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1975-2025



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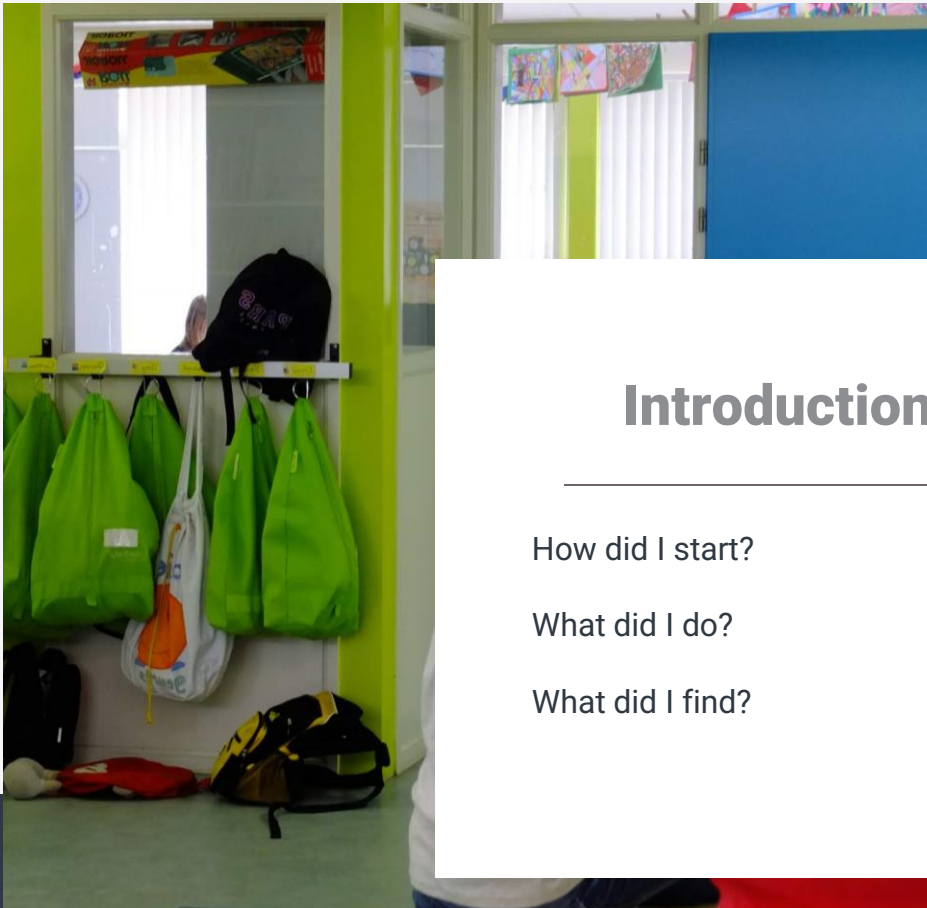
European Council
of National Associations
of Independent Schools

TURBULENCE RESISTANT SCHOOLS: A QUALITATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Sofia Reis

Bucharest 2024





Introduction

How did I start?

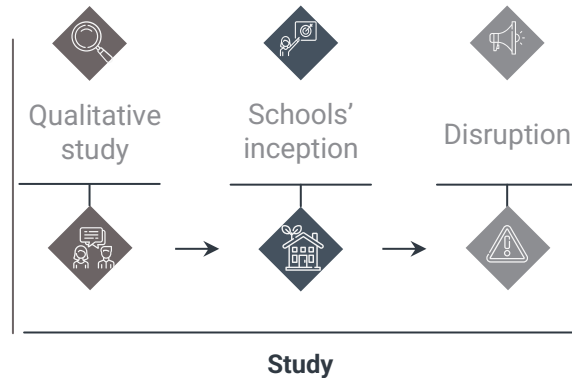
What did I do?

What did I find?



Purpose statement

... was to explore the lived experience of assertive school leaders who created new schools in Central and Eastern European countries after the Fall of the Berlin Wall (November 1989) and continued to lead these schools through turbulent contexts including the COVID-19 pandemic (March 2020).





What did I do?

14 Participants

Educational Leaders (principals)

8

Central and Eastern Countries

Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Slovenia,
Croatia, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania

1989
2000
s

Schools

Kindergarten, elementary, middle, high school
(one special-need school).



