

# Chapter 6

## Understanding Leadership in Educational Leadership Research in Finland



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**Abstract** This systematic literature review focuses on previous academic research on leadership in the context of the Finnish education system for minors, including early childhood education and care through the secondary level. The aim is to examine how leadership is understood in the focal studies. This is accomplished by acknowledging the leadership concepts of the studies, identifying the locus of leadership in them and ontologically differentiating their understandings of collective. According to the results, leadership was mostly defined as a collective, social phenomenon in nature. Most of these studies drew from an entity-based ontology, meaning that collective forms of leadership were seen as different types of leadership the characteristics of which were studied. Only a few studies drew from process ontology examining collective to be constituted within a flow of relations. The results are discussed in light of international educational leadership research and from the perspective of leadership research approaches in management and organisation studies. Based on our study, we encourage the future research on educational leadership to draw from various ontoepistemological approaches to strengthen the understanding of educational leadership.

**Keywords** Educational leadership · Systematic literature review · Early childhood education and care · Compulsory education · Finland

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## Introduction

In the context of the Finnish education system, research on educational leadership has increased over the past decade, and especially the research on social and collective forms of leadership, such as distributed leadership, has seemed to flourish (e.g. Tian et al., 2016). However, there is diversity of ontological understandings of collective leadership, either as an entity or as a processual phenomenon. Therefore, the aim of this study is to examine the understanding of leadership in the educational leadership research in Finland. Our study focuses on empirical research in the context of the Finnish education system for minors. We approach our research task by first acknowledging the concepts used in the literature; second, by identifying the locus of leadership; and third, by examining how *collective* is ontologically understood in the research. Within collective leadership studies, we distinguish the ontological differences by drawing on the matrix of Ospina et al. (2020), in which the authors position the studies on collective leadership to different categories, depending on whether the collective is understood as drawing from an entity-based ontology or process ontology. As our result, we distinguish the most commonly used concepts in the literature, as well as position the previous research based on the locus of leadership – whether it resides in individual, group or system – and based on the ontological understanding of collective as a ‘type’ or ‘process’. Our study enables us to link educational leadership within the historical trajectory and theoretical multidimensionality of leadership studies in the social sciences, such as management and organisation studies. By bringing out the different ontological approaches towards leadership, we can increase the understanding of different forms of collective leadership to encourage more explicit and consistent ontoepistemological and methodological approaches within the field of educational leadership.

This study is accomplished via a systematic literature review focusing on empirical research in the areas of educational leadership, educational management and educational administration in the context of the Finnish education system excluding higher education from 2000 to 2020. Because there is still relatively little research published in English, all articles that deal with leadership in the Finnish education system<sup>1</sup> for minors, that is, under the age of 18, including early childhood education

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<sup>1</sup> In Finland, according to the Act on Early Childhood Education and Care (540/2018), early childhood education and care (ECEC) refers to the entirety of the child’s planned and goal-oriented upbringing, teaching and care, with a particular emphasis on pedagogy. Every child has the right to ECEC. At 6 years old, children participate in a one-year pre-primary education that became mandatory in 2015, as set by the Basic Education Act (1998/628). After that, 7 years of age starts a compulsory education, which ends when the young person has reached the age of 18 or completed secondary education (general upper secondary education or vocational education and training). The Compulsory Education Act (1214/2020), which extends compulsory education to secondary education as well, entered into force in August 2021. Secondary education is free for young people, stated by the law. Education at all these levels, in ECEC, pre-primary education and compulsory education, are guided by the national core curriculums determined by the Finnish National Agency for Education. The system forms an educational continuum from childhood until adulthood, that is, up to the age of 18.

and care (ECEC), pre-primary education, comprehensive school, general upper secondary education/school and vocational education and training (VET), were taken into account. Finally, along with the established criteria for the systematic literature review, 32 peer-reviewed empirical journal articles published between 2010 and 2020 were selected for the final analysis. No previous literature review has been conducted focusing specifically on Finnish educational leadership at the different levels of the education system for minors (see, e.g. Alava et al., 2012; Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015; Risku & Kanervio, 2011). In the research on educational leadership, the importance of context is essential because it has implications for how leadership is conceptualised and how it is practiced in educational institutions and their societal context (Hallinger, 2018).

The special features of Finnish educational leadership stem from the historical development of the national education system, education policy, management practices and leadership culture at the municipal and local levels (see, e.g. Risku & Kanervio, 2011). Educational leadership is characterised by strong confidence in the competence of education professionals, which allows great degrees of freedom for leading educational organisations in practice (Uljens & Nyman, 2013). Even though organisations or unit-level management systems differ at different levels of the education system, education activities must be led by highly educated professionals who have the qualifications of a teacher. Organisationally, early childhood education and care is carried out in centres managed by an ECEC centre director. ECEC centre directors often lead several units, usually two to three centres. Pre-primary education is organised in accordance with the municipality's decision in an ECEC centre, in a comprehensive school or at another suitable location. The designated leader of a comprehensive school or general upper secondary school is the principal. VET, on the other hand, is often organised in regional consortia that include several units. In VET, the management system is multilevel; the vocational institution is managed by a person called the principal or director, and under the principal, there are administration and managers of the VET fields and subfields. At every level, teachers are responsible for (their own) teaching. In addition, teachers are involved in leadership processes and can take on various formal and informal leadership roles, such as team leader in ECEC and vice principal in comprehensive schools. ECEC teachers and childcare nurses work in teams; at other levels, teachers' educational collaborations are linked to specific educational subjects or fields.

