Educational leadership and the contribution of the technical pedagogical head across three types of schools in one Chilean region.

Marcela Huerta Villalobos

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The University of Melbourne

ABSTRACT

The Chilean school administration system has different actors playing important roles in leadership and school improvement, one clear example being the technical pedagogical head, hereafter referred as TPH, a school middle manager who is in charge of planning, organising, supervising and evaluating curricular and management activities, and who is also responsible for advising the school principal. The TPH must hold a teaching degree; and given their several responsibilities at school, they should have training and experience in planning, orientation, evaluation and curriculum as well as in-depth knowledge of the school itself.

This research investigated the perceptions of the role of the TPH in six selected public and private Chilean schools in the cities of Coquimbo and La Serena. Using a qualitative approach guided by hermeneutic phenomenology with the phenomenon of TPH as a central focus of exploration, the study gathered views from 71 people: 7 technical pedagogical heads, 6 principals, 4 level coordinators, 4 general inspectors, 3 school counsellors, 1 school integration program coordinator and a total of 46 members of teaching staff.

This study found that the TPH contributes significantly to improving teachers' practice and provides positive outcomes for schools when their role is focused on curriculum development and implementation. However, the role of the TPH needs to be well defined by school authorities if TPHs are to positively impact school improvement. Finally, a productive relationship between school leaders, teachers and TPHs is essential for school improvement.

More studies about the TPH role are required because of their high level of influence within schools in Chile, and their importance as an example of middle-level leadership in schools.

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

This is to certify that:

(i) The thesis comprises only my original work towards the degree of Doctor of Philosophy,

(ii) Due acknowledgement has been made in the text to all other material used,

(iii) The thesis is less than 100,000 words in length, inclusive of footnotes, but exclusive of

tables, maps, bibliographies and appendices.

Signed:

Marcela Huerta Villalobos

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

Table 5.1:

Comparison of required qualities and behavioural competencies of a TPH.

Table 5.2:

The most important features of the role of the TPH.

Table 5.3:

Respondents' view of the most important features of the role of the TPH.

Table 5.4:

Updated TPH's Competencies Profile.

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The research is an investigation of the educational leadership and the contribution to the school of the technical pedagogical head (TPH) in Chilean schools. The TPH is a professional who must hold a teaching degree and whose main responsibilities are planning, organisation, supervision and evaluation of curricular activities at school, and who is also in charge of advising the school principal (Fundacion Chile, 2006).

A broad qualitative approach was used for the study which involved an exploration into the perceptions of school members from six different Chilean school concerning the work of the TPH. Pseudonyms for the schools and participants were used.

1.2 Significance of the research

Despite the attempts of two studies in the past decade, the role and function of the TPH still remains under researched. Carbone, Olguin, Ostoic, Ugalde and Sepulveda (2008), identified important differences in typical leadership practices between the TPHs of high and low performance schools, which could affect school improvement in a positive or negative manner. According to Horn and Marfan (2010) more studies about the TPHs' role are required since it has given a high level of influence within schools. Therefore, there is a need both to draw upon what is already known about TPHs, and to extend our understanding of it.

In fact, the notion of the TPH is an emerging concept worthy of more detailed investigation. It is of interest therefore to examine the role of the TPH more closely from the viewpoint of practise at the school level and to compare perceptions of this role, from the perspectives of those who are involved with a TPH.

1.3 Background summary

Chile is a long, narrow country stretching along South America's western edge, with 4,300km of Pacific Ocean coastline. As of 1 January 2017, the population of Chile was estimated to be 18,197,209 people (Country meters 2017). Santiago, its capital, sits in a valley surrounded by

the Andes and Chilean Coast Range mountains. This country has three main zones, northern, central and southern territory, with a total of fifteen different regions.

In the northern part of Chile, the IV region of Coquimbo is located where this research took place. According to the Censo (2002), this region has about 297,253 inhabitants, and the most populated cities are Coquimbo and La Serena.

In Chile, education begins with preschool until the age of five. Primary school is provided for children between ages 6 and 13. Students then attend secondary school until graduation at age 17. Secondary education is divided into two parts: During the first two years, students receive a general education. Then, they choose a branch: scientific humanistic education, artistic education, or technical and professional education. Secondary school ends two years later on the acquirement of a certificate (Licencia de Enseñanza Media).

According to UNESCO- UNEVOC (2015), Chilean education is segregated by wealth in a three-tiered system; the quality of the schools reflects socioeconomic backgrounds:

- Public schools (colegios municipales) that are mostly free and have the lowest education results, mostly attended by students from low income families;

- Subsidised schools that receive some money from the government which can be supplemented by fees paid by the student's family, which are attended by students from mid-income families and typically get mid-level results; and

- Private schools that consistently get the best results. Many private schools charge high attendance fees of 0.5 to 1 times the median household income.

This research incorporated the participation of these three types of schools, with three schools from La Serena city, two from Coquimbo city and one from the small village called Guanaqueros.

1.4 Research Question

Research question:

What is the role and impact of the technical pedagogical head in three types of schools in the Chilean education system?

1.5 Methodology

This research used a qualitative approach guided by hermeneutic phenomenology with the phenomenon of the TPH as a central focus of investigation. Therefore, a theoretical framework was not used to conduct this study. This method allowed the participants to communicate their understanding of the phenomenon under examination and to elaborate a description from this.

1.6 Outline of the thesis

This thesis has five chapters. Chapter one provides the introduction, context, purpose and significance of the study. In addition, it outlines important aspects of the research, such as research questions, methodology, and the theoretical framework. Chapter two presents a review of existing literature in three main areas related to this study: educational leadership and school improvement in the Chilean context, and the role of TPH. The results of the analysis of the interviews are presented in chapter four, and chapter five provides discussion of the findings and their implications, including additional research directions.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2. Introduction

This chapter explores literature relevant to researching the role and impact of the Technical pedagogical head in three types of schools in the Chilean education system.

The first section outlines a general view of educational leadership to then provide a historical overview of the study of school leadership in Chile. It explores both past and present government initiatives relating to school leadership and the existing research evidence in relation to the impact of school leaders in Chile. The second section provides a review centred on school improvement, with an emphasis on the Chilean case. Finally, the closing sections focus on the Chilean reality, explaining the types of school leaders in Chile and providing a clearer definition of the Technical pedagogical head, and their role and impact.

A) Section I

2.1 Educational leadership: a general view

The research on school leadership is extensive due to it being an education policy priority around the world (Pont, Nusche & Moorman, 2008). According to Caldwell (2006, p. 6), educational leadership is "a process for establishing direction, aligning people, motivating, inspiring, and achieving change". This definition could be applied to most leadership situations regardless of whether they are in educational contexts or not.

In a decade-long search for a way to describe successful school leadership, Leithwood and colleagues began with a definition that included three elements similar to Caldwell's: setting direction, developing people and managing change (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). In later writing (e.g. Leithwood, Harris & Hopkins, 2008) the description was expanded to include a dimension particular to education, improving teaching and learning. This then provided a concise way to begin thinking about educational leadership including the aforementioned areas.

Whilst the four elements of Leithwood's view have become an important way to think about educational leadership, during the past thirty-five years, two conceptual models have been dominant: instructional and transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood & Sun,

2012). Both models have been extensively supported through a number of empirical studies and in contrast to earlier models, attention is focused explicitly "on the manner in which the *educational* leadership exercised by school administrators and teachers brings about improved educational outcomes" (Hallinger, 2003, p. 329).

According to Gurr, Drysdale and Mulford (2010, p. 301), "the concept of instructional leadership has had a long history". For instance, in some countries such as England or Australia "its origins can be traced back to the 19th century" (Gorton, 1976). By the 1980s, as indicated by Hallinger (2003), educational leadership studies were dominated by the conceptualization of instructional leadership. This literature "promoted the view that effective supervision of instruction could improve the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom" (Gurr et al., 2010, p. 301).

During the restructuring of the schools of North America in the 1990s, terms such as shared leadership, teacher leadership and distributed leadership began to appear among scholars and practitioners. It was partially caused by a general dissatisfaction with the instructional leadership model, which focused on leaders as the centre of knowledge and authority (Hallinger, 2003). Thus, Leithwood and Sun (2012) argued that transformational leadership was a model which starts by promoting the values and aspirations of leaders and followers.

According to Leithwood and Sun (2012, p.338), transformational theories emphasize that when provided with adequate support, staff members become highly involved and motivated by goals that inspire them. Usually these goals are linked with the values that followers "strongly believe—or are persuaded to strongly believe". Additionally, Hattie (2011) includes the idea that transformational leaders motivate their followers with a vision that promotes collaborative work towards a common good.

Hallinger (2003) points out that instructional and transformational leadership models started to be combined with top-down and bottom-up approaches. Thus, educational leadership began to be considered a better term. For instance, the term "instructional leadership" is seldom used in Australia since "educational leadership" generally provides a clear difference from former concepts (Gurr et al., 2010). In the following segment, a brief overview of these

important models of educational leadership will be presented to complete a general idea of the term.

2.1.1 Instructional leadership

The development of instructional leadership models began in the early 1980s after a number of studies examined features of effective schools (Hallinger, 2003). One of the first researchers to describe this type of leadership was Ronald Edmond (1979), who identified strong, directive leadership focused on curriculum and instruction from the principal as a characteristic of elementary schools that were effective at teaching children in poor urban communities, where students succeeded despite the probability of failure.

Consequently, several important models of instructional leadership were offered during the 1980s (Andrews & Soder, 1987; Bossert, Dwyer, Rowan & Lee, 1982; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood, Begley & Cousins, 1990). Murphy (1990) brought this together in an enduring definition that included: developing missions and goals; managing the educational production function; promoting an academic learning climate; and, developing a supportive work environment. It is a definition that encapsulated the earlier work of Hallinger and Murphy (1985), and which has been subsequently developed further by Hallinger and others (e.g. Hallinger & Heck, 1996a) to the point that Hallinger claimed in 2008 that it was the view most frequently used in empirical investigations.

New conceptual models in the field of educational leadership, such as the instructional model, focus explicitly on the manner in which the educational leadership exercised by school administrators and teachers brings about enhanced educational results (e.g. Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Southworth, 2002). Hallinger (2000) defines the instructional leadership of the principal in three main dimensions: defining the goals, managing the instructional program and promoting school climate. The first dimension is represented by two elements: (i) developing and (ii) clarifying school goals. The second dimension has three elements: (i) supervising and evaluating teaching, (ii) coordinating the curriculum, and (iii) monitoring the progress of students. Finally, the third dimension of promoting school climate has five elements: (i) preserving teaching time, (ii) being visible as a leader, (iii) providing incentives for teachers, (iv) promoting professional development and (v) providing incentives for

students to learn. All in all, this serves as a comprehensive definition that still has relevance more than ten years later.

According to Gurr et al. (2010), the greatest interest in instructional leadership was in North America during the 1980s when the role of principals was focused on instruction. Later in the 1990s it waned somewhat as transformational leadership gained dominance (Ingvarson, Anderson, Gronn & Jackson, 2006). However, recent emphasis on the importance of student outcomes has seen renewed interest in this concept of instructional leadership (Robinson, Lloyd & Rowe, 2008).

For Leithwood and Duke (1999) instructional leaders usually focus on the behaviours of teachers since they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students. According to Hallinger (2003, p. 337), the instructional leadership model is distinguished by a "top-down approach… emphasizing the principal's coordination and control of instruction".

Recent research by Robinson et al. (2008) has shown that the quality of student outcomes is one of the most significant results of instructional leadership. In fact, "the average effect of instructional leadership on student outcomes was three to four times that of transformational leadership" (Robinson, et al., 2008, p. 637), as instructional leadership is more focused on the pedagogical responsibilities of school leaders than on the relationship between leaders and followers.

Instructional leadership has been understood to be concerned with leading teachers' professional learning and this has usually been seen as being a role for the principal (Ingvarson et al., 2006). Nonetheless, important studies have confirmed that instructional leadership is not necessarily confined to principals, for example, Southworth (2002, p.74) says that research about principals needs to be accompanied by "studies into deputy headship and other leaders. Sadly, there has been too little empirical work on school leadership at other levels". Similarly, Bolivar (2010) indicates that bureaucratic management at current school centres is not enough, because ensuring learning success for students is absolutely necessary, and responsibility for learning cannot be placed only on teachers or solely on principals. In fact, school leadership includes people occupying various roles and functions such as principals, deputy and assistant principals, leadership teams, school governing boards and

school-level staff involved in leadership tasks, each one contributes to school success (Pont, et al., 2008).

Although there is renewed interest in instructional leadership, the transformational leadership view remains important as it is a view of educational leadership that helps us to understand how school leaders might work with staff to encourage them and help them to develop professionally. Indeed, it is an essential component of a modern view of instructional leadership (Huerta-Villalobos, 2014).

2.1.2 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership has been extensively discussed as a central concept by educational researchers. Hallinger (2003) explains how scholars during the 1990s, began to popularise this term in North America, in response to discontent with the instructional leadership model, which focused exclusively on the principal as the centre of expertise, power and authority.

Transformational leadership was originally expounded as a theory in the general leadership literature throughout the 1970s and 1980s (e.g. Bass & Avolio, 1997; Howell & Avolio, 1993). The idea of this model was proposed by Burns (1978, p.20) in that it is hypothesized to occur when leaders and followers unite in pursuit of higher order common goals, when "one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality". Bass and Avolio (1996, p.11) described transformational leadership as:

> A process in which the leaders take actions to increase their associates' awareness of what is right and important, to raise their associates' motivational maturity and to move their associates to go beyond their associates' own self-interests for the good of the group, organisation, or society. Such leaders provide their associates with a sense of purpose that goes beyond a simple exchange of rewards for effort provided. The transformational leaders are proactive in many different and unique ways.

Leithwood and his colleagues have developed the most relevant adaptation of Bass' work on transformational leadership for education. This model has been subjected to rigorous

investigation over the past decade (e.g. Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Silins & Mulford, 2002). In one version (Leithwood, 1998) there are seven components: individualised support, shared goals, vision, intellectual stimulation, culture building, rewards, and high expectations and modelling. This model begins from behavioural components such as individualised support, intellectual stimulation, and personal vision which suggest that the model is grounded in understanding the needs of individual staff instead of "coordinating and controlling" them towards the organisation's desired ends. In this sense the model seeks to influence people by building from the bottom-up rather than from the top down.

More recently, Leithwood and Sun (Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Sun & Leithwood, 2012) developed the latest model of transformational leadership which includes five dimensions (Leithwood & Sun, 2012).

1. Setting directions, comprising two leadership practices of developing a shared vision and building goal consensus, and holding high performance expectations.

2. Developing people, comprising three leadership practices of providing individualised support, providing intellectual stimulation and modelling valued behaviours, beliefs and values.

3. Redesigning the organisation, comprising the three leadership practices of strengthening school culture, building structures to enable collaboration and engaging parents and the wider community.

4. Improving the instructional program, comprising one leadership practice of focusing on instructional development. This dimension has considerable overlap with instructional leadership.

5. Related practices, comprising two leadership practices of contingent reward and management by exception (active, passive, total). These two practices in this dimension reflects traditional approaches to leadership. Contingent reward reflects a key feature of what Bass (1985) called 'transactional leadership' and the management by exception is seen as non-leadership.

The models of transformational leadership established by Leithwood and his colleagues have endeavoured to integrate elements of other leadership models such as instructional, managerial, moral and participative leadership (Sun & Leithwood, 2012). The inclusion of other leadership dimensions made this leadership model the most complete in educational contexts (Sun & Leithwood, 2012).

2.1.3 Comparison between Instructional and Transformational Leadership

In comparing these views of leadership, some argue that both instructional and transformational leadership qualities are needed by successful school leaders (Day & Gurr, 2014; Leithwood & Day, 2008), whilst others emphasise the importance of instructional leadership (Robinson, et al., 2008). Hallinger (2007) argues that substantive similarities among the transformational and instructional models are more significant than the differences. For instance, both would have the school leader focus on: creating a shared sense of purpose in the school; developing a climate of high expectations and a school culture focused on innovation and improvement of teaching and learning; shaping the reward structure of the school to reflect the school's mission as well as goals set for staff and students; organising and providing a wide range of activities aimed at intellectual stimulation and the continuous development of staff; and, being a visible presence in the school modelling the desired values of the school's culture.

On the other hand, an important difference highlighted by Hallinger (2003, p. 337) between instructional and transformational leadership was that the latter "does not assume that the principal alone will provide the leadership". On the contrary, leadership could be shared or distributed among principals and their staff. Another difference that Hallinger (2003, pp. 337-338) noted is that this model aims "to influence people by building from the bottom-up rather than from the top-down" and conceptualizes "leadership as an organizational entity rather than the property of a single individual".

Taking into consideration the differences and similarities of both models, as well as the diverse findings on educational leadership, it is important to mention that, according to Hallinger (2003, p. 346), "an appropriate model of leadership in education would be to link the appropriate type of leadership to the needs of the school context". Likewise, Hallinger

(2003, p. 346) suggests that, for instance, "schools at risk may initially require a more forceful top-down approach focused on instructional improvement", while Hattie (2011, p. 8) indicates that "it is a mistake to presume that what works best in a struggling school is the same as what works best in a successful school". These comparisons between the models provide a useful point of departure for an educational leader to reflect on their leadership.

In fact, Gurr (2002, p. 80) claims that educational leadership research needs to consider new views on transformational and instructional leadership since they are complex phenomena that need to be rethought due to constantly changing circumstances. Therefore, it is important to note that the context should be considered to apply educational leadership models. Hallinger, (2003, p. 346) claims that contextual variables such as student "background, community type, organizational structure, school culture, teacher experience, fiscal resources, school size, and bureaucratic and labour organisation" should be taken into account before implementing them in practice. As Hallinger (2003) states, leaders have to understand that the setting of the school can be a source of restrictions, resources or opportunities and these are important variables that must be considered to reach the challenges.

Recently, Hallinger and Murphy (2013, p. 7) argued that the knowledge base about instructional leadership has undergone significant developments over the past decades and the contemporary view of instructional leadership is "as an influence process through which leaders identify direction for the school, motivate staff, and coordinate school and classroom-based strategies aimed at improvements in teaching and learning".

After carrying out a literature review relating to the conceptual and empirical development of instructional and transformational leadership at an international level and also following the idea of the integration of these two leadership models according to the context, the next section will examine the historical, political and local antecedents of educational leadership in Chile, which have and still continue to influence the development of school leadership over the course of the last thirty-five years.

2.2 Historical overview of the study of School Leadership in Chile

This section provides an overview of school leadership in Chile in the last thirty-five years. The first part outlines the historical and political context which influenced the development of school leadership (1980-2005). It concludes with an explanation of the current situation of school management (2005-2015), highlighting two critical aspects in the Chilean context: educational policy and educational research on school leadership.

2.2.1 The development of school leadership (1980-2005)

In early September 1973, following an extended period of social and political conflict between the conservative-dominated Congress of Chile and the socialist President Salvador Allende, Allende presented the idea of resolving the constitutional crisis with a plebiscite, which was scheduled for 11th September. However, he was never able to deliver it, since the Chilean military staged a coup against him that day. The 1973 Chilean coup d'état was a watershed event in the history of Chile. As a consequence of this, Chile was under a military regime for seventeen years (Collier & William, 1996).

During the dictatorship period, in the early 1980s, education management was transferred from the Ministry of Education to the municipalities, private administrators, and associations (Aedo-Richmond & Richmond, 1996). Since that time, each city in Chile has been responsible for providing education to their citizens. Because of this adjustment, principals were assigned new duties, without any specific professional training for performing managerial responsibilities.

This change did not take into consideration the role of principals in the educational administrative system; instead, mayors and stakeholders were made responsible for effectively managing the education sector, resulting in a variety of different perspectives being implemented across the country (Nuñez, Weinstein & Muñoz, 2010). This meant that principals had limited involvement in the decision-making process inside their schools since the final decisions were always made by higher authorities. They were not responsible, for instance, for recruiting and dismissing people, setting salaries, and managing financial resources (Nuñez et al., 2010).

The transition of teachers and principals from functioning as public workers to becoming municipal or private employees was another radical change (Aedo-Richmond & Richmond, 1996). This new policy had a negative impact on the development of the professional career of principals. Thereafter, they lost the opportunity to be promoted or to apply for other positions within the public service (Nuñez et al., 2010). They also lost their "status, pay, long service and security of employment" (Aedo-Richmond & Richmond, 1996, p.202).

The absence of any opportunity for promotion modified, to some extent, the concept of professional development for principals. According to Nuñez et al., (2010), being a principal used to be considered a middle-level position, but from then on, it was seen as the last stop for these private educational employees, which had a negative impact on the prestige and social recognition of school leaders. Likewise, Nuñez and colleagues stated that the functions of principals and the possibilities of promotion were limited since they were confined to the local area.

Throughout the transition from a dictatorship to democracy in the 1990s, educational policies focused on two central aspects: quality and equality in education (Nuñez et al., 2010). This political transition brought with it attempts to modify educational policy to surmount the "adverse social legacy of prolonged authoritarian rule and the strong influence of extreme neoliberalism on the determination of policy" (Aedo-Richmond & Richmond, 1996, p. 197). Nevertheless, these modifications did not consider educational leadership as a part of school improvement and the function of principals was not seen as an important element in successful school management (Nuñez, Weinstein & Muñoz, 2010).

According to Weinstein, Muñoz and Raczynski (2011), there had not, in recent decades been any historical precedent for other educational reforms aiming to increase coverage and compulsory schooling. For instance, the most important initiatives implemented were the Preferential School Subsidy Law (2007), the General Education Law (2009) and the current Quality and Equity Law (2011). Additionally, a proposal was developed to guide professional training of principals towards a new vision of school management. This proposal was called Marco para la Buena Dirección (MBD)/Good School Leadership Framework (Ministry of Education, 2005).

In 1991, the № 19.070 law, also called the Teacher Statute was approved; this was to some extent based on the ideas proposed by the teachers' union the previous decade. The main changes which were implemented by this new law were related to the improvement of working conditions inside the classroom (Nuñez et al., 2010). However, the new legislation only addressed principals' administrative functions in a limited way while placing emphasis on teachers' performance (Nuñez et al., 2010).

In relation to professional autonomy, the aforementioned statute described the performance of teachers inside the classroom as being independent. This allowed teachers to make decisions independently of any outside influence. Therefore, they could plan lessons and choose methodologies and techniques without the input of their principals (Nuñez et al., 2010). According to the new law, principals could not influence teachers' decisions since their responsibilities were limited to administrative tasks and coordination (Nuñez et al., 2010). This confirmed that the role of principals was seen as part of the management of a school, while their role as educational leaders was considered of secondary importance.

In terms of remuneration, according to Montt (2012), the Teachers Statute enacted in 1991 differentiates between administrative positions and the pedagogical functions of teachers by improving their salaries. Principals' and technical pedagogical heads' remuneration was between 10 and 20 percent higher than that of teachers. However, as claimed by Nuñez et al., (2010) this did not represent an important distinction and it was not based on their responsibilities.

In addition, the № 19.070 law listed a number of requirements for a person to be appointed as a principal. One of these requirements was to have studied educational management, evaluation, supervision or vocational orientation. However, there was no mention of any minimum number of hours of study in the relevant area of specialization. Likewise, in cases where a vacancy could not be filled, any teacher could obtain the position despite not having any appropriate experience or background (Nuñez et al., 2010). This implied that the role of leader was considered a secondary concern and seen as a less important role, especially since a teacher's pedagogical experience was believed to be enough to enable them to lead a school.

24

In 1995, public application processes for the role of principal were established for the first time. In the last few decades the position of principal had been granted to those appointed for an indefinite period and based on political interests (Nuñez et al., 2010). In contrast, with the new law the duration of the position was now five years with the possibility of applying for a second five-year period. However, if they were not re-appointed, principals could stay in the municipality which was responsible for providing a new position within the institution (Nuñez et al., 2010). It should be noted that these public application processes were for new vacancies only and did not apply to those principals who had been appointed during the dictatorship.

According to Nuñez et al. (2010), Chilean legislation in the 1990s did not effectively address educational management. School leaders' specific responsibilities were not really considered in any legislation during this period. Additionally, Nuñez et al. (2010) indicate that the emphasis was on putting teachers at the centre of the educational process, and just leaving a restricted margin for the intervention of leaders in the teaching-learning process. Thus, it was difficult to differentiate between the directive and the pedagogical function of teachers as the latter have prevailed.

2.2.2 The current situation of school management (2005-2015)

With the arrival of the 21st century came a new vision of school management in Chile as the government implemented a series of administrative and legal reforms. For example, the Jornada Escolar Completa (JEC) law/Full School Day Nº 19,532. This reform listed new responsibilities for school principals, such as being the leader of the Proyecto Educativo Institucional (PEI)/Institutional Educational Project (OECD, 2008). This is a set of guidelines which defines the fundamental structure and objectives of a school organization. Each school in the country was required to have an Institutional Education Project (Educar Chile, 2013).

As part of these legal changes, a year later in 2005, it was stated that all principals had to be selected by national public application processes. This change also applied to those principals who were elected in 1995 (first public applications) and much more importantly, to principals who had been appointed as lifelong school leaders during the military government (Nuñez et al., 2010). By implementing this reform, it was possible to create more than 2,000 vacancies

across the country (OECD, 2008). This new system for employment began a gradual process of change which incorporated new procedures for selection and made the application processes for the principals' role more competitive. However, as stated by Montt (2012), in some cases this legislation was impractical since municipalities did not always have enough funds to dismiss senior employees or to call for early retirements.

The implementation of a framework called Marco para la Buena Dirección (MBD)/Good School Leadership Framework in 2005 was important since it presented a common benchmark to assess and guide school leaders' performance. The Ministry of Education introduced the MBD as a means of recognizing the genuine importance of school leaders whose roles had been undervalued for a long period of time. These modifications also included new guidelines to assist those appointed to become more efficient principals (Nuñez et al., 2010). Because of the implementation of the MBD (Ministry of Education, 2005) and the enactment the JEC law (Nº 19,979), principals were given more administrative functions.

Despite the benefits provided by the implementation of the MBD (Ministry of Education, 2005) and the JEC law (Nº 19,979), there was no visible effect to be seen within schools, since, according to Weinstein et al., (2011, p. 7) "principals have practically no impact on the management" of schools. This could be explained by the fact that principals' decisions were subject to the mayor's opinion and it was the mayor who made the final decision, for example, in the areas of human, financial and material resources.

In general, Nuñez et al. (2010) consider that the most relevant change in relation to the role of principals is that they are now required to act as educational leaders. Nuñez and colleagues specify that this idea has acquired an increasing importance at the commencement of the 21st century and it has already become extensively accepted. To conclude, Pinto, Galdames and Rodriguez (2010) indicated that the growth of school leadership as a national educational priority has been motivated by: (a) the influence of research-based evidence from international experience and (b) the implementation of policies accentuating the significance of school leadership in other countries.

The implementation of the MDB/Good School Leadership Framework (Ministry of Education, 2005) not only represented an improvement for educational organizations, but also played

an important role in drawing attention to the significance of the principals' leadership. The national literature emphasizes (e.g. Weinstein, 2009) the significance of the MBD in taking the first step towards recognizing the importance of the school leaders. However, the implementation of this framework was not enough to establish a new vision of school leadership. According to Donoso, Benavides, Cancino, Castro and López (2012), the lack of a legal base to support this initiative, diminished the impact of this framework on the Chilean school system. Weinstein (2009) also states that the MBD needs to include a more accurate conceptualization of competencies to become more effective. Likewise, Weinstein (2009) notes that the MBD must be transformed from a referential framework into a mandatory one in order to have a real impact on school leaders' practices.

Therefore, while the MBD took the first step towards a new perspective on leadership in school organizations and made a valuable contribution to the development of standards for principals, there were other circumstances that contributed to the emergence of school leadership as an important aspect of the Chilean educational system.

Pinto et al. (2010) refer to the attention given by policy-makers in different parts of the world highlighting the role of leadership in school organizations. This can be seen, for example, in 'the development of educational leadership standards in the United States (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2008), the work of the National College of School Leadership in England (Leithwood et al., 2006), and the development of a leadership framework for New Zealand principals (New Zealand Ministry of Education, 2008)' (Robinson, 2010, p. 2).

In Chile, the role played by international agencies is also relevant. For instance, the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) collaborate in encouraging the development of policies and putting this and other areas on the national agenda (Harris, Chapman, Muijs & Reynolds, 2013). Harris et al. (2013) state that these organizations, through their research, have been vital in raising several issues including, for example, the quality of education in Chilean schools. In relation to the influence of these agencies, Harris and colleagues state:

Outside of the Western context, the role of international agencies has been at the forefront of developing EER [educational effectiveness research] in policy. The OECD and UNESCO's International Institute for Educational Planning, for example, have produced a number of publications on school effectiveness (e.g. Scheerens, 1990) that have been influential in some countries. In Chile, for example, the impact of EER is significant and has dramatically increased over the last decade. Educational research has enabled the construction of a 'common basis' of knowledge concerning the condition of the Chilean school system, putting on the table not only the issue of 'poor learning quality' but also, above all, the highly unequal social distribution of such learning. International agencies (in the Chilean case, especially the OECD) have played an important role in applying this 'pressure' through their research, where they have evaluated, revealing their good and bad results as well as introducing a comparative perspective, the educational policies that have been developed in Chile since the 1980s (Harris et al., 2013, p. 12).

An example of the work produced by one of these agencies is the report titled 'Reviews of National Policies for Education' (OECD, 2004). This document, which was requested by the Chilean government, analysed the entire educational system and examined the national policies made from 1990 to 2003. Among other issues, the report identified a lack of pedagogical supervision by school leaders and a lack of support for teachers inside the classroom (Montt, 2012). This report later influenced, at least to some extent, the emergence of school leadership as a factor to be considered by policy-makers in Chile.

Another example of the role played by these international organisations is the document titled 'Challenges of the Chilean Education System' (OECD, 2010). In collaboration with the Ministry of Education and UNESCO, this document discusses ten challenges which need to be addressed in order to improve the quality of education. Within this document, one of the challenges discussed is school leadership, in which, according to the OECD (2010, p. 11), "Chile still has a long road to travel". The document provides a number of suggestions in different areas such as the professional development of school leaders and the advancement towards more distributed forms of leadership. Similarly, it also provides insight into how to make the profession more attractive for future candidates. While this document does not discuss any area in depth since it focuses on providing recommendations and alternatives, it is an

important example in terms of how the work of these organizations has influenced the development of policies in Chile.

Based on these findings, the current treatment of school leadership in Chile has been affected not only by international research but also by the role played by external groups which have been influential in the development of a new vision of leadership. With this in mind, it is important to examine two areas where the progression of school leadership from this initial stage to a more institutionalized stage of development can be identified: educational policies and educational research. The next section will therefore explore the development of policies aimed at school leaders by focusing on the legal reforms of 2009 and 2011. In addition, it will focus on the current situation of school leadership research in Chile emphasizing its importance at the present time.

Since the implementation of the MBD (Ministry of Education, 2005), there has been a substantial number of changes and reforms relating to school leadership and the role of school leaders. As discussed previously, these changes have been motivated by the recognition of the effect of leadership in schools on improving students' outcomes.

Four years after the implementation of the MBD, two educational laws were enacted, the law Nº 20.370 called Ley General de Educación (LGE)/ General Law of Education in 2009, which replaced the Ley Orgánica Constitucional de Educación (LOCE)/ Constitutional Law of Education, and the Ley de Calidad y Equidad de la Educación (LCE)/ Quality and Equity Law of Education in 2011. The importance of the enactment of the LGE which legally recognizes the key role of school leaders in school improvement, was in part a reaction to the huge student mobilizations that occurred in 2006 (Waissbluth, 2013). Consequently, the impact and consequences of these mobilizations were also key factors in the enactment of the subsequent law in 2011 (Montt, 2012). Both laws aim to reinforce the importance of school leaders.

The LGE represented a departure from traditional views of educational management in Chile through the establishment of responsibilities and functions for school leaders. In this respect, a significant contribution was made by making pedagogical supervision inside classrooms the

legal responsibility of school leaders (Montt, 2012). This was another step towards the implementation of a more instructional perspective of leadership in Chilean schools.

Similarly, this law states that school leaders are given the right to lead the school through the development of the Institutional Educational Project (PEI). In addition, it is stated that principals are responsible for the academic performance of students and promoting the professional development of the teaching staff (Nuñez et al., 2010).

While moving forward in the development of a new concept of leadership emphasizing the instructional role of school leaders, this law did not contain any reference to school leaders' training programs. This omission, according to Nuñez et al., (2010), was consistent with previous practices in which the professional development of principals was considered a personal choice that could be carried out during pre-service or in-service training.

Although significant advances were made in this period in terms of educational policy focusing on the role of school leaders, according to Montt (2012), it is not possible to provide much insight into the impact of these initiatives since they occurred so close together in time. However, Nuñez et al. (2010) believe that these legal reforms were the foundations for a new period in educational leadership.

In regard to educational policies intended to impact on school leadership during this period, Montt (2012) stated that future policies need to reinforce the development of capacities that support the leadership shown by principals. Therefore, the development of educational policies, which emphasize the importance of school leadership, should be concentrated on the promotion of instructional competencies.

2.2.3 School leadership and its influence on school improvement

According to Leithwood and Day (2008, p. 1), "the past 15 years have witnessed a remarkably consistent, worldwide effort by educational policy-makers to reform schools by holding them more publicly accountable for improving pupil performance on state or national tests." For school leaders, and for those who study what they do, the main consequence of this policy shift has been considerable pressure to demonstrate the contribution of their work to achieve such improvement.

The contribution of educational leadership to school improvement has been widely acknowledged in the international literature. For instance, Harris (2002, p. 66) notes that, "Findings from diverse countries draw similar conclusions about the centrality of leadership to school improvement", highlighting the key role of school leadership in sustaining organizational learning and improvement (Datnow, 2005; Hargreaves & Fink, 2008). In fact, the importance of leadership in securing viable school improvement has been confirmed in research and practice (Harris & Bennet, 2001; Jackson, 2000). As a matter of fact, there is substantial and growing evidence that principals can play a fundamental role in initiating and sustaining school improvement, particularly as it pertains to student academic performance.

Nowadays, there is considerable evidence that excellence in school leadership can influence positively on student academic performance. For instance, Leithwood, Louis, Anderson and Wahlstrom (2004), established two important claims. First, leadership is second only to classroom instruction as having the most impact on student learning, accounting for about a quarter of total school effects, and supporting current efforts in improving school leadership. Second, leadership has the strongest influence in struggling schools when the challenge of improving student learning is greatest.

A growing body of research suggests that to be successful in such initiatives, principals must motivate and encourage teachers, students, parents and other community members to join their effort in creating positive, engaging school climates that increase the likelihood of improved academic achievement and other forms of student performance (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). While research indicates a positive relationship between leadership and school success, questions remain as to the underlying causes of such associations and the extent to which findings can be generalized from one national context to another. Even though research supports a strong connection between leadership and school improvement, it depends on the context in which people are working.

Authors, such as Leithwood and Riehl (2003), argue that the impact of educational leadership is principally indirect because leadership is basically a process of influence between educational leaders and the rest of the teachers, where they are working together to embrace common goals. Other scholars are focused on the particular practices of types of leadership,

instead of seeing leadership as a single construct that influences school improvement (Robinson, et al., 2008).

Hallinger and Heck (1998) have described how leadership influences school improvement. This influence has been explained in four different areas: relating to the purposes and goals of the school; the interplay between the school organization and its social network; through influence over people; and, in relation to organizational culture. For Leithwood, Patten and Jantzi (2010), leadership influence is conceptualized as flowing along four paths (rational, emotions, organizational, and family) in the direction of student learning. Each path is populated by multiple variables with more or less powerful effects on student learning. Leaders increase student learning by improving the condition or status of selected variables on these paths.

According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (2001), the interest in linking leadership and student outcomes reflects the desire of policy-makers in many jurisdictions to reduce the persistent disparities in educational achievement between various social and ethnic groups, and their belief that school leaders play a vital role in doing so. For the same reason, school improvement should be considered by itself to clarify the points of connection among it and leadership. In fact, Harris (2006) declares that this topic has become a dominant feature of educational reform and has gained importance and recognition on the international stage.

In conclusion, a substantial number of studies recognize the influence of leadership in educational organizations. As Sammons (2007) states, school improvement research emphasizes the head teacher's or principal's role in the turn-around of failing schools and its importance for schools in deprived contexts. Thus, school improvement movement has been consistently validated by researchers because of its crucial role in improving student learning.

B) Section II

2.3 School Improvement: a general vision

All over the world there is an ongoing preoccupation with improving the performance of schools and school systems (Harris, 2012). International tests such as the Program for

International Student Assessment (PISA), which is conducted by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), have put intense pressure on some governments as they are now competing to have the highest results at an international level, according to Harris (2012). Harris et al., (2013, p. 12) indicate that these tests have placed "on the table not only the issue of 'poor learning quality' but also, above all, the highly unequal social distribution of such learning".

