falkner and Ludvigsson (2019).

The pedagogical activities at SAECs A and D are shaped by the ways in which the staff organize the teaching based on a narrow range of premises, materials, and personnel. The organization aims to offer a variety of teaching, which requires a lot of staff resources and is inefficient, as considerable time is spent on logistics and flexibility. Opportunities for collaboration are also limited due to staff being in different premises. Planning, staffing, and organizing are thus a daily complex and time-consuming task that the staff must solve before being able to offer, lead, and implement educational activities (cf. Boström and Berg (2018).

The staff in both SAEC A and D describe the SAEC as inferior to the school in terms of premises, interiors, organization, and staff resources. They express a lack of control and belongingness related to the premises, a lack of control due either to limited or lack of budget for interiors, an unpredictable staff situation, and an organization in which most of the staff's time, energy and commitment is spent during the school day. Only a few of the staff-members in SAEC A, with minimal resources in terms of time and place, are engaged in planning the SAEC activities, while the rest just "do time" in the SAEC. For these reasons, the staff do not seem to perceive a psychological ownership in terms of belongingness, or that their SAECs are "theirs" (Pierce & Brown, 2020). It is also uncertain whether the staff could invest themselves in the target (Pierce et al., 2019) due to their subordination and lack of control. However, during the school holidays the staff in SAEC A describe that they can claim the physical environment as their own, which gives them a sense of belonging, freedom, flexibility, and security, which, by extension, inspires and enables process-oriented, fun and engaging teaching in accordance with the students' interests and needs.

In conclusion, when the physical learning environment is conditional, either through accessibility or the premises being spread out in different buildings, it is this, rather than the intentions of the curriculum, the staff's pedagogical ideas, or the students' needs and interests, that determines the organization and content.

SAECs B and C: Partly Subordinated, Flexibility, and Ownership.

SAECs B and C have premises of their own, nearby, and reasonably sized in relation to the number of students. These premises function as a base for SAEC teaching. In these SAECs, there are few regionalized rules in the form of physical or social boundaries related to temporal and spatial aspects. Instead, there are more routinized rules in the form of norms and meaningful codes emphasizing choice, fairness, peace and quiet, order and tidiness, which Lager (2018) describes as goals of security, peace, and good relationships, and Holmberg (2018) as a connection of relationship, support and control, with the aim of helping and guiding the individual.

SAEC B and C offer a varied and flexible education where the staff had plenty of opportunity to supervise, collaborate, and act adaptively in relation to the interests and needs of the students. The pedagogical activities in SAEC B and C are predominantly shaped by what the physical learning environment offers and how the students are inspired. In SAEC B, weekly organized teacher-, student-led, and thematic activities occur, although at the time of the study this was not offered in SAEC C due to staffing issues. The planning of teaching,

organization, and staffing differ between the SAECs. In SAEC B it takes place on a more long-term basis, while in SAEC C it is more "ad hoc". According to the staff at SAEC C, this is mainly because staffing is often difficult to predict. They seem to have limited authoritative resources in relation to which aspects of the work to emphasize; the consequence being that SAEC staff do classroom work at the expense of SAEC work.

The norms and regionalized rules identified in both SAEC B and C are mainly formulated by the staff, which also means that they have authoritative resources to decide on the teaching and allocative resources to decide on the premises (cf. Giddens, 1984). Sometimes the rules are determined together with the students, which contributes to students' agency by giving them the potential to act independently and take responsibility for the SAEC environment (cf. Dahl & Ackesjö, 2022). The staff also express meaningful codes that impose restrictions on students, i. e. compulsory staying out after school, cleaning up after themselves, no running indoors, and reducing noise levels. However, norms, regionalized rules, and meaningful codes differ between SAECs B and C, with the extent of restrictions and prohibitions being greater in SAEC C. It should be noted that the empirical data in this study is not sufficient to allow for an in-depth analysis of the cause, although one aspect could be the level of education of the staff. In SAEC B, all the staff had an academic SAEC-, or preschool teacher education, while the corresponding level of education in SAEC C is only held by one part-time staff member (who also is responsible for the preschool class), with no post-secondary education amongst the remaining staff.

The staff at SAEC B express no distinctive subordination in relation to school, whereas the staff at SAEC C describe that they experience subordination in relation to the school in terms of an unpredictable and unequal staff situation in which most of the staff's time, energy and commitment, is spent during the school day, often at short notice. The staff at SAEC C also describe subordination in relation to the physical environment and a more limited budget for interiors and pedagogical material. However, they are glad to have their own premises for primary use, which enables them to plan, assess, and develop the learning environments, even though it is difficult to take full advantage of this due to the unpredictable and unequal organization of the staff. Some of the premises at SAEC B are shared with the school, which in some way hinders change in the SAEC, even though the staff describe themselves as equivalent partners in relation to school. It seems as though the staff at SAEC B and C have power, control, and influence (Pierce et al., 2004) with regard to their workplace, while SAEC C is more subordinated. This means that the staff's conditions for experiencing self-identity and belonging (cf. Pierce & Brown, 2020) at SAEC B are good yet weaker at SAEC C.

Conclusion

In SAECs B and C, possibilities for staff collaboration, flexibility, and the utilization of staff resources are more effective than at SAECs A and D. Flexibility is greater because the staff can more easily monitor the SAEC environments. Collaboration within the staff group is relatively easy because they have a closer proximity to each other that assists communication. The utilization of the staff resource is more efficient because they can position themselves close to the students to help or activate them, or alternatively carry out other work and

maintain a close and supervisory role (cf. Haglund, 2015a). The staff's positioning in relation to the students is therefore flexible, which means that students can easily be supported to start up an activity and that staff are free do other pedagogical work for or with other students. This enables the connectedness of relationship, support, and control with the aim of helping and guiding the individual that Holmberg (2018) describes and which, to use Giddens (1984) vocabulary, can be described as a sensitive interplay between the students' agency and the staff's positioning.