Educational leadership can be seen as having specific features compared with leadership in other fields. Educational organisations play a role in sustaining society by providing cultural and educational continuity (Parsons, 1960, as cited in Seeck, 2008, p. 20). The growing number of leadership models and different concepts reflect researchers' efforts to define and develop effective educational leadership from different perspectives (Gumus et al., 2018). Because of societal, political, institutional and cultural differences in different countries, educational leadership can be related to different meanings and practices – even if it is described with similar concepts (Moos, 2013). In international research, different concepts, models and perspectives have been attached to educational leadership at the different levels of education. According to Gumus et al. (2018), the most studied educational leadership concepts in

international research have been *distributed leadership*, *instructional leadership* and *teacher leadership*. *Distributed leadership* is argued as representing ‘one of the most influential ideas to emerge in the field of educational leadership in the past decade’ (Harris, 2010, 55). However, in the context of educational organisations, distributing leadership does not necessarily mean a weakening of the formal leadership positions (see, e.g. Tian et al., 2016). *Instructional leadership*, which is also referred to by terms such as *pedagogical leadership*, *curriculum leadership* or *leadership for learning* (see, e.g. Bush, 2019) is ‘one of the most commonly studied’ models in educational leadership (Gumus et al., 2018, p. 29). The model was originally very principal centred because it is based on the idea that the principal’s role is to guide and supervise teaching and learning (Gumus et al., 2018; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). *Teacher leadership* is also based on the idea of the distribution of leadership with the particular focus on teachers’ informal leadership roles (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In addition to these, the following concepts, amongst others, have also been used within educational leadership in the literature: *transformational leadership*, *technology leadership*, *transactional leadership*, *ethical/moral leadership*, *charismatic leadership*, *administrative/managerial leadership*, *strategic leadership*, *authentic leadership*, *visionary leadership* and *servant leadership* (Bush, 2019; Bush & Glover, 2014; Gumus et al., 2018).

Leadership is a diverse and multidimensional phenomenon; there is not just one definition of leadership, but many, which calls for research from different perspectives (Crevani et al., 2010; Yukl, 2006). Still, educational leadership research has been accused of conceptual fragmentation and is seen as theoretically fragile (Niesche, 2018; Oplatka, 2008). The roots of many of the models or concepts mentioned above are not in the educational sciences; only some of them, such as instructional leadership and teacher leadership, have been developed in the field (Wang, 2018). Since the development of the research field of educational leadership in the 1950s, scholars have borrowed concepts and theories from the social and behavioural sciences (Oplatka, 2008; Heck & Hallinger, 2005). According to Wang (2018), one of the top five ‘dominant framings’ for concepts in educational leadership research is organisation theory. However, as Wang notes (2018, p. 335), ‘building linkages to the concepts on leadership and organisation studies is still in process’.

In the current study, we analyse previous research based on whether it is more traditional leader-centric research focusing on the actions and perspective of the manager/management or whether the research object is collective leadership. Then, to explore the boundaries of the research on collective leadership, we benefited from the categorisation of Ospina et al. (2020), who demonstrate that collective forms of leadership can ontologically be divided into entity-based ontological understanding of a collective or process ontological understanding of a collective (see Table 6.1 in Ospina et al., 2020, p. 443). When the collective is seen more as an entity, collective leadership is seen as a ‘leadership type’ or model, which can be found in interpersonal relationships (such as shared leadership or team leadership) or in system dynamics (such as distributed leadership). The entity-based research focuses on the characteristics, influences and/or dynamics of collective leadership. A process ontological understanding of collective leadership, in turn, understands leadership as being constituted within the relations in a continuous process of relating. This means that moments of leadership, such as directing, can be captured in the

**Table 6.1** Inclusion and exclusion criteria for the searched publications

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Peer-reviewed journal article	Book chapter, academic dissertation, project report
In English	In Finnish or in Swedish (or in other languages)
Published 2010–2021 (before October)	Published before 2010
Leadership in organisation as a main or one of the research object(s) of the study	Object of the study, e.g. leaders' well-being
Focuses on Finnish educational leadership	Comparative study including data from other countries as well
Empirical study	Theoretical study

momentarily stabilisation of relations. It is important to acknowledge that leader-centric forms of leadership studies can also draw from process ontology. A study that draws from process ontology requires methods that allow the researcher to study how meanings are co-created within the flow of relational dynamics in situational interactions or in relation to system-level sociohistorical relations. In addition to different ontological understandings of the term collective, the other axis on the matrix by Ospina et al. (2020) describes the locus of leadership, which means whether leadership resides in a group or a system.

Inspired by Ospina et al. (2020), we created a framework that distinguishes studies based on the locus of leadership and ontology of the collective. We have extended the locus of leadership dimension to consist also of a leader-centric view and labelled the differences in collective ontology as 'Collective leadership as a type' and 'Collective leadership as a process'. We have further divided the category of 'Collective leadership as a type' into two subcategories, such as 'Leader's view on leadership' and 'Community's view on leadership'. This distinction is made because, even though leadership is understood as a collective phenomenon, a lot of research is done from the leaders' perspective. Even though it is well justified to understand the viewpoints of the leader(s), we would also like to notice that carrying out research only amongst leader(s) can be seen as strengthening leader centrality within collective forms of leadership.

This categorisation provides also the possibility to position research on educational leadership within the historical trajectory and theoretical multidimensionality of leadership studies in the social sciences, such as management and organisation studies. In this field, leadership research has evolved from traditional leader-centric perspectives to post-heroic ones, in which leadership is seen as a collective phenomenon that actualises in social interaction (Alvehus & Crevani, 2022; Carroll et al., 2008; Denis et al., 2012). As demonstrated above, leadership models that emphasise forms of collective leadership, such as distributed leadership, are amongst the most studied in the field of educational leadership (Gumus et al., 2018; Wang, 2018). This differs from leadership studies in the field of management and organisation studies, where the traditional understanding of leadership as residing in the leader still remains strong, even though collective/plural forms of leadership have appeared in the field to a stronger extent.