Over several decades, national and international educational systems have had the creation of strategies to promote school achievement as one of their main goals. The concept of successful school improvement is described by Earl and Lee (1998) as a chain reaction of urgency, energy, agency and more energy. During the last thirty-five years, school improvement research has gained prominence and recognition at an international level (Hopkins, Stringfield, Harris, Stoll & Mackay, 2014). Hopkins (2012, p. 163) has pointed out that school effectiveness research in the 1980s gave researchers "well-defined portraits" of effective schools, which led to an increase in the information on school improvement that was available during the 1990s.

After the establishment of the International Conference for School Effectiveness and Improvement (ICSEI), according to Wrigley (2013), school effectiveness and school improvement could be seen as "twinned paradigms". The author explains that the "key twinning agreement" came from an article written by Reynolds, Hopkins and Stoll (1993). Wrigley (2013) observes that the link between school effectiveness knowledge and school improvement practice results in a synergy between their respective fields. However, Bennett and Harris (1999, p. 533) note in relation to this synergy that: "attempts to create such links have not sufficiently addressed their different perspectives on organizational development and change. School effectiveness research has tended to view organisational development in terms of structural change, while the school improvement field has conversely placed an emphasis upon the cultural dimensions of organisational change". Chapman (2012, p. 27) adds that despite the differences, these two fields have made great contributions "to our understanding of the factors associated with effective schooling and the processes linked to enhancing them".

Currently, the continuous pressure upon schools to improve performance has resulted in a wide range of school improvement programmes and initiatives (Harris & Chrispeels, 2006). However, the need for building capacity to implement those ideas is often overlooked (Fullan & Ballew, 2001) despite evidence of the importance of capacity-building as a means of generating and sustaining school improvement (e.g. Fullan 2000; Fullan & Ballew, 2001; Harris, 2005; Harris & Lambert 2003; Hopkins & Jackson 2003). Capacity building embraces the idea of a professional community where teachers participate in decision-making, have a shared sense of purpose, engage in collaborative work and accept joint responsibility for the outcomes of their work (Lambert, 1996, p. 11). Building capacity fundamentally involves building relationships, building trust and building community. In this sense, Harris (2010) recommends paying careful attention to how collaborative processes in schools are fostered and developed.

According to Fullan (1999), the process of change for school improvement can been broadly categorised into three phases. The first one is the "initiation stage", where schools start working and seeking a focus for improvement. The second phase is the "implementation stage", where schools are putting their improvement plans into action, and phase three is the "maintaining and sustaining stage", where the process and practice of school improvement becomes an integral part of school development (Huerta-Villalobos, 2014). Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) also identified three historical phases of school improvement, the early practitioner-oriented phase (1980), a second phase where school improvement was directed at the classroom as well as the school level (1990s), and the third phase, from the mid- to late 1990s, where programme refinement and issues of scalability of reform initiatives responded to previous limitations.

Regarding the practices of the "third phase of school improvement", Hopkins and Reynolds (2001) hoped that these programmes would assist in resolving previous enigmas. Thus, other researchers have shown interest in this area contributing with studies about a philosophy and practice based on school improvement. For instance, Harris (2002) indicates that there are five important aspects that contribute to school improvement, namely participation, commitment, pressure and support, external agency and staff development.

According to Huerta-Villalobos (2014), establishing a positive climate for change is an indispensable prerequisite for school improvement. Furthermore, Murillo (2003) included the idea of the importance of the context in school improvement, explaining that international research data in countries that are socially, culturally and, above all, economically different, cannot apply to every context. Similarly, Harris (2012) considers that even the best policies may not travel well since what works in one context could have very different results in others. This author even notes that some of these policies cannot work at all in certain contexts due to the local history, culture and social make-up. For instance, the implementation of the MDB/Good School Leadership Framework (Ministry of Education, 2005) in another country such as Australia might not generate the same effects as it already did in Chile, since the reality of these countries is quite different.

Fullan (2000, p. 2) also remarks that schools are persistently "bombarded by overwhelming and unconnected innovations". However, the most effective schools are not those which integrate all of these new reforms but those which focus on selective innovations that are also consistent with their own goals. Moreover, Chapman (2012) and Reynolds (2012) say that to develop future projects in the field of school improvement, it is essential to join forces with politicians and educational policy-makers, as well as engage schools and school networks.

To conclude, Thomas, Salim, Muñoz and Peng (2012) confirmed that top-down methods to school development and change, especially in emerging contexts, have had little impact on students' performance and achievement. For that reason, the combination of micro school-based policy and school self-evaluation has greater potential for achieving better results than reforms that are far removed from reality.

2.3.1 School improvement in Chile

Chile began its school improvement initiatives in the 1980s under the dictatorship, and over the last two decades several programs and reforms have been implemented by the Chilean Ministry of Education, in order to improve education for everyone (Avalos, 2007). According to Opazo, Frites and López (2012), the improvement model was initially based on an economic approach which decentralized the control of a school's direction and included market-based incentives to stimulate an increase in the number of schools subsidized with public funds. As

a result, the educational system started to be run like a private business where the parents were the consumers. In consequence, there was a growing gap between low-income and high-income students which was not only "perpetuating but also magnifying social inequalities within the country" (Thomas et al., 2012, p. 134).

To resolve the issue mentioned above, some improvement programs were implemented in Chile during the 1990s. One of the strategies considered was increasing coverage of the educational system in Chile. However, the main concern was improving the quality of education provided to all students (Avalos, 2010). To achieve this goal, the key programs implemented in the course of this decade were:

- MECE Rural/Program for the improvement of quality and equity in education, which provided more funds to help improve building facilities and teaching and learning resources (Avalos, 2010).
- Microcenters, which were focused on promoting the improvement of multi-grade and single-teacher schools.
- P900 (900 schools program/Programa de las 900 escuelas), which was directed at rural and urban schools with poor academic results.
- ENLACES, an ICT program which provided computers across the whole educational system.

Coverage

During the 1990s, enormous efforts were made in order to widen the coverage of the educational system in Chile. Primary schools, as claimed by Avalos (2007), were then able to achieve almost universal enrolment (97 per cent) and secondary schools were also progressing in this area and their rates of enrolment were close to 80 per cent. Nevertheless, the key concern at that time, and currently, does not so much relate to increasing enrolments but to improving the quality of education provided to all students (Avalos, 2010).

MECE rural/Program for the improvement of quality and equity in education

This program initially targeted only rural schools, which in the 1990s represented approximately 16 per cent of national student enrolments. MECE rural provided more funds to help improve building facilities and teaching and learning resources (Avalos, 2010). Due to the positive results obtained in rural schools, from 1992 this program was gradually expanded across to the whole educational system from pre-school to secondary level.

Microcenters

These only operated in rural and remote areas of Chile and were part of the MECE rural program. This program was focused on promoting the improvement of multi-grade and single-teacher schools, which involved full-day meetings once a month for all teachers from multi-grade rural schools in each relevant suburb (Avalos, 2007). The aim of these meetings was to assess teachers' work, to review and analyse the new changes to the educational system, and to help each other in improving the teaching and school management (Avalos, 2007). According to Raczynski & Muñoz (2007), 3,285 rural schools benefited from this program, which covered 5.9 per cent of the enrolments in the country. The total value of the investment made by the Chilean government in this program was around $3.2 million.

P900: 900 schools program/Programa de las 900 escuelas

This program was directed at rural and urban schools with poor academic results. It was implemented in 1990 when national examinations showed low scores in learning results when compared with national averages (Avalos, 2007). Raczynski & Muñoz (2007) stated that the P900 program comprised 1,200 primary schools in the country, being 11 per cent of national enrolments. The total expenditure incurred from 1990 – 2000 onwards was $4.8 million.

ENLACES (ICT program)

This program was implemented in 1992 and included the provision of computers across the whole educational system. According to Avalos (2007), Chile was one of the first countries in Latin America to introduce ICT in schools.

A total of 7,247 schools and high schools benefited from this program, including 100 per cent of high schools and approximately 85 per cent of primary schools. The public spending on this program was $20.1 million (Raczynski & Muñoz 2007). According to the latest figures published between 2009 and 2012, 32,730 teachers received training in the use of new technologies during that period, and in 2013, 9,149 schools in Chile met the quality standards relating to "technologies for quality education" (Enlaces, 2013). (For more information see the official web page www.enlaces.cl). It is important to note that, as claimed by Avalos (2007), the Chilean ENLACES program has been subject to widespread international exposure since its results are a significant example in the area of ICT.

Regrettably, there were no visible changes made between 1990 and 1997 (Avalos, 2010), and the word "reform", as noted by Avalos (2010), was never used. During this period of transition, there was a degree of apprehension that anything that might appear as a drastic change would affect the stability of the country, mainly because the former dictator was in command of the Chilean Armed Forces (Avalos, 2010). All these unproductive results could be caused by insufficient attention given to teachers regarding how they could implement these programs (Bellei, 2001).

Furthermore, the results of the national standardized test (SIMCE) have shown that some improvement in terms of learning has been made in the years following the implementation of these programs (Avalos, 2007). Nevertheless, according to Avalos (2007), the educational reforms carried out in the 1990s were also subject to criticism since they did not pay enough attention to school-related factors such as the recognition of teachers' constraints, for example, inadequate preparation time and large classes. Instead, during that period of time the focus was placed on incorporating more infrastructures, building more facilities, providing textbooks, introducing ICT and reforming the curriculum.

The school improvement programs in the 2000s transferred their attention from macro-policy to school-based policy. These conceived schools as participant organisations in the pathway for school improvement. Therefore, the new challenge was to empower schools to become more effective (Thomas et al., 2012). Some of these new improvement programs were:

- System for quality assurance of school management /Sistema de aseguramiento de la calidad de la gestión escolar (SACG): a system for quality assurance of school management.

- Good school leadership framework/Marco para la buena dirección (MBD): a framework to guide a pertinent professional training of principals towards a new vision of school management.

- SEP - The Preferential School Subsidy Law (2008), which promoted the organizational goals of each school through their own plans for improvement.

System for quality assurance of school management /Sistema de aseguramiento de la calidad de la gestión escolar (SACG)

In 2003, as part of the international trend towards the improvement of teachers and local schools, the ministry of education began to implement the system for quality assurance of school management (Montecinos, Sisto & Ahumada, 2010). This new system was divided into five areas: (1) leadership; (2) curriculum; (3) organizational climate and school environment; (4) resources and; (5) results (MINEDUC, 2007). It also identified the school leadership team as being responsible for co-ordinating the educational process. This team normally includes the principal, assistant principal (present in bigger schools), general inspector, and a technical pedagogical head /jefe de unidad técnica pedagógica (TPH) (Montecinos et al., 2010).

Good school leadership framework/Marco para la buena dirección (MBD)

Nowadays, many countries are realizing that the key factor in having an effective school is its leadership. It is for this reason that in Chile the last reforms were aimed at implementing major changes in this area. The MBD (2005), in tandem with the program mentioned directly above, was introduced as a way of recognizing the importance of the leaders in the teaching-learning process. This framework was divided into four main domains: (1) leadership, (2) curriculum, (3) financial and human resource management, and (4) management of the school environment. These new guidelines aimed to assist newly appointed principals in becoming more efficient principals (Nuñez et al., 2010).

SEP: The Preferential School Subsidy Law (2008)

After conducting several reforms over the last 25 years in order to improve school coverage, mandatory schooling and double the investment in the education system, the ministry of education is now facing a major challenge both for the present and the future: providing equal education with high standards of quality for all students (Opazo, et al., 2012).

When the SEP law № 20,248 was enacted on the 1st of February 2008, this was the first time it had been accepted that educating children living in difficult circumstances with high levels of poverty, principally from the municipal and public-subsidized sector, is more expensive when compared with educating children from private schools (Raczynski, Muñoz, Weinstein & Pascual, 2013). Raczynski & Muñoz (2007) have labelled this law as revolutionary, since its demands for results would change the way the State related to schools. These authors made it clear that, for the first time, schools would have an incentive and an obligation to achieve better results. Opazo et al., (2012) have also pointed out two key aspects of this new law: firstly, the right to receive equal education no matter where the students come from and secondly, the prohibition of certain practices such as selecting and expelling students.

The SEP law also replaced the top-down approach of standardized programs which were implemented by the ministry of education. This new law promoted the organizational goals of each school through their own plans for improvement. It involves four areas of improvement: (1) curriculum, (2) leadership, (3) school environment and, (4) financial resources management, and schools are expected to take action in order to improve each of these areas (Ley SEP, 2008).

The SEP law mandates that in the 4th year of the application of this program, the stakeholder or principal will have to render an account of their management (Opazo et al., 2012). Following this, the Quality Agency will assess whether or not the results obtained are consistent with the goals that were set in the school's plan at the beginning of this process. This evaluation may reclassify schools according to their achievements in the standardized SIMCE test. If these results are not satisfactory, schools may be threatened with closure

(Raczynski et al., 2013). According to Osses (2014), this last aspect of the SEP law has been strongly criticized since this method of evaluation ignores other factors that may influence SIMCE results.

Public-subsidized and municipalized schools can decide whether or not they want to apply for SEP financial resources. According to Opazo et al., (2012), each school was given 50 per cent more funds, as a monetary stimulus, for students who were identified by the system as meeting priority criteria. SEP is a new source of income for the municipal education system, which represents on average approximately 13 per cent of all available resources (Raczynski et al., 2013). However, the SEP resources have not totally replaced the municipal contribution, but rather constitute an additional source of financial assistance.

The SEP law increases the funds for each student living below the poverty line by an average of approximately 60 per cent on top of the regular voucher system, which means that USD $65 per student per month are provided from kindergarten to the 6th grade of primary school (Raczynski et al., 2013). In relation to high schools, the increase in funds is USD $45 per student per month. According to Raczynski and colleagues, the difference between the regular school voucher system and the resources provided by the SEP law is that the latter must be invested in the school's improvement plan. These authors conclude that the SEP law improves the level of equity within the school system by addressing the existing inequalities and providing more resources to those students who live in difficult socio-economic conditions and/or belong to vulnerable social groups.

According to the latest figures published by Raczynski et al., (2013), the SEP program had incorporated 99 per cent of the total municipal enrolments in the country by 2011, as well as 73 per cent of the public-subsidized sector. The lower participation rate in the latter sector could be explained by the fact that some public-subsidized schools do not have high numbers of low-income students, so the majority of the funding comes from parents and the regular voucher system (Raczynski et al., 2013).

The SEP law is seen by Raczynski et al. (2013) as a change of paradigm in the Chilean educational system. This law, according to the authors, successfully addresses the deficiencies that form part of the financial system of education established in the 1980s. From then on, the State has covered the cost of educating the most socially and economically disadvantaged students in the country.

However, according to Opazo et al. (2012), it is not yet possible to analyse the impact of the measures mentioned above since schools have included these resources in their general expenditure in areas such as infrastructure, which benefits the whole school community. Furthermore, it is also difficult to confirm that this investment has helped to improve the results in national standardized tests since these results are not given individually per student (Opazo et al., 2012).

On the contrary, Raczynski et al. (2013) have stated that the result of the SEP investment is positive since the SIMCE indicates that over the last few years there has been a progressive improvement in the results which represent the national average. However, in order to confirm this, more research is needed since the SIMCE test cannot be the only instrument used to measure the impact of the SEP law and the quality of the Chilean education system. In general terms, it has been demonstrated that a gradual increase in financial resources in education linked to school-based improvement plans can lead to improved results. The results of disadvantaged schools have steadily improved in recent years, by between 2 and 5 percentage points. They are therefore expected to improve further as the years go by (Valenzuela, Villarroel & Villalobos, 2013). This also suggests that the SEP law may be able to close the gap between low and high socio-economic levels in municipal and public-subsidized education if the resources are used effectively (Raczynski et al., 2013).

What are the challenges facing the SEP Law?

In order to contribute to the discussion of how the SEP law can be improved, the next section will present some ideas which can be used to guide general reflection on this topic. Some studies regarding the financial implementation of the SEP law indicate that schools are not

capable of diagnosing their own pedagogical problems (Opazo et al., 2012). This directly implies that the way they spend their financial resources may not be related to any clear criteria. Opazo et al. (2012) observe that the use of these resources should be exclusively pedagogical; however, the law itself is not very clear on this point. According to Raczynski et al. (2013), one possible solution could be the implementation of ATEs or other organizations which have the capacity to guide schools with adequate support mechanisms. For example, teaching schools how to manage risks and supporting schools by providing technical and financial assistance, among other things. Similarly, Creemers, Kyriakides & Antoniou (2013, p. 128) have stated that "leaving schools to improve on their own will often not be a realistic or, most importantly, an effective option".

One of the main criticisms of the SEP law is that it puts increasing pressure on schools to obtain better results in standardized tests as financial resources are being directed to those schools which have obtained favourable SIMCE results. Waissbluth (2013) observes that since the enactment of the Agencia de Calidad/The Quality Agency in 2011, the law has enforced the establishment of "school categories" through a ranking based on SIMCE results. This situation has led to an excessive compulsion of training students in order to satisfy this requirement. According to Waissbluth (2013), this system is distorting the central aim of education by converting SIMCE into the central objective. It is therefore imperative to add other mechanisms of evaluation which can help schools to improve their effectiveness and accountability.

Another challenge faced by the SEP law is the expansion of this financial assistance across the whole educational system. Firstly, it should not only reach the early years of education but complete the delivery of these resources to 100 per cent of students from the 5th to 8th grades (currently it is only 60 per cent for these students when compared with students in the 1st to 4th grades). Secondly, it must incorporate the provision of financial resources to high schools (from years 9 to 12) in order to tackle the issue of inequality (Raczynski et al., 2013). According to Valenzuela et al. (2013), there is also a structural problem within the SEP law, since it has been viewed as the only mechanism which can reduce the gap in the quality

of education in the Chilean educational system. Therefore, other approaches are needed in order to complement the results obtained by the SEP law.

In general terms, several attempts have been made by school improvement programs over the last twenty years in Chile. Despite these efforts, Raczynski and Muñoz (2007) claim that school improvement programs have had and continue to have very little impact. According to these authors, this is due to the low percentage of investment in these programs since the majority of funds are always directed at the government's school voucher system, which comprises two-thirds of all of the available financial resources. Hence, school improvement programs represent less than 5 percent of all spending in this sector (Raczynski & Muñoz, 2007). For that reason, the outcomes of these programs are not what was expected and are not sustainable long-term.

In this regard, Avalos (2007) indicates that there is a disparity between the aims of these reforms and their actual impact on schools since they were focused on raising standards without a proper understanding of the correlations between contexts and possibilities. He adds that even when students participate in these school improvement programs and tend to increase their learning, when compared with children from families with higher incomes, the latter generally achieved better results. It is for this reason that there is a need to consider how both education systems and non-government initiatives can assist in the move towards better education and learning results (Avalos, 2007).

In conclusion, it is worth noting that between 1990 and 2008 substantial investments in school improvement were made by the Chilean government. Nevertheless, according to Opazo et al. (2012), the increase in public spending from 2.4 to 4.2 percentage points of the country's GDP has not provided the expected results since educational institutions have remained stable in their learning results. Furthermore, Thomas et al. (2013) observe that the school administration system continues unaltered since the 1980s reforms act as a strong barrier against major improvements and impose restrictions on schools' autonomy.

2.3.2 Linking school leadership and school improvement in Chile

Following the review of the national and international antecedents which have influenced the development of school leadership and improvement during the last thirty-five years, the next section aims to contribute to the discussion around school leadership in the Chilean system by exploring the success of school leaders in Chile.

Several studies have contributed to identifying the important role of school leadership in the improvement of schools, such as research on school effectiveness (Albornoz, 2007). However, Murillo (2006 cited in Albornoz, 2007) notes that these studies have not played an important role in the decision-making process or in the academic world in Ibero-American countries. Therefore, the development of knowledge regarding the influence of leadership in school organizations is a current, although growing, phenomenon in need of more attention in Chile.

In this respect, Muñoz (2009) notes that the importance of conducting more research in this area is supported by widespread international recognition of the effects of leadership as the second most important factor affecting students' outcomes. Similarly, Muñoz (2009) mentions the lack of research related to leaders' impact on schools as an important factor that should be considered as part of the new national agenda.

According to the Centro de Estudios de Políticas y Prácticas en Educación/Center for Research on Educational Policy and Practice (CEPPE, 2009), it is imperative to undertake more research into the impact of school leaders on the improvement of students' outcomes. CEPPE (2009) states that it is critical to develop empirical research so as to validate the role of school leaders in the improvement of educational organizations. This aspect of research, according to CEPPE (2009), has not received enough attention in Latin-American countries in contrast to Anglo-Saxon countries where it is seen as a key topic of study. Concomitantly, CEPPE (2009) claims that through the development of evidence-based studies on the relationship between school leaders' performance and learning outcomes, school leadership could be recognized as a crucial factor in the development of educational policy.

Horn and Marfán (2010) reviewed a large number of Chilean studies over a period of ten years (2000-2010), which contain findings relating to the relationship between school leadership

and the improvement of students learning outcomes. These authors identify two main sources of evidence: research on effective schools and research on leadership styles. Horn and Marfán (2010) conclude that school leadership, according to the field of school effectiveness, is a relevant factor (along with others) in explaining the improvement of students' outcomes in the Chilean context. In addition, they identified three key elements which underpin school leadership:

a) Firstly, pedagogical expertise where school leaders focus on students' learning.

b) Secondly, emotional management relating to the ability to handle complex emotional interactions, for example, personal and interpersonal relationships as well as promoting of an appropriate working climate.

c) Thirdly, organisational management which relates to the capacity to build a positive and effective school structure.

While recognizing the contribution of school effectiveness research in the identification of school leadership as an important factor in the improvement of learning outcomes, these studies have also provided information on the features of school leaders and their practices (Horn & Marfán, 2010). In relation to the second source of findings in this area, Horn and Marfán (2010) note that those studies focused on different styles of leadership (e.g. transformational and instructional) have also contributed to the recognition of the school leaders' role in the improvement of educational organisations. However, they point out that those studies which consider a single leadership perspective do not provide a broader view, therefore limiting any findings relating to the impact of principals in improving schools.

Horn and Marfán (2010) raise an issue relating to where educational research on leadership should go from here. In this respect, they state that school leadership research probably should advance towards the development of more complex studies which should include larger samples to obtain more representative findings and should also consider other perspectives. CEPPE (2009) proposes that educational research should take into consideration other areas which have not been explored yet in current studies and that it must reflect the national, regional and local Chilean context. One of these areas is the personal characteristics of school leaders; their motivations, values, trajectories (personal and professional), training,

and relationship with school community members, among others. These are variables that influence the leadership practices and where further research is required. In this regard, it is important to determine which of these characteristics are purely personal and which ones demonstrate positive associations with effective practices that could be transferable to a larger set of school leaders. Similarly, Weinstein et al. (2011) consider it necessary to extend the knowledge base available with more research to strengthen school leadership in Chile. Furthermore, according to Weinstein et al. (2011) school leaders' traits and their leadership style are aspects of their role which need more attention.

An extensive discussion of this issue is provided by Flessa and Anderson (2012) who consider what areas of interest should be explored by future educational research in Chile according to current international tendencies in school leadership. From their perspective, national research should place emphasis on research studies of: school leadership in challenging contexts; distributed leadership; school leadership as part of a local system and school leadership in non-public schools.

Considering schools as part of a local system, Flessa and Anderson (2012) highlight the lack of evidence relating to the influence of mid-level administrators and how they affect the performance of school leaders in Chile. Furthermore, they claim that educational research should focus on the role of municipal stakeholders as key members in the provision of leadership and the promotion of change in school organizations.

As a final point in relation to educational research, Flessa and Anderson (2012) mention the need to expand studies of school leadership in different educational systems such as the case of private and subsidized schools in Chile. According to these authors, this is important due to the lack of evidence-based studies on these types of schools, for example, in order to compare the effective performance of these school leaders with those from the public system. Flessa and his colleague consider this to be an area in need of exploration, so that evidence can be obtained regarding the effects of autonomy and school leadership.

In respect of the future steps of school leadership in Chile, it can be observed that a growing number of studies are considering different aspects of leadership that had not been examined before and, as a result, are contributing to the development of knowledge in Chile. Recent

studies have started to focus on the development of mid-level leaders (e.g. Peñailillo, Galdames & Rodrigues, 2013; Pinto, Galdames & Rodriguez, 2010). Large studies have also started to be developed and have provided evidence on school leaders' practices and personal traits among other things (Muñoz, Marfán, Horn & Weinstein, 2011).

In terms of new tendencies, there are now studies which have identified certain tensions between distributed leadership practices in Chilean rural settings (e.g. Ahumada, 2010). Some studies have explored the features of teacher leadership in schools in challenging circumstances (e.g. Maureira & Rojas, 2013). Other studies have also started to provide evidence relating to the difficulties experienced by school leaders when performing leadership tasks (e.g. Ulloa, Nail, Castro & Muñoz, 2012).

These studies are shaping a new vision on school leadership research. According to Flessa and Anderson (2012), the current international trends in school leadership have the potential to influence the implementation of future policies in Chile. In this regard, educational research needs to play an influential role in policy-making in future. The aim is to lead the implementation of policies based on empirical evidence rather than "in the intuition, tradition or ideology" of the present government (CEPPE, 2009, p. 31). By doing so, national research could have a real and visible impact on the configuration of the educational system in comparison to past decades where it has had a minor impact and a secondary role.

Hence, this study attempts to fill an important and current gap in research, specifically related to a key member of Chilean schools; the technical pedagogical head. It is a fundamental role since it supports the teacher's instructional labour and works together with the principal and leadership members. According to Horn and Marfan (2010), the TPH truly requires to be studied more, since it has a high level of influence within schools. Moreover, the role and function of the technical pedagogical head remain under researched. Carbone, Olguin, Ostoic, Ugalde and Sepulveda (2008) identify important differences in typical leadership practices between the Technical pedagogical heads of high performance schools and technical pedagogical heads of low performance schools. Thus, this study provides relevant evidence of how a TPH could affect school improvement in a positive or negative manner. Therefore, this notion will be addressed in the last section of this paper.

C) Section III

2.4 Middle leadership research

According to Dinham (2007), the literature based on school leadership has traditionally been focused on principalship. Similarly, the NCSL (2003, p.2) has noted that "the international literature pertaining to assistant and deputy head teachers is substantially smaller than that relating to head teachers or principals". However, in the nineties, some scholars started to develop a research interest in other designated school leaders such as deputy principals, assistant principals, heads of school, deans of study and so on. For instance, Marshall's (1992) study explored what assistant principals in the USA do and who they are, as well as how these "administrators-in-training" can take charge of their careers, another study from Harvey (1994) suggested the possibility of a growing interest in middle leadership positions in Australia, while Jayne (1996) looked at the role of primary deputy or associate heads in the UK.

After the advent of this new theme of investigation, other researchers supported the development of more studies related to middle leadership, as Harris (2000, p. 82) claims: "issues of leadership and management can no longer be seen as the exclusive preserve of senior school leaders". In 2000, White reviewed the literature on middle-level leadership in schools, noting an emerging interest in the research of the 1990s related to their potential influence in school improvement. Four years later, Cranston, Tromans and Reugebringk (2004) undertook an in-depth study in Queensland, Australia, where they examined the roles of deputy principals (assistant principals, deputy heads) in secondary schools. Nevertheless, it appears ironic that despite its perceived importance, "middle level leadership has not captured the research interest it deserves" (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013, p. 57).

2.4.1 Definition of school middle leaders

Almost thirty years ago a study affirmed that defining middle-level leaders was not simple (Kemp & Nathan, 1989). More recently, Koh (2018), De Nobile (2017) and Grootenboer, Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman (2015) still indicate that, "the definition of middle leaders is

not unambiguous". Therefore, it is necessary to find a proper description for this group of school leaders, in order to use it as a starting point for further studies.

Blandford (1997, p. 3) describes a school middle manager as someone who has responsibilities for managing "the development of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities" of students and teachers, although Turner (2007) considers that the role of middle leaders is not well-defined in an organisation. In schools, organisational hierarchical distinctions are not neatly delineated. Many staff are involved in a complex switching of roles and lines of accountability between different aspects of their work (Busher, Harris & Wise, 2000, p. 105).

Blandford (1997) used the term "middle managers", where the individual is a combination of teacher, team member and team leader, being both a manager and managed, while Grootenboer et al. (2015) adopted the term "middle leaders" to refer to the school leaders who practise their leadership among their teaching colleagues. They excluded the concept of "middle manager", as it focused more on the managerial rather than the leading dimension. They also define middle leaders as:

> Those who have an acknowledged position of leadership in their educational institution but also have a significant teaching role. Colloquially, they can be seen as those who sit between the principal or the head and the teaching staff – in the middle!" (Grootenboer et al., 2015, p. 509).

According to Gurr and Drysdale (2013, p.57), "in corporate and much of the earlier education literature, the more common term is middle managers. They are those people who have formal responsibilities and duties of leadership and management and sit between senior leadership and teachers". Current studies on school leadership have shown an evolution of this concept, which is now named middle-level leaders, defining these as "leaders who have significant responsibility for specific areas within a school. They will likely have position titles such as director of teaching and learning, curriculum coordinator, subject coordinator, head of department, student well-being coordinator or year-level coordinator" (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013).

The difficulty to designate a title to this group of school leaders has been reported by De Nobile (2007). According to him, there has been a shift in terminology from 'middle managers' to 'middle leaders' since the early 2000s. This change reflects an apparent evolution of the roles individuals in these positions are asked to carry out, from everyday administrative tasks to increasingly dynamic strategic and staff development-oriented activities. De Nobile (2017) explains that this does not mean management is of lesser importance, since middle leaders still need to be good managers (Fleming, 2014). Nevertheless, middle leaders are increasingly being asked to do far-reaching tasks that can impact teachers' performance and student learning outcomes.

Despite attempts to give a general definition to this leadership position, it is not simple to identify and label these people because their titles and roles depend on the context, size and structure of the school or school system (Grootenboer et al., 2015). For instance, in Cranston's study (2009, p. 218) based on Australia, middle-level leadership consists of roles such as "deputy principal, assistant principal, heads of school, deans of study and so on", whereas in Sweden, development leaders, team leaders and process leaders are indicative of the roles that could be considered as middle leaders. (Grootenboer et al., 2015).

White (2000) comments that the educational literature differentiates between middle managers in secondary schools and senior colleagues such as principals or deputy principals, in terms of the dual nature of their role. Notwithstanding the focus of the middle manager's position, they are recognised for their administrative role within the school, along with some classroom teaching responsibilities, which depends on the country, system, school and position in question. However, others think that the definition of middle leaders would not be given by the existence of a position of authority necessarily, but rather by the ability to influence the attitudes and behaviour of other teachers (Supovitz, Sirinides & May, 2009).

Grootenboer and his colleagues (2015) commented that one of the defining characteristics of a middle leader is their position both in the classroom and in the management structure. This is exemplified in the figure 2.1 below. In this sense, they are not just situated between the management/leadership of the school and the teaching staff, which is often how one thinks about their position, but they are an integral part of both (Grootenboer et al., 2015, p. 522). This means that they have to relate 'upwards' to a principal or head, and also 'across' to their

teaching colleagues, and this relational positioning can create both opportunities and difficulties for the middle leader (Inman 2009).
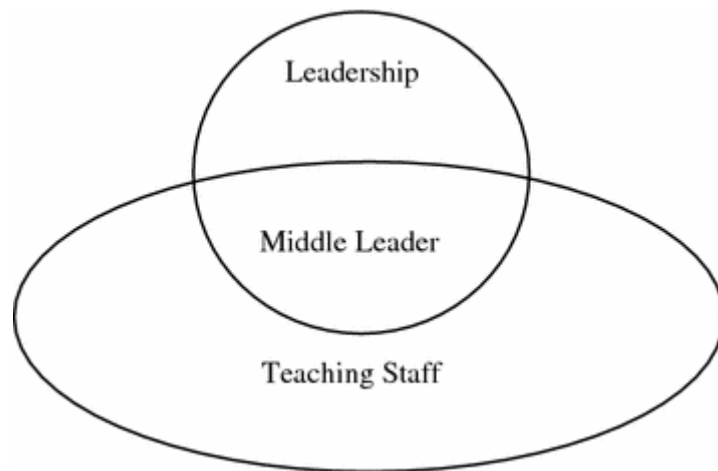
Figure 2.1: Positioning of the middle leader (Grootenboer et al., 2015)

From Grootenboer's study (2015, p. 524) three defining characteristics of middle leading have been identified:

(1) Positionally – middle leaders are structurally and relationally situated 'between' the school senior management and the teaching staff. They are not in a specific space of their own, but rather they are practising members of both groups.

(2) Philosophically – middle leaders practise their leading from the centre or alongside their peers. In this sense they are not the 'heroic crusader' leading from the front, but rather are alongside and in collaboration with their colleagues.

(3) In practice – middle leading is a practice and is understood and developed as a practice. To this end, the focus is on the sayings, doings and relatings of leading rather than the characteristics and qualities of middle leadership.

One of the difficulties faced by research and the development of training programs in this field is precisely the absence of a clear and unequivocal definition of middle leaders and how the concept of teacher leadership can be understood (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In some cases, teachers designated as leaders have formal leadership roles, such as heads of department, mentors or academic coordinators, whereas in other cases, they are defined as teachers

whose main role is associated with classroom teaching, but who collaborate or have assumed additional responsibilities associated with the management exercise (Pinto, Galdames, Rodriguez, 2010).

2.4.2 Importance of school middle leaders

Given the pressures on senior leaders, several leadership and management responsibilities of the school have been delegated to other members within the school (Koh, 2018). According to Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman (2013), middle leaders have the responsibility to bring about change in their schools. However, this important leadership position seems to have received scarce attention in the educational leadership literature, even though they are critical agents in school development and student learning (Cranston et al., 2004, Margolis 2012, Walters 2012).

Middle leaders (MLs) develop a significant role at schools, since they maintain a close relationship with the classroom, building a bridge between the educational work of classrooms and the management practices of the administrators/leaders. This implies a major impact on teacher learning through ongoing responsibilities for the professional development of colleagues (Edwards-Groves & Rönnerman 2013). Likewise, Hattie (2009) noted that MLs are considered as key agents for school development and are recognised for making student learning visible in classrooms.

According to De Nobile's (2017) study, principal support was the most frequent input to emerge from the ML's literature. He comments that there is consistent evidence that support from the principal is an enabler of successful middle leadership (Crowther & Boyne 2016; Day, Gu, & Sammons 2016; Gurr & Drysdale 2012). Even though there is no certainty in the literature of the specific ways principals can offer support, there are studies which described how encouragement from a principal promoted the confidence of emergent teacher leaders to run a pedagogical innovation in their school (Crowther & Boyne, 2016).

Dinham (2005, 2007) provides evidence of the impact of MLs in a study on the impact on student learning of the leadership of 50 subject departments and cross-school programmes across 38 secondary schools. The MLs were found to promote success through:

- A focus on students and their learning;

- High-level interpersonal skills, and generally being well-liked and trusted;

- High-level professional capacity and strategic resource allocation;

- Promotion and advocacy of their departments and maintaining good external relations with the school;

- Influencing department planning and organisation;

- Developing common purpose, collaboration and sense of team within their department;

- Fostering teacher learning, and developing a culture of shared responsibility and trust; and

- Clear vision, high expectations of themselves and others, and developing a culture of success.

Other authors also have mentioned the importance of MLs in relation to school improvement. For example, they indicate that MLs have a key role in influencing the factors that contributed to school improvement and in influencing the quality of teaching and learning within their subject area (Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Bell, 1996; Brown & Rutherford, 1996; Collier, Dinham, 2000; Dinham, Brennan, Deece, & Mulford, 2002; Dinham, 2007; Fitzgerald, Gunter, & Eaton, 2006; Thorpe & Bennett-Powell, 2014). Indeed, Hannay and Denby (1994, p. 2) indicate that MLs are better placed than senior leaders (SLs) to implement the change process in schools, and outline three key reasons:

• MLs have responsibility for smaller groups of people than SLs. This leads to stronger and more effective pressure and support that is required for change to be possible.

• MLs are likely to benefit from a pre-existing sense of community and unity of purpose that exists within the department; and

• It is often within departments that attempts to influence instructional practices are brought to bear on secondary schools.

The concept of middle leadership suggests that these school leaders have a key role both in the way the school is organised and in the way in which the central functions associated with teaching and learning are carried out (Pinto et al., 2010). Similarly, Gurr and Drysdale (2013) note that "principals are not the only leaders in a school and so ways of thinking about how leadership is dispersed are important" (p. 56). It is therefore important to understand that middle leaders have a pivotal position and capacity to bring about change in their own schools and pre-schools and are in a powerful position to encourage and sustain quality teaching and learning practices (Grootenboer et al., 2015).