We interpret this way of working as a didactic approach and a central part of the staff's professional identity. In these SAECs there is also (as in SAECs A and D) sometimes understaffing, but as the premises allow for monitoring and supervision of several rooms in parallel, students' choices and activities are less affected. The above factors should therefore be considered important from a quality perspective, where children's perspectives and interests can be accommodated (cf. Lager, 2015), and where teacher-child interactions are facilitated (Plantenga & Remery, 2017). In this way, the physical learning environment at SAECs B and C exhibits a higher pedagogical quality and offers better conditions for the teaching (cf. Harms et al., 2014).

The regionalized rules are characterized by social boundaries that interact with the authoritative and allocative resources (cf. Giddens, 1984) in all the SAECs. These rules are contextual and differ between them, which affects the relationships and interactions between people, materials, and functions. In this study, the existing rules make the conditions of the physical learning environment at SAECs B and C more favourable than at SAECs A and D. The rules and the resources, or lack of resources, also contribute to how psychological ownership is experienced (Pierce et al., 2001, 2003). They manifest what is in focus: care, supervision, control, activity, agency, logistics, staffing, planning, etc. Various meaningful codes that impose restrictions on students are expressed: compulsory staying out after school, cleaning up after themselves, and reducing noise levels. The restrictions at SAECs B and C are mainly justified for pedagogical reasons, while restrictions related to the physical learning environment dominate at SAECs A and D. Due to the design and planning of the physical environment, the interactions offer different opportunities between people, materials, and functions, which by extension provide different conditions for agency, participation, and ownership.

When the SAECs physical learning environment is conditional, in terms of limited allocative resources and when school management have greater authoritative and allocative resources the staff describes structures that constrain both themselves and the students (cf. Giddens, 1984). The structures, in the form om rules and regulations limits control, freedom, flexibility, cooperation and feelings of belonging, which summarizes up into a lack of ownership (Pierce, et al, 2020).

In summary, it can be concluded that the regionalization, dimensioning, layout of the premises, organizational aspects and the staff's feelings of psychological ownership and/or subordination have a clear impact on the nature and quality of the teaching. Conditions in the physical environment influence the physical learning environment, which in turn affect the pedagogical aspects, such as flexibility, ownership, cooperation, and agency. These aspects impact the staff's professional roles and their possibilities and motivation to develop their teaching in the physical learning environment and limit and/or enable the students' choices and activities. This means that all these aspects need to be taken into account when designing a

physical learning environment that serves what Kirkeby (2006) refers to as a servant of pedagogy.

This study has limitations but offers important knowledge. The variation of the physical, organizational, social, and staff-educational conditions in the four SAECs makes it difficult to draw general conclusions but works well to identify factors in the physical learning environment that relates to teaching. The study can therefore form a base for development of analytical tools that combine qualitative and quantitative data, different methods of analysis as well as explore these concepts longitudinally which would provide more generalizable results. The knowledge can contribute to the practice in the current context but can also be transferable to other similar contexts, nationally and internationally.

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Centering Culture in Program Quality: Charting the Associations between Culturally Responsive Practices and Latine Adolescents' Basic Needs in a U.S. Math After-School Activity

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Abstract: Scholars have increasingly argued that we need to attend to adolescents' race, ethnicity, and culture in after-school activities to ensure positive effects. Still, little is known about adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices in after-school activities (i.e., the use of diverse teaching practices, cultural engagement, and affirming diverse language preferences), including whether they are stable over time and beneficial to Latine adolescents, who are minoritized in U.S. society. Theoretically, culturally responsive practices are expected to help after-school activities meet adolescents' three basic needs as conceptualized by self-determination theory: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Findings based on 134 Latine adolescents (53% girls, M_{age} =11.74 years) participating in an after-school math enrichment activity suggest adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices in the activity were moderately stable from winter to spring. There were no significant differences in adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices based on gender or preferred language (i.e., English or Spanish), and significant positive associations emerged between adolescents' perceptions of diverse teaching practices and their feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness. This study offers insights for future theory development in the after-school field, particularly in the context of program quality, culturally responsive practices, and their implications for adolescent development and well-being.

Keywords: program quality, culturally responsive, after-school, extended education, self-determination theory, adolescents.

Introduction

Adolescents' math achievement is critical to many Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) jobs (Watt, 2017), which are projected to grow by more than 10% in the U.S. by 2032 (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2023). Thus, it is essential to consider the experiences of Latine[1] adolescents in the U.S. who often face numerous structural barriers, including discrimination and enrollment in under-resourced schools (De Garmo & Martinez, 2006; Eamon, 2005). After-school activities can serve as a structural resource that supports historically marginalized adolescents in STEM (Krishnamurthi et al., 2014) by meeting their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These three needs lay the foundation for

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1 Spanish speakers in the U.S. are currently using the term Latine (instead of Latino/a) to refer to people of Latin American origin or descent because it is a gender-neutral, non-binary term (Miranda et al., 2023).

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individuals' intrinsic motivation and have been shown to predict their math learning and motivation in a variety of contexts (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Indeed, participating in STEM after-school activities is linked positively with improved standardized math achievement and motivation (e.g., Faust & Kuperminc, 2020; Yu et al., 2022a).

Unfortunately, some Latine adolescents report experiencing discrimination, marginalization, and feeling misunderstood while participating in after-school activities (e.g., Ettekal et al., 2020). As such, scholars have increasingly argued that high-quality after-school activities need to attend to adolescents' race, ethnicity, and culture (e.g., Williams & Deutsch, 2016). Scholars posit that culturally responsive practices can help ensure that after-school activities are relevant, meaningful, and respectful of participants' diverse identities, thereby contributing to adolescents' positive development (Simpkins et al., 2017). Though several scholars have argued that culturally responsive practices are vital to fostering a more inclusive and engaging learning environment in classrooms over the last three decades (Ladson-Billings, 1995), little is known about these practices in after-school activities.