The collective understanding of leadership has meant a shift from realistic and post-positivistic science philosophical approaches to constructionist, processual and practice-based approaches (Crevani et al., 2010). For example, within practice-based theorising, leadership is understood as collective and process-like by nature; it is actualised in the constant flow of interpersonal relationships within daily practices and in relation to sociohistorical practices, and the research can demonstrate how the instant stabilisation of the interactional flow produces shifts in direction that manifest a leadership moment (Crevani et al., 2010; Raelin, 2016). However, despite the rise of constructionist, processual and practice-based approaches to leadership research, many of the leadership studies in management and organisation studies, as well as the research on educational leadership, is based on realistic and post-positivistic science philosophy and is accomplished using quantitative research methods. According to Gumus et al. (2018), quantitative methods have recently been favoured in the quest to measure the effectiveness and impact of education.

Our research task is to examine how leadership is understood in the empirical educational leadership research accomplished in Finnish educational organisations for minors. With the systematic literature review, we approach the current study with the following research questions: *What kinds of leadership concepts are used in the research? What is the locus of the leadership in the research? How is 'collective' ontologically understood in the studies?* For the purpose of the present literature review, the term 'educational leadership research' (*koulutusjohtamisen tutkimus* in Finnish) is used to refer to all the research accomplished in the field of educational sciences dealing with educational leadership, educational management and educational administration. Furthermore, the concepts and phenomena of 'people leadership' and 'management of issues' are not distinguished but are considered part of the leadership phenomenon. Although bundling various concepts might erase specifications (e.g. Oplatka, 2008; Bush, 2008), in the present research, the phenomenon of 'educational leadership' is considered to consist of these various aspects of leadership.

Next, the systematic review process is explained, and the results are presented based on the research questions.

## **Systematic Literature Review Method**

### ***Search and Selection of the Data***

A systematic literature review was accomplished by the first author to focus on selecting materials based on well-defined criteria to synthesise those materials (Hallinger, 2014; Tranfield et al., 2003). The aim was to find out what kind of research has been done in the field of educational sciences that deals with educational leadership, educational management and educational administration in the context of the Finnish education system for minors, from ECEC to upper secondary education.

The research data were collected in October 2021. The university library's information specialist helped with the selection of online databases and search phrases. The following databases were selected: EBSCO (ERIC and Academic Search Elite), ProQuest (ERIC and Education Collection), Scopus and the Finnish database Finna.fi. Relevant publications were searched using the following search phrases: *education, leadership, management, administration, early childhood education, basic education, upper secondary education, vocational school, principal, director* and *Finland* or *Finnish*.

Before the literature search, it was assumed that there would be relatively few publications altogether, so the search criteria were initially broad: (a) peer-reviewed journal article, (b) peer-reviewed book chapter, (c) written in English or Finnish, (d) published in 2000–2021 (before October) and (e) an empirical or a theoretical study dealing with educational leadership. However, because the searches yielded a moderate number of publications, the criteria were specified to align with the interests of this review. The inclusion/exclusion criteria are summarised in Table 6.1 and justified below.

To review academic research publications that contribute to the international scientific discussion on educational leadership, and thus are more widely available, it was decided to include only peer-reviewed, English-language journal articles. Book chapters were excluded because the peer review processes for books vary widely. Academic dissertations, mostly written in Finnish, were excluded because of uncertainty about their quality and because of being written in the Finnish language.

The original publication period, 2000–2021, was chosen because research and publications on educational leadership in Finland began to increase after the turn of the millennium because of education reforms (see, e.g. Alava et al., 2012). However, with changes in legislation, especially in the field of ECEC and VET, taking place in the 2010s, the operating environment for pre-2010 research can be seen as significantly different. Probably because of these changes and the growing interest in the phenomenon of leadership, most of the journal articles were published after 2010. Therefore, it was decided to specifically focus on studies published in the past 10 years. In addition, previous literature reviews have already covered the research conducted in the first decade of the twenty-first century, though the focus and scope of these reviews do not correspond to that of this study (see Alava et al., 2012; Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015; Risku & Kanervio, 2011; Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016).

The systematic literature review included studies from all levels of the Finnish education system for minors, that is, ECEC, pre-primary education, comprehensive school and secondary education, including general upper secondary education and VET. In these levels of the education system, the participants are minors, at least until secondary education, and the guidance system is based on the national guidance by the Finnish National Agency for Education through the national core curricula for each level – for ECEC, for pre-primary education, for basic education, for upper secondary school and the degree criteria for VET.

Higher education was not included because it is adult education and differs administratively and in its leadership perspective because universities and universities of applied sciences are autonomous within the relevant legal and regulatory framework, and their social status is different from that of compulsory education organisations or ECEC organisations. Of course, in practice, leadership in ECEC centres, schools, general upper secondary schools and vocational institutes also differs considerably. However, these all organise education for minors, children and young people. Second, the main focus of the current systematic literature review was not to address the differences regarding research on different educational-level organisations per se but to look at how leadership as a phenomenon under study has been approached altogether. For this purpose, the review included only empirical studies. Theoretical studies have a lot of variations regarding the leadership as a phenomenon and an object of study.

The data collection and selection phases are presented in Table 6.2. The literature search yielded approximately 400 peer-reviewed journal articles. In the initial screening of the articles, duplicates and clearly non-relevant articles were first removed, after which 265 publications remained (see phase 1. of screening in Table 6.2). In the second phase of the screening, book chapters, the articles written in Finnish or other languages, international comparative studies in which Finland was one of the contexts and articles whose perspective was historical were excluded.

In the third phase of screening, these 114 articles were reviewed, here in terms of whether their abstracts and keywords matched the inclusion criteria. After the three phases of screening, 61 articles remained. Next, the articles were coded using a data-extraction table that included the following categories: (1) bibliographical information (author, title, publication year, journal), (2) participants or data (e.g. documents), (3) research methodology and (4) concept of leadership (or leadership model). In addition to these categories, the *aim of the study* and *research questions* were also checked in case leadership was not the object of the empirical study. In this coding phase, 29 non-relevant articles that did not meet the criteria were found and excluded. The articles excluded in this phase were conceptual in nature,

**Table 6.2** Data collection and selection phases

Database	Source	Search results	Screening of the data			Final data for analysis
			1. Phase	2. Phase	3. Phase	
Finna.fi	Peer-reviewed journal article, search results for 'Text' or 'Other unspecified'	96	64	114	61	32
EBSCO; ERIC, Academic Search Elite	Peer-reviewed journal article	352	201			
ProQuest; ERIC and Education Collection		303				
Scopus		301				
Total			265	114	61	32



including studies in which leadership in an educational organisation was not the actual object of the research or studies in which data were not collected in or only in a Finnish educational organisation. Hence, after the screening and coding phases 32 peer-reviewed articles remained for the final analysis. The list of these selected articles is presented in Appendix.