2.4.3 Role(s) of school middle leaders

Obtaining a definition of the MLs' role is still a difficult mission, as Weller (2001, p. 73) points out by noting that it is "largely undefined, open to interpretation, and multifaceted in nature". Similarly, Leask and Terrell (1997, pp. 9-10) highlight the complexity of the role of middle managers in secondary schools as follows:

> The middle manager may feel they are in a sandwich between classroom practitioners and senior managers. There are demands for change and improvement from teachers themselves, from outside the school, from governments, local education authorities, parents and the community. There is a pressure to reach higher standards of achievement. Different and higher expectations develop over time, such as ensuring the use of IT and the internet for learning.
>
> Classroom teachers place a special pressure on middle managers. Some practitioners believe that children are not getting any cleverer or easier to work with. Indeed, some believe that they are getting more difficult, for a variety of reasons, including the influence of the media, distractions of leisure pursuits, and a shift in the perceived value of education and so on. Innovative and enthusiastic classroom teachers will have their own solutions to these problems, and perhaps these are not always shared by senior management.

At the centre of the management sandwich is the middle manager, working with the practical difficulties and pressures from below, and the higher aspirations and pressures from above. While the logic, aspirations and value judgements of senior management may be clear, practitioners living with the daily reality of classroom life may have a different view. Handling this tension and creating a strategy for dealing with it is a central task for middle managers.

Busher (2007) opines that MLs may well be the de facto instructional leaders in schools as SLs have little time to spend in classrooms working with teachers. Blandford (1997, p.12) asserts that middle managers in schools, be they pastoral or academic, must have educational knowledge and understanding that transcends their area of responsibility, being essentially responsible for:

1.   The implementation of school-wide strategies, structures and intentions. In this process, middle managers "fine tune" these strategies to suit the real world.

2.   Being role models for their staff. A middle manager's daily behaviour must represent the people-centred culture of the school as an organisation.

3.   The passing on of practices which are learnt as a consequence of operational wisdom.

Blandford admits that the role of a middle manager is not always straightforward. She opines that, "the job of a middle manager will always have difficulties and dilemmas. Courage and persistence are valuable tools. Personal integrity is essential" (Blandford, 1997, p. 15). Harris (2000) places the ML role into four key dimensions:

1. Bridging or brokering; the way the ML translates the perspectives and policies of senior school leaders into the practices of individual classrooms. This implies a transactional leadership role for ML. The ML makes use of "power over" others (Blase & Anderson, 1995) to get members of the department to achieve school and departmental goals and practices. One key aspect of this role is the managing and allocating of resources.

2. Creating social cohesion; the way the ML encourages teachers to cohere and develop a group identity by shaping and developing a shared vision. This implies a leadership style that

empowers others, making use of "power with" or "power through" others. This leadership style is power oriented and pays attention to people's feelings, attitudes and beliefs. Transformational leaders not only manage structure but purposefully impact upon the culture in order to change it. A key facet of the ML's work is to shape and manage departmental culture.

3. Improvement of staff and student performances. This involves both the transactional leadership role for the ML in monitoring the attainment of school goals and meeting certain prescribed levels of curriculum performance. On the other hand, it includes a mentoring or supervisory leadership role in supporting colleagues' development and the development of students academically and socially. This mode of leadership draws on the expert knowledge of the ML and their referent power to make improvements in practice.

4. A liaison or representative role. This requires the ML to be in touch with a variety of actors and sources of information in the external environment of the school and, where necessary, to negotiate on behalf of the other members in the department.

There have been several attempts to identify, organise and categorise MLs' duties and responsibilities in primary and secondary schools. In a study of MLs in English primary and secondary schools, Bennett (1995, pp. 78-79) identifies forty-four characteristics under seven headings:

1. Subject-related.

2. Cross-curricular / Whole school duties.

3. External relations and relations with parents.

4. Team leadership / Interpersonal skills.

5. Staff development.

6. Assessment and records of achievement.

7. Teaching duties.

Fletcher and Bell (1999) organised the tasks that primary MLs felt they should do and considered to be effective into eight categories:

1. Resources.

2. Paperwork.

3. Influencing practice.

4. Monitoring.

5. Staff INSET (In-Service Training day)

6. Subject knowledge.

7. Supporting staff.

8. Others.

Adey (2000) identified a list of thirty discrete roles for secondary MLs and grouped those under six categories:

1. Teaching and curriculum.

2. Monitoring.

3. Evaluating and improving.

4. People and relationships.

5. Managing resources.

6. Accountability.

For Hammersley-Fletcher (2002), the four key task areas for primary MLs in charge of a subject are:

1. Strategic direction and development of the subject.

2. Teaching and learning.

3. Leading and managing staff.

4. Efficient and effective deployment of staff and resources.

From these lists it becomes apparent that the work of MLs is complex and somewhat difficult to describe. In reviewing this research, Koh (2018) identified five core tasks: i. Planning and

organising delivery of a subject curriculum; ii. Managing staff and students; iii. Monitoring student achievement; iv. Developing staff; and v. Reviewing and developing programmes. MLs are expected to carry these five core tasks on top of a significant teaching load.

The role of school middle leaders continues to increase in both scope and workload (Basset & Robson, 2017, p. 21). For that reason, the middle leader's role has evolved from that of subject specialist to having responsibility for monitoring and evaluation, contributing to wider school policy, evaluating teaching programmes, developing organisational relationships, ensuring quality assurance, and liaising with senior management (Bennett, Woods, Wise, & Newton, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2000; Glover, Miller, Gambling, Gough, & Johnson, 1999).

2.4.4 Challenges associated with the role of the school middle leader

According to Shaked and Schechter (2016), school MLs' role is more complex, and expectations of them are high. Faced with an increasingly challenging, fast-paced, and demanding educational environment (Cordeiro & Cunningham, 2014), the traditional tools at their disposal are not enough (Hammersley-Fletcher & Strain, 2011; Thorpe & Bennett-Powell, 2014). Given the importance of school middle leaders to the development of well-performing schools (Bennett, Newton, Wise, Woods & Eonomou, 2003; Fleming & Amesbury, 2012), the exploration of new strategies for them may be considered a most worthy and, in fact, necessary topic for empirical study (Shaked & Schechter, 2016, p. 1).

Cranston (2006) indicates in his study that there are some significant tensions and struggles in the ML role, since they endeavoured to rationalise their roles and responsibilities, and how they might better be conceptualised in terms of incumbents' preferences. White (2000) commented that issues such as the correlation and transfer of values held by the incumbent from their teaching role to their management and leadership role, dealing with people, time management, and even forming a clear understanding of their specific role within a school can make the role challenging if not properly understood and dealt with. According to Blandford (1997, p. 15), "the job of a middle manager will always have difficulties and dilemmas. Courage and persistence are valuable tools. Personal integrity is essential".

Similarly, Koh (2018, p. 59) points out that MLs face a number of challenges in their role, and he compares two studies with the most frequently reported barriers to MLs carrying out their roles effectively (see the tables below).

Table 2.1: Challenges of the MLs

Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989)	White and Rosenfeld (1999)
1. Time.	1. A sense of role ambiguity resulting from a lack of clear expectations from school senior management team (SMTs)
2. Departmental staff with other commitments.	3. A lack of training to adequately carry out the requirements of their role, particularly in the areas of leadership and management
3. Role overload.	4. A lack of systematic professional development, including that which generates an understanding of organisational change
4. Staff discipline and interpersonal relationships.	5. A lack of time to adequately carry out the requirements of their role
5. The definition of responsibilities.	6. An absence of formal authority
6. Inadequate preparation.	7. A feeling of being given tasks to relieve the workload of SMT members rather than being empowered through genuine delegation
7. Ancillary help.	
8. Management of physical resources.	
9. The timetable.	
10. Conflict of styles.	
11. Parental pressure.	
12. Accommodation.	

Koh (2018) notes that some of these challenges have been steadily reported over two decades: absence of preparation and training, lack of time, and issues concerning to the nature of the role itself, such as role ambiguity and role conflict. This literature review will focus on these challenges, as well as address the issue of lack of leadership skills in middle level leaders recently mentioned by Gurr and Drysdale (2013).

2.4.6 Preparation and training

When Thorpe and Bennett-Powell (2014) explained their study of the perceptions of secondary school middle leaders regarding their needs following a middle leadership development programme, they cited: "most respondents felt confident in their role but, somewhat paradoxically, expressed a need for further development in their areas of greatest confidence which may well reflect the increasing complexity of the role of the middle leaders in schools. Sadly, "a lack of professional development and experience meant they had to learn on the job" (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013, p. 66)

The absence of preparation and training of MLs previously being appointed to their role has been extensively described (Adey, 2000; Adey & Jones, 1998; Bassett, 2016; Brown & Rutherford, 1999; Cardno & Bassett, 2015; Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Fleming, 2014; Fleming & Amesbury, 2012; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Weller, 2001). These studies found that numerous MLs felt inadequately prepared or trained for their role (Koh, 2018). Almost six in ten MLs surveyed by Adey (2000) and more than 70 per cent of MLs in Weller's (2001) study reported receiving no formal training before being appointed.

Blanford (1997, p. 7) perceived the middle manager role in schools as subject to pressure from above and below, with "little training or support" given when the role is taken on. White (2000) also cited this author, mentioning a possible solution to this issue as follows: "On-going self-reflection and analysis within the particular circumstances of the school can improve the individual performance of a middle manager". This reflection and analysis is centred on four dimensions (Leask & Terrell, 1997):

• The tasks of management;

• How the middle manager works with people;

- Who the middle manager is in the context in which they work; and

- The manager's values and beliefs about teaching and learning.

According to Gurr and Drysdale (2013, p. 67) "the lack of professional preparation and leadership development by individual middle-level leaders, and underdeveloped professional knowledge and capability contribute to a missed opportunity to make a difference in schools". For instance, developing professional learning communities would contribute to creating the responsive and creative environment required for contemporary successful schools. However, nowadays, there has been a proliferation in the delivery of formal training programmes for MLs around the world (Koh, 2018).

These preparation programmes were either school-based or in partnership with a local education authority. One such middle leadership development programme was the 'Leading from the Middle' (LftM) Programme (now replaced by the National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership) (Koh, 2018, p. 62). Nevertheless, not all formal training programmes for MLs are highly effective for middle leaders (Koh, 2018), perhaps because, as Bush (2016, p. 18) notes, "School leadership is a different role from teaching and requires separate and specialised preparation". In fact, Harris, Busher and Wise (2001, p. 87) found that a majority of courses offered by local education authorities "focused upon topics of a broad and general nature … rather than to be tailored to the professional needs of a particular group", and it must be considered that "the skills needed for middle leadership are not the same as those required for classroom teaching" (Irvine & Brundrett, 2016, p. 88)

2.4.7 Lack of time

A considerable number of studies have stated that there is a lack of time to fully carry out all responsibilities of the ML role effectively (Bassett, 2016; Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Connors, 1999; Deece, 2003; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Glover & Miller, 1999; Irvine & Brundrett, 2016; Wise & Bennett, 2003). This challenge for MLs was mentioned by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989), when they published the results of their comprehensive study into the work of MLs nearly thirty years ago. Similarly, findings from a current New Zealand study confirmed that lack of time is one of the most problematic issues facing MLs (Bassett, 2016).

(Koh, 2018) mentioned that time is a crucial matter in determining the extent to which a ML is able to perform their role successfully. Although MLs have the allocation of extra non-contact time to undertake leadership functions, some claim it is not sufficient for middle leaders to perform their role effectively (Wright, 2002; Wise & Bennett, 2003). Likewise, studies in Australia and the UK have highlighted a lack of allocated time to undertake the role effectively as a major challenge (Brown et al., 1998; Dinham, 2007).

Fitzgerald (2009) asserts that middle leaders are overloaded with compliance duties, which dominates their time. They note that other tasks, such as monitoring and evaluation of staff, classroom planning, and assessment and reporting are either neglected, completed during class time or completed after hours (Busher, 2005; Fitzgerald, 2009). This issue is summarised by the PPTA taskforce (2015) which states middle leaders are left "without enough time and energy to do an excellent job as both a leader and classroom teacher".

The challenges related to middle leadership, whilst rewarding, make the role a tough one (Fitzgerald, 2009). As Fitzgerald & Gunter (2006, p. 334) suggest, "The term middle level leader may simply be a means of seducing teachers to take on extra tasks and responsibilities without the commensurate increase in pay or time". Although it may not be possible to eliminate the challenges of the role, middle leaders can be better equipped to deal with these through the provision of specific, contextualised leadership development (Bassett, 2016, p. 101).

In White's (2000) study, lack of time was frequently reported as a barrier to CAMMs successfully carrying out their role. Certainly, time demands arose as an issue for school middle leaders, for instance, learning area leaders (LAL). As Dinham (2007, p.63) points out, the LAL "usually has a significant teaching load and in larger secondary schools, he or she can be responsible for ten or more staff and the teaching and learning of hundreds of students". Even so, Keane (2010) commented in his research about LALs that among interviewees there was a sense that time to do the job was an important consideration, therefore, lack of time would obviously mean a good deal of compromise.

2.4.8 Issues concerning the nature of the role itself

Role conflict

Mayers and Zepeda's (2002) study demonstrated that MLs experience role conflict on two different levels: as instructional versus clerical roles, and as department chair or teacher. The first level makes a difference between the adopted nature of the job, and the reality of the job. While on the other level, there is insufficient time to complete both departmental and teaching responsibilities. As a consequence, MLs are split between "what to do when" or "teacher and as a department chair".

Instructional versus clerical roles

Cranston (2006, p. 9) indicates that MLs perform a demanding role, working on administrative and operational matters for long hours, having limited time for strategic duties such as curriculum and instructional leadership. Similarly, studies indicate that the majority of the workload pressure is taken up by tasks which could be considered as managerial, responsibilities which are not likely to relate to the leadership aspects of the role, such as improving teaching and learning (Fitzgerald, 2009).

Department chair or teacher

MLs are positioned in the middle of the school hierarchy, reporting upwards to SLs and leading a department of staff (Dinham, 2007b). Therefore, MLs are caught in between two sides, which creates a growing tension between "expectations that the ML role had a whole school focus and their loyalty to their department" (Bennett et al., 2007, p. 453). In this regard, Fleming, (2014, p. 39) comments:

Middle leadership is not easy. In some schools responsibility allowance holders can feel trapped between members of their team and the SLT as a result of conflicting expectations from these two groups of people. When teachers gain promotion internally to a middle leadership position, they take with them 'baggage' from their earlier roles and can find it quite stressful to settle into new relationships with colleagues, especially holding people to account.

Also, a considerable number of teachers did not accept that the MLs should be observing their teaching (Wise, 2001). This lack of acceptance of "top-down model of monitoring" is "possibly because the concept of monitoring work is equated with accountability and surveillance … rather than issues of equity and quality" (Wise, 2001, p. 338). The dilemma for MLs in this regard is that while they "like to be collaborative, democratic and collegial, they are also supervisors" (Deece, 2003, p. 49). According to Koh (2018), the only way out of this struggle was to provide greater role clarity and to allocate more time to the task of monitoring. However, some studies (Adey, 2000; Wise, 2001) propose that the attitude to managing staff may be changing. MLs in these studies have indicated "their acceptance of the need for monitoring and supervising their team members" (Wise, 2001, p. 340) and "gave 'supervising/monitoring colleagues' work' a high ranking in their priorities" (Wise, 2001, p. 338).

Role ambiguity

Several authors began to investigate the ambiguity of the ML's role more than two decades ago, and unfortunately, this uncertainty still exists. The ambiguity of the role is explained through several reasons. For instance, Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) defined this phenomenon as an absence of formal role descriptions. For Adey (2000) there seems to be important differences in how these role descriptions are interpreted by MLs. These ideas are confirmed by De Nobile (2017, p. 16), who attempted to create a model of MLs, but he still considers that "it may not be possible to produce a 'one size fits all' model or theory of middle leadership, given the importance of context".

A significant number of researches (Collier et al., 2002; Cranston, 2006) have showed that MLs often have a complex and conflicting set of responsibilities that include teaching, staff supervision and development, curriculum leadership, students discipline and welfare, school administration, professional development and other duties. Likewise, Weller (2001), indicates that the ML role frequently expanded beyond what was actually stated in the job description. Therefore, Koh (2018) proposes to follow the advice of White (2000), who recommended a publication of a document akin to the 'National Standards for Subject Leaders' that could help ML to focus on their role as drivers of curriculum and pedagogical change, since role effectiveness can only be enhanced with greater role clarity.

2.4.9 Leadership is not a quality for everyone

In a recent study by Gurr and Drysdale (2013) a "leadership issue" was reported among middle level leaders. These authors made a literature revision based on three Australian studies on MLs. It was noted by Cotter's (2011) research on middle-level leadership that the work of MLs is greatly dependent on how their roles are constructed. According to Gurr and Drysdale (2013, p. 62),

> Some are expected to be leaders that influence teaching and learning, and they may be developed and supported to do so. Unfortunately, a decade after this original research we are still finding examples where teachers in these key roles have few expectations or opportunities to exercise leadership.

Other research, such as Dinham's (2007) study, point out that heads of departments and programmes can make a difference. However, "the key to this is the support and high expectations from the leadership of the school (particularly the principal), and the capacity and aptitude to be leaders. Too often some or all of these elements are missing" (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013, p. 62),

Reliable findings about MLs during the past ten years from three doctoral students of the University of Melbourne, in Australia - Cotter (2011), Keane (2010) and White (2000) - are to a certain extent concerning. Leadership cannot be considered as a characteristic of everyone, instead, it needs to be seen as a special quality (Gurr, 2010).

Sadly, according to Gurr & Drysdale (2013), many people in leadership roles are not leaders, do not have an expectation of being a leader, and do not have the organisational support to be leaders. They propose that leadership is a special quality, hence, it is essential that middle-level leaders are truly expected to be leaders and that they are given the support to be leaders (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). The next section will focus on the protagonist in this research; the technical pedagogical head in Chilean schools, an important school middle leader.

2.5 Types of school leaders in Chile

The Chilean school system is composed of different participants; each one considered an important member in the educational process, since they play diverse roles in schools. This

section will refer to school leaders in Chile in order to contextualise the main focus of this research, providing a definition of principals, subprincipals, general inspectors, technical pedagogical heads and level coordinators.

Principals: a senior professional holding a teaching degree, who deals with the management, administration, supervision and coordination of a school. Their central role is leading and directing the Institutional Educational Project of the school (Fundacion Chile, 2006)

Subprincipals: a professional who must hold a teaching degree and whose function is to support the Principal's work and in case of absence of the Principal, must occupy their position (own elaboration).

General inspectors: as an entry condition, must have completed the last year of Secondary school, without any criminal background or child abuse or convictions. Their principal

functions are ensuring the students' integrity in the educational community, incorporating the development of appropriate values and habits, performing complementary educational work in order to develop, support and monitor the teaching and learning process, as set out in the school regulations associated with this educational role (Fundacion Chile, 2006).

Technical pedagogical heads: a professional who must hold a teaching degree and whose main responsibilities are planning, organization, supervision and evaluation of curricular activities at school, and who is also in charge of advising the school principal (Fundacion Chile, 2006).

Level coordinators: a professional holding a teaching degree, who is responsible for all the academic activities concerning one specific level, which can be preschool, primary or secondary (own elaboration).

2.6 Definition of the Technical pedagogical head

This section describes the role of the technical pedagogical head as documented by the Fundacion Chile, including the capabilities required of TPH by the Chilean Ministry of Education and the standards against which TPH's performance is measured.

Fundacion Chile is a non-profit private/public corporation created in 1976 by the Chilean Government and the ITT USA Corporation. It promotes innovations and also generates international networks, delivering solutions to address the challenges of sustainability, development of human capital, education, aquaculture, entrepreneurship and food in Chile. Fundacion Chile has created a Centre for Innovation in Education, which contributes to improving the quality of Chilean education, developing innovative and high impact solutions for the school system. This Centre works through four main fields:

- Comprehensive improvement of schools and kindergartens;
- Supporting key segments of education;
- Focusing on educational changes to address the challenges of the XXI century; and
- Development of Technical and Further Education.
-

A clear description of the technical pedagogical head role is necessary to note at this phase, given that the participants in this research study are asked to compare their perceptions of their role with the expected role.

According to Fundacion Chile (2006), the technical pedagogical head must hold a teaching degree. Furthermore, he or she should be trained in planning, orientation, evaluation or curriculum with enough knowledge of the school. Therefore, the technical pedagogical head is a professional who is in charge of planning, organising, supervising and evaluating curricular activities at school, and is also responsible for advising the school principal. In order to describe this role, Fundacion Chile has developed a skills profile (see tables below).

Table 2.2: Functional Competencies Profile for Technical pedagogical heads

CODE	Management Area: Functional Competencies
CF04	Establish educational and training guidelines for the different levels at school
CF05	Diffusion of the Educational Project, ensuring participation of community members
CF07	Provide useful information for decision-making processes
CF11	Managing academic staff
CF16	Planning and coordination of school activities
CF17	Resources administration according to the Educational Project
CF22	Coordination and Supervision of the academic and administrative functions of middle level leaders
CF24	Supervision of academic programs in the classroom
CF25	Ensuring quality strategies in the classroom
CF26	Leading the teachers evaluation process
	Curricular Area: Functional Competencies
CF48	Curriculum organisation according to the educational project
CF49	Ensuring an adequate implementation of the academic Plans and Programs
CF50	Supporting teachers in classroom management
CF61	Improving strategies according to their results
CF66	Managing innovative educational projects

Table 2.3: Behavioural Competencies Profile for Technical pedagogical heads

CODE	Behavioural Competencies
CC01	Ethic and social Commitment
CC02	Quality orientation
CC03	Self- learning and professional development
CC04	Leadership
CC06	Responsibility
CC08	Conflict resolution
CC11	Assertiveness
CC12	Initiative and innovation

This competencies profile is composed of two types of skills: functional and behavioural. Functional competencies are framed in two educational areas: Management and Curriculum. The first area indicates the managerial responsibilities that a TPH should perform, while the second area describes the academic functions that a TPH should perform. This guideline provides a clear description of every task, followed by descriptors for standard and outstanding performance, required basic knowledge for each duty, and a list of actions that should not be done by TPHs in every particular case scenario. Finally, the behavioural

competencies are related to ethical and moral actions the TPH is expected to attain. This list also contains a description, criteria and levels of the conducts (minimal, working towards, developed, and exceptional). According to Fundación Chile (2006), the most important features of the role of the TPH are:

- Being part of the School Management Team.
- Conducting meetings, coordinating and supervising the work of the leadership members.
- Attending relevant meetings organised by agencies outside the institution.
- Planning, organizing, supervising and evaluating the development of the different school curricular activities.
- Advising the School Principal, along with other members of the School Management Team in preparing the Annual Working Plan.
- Assisting school planning: courses distribution, teachers, and students.
- Advising and organising class schedules.
- Supervising the review of school documents.
- Verifying the correct preparation of official documents: transcripts, records of assessment, marks, etc.
- Preparing and submitting weekly schedules, monthly educational activities and yearly goals to the School Leadership Team.
- Promoting the improvement of students' results, seeking to optimize and achieve goals, designing and promoting methods, techniques and teaching strategies that support effective student learning.
- Promoting integration between different sectors and subsectors of learning in order to promote teamwork among classroom teachers.
- Guiding teachers towards the correct interpretation and application of laws and regulations about school assessment and promotion.
- Advising and supervising direct, effective and timely teachers' organization and implementation of plans and programs.
- Contributing to teachers' improvement in assessment and curriculum materials.
- Leading the teachers' council concerning technical and educational materials.

- Promoting and coordinating the organization of meetings, workshops and other activities to address educational problems, and improve the quality of education.

- Planning, monitoring and evaluating plans and special or new programs, tailored to school needs and standards.

- Upgrading knowledge and skills according to the changes in education and providing timely information for the school community.

- Designing criteria to consider in educational outings or trips with teachers' collaboration.

- Keeping battery guides, tests and exercises for the different sub-learning areas.

- Ongoing self-assessment of their leadership role.

Analysing the work developed by the technical pedagogical head is flexible and it depends on the school's needs, notwithstanding commonalities among private, public and subsidized schools. In fact, the assigned duties of a technical pedagogical head could be grouped in two areas: academic and administrative responsibilities.

2.7 The technical pedagogical head perceptions of the leadership role

In 2008, the General Education Division of the Chilean Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) requested that a group of educational researchers from the University Alberto Hurtado in Chile undertake a study of the current Chilean educational leadership situation (Carbone et al., 2008). One of the main objectives was to understand the leadership practices of the leading teams in public and subsidised Chilean schools.

Table 2.3: Sample used in the study: Situation of the Educational leadership in Chile, Chilean Ministry of Education, University Alberto Hurtado (2008).

Level:		Primary Schools		Secondary Schools		Primary & Secondary		
Type of school	Location	Good results	Bad results	Good results	Bad results	Good results	Bad results	Total
Public schools	Metropolitan	5	5	2	2	4	4	22
	Rural	2	2	2	2	2	2	12
Subsidized schools	Metropolitan	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
	Rural	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Total		10	10	7	7	9	9	52

According to Carbone et al. (2008), the most important positions in the Chilean leadership team are principals, technical pedagogical heads and general inspectors. Hence, only these leadership positions were participants in this study. A total of 52 schools participated in this study. These schools were public and subsidized schools located in metropolitan and rural areas of Chile. School participants were selected according to academic results in two national tests. The first test was called the Education Quality Measurement System (SIMCE), which is a battery of tests implemented in Chile to measure certain aspects of school curriculum. Currently, a state agency, The Agency for Quality of Education, is in charge of administrating the tests to students in 2nd, 4th, 6th, and 8th grade (Educacion Basica, equivalent to Primary School) and 2nd and 3rd grade (Educacion Media, corresponding to Year 10 and 11 of Secondary School in Australia) (Agencia de Calidad de la Educación, 2015). The second test, PSU, the university selection test, which is taken by students in their last year of Secondary Education (4to Medio corresponding to Year 12 in Australia), consists of four sections: mathematics, language, science and history, and is managed by DEMRE (Department of Evaluation, Measurements and Educational Register) (DEMRE, 2015). According to the results in these tests, schools were categorised as "schools with good results" and "schools with bad

results". Meanwhile, participants were asked to take part in behavioural-event interviews, focus group interviews, a Learning Styles Inventory, teacher' surveys and to provide school record statements. Carbone et al. (2008) identified differences in typical leadership practices between the technical pedagogical heads of high performance schools and technical pedagogical heads of low performance schools (see Figure 2.2 below).
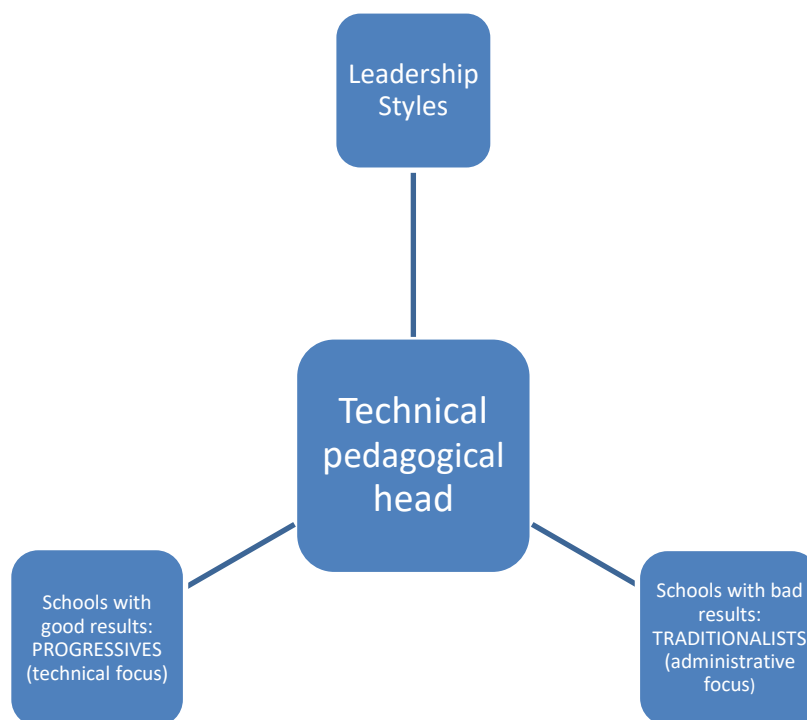
Figure 2.2: Leadership style according to roles
Situation of the Educational leadership in Chile
Chilean Ministry of Education
University Alberto Hurtado

As can be seen in Figure 2.2, school leaders who came from "schools with good results" defined themselves as a progressive person, whereas, technical pedagogical heads working at "schools with bad results" considered themselves as traditionalists. The Carbone et al. (2008) study also found that the technical pedagogical heads' practices and aspects of their leadership style differed according to the school context. Some of the most recognised TPH

functions are, for example, leading the development of the academic curriculum, ensuring access to useful information related to decision-making for school members, managing the use of school resources, supervising and supporting teachers and ensuring the implementation of quality practices in the classroom. Furthermore, this research concluded that technical pedagogical heads from high and low performance schools also play extra roles simultaneously, such as being a counsellor, teacher and inspector. Indeed, their role depends on the school reality and the principal's requirements. Finally, in some cases, there was an absence of the technical pedagogical head or limited assigned working hours in which to develop their job. In these situations, the earlier description provided by Carbone and colleagues (2008) could be affected and modified.

Leadership style of technical pedagogical heads at high performance schools

According to Carbone et al. (2008), technical pedagogical heads from schools with good results are defined as progressive with a technical focus. This leadership style has been mostly observed at subsidized schools. This important feature means that TPHs show a positive predisposition towards progress, change and school improvement. Therefore, they work for establishment of innovative learning strategies, emphasizing a technical facet in their role.

In general terms, progressive nature of the technical pedagogical heads accepts challenges and they are constantly updating their knowledge and skills through diverse professional training. Thus, they implement, lead and manage change processes within schools by improving practices and methodologies. Following the same line, TPH's role is based on rigour and control across formal and regular meetings within leadership team members and teachers using consolidated communication channels. Furthermore, technical pedagogical heads are not considered as inflexible and authoritarian leadership members; in contrast, they are conceived as self-critical, since TPHs make needed adjustments according to school requirements, as they have a real understanding of the school.

On the other hand, the technical dimension referred to the role of TPHs focused on monitoring learning results, managing pedagogical interventions and curricular innovations. For that reason, TPHs accompany teachers providing technical support and ensuring that processes are correctly implemented. In fact, technical pedagogical heads work

collaboratively with the leadership team, assigning them responsibilities, showing confidence in their works and holding an optimistic future vision, which generates a positive work environment.

Leadership style of technical pedagogical heads at low performance schools

Carbone et al. (2008) define TPHs from low performing schools as traditionalist and concentrated on administrative aspects. In consequence, this group was considered as TPHs who are averse to or extremely cautious about change or innovation at school and who hold to traditional values and attitudes. This technical pedagogical head profile was predominantly found at public primary and secondary schools.

The traditionalist aspect present in TPHs is explained by distinctive behaviours, such as a very low tolerance to innovation, a low level of interest in training or updating information, reduced expertise and a lack of managerial skills. As a result, they actually prefer not to take many risks, so there is an absence of changes which impact on learning. This conservative style also influences TPHs' practices, since they adopt an authoritarian management style at school, which emphasises an individualist style to work, a pessimist discourse, a short-term view and an absence of shared approach to work. Furthermore, TPHs demonstrate a lack of school knowledge, which reveals that school reality is not taken into consideration in the decision-making process.

In relation to the technical pedagogical head administrative focus in these schools, there is an emphasis on: highlighting compliance to school rules and norms, controlling teachers' practices in terms of responsibilities, functions and duties (attendance, absences, late entries, document preparation, etc.), managing and running specific duties regarding resources delivery for class development, teachers' salaries or being in charge of day to day activities, and solving urgent and immediate issues rather than having a projective vision of the school. Thus, the logistics dimension is more important than pedagogical or curricular aspects.

D) Section IV

2.8 Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to explore three central areas, beginning with the notion of the educational leadership, followed with a review on school improvement focusing on the Chilean case, and then investigating the role of the technical pedagogical head through an analysis of the existing literature.

This chapter has presented a review of relevant literature relating to technical pedagogical heads in the Chilean education system. It has shown that technical pedagogical heads play a relatively unknown role in educational research, even though they are a key member of Chilean schools. The TPH is a professional who is in charge of curricular and administrative activities at school and is also responsible for advising the principal. The technical pedagogical head must hold a teaching degree; and given their numerous responsibilities at school, the TPH should be trained in planning, orientation, evaluation or curriculum with sufficient knowledge of the school (Fundacion Chile, 2006).

Nevertheless, the role and function of the technical pedagogical head remains under researched. Carbone et al. (2008) identified important differences in typical leadership practices between the technical pedagogical heads of high performance schools and technical pedagogical heads of low performance schools, which could affect school improvement in a positive or negative manner. Hence, more studies about the TPHs' role are required since it has a high level of influence within schools (Horn & Marfan, 2010). As a consequence, there is a need to draw upon what is already known about TPHs, and also to extend our understanding of it.

The notion of the technical pedagogical head is an emerging concept worthy of more detailed investigation. It is of interest therefore to examine the role of the TPH more closely from the viewpoint of practice at the school level, and to compare perceptions of this role but from the perspectives of those who are involved with a technical pedagogical head.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses essential terms related to the methods and procedures used in this study. It describes why the research uses a qualitative approach guided by hermeneutic phenomenology with the phenomenon of technical pedagogical head as a central focus of exploration. Explanations of how the data have been collected and analysed are provided.

This chapter also refers to the participants involved in the research, including a description of the characteristics of the schools. With a particular emphasis on the trustworthiness of the research along the lines described for investigations in the naturalistic paradigm, the limitations and delimitations of the research and ethical issues will be also addressed.

3.2 Research question

Major Research Question

What is the role and impact of the technical pedagogical head in different types of schools in the Chilean education system?

3.3 Approach and Design:

3.3.1 Personal context

Chile is a long, narrow country stretching along South America's western edge, with 4,300km of Pacific Ocean coastline. As of 1 January 2017, the population of Chile was estimated to be 18,197,209 people (Country meters 2017). Santiago, its capital, sits in a valley surrounded by the Andes and Chilean Coast Range mountains. This country has three main zones, northern, central and southern territory, with a total of fifteen different regions.

In the northern part of Chile, the IV region of Coquimbo is located, where this research took place. According to the Census (2002), this region has about 297,253 inhabitants, and the most populated cities are Coquimbo and La Serena, which are known for their long beaches, many of fine white sand, bathed by a calm sea, and the region's pleasant climate, making this territory a popular travel destination for local and international visitors.

In Chile, education begins with preschool until the age of five. Primary school is provided for children between ages 6 and 13. Students then attend secondary school until graduation at age 17. Secondary education is divided into two parts: During the first two years, students receive a general education. Then, they choose one of three branches: scientific humanistic education, artistic education, or technical and professional education. Secondary school ends two years later on the acquirement of a certificate (Licencia de Enseñanza Media).

According to UNESCO-UNEVOC (2015), Chilean education is segregated by wealth in a three-tiered system, where the quality of the schools reflects socioeconomic backgrounds:

- Public schools (colegios municipales) that are mostly free and have the lowest education results, typically attended by students from low income families;

- Subsidised schools that receive some funding from the government which can be supplemented by fees paid by the student's family, which are attended by students from mid-income families and usually get mid-level results; and

- Private schools that consistently get the best results. Many private schools charge high attendance fees of 0,5 to 1 times the median household incomes.

The PADEM, also called the Municipal Education Development Annual Plan, establishes an opportunity that improves the participation of the school system, enabling the management and participation of the community in the development of local education, which means assuming an efficient management of resources and a more proactive municipal management in relation to all the educational establishments of its dependency.

According to the PADEM 2016, in the Report of the International Program for the Evaluation of Students (PISA) of 2013, Chilean students achieved the highest average score among Latin American countries, ranking 52nd out of 66 countries that participated in the measurement, although it has dropped from the 44th. Chile ranks 51st with 423 points in mathematics, below the average set by PISA (out of 494), while in reading it gets 441 and in science 445. In Language, 441 points against 449 were obtained in the year 2009 and 494 of the OECD average; while in Sciences, 445 were obtained by dropping two points from the previous measurement. The Pisa Test measures 66 countries, all belonging to the OECD organization

plus different countries in Latin America, Asia and Europe. This last report categorizes Chile with an education index below the OECD countries, which leaves our country with a great challenge to work towards better education.

At the national level, the Association of Municipalities of Chile carried out an evaluation ranking in 2014 which groups all the educational establishments of the communes of Chile, with this study dividing these into 5 groups or evaluation standards, which consider three categories such as PSU score, SIMCE year 8 and SIMCE year 10.