One important next step is to describe adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices and their associations with adolescents' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). This is a critical consideration given the growing racial and ethnic diversity in the U.S. (U.S. Census Bureau, n.d.) and the potential value of these practices in settings where Latine adolescents have been historically marginalized, such as math learning settings where they often lack feelings of competence and relatedness (Andersen & Ward 2014; Barbieri & Miller-Cotto, 2021). Thus, we examined (a) Latine middle school adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices among those who attend an after-school math enrichment activity, (b) the variability in their perceptions of culturally responsive practices over time and across groups, and (c) the associations between adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices and their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Culturally Responsive Practices in After-School Activities

Drawing on multiple theories including critical race theory, cultural wealth (e.g., Yosso, 2005) and social justice education (Adams et al., 2022), culturally responsive practices have historically emphasized creating inclusive formal learning environments and adapting teaching strategies in classrooms to be grounded within students' culturally diverse backgrounds and lives (Gay, 2000). As an extension of Ladson-Billings' seminal work on culturally relevant practices in classrooms (1995), culturally responsive practices aim to reduce educational inequities. Teachers' culturally responsive practices in classrooms include (a) using diverse teaching practices, (b) actively engaging students' cultures and backgrounds, and (c) affirming the value of cultural diversity, such as language preferences (Siwatu, 2007; Dickson, 2016). Culturally responsive practices in the classroom enhance students' academic achievement, foster a sense of belonging, and promote positive socio-emotional development (Gay, 2000).

Though scholars have begun to define the dimensions of culturally responsive practices in after-school activities (Simpkins et al., 2017), empirical research is rare. Qualitative studies

suggest that culturally responsive practices have the potential to make after-school activities more inclusive and supportive for marginalized adolescents. For example, diverse teaching practices in activities have helped promote Latine adolescents' math competence beliefs (Soto-Lara et al., 2021), and African American boys' cultural competence and pride (Stevenson, 2003). Cultural engagement (e.g., examining personal experiences of cultural marginalization) has helped Hmong immigrant adolescents build their sense of agency (Ngo, 2017), and was linked to African American adolescents' interest and engagement in STEM (Casler-Failing et al., 2021). Finally, centering adolescents' sociocultural assets, including their preferred language, is key to developing a sense of relatedness among English language learners and bilingual adolescents (Gast et al., 2017). These studies provide qualitative support that culturally responsive practices in after-school activities may help support the needs of diverse adolescents.

However, there are several limitations to the current research. For instance, the existing literature largely relies on qualitative data measured at a single point in time (e.g., Ngo, 2017). Quantitative data provides complementary information concerning generalizability and the extent to which adolescents' perceptions might vary (e.g., across time and groups), which have implications for activity design and implementation (e.g., how often these perceptions need to be assessed).

The Variability in Culturally Responsive Practices Across Time and Groups

Adolescents are active agents in their own development. The extent to which they think settings are supportive has implications for their development (Kataoka & Vandell, 2013). Thus, it is important to consider adolescents' perceptions of whether they believe an activity is culturally responsive and the extent to which their perceptions might vary across time and groups.

After-school activities often change over time due to high staff turnover and because they have the flexibility to change their programming to build on participants' interests. Such changes could prompt adolescents to think an activity is more or less responsive over time (i.e., mean level stability; Peterson, 2023). Adolescents could also shift in terms of their rank ordering, such as if adolescents who think an activity is not responsive might change their views more than others and rate it highly later on (i.e., rank order stability; Peterson, 2023). Previous research on activity quality found that adolescents' perceptions of activities evidenced small declines each year (Seitz et al., 2021), but that adolescents typically maintained their rank order in their perceptions of quality where those who rated an activity highly were likely to rate it highly two years later (Kataoka & Vandell, 2013). In addition to practical implications, these two central developmental processes have implications for theory and our understanding of development, such as whether adolescents attending the same activity experience it in similar or different ways (Peterson, 2023).

Testing group differences can help identify if some groups feel marginalized in an activity, or if they feel an activity is not responsive to them and their needs. Gender and language preferences are important to consider. For example, Latina adolescents exhibit lower math motivation than their Latino peers (Hsieh et al., 2021). Spanish-preferring Latine adolescents face many educational challenges (Ayala, 2022). Culturally responsive practices may help address educational inequities experienced by Latinas and those with diverse language

preferences. However, prior mixed-methods work suggests that Latine adolescents who were more oriented toward their Latine culture actually felt elevated *negative* emotions when they attended activities emphasizing Latine culture (Ettekal et al., 2020); qualitative data revealed that, despite good intentions, staff were not being responsive but rather based their practices on cultural stereotypes or what they *thought* the adolescents wanted to do. Thus, it is important to assess adolescents' perceptions of responsiveness and if there are groups that feel an activity is not responsive.

Adolescents' Basic Needs

Self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2020) suggests that how much autonomy, competence, and relatedness one feels in settings influences their learning and motivation. Autonomy refers to the need for self-direction and control. Competence involves the desire for effectiveness and mastery. Relatedness pertains to the need for social connection and belonging. According to this theory, satisfaction of these needs contributes to optimal functioning and well-being.

STEM after-school activities can foster adolescents' engagement, motivation, and learning by meeting their three basic needs (i. e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness). More specifically, promoting adolescents' sense of autonomy in activities was associated with higher levels of engagement and motivation (Faust & Kuperminc, 2020) and their sense of accountability and responsibility (Yu et al., 2022b). Supporting adolescents' competence needs in activities was associated with increased content knowledge and skills (Moreno et al., 2016) and increases in motivational beliefs (Yu et al., 2022a). Finally, participants sense of relatedness in STEM after-school activities was associated with social competencies, math and science efficacy and interest (Hoffman et al., 2021), and relatedness is a key predictor of participants' motivation and interpersonal competence (Mulvey et al., 2022). In sum, addressing adolescents' autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs in activities not only enhances their STEM motivation and engagement, but also cultivates skills and attitudes that are essential for their personal and academic development.

Adolescents are at a stage in life when developing a sense of independence and identity are central (i. e., autonomy). Also, they are engaged in learning and mastering new skills (i. e., competency). Finally, they have a strong need for social connections (i. e., relatedness). Consequently, structuring adolescents' experiences in ways that facilitate the formulation and internalization of these developmental lessons may be beneficial (Nagaoka et al., 2015). Moreover, early adolescence marks a critical developmental period for students' math motivational beliefs which, unfortunately, typically decline over time (e. g., Jacobs et al., 2002).