### ***Analysis of the Articles***

To answer the main research question – *How is leadership understood in the empirical educational leadership research accomplished in Finnish educational organisations for minors?* – the following subquestions were posed:

1. *What kinds of leadership concepts are used in the research?*
2. *What is the locus of leadership in the research?*
3. *How is ‘collective’ ontologically understood in the studies?*

The analysis of the selected articles ( $n = 32$ ) included the following two steps: First, to answer the first and second subquestions, the analysis began by using a data-extraction table supplemented with a fifth category: (1) bibliographical information, (2) participants or data (e.g. documents), (3) research methodology, (4) concept of leadership (or leadership model) and (5) articulations of leadership. A summary table and a synthesis of the concepts used in the previous research are presented in the results section. Second, to answer the third subquestion, we used the framework based on Ospina et al. (2020) to explore the ontology of the collective within the studies that had different forms of collective leadership. The classification, including examples of articles representing the different approaches to collective leadership – ‘Collective leadership as type’, including the subcategories of ‘Leaders’ view of collective’ and ‘Community’s view of collective’ and ‘Collective leadership as a process’ – is presented in the results section. The analysis was performed in a deductive manner as previous conceptualisations of leadership research have guided it. In the next section, the results of the analysis are presented to answer the research question.

## **Findings**

### ***Leadership Concepts and Models in Finnish Educational Leadership Research***

Of the 32 articles analysed, 15 examined educational leadership in ECEC organisations, 13 in comprehensive school and 4 in VET. None of the articles focused on the context of general upper secondary education/school.

Based on the articles included in this literature review, the most used educational leadership concepts in the research concerning ECEC organisations and compulsory education organisations were *distributed leadership* and *pedagogical leadership*, as well as the combinations of these concepts, such as *distributed pedagogical leadership* (see Table 6.3.). In relation to distributed leadership, concepts or models of *joint leadership* (Keski-Rauska et al., 2016) and *moral leadership* (Paulsen et al., 2016) were used. *Teacher leadership* was a focus of studies specifically in ECEC, and none of the articles examined teacher leadership in the comprehensive school context, in contrast to an international study of teacher leadership in which the concept was examined specifically in the school context (Heikka et al., 2016).

In addition to these concepts, educational leadership was also approached from the perspectives of culture (Lahtero & Risku, 2014; Weckström et al., 2020), diverse worldviews in schools (Lipiäinen et al., 2021), the professional learning community (e.g. Antinluoma et al., 2018) and a broader systemic, education theoretical perspective (Uljens et al., 2016). In some of the studies, the focus was specifically on leadership in educational reforms and change (Pulkkinen et al., 2019; Pyhältö et al., 2016; Soini et al., 2016) and models, such as *knowledge management* (Syysnummi & Laihonon, 2014) and *strategic leadership* (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2013). Few studies applied concepts such as *symbolic leadership* (Lahtero & Risku, 2012, see also 2014) and *relational leadership* (Mäntyjärvi & Puroila, 2019), which refer to a theoretical approach close to ‘Collective leadership as a process’ (Ospina et al., 2020).

**Table 6.3** Leadership concepts in educational leadership research in the contexts of Finnish education organisations for minors

<i>Distributed leadership</i> Joint leadership Moral leadership	Halttunen (2016), Heikka et al. (2021), Heikka and Suhonen (2019), Heikka and Hujala (2013), Kangas et al. (2016), Keski-Rauska et al. (2016), Lahtero et al. (2019, 2017), Paulsen et al. (2016), Varpanen (2021)
<i>Pedagogical leadership</i> Distributed pedagogical leadership Broad pedagogical leadership sustainable (pedagogical) leadership	Ahtiainen et al. (2021), Fonsen and Soukainen (2020), Harju-Luukkainen et al. (2014), Heikka et al. (2020), Jäppinen and Maunonen-Eskelinen (2012), Jäppinen and Sarja (2012)
<i>Teacher leadership</i>	Halttunen et al. (2019), Heikka et al. (2016, 2018)
Relational leadership	Mäntyjärvi and Puroila (2019)
<i>Leadership culture</i> Symbolic leadership	Lahtero and Risku (2014), Lahtero and Risku (2012), Weckström et al. (2020)
<i>Educational leadership</i> School leadership Professional learning community	Antinluoma et al. (2018), Lipiäinen et al. (2021), Pyhältö et al. (2016), Uljens et al. (2016)
Leadership for change	Pulkkinen et al. (2019), Soini et al. (2016)
Strategic leadership	Lahtero and Kuusilehto-Awale (2013)
Knowledge management	Syysnummi and Laihonon (2014)

A summary of the leadership concepts used in the articles is presented in Table 6.3. It should be noted that the classification is based on the concept/model of leadership that the study focused most on, even though the article might have referred to the other concepts as well. In this sense, the studies could have been positioned into several categories at the same time. In the table, the concepts have been divided into groups according to how they are linked to each other in the articles. For example, in the same category as *pedagogical leadership* are the concepts *distributed pedagogical leadership* and *broad pedagogical leadership*.

In most of these studies, leadership was articulated as a collective phenomenon in nature and that leadership also belongs to others than just the formal leader. However, there were some studies in which leadership was examined mainly from the manager's point of view or as a manager's task. Even if these articles also referred to the distribution of leadership, the main focus was the leader's perspective and action. Overall, however, *distributed leadership*, together with *pedagogical leadership*, was considered the most crucial concept in examining leadership in research on Finnish education organisations for minors. The concept was used at all levels of the education system for minors, though it might be articulated a bit differently because of the characteristics of the levels of education.