Table 2.4: Evaluation ranking by the Association of Municipalities of Chile (2014)

STANDARISED TESTS	AVERAGE	GROUP 1	GROUP 2	GROUP 3	GROUP 4	GROUP 5
PSU SCORE	451	599,6	493	454,8	417,1	377
SIMCE YEAR 10	247,02	309,4	309,4	248,254	230,361	218,711
SIMCE YEAR 8	250,343	294,3	294,3	250,496	244,088	250,343

Coquimbo was classified in group 3 (yellow), below La Serena, which has similar urban and demographic characteristics, however as this study involves all schools, La Serena obtained a higher regional score given that there is a greater number of private and subsidised private schools that contributed to a higher index of the variables.

The index of Coquimbo indicates an alert in the quality of the indicators, since these are adjusted to the national average, for which it suggests to increase the communal efforts in improving those indexes since these possess a rather downward scenario.

This research involved the participation of three types of schools, order to represent the real situation of the Chilean educational system. As was mentioned previously, the used sample was from the IV region; as a result, there were three school participants from La Serena city, two from Coquimbo city and one from the small village of Guanaqueros.

School A

This school located in La Serena was established in 1848 by The Barnabitas Congregation with a strong Catholic focus. For a long time, the students were exclusively boys, but since a few

years ago, girls are also accepted. The current number of students is more than 1,000, and it provides scientific humanistic education from primary to secondary school.

School B

This education institution has been in La Serena city for 34 years, receiving male and female students from preschool to secondary school. It offers scientific humanistic education with a secular emphasis. This school currently has more than 1,200 students.

School C

This centenary school located in La Serena city accepts only female students from preschool to primary school, providing scientific humanistic education. It is categorised as public, since the city council is in charge of distribution of economic resources and students do not have to pay any fees for their studies.

School D

This organisation has only been in the education industry in Coquimbo city for 10 years. It offers scientific humanistic instruction for more than 600 female and male students from preschool to secondary education.

School E

This institution was created in 1990 as a kindergarten in Coquimbo city, and with growing numbers of interested students, it expanded its focus into primary and secondary schooling. This school has more than 1,000 female and male students, providing scientific humanistic teaching.

School F

This school was established in 1947 in the small village of Guanaqueros. It provides free education for disadvantaged children from preschool to primary school on a full-time basis (jornada escolar completa). The school focus is centred on music and arts.

3.3.2 Qualitative research

A theoretical framework was not used to conduct this research, since this study was guided by hermeneutic phenomenology, where the central focus was to explore the phenomenon of technical pedagogical head in public, subsidized and private schools. The orientation of the hermeneutic phenomenology used is descriptive and interpretative (Heidegger, 1962), essentially because this important phenomenon in education has been overlooked, with few investigations been undertaken to provide a better understanding of the role.

Hermeneutic phenomenology is concerned with the life world or human experience as it is lived. According to Wilson and Hutchinson (1991), attention is given to illuminating details and seemingly trivial aspects within experience that may be taken for granted in our lives, with a goal of creating meaning and achieving a sense of understanding. Phenomenology becomes hermeneutical when its method is taken to be interpretive instead of purely descriptive as in transcendental phenomenology. This orientation is manifest in the work of Heidegger (1962) who argued that all description is already interpretation and every form of human awareness is interpretive.

This type of research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world and involves an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world. Tesch (1990, pp. 50-51) provides an outline of naturalistic inquiry as one where "the researcher is the instrument, and the focus is on understanding the meaning people under study give to their experiences". This means that qualitative researchers typically study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring to them.

Lincoln and Guba (1985) offer an outline of the paradigm of naturalistic inquiry and the ways in which it differs from the positivist paradigm. Table 3.1 below summaries the five axioms around which Lincoln and Guba base their comparison of the naturalist and positivist paradigms.

Table 3.1: Contrasting positivist and naturalistic axioms (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.37)

Axioms about	Positivist paradigm	Naturalist paradigm
The nature of reality	Reality is single, tangible, and fragmentable	Realities are multiple, constructed and holistic
The relationship of knower to the known	Knower and known are independent, a dualism	Knower and known are interactive, inseparable
The possibility of generalisation	Time- and context-free generalisations (nomothetic statements) are possible	Only time- and context-bound working hypotheses (idiographic statements) are possible
The possibility of causal linkages	There are real causes, temporally precedent to or simultaneous with their effects	All entities are in a state of mutual simultaneous shaping, so that it is impossible to distinguish causes from effects
The role of values	Inquiry is value-free	Inquiry is value-bound

The implications for undertaking research in the naturalistic paradigm based on the axioms presented in Table 3.1 are then outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 39-43) as follows:

1. Research is conducted in a natural setting.

2. Humans are used as the primary data-gathering instruments.

3. Tacit (intuitive, felt) knowledge is used in addition to propositional (expressible in language form) knowledge.

4. Qualitative rather than quantitative methods are employed.

5. Purposive sampling is favoured to increase the range of data collected and increase the likelihood that the full array of multiple realities will be uncovered.

6. Inductive data analysis is preferred to deductive.

7. Guiding substantive theory preferred to emerge from (be grounded in) the data.

8. Research design preferred to be emergent rather than a priori.

9. Meanings and interpretations of data preferred to be negotiated with those from whom it has been drawn.

10. Case study reporting mode preferred over the scientific or technical report.

11. Data interpreted ideographically rather than nomothetically.

12. Broad application of research findings likely to be tentative.

13. Boundaries to the inquiry set on the basis of an emergent focus.

14. Trustworthiness criteria constructed differently to "conventional" criteria.

The chosen methodology presupposes a certain view of knowledge and reality, which is mostly interpretivist, because this research will obtain in depth findings, which are interpretative, individual, idiographic and context dependent, and will develop a body of knowledge in the form of "working hypothesis" that describes the individual case. According to Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2005), the term interpretivism refers to an assemblage of theoretical variants that guide approaches to qualitative research. Although each variant shares family resemblances with the others, each also embodies some unique methods and practices.

Gurr (1996, pp. 85-87) also offers a justification for the use of hermeneutic phenomenology in research of the type involved in this study. His idea is based on three main points as follows.

1. The hermeneutic phenomenological approach seeks first to understand the data and then to ascribe meaning to them; it does not presuppose a meaning to the data. This means that an a priori theoretical framework is not necessary.

2. Hermeneutic phenomenology lends itself to gathering data from a number of different sites because it is inexpensive of time (at least for the initial collecting of information).

3. The methodology employed is a useful technique for gaining perceptual data. Perceptual data are important sources of information concerning what people do because the way they see themselves and others influences how they think and act.

These ideas reinforce the use of this methodology in this study, since this research aimed to allow the participants a fluid communication about their understanding of the phenomenon under examination and the elaboration of a description from this. As with Gurr (1996), the researcher in this study wished to build up descriptions of the phenomenon outlined in the research question (TPH's role and its perceived impacts) that were defined by the experiences of the participants interviewed for the study. Hermeneutic phenomenology, which offers itself to research that assumes no a priori framework, was therefore employed as a methodology that gave the researcher "the freedom to investigate various conceptions (of the phenomenon) and … the participants the freedom to convey their own understandings" (Gurr, 1996, p. 23). Hence, the attention will focus on what appear to be significant aspects of the phenomenon under investigation to ensure scope and depth of coverage, in terms of trustworthiness.

3.3.3 Participants and setting for the study

This study is part of a major thesis that can be achieved within 80,000 words. The quality of a piece of research not only stands or falls by the appropriateness of methodology and instrumentation but also by the suitability of the sampling strategy that has been adopted (Morrison, 1993, pp. 112-117). Therefore, the participant sample consisted of seventy one participants from six schools located in the IV region of Coquimbo in Chile.

The school participants were selected through purposeful sampling (Patton, 2002). One of the reasons for choosing this type of sampling relates to the opportunity of selecting information-rich cases for in-depth study. As Patton (2002, p. 273) mentioned: "the logic and power of purposeful sampling lies in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth". He indicates

that studying information-rich cases allows for greater insight and in-depth understanding instead of empirical generalizations.

Schools were selected taking two main aspects into consideration. First, according to the geographical area; one particular region of Chile was chosen by the researcher. Second, considering the participation of the three types of schools existing in the Chilean education system: public, subsidized and private school. Hence the school participants sample consisted of 6 schools located in the IV Region of Coquimbo, Chile.

- 2 Public schools

- 3 Subsidised schools

- 1 Private school

Selected participants were those who have been involved with a technical pedagogical head. The total number of participants was 71 people: 7 technical pedagogical heads, 6 principals, 4 level coordinators, 4 general inspectors, 3 school counsellors, 1 school integration program coordinator and a total of 46 members of teaching staff. The access to site and participants was arranged by the researcher, who made contact with the principals of the 6 selected schools by email, in order to seek permission to conduct the research. Recruitment of the participants was based on their position and availability on scheduled interview days. Participation was, of course, voluntary. Principals were already aware of the research and they were supportive. All the other people contacted agreed to participate. Therefore, the researcher did not have any problems gaining participation. The context of this research was based on Spanish speakers. The actual number of participants from each school is outlined in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3.2: Research participants by school and position within school

		School A	School B	School C	School D	School E	School F
Principal Class	Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1
Curriculum	Technical pedagogical head	2	1	1	1	1	1
Middle leaders	Level Coordinator	0	0	0	0	3	1
	Integration Program Coordinator	0	0	0	1	0	0
Non-teacher staff	General Inspector	1	0	1	0	1	1
	Counsellor	1	1	0	1	0	0
Group of teachers	Teachers	8	7	7	8	8	8
	Total	13	10	10	12	14	12

3.4 Data collection

Qualitative researchers do not have a single set of methods; instead, they are able to choose from an extensive range of practices that can provide significant insights and knowledge about the phenomenon being investigated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.6). Methods for collecting empirical materials can include: interview; direct observation; analysis of artefacts; documents; cultural records, for example, published accounts of the school history; and the use of visual materials, such as photographs and maps. In this investigation, sources of information besides multiple perspective interviews were sought and used "because no single source of information can be trusted to provide a comprehensive perspective" (Patton, 2002, p.306). Thus, by "using a combination of observation, interviewing and document analysis", the researcher was able to use "different data sources to validate and cross-check findings"

(Patton, 2002, p.306). The features of the data collection techniques employed in this investigation, and how each method was implemented, are described in this section.

This qualitative research involved, as a basis for the data, the interview, and the strategy for collecting and analysing this data comprised an audiotaped interaction with the participants. The methodological approach consisted of one-to-one interviews and group interviews, both semi structured. In addition, some background material was used, such as the schools' Institutional Educational Projects and the schools' websites. Taken together, these two sources of data gave the researcher an in-depth understanding of the TPH's role and their contribution at the school. Each one of these methods is considered in further detail.

3.4.1 Interviews:

Interviewing was the main method of collecting information used in this study. Interviews in hermeneutic phenomenology may be useful for two important reasons: first, for exploring and gathering experiential narrative material that could serve as a resource for developing a richer and deeper understanding of a human phenomenon, and second, in order to develop a conversational relation with another individual about the meaning of an experience (Van Manen, 2012).

Minichiello, Aroni, and Hays (2008) define interviewing as a face-to-face verbal interchange in which one person, the interviewer, attempts to elicit information or expressions of opinion or belief from another person or persons. Minichiello et al. (2008) also describe the ways in which the relevant literature has attempted to categorise forms of interviewing, offering three broad types of interviewing that can be considered as regions of a continuum. Briefly, *structured interviewing* involves the asking of a predetermined set of standardised questions in a predetermined order. *Focussed* or *semi-structured interviewing* involves the use of a broad topic to guide an interview that is developed within a flexible interview schedule without fixed wording or ordering of questions. *Unstructured interviewing* relies on the social interaction between the researcher and the interview participants to elicit information and involves no formal interview schedules or ordering of questions. Semi-structured interviewing was used for the purpose of collecting participants' responses in this research. Interview

schedules were not pre-planned, nor did the interviews involve a pre-defined list of questions that would constitute the interview, except for lists that would serve as guides for the researcher to ensure that an appropriate scope of the phenomenon under investigation had been dealt with.

There were two types of interviews used for this study; one to one and group interviews. All school members were asked a similar set of six to nine questions. In the case of one to one interviews the number of questions were eight to nine, while six questions were asked to the group of participants. The interviews were semi-structured and additionally each interviewee was asked to describe the role of the technical pedagogical head in-depth. Extra questions were asked as part of the semi-structured interview process. In order to assist understanding the dynamic of the questions and answers, the researcher included an Appendix section with the interview formats for every participant.

3.4.1.1 Interview process

The interview process consisted of a brief starting dialogue between the researcher and every participant, in terms of establishing rapport and an understanding of the purpose of the interview, gathering information relating to the professional history of the participant(s), and then commencing the interview proper with an initial question. Interviews were held at the school during a normal school day at a mutually agreed time and date. The interviews were between 40 and 60 minutes in duration and were recorded. Minichiello et al. (2008) outline the advantages and disadvantages of recording interviews, which are outlined briefly below.

Advantages

•   Assists in improving empathy between the interviewer and participant.

•   It ensures a full and correct record.

•   It allows for a more natural exchange of ideas.

•   It permits the interviewer to be attentive to the participant.

Disadvantages

•   Participants may find the process inhibiting.

•   The recording device does not record non-verbal data.

By recording the interview, a complete and precise record of the interview was gained, and it allowed the researcher to use a natural conversation style and attend to what was being said,

which improved the rapport between researcher and participant. The research tried to diminish the first disadvantage of participant inhibition by guaranteeing anonymity to the participants when they requested it. No record was made of non-verbal data and thus will not be discussed in this research.

The resulting transcripts were sent to participants for checking or editing purposes with the exception of the group interviews, since the researcher could not recognize voices at the time of transcribing. By presenting the full transcripts, the trustworthiness of the data is enhanced Participants were informed that they could add material, altering or deleting (editing) the interview transcript before returning it to the researcher for analysis. Of the 25 individuals who participated in the one to one interviews, 15 returned interview transcripts to the researcher, with only two of these having been altered, albeit in a very minor way.

The questions were semi-structured to allow more flexibility and openness for the interviewer to respond to the information provided by interviewees. The initial question used for each of the participant groups was as follows, with the questions receiving slight variations as required by the terminology used for TPH in each of the schools.

- For principals, middle leaders, non-teaching staff and the group of teachers: With particular regard to leadership, how do you see the role of the technical pedagogical head in this school?
- For the TPHs: With particular regard to leadership, how do you see your role as a technical pedagogical head in this school?

Once the initial interview question had been asked, an active listening technique was employed until the interview reached a natural conclusion. To ensure that full exploration of the phenomenon under investigation was covered in each of the interviews, some comprehensive questions were used. This ensured that the focus of the interviews remained on the phenomenon under investigation, and that areas related to the research questions that needed to be examined, were investigated. These questions were as follows.

- I am interested in what technical pedagogical heads do. Can you describe an example of how the technical pedagogical head works in the school? Please try to provide an example if possible.

- What has been their main contribution to the school?

- What does the term technical pedagogical head mean for you? What are the qualities and characteristics that the school technical pedagogical head brings to the role?

- Reflecting on the improvement journey of this school, can you summarise how the school is progressing and who have been the key people in this progress?

As well, each person was asked individually to describe in depth the role of the technical pedagogical head, giving examples of their function at the school. The questions were different because the views and roles were different: the principals, middle leaders, non-teaching staff and the group of teachers were asked to reflect on their own perspective and according to their work relationship with the TPHs. On the other hand, the TPHs were asked to reflect on their understanding of the role based on their experience of being TPHs at the school. The questions were intentionally broad and non-prescriptive. The questions were also designed to set the boundaries, but not to force or direct the discussion; this type of unstructured interviewing has been referred to as a "controlled conversation, which is geared to the interviewer's research interests [but where] the level of control is regarded as minimal" (Minichiello et al., 1995).

3.4.1.2 One to one interviews

A total of twenty five one to one interviews were used to collect data. The purpose of these is to set up a condition where each respondent could express their thoughts, ideas, feelings, intentions and sub-contexts (Lichtman, 2010, p. 140). One to one interviews allowed for the collection of data in the form of direct quotations from the participants, who expressed their views and beliefs about the TPHs definition, role and impact. According to Quirk's Marketing Research Review (2006, p.1):

One-on-one interviews can uncover the best thinking of every respondent without the drawbacks of group dynamics. In a typical focus group, a few of the respondents do most of the talking. Even if an adept moderator can help smooth out this imbalance, it's difficult to prevent group-think bias as a result of a few individuals monopolizing the conversations.

By using one-on-one interviews, thoughts from one respondent do not influence the opinions of other respondents, which increases the quality of the information obtained. This method of interviewing is also designed to elicit the reasons behind respondents' reactions. These types of interviews are ideal when looking for detailed information on topics that people are unlikely to openly talk about in front of others or when expressing concepts that may be difficult to understand and which participants may not want to demonstrate their ignorance of in a public setting. For example, employees may be unwilling to speak freely in front of co-workers and/or management observers. Therefore, the use of one to one interviews was very helpful, in terms of eliciting honest and extended answers.

3.4.1.3 Group interviews

Twelve group interviews were held with four teachers in ten groups, and three teachers in two groups. Therefore 46 teaching staff were interviewed, with two group interviews conducted in each school. The benefit provided by the group interview was that it facilitated interaction, and also allowed new thoughts and ideas to appear which might not occur in an individual interview (Lichtman, 2010, p. 154).

3.4.2 Background material

To provide background support material, the researcher made use of a number of significant documents produced by the Ministry of Chilean Education, school information and reports and the Institutional Educational Project of each school. According to Doherty (2008, p.77),

Documents can be internal to the school, such as the notes from which the principal speaks to staff on the first day of a school year or the minutes of a School Council meeting which provides direct clues as to the qualities and strategies of principal leadership in the school. Documents can also be external, such as publications like

those produced and released for public consumption, for example, the school newsletter, website information and school promotion brochures which build a picture of the school, of what it provides, and how it goes about the business of teaching and learning.

Some external documents are good indicators of school system strategies and represent the values of those in positions of leadership, management and administration (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003, p.128). They often present the official face of the school, marketing image to the wider community, and work towards creating its market niche; the interrelationships among the different school members, and the identity of the school. In selecting school documents as background support material, the researcher could ascertain who produced the documents and what their aim was in doing so.

Those documents accessed in the study were the schools' Institutional Educational Projects and the school's websites. Both sources of data - documents and the interviews - provided the researcher with a comprehensive understanding of the TPH's role and their contribution to the school. Hence, documents are a valuable source of information in qualitative research because they are a good source of textual data and have the benefit of being in the language and words of the participants, who have commonly given focused attention to them (Creswell, 2009). The documents used in this study were publicly accessible, and considerable care was taken by the researcher to use this supporting material in an accurate and authentic way.

3.5 Qualitative data analysis

This section comprises a description of the process undertaken for the analysis of participant interviews. The process was informed by the use of excerpts from the interviews, using qualitative methods. Six schools were chosen from one defined geographical area of Chile. A total number of 71 participants were interviewed and this information was supplemented by evidence from appropriate documentation. Interviews were semi structured to allow for issues to emerge. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed for themes that resulted in a description of the role of technical pedagogical head and their contribution to the school.

Analysis of the interviews followed the qualitative methodology espoused by Miles, Huberman and Saldana (2014). In accordance with Miles et al. (2014), the researcher used three "concurrent flows of activity: data reduction; data display and conclusion drawing/verification". The interactive model of data analysis (figure 3.1) as described in Miles et al. (2014) was used to examine the evidence provided to explore the phenomenon of the TPH in relation to the research question.
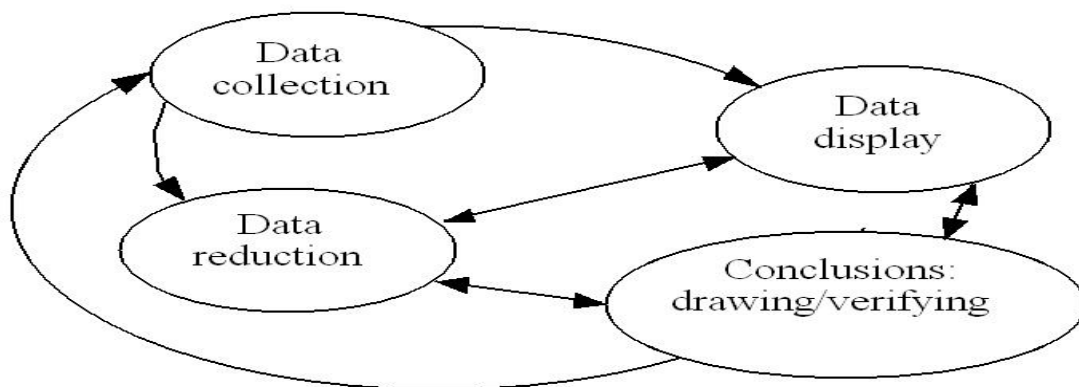
Figure 3.1: Components of data analysis: Interactive model

(Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 12)

Data reduction involved the use of code words, or words to describe categories, the codes being attached to descriptive or inferential information to enable differentiation and combination of the data (Miles et al. 2014; Tesch 2013). Therefore, data reduction started by highlighting significant phrases, sentences and words that described the role of the technical pedagogical head and noting keywords or labels in the right-hand margin that characterised the units of meaning. A unit of meaning is a segment of text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode, or piece of information (Tesch, 2013). This analysis was essential to represent the interviewee's perceptions precisely and to clarify and suspend any researcher assumptions and interpretations and eliminate bias (Tesch, 2013). To finish this process, the last data display consisted of the arrangement of the sets of foremost themes

and subthemes. This was made in order to assist in organising the data efficiently, identifying themes, using inductive logic, and making deep interpretations (Hurworth, 1996; Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998). The data was analysed for commonalities, for instance:

The interview had questions focused on three main themes, which were highlighted with different colours, as follows:

- Definition of TPH: <mark style="background-color:magenta">pink</mark>
- Role of TPH: <mark style="background-color:lime">green</mark>
- The impact of the TPH: <mark style="background-color:yellow">yellow</mark>

At the same time, these main themes revealed sub themes, which were highlighted as well, and they provided categories that defined these sub themes, as table 3.3 indicates below for a question related to the TPH's work in the school. The, answer pointed out two of the main themes, which were the definition (pink) and the role of the TPH (yellow). Also, from the content of the answer, it can be seen that there were two sub themes emerging from the definition of TPH and one sub theme extracted from the role of TPH. Finally, this process of codification allowed a detailed explanation in the results chapter, and also a further discussion.

During the coding process, the main themes and sub-themes were determined according to the frequency of their appearance in the interviews and this frequency was highlighted in yellow followed by their respective total value (please refer to each table in the Result's chapter).

Table 3.3: Excerpt from interview with a school principal

Questions and answers	Main themes	Sub themes
I am interested in what technical pedagogical heads do. Can you describe an example of how the technical pedagogical head works in the school? Please try to provide an example if possible. We have gone through experiences, we have had TPH's rather traditional style in primary and secondary, we had two TPH's, but as I've been working here, I realized that we had to make a change, not to keep with the role of a TPH who gets into all departments or in all subjects and intends to manage the curriculum or even trying to supervise it, i.e. how the English lesson is, how the History or Maths lessons are. I feel I gave him a managerial role (as coordinator), the TPH is more as a coordinator of the pedagogical activity rather than a supervisor of each activity there, because there are department heads for each activity (related to each subject), he or she directs a subject of her/his expertise, with a pedagogical leadership, i.e. what we are doing, how we are evaluating, if we are complying with the educational program. Since our goal is also to develop the program, and those who know more about the subject program are the subject teachers, so we transfer the responsibility to the heads of department and the TPH, which is only one now, he is in charge of a managerial role and we have been doing this for already 6 or 7 years, when the past TPH retired from work. And we started with the creation of departments and there is a coordinator for primary, another for secondary, plus the subject coordinators, and we continue working in the same way which has been	DEFINITION OF THE TPH ROLE OF THE TPH	-TYPES OF TPHS - THE NEED OF DELEGATING FUNCTIONS -PLAN & CURRICULUM DESIGN IMPLEMENTATION

positive (with all respect for the previous people).		

3.6 Rigour and trustworthiness

Researchers need alternative models appropriate to qualitative designs that ensure rigour without sacrificing the relevance of the qualitative research. According to Guba´s model (1991), researchers define four aspects of trustworthiness that are relevant to qualitative studies: truth value, applicability, consistency, and neutrality. Guba and Lincoln's (1991) model identified these four criteria as applicable to the assessment of research of any type. They argued that these criteria must be defined differently for qualitative and quantitative research based on the philosophical and conceptual divergence of the two approaches.

Regarding the matter of trustworthiness for the type of research methodology used in this study (hermeneutic phenomenology), Lincoln and Guba (1985, p. 267) also note:

> Naturalistic inquiry seems to be especially assailable on the grounds of being 'sloppy' or 'loosey-goosey', and it is imperative that inquirers working from this paradigm take measures while in the field to increase the probability of a judgement of trustworthiness as well as to test it directly.

The four components of trustworthiness, mentioned in the introduction to this section, are thought by Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.290) to encompass four questions that have led to the evolution of the four components:

1. How can one establish confidence in the 'truth' of the findings of a particular inquiry for the subjects (respondents) with which and the context in which the inquiry was carried out? Truth value: internal validity/credibility.
2. How can one determine the extent to which the findings of a particular inquiry have applicability in other contexts or with other subjects (respondents)? Applicability: external validity/transferability.

3. How can one determine whether the findings of an inquiry would be repeated if the inquiry were replicated with the same (or similar) subjects (respondents) in the same (or similar) context? Consistency: reliability/dependability.

4. How can one establish the degree to which the findings of an inquiry are determined by the subjects (respondents) and conditions of the inquiry, and not by the biases, motivations, interests, or perspectives of the inquirer? Neutrality: objectivity/confirmability.

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.301) offer alternatives to the conventional (positivist) terms associated with trustworthiness:

> … not simply to add to naturalism's mystique or to provide it with its fair share of arcane concepts, but to make clear the inappropriateness of the conventional terms when applied to naturalism and to provide alternatives that stand in a more logical and derivative relation to the naturalistic axioms.

Arguments are provided for each of the four substitutions involved (p.294-301), and the concept of trustworthiness as proposed by Lincoln and Guba has been taken as applicable to this research. These authors suggested a manner in which the four components of trustworthiness may be addressed, as follows:

3.6.1 Credibility

Lincoln and Guba provide five major techniques and seven activities that contribute to the credibility of a study.

- Three activities that increase the probability that credible findings and interpretations:
  1. *Prolonged engagement*: "the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes; learning the 'culture', testing for misinformation introduced by distortions of the self or of the respondents, and building trust" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.301); provides scope.
  2. *Persistent observation*: the ability to "identify those characteristics and elements in the situation that are most relevant to the problem or issue being pursued and focusing on them in detail" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.304); provides depth.

3. *Triangulation*: the use of different sources and/or methods of data collection, sometimes with the use of multiple investigators. Lincoln and Guba consider the use of different investigation designs and multiple theories for the sake of triangulation not to be acceptable in the naturalistic paradigm (pp.306-307).

- One activity that provides an external check on the inquiry process:

4. *Peer debriefing*: the use of a critical reviewer (Gurr, 1996, p.102)/disinterested peer (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.308) for "the purpose of exploring aspects of the inquiry that might otherwise remain only implicit within the inquirer's mind" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.308); keeps the researcher "honest" and ensures "that the investigator is as fully aware of his or her posture and process as possible (remembering that while it is not possible to divest oneself of values, it is at least possible to be aware of the role they play)" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.308).

- One activity aimed at refining working hypotheses as more and more information becomes available:

5. *Negative case analysis*: continual reviewing of a hypothesis until it accounts for all, or "some reasonable number" of cases (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.312).

- One activity that makes it possible to check preliminary findings and interpretations against archived "raw data":

6. *Referential adequacy*: the use of some collected data as "a kind of benchmark against which later data analyses and interpretations … could be tested for adequacy" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.313); involves the archiving and, thus, the loss from use in the investigation of a 'representative' portion of collected data.

- One activity providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they have come - the constructors of the multiple realities being studied:

7. *Member checking*: the use of participants of the investigation to check the data, analytic categories, interpretations, and conclusions; the "most crucial technique for establishing credibility" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.314).

3.6.2 Transferability

Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.316) indicated that it is impossible, "in a strict sense", for transferability to be established in research involving a naturalist methodology since the paradigm assumes multiple realities, and the researcher "can only set out working hypotheses together with a description of the time and context in which they were found to hold". Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.316) argue that the researcher's provision of "thick description" can "enable someone interested in making a transfer to reach a conclusion about whether transfer can be contemplated as a possibility". In fact, since the elements that constitute "proper" thick description are not fully developed or defined, the task of the researcher, broadly defined, is to supply sufficient information as to make the judgement of transferability "possible on the part of potential appliers".

3.6.3 Dependability and Confirmability

Both dependability and confirmability are achieved in the naturalistic paradigm through the use of an "inquiry audit", a process that Lincoln and Guba describe as being akin to a financial audit in business circles. Known as the "Halpern algorithm", the audit involves three major components.

1. The audit trail, "a residue of records stemming from the inquiry" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.319). Such records are understood to consist of six main categories, each subject to further sub-division: raw data, data reduction and analysis products, data reconstruction and synthesis products, process notes, materials relating to intentions and dispositions, and instrument development information.

2. The audit process, divided into five stages, the process requires the involvement of a second person (the auditor) to assess the investigation in terms of its process and product, and, thus, to establish the trustworthiness of the investigation in terms of its dependability and confirmability. Lincoln and Guba note (p.324) that the auditor also has "considerable leverage on the question of whether *credibility* had been appropriately dealt with in a study" [Lincoln and Guba italics].

The assessment of both dependability and confirmability involves a number of steps, with Lincoln and Guba mentioning that the algorithm calls for the dependability check to precede that for confirmability; but that "the order is not, however, critical" (p.323). In the assessment of confirmability, the auditor makes a judgement as to "the extent to which the data and interpretations of the study are grounded in events rather than the inquirer's personal constructions" (p.324). In making this judgement the auditor will follow a process that involves these steps:

- Following a sampling of findings back to the raw data, via the audit trail;

- Making judgements about whether inferences based on the data are logical;

- Investigating the utility of the category structure;

- Assessing the degree and incidence of inquirer bias; and

- Assessing the inquirer's "accommodation strategies", that is, the "efforts made by the auditee during the inquiry to ensure confirmability".

In the assessment of dependability, judgement is made on the adequacy of issues such as the following:

- The appropriateness of inquiry decisions and methodology shifts;

- The extent to which all data have been accounted for and all areas reasonably explored;

- The extent to which negative as well as positive data has been searched for;

- The possibility of influence by factors such as the Pygmalion and Hawthorne effects; and

- The possible intrusion of instabilities.

3. The preparation of an auditor's report.

Further to the processes defined above for establishing trustworthiness, Lincoln and Guba (1985, p.327) incorporate the use of a "reflexive journal" which they state has "broad-ranging application to all four areas and provides a base for a number of judgement calls the auditor must make". They consider that for such a journal "it would appear reasonable to suggest that it consists of separate parts that include the following" [Lincoln and Guba italics]:

1. the *daily schedule and logistics* of the study;

2. a *personal diary* that provides the opportunity for catharsis, for reflection, and for recording of growing insights; and

3. a *methodological log* that records methodological decisions and accompanying rationales.

3.6.4 Trustworthiness of this study

3.6.4.1 Credibility

Credibility for the study was gained through the use of the seven activities proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

- Triangulation: credibility was enhanced through the use of triangulation. Triangulation involved the collection of information from different sources, such as technical pedagogical heads, school principals and middle level leaders of Chilean Schools. Data were carefully analysed using themes that emerged from the data. This allowed for conceptual connections to be made and conclusions to be drawn that confirmed the findings.
- Member checking: interview participants checked interview transcripts for accuracy, with the exception of the group interviews, since the researcher could not recognize voices at the time of transcribing. Participants were informed that they could add material, altering or deleting (editing) the interview transcript before returning it to the researcher for analysis. Of the 25 individuals who participated in one to one interviews, 15 returned interview transcripts to the researcher, with only two of these having been altered, albeit in a very minor way.
- Peer debriefing: regular meetings throughout the course of the research with the research's supervisor and co-supervisor assisted the purposes of this activity as described by Lincoln and Guba (1985, pp. 308-309).

As noted in White's study (2000), the remaining activities related to credibility outlined by Lincoln and Guba were considered as either not applicable (prolonged engagement,

persistent observation, negative case analysis), or too expensive of time (peer debriefing) or data (referential adequacy).

3.6.4.2 Transferability

A detailed summary of the phases of the methodological process employed, together with descriptions of the main features of the interview participants and the schools' sites involved contributed to the thick description provided for this research.

3.6.4.3 Dependability and confirmability

There is enough material from this research for others to conduct an audit trail to clear any judgements of dependability and credibility, including those who may wish to borrow from the methodology for further research. Such material is listed below.

- Raw data: audio recordings of interviews, and their transcripts.
- Data reduction and analysis: summaries of interview transcripts and interview themes.
- Data reconstruction and synthesis products: final report, including literature survey and methodology outline.
- Material relating to intentions and dispositions, including investigation proposal.

3.7 Delimitations and limitations of the study

Research can have delimitations and limitations. Delimitations are represented by the assigning of boundaries, while limitations are the restrictions and qualifications that are placed on the findings. In regard to the research described herein, Gurr (1996, p.97) writes that "much of the discussion of these issues arises through the use of a qualitative methodology and the freedoms and constraints this imposes".

As previously mentioned, one of the characteristics of naturalistic enquiry is the focus-determined nature of its boundaries (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.42). Consequently, an important delimitation of this study was that the researcher used data from only one Chilean region, which means that is challenging to make generalizations from this research. It may be that the study could be interpreted as being quite subjective. Although the findings may have applicability outside of this region, no such applicability is implied or assumed. It should however be noted that diverse quotations and multiple perspectives were incorporated to support the results (Creswell, 2009, p. 189). The findings have also been conveyed using rich data which can be connected to the attached quotes in Chapter Four: Results.

Another delimitation may be that the research involves only the perspectives gathered from within the schools and members participating in the study, and from a sample of personnel: technical pedagogical heads, school principals, middle level leaders and teachers. The inclusion of other school communities (perhaps more private schools) and members (group of students) would have provided for a greater variety of perspectives. However, this was beyond the scope of this research, considering the time available for the fieldwork.

According to Gurr (1996, p.98-100), the research is further delimited by its being descriptive and interpretive, in place of experimental and theory building. He also outlines the main limitations with research of the type described here as being those associated with employing qualitative methodologies. He explores these using a list of benefits and problems associated with qualitative research methods developed by Miles and Huberman (1984, pp. 15-16), and summarised as follows.

Benefits

1. It provides rich descriptions and interpretations of social phenomena.
2. It can lead to surprising findings and to new theoretical integrations because the research does not have to be constrained by initial preconceptions and frameworks.
3. The findings may be more attractive and more persuasive to many readers because the findings are presented as words, not numbers.

These three benefits are all present in this research. In fact, the methodology employed was chosen so that a rich description of the TPH's role and impact could be obtained; which was

generated from the descriptions given by the participants involved, and which was able to be presented in words so that it was easily accessible to individuals who do not possess specialist statistical knowledge.

Problems

1. There are time and financial demands involved in the data collection and analysis.
2. The limited degree of sampling means that generalisability is often limited.
3. Because it relies heavily on the researcher's interpretation, there may be increased chance of researcher bias.
4. The methods of qualitative data analysis are not always clearly formulated. This dearth of guidelines on data collection may make it difficult for the research to be replicated.

Time demands of the data collection process were a relevant issue for the researcher and her study. Even though the researcher tried to organise the fieldwork and the data analysis in advance, several circumstances made this process somewhat problematic. First of all, the study was centred on the Chilean education system, which necessitated overseas travel, which was a time-consuming process. The researcher had to travel to Chile for almost three months and coordinate this trip at least six months in advance. Once, arriving at the destination, the researcher had to re-organise the interviews with the school principals, since the majority of the dates had to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances.

The data analysis process was time consuming, involving the transcription of thirty seven interviews, followed by the sending of the transcripts back to participants for checking, before they were returned to the researcher, who modified them to produce the final version of the interview transcript. Also, there was another challenge that arose over the stage of the interview transcriptions, which was related to some difficulties translating the ideas of the interviewees from Spanish to English. The researcher believes that this happens because Spanish speakers use many extra words to explain a simple idea, making it more complex and therefore harder to translate into English without changing the meaning, whilst English speakers are more specific and precise in explaining their viewpoints. As a result, this process took longer than the expected.

The final three problems raised by Miles and Huberman and cited by Gurr (1996) relate to the issues of generalisability, researcher bias and replication respectively. As previously outlined, these issues are reflected in the naturalistic paradigm through the concepts of transferability, confirmability and dependability respectively. All three areas have been discussed above in relation to the issue of trustworthiness, both generally, and in relation to this study specifically.