Culturally responsive practices can promote adolescents' three needs in several ways. First, diverse teaching practices that incorporate youth voice allow adolescents to have a say in their educational experiences, thereby promoting a sense of autonomy (Alley, 2019). Second, cultural engagement via (1) curricula reflective of students' cultures, backgrounds, and beliefs, and (2) facilitating connections between students' lives and the content being taught may promote feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Tan et al., 2021; Kumar et al., 2018). Finally, affirming diverse cultural practices signals to students that they are capable of success, thereby potentially boosting students' sense of agency (Zavala, 2014) and students are more likely to feel a sense of relatedness (Kumar et al., 2018).

Math CEO: The Activity Setting for the Present Study

Math CEO is an organized after-school activity developed in 2014 by math faculty at the University of California, Irvine (UCI) as a research-practice partnership. It serves as the focal activity for this study. Math CEO is an enrichment after-school activity where undergraduate students serve as mentors and work with students from local schools. Each year, Math CEO offers around 20 90-minute sessions that occur once per week on the university campus. During each weekly session, middle school students work with 6–10 peers from their school and 2–3 mentors on enriching, team-based math activities. As an example, to develop students skills using ratios, fractions, and percentages, one activity had students working together to manage a hotel, calculating profits, sales, and expenses.

During the year of this study, the 2018–2019 academic year, Math CEO served approximately 150 middle school students who attended three local middle schools that were low performing and under-resourced. The youth participants were roughly equally distributed among the three schools and were grouped by school into three separate locations at the university (so, all youth from School A were together in one room). At each school, math teachers invited a variety of students, resulting in a mix of students needing additional support in learning math and those seeking out opportunities for additional challenges in math. Because the activity serves students in grades 6–8, it is possible for students to attend for multiple years. Furthermore, although Math CEO was offered throughout the entire academic school year, some students dropped out during the year at which point the math teachers would try to recruit and bring new students to the activity. The demographics of the students who attend Math CEO are similar to the general school populations with approximately 98% of the students identifying as Latine, and over 90% were eligibile for free/reduced-price lunch.

Additionally, approximately 50 undergraduate students are recruited as mentors who serve as front-line staff for Math CEO at any one point in time. UCI uses a quarter system and the students either volunteer or sign up for course credit on a quarterly basis (i.e., fall, winter, and spring quarters). Because Math CEO is offered during all three academic quarters, many of the undergraduate students switch from quarter to quarter, resulting in more than 100 mentors across the entire academic year. To help support the mentors and ensure Math CEO maintains its high quality, mentors attend a weekly 120-minute training session prior to meeting with the youth participants. These weekly training sessions cover basic pedagogical practices (e.g., providing opportunities for students to reflect on their learning experiences), culturally responsive practices (e.g., strategies for making meaningful connections with the middle school students), and the math concepts that will be covered that week (e.g, proportionality, sets, geometry). Of the mentors who participated in Math CEO when the data were collected (i.e., winter and spring of 2019), approximately 58% of the mentors were Asian and/or Pacific Islander, 25% Latine, 20% White, and 5% other. Approximately 69% of the mentors were female, 45% received some form of federal student aid, and 38% were first-generation college students.

Research Aims

The purpose of this study was to examine Latine adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices at an after-school math enrichment activity. The following specific research aims guided our study:

1. Examine the changes in Latine adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices from winter to spring.
2. Test the differences in adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices based on gender and language preference.
3. Test the positive associations between Latine adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices in the winter and their three basic needs in spring.

Methods

Participants and Procedures

All of the middle school students attending Math CEO were recruited for this study, and 97% consented to participate in the study, resulting in a total of 146 participants. After excluding participants who did not identify as Latine, the resulting analytic sample included 134 adolescents (46% 6th grade, 34% 7th grade, 20% 8th grade; M_{age}=11.74, SD_{age}=.83; 53% girls, 1% other; 19% preferred a language other than English; 36% from School A, 45% from School B, 19% from School C). Students completed surveys during the activity in winter and spring of 2019, prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. By winter, most participants had attended the activity for three to five months. Though the survey was made available in both English and Spanish, all participants opted to complete the survey in English. The surveys took approximately 15 to 20 minutes to complete, and all participants received $5 as compensation for each survey completed. All study procedures were approved by the University of California, Irvine Institutional Review Board.

Measures

Culturally Responsive Practices

Adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices were measured with an adapted scale used in classrooms that has strong reliability and validity among diverse adolescents (e.g., Dickson et al., 2016; Byrd, 2016). The adapted measure (for the 14 items, see Table S1; 1=*Never*, 5=*Always*; α=.84 for both time points) assessed three subscales. First, diverse teaching practices measured perceptions of practices that incorporate participants' cultural knowledge, prior learning, and preferences, and which tailor learning environments to their cultural orientations (7 items, α=.84 [winter] and .74 [spring]). Second, cultural engagement measured perceptions of practices that equip participants with the necessary knowledge and skills to navigate mainstream culture and maintain their heritage culture (5 items, α=.83 and .87). Third, diverse language affirmation measured perceptions of practices that acknowledge

languages other than English (2 items, ρ^2=.42 and .40). We examined adolescents' overall perceptions and the three discrete dimensions.

Adolescents' Basic Needs

Adolescents reported their perceptions of their basic needs being met in the activity during spring of 2019 using an adapted self-determination theory scale that has been used in a variety of contexts with diverse populations and demonstrated good reliability and validity (e.g., Deci et al., 2001; Ilardi et al.,1993). The 12 items (1=*Never*, 7=*Always*) make up three discrete subscales: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (see Table S2). The autonomy subscale measured participants' feelings of independence (3 items, α=.74). The competence subscale measured participants' feelings of competence and mastery over the math material presented (4 items, α=.83). The relatedness subscale measured participants' sense of belonging (5 items, α=.88).