In the context of ECEC, the organisation itself was often distributed (Halttunen, 2016). ECEC centre directors typically were found to have several (two to three) units to lead, which, in turn, worked in teams pedagogically led by early childhood education (ECE) teachers. In addition, if ECEC was provided by the municipality, leadership was also distributed between municipal stakeholders, who, in turn, would then be guided by state-level steering and policies (e.g. Heikka et al., 2021). In their study, Heikka et al. (2021, p. 335) referred to the five dimensions of *distributed pedagogical leadership* in the ECE organisation: '(1) enhancing the shared consciousness of visions and strategies between the stakeholders', (2) 'distributing responsibilities for pedagogical leadership', (3) 'distributing and clarifying power relationships between the stakeholders', (4) 'distributing the enactment of pedagogical improvement within centres', and (5) 'developing a strategy for distributed pedagogical leadership'. How *distributed leadership* has been determined in the studies regarding Finnish ECEC is examined in more detail below in reviewing the concept of *teacher leadership*.

In comprehensive schools, *distributed leadership* was considered a way to involve teachers in leadership processes and share and decentralise responsibilities. The tasks of principals have increased, and the work has been complicated in many ways, so distributed leadership has also been seen as one solution (Lahtero et al., 2017). However, distributed leadership does not always reduce the workload of the principal because it also requires 'a strong core coordination' of how tasks and responsibilities are shared and how teachers and the other staff are involved in decision making (Paulsen et al., 2016, p. 759). In addition, because the principal is the formal head of the school, leadership was ultimately seen as her/his responsibility (Lahtero et al., 2019).

In VET, distributed leadership is scrutinised in relation to pedagogical leadership and called *distributed pedagogical leadership* (Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012; Jäppinen & Sarja, 2012). In her article on supporting student transitions, Jäppinen (2012, p. 24) defined distributed pedagogical leadership (DPL) as concerning everyone in a school community and approaches leadership as collective – the ‘innermost substance of a professional learning community’. Theoretically, Jäppinen defined DPL through three concepts: *distributed leadership* because of its roots in shared cognition and understanding; *leaderful practices*, based on Raelin’s (2003) conceptualisation of leadership practices as a collective endeavour; and *managing without leadership*, based on Lakomski’s (e.g. 2005) thinking on the distributed nature of human cognition and the context-specific nature of organisational processes. According to Jäppinen and Sarja (2012, p. 65), ‘In DPL, at its best, educational practices are collaboratively “led” in jointly agreed ways and in a jointly agreed direction by each member in the community on the basis of accumulative collective cognition and understanding’.

In Finnish educational leadership research, *pedagogical leadership* has referred to ‘all the actions taken to enhance the implementation of the curriculum’ (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014, p. 338), which constructs a broader meaning than what is meant by *instructional leadership*, which is a parallel concept in mainstream Anglo-American research. Pedagogical leadership was most often considered in the context of distributed leadership, as ‘a form of distributed leadership’ (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020, p. 213) and also in ECEC in connection with *teacher leadership*. In their article on the differences in leadership between a Finnish- and Swedish-speaking school in Finland, Harju-Luukkainen et al. (2014) used the concept of *broad pedagogical leadership* and referred to the broad pedagogical leadership theory created by Alava et al. (2012). According to this theory, for a school to be a learning community, principals should lead processes in which mission, vision and strategies, organisational culture and curriculum are developed. Leadership can have direct and indirect influencing, and from the principal’s view, it is interactive, a resource that the principal also distributes by empowering teachers. Broad pedagogical leadership is also associated with an ethical and progressive perspective, in which education is understood as a means of strengthening equality in society (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014, p. 338–340). In this case, *pedagogical leadership* has been considered a dimension of principal leadership.

According to this systematic literature review, *teacher leadership* has been studied mainly in the context of ECEC and does not appear to be examined at other levels of minors’ education in Finland. Of the articles selected for review, three focused on teacher leadership. Research conducted by the same research team examined the enactment of teacher leadership in ECEC centres (Heikka et al., 2016), the perceptions of ECEC professionals themselves (Heikka et al., 2018) and the repertoires of teacher leadership in the context of team meetings (Halttunen et al., 2019). These studies have suggested that the concept of teacher leadership is still evolving. The concept has also been intertwined with the concepts of

*pedagogical leadership* and *distributed leadership*. According to Halttunen et al. (2019, p. 144–145), in order to understand the broader concept of pedagogical leadership, the concept of teacher leadership is central. They stated that as a form of distributed leadership, teacher leadership helps to achieve the goals set for ECE by enhancing the development of personnel and organisation as well as curriculum work. In the context of ECEC, teachers lead pedagogy at the team level and centre directors at the centre level. However, if a centre director has more centres to manage, as is usually the case, the director is not necessarily present in the day-to-day work, so the responsibility of the teachers grows. In Finland, the role of teachers as leaders has been emphasised, but leadership positions are unclear, and at the national level, no guidance on ECEC teacher leadership has been offered (Heikka et al., 2018).

### ***Leadership Based on Its Locus and Different Ontologies of Collective***

Most of the 32 studies included in the present review were qualitative in nature, while 12 (38%) were quantitative. The research related to comprehensive school (13/32) was almost equally qualitative and quantitative, while the research related to ECEC (15/32) was more often qualitative. In most of the studies, the research participants included the leaders – principals or heads of ECEC centres – and the teachers. In the context of ECEC, the teachers participated in the research almost as often as the leaders did.

To answer the second and third subquestions, we analysed the locus of leadership – whether leadership resided in a leader, a group or a system – as well as the ontological understanding of collective in the collective forms of leadership in the studies. According to the analysis, 5 out of 32 (16%) studies were considered to be representing a more traditional leader-centric research approach. These studies focused on the management perspective or management activities and were positioned in the categories of (1) ‘Leader-centric approach’ and ‘Leadership residing in individuals.’ In this category, the studies used both quantitative and qualitative methods (surveys or interviews) to gather data.