Data protection

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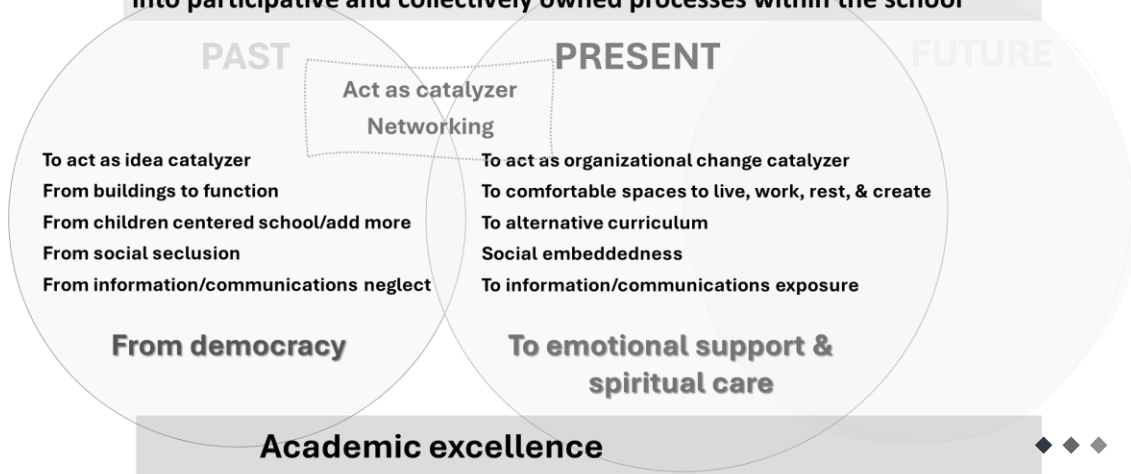




What did I find?

Main Findings

Assertiveness: ability to transform own individual impetus for action into participative and collectively owned processes within the school





THANK YOU



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Answer to the **Central Question**

At their genesis educational leaders created schools to reflect democratic ideals. Three decades into democracy, having weathered turbulence/perturbance including a pandemic, the major concern of these educational leaders has shifted from strengthening democratic ideals to also incorporate a focus on providing their students and teachers with emotional support and spiritual care.



Subquestions answered

1

How is CLT manifested in organizations experiencing disruption?

All the educational leaders started schools.

They amplified actions (translated their ideas into practice), self-organized and recombined resources, starting a cycle of emergence by the creation of a new school

Interplay of the three leadership roles.

2

How do successful assertive educational leaders address perturbation?

To answer 'what's next' all educational leaders shared a deep sense of collective responsibility and a sense of future direction.

They revealed understanding that students' Academic Excellence is supported trusting student-teacher relationships.

By acting as catalyzers

3

What leadership attributes (mechanisms and interactions) assist organizations in times of disruption?

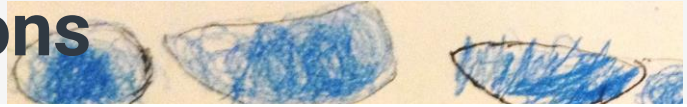
Participants' leadership experiences of school inception in the 1990s and early 2000s dropped seeds of innovation by:

- (a) disrupting existing patterns
- (b) encouraging novelty, and
- (c) **sensemaking.**

Sensemaking consists of the translation of information and the mediation of actions into the school's culture.



Implications and Recommendations



Implications

The schools' adaptive outcomes (such as resilience or academic success) do not result from sequential linear predictable chains of actions, instead they are the result of **non-linear human interactions using information, knowledge, and skills, conditioned by the contextual conditions** (Plowman et al., 2007b).

Building and sustaining trusting relationships between teachers, students, parents, and the school's administrators constitutes an asset. It works as a force that protects the school.

Recommendations for School Leaders

- Adopt a child-centered philosophy
- The importance of maintaining networks
- Develop financial management skills (initial training and professional development)