Background Information

Adolescents self-selected their gender (1=*female*, 2=*male*, & 3=*other*) and were asked four questions about which language they used in a range of settings (e.g., "What language do you usually speak at home?"; 1=*Only Another Language [like Spanish]*, 5=*Only English*; Norris et al., 1996). For analytic purposes, we averaged all four language items and created a dichotomous item where scores equal to or greater than 4 were coded as English-preferring students.

Covariates

To control for potential differences due to participants' grade in school (6th to 8th) and the school they attended in our third research question, we created two dichotomous indicators for grade level and two dichotomous indicators for school with 8th grade and School C as the reference groups. Additionally, to control for potential differences pertaining to adolescents' experience with Math CEO, first-year-status in the activity (1=*yes*, 0=*no*) was used as a covariate.

Plan of Analysis

All analyses were performed using SPSS version 29. To explore our first aim regarding continuity over time, we ran dependent *t*-tests to assess mean-level differences and bivariate correlations to examine rank-order stability. To explore our second aim regarding group differences, we ran repeated measures ANOVAs and assessed mean-level differences between adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices based on their gender and preferred language. To explore our third aim regarding the correlates, we used multiple regression to test relations between adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices in winter and their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs in spring, controlling for grade level, school attended, and first-year-status in the activity.

2 Despite the low Spearman-Brown ρ, we have chosen to retain the scale items for both practical and theoretical reasons: (1) exploratory factor analyses revealed a three-factor structure best fit the data ($\chi2(297)$=551.582, *p*=0.00; CFI=0.823, RMSEA=.082 (90% CI: 0.072–0.093),and SRMR=.066) and the removal of these two items would decrease the α for the composite scale in spring, and (2) adolescents' language preferences represent a distinct theoretical construct within culturally responsive practices that was especially important given our sample population.

Missing Data

Missing data ranged from 2.7% to 29.5%. We compared the 95 participants with complete data to the 39 participants who were missing some data (Table S3). None of the 16 comparisons were statistically significant and none of the effect sizes met the threshold of a small effect size. To account for missing data, we employed multiple imputation (Enders, 2010). Using all of the available variables in the data set at all time points, 30 imputated datasets were estimated and used. Reported findings reflect the pooled results.

Results

For our first research aim, dependent *t*-tests revealed significant increases in adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices overall ($t(244)=2.022$, $p=.044$, $d=.211$), as well as on the cultural engagement subscale ($t(309)=2.620$, $p=.009$, $d=.267$). There were no significant changes over time in adolescents' perceptions of diverse teaching practices ($t(531)=1.698$, $p=.09$, $d=.164$) nor diverse language affirmation ($t(294)=.107$, $p=.915$, $d=.013$). Bivariate correlations evidenced positive moderate associations suggesting adolescents generally maintained their relative standing compared to their peers over time ($r=.393$ to .534, *p*s<.01, see Table 1). That is, adolescents who rated culturally responsive practices highly in winter were moderately likely to rate them highly again in spring. Taken together, these results suggest that even though there were increases in some perceptions of culturally responsive practices, other perceptions were stable, thus highlighting the complexity of these practices over time.

For our second research aim, independent samples *t*-tests using the composite measure of adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices revealed significant differences based on their gender in winter ($t(419)=2.064$, $p=.040$) but not in spring ($t(546)=0.810$, $p=.419$). No significant differences were found based on language preference in winter or spring ($t(465)=0.421$, $p=.674$ and $t(263)=1.748$, $p=.082$).[3] Using the three subscales, winter diverse teaching practices revealed significant differences based on gender ($t(663)=2.245$, $p=.025$), however no significant differences were found across other comparisons based on gender (diverse teaching practices in spring: $t(569)=0.662$, $p=.508$; cultural engagement: $t(2688)=1.419$, $p=.156$ and $t(767)=0.767$, $p=.443$; diverse language affirmation: $t(1304)=1.275$, $p=.203$ and $t(484)=0.923$, $p=.356$) or language preference (diverse teaching practices: $t(1542)=0.686$, $p=.493$ and $t(215)=1.334$, $p=.184$; cultural engagement: $t(5668)=0.250$, $p=.803$ and $t(324)=1.714$, $p=.087$; diverse language affirmation: $t(2840)=-0.269$, $p=.788$ and $t(594)=0.388$, $p=.698$).

For our third research aim, multiple regression analyses controlling for grade level, school attended, and first-year-status at Math CEO indicated adolescents' perceptions of overall culturally responsive practices in winter were positively associated with their perceptions of all three of their basic needs in spring (i.e., autonomy $\beta=.515$, $p<.001$; com-

3 Repeated measures ANOVA tests yielded similar results, however SPSS does not provide pooled results in the output. Thus, given our use of multiple imputation, we are presenting the pooled results from independent *t*-tests using the same variables.

petence, β=.604, p<.001; and relatedness, β=.527, p<.001; see Table 2)[4]. Of the three subscales, only adolescents' perceptions of diverse teaching practices were significantly positively associated with their perceptions of autonomy (β=.711, p<.001), competence (β=.815, p<.001), and relatedness (β=.733, p<.001). Cultural engagement and diverse language affirmation were not statistically significantly associated with adolescents' perceptions of any of the three basic needs.

Discussion

In this study, we examined Latine adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices in an after-school math enrichment activity, differences across time and groups, and their associations with the three basic psychological needs as conceptualized by self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000). We found that, on average, the stability of adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices varied across the dimensions of cultural responsiveness. With one exception (diverse teaching practices in winter based on gender) there were no significant mean-level differences based on gender or preferred language. Finally, adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices overall and, more specifically, diverse teaching practices, were positively associated with adolescents feeling all three basic needs (i.e., autonomy, competence, and relatedness) were being met. These findings contribute to the nascent literature on culturally responsive practices in promoting positive experiences and outcomes for historically marginalized adolescents in after-school activities.