The rest of the studies – 27 out of 32 (84%) – focused on different forms of collective leadership or defined leadership as such. They were positioned under the category (2) ‘Collective leadership approach’, in which there were different categories based on whether the leadership resided in a *group* or *system* and whether the collective was ontologically seen as (2.1) a type or (2.2) process. Furthermore, in the category (2.1) ‘Collective as a type’, the studies were divided between two sub-categories based on the research participants: (2.1.1) ‘Leader’s view of leadership’ and (2.1.2) ‘Community’s view of leadership’.

The number of studies fell into the following categories:

- (1) *Leader-centric research approach*: 5 out of 32 studies (16%)
- (2) *Collective leadership research*: 27 out of 32 studies (84%)

(2.1) *Collective leadership as type*: 20 out of 32 studies (63%)

(2.1.1) Leaders' views on leadership: 5 out of 32 studies (16%)

(2.1.2) Community's view of leadership: 15 out of 32 studies (47%)

(2.2) *Collective leadership as a process*: 7 out of 32 studies (22%)

In leader-centric research, leadership was mainly defined and approached from the perspective of the leader's activities, responsibilities and competencies, but the collective dimension of leadership was, without an exception, also referred to, at least to some extent. The distinction between different forms of collective leadership was made based on the different ontological understandings of the collective. Category 2.1 consisted of studies examining collective forms of leadership as an 'entity'. Thus, collective forms of leadership are seen as 'types of leadership' whose characteristics and consequences are examined. In turn, Category 2.2 consists of studies within which leadership is based on process ontology. This means that leadership is seen as constituted within relations in a process in which meanings of leadership are created or the researcher can stabilise certain moments in which leadership occurs, for example, as decisions and changes in direction. Furthermore, we have divided category 2.1 into two subcategories: (2.2.1) 'Leaders' view of leadership', which includes studies in which the research participants were the leader(s), whereas in the second subcategory, (2.2.2) 'Community's view on leadership', the respondents were diverse and held various roles within the educational organisation. Hence, even though leadership was seen as a collective, the articles in the first subcategory (2.2.1) seemed to rely on the perspectives of the leaders in examining collective leadership in the educational context.

Below, we provide an exemplary study, if there can be said to be one, for each category as representative of the research (see Table 6.4). We accomplished the categorisation based on our understanding of whether the leadership was based more on an entity-based ontology or process ontology.

1. *Leader-centric approach*. The studies in this category did not focus on the forms of collective leadership, but instead, they represented a more traditional leader-centred approach. The studies drew from entity-based ontological understandings of leadership residing in individual(s) whose characteristics and behaviours were studied. Five out of the 32 studies (16%) were identified as representing the leader-centric approach, and these studies also fell into the category of *leadership residing in the individuals*. Furthermore, the studies focused on the leader(s) viewpoint of leadership. As an example of this category, Syysnummi and Laihonen (2014) focused on *knowledge management* in vocational education and training organisations (VET) from the perspective of management team members ( $n = 8$ ) via e-mail enquiry and a group interview; the aim was to discover the management challenges and explore the knowledge management processes that support the teachers' work (Syysnummi & Laihonen, 2014, p. 54). The authors defined knowledge management as an 'integral part of education management', which is 'seen as an essential task for producing high-quality education services' (p. 63). They pointed out the collective dimension of knowledge management in management teams by stating

**Table 6.4** Leadership based on its locus and ontology of collective in educational leadership studies in the context of Finnish education organisations for minors (framework modified from the original four-field matrix of Ospina et al., 2020, p. 433)

Locus of leadership	Leadership approaches based on different ontological underpinnings			(2.2) Collective leadership as process
	(1) Leader-centric approach	(2) Collective leadership approach		
		(2.1) Collective leadership as type	(2.1.2) Community's view of leadership	
<i>Leadership residing in the group.</i>		(2.1.1) Leaders' view of leadership	(2.1.2) Community's view of leadership	
<i>Leadership residing in the system.</i>		Ahtiainen et al. (2021), <i>Pedagogical leadership</i>	Weckström et al. (2020), <i>Leadership culture</i>	Halttunen et al. (2019), <i>Teacher leadership</i>
<i>Leadership residing in the individual(s).</i>		Uljens et al. (2016), <i>Educational leadership / Non-affirmative theory</i>		Varpanen (2021) <i>Distributed leadership</i>
<i>Leadership residing in the individual(s).</i>	Syysnummi and Laihonen (2014), <i>Knowledge management</i>			
<b>All studies (32)</b>	<b>5/32</b>	<b>5/32</b>	<b>15/32</b>	<b>7/32</b>
	Harju-Luukkainen et al. (2014), Lipiäinen et al. (2021), Pulkkinen et al. (2019); Soini et al. (2016); Syysnummi & Laihonen (2014)	Ahtiainen et al. (2021), Heikka et al. (2020), Lahtero et al. (2019), Pyhältö et al. (2011), Uljens et al. (2016)	Anttiluoma et al. (2018), Fonsén & Soukainen (2020), Halttunen (2016), Heikka and Hujala (2013), Heikka and Suhonen (2019), Heikka et al. (2018, 2021), Jäppinen (2012), Jäppinen and Maunonen-Eskelinen (2012), Keski-Rauska et al. (2016), Lahtero and Kuusilehto-Awale (2013), Lahtero et al. (2017), Mäntyjärvi and Puroila (2019), Paulsen et al. (2016), Weckström et al. (2020)	Halttunen et al. (2019), Heikka et al. (2016), Kangas et al. (2016), Jäppinen and Sarja (2012), Lahtero and Risku (2012, 2014), Varpanen (2021), Uljens et al. (2016)

that ‘knowledge-intensive activities rely heavily on group problem solving and decision making’ (p. 56); however, the study approached knowledge management primarily as a management task.