3.8 Ethical issues and risks

Ethical concerns encountered in educational research may create a conflict between the demands placed on researchers as professional scientist in pursuit of truth, and their subjects' rights and values which could potentially be threatened by the research. This is known as the cost/benefits ratio, the essence of which is outlined by Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (1992).

Some important aspects to consider in the ethics procedure for educational research include informed consent and the access and acceptance by the research participants. First, informed consent plays an important role in relation to the subject´s right to freedom and self-determination. This protects and respects the rights of participants and places some of the responsibility on them, because the subject has the right to refuse to take part. According to this principle, researchers submitted an ethics application to THEMIS, which is the integrated administration system that supports the documentation and management of Finance, Human Resources, Research and Environment, Health and Safety processes at the University of Melbourne. Consent was granted under this system for the researchers to gain access to the participants.

In general, ethical aspects have been well respected, because researchers hold an ethic of respect for the person, knowledge, democratic values, the quality of educational research and academic freedom (Dowling & Brown, 2010). In terms of confidentiality, this research had the consent of the Department of Education of Coquimbo in Chile (DAEM), The University of Melbourne with THEMIS approval, and the permission of the school principals to proceed. Consequently, these organisations allowed the researcher to use the real names of the schools. However, there were some school members from different schools who preferred to

be anonymous. Therefore, anonymity was assured through the use of codes for both the participants and the schools involved.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Overview

This chapter describes and discusses the results that emerged from the interviews with the technical pedagogical heads, principals, leadership team members and teachers involved in this research. This chapter addresses the main question of this study; what is the role and impact of the technical pedagogical head in different types of schools in the Chilean education system?" Data were collected through some background material and a series of semi-structured individual and group interviews.

All interviews conducted for the study were between the researcher and one participant (a total number of 25 one on one interviews), with the exception of 12 group interviews, involving four teachers in each group. The interviews were audio-taped, and notes were taken. Each interview was between thirty and fifty minutes in duration. Therefore, 37 interviews were conducted with 71 participants.

Chilean education has three main types of schools: public, subsidized and private schools. Hence, this study included these types of schools in its selection; two public, two subsidized and two private schools. Only schools from Coquimbo and La Serena in Chile were invited, considering typical or traditional schools and excluding failing schools or schools with less than ten years of establishment. Principals and TPHs from participating schools were required to be in their position for at least two years. The researcher stopped the selection once two schools from each sector were obtained, filling the six places.

Individuals were selected by the researcher with the collaboration of the principals, on the basis of having a relationship with a technical pedagogical head. Interviews were conducted with the following people, who currently fulfil a variety of leadership roles at the school. The individual interviews were with: six principals, seven technical pedagogical heads, four level

coordinators, four general inspectors, three counsellors and an integration program coordinator. Group interviews were conducted with 46 teachers divided into 12 groups with four teachers per group.

Summary of the findings

When the analysis of data collected from the school documents had been completed and correlated with the themes drawn from the interview responses, a final list of themes was made. The final themes were ranked from strongest to weakest according to their frequency of occurrence. The results of that process are given in Tables 1, 2 and 3.

Table 4.1: Definition of TPH

MATRIX SHOWING THE HIGHEST CONSISTENT RATE OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES						
Matrix 1: Members of Six Chilean Schools and their responses.						
THEME	Principal Class (6P)	Curriculum (7TPH)	Middle Leaders (4LC,1 IPC)	Non-teacher support (4GI, 3C)	Group of Teachers (12T)	AGREEMENT
1.1 General Definition						
Guide	4	5	2	3	9	23
Pedagogical activities coordinator	2	3	2	2	3	12
Curriculum Leader	2	1	3	1	3	10
1.2 Required characteristics:						
Expertise	3	3	4	4	10	24
Empathy	3	3	3	4	11	24
Leadership	3	2	3	4	10	22
Experience in the classroom	2	2	3	3	10	20
Up to date	4	1	2	1	4	12
Role model	2	2	1	2	2	9
Proper educational background	2	4	1		1	8
Communication skills	1	1		3	2	7
1.3 Perceptions of the TPH:						
The need of delegating functions among TPH's	6	5	3	4	10	28
Traditional v/s Contemporary workstyle	5	3	2	2	8	20
Supervising v/s Supporting	4	3	2	2	8	19
Lack of time		4	2	1	5	12

Lack of information of the TPH role	2	3	2	1	3	11
Change the name	1	3		2	5	11
Every school defines a different role					2	2

Table 4.2: Role of TPH

MATRIX SHOWING THE HIGHEST CONSISTENT RATE OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES						
Matrix 1: Members of Six Chilean Schools and their responses.						
THEME	Principal Class (6P)	Curriculum (7TPH)	Middle Leaders (4LC,1 IPC)	Non-teacher support (4GI, 3C)	Group of Teachers (12T)	AGREEMENT
2.1 Supporting teachers in the classroom	6	7	4	4	11	32
2.2 Plan & Curriculum design and implementation	4	7	3	4	10	28
2.3 Test revision	5	5	2	4	9	25
Multifunctional	1	5	1	1	4	12
Timetable creation	2	2		2	2	8
Workshops	1	1		1	2	5
2.4 Strengths of the role						
Closeness	3	4	3	4	11	25
Expertise	4	5	3	2	10	24
Leadership	5	4	3	4	8	24
Kindness-Generosity	3	1	3		5	12
Responsibility	3	1	1	1	3	9
Professionalism	4	1	1		2	8
Up to date	3	1			4	8
2.5 Weaknesses of the role						
Bad communication	6	6	4	7	12	35
Abuse of power	5	7	4	4	7	27
Bureaucracy	4	7	5	3	6	25
Lack of expertise	3	4	2	1	5	15
Working alone	1	1	2	1	3	8

Table 4.3: The impact of the TPH

MATRIX SHOWING THE HIGHEST CONSISTENT RATE OF PARTICIPANT RESPONSES						
Matrix 1: Members of Six Chilean Schools and their responses.						
THEME	Principal Class (6P)	Curriculum (7TPH)	Middle Leaders (4LC,1 IPC)	Non-teacher support (4GI, 3C)	Group of Teachers (12T)	AGREEMENT
3.1 Main contributions of a TPH:						
Teachers support	6	7	4	5	12	34
Improving strategies	6	7	2	3	11	29
3.2 The importance of working with the principals	5	5	2	3	10	25

Abbreviations:
TPH: Technical pedagogical head
P: Principal
LC: Level Coordinator
GI: General Inspector
C: Counsellor
IPC: Integration Program Coordinator
T: Teachers
High Agreement in each theme= Yellow colour
Notes:
Teachers' responses were obtained from 12 group interviews.

Classification	Principal Class		Curriculum	Middle leaders	Non-teacher support	Teachers
Role	P	SP	TPH	LC, IPC	GI, C	T

37 interviews, 71 participants.

12 group interviews (46 teachers)

25 one-on-one interviews

The results are reported according to the main themes and sub-themes that emerged during analysis of the interviews. The principal themes and sub themes are presented below:

Table 4.4: Chapter distribution

MAIN THEMES	SUB THEMES
1. Definition of TPH	1.1 General definition
	1.2 Required characteristics
	• Expertise
	• Empathy
	• Leadership
	• Experience in the classroom
	1.3 Perceptions of the TPHs:
	• The need of delegating functions among TPH's
	• Traditional versus Contemporary work style
	• Supervision versus supporting
2. Role of TPH	2.1 Supporting teachers in the classroom
	2.2 Plan & Curriculum design and implementation
	2.3 Test revision
	2.4 Strengths of the role
	• Closeness, expertise and leadership
	2.5 Weaknesses of the role
	• Bad communication, abuse of power and bureaucracy.
3. The impact of the TPH	3.1 Main contributions of a TPH
	• Teachers support
	• Improving teachers' strategies
	3.2 The importance of working with the principals

4.1 Definition of the TPH

This section describes the definition of the technical pedagogical head as expounded by the interviewees. During the interviews, participants described some important factors which provided a general definition and characteristics of a TPH. Furthermore, important topics came to light such as the need for delegating functions among TPHs, as well as two different TPHs' workstyles. The concept of technical pedagogical head is familiar to the Chilean education system; seven people have been working in this role and several school members have been involved with a TPH. All of them were interviewed in this study, in order to further understand this interesting concept.

Participants indicated how they perceive a TPH, and from these perceptions a key idea was unveiled, such as the difference between supervising the work of the teachers and supporting them. For instance, the school D principal said that the TPH's work is more about supporting teachers rather than supervising them, giving the word "supervise" a negative connotation. Sub themes that emerged from the interviews comprise a real necessity of change in regards to the TPH's role and the need for a head of department at schools as a collaborative partner of the TPH. Each of these topics will now be described.

4.1.1 General definition

Guide

Through these two questions: "What does the term technical pedagogical head mean to you?" and "How do you see the role of the technical pedagogical head at school?" interviewees had to explain their perceptions of the TPH. The answers showed a high level of agreement, twenty three out of thirty seven responses indicated that "the TPH is a guide".

When teachers defined the TPH term, nine out of twelve described it mostly as a guide. For instance, educators from school F described the TPH as a guide or a counsellor who has to work on technical, administrative and pedagogical matters. There were similar opinions on

perceiving the TPH as a mentor and supportive colleague. One of these teachers said, "She makes me grow in a professional way". Another teacher of the same school explained, "She saw my strengths and weaknesses to start teaching me".

As stated by teachers from group A, the TPH is a good guide that presents clear objectives for the teachers, walking together to support educators towards children's learning. They also mentioned that the TPH is a guide and an educator's leader who has to work with them, providing direction to reach their goals. Furthermore, as a leader a TPH should always be looking for quality improvement practices.

According to the teachers from school D, the TPH is an expert in curriculum and planning who guides educators. Similarly, the group of teachers from school C defined the TPH as an essential person at school with strong social values and a coordinator or facilitator of teachers' practice. Some teachers from school E considered the TPH to be an academic leader and teachers' practice evaluator. Others believed that the TPH must be permanently working with teachers: according to them, "if it is not happening, we could get rid of him". While teachers from school B described the TPH as a pedagogical coordinator with a wide range of knowledge about the national curriculum, plans and programs; they said, "If the school principal is away, the second in charge is the TPH".

Technical pedagogical heads were also asked for a definition of their role, and five out of seven used the term 'guide' to describe it. They provided extended explanations to enlighten their answers, for example, the TPH from school D said: "the TPH is a facilitator of the teacher's work; we have to guide the teaching practice and we are also the principal's advisor in curriculum matters". Similarly, another TPH mentioned (school A): "the TPH is the person who supports and guides teachers. In addition to this we have to assist the school principal in everything". This TPH also added that he is mainly in charge of checking tests/exams, students' learning, teachers' training and school results, which was confirmed by the TPH from school E.

To continue with the TPH's description, four out of six school principals perceived the TPH as a guide. Principals' responses were mainly focused on guidance of pedagogical matters to define a TPH plus their role. For instance, principal E said, "the TPH is the curriculum director",

explaining that the TPH is the protagonist of the program implementation. This idea was coherent with principal F's opinion: "who articulates everything generated by the school in order to improve the learning process". Similarly, principals from school C and B mentioned that the TPH is responsible for the learning process, and the coordinator of pedagogical activities at the school. Similarly, the school integration program coordinator from school D defined the TPH as follows: "I think it is the intellectual root of the school".

A group of three general inspectors provided an overall definition of the TPH and it was similar to the principal's vision. For example, one said, "the TPH works closely with the principal and his duties are related to the learning process, planning, content, lessons, evaluation and orientation", whilst another inspector from school A included the idea of supervision within the definition. This concept was also mentioned by the school D counsellor who indicated that the TPH is someone who must be aware of the pedagogical work of students and teachers. In general terms, the extracted definition from respondents pointed out that the TPH is a guide, in charge of the school pedagogical activities and the curriculum leader.

4.2 Required characteristics

When participants defined the TPH, they expressed a set of features which are essential to perform excellent work at school. In twenty four interviews, expertise and empathy were mentioned as extremely important traits in a TPH. Alongside these characteristics, the other twenty two interviews showed that leadership was crucial characteristic, and twenty interviews indicated that previous experience in the classroom was required before performing the role of TPH. A clearer explanation about each concept is provided below.

Expertise

Expert skill or knowledge in the field of school education was mentioned as an important requirement by the majority of participating teachers in this study. Educators from school F explained that the trust relationship with the TPH is grounded on their expertise, since they can learn from this role. Therefore, if there is a lack of knowledge, they would rarely believe in a TPH. Similarly, teachers from school A said that their TPH inspires confidence towards performing good work based on her expertise. Likewise, school E teachers believed that the

TPH must be clever in education. According to another group of teachers (C), the TPH needs to be trained in curriculum and pedagogical matters because the school's success mostly depends on the TPH's work. These ideas were also mentioned by educators from school E, who defined this required trait as "technical skills". Meanwhile, another group of teachers from school F explained this required expertise as follows: "he must have current knowledge of all the subjects, and he needs to be in a permanent learning process because he is like our head teacher and we are the students". This explanation was named as: profound and up-to-date knowledge by teachers from school B.

The TPHs' opinions were similar to the teachers' view. In fact, more than half of them mentioned expertise as a required characteristic. For instance, one of them (D) said that as a TPH they need to be reading and studying continuously. Another TPH (A) mentioned, "We must have solid knowledge about our work". According to the TPH from school C, they would be considered as weak if they did not show a high level of understanding of the curriculum. Meanwhile, other TPHs emphasised the importance of doing a quality technical job based on broad expertise.

Three school principals strongly agreed with expertise as a fundamental characteristic in a TPH. In fact, one of them (B) mentioned, "A TPH must know the national and international curriculum very well". Another principal (A) added, "the TPH needs to have technical knowledge about education and a reflective understanding of the Institutional Educational Project (PEI) to recognize the school goals and be informed about what is going on education". A similar idea was stated by the principal from school C:

> It must be a person who has the habit of being a connoisseur of all updates in regards to the public education policies, they must also have the expertise and ability to re-signify certain central guidelines according to the school's PEI.

She also explained that this attribute needs to be accompanied by a researcher spirit to generate knowledge. Another way to define this required trait was as "curriculum domain", as explained by school A principal: "a TPH must be able to articulate the national curriculum with the Institutional Educational Project in terms of improving the learning process". In fact, everyone indicated that having technical competencies in education was vital.

Level coordinators work together with the TPHs and assist them in pedagogical duties, thus, they clearly know what is required to be an excellent TPH. A secondary level coordinator from school E said, "Absolute knowledge of the role is a must". Moreover, another level coordinator from school F considered her TPH as a mentor to her in performing her coordination role, because she is her permanent support through knowledge-based advice and observations. According to the school E primary level coordinator: "a TPH requires very good educational training, I would say that a master's degree is required to perform this role".

Other members of the school such as counsellors or general inspectors were emphatic about the need for having skilled and knowledgeable TPHs at school. For instance, the general inspector from school E argued that the TPH needs to have a deep knowledge of curriculum theory and evaluation, in order to design and put the school plan in place. Similarly, the school D counsellor added the concept of updated knowledge as a key requirement. This perception was reaffirmed by the school A counsellor as follows:

> I believe that it also has to be a very studious and intelligent person, able to innovate because education is not static, it is dynamic, so the TPH has to have the ability to update them self and foresee certain things.

As already mentioned, the rest of participants' opinions were focused on the importance of being an educational expert.

Empathy

The ability to understand and share the feelings of others was frequently mentioned by participants as a required characteristic of a TPH. This capacity of understanding, being aware of, being sensitive to, and vicariously experiencing the feelings and thoughts of others when working with people in a leadership role was considered as a relevant trait in twenty four interviews.

Teachers from five out of six schools emphasised that a lack of empathy in a TPH may affect the working environment enormously. For instance, school C teachers said, "if there is empathy among TPHs and teachers, we can build a close relationship based on confidence".

Others from the same school indicated: "the lack of empathy is visible in some TPHs working in the public system who just talk with teachers to criticise their performance".

As stated by teachers from school A, another way to explain the importance of being an empathic TPH was: "when our TPH is able to support us in personal matters". They believe that empathy is demonstrated through real commitment to teachers. Hence, educators feel valued and develop positively in their professional role.

Three out of seven TPHs were emphatic about the relevance of empathy in their work. For example, according to the TPH from school B: "this role requires a high level of empathy as our staff members are very capable". He extended his idea saying that being empathic was extremely necessary, and therefore, they must be empathic and supportive of teachers. He added the notion of respect to the empathy definition: "we need to be respectful of teachers' feelings; if there is a complaint, we have to talk to them in private".

At school A, there were two TPHs in each educational level, and both believed that empathy is a key quality when performing this role. The TPH from a primary school said, "Forgetting your previous role as teacher may cause relationship problems with your colleagues and this is because there is a lack of empathy". When the TPH from a secondary school answered this question it was stated that, "the required characteristics to be a TPH are in the Fundacion Chile handbook, but I think that empathising, understanding the feelings of another, of teachers is one of the most essential traits".

Principals' opinions were much like the rest of participants; three out of six school principals highlighted this quality to be a successful TPH. According to school principal A: "TPHs require the capacity of empathy to understand or feel what another teacher is experiencing from within the other teacher's frame of reference, in order to build work teams". Likewise, the school C principal said that empathy is useful for creating learning communities within the school. School principal F affirmed that their TPH was empathetic and this personal characteristic had contributed to a better relationship with teachers.

School principal F extended her explanation further by saying:

> The current TPHs need to visualise that schools are changing, children learn in a different way than they did 20 years ago. Therefore, the TPH must be an open-

minded person, adapted to the new changes and showing a lot of empathy towards their colleagues.

In accordance with the rest of interviewees, the general inspectors commented that empathy was a useful quality for building positive relationships among school members and it helps to organise better teamwork. For instance, one of them said:

> TPHs must be able to use appropriate communication channels when there is an area which needs to be improved, but if they just criticise teachers' work, without considering the reasons as something has not been done it is because there is an absence of empathy.

School level coordinators supported this statement based on the importance of understanding the meaning of empathy when working with people. As an example, the level coordinator from school F indicated: "as leaders we have the responsibility of building positive relationship with our peers and being empathic is a required quality".

Leadership

The majority of respondents considered the TPH as a leader within the school community, and specifically the teachers' leader. Likewise, they mentioned that, while leadership was a mandatory skill for performing the TPH role, it can be developed over time. In twenty two interviews, the importance of showing leadership was a fundamental characteristic of TPHs.

Ten groups of teachers nominated leadership as a key characteristic of a TPH. As claimed by a group of teachers from school A, "the TPH must be a leader, a positive leader, but not a distant leader, he needs to be involved in our journey". Teachers from school C defined this required trait as "accompanying leadership", in order to explain that this leader must be close to teachers. They also included a beautiful concept to describe a TPH; "the soul of the school".

In relation to leadership skills, a particular explanation stated by a group of teachers from school D was: "Over time, the TPH's leadership figure has been changing, from authoritarian to transformative". Similarly, another group of educators commented: "nowadays, we expect to have a humble leader, someone who is be able to balance leadership and kindness".

For the TPHs, leadership is a combination of personal traits and the ability to think and act as a leader. This also involves the art of motivating a group of teachers to act towards achieving the common goal of school improvement. When they explained this definition, two TPHs mentioned that resilience was an important part of developing an effective leadership role at school. In the words of one them: "we must assume crisis periods as learning opportunities".

Three school principals mentioned that a TPH must possess leadership capacity to perform their role. Furthermore, they indicated that the leadership focus should be on creating knowledge communities within the school, in terms of working for continuous learning. According to school principal D: "they must show a distributed leadership with emphasis on pedagogical matters". Likewise, school C principal used the term "staff cohesion" to explain the TPH's main responsibility as a school leader. She also said, "Sometimes you are not born a leader. For instance, our TPH has taken this role slowly, she has a silent leadership, but she is managing people well now". In conclusion, every school principal specified that they have to attract teachers.

The term "positive leadership" was also used by the school level coordinators, who mentioned this quality as required to perform the role well. While a school F counsellor indicated that a TPH requires absolute leadership, it must not be misunderstood as abuse of power, since it could be detrimental for the working environment. Similarly, the school integration program coordinator argued: "TPHs need to manage their leadership to avoid excess authoritarianism".

Experience in the classroom

Previous experience in the classroom was frequently mentioned as a required characteristic of a TPH. According to the teachers' responses, it is not about the amount of years working as a classroom teacher, but rather the expertise developed in the field. According to teachers from school A:

> It is very important that a TPH has lived the experience of being a classroom teacher, no matter how many years, but at least the TPH has had knowledge about what working in the teaching space is like, to then empathise with teachers.

118

The group of teachers from school B thought that if a TPH has previously worked as a full-time teacher, then this experience would be helpful for both parties. For the TPHs, having previous experience as a teacher is positive in order to perform a role based on knowledge and real understanding, and for the teachers it is helpful for building a close working relationship with the TPH. Similarly, educators from school C agreed that when a TPH has never performed the classroom teacher's role, it may be difficult to do a good job.

Teachers from school C supported the previous statements and included the following idea:

> When the TPH knows the central character of the work in the classroom, then the TPH will ask teachers for appropriate duties, but if a TPH does not have any experience and prefers being in the office all the time, it may produce a huge distance with the classroom reality.

Likewise, the TPH from school A noted: "we have to listen to teachers and learn from their classroom experience as this is what really matters". Therefore, experience in the classroom is absolutely necessary alongside profound knowledge of the classroom.

According to the school A principal:

> Having experience in the classroom is a plus, both TPHs here have practice in the classroom, and this is an advantage over another TPH who has received only training to perform this function without going through the classroom. This allows you to have a better management of the school reality. I believe that the TPH should have been in the classroom as a teacher previously. In fact, this is a tradition among us, the school leaders have had teaching experience and they have to maintain the connection with the students to know what student profiles we have at the school, because the TPH also requires an understanding of our students. It is not enough to have a list with our children's socioeconomic data, or students' performance, it requires direct contact with them.

The primary level coordinator from school E mentioned that much like Fundacion Chile stipulates in its skills profile, a TPH must hold a teaching degree. Hence, this role needs to have adequate teaching practice. According to the SIPC, current TPHs need to spend more

119

time in the classroom, even though they have had previous teaching experience because the school is changing every day and they must be up-to-date with the modern school context.

In addition to these four main required characteristics, the participants in this study mentioned other traits with lower levels of agreement. For instance, in order of frequency the other characteristics cited were: being up to date, being a role-model, having a proper educational background, and demonstrating communication skills.

4.3 Perceptions of the TPH

The purpose of this section is to identify the most predominant visions of the TPH in the school environment. This offers an opportunity to gain insight into how educational organisations understand and interact with this school member. It also provides a context for exploring how the school might contribute in establishing a consistent theoretical framework in relation to this role. According to the interviewees' level of agreement, there were three principal ideas emerging from the TPH concept. First, the need to delegate functions among TPHs; then the presence of two different work styles and third, the difference between supervision and supporting, alongside other perceptions less often mentioned but equally relevant for the study. All of these ideas will be developed in the next paragraphs.

The need to delegate functions among TPHs

One of the recurrent ideas emerging from the group of teachers was the excess workload among TPHs due to the wide range of tasks that need to be done. For this reason, ten out of twelve groups of educators indicated that there is a clear need for delegating the TPH's functions in order to perform a quality job. For instance, teachers from school A noted how they came to implement a new supporting role for the TPH:

> We had a well-prepared TPH, who performed a great job with his wife's collaboration. When he passed away three years ago, his wife retired, and the position become vacant. So, a new TPH was hired, but it did not work well because he had a work overload, and less expertise in the primary level. Therefore, last year the principal made the decision to hire another TPH just for the primary level, which has been very helpful.

With this anecdote, they wanted to express the need for sharing the duties of the TPH. Another successful experience was related by school B teachers who have seven heads of departments working alongside the TPH. This strategy has allowed for coordinated work and has greatly reduced the TPH's workload.

According to the teachers from school F: "a TPH fulfilling many tasks is detrimental for the school and for the role itself". This claim was affirmed by the example of the school B teachers, when they commented on the positive changes that have occurred since the TPH began working with head of departments for every subject. Some of the progress they mentioned was focused work in each area, expert support for teachers, and better student academic results. School E showed a similar organisation, with the exception of having level coordinators. As they explained, "heads of departments are in charge of different subjects and divided by levels in charge of coordinators". These additions to the school roles have also been commented on by school F teachers: "the arrival of a head of department has been beneficial for us".

TPHs also indicated that there was a need for distributing their functions among other collaborators, and five out of seven of them provided an example of this current practice. The TPH from school E distributed part of his pedagogical tasks among his level coordinators, who delegate tasks to the heads of departments and must work closely with teachers. This delegation of functions has occurred in three of the participating schools and it was indicated as making a significant contribution towards improving the quality of learning and academic achievement.

The need for collaborators for TPHs was also expressed by all the school principals. They believe that TPHs should be working alongside other peers, in order to improve performance. For example, the school A principal said, "the current education challenges are bigger than they were in the past when we used to have one TPH to conduct only the gross lines of the teachers' work. Nowadays we need personalised work with teachers and more structure". Equally, the school B principal explained that through the incorporation of new members assisting the TPH's work, they have been able to develop a more thorough approach to helping teachers.

121

Middle leaders such as level coordinators, or also named as head of departments, are close TPH collaborators, and they recognised the importance of having them as helpers in pedagogical matters. Three out of four level coordinators mentioned during the interviews that working with the TPHs promotes school improvement as they do not have a work burden and can focus on what really matters. Finally, more than half of the non-teaching staff said that delegating responsibilities among other peers was a useful initiative that should be replicated in every Chilean school. According to the general inspector of school E: "the creation of heads of departments as a new role has been absolutely positive, as teachers seem to be working more connected with these school leaders". This explanation was shared by twenty eight participants performing different roles at school.

Traditional versus Contemporary work style

This theme was evident across a wide number of the interviews with principals and teachers. Those who mentioned it emphasised the significant difference between two styles of TPHs and it was mainly identified as traditional v/s a contemporary work style.

Participants explained in detail how they perceived the difference between the leadership styles. For example, participants commented that TPHs with a contemporary work style showed a positive predisposition towards progress, change and school improvement. Therefore, they work for the establishment of innovative learning strategies, emphasizing a technical aspect of their role. These technical pedagogical heads accept challenges and are constantly updating their knowledge and skills through diverse professional training.

TPHs with a traditional work style are averse to or extremely cautious about change or innovation at school. The traditionalist aspect present in TPHs is explained by behaviours such as low tolerance to innovation, a low level of interest in training or updating information, reduced expertise and a lack of managerial skills. As a result, they actually prefer not to take many risks, so there is an absence of changes which impact on learning.

In establishing a difference between these two working trends, there was a negative evaluation of the traditional work style. From the teachers' viewpoints, traditional TPHs exert too much pressure on them without providing support. As claimed by a group of teachers: "they always try to mark distance in our professional relationship, they are unfriendly. Their

favourite duty is sending warning letters and that's it". Some of the qualities mentioned in regards to this style were: bossy, controlling and unsupportive. However, not all was negative; there were also some positive characteristics mentioned by the educators. A few of them identified characteristics of a traditional TPH that they valued, such as responsibility, punctuality, etiquette, manners and politeness. Consequently, in these teachers' view, "traditional TPHs are considered as mentors who help us become better teachers".

On the other hand, contemporary work style is defined as a more flexible approach, where the TPH is able to delegate functions among their colleagues and the work is based on constant dialogue to support teachers' practice. Teachers define this type of TPH as another co-worker, and the main goal is to build a working community. However, other characteristics were similar between these types of TPHs. For example, teachers' views coincided in that that both styles perform a multifunctional role due to having multiple responsibilities.

Due to the school changing, participants mentioned that TPHs have experienced a transformation period moving from an authoritarian position to a transforming role. One of the TPHs explained an important difference between traditional and contemporary work styles. According to him, there are two main visions; the first is a classic vision focused on school academic results and evaluation and the second is an emancipatory vision centred on building positive relationships among the school community in order to work towards school improvement. He also indicated the fact that traditional TPHs show a high level of resistance to change by saying, "we have always worked in this way", which represents the classic education paradigm. Nevertheless, at the end of the day the working style performed will depend on the individual.

Related to the TPH traditional style, the majority of the school principals identified key qualities of this type of TPH. According to four out of six principals, traditional TPHs are more focused on theory than practice, they have a dictatorial personality with a kind of intellectual arrogance, and they prefer to look after all the subjects instead of working with the support of other personnel. Many of them believed that this may be the reason why their role is quite isolated at times. As a school counsellor commented, "a traditional TPH is someone who lacks an open relationship with the staff, because you cannot exchange ideas with them, he is situated only in his office desk working on the curriculum". Moreover, a general inspector

concluded, "traditional TPHs only care about the school results and academic evaluation, they do not care if there is a poor relationship with the rest of the staff".

On the contrary, TPHs with a modern work style encourage an organisational process which includes everyone, where there is distributed leadership. As stated by school principal C: "the contemporary style considers all the school community members as important part of the learning process, and everyone has a key role". Another principal also said: "modern TPHs must understand that the school's focus is the children". Similarly, a school counsellor highlighted: "nowadays we need a TPH who is able to think about the future changes based on the school context". These ideas were centred on a transformational movement oriented to the changes at the school since the turn of the century.

Supervision versus supporting

During the interviews, participants noted that the role performed by the TPHs is based on supporting teachers in the classroom, and they noticed subtle but important differences between two practices which seems to be developed differently and has diverse connotations. As evidenced by nineteen interviews, one of the major differences between supervision and supporting is that the first is often task-oriented, for instance, completion of a certain duties, whereas the latter is more about caring for an individual's long-term development.

The difference between supervision and support was mentioned by eight groups of teachers who work closely with a TPH. All of them pointed out the same reasons to explain why these actions were dissimilar. For example, teachers from school A defined the act of support from a TPH as "a classroom visit to observe the teaching method using an evaluation guideline, and then providing posterior feedback to improve teachers' practices", noting the difference with the act of supervising, where the TPH's visit focuses on teachers' mistakes and criticising them. School F teachers talked about their experience with the presence of a TPH in their classroom as follows: "we do not feel bad about receiving constructive feedback from the TPH, because it helps our professional development. In fact, we are not afraid of having the TPH in our classrooms, since she does more support than supervision". Likewise, teachers from school C indicated that the TPH's support is given by collaboration and feedback in the

classroom, which is totally different than a classroom visit to check if teachers have updated the paperwork.

The TPH of primary level in school A did not directly mention that there is a difference between supervising and supporting in the classroom, but she mentioned that accompanying a teacher in the classroom is one of the most complex tasks of a TPH. In her words: "it cannot be seen as an invasion or as though we go to criticize the teacher's work. I must support the teacher; together we see which strategies are the most appropriate". She clarified that this differentiation between supervising and supporting is perceived by teachers and not by TPHs, and she noticed this when she observed that teachers were anxious and nervous during her classroom visits. While her colleague from the secondary level made a difference between these terms, he said: "our role is associated with a regulatory entity because we have to control the teachers' performance, but they need to see that we are supporting them". Similarly, the TPH from school C does not like to use the term supervision when she is referring to classroom visits. According to her:

> We have to be a support entity rather than a supervisor; teachers want to see us as a supporter. Our role involves being an ally that delivers constructive feedback. I do not like to say that I am going to supervise a teacher, it is better to use the word accompaniment, as it is warmer.

A similar idea was expressed by the TPH from school F, who pointed out the importance of accompanying teachers, as opposed to harsh judgment of their performance.

School principals also indicated that there is a difference between supervising and supporting. For instance, the school F principal clearly request her TPH to develop a collaborative program with teachers, where they view the TPH as someone walking beside them and not positioned at the top. She explained: "I do not want the requirement and fulfilment of orders without major sense, the TPH must accompany teachers". Equally, the school D principal added, "TPHs must develop a classroom accompaniment with a growth perspective and not as a punishment instance, where they provide helpful feedback to our teachers".

Middle leaders also considered that supporting teachers in the classroom is more valuable than just supervising them. They indicated that accompanying teachers in the classroom must

be focused on providing feedback and strategies to improve their practices instead of emphasising bad practices. Similarly, two out of seven non-teaching staff indicated that even though TPHs are an authority to teachers, they must support educators. For instance, the school D counsellor highlighted the importance of having social skills to understand the teachers and empathise with them at the same time as guiding them: "they provide company to the classroom because they coach teachers and act as role models".

Other perceptions around the TPH role were made by school B teachers, who mentioned that TPHs lack time and have multiple responsibilities, which may cause health issues.

According to the teachers from school F, they should be electing the TPH's position instead of the principals. They said, "This role is designated by the principals, as it is a position of trust of the principals, but it may be a weakness". They recommended that a teacher's career development should occur according to their skills in order to become a TPH, and not simply based on being trusted by the principals or for having the same political ideas.

Concerns were expressed about the TPH's title; five out of twelve groups of educators mentioned that the name TPH should be modified. For instance, school D teachers believed that this title is very dictatorial, suggesting that the word head might be replaced by "coordinator". Similarly, teachers from school F thought that the word "head" should be eliminated, as it has a negative connotation and it creates distance between the TPHs and their peers. They added: "the current title covers a lot of things and perhaps it could be the reason why TPHs are overloaded with work". Likewise, school A teachers perceived the title as part of the business vocabulary and not very educational. They also mentioned that every organisation defines a different role for the TPHs, so at the end of the day, there is no consensus in the Chilean education system and ambiguity for the TPHs. The school C principal also expressed her concern about the name TPH. She related, "I worked as a TPH years ago and I requested to the principal a change on my title, deleting the word head because the language is a burden. I wanted to coordinate or facilitate the pedagogical matters as a peer".

A last question to end the interviews was if they would like to add more comments, and three TPHs mentioned that there is a lack of information about the TPH's role. As an illustration of this, the TPH from school D acknowledged this study for considering this theme as a research

topic, since it gives hope to him to be actually included and considered in the Chilean education system. Likewise, the TPH from school B considered that it is necessary to delve into the TPH concept and define their duties more precisely.

4.4 Role of the TPH

This section addresses the question: "What does a TPH do at school?" Thus, every duty is explained by TPHs themselves and their co-workers, including the capabilities required of a TPH as well as the weaknesses of the TPH's performance. During the interviews the participants mentioned various general activities performed by TPHs at school; defining this role as "multifunctional". According to the TPH from school E, his role involves several responsibilities. The first obligation is understanding the administrative guidelines of the government, taking into consideration his own beliefs about education and also the mission and vision of the school. After that, they have to consider the principal's thinking and communicate it to the teachers in order to make it more accessible and understandable for them, which is a complex responsibility. While at school D, the TPH agreed with the idea of defining his role as "multifunctional", he said that his role is not well defined. Notwithstanding this, the majority of the interviewees highlighted three main duties as the most important ones. Each of these will now be described.

4.4.1 Supporting teachers in the classroom

This task was considered as the most important role of the TPH. However, in the beginning of the interviews, it was a difficult question to answer. For example, teachers from school F said that every TPH is different and they do not perform the same role at school, hence, it is difficult to define the role of the TPH. Nevertheless, later on, a high level of agreement among participants was found through the question: can you describe an example of how the technical pedagogical head works in the school? Generally, "supporting teachers in the classroom" was considered as a key role of TPHs.

The responses of eleven out of twelve group of teachers were concordant. As an illustration of this, the school D educators stated: "the TPH is the school personnel who is more in touch with teachers". Teachers from school B said that, "the teaching strategies came from the TPH

127

and afterwards these are reflected on the teacher practice". According to both, the pedagogical role of the TPH consists of helping teachers in the preparation of teaching, seeing how it has been applied in the classroom and then evaluating the results.

One of the members of a group teachers' interview from school A defined the TPH as a positive leader who supports them in all pedagogical duties. Similarly, teachers from school F explained: "the technical pedagogical head visits us in the classroom in order to evaluate our work and finally we receive their feedback to improve our practice". Since the TPH knows how every teacher works in the classroom, the TPH supports them according to their work style. For instance, a Language teacher from school F said that the TPH provides her with suggestions related to her subject which is obviously totally different to the advice given to the Arts teacher. As mentioned by their colleagues, the TPH of school F is well known for visiting the classroom and supervising teachers' lessons.

During the conversation with teachers from school C, one of them mentioned her idea about how she perceives the support that should be provided by the TPH in the classroom; explaining that it must be a "companion leadership" which is not the same as being the boss of the school. The TPH from school B agreed with this idea, by saying that "accompaniment to the classroom" is one of the most important duties for a TPH; it cannot be seen as an invasion of the teachers' classroom, as a TPH should support educators in their teaching space. Similarly, the TPH of school D mentioned that, as a part of his daily routine: "I do classroom evaluations", referring to the supervision of teachers' practice. It was based on a guideline with the four dimensions of MBD (Good School Leadership Framework) and other aspects added by them in order to improve school practices. The TPH from school F specified several tasks related to her job: "sometimes I have to work on duties that are unrelated to my role, but I try not to get out of my role to be with the teachers in classroom". In fact, when she explained her day to day routine, an important part of her day was dedicated to visiting teachers during their lessons. The daily routine of the TPHs consist of classroom supervision, focusing on lessons from teachers recently incorporated into the school or teachers in charge of subjects with low results.