Our findings reveal some Latine adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices changed from winter to spring whereas others were more stable. These findings are consistent with previous studies that have reported positive correlations between adolescents' perceptions of quality in after-school activities over a two-year period (Kataoka & Vandell, 2013) and extends the existing work on culturally responsive practices, which to our knowledge have not been studied over time. Importantly, mentors at the activity in this study are undergraduate students and many changed between winter and spring. Though this introduces significant instability, the mentors received weekly training in culturally responsive practices, such as information on strategies to make meaningful connections with the middle school students. The stability in adolescents' perceptions suggest that the mentors were successful in creating a supportive and inclusive environment despite changes in mentors from winter to spring. Additionally, the positive correlations between adolescents' ratings of culturally responsive practices at both time points indicate rank-order stability, suggesting that individual differences among adolescents in their perceptions of culturally responsive practices were moderately stable over time (Peterson, 2023). Importantly, although our findings suggest adolescents' perceptions of culturaly responsive practices are relatively stable across two seasons, it will be important to test stability over longer periods of time.

In exploring our second research aim, with the exception of winter diverse teaching practices based on gender, we did not find significant differences in adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices based on gender or preferred language. One interpretation of these mostly null findings is that all participants, regardless of gender or language preference,

4 R^2 = .147-.396

shared similar perceptions of culturally responsive practices, with average means above 2.7 indicating that culturally responsive practices were at least sometimes perceived (i.e., diverse language affirmation), if not nearly always perceived (i.e., diverse teaching practices; see Table 1). In other words, it is possible that the consistency among participants' perceptions means the activity successfully implemented inclusive and accessible practices for diverse adolescents, regardless of their demographic characteristics, suggesting that no particular group of students based on gender and preferred language felt the activity was unresponsive. Another interpretation of these null findings is that the lack of statistical significance may have resulted from data collection issues such as social desirability bias, insufficiently sensitive measures, or unidentified confounding variables. For example, it is possible that students responded in ways they believed were socially acceptable or expected rather than providing genuine reflections on their experiences. Additionally, the measure used to assess adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices may not have been sensitive enough to capture nuanced differences between groups. Finally, unidentified confounding variables, such as varying levels of exposure to culturally responsive practices or differences in personal experiences that were not accounted for in the study could have obscured meaningful differences.

Findings from our third research aim revealed adolescents' overall perceptions of culturally responsive practices, specifically their perceptions of diverse teaching practices, were positively associated with feeling like their basic psychological needs were met months later. This aligns with previous research linking diverse teaching practices to adolescents' feelings of autonomy (Alley, 2019). It also adds to the literature by suggesting diverse teaching practices might also meet adolescents' needs for competence and relatedness. These results highlight the importance of tailoring instructional strategies to match adolescents' learning preferences and cultural backgrounds. That said, cultural engagement and diverse language affirmation were not directly associated with adolescents' needs. This may be due to the fact that, at the time of this study, the primary focus of the weekly mentor training sessions was diverse teaching practices.

Taken together, these findings have several implications for theory, research, and practice. Firstly, our study contributes to the literature on after-school activities by highlighting the potential importance of culturally responsive practices in activities for Latine adolescents. By maintaining stable and inclusive environments, after-school activities can support the academic and socioemotional development of historically marginalized adolescents (Byrd, 2016). Additionally, our findings underscore the need for future research to also identify the specific mechanisms, such as satisfaction of basic needs, through which culturally responsive practices may influence adolescents' adjustment (e.g., Yu et al., 2022a). Future studies could explore how different components of culturally responsive practices in activities contribute to adolescents' sense of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

From a practical standpoint, our findings and the work of others suggest that it might be worthwhile for activity staff to consider implementation of diverse teaching practices that are centered in students' cultural backgrounds, knowledge, and learning preferences. By doing so, activites can create more inclusive and supportive environments that foster positive experiences for all participants (Alley, 2019). Additionally, our study highlights the importance of ongoing assessment and evaluation of culturally responsive practices to ensure that activities continue to be responsive to the diverse student populations they serve.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although this study contributes to our understanding of culturally responsive practices in after-school activities, certain limitations warrant consideration. Firstly, our sample may include participants with diverse motivations for attending the after-school activity (i.e., those needing additional support in learning math as well as those seeking opportunities for additional challenges in math). Though we controlled for some differences among participants with the covariates, differences among adolescents in terms of motivation for participation and math abilities may have confounded the results, making it difficult to determine whether observed effects are due to the program itself or the inherent differences among adolescents. Secondly, although adolescents are the only ones who can report if an activity is responsive to them, self-report measures can introduce bias. Complementary data, such as observations on diverse teaching practices, would be helpful in determining which specific practices are helpful or engaging to participants. Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, the only validated quantitative measure available to assess participants' perceptions of culturally responsive practices is the Student Measure of Culturally Responsive Teaching (SMCRT; Dickson et al., 2016), originally designed for classrooms, which we adapted for after-school activities. Despite some similarities between after-school and classroom settings, the literature clearly identifies after-school activities as unique developmental contexts (Witt & Caldwell, 2018) and scholars have emphasized the importance of additional dimensions beyond those measured in the SMCRT (e.g., Simpkins et al., 2017). As such, we need to continue to refine our understanding of culturally responsive practices in activities and should consider additional factors. It is also possible that the low reliability of the two-item diverse language affirmation subscale impacted our findings. Finally, due to our reliance on a small sample of voluntary Latine adolescent participants at a single after-school activity, potential selection effects may have influenced the results. Larger studies should examine the generalizability of these findings across different activities and populations.

Conclusion

The present study has practical and theoretical implications for after-school activity practitioners and researchers. First, this study contributes to our understanding of adolescents' perceptions of culturally responsive practices in activities and whether these perceptions vary across time and key groups. Second, as the first study to establish quantitative links between culturally responsive practices and adolescents' basic psychological needs, our findings contribute to the limited body of quantitative research on culturally responsive practices. Overall, this study underscores the potential for integrating culturally responsive practices in after-school activities, highlighting their associations with adolescents' positive outcomes by addressing basic psychological needs and enhancing overall experiences in these settings.