Recommendations for Future Research

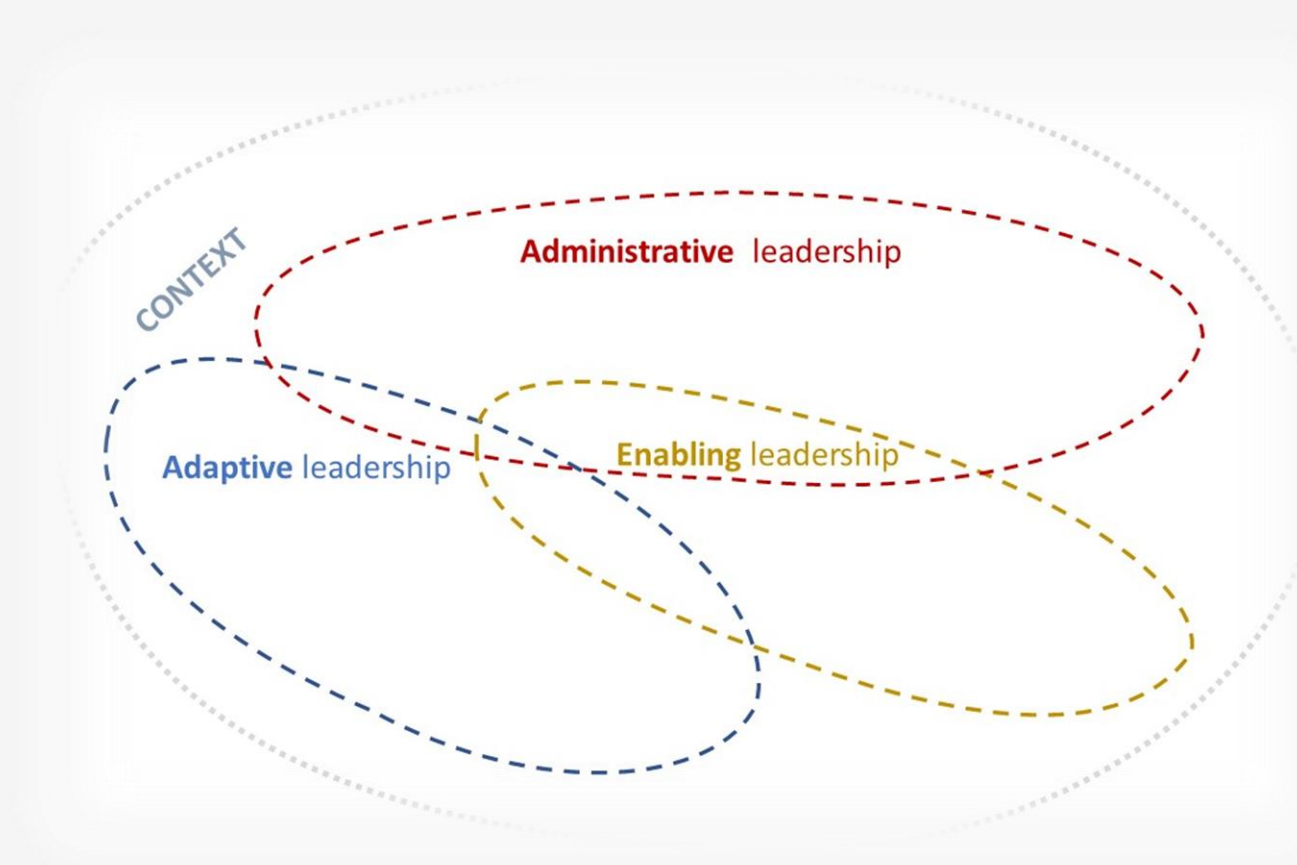
- Mapping of the processes involved in enduring extreme turbulence, and a more complete exploration including experiences of students, teachers, and parents.
- Educational leadership vocabulary and different systems, or levels.
- Examination of educational systems' resilience by fostering diversity within the system.
- What mechanisms can facilitate acceleration of innovation (transferability)?

CONTEXT

Administrative leadership

Adaptive leadership

Enabling leadership





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Results

Chapter Five

Beginning in Revolutionary Times: School Starting

Initial motivation

Combined effect of **frustration** with **opening opportunities**



Assets needed

Facilities/buildings and **finances** needed to start the school



Children-centered philosophy

supported by the idea of **adding extras to the curriculum**

Challenges

of creating a **new** type of educational organization



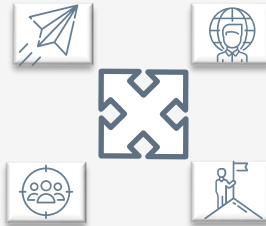
Enduring Extreme Turbulence: **School (re)Invention**

**Crises are
opportunities**

Change

Assets

**Academic excellence and
trusting relationships**



**Communications
must be managed**

Technology and multiple networks

Innovation

**Curricular innovation, emotional support and
spiritual care.**





06

Conclusions

Chapter Five



Leadership

Current situation and **problem**

A failure in responsiveness results in students suffering, both in academic and in socioemotional dimensions (Day et al., 2020).