Another idea of supporting teachers was added by the TPH from school A, who considers that the process of teachers' induction is also extremely important, where new teachers are

accompanied and the communication between TPH and educators is vital. Similarly, one of the many responsibilities of the TPH from school B is teachers' inductions. Meanwhile, the TPH from school C highlighted the pedagogical aspect as her main responsibility and she considered herself as a lucky TPH because the general inspector is in charge of the school functioning instead of her. This TPH is supporting teachers in the classroom in various ways, for instance, she visits the classroom to observe lessons, she listens to teachers and she gives advice about how they could improve their practice.

The opinions of principals were very consistent, with all of them highlighting the TPH's work with teachers in the classroom as an essential aspect of the role. In fact, the school B principal thinks that, "As a TPH it's not enough to observe teachers from outside, they have to know what is going on in the classroom". Teachers do not need an overload of paperwork, they are interested in having support.

The importance of the TPH's supportive role was undersored by school leaders. For example, the school D principal mentioned the key role played by TPHs in the classroom, explaining that they are able to increase or decrease the students' results depending on teachers' support. She based her belief on the following idea: "if TPHs help teachers to see their mistakes and change it, then teachers will do the same with the students and it will bring success". Furthermore, she indicated that when TPHs are highly experienced, the more strategies and resources they have. For this reason, she feels very impressed with the TPH performance at her school, where even being a young History teacher has been a real contribution to the school. In fact, teachers see him as a leader, as the TPH supports teachers' practice through ongoing classroom visits.

The school principal from school B said that she is working collaboratively with the TPH in every single aspect related to the school. They are focused on students' learning; thus, a crucial aspect is what is happening inside the classroom. For this reason, the school principal with the TPH, alongside teachers, have developed guidelines for classroom supervision. Thereby educators are informed about the expectations regarding their lessons. Currently, teachers are supervised by the TPH during their lessons, who highlight educators' strengths and then encourage teachers to identify their weaknesses themselves. Similarly, the response from school F principal about how the TPH works in the school was consistent with the

majority of the principals' ideas. She said: "I always request the TPH supporting the teachers. A TPH must be seen beside teachers and not in front of them. Teachers should feel as though the TPH is a collaborator, to learn together". According to this principal, the TPH is constantly visiting teachers in the classroom.

Since the second semester of 2016, school A has had two TPHs, one working with the primary school and another working with the secondary school. As stated by the principal this reorganisation process aims for better leadership of their respective teams. He expects that both TPHs are capable of becoming involved in teachers planning according to classroom needs. For instance, the TPH of the primary school provides company in the classroom and she has the knowledge for training primary teachers, while the TPH of the secondary school is actively working on teachers' inductions and supporting newly employed educators.

Non-teaching supportive staff also mentioned helping teachers in the classroom as an important duty of TPHs. As specified by the general inspector of school F, the TPH can be defined as a supportive person who will help teachers in improving their lessons to develop children's learning. School D counsellor similarly stated: "the TPH provides teachers ongoing feedback about their lessons in order to improve their practices". Likewise, she says: "he is not invading teachers' space, he is providing accompaniment to the classroom".

When middle leaders gave their opinions of the role of the TPH, four out of five mentioned the importance of having a TPH who works closely with teachers. One of the examples was school E, which has one TPH and three level coordinators for each educational level: preschool, primary and secondary. These personnel are in charge of supporting the TPH's role in their area of expertise. One of the interviewees was the primary level coordinator, who previously took over the role of TPH in the same educational organisation, and he mentioned that one of his main duties was working with teachers to help them in their professional development, which is similar to the role performed by the other TPHs working in schools where there are no level coordinators.

Similarly, to the school mentioned above, school F has a level coordinator specialising in the II cycle of primary school (from Year 5 to Year 8) to help the role of the TPH who is a preschool teacher and specialist in the I cycle of primary school (from Year 1 to Year 4). This level

coordinator indicated that supporting teachers in the classroom is a shared duty with the TPH to identify teachers' strengths and weaknesses and then provide them with strategies to improve their practice. Adding to that, once these resources are given, they are required to monitor teachers' progress. Likewise, the school D integration program coordinators clearly stated the importance of a TPH who is focused on the teachers' space so as to know the reality of the classroom nowadays.

4.4.2 Plan & Curriculum design and implementation

This duty was mentioned as one of the most important roles of the TPH, as this middle level leader is commonly considered as a curriculum mentor at the school. When teachers from school F defined the role of the TPH they said: "she gave us ideas for our planning and how to make adjustments". They added that the TPH's wide range of knowledge allows them to assist in any school subject. Meanwhile, teachers from school C said that the TPH must know about curriculum, and this view was common among teachers from school D. They indicated that TPHs are in charge of establishing curricular guidelines for planning.

The importance of this task was mentioned by a great number of the teachers interviewed in groups. For instance, a group of educators from school E mentioned that they expect the TPH to able to act as a teacher's academic leader. In defining the role of the TPH, teachers from school B said that it was coordination of pedagogical matters, knowing the plan and program in detail. They also defined the TPH as the person in charge of organising academic activities or, as called by educators from school D, "pedagogical coordinator". A very clear definition was also obtained from school F teachers, who said "the TPH is the person in charge of making the pedagogical theory more practical".

When TPHs had to define the TPH role, they agreed that plan and curriculum design and implementation was a crucial responsibility of this role. The TPH from school B emphasized monitoring of learning as one of her key responsibilities, which is also part of planning and executing curriculum. A similar idea was expressed by the TPH and principal of the same school as well as the general inspector from school A. They believed that a TPH must ensure that planning and programming are correctly developed by teachers.

When the school D integration program coordinator talked about the role of the TPH, she defined it as follows: "the intellectual basis of the school, who knows and leads the theoretical content of the curriculum and program". This description was reinforced by the school D principal, who said that the TPH is a coordinator of pedagogical activities. The principals from schools B and F respectively stated their definition of the TPH concept as "the leader of the curriculum implementation", whilst the school principal from school A added another aspect, in mentioning that the TPH should be able to articulate the general curriculum with the school vision. This aspect was also mentioned by the school C principal, but instead of using the word "articulating" she used the word "re-signify" in order to explain that the TPH should possess the ability to re-signify centralist guidelines according to the school vision. Furthermore, she included the next sentence: "the TPH is the person in charge of implementing my dreams for the school".

In the conversation with the level coordinators from school E, who are the direct assistants of the work of the TPH, one of them said, "He is responsible for implementing the pedagogical regulations of the Ministry of Education". Another level coordinator also indicated that the TPH must have a global view of the educational process in the school. Likewise, a school counsellor mentioned that the TPH is very well-informed about the pedagogical work of students developed by their teachers.

4.4.3 Test revision

Another task which is commonly part of the TPH's role is the revision of the teachers' evaluation instruments. For example, teachers from school F mentioned that once the TPH supervises them in the classroom, she provides suggestions about how the teachers' work plan can be enriched through different methods and strategies. They also indicated that one of the many duties of the TPH is test revision prior to testing students. This responsibility is considered as an essential part of the TPH's work because at the end of the school journey all the teachers from this school will feel that they are working towards the same goal. The group of teachers from school E said that they expect to receive an evaluation of their planning and programming work from the TPH. Similarly, teachers from school D defined this role as an "inspection body", which they elaborated by saying that "mostly pedagogical matters are in

charge of the TPH, from the learning process preparation, implementation in the classroom, the evaluation of the subject and the school results". Meanwhile, another group of educators added to this aspect the notion of providing tools to create further tests and evaluations.

When TPHs had to talk about this part of their role, they pointed out this duty as an essential obligation in order to improve the school results. Therefore, the TPH from school A said, "I have to monitor the teachers' work: content, curriculum, lessons, resources, so sometimes it looks like I am the one who is controlling the educator's work, but what we are actually doing is supporting their work". The TPH from school C explained her approach to test revision, mentioning that she reviews the tests made by the teacher and compares these with the teacher's plan and if it is coherent, then she approves it with a stamp. In the case of the TPH from school B, she receives the teacher's resources every afternoon, and carefully revises it. Additionally, every Tuesday morning she revises assessments prepared by teachers. The TPH from school D mentioned that his key role was in fact the curriculum and evaluation process.

School principals also provided their opinions in regards to this topic. For instance, the school D principal noted that the TPH role is diverse, but mainly focused on evaluation and curriculum. The technique used in this school is named triangulation, which consist of the revision of the classroom book, the educational program and the student notebook. This work is developed once per semester, and then the results and process of revision is discussed with the educators. Another technique to review teachers' work is the presentation among peers, where every teacher presents their lesson and the TPH and leadership team members evaluate the quality of this performance.

The school D integration program coordinator argued that the TPH is the person in charge of what students will learn, the way students will learn and how they will be assessed, which is basically the teachers' responsibility. Hence, reviewing teacher work plans is an essential area of TPH work. In the same way, the general inspector from school A recognised the evaluation of tests and assessments and accomplishment of planned activities as important responsibilities. Similarly, the general inspector from school E said that the TPH is the evaluation coordinator among other several duties.

The other comments about the TPH's role were less supported by the participants, but equally mentioned as part of their duties. For instance, twelve interviews revealed that the TPH has multiple roles, eight responses stated that the TPH is in charge of creating and organising teachers' timetable, and only five interviews indicated that a TPH is who does school workshops.

4.5 Strengths of the role

According to the interviews, there are several positive qualities or social values which seem to be important for being a technical pedagogical head. A teacher, for example, described strengths of the TPH's personality as being clever, using knowledge and creating good relationships, particularly with the principal and teachers. The qualities that strongly emerged from the interviews comprised interpersonal skills such as closeness and generosity, as well as expertise. Interpersonal skills were identified in all interviews as being features of the success of the technical pedagogical head role. Each of these will now be described.

Closeness

Closeness was highly mentioned among teachers as a strength of the role of the TPH. A teacher from school F said: "she is very close to us, we are a group and we are all on the same boat". Then, the group of educators from this school affirmed that their TPH is a close person, who is always available to talk to them. According to them, a close relationship with their TPH generates confidence to work as they see her as a friendly leader. They defined their relationship with the TPH as follows: "her office is always open for us, and she has the disposition for helping us". Other teachers from the same group expressed that: "she is a leader who goes along with us by working with us, she is not a distant person who places herself up in the clouds, since she is another colleague, but always emphasising her leadership". Teachers from school D highlighted an important difference between being close and being relaxed. They explained that even though the TPH is close to the teachers it does not means that his role is relaxed; associating this word with the idea of relaxed means doing nothing or working very little. The perception of various educators from school B was that the TPH is a close colleague, who facilitates teachers' work.

Teachers from school A mentioned being supportive towards them as a strength, and not just in pedagogical matters, but also in personal aspects. Indeed, teachers from school D defined the TPH as the school leader who is more in contact with educators. Meantime, teachers from school B visualise the TPH as another colleague who possesses a leadership role.

In general, the TPHs by themselves were a quite discreet when talking about their own strengths. The TPH from school D defined his role as the principal's squire (escudero) and one of the required qualities to be a good TPH is being close to the school community members. The TPH from school B spoke about the need for creating a confidence bond with teachers in order to obtain good results. Thus, this confidence is linked with a close relationship between them which is based on an empathic understanding of the teacher's role. However, the TPH from school E talked in detail about his achievements in his role, and about the resistance of some school members to make changes, but he did not provide much more information in regards to his strengths, while the principal from the same school reported that she has a very close relationship with the TPH and it is a fundamental requirement for building a positive school environment.

According to principal: "I am impressed with the performance and strengths of our TPH. He is young, with great IT skills, fast, he has a good relationship with the students and teachers and is very approachable". When talking with the school counsellors, one of them mentioned the importance of the TPH's social skills, and she said that the TPH's charisma enhances his work with the teachers. Then, the school D counsellor added, "we are like a family, when one succeeds, everyone is part of the success", which reflects a close relationship. A similar idea from another school counsellor was that the TPH is an approachable person with sufficient leadership skills.

The perception of a general inspector in regards to this was clear: "the TPH is a close person and everyone trusts her". Also, a very honest and personal explanation was given by the general inspector from school F. He said, "More than a boss, I consider the TPH as a person who helps academically and emotionally. She gives you time to talk, she sees us as people and she motivates us". Closeness was mentioned in twenty five out of thirty seven interviews, indicating strong support among school teachers for the importance of this personal quality.

Expertise

A large number of teachers; ten out of twelve, referred to the capability of being smart, clever, having expertise and great knowledge. For instance, one of the school A teachers said, "she knows a lot, being able to help us with all the subjects, her wide range of knowledge gives us confidence". Likewise, another teacher from school F noted that he learns from the TPH: "she makes me grow in a professional way". Similarly, all the educators from school F considered their TPH as an intelligent woman.

The perception of teachers from school D was the same as above; they believe that their TPH is someone who knows and understands his job, and thus his work is coherent in terms of what he knows, what he says and what he does. Teachers from school A said that their TPH is a knowledgeable person, who shows competent work. The same idea was expressed by teachers from school E, who thought that the TPH is an expert in education. Other teachers from school A indicated that the TPH is someone who has more pedagogical credibility, explaining this as follows: "I believe in what the TPH is teaching me because he is the person who really knows about education here". Additionally, an educator from school F commented that "the TPH is someone who has more classroom knowledge", because their TPH has several years of experience in the classroom working as a teacher.

When TPHs asked about their strengths, they started by mentioning some required characteristics to be a good TPH and through the conversation they gradually explained their strengths as a part of the role. One of the TPHs said that he feels his role requires a wide range of knowledge and preparation, so he pushes himself to be on top of the hill in regards to education matters. Then, he realised that he is working as a TPH because he deserved to be in this role due to his expertise and contribution to the school. He added, "I am working with competent people who want to learn from me; for that reason, I need to lead them by giving the best example, being their role-model".

The TPH from school F did not explicitly mention his knowledge or expertise as one of his strengths but referred to the importance of being a well-prepared professional. According to his words:

The TPH must be multifunctional, since we have to develop several duties at school, thus we have to learn a lot, we need to be up to date, participate in trainings and assume new challenges. In this process we have to be resilient to assume crisis periods as an opportunity. All of these situations require a solid knowledge of education.

This thinking was supported by the idea of the TPH from school E, who mentioned that they will always find resistance among school members, but this is not a reason to give up as they need to be resilient and have the proper knowledge to convince people in order to work for the same ideal. Meanwhile, only five out of seven TPHs mentioned the importance of having a deep understanding of plans specifically, programs and curriculum imparted by the Ministry of Education and focused on the school context.

During the interview with the principal from school E, she stressed the strengths of the TPH, beginning with the phrase, "he is very intelligent, he enjoys studying, he is a very good researcher and he will never stop finding more information". Another principal also pointed to research skills as a fundamental part of being knowledgeable. She described the TPH as a person who generates and systematises knowledge. The principal from school B assumed that the TPH is an intelligent person but highlighted that he must show a wide range of knowledge of the school project (PEI) and be up to date about education and its current changes or reforms. Similarly, the school D integration program coordinator defined the TPH as "the intellectual part of the school", which means that the TPH has the knowledge of the curriculum, evaluation and programs. The school A counsellor talked about the TPH's knowledge as a strength, also emphasising leadership qualities: "the TPH is an active leader, smart enough to attract people and motivate them to work for a common goal".

Leadership

The results showed that leadership was the third most important strength of the TPH's role. There was strong agreement between the interview participants that the art of motivating a group of people to act towards achieving a common goal was an essential quality of the TPHs, whose leadership must inspire others. Through the question, "How do you see the role of the

technical pedagogical head in this school?" Several participants spoke of the TPH's leadership capacity.

Eight out of twelve groups of teachers explicitly talked about the TPHs' leadership. For instance, teachers from school F, in referring to the TPH, said, "she possess a high level of leadership, she is part of the leadership team so much so that she assists the principal with the personnel hiring process". Similarly, when teachers from school A were asked, "Must the TPH be a leader?" they strongly declared, "yes, absolutely", so another question emerged; why? They answered, "Because the TPH is our leading light. At school we need a capable person stepping up and being our leader, as his/her leadership is the connection with us and the students to attain our goals".

The study findings showed that the TPH's leadership characteristics and practices had influenced the school community strongly in several ways and was seen as having a positive impact on the school. Correspondingly, four out of seven TPHs mentioned their leadership as a strength of their role. The TPH from school D ascribed his leadership capacity to his undergraduate studies, as follows:

> This characteristic started with my initial education as a student in the History and Geography department at the University of La Serena, which is well-known by creating a leader profile in their teachers, and many of us are working in leadership roles.

Likewise, the other three TPHs made reference to leadership as a capacity that they have been developing during their years of experience at school, which has been instrumental when working with people. All of them agreed that their role in the school was a leadership one.

The majority of school principals stressed the importance of the TPH being a leader at their school. They mentioned that when they chose their TPHs, they considered their leadership skills as a key factor. For example, the school E principal defined her TPH as the curriculum leader. She added, "my TPH shows his leadership when he is able to enchant our teachers with his speech and convince them to work together". Similarly, the school A principal mentioned that the TPH from primary level has achieved peer recognition through her strong

138

leadership, which is an enormous strength. According to the school B principal, "due to the TPH's role being based on the coordination of pedagogical activities, leadership is a required quality". This idea was supported by five out of six school principals, who believe that one of the most important contributions of the TPH is their leadership and the work that they develop as the teachers' leader.

Middle leaders and non-teaching staff also considered that leadership is an essential strength of the TPH's role. They described the TPH as one of the most important school leaders, who needs to be an effective mediator in issues arising for teachers, and able to produce positive outcomes for all parties involved. These leadership qualities thereby enable the development of closer relationships between staff and nurture the development of teachers through encouragement and participation in teaching and learning programs.

Other strengths mentioned were generosity, responsibility, professionalism and being up to date. From the conversations, the strength which was most frequently mentioned was generosity. According to five groups of teachers, a key quality of their TPHs is kindness and generosity and they greatly value this strength. They perceive kindness and generosity as demonstrated through actions rather than words. For example, teachers from school F felt they could learn from the TPH because she is always there for them. Another teacher from school F said, "She is not questioning my work, she provides strategies to improve my teaching techniques". The rest of the teachers from the same group mentioned that they believe the same and one of them noted, "she is someone who teaches you, who helps you, who allows you to develop your career". Another educator from school D commented, "the TPH saw my strengths and weaknesses and started teaching me to become a better teacher, this is generosity". Teachers from school D said that they can ask for assistance and the TPH will always provide suggestions with respect, adding that this quality brings a contribution to the school and even though he is a leader, he remains humble.

Teachers from school A mentioned that the TPH always talks to them in a very respectful way and even though they make mistakes, their TPH will provide generous constructive feedback. Furthermore, one of them said, "her generosity in giving me strategies and helping me as a teacher makes me feel like I have immensely learnt with her advice". Teachers from school C

agreed with the notion of generosity as a key quality for TPHs; they said that a TPH must be generous with everyone and give time to teachers with support and conversation.

Thus, the TPH is the soul of the school, and needs to show human values such as generosity, humility and honesty. When a group of teachers from school B remembered one of the most exemplary TPHs they have had, they said with some emotion, "she was not selfish with her knowledge, she shared everything with us, she was protective, and she trusted us". After this, they made a comparison with TPHs in the public sector, which, according to them, are not helpful, instead putting pressure on teachers and may not be the right person for this role.

Other teachers defined the TPH as a collaborator within the school leadership team. From the TPH's perspective, she is making a contribution to the teachers' work as she provides strategies to improve teachers' practice. Likewise, another TPH said that she is always doing her best for the school. This is reflected in an example provided by a principal who indicated that the TPH shares his knowledge with teachers in many different instances but especially through teamwork.

4.6 Weaknesses of the role

School leaders and teachers were asked about the most typical weaknesses found in the role of the TPH. The majority of participants agreed that positive school leaders encourage and inspire school community members to perform amazing feats. However, they also mentioned that there were recurrent weaknesses in some TPH's that could negatively affect school performance, such as bad communication, abuse of power and extreme bureaucracy.

One of the TPHs from school B said that it is quite difficult to talk about your own strengths and flaws, but often, the attributes you consider your strengths, when taken to extremes, become weaknesses. According to him, "many good leaders could be even great leaders if they recognise their weaknesses". In accordance with the opinion of the TPH from school F, the key reasons why the TPH's role is unclear and weak are:

> First, it is not well-defined, and it is under-valued in the Chilean educational system. Within the new teaching career there is scarce information about our role, there is no long service recognition, and it is totally unknown what will happen with this role

in the future. Besides, there is a lack of specialised professional development for TPHs, but anyway we have to complete multiple tasks.

Another TPH from school E mentioned that the demands of their role is normally underestimated and this creates conflicts among colleagues:

> If you are in a leadership position, odds are you have many responsibilities. Balancing assignments while keeping teachers on task can be stressful. All the pressure seems to be on you, and because you are human, you are bound to make a few mistakes along the way.

Principals agreed with the idea that even if you are doing a great job of leading your team, there is always room for improvement, especially because higher education in Chile does not provide adequate training to work as a team in the workplace. Hence, here there are three common leadership weaknesses related to the TPH role: bad communication, abuse of power and bureaucracy.

Bad communication

All teachers' groups mentioned that problems with the communication channels between the TPH and educators was a serious issue. They thought that poor communication could be a harmful in the school settings, believing that bad communication between educators and the TPH produces a sense of isolation for both parties. One of the teachers from school D said, "this situation can be observed when TPHs approach educators just to criticise their jobs". A preschool level coordinator also spoke about the problem of communication between TPHs and educators. According to her, good communication is crucial because a balanced and positive relationship with teachers is essential. This view was supported by the general inspectors and school counsellors. For example, the general inspector from school E said: "lacking of communicative skills is a serious problem; no one wants a leader who does not communicate with the members of the community". He explained that unfortunately their current TPH has this weakness and it has been generating problems with other school members because he has communication only with the principal.

According to one of the TPHs from school E, problems such as the absence of communication could create other issues, such as disengagement with the school members. As claimed by his colleague working at the secondary level, "the communication problems are not only with educators, it could happen with any of your peers. In fact, we do not communicate between TPHs, we need to improve our articulation". Similarly, the integration program coordinator from school D indicated that this communication issue occurs when the TPHs ignore the emotional dimension. As an illustration of this situation, she said, "sometimes they are too focused on fulfilling their commitments that they easily forget to ask teachers, how you feel today? Or what do you need?

Abuse of power

Abuse of power was mentioned as a detrimental characteristic of the TPH role by seven out of twelve groups of teachers. This idea was also mentioned by all of the TPHs, who explained that too much authority can be a negative aspect of this leadership role as it could produce distance between the TPH and teachers. Even more emphatic was the opinion of the TPH from school A, who said, "if we were very punitive this would not work at all". This was consistent with the general view of the level coordinators, who mentioned that the success of a TPH would depend on the way TPHs manage their leadership.

Notably, five out of six principals identified mentioned that abuse of power was highly destructive to the TPH's role. As stated by the principal from school E, "any leadership role makes people powerful and stronger, but if they start using their power incorrectly, it would generate animosity among school members". School principal D indicated that sometimes people change their personality when they are in a leadership role and misunderstand the word "leader", becoming abusive towards their colleagues. According to the principal from school C, "I have observed that some of the TPHs mix authoritarianism with an intellectual arrogance that interferes with a pleasant learning process for teachers and students". All school counsellors agreed with this idea, the one from school D commenting that, "when people abuse their role they lose the focus". Likewise, her colleague from school A explained that this negative attitude had come from the traditional and old-fashioned role of the TPHs,

"where they were positioned at the top of the hill and teachers had to give explanations for everything in order to avoid disagreements with them".

Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy was mentioned as the third negative characteristic of the TPH role. A large number of participants indicated that TPHs should facilitate the work of teachers and avoid making it even more difficult by setting out excessively complicated administrative procedures. Six out of twelve groups of teachers thought that this situation would produce several problems in the work relationship, causing the TPH to be more focused on administrative matters than pedagogical duties. Likewise, the principal from school C indicated that, "sometimes TPHs and principals become very bureaucratic and centred on administrative tasks such as filling forms, sending emails, meetings, etc., then we lose our focus which is providing quality education for students". Similarly, the school C principal mentioned that some TPHs start spending the majority of their time sitting in their offices doing paperwork and they forget what really matters: the classroom.

During the interviews the complexity of the TPH's role was frequently mentioned by the participants, and it was generally related to the multiple tasks they have to perform at school and the lack of clarity about their role and obligations, which are just presented as a "shopping list" in an official document from the Chilean Ministry of Education, as the level coordinator from school F stated. She also mentioned that there are TPHs focused only on administrative tasks and this is a flaw in the TPH's role; "a problem that emerges within a bureaucracy over time is that TPHs and school leaders fail to control the development of the organisation properly". The TPHs also consider that their work is generally complex, as the TPH from school A indicated:

There are numerous ambitious pretensions to cover too many tasks, but we actually have to be focused on curricular management rather than administrate duties, but since the school is like a home, through the day there are emerging things that we must attend to. This ends as a bureaucracy problem for us, where excessive administrative procedures are positioned first, and then higher than our pedagogical role.

143

Another TPH (school D) added, "another problem with bureaucracy is that we rely too much on rules and policies to make decisions, and this overreliance makes us unresponsive to the needs of the school". Principals also believe that bureaucracy is an ongoing issue related to the TPH role. As is illustrated by the principal from school B: "I see them as extremely bureaucratic, more focused on paperwork and administrative duties rather than working actively with teachers. This is a huge disadvantage, because teachers are interested in feedback, not in finding traps, they are looking for the TPH's feedback".

In addition to these three main weaknesses of the role of the TPH, there were also two other flaws mentioned by the participants. They indicated lack of expertise and working alone as issues that should be addressed.

Lack of expertise or experience

In Chile every TPH requires a teaching degree, which is normally focused on a subject (English, History, Science, etc.) and on a school level (preschool, primary, secondary). This situation was considered by teachers from school F as a common deficiency of the role of the TPHs. While TPHs work closely with teachers across all subject areas, they do not necessarily have expertise in all the areas where they are expected to provide feedback and guidance. This lack of expertise was reported as an issue for most of them. However, the TPH from school C claimed that instead of being an expert in all school subjects, the role requires expertise on the national plans, programs and curriculum. For instance, the TPH from primary school F is an early childhood teacher and she recognises that she still does not know everything about primary level as her expertise is on preschool and early years. However, she noted that she has been studying exhaustively in order to be more confident about her role and she feels that she is filling it well.

The principal of school B said that it is quite difficult to be a TPH who is an expert in all subjects, as this is expected only for a medieval scholar. However, the TPH's reality is different and the scarce expertise can become a problem if there is no permanent training on the plans, programs and curriculum. As stated by the general inspector from school A, there are no professional courses for TPHs and they need a proper specialisation. According to the teachers from school A, "a weak TPH is one who does not know the national curriculum, is

144

without leadership skills and lacking emotional intelligence, because education is a daily learning process where everyone is involved". Similarly, two level coordinators see lack of expertise as a common problem among TPHs; they mentioned that being an expert in the school subjects would help but it is not required, but they must have enough experience as a teacher before becoming a TPH.

Working alone

When the TPH (primary level) from school A was asked to explain other weaknesses of her role, she said: "this work is somewhat isolated, sometimes we are working in an island far away from the school". The same term was used by her colleague at the secondary level: "we are lacking teamwork because we do not have training on this, we are like two islands". In regards to teamwork training, the school principal A commented that the education given to teachers at university does not develop teamwork spirit and thus prospective TPHs lack this skill. According to his words: "they misunderstand the meaning of autonomy and begin working alone without communicating with other school members".

Similarly, according to teachers from school F: "our TPH has many commitments and several things to do, thus sometimes we feel that she may abandon some obligations because the role itself has an overload of work, even though at the school we work as team". They went on to explain that due to the nature of the role, a TPH will be always working alone unless education policies change, and they incorporate a clear framework about the role of every school member. Teachers from school B expressed the same view by using another example: "TPHs who make decisions without consulting ones who are above and below them are wrongly performing their role because everything must be well-coordinated, otherwise they are working alone". Meanwhile, the group of teachers from school F believed that the main problem generated when TPHs work unaccompanied is that they do not provide teachers with feedback, which they see as one of the most important duties of the TPHs.

4.7 The impact of the TPH

As mentioned before in the literature review chapter, Chilean schools are working on an ongoing basis with at least one TPH. The focus of this section is on the impact of the TPH's

work in schools. According to the interviewees, TPHs work in different ways, but with the same goal, which is to contribute to student learning and school improvement. In this section, some of the actual work of the TPHs will be described.

Staff opinions of the technical pedagogical heads were very similar and the majority of them shared a positive view of the contribution of the TPHs at their school. Interviewees discussed the key people and events that have been critical to the school's development and all agreed that two of the main contributions of the TPHs are working closely with principals as well as with teachers.

4.7.1 Main contributions of a TPH

There were three key questions focused on evaluating the contribution made by the TPHs. Interviewees were asked for what has been the TPH's main contribution to the school, what does the term TPH mean for them, and then reflecting on the improvement journey of their schools, and who have been the key people in this process. The conclusions were decisive; technical pedagogical heads play an important part in school settings, they are considered as teachers' guides by supporting them to improve their strategies and also as a supporter of the school principal. Therefore, the importance of TPHs is something that cannot be understated.

Teacher support

Although school improvement is a process where everyone participates, TPHs can have a highly beneficial impact in Chilean schools, as the list of achievements mentioned by the interviewees is long and wide–ranging. One of the most important contributions made by TPHs was described by teachers from school F as teacher support: "we can learn from her, she is always there for us". Teachers from school A had also only gratitude for their TPH (primary level): "she has been an excellent guide…she raises the objectives of each teacher very well and she is behind us to give us support…she shares her knowledge with us because she is focused on supporting teachers". Similarly, teachers working in the secondary level of school A also noticed that their TPH makes a real contribution to them: "he guides us beyond a specific subject, and we feel his support".

Interviewees discussed the key people and events that have been critical to the school's development. A total of 34 out of 37 members agreed that the TPH is an instrumental person in providing support for teachers, which has contributed to school improvement. When teachers from school B talked about their perceptions of the role, they defined a TPH as a "teachers' work facilitator". Similarly, teachers from school C unconditionally supported the TPH's role in school improvement: "the school success depends on the TPH". According to teachers from school D, the TPH is a big support, as they can ask their questions without being afraid and he clarifies their doubts with confidence, being always available for them. Likewise, for school F teachers, the TPH is a key support for every community member, who emphasise her support of teachers.

The TPH from the primary level of school A indicated that since she started in 2016, she wanted to fundamentally reorganise teachers' work. Hence, she conducted a diagnostic evaluation to identify teachers' weaknesses and use these as a starting point. After this, she realised that they had difficulties with evaluation as they did not know how to relate the content of their teaching to their assessment processes. Thus, she organised workshops about assessment with teachers, and since then, they have met every Tuesday for three hours to work on technical topics. In conclusion, she said, "I am supporting teachers in an organised and efficient way". The TPH from the secondary level of the same school believes in distributed leadership, where everyone has a role and all together articulate the learning process. From this thinking, he considers that an important part of his role is the beginner teachers' induction, and he enjoys accompanying them in the classroom and talking about their fears, progress and expectations. Also, he has tried to communicate with all teachers and for this the digital channel is a good tool. He truly believes that supporting teachers is one of his main contributions at the school.

The TPH from school C indicated that her main contribution is the personalized work she does with teachers. Correspondingly, her school B colleague considered that his contribution toward student learning has actually been his support for teachers because they feel they are never alone. Along with this, he conducts the beginner teachers' induction, where he focuses on the positive things about their working style. As he said: "it is easier for me to congratulate our teachers rather than tell them off, because I am their colleague, so I have no choice but

being a role model, like going to my classroom on time". Similarly, the TPH from school F believes that supporting teachers in the classroom is the best assistance she can offer to educators, a view consistent with that of her co-workers.

Among school principals there was a total agreement when talking about the main contributions made by the TPH in Chilean schools. The school A principal mentioned that TPHs at both primary and secondary level have the capacity to build the knowledge of their teachers, which is a great support especially for beginning educators who are in need of the most guidance in their profession.

Middle leaders composed of four level coordinators and one integration program coordinator also provided their opinions regarding the TPH's contribution, and the majority of them affirmed that TPHs are the key support for teachers. The II cycle coordinator from school F noted that the TPH is vitally important as they support new teachers through proper inductions and provide ongoing guidance. According to a new teacher at this school, "she has been my mentor and my biggest support". A note of caution was offered by the school E secondary level coordinator who said, "A TPH may contribute but could also worsen the school quality if he/she does not have the required qualities or experience to perform this role". But generally, opinions were the opposite of this. For example, three general inspectors focused on the ongoing feedback provided by the TPHs to the teachers, which helps them to accomplish their objectives. The general inspector from school F added that he has felt this support in his role too because the TPH is a very helpful member of the school.

Non-teachers also mentioned the important support that the TPHs provide in Chilean schools. The opinion of counsellors from school A and D was exactly the same; both mentioned that the TPH has been extremely important for their schools, particularly in generating close relationships between teachers, students and their families and in addition to their contribution to pedagogy, they provide valuable support to teachers in many situations within the school.

Improving strategies

For school F teachers reflecting on the improvement journey of the school, there are a number of areas in which the TPH has made a significant impact, such as classroom

monitoring, which helps to develop better practices through self-evaluation and the TPH's feedback; ongoing communication, where the TPH provides strategies to improve teachers' lessons; external and internal training, which is focused on teachers' continuous professional development, and differentiated support, where the TPH provides educational strategies consistent with the teachers' work-style. For example, school F teachers mentioned, "she gave us ideas for our program, with her wide range of knowledge she can helps us in any subject to improve our teaching technique". Therefore, their TPH teaches her group of teachers how to understand the national plan, programs and curriculum in order to develop quality work with improved strategies and methodologies. Similarly, school C teachers thought that TPHs definitely have an impact on school improvement, "as long as they provide training for teachers".

Educators from school B said that the TPH contribution goes beyond improving teachers' strategies because it impacts on student learning and consequently on school success. In relation to this, school C teachers indicated: "as teachers we should be humble in the face of criticism because we can make mistakes without realising and we need someone else to tell us what is wrong; this is the reason why we require a TPH". Consistent with this view, educators from school D mentioned an important aspect of the TPH's duty: "he is always delivering constructive feedback and encouraging teachers to improve their work". Similarly, an emotional teacher commented that it is the TPH's vision, his determination, his ability to push people that have been a key to the success of the school. She specifies: "everything I have attained at this school has been because of him, from his support and guidance". The rest of her colleagues added, "He gives us freedom to work and relies on us".

For the TPHs, talking about their main contributions is a tough topic because they tend to be more critical of their job and so avoid mentioning their positive outcomes, as they feel that it is better to leave this to the other school members. Nevertheless, when we began probing their role, they naturally mentioned the most important results they have accomplished. The TPH from school E identified professional dialogue as a positive contribution since he started at this school. Professional dialogue involves conversations about teaching practice that occur between teachers, level coordinators and himself, in which they create an improvement plan, and methods and strategies to promote better results in student learning. The TPH from

school E provided a detailed explanation about key factors that contributed towards school progress and his participation in these events:

> A year after I commenced working here, I had an argument with the school principal in regard to the SIMCE results, as they had dropped off. My position was that I could not be responsible for the results of a standardised test in the short-term process, but I assumed the blame and I proposed a collective constructive work, where everyone works uniting criterions. We created strategies to support teachers in their work, in order to optimise students' learning and it ended up with excellent results.

After his explanation, he summarised his main contribution at the school: "the systematization of processes and strategies, giving the possibility to my colleagues to share their successful experiences in the classroom with their peers, providing spaces for pedagogic reflection and closeness with all the members of the school community". For instance, they developed a guideline with the four dimensions of the framework of good teaching to evaluate and improve teachers' practices. The TPH from school F added that she always tries to support teachers by providing techniques and strategies to assist children's learning, especially new teachers as they need more guidance.

According to the principals' point of view, the TPH contributes in multiple ways to school improvement. One of the most valuable contributions mentioned by the school F principal was the learning environment improvement to achieve the school's goal, which is student learning. As she pointed out:

> The school success is attained by teamwork, and the TPH's role is to create a learning culture with high expectations, therefore our teachers ask for challenges and the TPH challenges them, and at the end of the day, they improve their work.

The school D principal held the same view of the instrumental role of TPH in school development. She said, "As a school, we have to create a high expectations culture", adding that her TPH allows a continuous improvement process through exhaustive work with teachers, mentoring them to improve their teaching techniques. In the same way, the school principal F said that his TPH has showed leadership among teachers where the actions planned to improve the teaching practice have been carried out at the school.

The opinion of two out of five middle leaders was that the most important contribution of TPHs is improving teachers' strategies. The II cycle coordinator from school F explained, "The TPH helps our educators to implement new strategy in the classroom, and also she monitors its development in order to improve techniques towards students learning".