The other articles that were interpreted as belonging to the category of (1) ‘Leader-centric approach’ studied leadership from the view of principals in the context of leading change (Pulkkinen et al., 2019; Soini et al., 2016) and principals’ perceptions of Finnish and Swedish-speaking schools (Harju-Luukkainen et al., 2014). In addition, a study on the principals’ perceptions of diverse world-views in leading schools (Lipiäinen et al., 2021) was included because the study focused on the topic from the principals’ point of view, pointing out the principal’s role and competences.

2. *Collective leadership approach.* The studies in this category focused on forms of collective leadership and different approaches to it. Most of the analysed studies – 27 out of 32 (84%) – were included in this category, drawing from either an entity-based or process ontological understanding of leadership as a collective: (2.1) ‘Collective leadership as a type’ or (2.2) ‘Collective leadership as a ‘process’ (2.2). Next, the classification of the studies based on this division is presented.

2.1. *Collective leadership as a type.* This category was divided into two subcategories – (2.1.1) ‘Leader’s view on leadership’ and (2.1.2) ‘Community’s view on leadership’ – based on whether the research participants were designated leaders or if other members of the work community, such as teachers, were included. Below, we present two exemplary studies from both of these two subcategories – a study in which the locus of leadership resided in a group and one in which leadership resided in a system (see Table 6.4).

2.1.1. *Leader’s view of leadership.* An exemplary study representing a (2.1.1) ‘Leader’s view on leadership’ and ‘Leadership residing in a group’ is that of Ahtiainen et al. (2021), which focused on ECEC leaders’ perceptions of pedagogical leadership and an assessment of the implementation of the National Core Curriculum for ECEC. The research material was collected with the help of a survey and comprised of 41 ECEC leaders’ answers to the open-ended questions on the electronic questionnaire. The leaders’ described the pedagogical practices of their own centre in open-ended questions. The survey material was analysed using a content analysis, and the results were reflected regarding the theoretical framework of the study: the human capital of pedagogical leadership and models of educational change. Regarding these lenses, the authors refer to their previous studies (e.g. Fonsén and Ukkonen-Mikkola, 2019) and to the theories of Fullan (2015) and Hargreaves and Shirley (2012), amongst others.

In the study, the researchers articulated leadership, here considering the ECEC context, including changed legislation, curriculum and employee qualification requirements, along with the concepts of pedagogical leadership and distributed leadership. Referring to Heikka (2014), the authors stated that leadership is ‘a distributed phenome-



non, in which leadership is a collective commitment and process for all participants' (Ahtiainen et al., 2021, p. 128). In conclusion, the authors presented a model of leadership competence for leading pedagogy and curriculum implementation (see Fig. 1 in Ahtiainen et al., 2021, p. 136).

A study by Uljens et al. (2016) is our other exemplary study of the subcategory (2.1.1.) 'Leader's view on leadership', and it represents the category of 'Leadership residing in a system'. Furthermore, the study can also be seen as an example crossing the boundaries of the upper categories of (2.1) 'Collective leadership as type' and (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process'. Uljens et al. (2016) perceived leadership as residing in a broader system than, for example, within a management team inside the school. The study was based on two theories: discursive institutionalism, which was used to explore Finnish educational policy culture, and non-affirmative general education theory, by which institutionalised education could be perceived in a system-wide manner, assuming the non-hierarchical nature of the relationships within a system. According to non-affirmative theory, educational leadership and school development and teaching can be understood as the 'mediating' activities between epistemic practices, such as the theory of teaching and values in society. In addition, educational leadership was understood as influencing others in a non-hierarchical and ethical way. The data consisted of focus group interviews with professionals from the district administration of Åland, a Swedish-speaking region in Southwest Finland, and the schools there ( $N = 20$ ), as well as policy documents including, amongst others, national and regional curricula. The materials were analysed through hermeneutic content analysis, which linked the analysis of the interviews with the policy documents to create a temporal and multilevel picture of school development in the region.

As a result, Uljens et al. (2016, p. 103) produced three periods of 'a successful ten-year multilevel and district-led school regional developmental turnaround process'. The study also demonstrated strong characteristics of leadership across the different levels, such as a shared commitment to evaluation and the development of teaching. Hence, the study provided an example of a leadership type with characteristics. Simultaneously, the study can be positioned in the second class, (2) 'Collective leadership as a process', because leadership was approached in terms of activities operating at all levels of the system, where 'strength' was also found in 'leadership practices distributed across levels and professional groups, where different professionals own the initiative' (p. 119; see also Crevani et al., 2010).

In addition to these two examples, the other studies in the (2.1.) 'Collective leadership as type' subcategory of (2.1.1) 'Leader's view on leadership' focused on the content of pedagogical leadership plans

formed by the ECEC leaders (Heikka et al., 2020) and, in the context of comprehensive school, principals' training and their views on distributed leadership (Lahtero et al., 2019) and principals' and chief education officers' views on school development (Pyhältö et al., 2011).

- 2.1.2. *Community's view of leadership.* The studies that examined (2.2.) 'Collective leadership as a type' from the perspective of a larger community (2.1.2 'Community's view of leadership') represented all the category of 'Leadership residing in a group'. Weckström et al. (2020) provided an exemplary study that examined the creation of participative culture in ECEC and identified leadership as part of that. A larger community of educational professionals participated in the study. More specifically, the researchers investigated participative culture and the critical factors in its development, from which leadership was one. The study was carried out as a critical participatory study in the context of a private ECEC unit in Finland. The data consisted of group conversations, one stimulated recall conversation, diary notes and the field notes of the leader, and it was analysed using thematic analysis. The analysis revealed a powerful community discourse, which the researchers named the 'we-narrative'. According to the results, the we-narrative was at the centre of inclusive culture development, and 'relational and reciprocal leadership' was one of the three critical culture factors (see Fig. 3, p. 509). The study can be seen to demonstrate the difference between the categories of (2.1) 'Collective leadership as type' and (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process': if leadership would have been examined as constituted within the 'we-narrative', the research could have been seen based on a process ontology, but now, because leadership was one of the factors of a participatory culture, it was considered ontologically as an entity.