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Table 1. Correlations Among Perceptions of Winter and Spring Culturally Responsive Practices and Spring Basic Needs

Measure	*M*	*SD*	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Winter													
1. Culturally Responsive Practices (Composite)	3.67	0.67											
2. Diverse Teaching Practices	4.29	0.63	.647***										
3. Cultural Engagement	3.16	1.05	.719***	.348***									
4. Diverse Language Affirmation	2.74	1.14	.564***	.291***	.425***								
Spring													
5. Culturally Responsive Practices (Composite)	3.53	0.62	.481***	.382***	.421***	.342***							
6. Diverse Teaching Practices	2.99	0.59	.397***	.498***	.197	.235*	.519***						
7. Cultural Engagement	4.18	0.97	.470***	.233***	.534***	.258**	.585***	.285***					
8. Diverse Language Affirmation	3.15	1.11	.236***	.097	.193*	.393***	.443***	.209*	.310***				
9. Autonomy	5.95	1.12	.353***	.519***	.150	.208*	.163	.300**	.057	.040			
10. Competence	5.75	1.18	.348***	.520***	.125	.170	.181	.300**	.067	.039	.693***		
11. Relatedness	6.05	1.09	.399***	.540***	.228**	.144	.168	.292**	.102	-.084	.682***	.680***	

Note. * Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level. ** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level. *** Correlation is significant at the 0.001 level.

Table 2. Unstandardized Coefficients for Adolescents' Spring Basic Needs Predicted by Winter Culturally Responsive Practices Controlling for Grade in School, School Attended, and First-Year-Status in the Program

	Basic Needs Predicted by Culturally Responsive Practices Overall			**Basic Needs Predicted by Culturally Responsive Practices Sub Scales**		
	Autonomy[a] B(SE)	Competence[b] B(SE)	Relatedness[c] B(SE)	Autonomy[d] B(SE)	Competence[e] B(SE)	Relatedness[f] B(SE)
Culturally Responsive Practices (Composite)	**.515*** (.140)**	**.604*** (.146)**	**.527*** (.145)**			
Diverse Teaching Practices				**.711*** (.164)**	**.815*** (.181)**	**.733*** (.160)**
Cultural Engagement				-.007 (.110)	-.032 (.111)	-.048 (.105)
Diverse Language Affirmation				.054 (.098)	.099 (.098)	.086 (.093)
6th grade	-.443 (.350)	-.185 (.360)	-.383 (.333)	-.525 (.341)	-.270 (.342)	-.460 (.333)
7th grade	-.024 (.285)	.149 (.293)	.157 (.272)	-.043 (.276)	.125 (.272)	.131 (.255)
School A	-.907** (.308)	-.804** (0.301)	-1.001*** (.283)	-.692* (.311)	-.574 (.316)	-.782** (.299)
School B	-.619* (.303)	-.502 (.322)	-.704* (.287)	-.584 (.301)	-.479 (.320)	-.674* (.291)
First Year in program	.545 (.265)	.645 (.269)	.581* (.244)	.575* (.257)	.669** (.257)	.605** (.233)
Constant	4.493*** (.595)	3.639*** (.629)	4.504*** (.619)	3.117*** (.700)	4.504*** (.619)	3.105*** (.671)

Note. 8th grade and School C are the omitted groups. Standard errors are in parentheses. *$p<0.05$. **$p<0.01$. ***$p<0.001$.
[a] R^2 = .147-.323. [b] R^2 = .170-.374. [c] R^2 = .176-.396. [d] R^2 = .219-.426. [e] R^2 = .251-.503. [f] R^2 = .256-.529.

Supplemental Material

Table S1. Student Measure of Culturally Responsive Teaching (Dickson et al., 2016)

Subscale	Scale Item
Diverse Teaching Practices	1. Explain to me what we are learning in different ways to help me learn
	5. Provide me with visual examples (like pictures) when explaining things
	9. Want students from different cultures to respect one another
	10. Use what I already know to help me understand new ideas
	11. Treat all students like they are important members of [activity name]
	12. Try to find out what interests me
	13. Use real-life examples to help explain things
Cultural Engagement	2. Use examples from my culture when teaching
	3. Ask about my school or home life
	4. Are interested in my culture
	6. Speak about contributions that my culture has made to Science, Technology, Engineering and Math
	8. Help me learn about other people and their cultures
Diverse Language Affirmation	7. Have spoken to me or to other students who speak another language (for example Spanish)
	14. Allow students to speak another language (for example Spanish) at times during [program name] sessions

Note. The question stem was "[Program name] mentors and adults…". Scoring was as follows: 1=*Never*,2,3=*Sometimes*,4,5=*Always.*

Table S2. Basic Need Satisfaction in Relationships Scale (La Guardia et al., 2000)

Subscale	Scale Item
Autonomy	I am free to decide for myself at [activity name]
	I generally feel free to express my ideas and opinions at [activity name]
	I feel like I can pretty much be myself at [activity name]
Competence	I feel very smart at [activity name]
	I have been able to learn interesting new skills at [activity name]
	Most days I feel a sense of accomplishment from what I do at [activity name]
	In [activity name] I have a chance to show how capable I am
Relatedness	I really like the people I interact with at [activity name]
	I get along with people I come into contact with at [activity name]
	People at [activity name] care about me
	People are generally pretty friendly towards me at [activity name]
	I feel that there are many people I am close to at [activity name]

Note. Scoring was as follows: 1=*Never*, 2, 3, 4=*Sometimes*, 5, 6, 7=*Always.*

Table S3. Comparisons Between Sample with Complete Data and with Some Missing Data From the Entire Analytic Sample