Half of the non-teacher support members indicated that even though they are not working in the classroom they can see that there is a benefit when teachers' work aligned with the TPHs. For example, in the case of school E, where they established subject departments which are managed by heads of departments with the collaboration of level coordinators and the TPH, the general inspector stated that "the TPH has helped with the departments strengthening". This effort has been considered as an improvement of the learning environment for students learning and contributed to school success. The colleague from school C added, "Our TPH provides strategies, new methodologies, and she has included an inclusive style of teaching in relation to the different students' learning styles, so it allows everyone to learn".

4.7.2 The importance of working with principals

This theme was evident across twenty five of the thirty seven interviews, so while it was not expressed by a great majority, it was considered sufficiently important to be a separate theme, as the definition provided by Fundacion Chile specifies that a TPH is in charge of advising the school principal. It should be noted that those who mentioned it emphasised the significant difference between schools where the work of TPHs and principals was closely aligned, and schools where they seem to be working in different directions.

The majority of the teachers interviewed, ten groups from a total of twelve, considered that the relationship between TPHs and principals was fundamental for having a positive impact on school performance. They deemed the contribution and participation of both to the school's improvement as significant. Benefits included: improving teachers' performance, but also improving student results; increasing effective collaboration among school members, which leads to stronger pedagogy in a friendly learning environment and the more effective a school is, the more a student will benefit.

Teachers from school D commented on the impact of a close relationship between TPHs and principals: "we can notice when there is joint work between them because it is reflected in a

positive working atmosphere based on common goals and expectations". Similarly, the colleagues from school F noted, "a coordinated job between our leaders helps us a lot because they are our role-model and we aim for the same objectives". Teachers from school C mentioned that both school leaders work together; while the principal focuses on administrative tasks the TPH undertakes pedagogical duties. The group from school A shared this opinion, explaining that thanks to the TPH they feel closer to the principal: "our TPH drives an open channel towards the principal". According to teachers from school B, "the greatest resource that teachers have is other teachers. Principals and TPHs are teachers with a leading role, hence, they need to work as a team".

Five TPHs explained in detail how they perceived the significance of working closely with the school principals. The TPH of school F, for example, commented, "I have a deepest admiration for her, the way she has been running this school is exceptional, and when she asked me to take this role, we commit to work together to put in place our shared educational dream". He also indicated that studying a master of leadership and educational management with the principal and this time together helped to nurture their relationship. Similarly, the TPH from school D indicated:

> We have a beautiful relationship, based on affection and respect. To me all the experience and learning that the principal has shared with me has marked my personal character and this in turn has been noticeable in all the teachers, students and families that collaborate with us.

According to the TPH from the primary level of school A, "the principal has techniques that allow an ongoing communication and specifically being in touch about important topics". She emphasized the importance of a pedagogical leadership which is a trait in effective principals and she believes that the school A principal is one of those. She expanded her idea in noting that the principal's style is characterized by emphasizing that the entire school community works to achieve good academic results in students, and she works with him for the same purpose. Likewise, the colleague from the secondary level commented that he has been staying in this school because the principal allows them to work independently but articulating the learning process. The TPH of school C also justified remaining at the school

because of the principal. She said, "I am very close to the principal, we are united, we talk a lot and she values my work that is why we are getting good results".

When the TPH of school C talked about school progress and success she mentioned strong leadership as one of the reasons for attaining good results. Her explanation included the idea of collaborative work among school leaders and a close relationship between her and the principal. She acknowledged the principal's support to become a TPH and she believes that the positive impact of her work at the school is in great part because of this support, guidance and confidence. Also, she thinks that these feelings are mutual as she also aids the principal in important decision-making processes. At the end of the interviews, when they were asked about something else that they would like to add, teachers from school A mentioned, "we would like to know if there is any type of supervision of the TPH's work, because the principal should verify that the TPH's work is being fulfilled". This query will be clarified next with the principal's perceptions.

The improvement experienced by the schools was seen as the result of the commitment, endeavour and passion of many people. Five out of six school principals emphasized the importance of the combined efforts of the leadership team members, the teaching staff, support staff and most importantly the TPHs. The school A principal explained that one of their aims as an educational organisation is establishing coordinated work among all parties. He says, "I try to organise meetings to allow common work lines among us". Another principal from school E highlighted the importance of a mutual understanding with the TPH:

> I feel that with my current TPH it has turned out to be what I wanted, we have accomplished many things that before we could not attain. Before I was working alone and now it is different because the TPH understands what I want, and he helps me to put my ideas into practice.

She clearly admitted that the TPH's appointment was based on their similarities in educational thinking. According to the school F principal, who also has a strong professional connection with her TPH, their work is normally organised based on performance reports and ongoing communication. Likewise, the work relationship between the school D principal and the TPH is even closer, as stated by her: "it was a crisis (that) helped us to work closer together to

153

improve the learning quality process". They developed a collaborative work relationship, where she supports him with the primary level pedagogical duties, since the TPH's expertise is at the secondary level. When the school C principal defined her relationship with the TPH she expressively said, "It is marvellous", explaining that she considers it to be essential for school success to have a strong relationship with the TPH.

When middle leaders were asked about essential people or events for school development, two out of five mentioned that collaboration between principals and TPHs has facilitated school progress. The II level school F coordinator considered that both are positive leaders who have a strong and beneficial leadership at the school, recognising joint work and organisation. The same perception was expressed by the integration program coordinator, who indicated that there is a cohesion between the school principal and the TPH, which is required to impact the school community positively. Non-teacher support staff were also interviewed about this issue, and three of them clearly stated that teamwork is a factor of success, an idea which was highly supported by the school counsellors. The general inspector from school A mentioned, "When there is good management, there is no room for mistakes, and everyone's work is aligned. In conclusion, TPHs and principals working together is absolutely pivotal; through these key people and initiatives, schools are progressively achieving the expectations of the community for quality education and students are achieving their goals.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Introduction

According to Fundacion Chile (2006), the (TPH) is a professional holding a teaching degree whose main responsibilities are planning, organisation, supervision and evaluation of curricular activities at school, and who is also in charge of advising the school principal. Therefore, this school member seems to play an important role in the Chilean education system. However, only a small number of studies of the TPH have taken place, and therefore the role and function of the TPH remains under-researched.

Selected participants such as TPHs, school principals, middle leaders, non-teaching staff and groups of teachers from participating schools were interviewed, and their perceptions were used to describe the role and impact of the TPH. The perceptions were compared to determine the extent to which their opinions were consistent with the scarce literature, in order to provide a more detailed description of the TPH. The methodology chosen hermeneutic phenomenology, allowed the phenomenon of the TPH to both be described and interpreted without using prior assumptions concerning middle level leaders; the participants defined the scope of what was included in the role description and the researcher interpreted their views by looking for common themes. These findings were presented in chapter four.

The aim of this research was to investigate the role and impact of the technical pedagogical head in different types of schools based on the Chilean education system. In addition to this, the TPH's definition and the perceptions given by school members were examined, in order to provide a clear description regarding this school leader.

The purpose of this chapter is to connect the study's results with existing literature about the TPH definition and the broader literature on middle-level leaders, noting what this research confirms or refutes and presenting unique findings, implications, and areas of further investigation. To achieve this purpose, the discussion has been divided into the following sections:

1. The summary results of the study in relation to the research question;

2. Insights obtained from this case study concerning the definition, role and impact of the TPH, where the major themes identified were discussed under the following headings:

    2.1 Existing definition versus definition by respondents

    2.2 Behavioural competences versus required qualities

    2.3 Current perceptions versus new findings

    2.4 Functional competences versus the role of TPH

    2.5 The impact of the TPH

3. Applicability of CAMM leadership model to the leadership role of the TPHs

4. Updated TPH's Competences Profile

5. Directions for further research.

6. Contribution to knowledge

7. Methodology

8. Recommendations for practice

9. Conclusion

5.1 Research question

What is the role and impact of the technical pedagogical head in different types of schools in the Chilean education system?

Participants identified a considerable number of interpersonal skills, required qualities and technical competencies as a part of the role of the TPH. The TPH was defined as the teachers' guide, someone who coordinates pedagogical activities at school and who is the curriculum leader. The role of the TPH was focused on three main responsibilities: supporting teachers in the classroom, planning and implementing the curriculum, and test revision. These duties are clearly mentioned as the most important features of the role of the TPH in the Competencies profile of Fundacion Chile (2006). However, this framework needs more elaboration as the competencies were set out as a list of duties.

This study identified several different strengths and weaknesses of the role. For instance, closeness, expertise and leadership were considered as positive characteristics of the role, while poor communication, abuse of power and bureaucracy were mentioned as flaws of the

role. Finally, the main impact of the TPH was in relation to teacher support, improving teachers' practices and the working with the principals.

In the next section, these aspects will be considered, first by exploring a new definition for this concept, then identifying required qualities of the TPH (such as expertise, empathy, leadership and experience in the classroom). Finally, the discussion will focus on three key ideas that were mentioned by most respondents where new findings challenge current perceptions: the need to delegate functions among TPH's, traditional versus contemporary work style, and supervision versus support. Subsequently, the functional competences of Fundacion Chile (2006) are compared with the role of the TPH by respondents, to finally determine the impact of the TPH in the Chilean education system.

5.2 Insights obtained from this case study concerning the definition, role and impact of the technical pedagogical head.

The evidence provided from the literature on the technical pedagogical head indicates an urgent need to increase the level of understanding of the role of this school leader. According to Dinham (2007), the literature on school leadership has traditionally been focused on principalship. Likewise, the NCSL (2003, p.2) has noted that "the international literature pertaining to assistant and deputy headteachers is substantially smaller than that relating to headteachers or principals".

As discussed in chapter two, leadership has a powerful influence on school improvement (Harris, 2002). In fact, Gurr and Drysdale (2013) asserted that the Australian research on middle-level leadership shows their potential to make a substantial impact on school improvement. Therefore, the development of more studies related to middle leadership is essential, as Harris (2000, p. 82) claims: "issues of leadership and management can no longer be seen as the exclusive preserve of senior school leaders". The findings of this study affirmed that the TPH as a school leader influences school improvement; however, this role has yet to be given the importance it deserves.

To begin, it was demonstrated through this investigation that the TPH's definition goes beyond a couple of lines or a list of relevant competencies. The TPH was considered as a key school member; playing a leading role in the curriculum decision making process, which

directly affects school results. It was shown in this research that this process requires real dedication and a high level of commitment, so the work done by the TPH plays an important role in the improvement process.

The TPH was considered by respondents as someone much more relevant and necessary than anyone else at school. The TPHs, through their many close relationships with staff, their expertise in teaching and learning and their leadership, were described as a guide. School members perceived the TPH as an experienced teachers' leader, bringing extensive knowledge, and for this reason there is a high level of confidence in their expertise and support. This creates a relationship that allows for collaborative work between teachers and TPHs, which is beneficial for the enhancement of student learning and consequently for school improvement. Principals consider that TPHs are a part of the leadership team, and they seemed to highly value their contribution and the close working relationship developed between them.

5.2.1 Existing definition versus definition by respondents

Fundacion Chile has been the only Chilean organisation that has delivered a formal and common definition for this role. In fact, there are no official documents available that provide a comprehensive description of this position. However, the internet network shows different definitions provided by educational organisations in relation to the TPH, although each of these varies according to the school needs and context. Similarly, Turner (2007) considers that the role of middle leaders is not well-defined in an organisation. In schools, organisational hierarchical distinctions are not neatly delineated. Many staff are involved in a complex switching of roles and lines of accountability between different aspects of their work (Busher, Harris & Wise, 2000, p. 105).

Another difficulty when trying to define the TPH is the complexity of their several and varied responsibilities, which will depend on numerous factors. This situation is also evident in recent literature about school middle leaders; despite efforts to give a general definition to this leadership position, it is not simple to identify the roles of these people because their titles and roles depend on the context, size and structure of the school or school system (Grootenboer et al., 2015). Therefore, unofficial descriptions cannot be considered as reliable

information on the Chilean educational system, and thus they were not included in the literature reviewed for this study.

Recent studies of school leadership have shown an evolution in this leadership position, which is now referred to as a middle-level leader. Middle level leaders are, defined as "leaders who have significant responsibility for specific areas within a school. They will likely have position titles such as director of teaching and learning, curriculum coordinator, subject coordinator, head of department, student well-being coordinator or year-level coordinator" (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013).

The TPH is considered as a senior teacher with multiple responsibilities, such as planning, organising, supervising and evaluating curricular activities at school, who is also responsible for advising the school principal (Fundacion Chile, 2006). Consequently, the research results revealed that this definition is consistent with the reality observed by teachers. For instance, educators from school F described the TPH as a guide or a counsellor who works on technical, administrative and pedagogical matters. Teachers from school D added that the TPH is an expert in curriculum and planning who guides educators. At the same time, teachers from school B described the TPH as a pedagogical coordinator with a wide range of knowledge about the national curriculum, plans and programs; according to their words: "if the school principal is away, the second in charge is the TPH".

It is necessary to mention that some literature on middle level leaders shows differences from the TPH's role described in this study. For instance, Pinto, Galdames & Rodriguez (2010) divide middle level leaders into two groups. In one of these groups of MLs are teachers whose main role is associated with classroom teaching, but who collaborate or have assumed additional responsibilities associated with the management exercise. Having said that, the TPH in Chile does not perform teaching duties, but in the majority of the cases, they have worked in the classroom for several years and working as a TPH is a promotion in their professional careers. Hence, they do classroom supervision to monitor teachers' performance.

Other studies indicate that MLs are not just situated between the management/leadership of the school and the teaching staff, which is frequently how one thinks about their position, but instead they are considered as an integral part of both (Grootenboer et al., 2015). This means

159

that they must relate 'upwards' to a principal or head, and also 'across' to their teaching colleagues, and this relational positioning can create both opportunities and difficulties for the middle leader (Inman, 2009).

TPHs provided additional perspectives on the complexity of their role. For example, the TPH from school D said, "the TPH is a facilitator of the teacher's work, we have to guide the teaching practice and are also the principal's advisor in curriculum matters". As can be seen from the above examples, there was a high level of agreement when defining the TPH, but it should be noted that the concept of a "guide" was added to the current definition provided by Fundacion Chile. In general terms, the definition extracted from respondents was focused mainly on guidance in pedagogical matters. They pointed out that the TPH is a guide, in charge of the school pedagogical activities as well as being the curriculum leader. The next section will analyse the behavioural competencies profile (Fundacion Chile, 2006) alongside literature about school middle leaders in contrast with the required qualities of a TPH mentioned by the participants in this study.

5.2.2 Behavioural competencies versus required qualities

The competencies profile designed by Fundacion Chile (2006) provides a list of skills required to perform the role of the TPH. One of these competencies is named as behavioural, which is related to ethical and moral actions the TPH is expected to demonstrate. This handbook contains a description, criteria and level of conduct; each of these were listed in chapter two.

This study found that there is a range of qualities referred to as interpersonal skills required to work as an effective TPH. The most significant interpersonal skills noted by interviewees were expertise, empathy, leadership and experience in the classroom. In addition to these four key required characteristics, the participants in this study cited other traits with lower levels of agreement. For instance, in order of frequency the other characteristics cited were: being up to date, being a role-model, having a proper educational background, and demonstrating communication skills. A chart comparing required qualities and behavioural competences of a TPH, which highlights differences and similarities between them, is shown below (Table 5.1).

160

Table 5.1: Comparison of required qualities and behavioural competencies of a TPH

Required qualities (Study findings)	Behavioural competencies (Fundacion Chile, 2006)
1.Expertise 4. Experience in the classroom	Self-learning and professional development Quality orientation
2. Empathy	Assertiveness Conflict resolution
3.Leadership	Leadership
5.Up to date	Initiative and innovation
6.Role model	Responsibility Ethic and social commitment
7.Communication skills	Conflict resolution

The left column lists (with a number) the required qualities of a TPH in order of importance according to the study results. The right column shows the behavioural competencies described by Fundacion Chile, which have been listed beside the corresponding required qualities according to the similarity in their description. A wider explanation of these comparisons will be provided next.

To begin, it should be noted that Dinham (2005, 2007) mentioned that one of the ways to achieve success as a middle level leader is by having high-level interpersonal skills, which summarises what is expected of the role of TPHs according to the interview results. First, expertise or extensive knowledge of the field of school education was cited as an essential requirement by the majority of participating teachers in this study. For example, teachers from school F explained that the trust relationship with the TPH is grounded on their expertise, since they can learn from this role. Thus, if there is an absence of knowledge, they

would rarely trust a TPH. The TPHs' opinions were strongly consistent with this view, as illustrated by the TPH from school A, who mentioned, "we must have solid knowledge about our work". Meanwhile, other TPHs emphasised the importance of performing a quality technical job based on wide-ranging expertise.

Expertise as a quality can be comparable with two behavioural competencies. The first of these is self-learning and professional development as it is considered as a capability to seek, assimilate and share new knowledge, enhancing staff skills and professional development. The second of these is quality orientation, which is visible in an expert school leader who has the ability to uphold an orientation and professional performance reflecting efficiency and quality in their work (Fundacion Chile, 2006). Additionally, another quality mentioned by respondents in this study was experience in the classroom, which is also comparable with these two behavioural competencies.

Harris (2000) places the ML role into four key dimensions, one of these is "improvement of staff and student performance". This involves both the transactional leadership role for the ML in monitoring the attainment of school goals and ensuring that certain prescribed levels of curriculum performance are met. It also includes a mentoring or supervisory leadership role in supporting colleagues' development and the development of students, both academically and socially. This dimension of ML's leadership refers to an expert knowledge, and the power to make improvements in practice, which is comparable to the expertise identified by the study's participants.

With regards to experience in the classroom, the number of years working as a classroom teacher was not as important as expertise developed in the field. This clarification was made by teachers from school A:

> It is very important that a TPH has lived the experience of being a classroom teacher, no matter how many years, but at least the TPH has knowledge about what working in the teaching space is like, to then empathise with teachers.

For the TPHs, having previous experience as a teacher is needed in order to perform a role based on knowledge and real understanding, and for the teachers it is helpful to build a close working relationship with the TPH. Therefore, these ideas are connected with the notion of

self-learning and professional development and quality orientation from Fundacion Chile (2006), as a TPH with experience in the classroom is able to promote staff improvement and perform their role in a well-organized way. In the opinion of school A principal:

> Having experience in the classroom is a plus; both TPHs here have practice in the classroom, and this is an advantage over another TPH who has received only training to perform this function without going through the classroom. This allows you to have a better management of the school reality. I believe that the TPH should have been in the classroom as a teacher previously. In fact, this is a tradition among us, the school leaders have had teaching experience and they have to maintain the connection with the students to know what student profiles we have at the school, because the TPH also requires an understanding of our students. It is not enough to have a list with our children's socioeconomic data, or students' performance, it requires direct contact with them.

According to the interviewees, one of the most vital requirements of a TPH is to demonstrate empathy towards others, and being able to understand each party's perspective, without necessarily agreeing with them. This required quality of TPHs possesses similarities and differences with assertiveness, which is mentioned in the competences profile of Fundacion Chile. Assertiveness refers to the process by which a TPH articulates and advocates his/her interests while equally caring for the relationship with other school members (Fundacion Chile, 2006). Being assertive means being able to stand up for your own or other people's rights in a calm and positive way, without being either aggressive, or passively accepting 'wrong'. Assertive TPHs are able to get their point across without upsetting others or becoming upset.

These two qualities enable the expression of feelings, opinions and thoughts at the right time and in the right way. In both cases, the opinions and convictions of others must be respected. However, when a TPH is assertive they will defend their convictions. Conversely, when a TPH is empathetic, they will understand the feelings of other human beings. Most of the participating teachers in this study highlighted that a lack of empathy in a TPH may affect the working environment enormously. In the case of school C teachers, they indicated, "if there is empathy among TPHs and teachers, we can build a close relationship based on confidence".

This research suggests therefore that the most effective school leaders should be developing expertise in both dimensions.

The literature provides similar information related to the importance of being an empathic middle leader. For instance, Fletcher and Bell (1999) organised the tasks that primary MLs felt they should do and considered to be effective into eight categories. One of these was supporting staff, which is directly related to the empathy required to be a good TPH. Similarly, White (2000) indicates in his CAMM leadership model that one of the four key roles of a middle leader is being a learning area architect. This reflects aspects of the leadership role that are involved in changing learning area culture and building human capital in the learning area. In this sense, middle leaders create a team environment where decision making is collaborative, and people are motivated, feel valued, and are willing to contribute.

TPH's leadership as stated by Fundacion Chile (2006) affirms the importance of applying the school's vision in their work, improving school practices, assuming responsibilities, developing teachers' capacity and driving innovation. A TPH needs to articulate the personal resources of the team members, in order to act efficiently in different situations, following the school's standards. Before comparing the perception of the TPH's leadership as described by Fundacion Chile with the results of this study, it should be noted that the majority of respondents considered the TPH as a leader within the school community.

The third fundamental characteristic for a TPH frequently mentioned by respondents was leadership. Interviewees perceived the TPH as a leader who allows them to share ideas, give opinions, share experiences and methodologies, and also look at strengths and weaknesses with the purpose of becoming better professionals. For example, teachers from school A noted, "the TPH must be a leader, a positive leader, but not a distant leader, he needs to be involved in our journey". This definition is clearly comparable with the definition provided by Fundacion Chile. In fact, both descriptions pointed to the same goal, which is working together with school members towards school improvement. Thus, there is no doubt about the level of agreement about the importance of the TPH's leadership. Indeed, when reviewing the responses of the TPHs, they also believe that leadership capacity is an essential aspect of their role, describing this quality as a combination of personal traits and the ability to think

and act as a leader. They also perceived leadership as the art of motivating a group of teachers to act towards achieving the common goal of school improvement.

Similarly, Grootenboer and his colleagues (2015) clearly indicate that the term middle leaders refers to the school leaders who practise their leadership among their teaching colleagues. Likewise, Harris (2000) says that one of the key dimensions of the ML role is creating social cohesion through a leadership style which is power oriented and pays attention to people's feelings, attitudes and beliefs.

In addition to the main required qualities extracted from the findings, there were also three other characteristics less developed by interviewees, but equally important, as they have a direct relationship with the behavioural aptitudes mentioned in the competencies profile. For instance, some participants stated that a TPH needs to be up to date in regards to the Chilean education system, which was also cited in the document of Fundacion Chile (2006) as initiative and innovation. This ability requires a quick reaction when facing challenges, providing innovative alternatives to solve problems, acting creatively and anticipating changes in the school context. In White's (2000) study, this quality is also mentioned as a part of the CAMM leadership model, where it is defined as awareness of changes and trends in learning area curriculum, and an ability to communicate well with staff"

Beside this capacity, respondents said that a TPH must be a role model, as they are followed by teachers. Being a role model involves a high level of responsibility and a strong ethical and social commitment among other characteristics. These two aspects were also cited separately in the TPH's competencies profile (Fundacion Chile, 2006), which also includes showing commitment to the school and its social and cultural environment. Ethical and social commitment also include the provision of support and supervision, being responsible for delegated tasks, and assuming accountability for mistakes made by school members. Likewise, being a role model means possessing outstanding qualities that are emulated by others in a way that makes them better professionals, as it was indicated in the aforementioned behaviours.

In regards to the role-model's characteristics, Busher (2007) opines that MLs are basically responsible for three general tasks, and one of the listed responsibilities is being role models

for their staff. According to him, the middle manager's daily behaviour must represent the people-centred culture of the school as an organisation. Accordingly, Blandford (1997) points out that personal integrity is essential for school middle leaders.

Communication skills was another important quality mentioned by interviewees. For example, the general inspector from school E said, "lacking communicative skills is a serious problem, no one wants a leader who does not communicate with the members of the community". Similarly, the integration program coordinator from school D indicated that this communication issue occurs when the TPHs ignore the emotional aspect. Here is where the conflict resolution ability mentioned by Fundacion Chile (2006) plays an important role. This capacity to facilitate the achievement of agreements through support and approval of all parties involved is an essential skill. According to the comparison established by the researcher, communication skills play a vital role in conflict resolution, whereby a TPH needs to ask questions and listen to school members carefully in order to determine the nature of a conflict and find possible solutions. White (2000) also refers to communication in his CAMM model, as the middle leader is required to act as a formal and informal information carrier between a variety of groups and individuals within the school.

5.2.3 Current perceptions versus new findings

One of the main findings of this research has been the emergence of new and important insights about the TPH. In 2003, the TPH started to play a leading role in Chilean schools, once the Chilean Ministry of Education began to implement the system for quality assurance of school management (Montecinos, Sisto & Ahumada, 2010). In 2006 Fundacion Chile elaborated a competence profile focused on a definition and role of the TPH, and later in 2008 Carbone et al., undertook a study of the current Chilean educational leadership situation, which concluded that the TPH was an important member of the Chilean leadership team.

In chapter two, it was observed that perceptions of the MLs including the TPHs contained in the scarce literature have typically reported divisions of responsibilities between instructional and administrative functions. In fact, Busher (2007) opines that MLs may well be the de facto instructional leaders in schools as senior leaders have little time to spend in classrooms working with teachers. Certainly, the leadership role that emerged from this study has aspects

relating to these broad divisions, but the leadership role of a TPH that was developed from the interview data provides a more extensive and richer description of this position which also includes a strong pedagogical focus which impacts school settings.

This study also identified key findings about the current role of the TPH in the school environment. It as well provided a context for exploring how the school might contribute in establishing a consistent theoretical framework in relation to this role, which is highly needed. This research revealed three central ideas emerging from the TPH concept: first, the need for delegating functions among TPHs; then the presence of two different work styles and third, the difference between supervision and support, alongside other perceptions less frequently mentioned but also relevant to the study.

According to the research findings, there is an excess workload among TPHs due to a wide range of tasks that need to be done. Some possible reasons for the heavy work burden experienced by TPHs may be explained by the literature on MLs. For instance, when Grootenboer et al., (2015) define the MLs as an integral part of the management/leadership of the school and the teaching staff, they explain that MLs have to relate 'upwards' to a principal or head, and also 'across' to their teaching colleagues. According to Inman (2009), this relational positioning can create both opportunities and difficulties for them. In the particular case of TPHs, this "integral role" could be creating an excess of responsibilities, which may be affecting their performance. Regarding this issue, teachers clearly pointed out that there is a real need for delegating the TPH's functions in order to perform a quality job. As an example, teachers from school A explained why they had to implement a new supporting role for the TPH:

> We had a well-prepared TPH, who performed a great job with his wife's collaboration. When he passed away three years ago, his wife retired, and the position become vacant. So, a new TPH was hired, but it did not work well because he had a work overload, and less expertise in the primary level. Therefore, last year the principal made the decision to hire another TPH just for the primary level, which has been very helpful.

Leask and Terrell (1997, pp. 9-10) also explained the complexity of the role of middle managers in secondary schools: "...at the centre of the management sandwich is the middle manager, working with the practical difficulties and pressures from below, and the higher aspirations and pressures from above". This insight was similarly described in the study of Carbone et al., (2008). As this research concluded, "TPHs from high and low performance schools also play extra roles simultaneously, such as being a counsellor, teacher and inspector. Indeed, their role depends on the school reality and the principal's requirements" (Carbone et al., 2008, pp.16-17).

From the participating teachers' point of view, "a TPH fulfilling many tasks is detrimental for the school and for the role itself". For this reason, three out of six school participants in this study have included new members as the TPH's collaborators. For instance, in school A there are two TPHs, one at the primary level and one at the secondary level. In the case of school B, they count with heads of departments in every subject, and in school F, as well as heads of departments, they have added three level coordinators for preschool, primary and secondary level respectively. All of them provide assistance in pedagogical matters, which has made a positive contribution to improving the quality and results at the school. It should be noted that in none of the public schools the TPHs has specific assistance from other school members.

This research clearly confirms the issue of lack of time among MLs, as over time the role of school middle leaders has been increasing in both scope and workload (Basset & Robson, 2017). Thereby, the middle leader's role has evolved from that of subject specialist to having responsibility for monitoring and evaluation, contributing to wider school policy, evaluating teaching programmes, developing organisational relationships, ensuring quality assurance, and liaising with senior management (Bennett, Woods, Wise, & Newton, 2007; Fitzgerald, 2000; Glover, Miller, Gambling, Gough, & Johnson, 1999). According to the interviewees, this escalation in duties and responsibilities becomes a problem when it is too much of a burden for just one person, and it could be resolved if the tasks were adequately delegated among other school members, enabling the TPH to prioritise their key pedagogical and managerial roles.

As was said in the first paragraph of this section, an important contribution to the literature of TPHs was made by Carbone and colleagues (2008). This study was not totally focused on

this middle level leader, but it attempted to understand the leadership practices of the leading teams in public and subsidised Chilean schools, involving the TPHs as one of the protagonists. Through this research it was possible to identify differences in typical leadership practices between the TPHs of high performance schools and TPHs of low performance schools. It was also found that the technical pedagogical heads' practices and aspects of their leadership style differed according to the school context.

Similarly, to the Carbone et al. (2008) study, the respondents in this research mentioned the presence of two different working styles among TPHs; traditional and contemporary. Similarly, back in 1989, Earley and Fletcher-Campbell mentioned in their study the conflict of styles among MLs. This perception was evident across a great number of the interviews being frequently evoked by the principals and teachers. When they identified a difference between these two working styles, there was an obvious negative view of the traditional work style. For instance, a group of teachers explained this idea as follows: "they always try to mark distance in our professional relationship, they are unfriendly. Their favourite duty is sending warning letters and that's it". This negative perception was also characterised in the research of Carbone et al. (2008) as "they adopt an authoritarian management style at school, which emphasises an individualist style to work, a pessimistic discourse, a short-term view and an absence of a shared approach to work".

Conversely, the study participants defined TPHs with a contemporary work style as leaders with a positive predisposition towards progress, change and school improvement. According to respondents, these TPHs focus on establishing innovative learning strategies, accepting challenges and constantly updating their knowledge and skills through diverse professional training. Likewise, Brown and Rutherford (1998) also characterised the leadership styles of MLs into different types of roles, calling one of those the "servant leader" to describe MLs who use their professional expertise rather than their line authority. These ideas centred on a transformational movement oriented to the changes at the school in this century, and were expressed by a school counsellor who said, "Nowadays we need a TPH who is able to think about the future changes based on the school context". Similarly, Carbone et al. (2008, p. 17) defined the progressive TPH leadership style as "technical pedagogical heads who work collaboratively with the leadership team, assigning them responsibilities, showing confidence

in their work and holding an optimistic future vision, which generates a positive work environment".

In regards to this perception observed in the literature and in the research findings, it can be highlighted that the distinction between TPHs who came from "schools with good results" and TPHs working at "schools with bad results" was mentioned only by Carbone and colleagues (2008), linking the first group with a progressive style and the second group with a traditionalist work style. However, this study showed the existence of two leadership styles according to the personal characteristics of the TPH and was not related to the school where they worked.

Another perception extracted from the findings was the distinction between the TPHs supervision in the classroom and supporting teachers in the classroom. According to Carbone et al. (2008), one of the most recognised TPH functions is supervising and supporting teachers, ensuring the implementation of quality practices in the classroom. This role's description might suggest that supervision and support would be two tasks that are carried out together. However, for a great number of interviewees there are several factors that make a subtle but important difference between these two actions, indeed even attributing a negative aspect to the act of supervision. According to the interviewees, one of the major differences between supervision and support is that the first is often task-oriented, for instance, completion of a certain duties, whereas the latter is more about caring for an individual's long-term development.

As an example of this discrepancy, teachers from school A explained the act of support from a TPH as "a classroom visit to observe the teaching method using an evaluation guideline, and then providing subsequent feedback to improve teachers' practices", noting the difference with the act of supervision, where the TPH's visit focuses on teachers' mistakes and criticising them. Similarly, teachers from school C noted that the TPH's support is given through collaboration and feedback in the classroom, which is totally different than a classroom visit to check if teachers have updated the paperwork, which was considered by them to be supervision. This perception has become an issue for the study' participants similarly to that cited almost thirty years ago by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1989) regarding staff discipline and interpersonal relationships.

The negative connotation of the supervision role performed by the TPHs can be also compared with more recent literature (Wise, 2001), where a considerable number of teachers did not accept that the MLs should be observing their teaching. In fact, the concept of supervision is negatively related to accountability and surveillance rather than issues of equity and quality" (Wise, 2001, p. 338). Almost a decade has passed so far, and this research confirms this dilemma among the TPHs and subordinated teachers.

Other perceptions of the TPH from the data collected were focused on negative aspects in relation to their role. For instance, school B teachers stated that TPHs lack the time to comply with their many responsibilities. This perception of the role of the TPH aligns with the need for delegating functions of the role mentioned in the literature discussed at the beginning of this section. This issue is not unexpected, as many studies have stated that there is a lack of time to effectively carry out all responsibilities of the ML role (Bassett, 2016; Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Connors, 1999; Deece, 2003; Fletcher-Campbell, 2003; Glover & Miller, 1999; Irvine & Brundrett, 2016; Wise & Bennett, 2003). Similarly, it was also referred to by Carbone et al. (2008, p. 17): "in some cases, the TPHs have limited assigned working hours in which to develop their job".

Another issue identified by the study's participants concerned the lack of information about the TPH's role. Unfortunately, this issue not only affects the TPHs, but it is also a recognised problem in the literature of MLs in general. As has been indicated in several studies, "middle level leadership has not captured the research interest it deserves" (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013, p. 57). Similarly, Weller (2001, p. 73) notes that the role of MLs is "largely undefined, open to interpretation, and multifaceted in nature". Notably, the TPH from school D valued this study for considering this theme as a research topic, since it gives hope to him to be actually included and considered in the Chilean education system. Equally, the TPH from school B considered that it is necessary to delve into the TPH concept and define their duties well, which aligns with the view of Horn and Marfan (2010), who advocate that the TPH role requires to be studied more, since it has a high level of influence within schools. Similarly, Flessa and Anderson (2012) highlighted the lack of evidence relating to the influence of mid-level administrators and how they affect the performance of school leaders in Chile.

171

Finally, the last perception of TPHs identified in the interviews was an unusual idea, never mentioned in the current literature; it was the request of changing the name of the TPH for another more appropriate title. For instance, school D teachers believed that this title is very dictatorial, suggesting that the word "head" might be replaced by "coordinator". Likewise, teachers from school F thought that the word "head" should be eliminated, as it has a negative connotation and it creates distance between the TPHs and their peers. They added, "The current title covers a lot of things and perhaps it could be the reason why the TPHs are overloaded with work". Similarly, school A teachers perceived the title as part of the business vocabulary and not very educational. They also mentioned that every organisation defines a different role for the TPHs, so at the end of the day, there is no consensus in the Chilean education system about the role of the TPH. This notion has been also commented on in several studies of educational leadership. Despite attempts to provide a general definition of this leadership position, it is not simple to identify and label these people because their titles and roles depend on the context, size and structure of the school or school system (Grootenboer et al., 2015).

5.2.4 Functional competencies versus the role of TPH

The research had as one its main aims to describe the leadership role of TPHs as perceived by the study participants, to compare the resulting leadership role description with the existing literature, and to obtain the perceptions of the study participants into the impact(s) of TPHs on student learning outcomes and further school improvement. The resulting descriptions thus include pedagogical, behavioural, management and leadership aspects. In this section, the discussion will be centred on management and curriculum. The first part discusses the managerial responsibilities that a TPH should perform, while the second area describes the pedagogical functions of a TPH.

Since the nineties, the international literature has reported more widely about the role of school middle leaders. Nevertheless, it is still a small number when compared with principal leadership literature, as stated by Dinham (2007), who claims that the literature based on school leadership has traditionally been focused on principalship. Even more dramatic is the case of the TPHs in Chile, where studies focused on TPHs are rare.

According to the interviewees, they do not have clarity about the specific role and definition of the TPHs, as there is little accessible information about it for them. This topic was also an issue for the TPHs themselves, who commented that their task would differ according to the school's needs. Nevertheless, they mentioned that they understand that their role is about pedagogical and administrative matters, and they acknowledge the existence of the competencies profile by Fundación Chile, which was defined as a list of general duties.

Specifically, Fundación Chile (2006) provides guidelines for the TPH role which includes a general description of every task, followed by descriptors for standard and outstanding performance, required basic knowledge for each duty, and a list of actions that should not be done by TPHs in every particular case scenario. The most important features of the role of the TPH according to Fundación Chile (2006) are listed in Table 5.2 below:

Table 5.2: The most important features of the role of the TPH, (Fundación Chile, 2006)

Management Area	Curriculum Area
• Being part of the School Management Team. • Conducting meetings, coordinating and supervising the work of the leadership members. • Attending relevant meetings organised by agencies outside the institution. • Advising the School Principal, along with other members of the School Management Team in preparing the Annual Working Plan. • Assisting school planning: course distribution, teachers, and students. • Advising and organising class schedules. • Supervising the review of school documents. • Preparing and submitting weekly schedules, monthly educational activities and yearly goals to the School Leadership Team.	• Planning, organizing, supervising and evaluating the development of the different school curricular activities. • Verifying the correct preparation of official documents: transcripts, records of assessment, marks, etc. • Promoting the improvement of students' results, seeking to optimize and achieve goals, designing and promoting methods, techniques and teaching strategies that support effective student learning. • Promoting integration between different sectors and subsectors of learning in order to promote teamwork among classroom teachers. • Guiding teachers towards the correct interpretation and application of laws and regulations about school assessment and promotion. • Advising and supervising direct, effective and timely teachers' organization and implementation of plans and programs. • Contributing to teachers' improvement in assessment and curriculum materials. • Leading the teachers' council concerning technical and educational materials. • Promoting and coordinating the organization of meetings, workshops and other activities to address educational problems, and improve the quality of education. • Planning, monitoring and evaluating plans and special or new programs, tailored to school needs and standards. • Upgrading knowledge and skills according to the changes in education and providing timely information for the school community. • Designing criteria to consider in educational outings or trips with teachers' collaboration. • Keeping battery guides, tests and exercises for the different sub-learning areas.
• Ongoing self-assessment of their leadership role.	

According to Carbone et al. (2008) some of the most recognised TPH's functions are, for instance, leading the development of the academic curriculum, ensuring access to useful information related to decision-making for school members, managing the use of school resources, supervising and supporting teachers and ensuring the implementation of quality practices in the classroom. Comparing these guidelines with the information provided in the data collected, the majority of interviewees highlighted three main duties as the most significant ones. These tasks are focused on pedagogical activities performed by the TPH, such as: supporting teachers in the classroom, curriculum design, planning and implementation,

and test revision. Likewise, Blandford (1997, p. 3) describes a school middle manager as someone who has responsibilities for managing "the development of knowledge and understanding, skills and abilities" of students and teachers. Similarly, Grootenboer et al., (2015) define middle leaders as the school leaders who practise their leadership among their teaching colleagues.

In the case of the first duty mentioned above, the teachers from school B said, "the teaching strategies came from the TPH and afterwards these are reflected in the teachers' practice". Similarly, a group of educators from school F explained this idea as follows: "the technical pedagogical head visits us in the classroom in order to evaluate our work and finally we receive their feedback to improve our practice". This function is evidently visible in three tasks referred to by Fundacion Chile (2006), such as guiding teachers towards the correct interpretation and application of laws and regulations about school assessment and promotion and contributing to teachers' improvement in developing assessment and curriculum materials. This role has been commonly discussed in other studies about MLs. Bennett (1995, pp. 78-79) identifies "staff development" as one of the duties of MLs, while Grootenboer et al., (2015) indicate that it is important to understand that middle leaders have a pivotal position and capacity in sustaining quality teaching and learning practices.

Another important role attributed to the TPHs and elaborated in the interviews was the plan and curriculum implementation. This was defined by the level coordinators from school E as being responsible for implementing the pedagogical regulations of the Ministry of Education. It was also described by the teachers from school F as follows: "she gave us ideas for our planning and how to make adjustments". Likewise, Fundacion Chile (2006) mentioned these related duties: planning, organizing, supervising and evaluating the development of the different school curricular activities; advising and supervising direct, effective and timely teachers' organization and implementation of plans and programs, and planning, monitoring and evaluating plans and special or new programs, tailored to school needs and standards. Similarly, Dinham (2005, 2007) found that MLs promote school success through their influence on planning and organisation. According to Koh (2018), planning and organising delivery of a subject curriculum is considered as one of the five core tasks of MLs, and White

(2000) indicates that the CAMM as curriculum strategist is in charge of direction-setting for the learning area and the school in curriculum matters.

The third most important role assigned to the TPH by interviewees was test revision. They specified that test revision is a required process prior to testing students. According to the TPHs, this part of their role is considered an essential obligation in order to improve school results. For example, the TPH from school C explained her test revision technique, mentioning that she reviews the tests made by the teachers and compares these with the teachers' plan and if it is coherent, then she approves it with a stamp. Correspondingly, Fundacion Chile (2006) also considered this responsibility as an important one, citing comparable tasks in its guidelines, including verifying that official documents (such as transcripts, records of assessment, and marks) have been prepared correctly, and retaining battery guides, tests and exercises for the different sub-learning areas.

Table 5.3: Respondents' view of the most important features of the role of the TPH

Management Area	Curriculum Area
• Timetable creation (mentioned in 8 out of 37 interviews)	• Supporting teachers in the classroom. (mentioned in 32 out of 37 interviews) • Plan and Curriculum design and implementation. (mentioned in 28 out of 37 interviews) • Tests revision. (mentioned in 25 out of 37 interviews) • Promoting and coordinating workshops. (mentioned in 5 out of 37 interviews)
• Multifunction role	

As can be seen from Tables 5.2 and 5.3, pedagogical duties are the most important part of the TPH's role with 59 per cent of duties within the curriculum area mentioned by Fundación Chile (2006), 67 per cent within this area according to the participants in this study. The second most important aspect was administrative tasks, which, according to Fundación Chile (2006), correspond to 36 per cent of the TPH's duties, but only 17 per cent as claimed by the study's respondents. In both comparisons, there was only one task situated as an administrative and

pedagogical responsibility. Therefore, it should be noted that the results of this research showed a low focus on administrative tasks by the TPH.

5.2.5 The impact of the TPH

The contribution and participation of the TPHs to teachers' practice and consequent school improvement was frequently mentioned in the interviews. The TPHs were seen to provide many benefits to school members through their expertise, experience and leadership. They were considered as teachers' guides by supporting them to improve their strategies as well as support for school principals. Therefore, the importance of TPHs cannot be understated. For example, some of the interviewees described how grateful they were through these words: "we can learn from her, she is always there for us", or "she has been an excellent guide, she raises the objectives of each teacher very well and she is behind us to give us support", and also by saying, "she shares her knowledge with us because she is focused on supporting teachers". This important contribution was recognised by Horn and Marfan (2010), who affirmed that the TPH really needs to be studied more, since it has a high level of influence within schools. Additionally, the international literature has begun to discuss the middle level leaders' contribution. According to Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman (2013), middle leaders have the responsibility of bringing about change in their schools.

Interviewees debated the key people and events that have been critical to the school's development, and the conclusion was that the TPH is essential for providing support for teachers, and which is considered as favourable for school improvement. Similarly, the literature indicates that MLs are critical agents in school development and student learning (Cranston et al., 2004, Margolis 2012, Walters 2012). In Chile, several school improvement programs have been implemented over the last twenty years, but according to Raczynski and Muñoz (2007) they have had and continue to have very little impact. Accordingly, Muñoz (2009) mentioned the lack of research related to leaders' impact on schools and recommended conducting more research on educational leadership because of widespread international recognition of leadership as the second most important factor affecting student outcomes. Similarly, Muñoz (2009) mentions the lack of research related to leaders' impact

on schools as an important factor that should be considered as part of the new national agenda.

According to interviewees, there are also positive qualities or social values they consider to be strengths of the role. An important strength was developing a close relationship with the teachers, which is explained by this comment from a group of educators: "She is a leader who goes along with us by working with us, she is not a distant person who places herself up in the clouds, since she is another colleague, but always emphasising her leadership". This finding is supported by Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman (2013) who stated that middle leaders (MLs) develop a significant role at schools, since they maintain a close relationship with the classroom. Grootenboer et al., (2015) describe this duty as building a bridge between the educational work of classrooms and the management practices of the administrators/leaders.

Another highly valued strength of the TPH's role was expertise. Indeed, the TPH was defined by the teachers as the one who has more pedagogical credibility, explaining this as follows: "I believe in what the TPH is teaching me because he is the person who really knows about education here". This common feeling among participants is inconsistent with an issue presented in the MLs literature, where the absence of preparation and training of MLs previously being appointed to their role has been extensively described (Adey, 2000; Adey & Jones, 1998; Bassett, 2016; Brown & Rutherford, 1999; Cardno & Bassett, 2015; Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Fleming, 2014; Fleming & Amesbury, 2012; Gurr & Drysdale, 2013; Weller, 2001). Furthermore, (2018) affirms that these studies found that numerous MLs felt inadequately prepared or trained for their role.

The third most important strength identified by this study was leadership, with the TPH being defined as "the teachers' leader". This quality of MLs has been investigated over the past decade in Australia by three doctoral students. Cotter (2011), Keane (2010) and White (2000) demonstrated that many people in leadership roles are not leaders, do not have an expectation of being a leader, and lack of the organisational support to be leaders (Gurr & Drysdale, 2013). In fact, leadership cannot be considered as a characteristic of everyone, instead, it needs to be seen as a special quality (Gurr, 2010).

Other strengths mentioned were generosity, responsibility, professionalism and being up to date. All these strengths were consistent with the description of the TPHs of high performance schools identified by Carbone et al. (2008). Furthermore, three main weaknesses of the role were identified; poor communication, abuse of power and extreme bureaucracy. These characteristics can be recognised in the description of TPHs in low performance schools (Carbone et al., 2008). For example, the authors claim that this type of TPH adopted an authoritarian management style at school, an individualistic style of work, a pessimist discourse, and a short-term view. The TPHs participating in this research recognised these issues and although they would not like to perform poorly, one of them explained his position as follows:

> If you are in a leadership position, odds are you have many responsibilities. Balancing assignments while keeping teachers on task can be stressful. All the pressure seems to be on you, and because you are human, you are bound to make a few mistakes along the way.

The positive aspect of recognising their own flaws thanks to this study is the valued information provided to other school leaders, as one of them said: "many good leaders could be even great leaders if they recognise their weaknesses".

An important aspect of the TPH's work was named as "improving teachers' strategies". Middle leaders have a major impact on teacher learning through ongoing responsibilities for the practice development of colleagues (Edwards-Groves and Rönnerman 2013). This is declared as one the duties of this school leader by Fundación Chile (2006). School members commented that when this really occurred it can be considered as a real contribution to the school, because it leads to school improvement. As educators from school B explained: "The TPH contribution goes beyond improving teachers' strategies because it impacts students' learning and consecutively on school success". Dinham (2005, 2007) indicates that the MLs were found to promote success through fostering teacher learning and developing a culture of shared responsibility and trust. This contribution was recognised by the majority of the respondents in this study, including non-teaching staff, as the general inspector from school C indicated, "Our TPH provides strategies, new methodologies, and she has included an inclusive style of teaching in relation to the different students' learning styles, so it allows

everyone to learn". Similarly, White (2000) indicates in his model of portfolio CAMM leadership that CAMMs as instructional leaders are directly involved in improving the teaching and learning process in the learning area.

As a final element to be analysed as a TPH's contribution at school, this study highlighted the importance of the relationship developed between TPHs and principals. This is probably not a new aspect in the role of the TPH, since both Fundación Chile (2006) and Carbone's (2008) study mentioned it, but the frequency with which this topic was discussed in the interviews emphasises the importance of this relationship and its effect on school results. It should be noted that those who mentioned this relationship emphasised the significant differences between schools where TPHs and principals worked in close alignment and schools where they seem to be working in different directions. For example, teachers from school D commented: "we can notice when there is joint work between them because it is reflected in a positive working atmosphere based on common goals and expectations". This idea was well-supported by the TPH of school C, who said, "I am very close to the principal, we are united, we talk a lot and she values my work - that is why we are getting good results".

The importance of coordinated work among principals and the TPHs was also mentioned by De Nobile (2017). According to him, principal support was the most frequent input to emerge from the ML's literature. He indicates that the principal is an enabler of successful middle leadership. Similarly, Crowther and Boyne (2016) describe how encouragement from a principal promoted the confidence of emergent teacher leaders to run a pedagogical innovation in their school. To conclude, TPHs and principals working together is absolutely necessary; through these key school members and various initiatives, students are achieving their goals and schools are progressively achieving the expectations of the community for quality education.

Likewise, Hattie (2009) noted that MLs are considered as key agents for school development and are recognised for making student learning visible in classrooms. Other authors also have mentioned the importance of MLs in regard to school improvement. For example, they indicate that MLs have a key role in influencing the factors that contributed to school improvement and in influencing the quality of teaching and learning within their subject area (Bell, 1996; Brown & Rutherford, 1996; Collier, Dinham, Brennan, Deece, & Mulford, 2002;

Dinham, 2007; Dinham, 2000; Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989; Fitzgerald, Gunter, & Eaton, 2006; Thorpe & Bennett-Powell, 2014).

Considering the evidence from the literature and the findings from this study, the researcher proposes to use this study as a basis for promoting school improvement through new programs focused on the strengthening of the role of TPHs in the Chilean education system.

More extensive studies of this educational leader are needed in order to identify the key elements that make the TPH a driver of school improvement. Similarly, the Centre for Research on Educational Policy and Practice (CEPPE, 2009) recommended further research into the impact of school leaders on the improvement of students' outcomes. This organisation claims that through the development of evidence-based studies on the relationship between school leaders' performance and learning outcomes, school leadership could be recognised as a crucial factor in the development of educational policy.

Although school improvement is a process in which everyone participates, the influence of the TPHs can be highly favourable for Chilean teachers and schools. This view is consistent with findings of this study where, for example, the II cycle coordinator from school F explained that the TPHs are absolutely important since they support new teachers through proper inductions and keep guiding them all the time. According to her, "she has been my mentor and my biggest support". On the other hand, as noted by the school E secondary level coordinator, "A TPH may contribute but could also worsen the school quality if he/she does not have the required qualities or experience to perform this role". Thus, it is necessary, as was done in this study, to identify predominant strengths and weaknesses of the TPH role.

This issue was identified by Carbone et al. (2008). This study identified important differences in typical leadership practices between the TPHs of high performance schools and TPHs of low performance schools. In the first case, more positive factors were identified about their practices, while the second group was described as having several negative attributes. It could certainly affect school improvement in a positive or negative manner.

5.3 Thinking about a model to describe the work of TPHs

White (2000) described model for curriculum area middle leaders (CAMMs) and given the role of TPHs and the findings reported in this thesis, White's model seems an appropriate basis to consider the work of TPHs. White's (2000) model (refer to Figure 5.1) built upon the earlier work of Turner and Bolam (1998), and the utility of White's model was confirmed by Keane's (2010) research of learning area leaders in catholic schools in Victoria, and Koh' His framework is composed of fifteen leadership themes which are organised into four broad areas of leadership. White (2000, p. 222) claimed that "It is an ideal model that reflects the best advice from the literature and the best advice from this research." The four roles involved in this model of portfolio CAMM leadership are as follows (White, 2000, p. 220-221):

- **CAMM as instructional leader.** This reflects aspects of the CAMM leadership role that are directly involved in improving the teaching and learning process in the learning area.

- **CAMM as curriculum strategist.** This reflects aspects of the CAMM leadership role that are involved in direction-setting for the learning area and the school in curriculum matters. It includes aspects of the CAMM role in raising learning area and school profiles when appropriate opportunities arise.

- **CAMM as learning area architect.** This reflects aspects of the CAMM leadership role that are involved in changing learning area culture and building human capital in the learning area.

- **CAMM as administrative leader.** This reflects aspects of the CAMM leadership role that involves what is traditionally considered learning area 'management'.

White's (2000) model highlights the complexity and richness of the middle leadership and combines the instructional emphasis of instructional leadership with the cultural and symbolic aspects of transformational leadership, the stewardship, service and supervisory (accountability) aspects of pedagogical leadership, and the future directions aspects of strategic leadership.
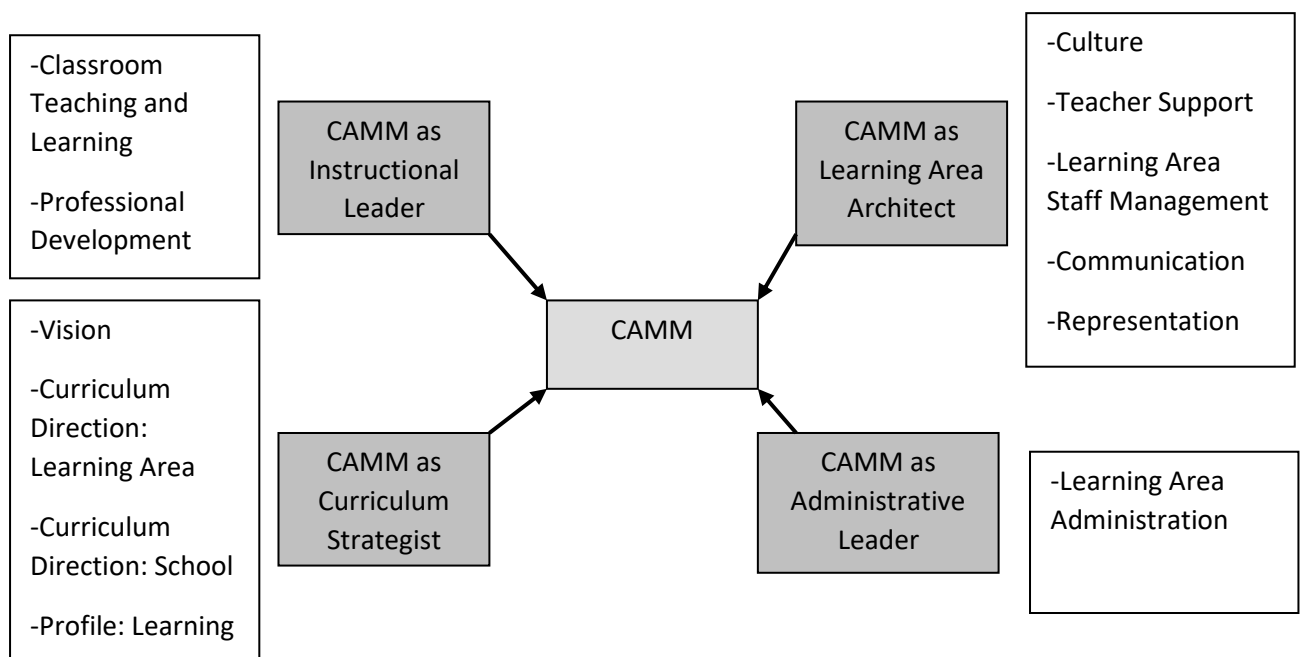
Figure 5.1: CAMM leadership model (White, 2000)

In this section, the TPH's leadership role described by participants in this study will be analysed according to White's model.

5.3.1 TPH as instructional leader

According to White (2000) this area of leadership reflects aspects that are directly involved in improving the teaching and learning process in the department. He indicates that there are three main areas in which MLs operate as Instructional Leaders:

• Classroom teaching and learning;

• Professional development; and

• Accountability.

Classroom teaching and learning: The majority of the TPHs in this study; five out of six, were no longer teaching in the classroom, reflecting current trends among TPHs. However, they were focused on supporting teachers in their pedagogical duties, and providing teachers support in order to help them to improve their strategies to achieve school improvement. They encouraged educators to reflect on their instructional practices and supported the

development of instructional practice through visits to the teaching space, where TPHs provide feedback on existing teaching practices. TPHs had a role in overseeing teaching practice and monitoring whether the school curriculum was actually being taught and whether student learning was being optimised. The literature indicated that there was an expectation that MLs would be excellent, if not outstanding, professionals in their subject area or area of responsibility (Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Dinham, 2007b; Earley & Fletcher-Campbell, 1989). This belief was supported by the respondents, who argued that teaching expertise was a required characteristic of a TPH.

• **Professional development:** even though this role may be important in other MLs, such as the case of Singapore, where MLs are seen as the people who were responsible for the professional development of teachers in the department (Koh, 2018), this responsibility was not very obvious among participants of this study. In fact, only five out of thirty seven interviews explicitly reflected that the creation of programmes or workshops for teachers' professional development was a duty concerning TPHs. It may be participants' interpretation of PD as formal training only. Classroom observation and feedback was highly valued, and my belief is that it is a valid form of PD. However, Fundación Chile (2006) claims that establishing educational training guidelines for the different levels at school is part of the functional competencies required for TPHs.

• **Accountability:** TPHs in this study were held to account for the overall performance and quality of the work of the technical pedagogical department, and the students' results in national and regional standardised test. This responsibility was clearly explained by the TPH from school D as follows:

> A year after I commenced working here, I had an argument with the school principal in regards to the SIMCE results, as they had dropped off. My position was that I could not be responsible for the results of a standardised test in the short-term process, but I assumed the blame and I proposed a collective constructive work, where everyone works uniting criterions. We created strategies to support teachers in their work, in order to optimise students' learning and it ended up with excellent results.

Therefore, the accountability of TPHs was understood as bi-directional, which is consistent with other studies (Keane, 2010; White, 2000) that described accountability as being felt from above (SLs) in terms of improving student learning outcomes and from below in terms of what teachers in the department expect from the MLs (Koh, 2018).

5.3.2 TPH as curriculum strategist

According to White (2000), the work of the ML as a Curriculum Strategist involves direction setting for the department and the school in curriculum matters. This role encompasses the following areas:

• 	Vision;

• 	Curriculum Direction: learning area and school; and

• 	Profile: learning area and school.

• **Vision:** As Koh (2018) indicates in his doctoral thesis, the development of a vision is a defining feature of most leadership models and the absence of an appropriate vision is one of the key indicators of an ineffective department (Harris, 2000; Turner, 2005). TPHs in this study were expected to have a clear vision of the Chilean education system and a strong knowledge of the mission and vision of their particular school. According to Fundación Chile (2006), it was expected that the TPH's vision corresponds with the overall school vision, whether or not they fully agree with it. What was important was to show respect to this as a member of the school.

• **Curriculum direction:** According to the interviewees in this study, the TPH was perceived as "the curriculum leader". For instance, the majority of school principals mentioned that when they chose their TPHs, key factors they considered were their leadership skills to direct the curriculum and to manage people. As an example, the school E principal defined her TPH as the curriculum leader, and she said: "My TPH shows his leadership when he is able to enchant our teachers with his speech and convince them to work together". White's (2000) model differentiated between two dimensions; learning area and school. However, the role of the TPH is not centred on a specific subject or area, but it combines pedagogic and administrative

coordination throughout the school, so it makes more sense to discuss them together. This study revealed that TPHs were expected to set a clear direction for teachers, in terms of working towards the implementation of the school vision. They were also responsible for coordinating the pedagogical activities of the school with some extra administrative duties, such as acting as the bridge of communication between the Ministry of Education and the school in pedagogical matters.

• **Profile of the learning area and the school:** Similarly, to the dimension referred to above, it makes sense to discuss them together due to the multidimensional role of the TPH. White (2000) indicated that this role involves responsibilities such as the formulation of strategies and the use of opportunities to promote learning areas within the school and in the outside community, the formulation and implementation of initiatives for promoting the school in the wider community, and the facilitation of strategies to maximise student results and publicise them in the wider community. Similarly, Fundacion Chile (2006) stated that TPHs are in charge of the diffusion of the educational project among school community members. According to the comments made by participants in this research, the TPHs are continuously providing strategies and methodologies to improve teachers' practice and student learning. However, promoting the school in the broader community was not seen as a main duty; indeed, it was not mentioned during this study.

5.3.3 TPH as learning area architect

This reflects aspects of the ML leadership role that are involved in changing the department culture and building the department's capacity for change (Koh, 2018). Obviously, there are some areas where professional development and accountability and teacher support and staff management overlap (Keane, 2010 p. 121). White (2000) noted five focus areas for the role of MLs:

• Student Management;

• Teacher Support;

• Learning Area Staff Management;

• Communication;

186

- Representation; and

- Culture.

• **Culture:** While MLs in Koh's (2018) study were required to build a department culture that embraces collegiality, teamwork, sharing and a desire for improvement at both the department and school levels, this aspect was not visible in the present study., Instead, there was a different perception cited among interviewees, who mentioned that sometimes the TPH may be seen working alone, which would be contradictory to the idea of culture described by White (2000), where the development of learning area culture embraces collaboration, sharing and a desire for improvement.

• **Teacher support:** this was considered the most important aspect of the leadership role of TPHs in this study. They were seen to provide professional and personal support for all teachers, particularly those who were new to the school or beginning their career as educators, naming this duty as "teachers' induction". Likewise, other studies have confirmed the relevance of this role among MLs. For example, Koh (2018) indicates that MLs in Singapore were found to provide advice, guidance, resources and professional learning opportunities to teachers, both when it was asked for, and when they judged it to be necessary. Similarly, Keane (2010) noted that each of the leaders in the three schools that participated in his study would broadly characterise themselves as being supportive and collaborative.

• **Learning area staff management:** This was a fundamental role of MLs and overlapped with 'Teacher support' in Koh's (2018) study. TPHs in this study were considered as the teachers' leader, or also defined as the pedagogical activities coordinator. According to Fundación Chile (2006), the TPHs are in charge of managing academic staff. This function was visible in the results of this research, as TPHs were seen as working with the leadership team and principals in matters such as designating teachers' duties and co-curricular responsibilities.

• **Communication:** According to the findings, communication skills were considered as a required characteristic for being a TPH. Similarly, Dinham (2007) affirmed that communication was a vital part of the leadership process, and an important part of the ML role. White (2000) defines this area as acting as formal and informal information carrier between a variety of groups and individuals within the school. Accordingly, when the

interviewees were asked about the weaknesses of the TPH's role, they immediately pointed out that bad communication was the most important. For example, the general inspector from school E said: "lacking communicative skills is a serious problem; no one wants a leader who does not communicate with the members of the community".

• **Representation:** According to White (2000) this dimension concerns representing and advocating for the learning area and understanding how the learning area needs and interests fit with overall school goals and priorities. In this sense, Koh (2018) affirms that MLs in Singapore acted as the primary representative and spokesperson for their department and were recognised as the chief advocate for the interests of their department and its teachers. In this study, this notion was not predominant, rather the TPHs saw their responsibility as a school leader more generally.

• **Student management:** this role has been predominantly a teachers' responsibility in Chilean education, and mostly a matter for head teachers. However, the TPHs collaborate with this role indirectly, for instance when teachers need support to manage a special situation with a student, they ask for the TPH's assistance. Likewise, student management was not emphasised in Koh's (2018) study, due to the main responsibility for the management of students resting with the form and/or subject teachers, supported by the Student Welfare department. Despite the importance accorded to student management by White (2000), MLs who are in charge of a subject area generally have no official student management accountability (Koh 2018; Keane, 2010; White, 2000).

5.3.4 TPH as administrative leader

Some of the traditional responsibilities in which administrative leaders are involved are: compiling budgets, monitoring spending, obtaining resources, documenting courses, distributing information about professional development and dealing with correspondence (White, 2000). This refers to features of the ML leadership role considered as 'management' functions. Fundacion Chile (2006) included managerial duties in the competencies profile, but these are more focused on pedagogical tasks rather than administrative responsibilities. To some extent, the TPHs' role was considered in the literature as an integral component of the school with managerial and pedagogical responsibilities, but this study clearly highlighted

differences between what was officially described as the TPH's role and what really is the TPH's role. This research revealed that the TPH's work is more focused on educational activities than administrative tasks.

In summary, the leadership roles of TPHs that emerged from this research were mostly consistent with those described by White (2000), excluding minor differences that were more related to the Chilean educational context than the MLs' role itself. Evidence was found for each of the four roles and the majority of the dimensions being undertaken by the TPHs in this study. White's (2000) model seems to be an appropriate basis to consider for describing the work of TPHs.

5.4 Updated TPH's Competencies Profile

According to the findings of this research, a new competences profile will be provided, as it appears to be more pertinent in terms of the current educational scenario in Chile. This profile is based on the study made for Fundacion Chile (2006) and includes the results of this research. It is noted that the expected duties of the TPHs have reduced considerably when this new profile is compared with the one previously provided by Fundacion Chile (2006). However, this reduction in workload is viewed as a useful tool for reducing the excess of duties so far assigned to the TPHs (see Table 5.4 below).

Table 5.4: Updated TPH's Competencies Profile (Huerta Villalobos, 2018)

Updated TPH's Competencies Profile (Huerta Villalobos, 2018)		
Curriculum Area	**Required qualities**	**Management Area**
• Supporting teachers in the classroom. • Plan and Curriculum design and implementation • Test revision • Promoting and coordinating professional training and workshops	• Expertise • Empathy • Leadership • Experience in the classroom • Up to date • Role model • Communication skills	• Working with principals • Timetable creation

5.5 Directions for further research

The relatively small amount of research into the role of TPHs in Chilean schools leaves much scope for further enquiry. Findings from the current research and indications from the reviewed literature suggest a number of possible research directions that could be undertaken, given that these important leadership positions seem to have received scarce attention in the educational leadership literature, even though they are critical agents in school development and student learning (Cranston et al., 2004, Margolis 2012, Walters 2012).

This section outlines research directions associated with investigating relationships between the different components of the TPH role, the impact(s) of TPH contribution at school, the nature of the involvement of the TPH in student learning outcomes, further investigation of components of the TPH leadership role, and the nature of the way in which school members, particularly that of the teachers and principals, interact with those of TPHs.

The role and impact of the TPH in the Chilean education system has been clarified through this study, which explored the work of the TPHs in different types of Chilean schools. The TPHs were seen as an essential part of the school's improvement, supporting teachers to improve their professional practice, working closely with the school principals, participating in the leadership team and leading the group of middle-level leaders to both set an improvement direction and implement improvement strategies. The technical pedagogical head was considered primarily as a guide, who leads curriculum development and coordinates pedagogical activities. The TPH brings a high level of professional expertise and leadership to the school, providing support to set the school's direction, collaborating with staff to initiate new methodologies and strategies to improve the learning environment for students and contributing to the capacity building of middle-level leaders and teachers.

This study involved a sample of only six schools in the IV region of Coquimbo in Chile, therefore, these new findings could generate more interest in researching and extending this topic to include other geographical areas and connecting the work of the TPH with the broader educational leadership and school improvement literature. Further studies could include a much larger cohort of schools and school participants in order to gain a richer base

of information. Deeper exploration of the role could also be achieved through observational studies. The research also has applicability to contexts where TPHs are less known or this role does not exist and in countries such as Australia, where similar roles exist, such as the role of curriculum area middle managers (CAMMs).

5.6 Contribution to knowledge

The research has made a number of contributions to the body of knowledge relating to school leadership. Without unnecessarily repeating findings of the study in detail, this section will outline six contributions.

5.6.1 Extended definition of the TPH

Chilean studies to date have failed to provide rich information about the role and impact of the TPH, nor have they been able to present a theoretical framework in regards to the TPH. Therefore, it was imperative to create a proper definition of this role as a starting point in this study. Hence, this research contributed with a comprehensive definition of the TPH, as follows: the TPH is a guide, who leads the curriculum and coordinates pedagogical activities at school. The TPH brings a high level of professional expertise and leadership to their role, providing support to set the school's direction, collaborating with new methodologies and strategies to improve the learning environment for students, and contributing to the capacity building of middle-level leaders and teachers.

5.6.2 Description of the TPH leadership role

Perceptions of technical pedagogical heads, principals, level coordinators, general inspectors, school counsellors, school integration program coordinator and members of teaching staff were used to describe the TPH leadership role. The result was a rich description that showed the role to be complex, important and multi-dimensional. The provision of the leadership role description, along with the perception of participants in relation to the impact(s) of TPHs on teachers' practices and student learning outcomes, will render decision makers, at both systemic and school levels, more informed about the work of the TPHs in schools at the present time. Practical issues ranging from such things as the role of TPHs in schools, to

provision of appropriate professional development activities for TPHs may be guided by these findings. A later section in this chapter contains ten specific recommendations for practice.

5.6.3 Comparison with the current literature

As well as describing the TPH leadership role, the description was also discussed in terms of the existing related literature. Connections were made to the literature base dealing with the role of TPHs in three different types of schools as appropriate. Also, the role was examined in terms of existing behavioural and functional conceptions, including the guidelines produced by Fundación Chile (2006) and the findings described in the study conducted by Carbone et al. (2008).

5.6.4 Description of the TPH's impact

The comparison of the overall TPH leadership role description with the leadership literature, plus the important comments given by the research participants, led to unique findings and implications in regards to the impact of the TPH at school. The TPH was considered as a pedagogical leader who supports teachers, helping them to improve their strategies and is considered as an important co-worker of the school principal.

5.6.5 Research directions

Research directions suggested as arising out of this study have been described previously. Important research directions include extending the investigation of the TPH and middle level leaders in the Chilean education system and at an international level, as well as the investigation of school improvement and the role of the TPHS, through larger studies. In future researches in this area, it could be immensely beneficial to investigate how the role of the TPH has been implemented in the new teacher professional development system in Chile (Law 20,903 of 2016), and compare it in the practice among Chilean schools.

5.7 Recommendations for practice

The findings and analysis of the research presented in chapter four and in this chapter allow the formulation of a number of recommendations for practice concerning the leadership role

of TPHs in the Chilean education system. Not all the recommendations are focused specifically on TPHs themselves. The recommendations are indications of initiatives and directions that the group(s) or individual(s) concerned should be considering, while acknowledging the constraints placed on the power of the recommendations by the limitations of this research.

1. School principals should ensure that TPHs have a clearly acknowledged and understood strategic role in the school curriculum planning and policy process. TPHs should pursue this outcome. The nature of the TPH's role and their positions in schools place them in an ideal position to provide input that ensures improvement in teachers' practices, enhancement of student learning and support for school improvement.

2. At a system level, consideration should be given to the development and publication of an official document applicable to TPHs. Such a document would acknowledge the nature of the TPH's role in schools as identified through this and other investigations, particularly their role in school effectiveness and improvement. The document would also be a step toward achieving implementation of the previous recommendation.

3. TPHs should appreciate the complexity of the leadership role ascribed to them by participants in this research. They should be aware of the leadership role ascribed to them as well as the role they are perceived to play in improving teachers' practices and student learning. Specifically, they should work to achieve agreement on the goals and direction of their role.

4. The Chilean education system should extend the practice of using data to drive educational change at different educational levels.

5. Schools should examine the appropriateness of the amounts of non-teaching time being allocated for TPHs. Whilst appreciating the realities of funding at a school level, it would appear unreasonable to expect the full potential of the TPH role in schools to be achieved on the sort of non-teaching allowances currently in use.

6. TPHs need to possess effective communication, organisational and interpersonal skills, as well as being able to offer encouragement, advice and support to their teachers, students and other colleagues.

5.8 Conclusion

This research, employing a hermeneutic phenomenological methodology that did not rely on a priori theoretical framework, has demonstrated that the perceived leadership role of the technical pedagogical heads (TPH) in Chilean schools is complex and multi-dimensional. Given the limited time available and the multiple responsibilities of the role it is difficult to achieve maximum efficiency. Nevertheless, there was a high level of agreement that TPHs were perceived as being able to impact teachers' performance and student learning outcomes.

This study about the THPs consisted of three main themes: The definition of the TPH, the main aspects of the TPH's role and its impact at school. Possibilities for further research, including the investigation of the role of the TPHs in school improvement, more investigation of components of the TPH's leadership role, and the way in which school members interact with TPHs, were presented. Also, this study presented some recommendations for practice that involved both system and school level initiatives.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The following questions are for:

Principals, Subprincipals and Level coordinators: with particular regard to leadership

1. How long have you been at this school? In what capacity? Tell me about your past experience as a school leader.

2. How have you specifically helped to increase success at school? What people and events have been critical to the school's development?

3. What has been your role in the improvement of the school?

4. I am interested in what Technical pedagogical heads do. Can you describe an example of how the Technical pedagogical head work in the school? Please try to provide an example if possible.

5. What has been their main contribution to the school?

6. What does the term Technical pedagogical head mean for you? What are the qualities and characteristics that the school Technical pedagogical head bring to the role?

7. Reflecting on the improvement journey of this school, can you summarise how the school is progressing and who have been the key people in this progress?

8. How do you see the role of the Technical pedagogical head in this school?

9. Anything else?

Appendix 2:   The following questions are for:

Members of the teaching staff

1. How long have you been at this school? In what capacity?

2. How has the teaching staff helped to increase success at school? What people and events have been critical to the school's development?

3. How do you see the role of the Technical pedagogical head in this school?

4. I am interested in what Technical pedagogical heads do. Can you describe an example of how the Technical pedagogical head work in the school? Please try to provide an example if possible.

5. What does the term Technical pedagogical head mean for you? What are the qualities and characteristics that the school Technical pedagogical head bring to the role?

6. Anything else?

Appendix 3:   The following questions are for:

Technical pedagogical heads

1. How long have you been at this school? In what capacity? Tell me about your past experience working in education.

2. How would you describe the progress of this school? What was the school like when you began? Tell me about the school now.

3. What people and events have been critical to the school's development?

4. How do you see your role as a Technical pedagogical head in this school?

5. What has been your main contribution to the school?

6. Can you describe your work as a Technical pedagogical head?

7. Can you describe an example of how the Technical pedagogical head work in the school? Please try to provide an example if possible.

8. What qualities do you bring to the role of Technical pedagogical head?

9. Anything else?