	Sample with complete data			Sample with missing data			Effect Size
	n	*M*	*SD*	*n*	*M*	*SD*	
Gender	95	1.49	0.52	132	1.47	0.52	<0.01†
Grade	95	2.11	0.91	134	2.13	0.89	<0.01†
School	95	1.88	0.77	134	1.84	0.73	<0.01†
First Year in Math CEO	95	1.35	0.48	134	1.34	0.48	<0.01†
Preferred Language	95	0.24	0.43	134	0.22	0.42	<0.01†
Winter Culturally Responsive Practices	95	4.29	0.63	112	4.3	0.63	0.00‡
Winter Diverse Teaching Practices	95	2.97	1.03	112	2.99	1.05	0.02‡
Winter Cultural Engagement	95	3.19	1.15	112	3.16	1.14	0.03‡
Winter Diverse Language Affirmation	95	3.66	0.67	112	3.67	0.68	0.01‡
Spring Culturally Responsive Practices	95	4.24	0.56	100	4.2	0.59	0.06‡
Spring Diverse Teaching Practices	95	2.76	0.99	100	2.73	0.97	0.03‡
Spring Cultural Engagement	95	3.13	1.12	100	3.16	1.11	0.02‡
Spring Diverse Language Affirmation	95	3.55	0.62	100	3.53	0.62	0.04‡
Spring Autonomy	95	6.00	1.09	100	5.95	1.12	0.05‡
Spring Competence	95	5.81	1.13	100	5.75	1.18	0.05‡
Spring Relatedness	95	6.12	1.01	100	6.05	1.09	0.07‡

Note. † indicates phi. ‡ indicates Cohen's *d*. Convention for phi: small = .1, medium = .3, large = .5. Convention for Cohen's *d:* small = .2, medium = .5, large = .8.

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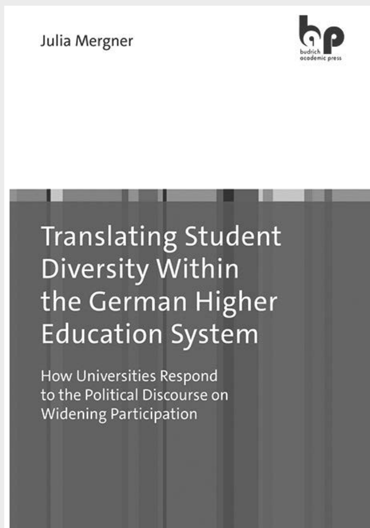

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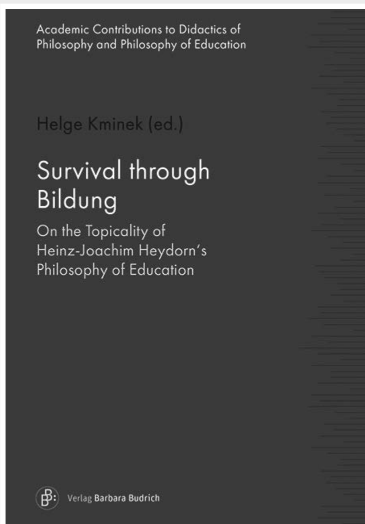

Helge Kminek (ed.)

Survival through Bildung

On the Topicality of
Heinz-Joachim Heydorn's
Philosophy of Education

Wissenschaftliche Beiträge zur Philosophiedidaktik und Bildungsphilosophie, Bd. 8
2024 • 162 pp. • Pb. • 44,00 € (D) • 45,50 € (A)
ISBN 978-3-8474-2480-2 • eISBN 978-3-8474-1624-1 (Open Access)

The central reference point of the volume is Heinz-Joachim Heydorn's essay “Survival Through Bildung – Outline of a prospect” (1974), which was translated into English and subsequently made available to a broad public for the first time. Despite the time gap of almost 50 years, Heydorn's text is fascinating, because the survival of humanity – at least a qualitatively substantial survival of humanity – seems extremely questionable today. Researchers with different theoretical perspectives question the text on its contemporary content and put their interpretations up for discussion.

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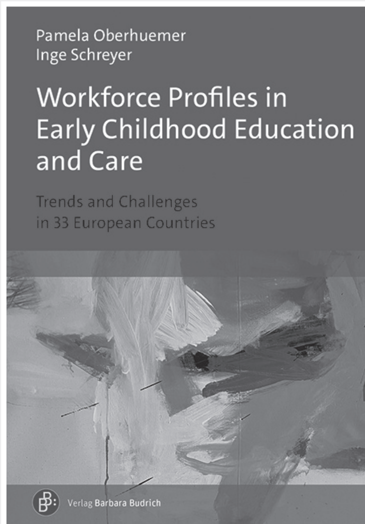

Pamela Oberhuemer
Inge Schreyer

Workforce Profiles in Early Childhood Education and Care

Trends and Challenges in 33 European Countries

2024 • 157 pp. • Pb. • 26,00 € (D) • 26,80 € (A)
ISBN 978-3-8474-3071-1 • eISBN 978-3-8474-3205-0

This book offers a systematic insight into the development of early childhood professionals in Europe. What are the requirements in terms of qualifications? What do career paths look like? What characterises the respective working contexts? What political initiatives are being taken? What challenges are there? These questions were analysed as part of a three-year research project in 33 countries. The book summarises the key findings and presents cross-national comparisons of selected aspects in the context of the differently structured systems of early childhood education and care.

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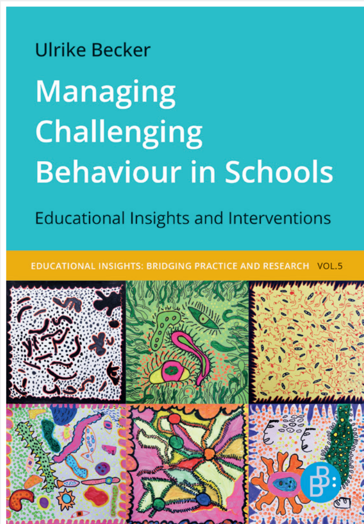

Ulrike Becker

Managing Challenging Behaviour in Schools

Educational Insights and Interventions

Educational Insights: Bridging Practice and Research, Vol. 5
2025 • 113 pp. • Pb. • 26,90 € (D) • 27,70 € (A)
ISBN 978-3-8474-3107-7 • eISBN 978-3-8474-3241-8

Challenging behaviour of children and adolescents in everyday school life is often a sign of the difficult life situations in which they grow up. For teachers and educational professionals, dealing with the resulting conflicts is the biggest challenge. This book presents approaches and solutions for understanding and acting in difficult educational situations at school. In addition, an inclusive support approach offers impulses for school development to prevent challenging behaviour.

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