Other studies in this largest category of (2.1.2) 'Community's view on leadership' included studies on pedagogical leadership (Fonsén & Soukainen, 2020), teacher leadership (Heikka et al., 2018), the joint leadership model (Keski-Rauska et al., 2016), distributed leadership (Heikka & Hujala, 2013; Lahtero et al., 2017), distributed pedagogical leadership (Heikka et al., 2021; Heikka & Suhonen, 2019; Halttunen, 2016; Jäppinen, 2012; Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen, 2012), relational leadership (Mäntyjärvi & Puroila, 2019), strategic leadership (Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale, 2013) and a study in which (distributed) leadership was studied as a 'one of the key factors in implementing a PLC [professional learning community]' (Antinluoma et al., 2018, p. 78) and another study regarding teacher empowerment in the Finnish policy culture (Paulsen et al., 2016).

- 2.2. *Collective leadership as a process.* The studies exploring (2.2.) 'Collective leadership as a process' strived to understand leadership from a completely different ontological perspective than entity-based ontology, focusing on the continuous process of relational interactions within which leadership can be seen

to emerge. Theoretically, the studies may have drawn, for example, on social constructionism (Berger & Luckmann, 2005) or practice theory (Raelin, 2016), which invites a reflection on the ontological nature of leadership and epistemological commitments to how this phenomenon can be understood as emerging within a process of actions rather than focusing on how collective forms of leadership operate. Hence, the research drew on written and spoken language, various texts and discourses, interaction processes, material objects and practices and processes (Ospina et al., 2020). According to the analysis, only 7 out of 32 studies (22%) could be interpreted as representing this approach. From this category, we can offer an example of both types of research in which leadership resided in a group and in a system.

The exemplary study in the category 'Leadership residing in a group' is that by Halttunen et al. (2019), who explored how teacher leadership is formulated in the discussions of six ECE teams. The teams were comprised of one to two ECE teachers and one to two childcare nurses. The research was based on social constructivism, in which language was understood as a social practice. The study investigated teacher leadership repertoires at weekly ECE team meetings, utilising critical discourse analysis to elucidate the functions of talk and subject positions in relation to functions and repertoires. As a result, four repertoires of talk describing 'how teacher leadership occurs in the talk' were identified: the repertoires of collaborative teacher leadership, supportive teacher leadership, professional expertise and legitimation. In addition, several subject positions were recognised: 'teachers as reflection enhancers, decision-makers, interpreters, guides and agents of compliance in team decision making within ECE settings' (Halttunen et al., 2019, p. 149). Even though repertoires can be seen as sociohistorical system level configurations constituting leadership, we interpreted that in this study leadership resided in a group. The repertoires were constructed in the situational interaction between team members, and the study provided agency for the individuals in constructing the repertoires as well as utilising them by stating that 'informal leadership positioning constructed by discursive means can influence how the teacher utilises daily encounters to promote pedagogy' (p. 156).

Another example of research in the (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process' category, where 'Leadership resided in a system', was Varpainen's (2021) qualitative study on ECE leadership in relation to Gronn's (2000) idea about the polarisation of leadership theory regarding individual agency and structural power. The aim was to investigate whether this polarisation would also apply to ECE leadership. The research material was collected from three focus group interviews of ECEC unit leaders', which the author analysed using post-structural discourse analysis. The study provided an example of the relational dynamics of linguistic acts in and through which the meaning of leadership and leader could be cocreated. The author drew from practice theory to examine the co-constitution of structure and agency in the flow of ECE leaders' talk, which reconstructed existing discourses of leadership and subtly transformed them. Because he demonstrated how the leaders of ECEs

drew from frames that could be seen as moments of sociocultural discourse, we interpret leadership as residing in a system. This positioning was strengthened when the author demonstrated the difficulty of changing existing institutional practices, even though this empirical result would not legitimate the positioning of the study into this category. Still, Varpainen's study can also serve as an example of leaders as study participants in a study drawing from process ontological understanding of the collective.

The other studies positioned in the category of (2.2) 'Collective leadership as process' were those on distributed leadership (Kangas et al., 2016), distributed pedagogical leadership (Jäppinen & Sarja, 2012) and teacher leadership in the ECEC context (Heikka et al., 2016), along with studies approaching leadership from the perspective of culture (Lahtero & Risku, 2014) and symbolic leadership (Lahtero & Risku, 2012). These studies relied mostly on qualitative methods, such as linguistic analysis and observation. When it came to the participants, the focus was on the entire working community, including leaders, management teams' members and teachers, excluding the exemplary studies of Varpainen (2021) and Uljens et al. (2016).

## Conclusions and Discussion

The purpose of the present study was to increase understanding about the various approaches to leadership, especially collective leadership, in previous empirical research that has focused on Finnish educational organisations for minors. The literature was examined through a systematic literature review that focused on the years 2010–2020.

The results have emphasised the extensive use of concepts such as *distributed leadership* and *pedagogical leadership*, which have also been noted in previous literature reviews (Eskelinen & Hujala, 2015; Risku & Pulkkinen, 2016; see also Saarivirta & Kumpulainen, 2016). The results demonstrated the conceptual integration of distributed leadership and pedagogical leadership in *distributing pedagogical leadership* at different levels of education – in ECEC and pre-primary education, in comprehensive school and at the upper secondary level in VET.

The majority of the studies examined some forms of collective leadership, and there were only a few studies representing a more traditional leader-centred approach. Most of the studies on collective forms of leadership drew from an entity-based ontological understanding of collective leadership as a type, the characteristics and consequences of which can be studied. The study participants were mainly the leader(s) and personnel. However, there were a few studies that focused only on the leader(s) perspective. Even though it is important to understand the viewpoints of the leader(s), we would like to notice that this kind of a research setting might – on its part – dilute the understanding of collective within the collective forms of leadership.

Studies representing the category of (2.2.) ‘Collective leadership as a process’ were less common because these should be based on a fundamentally different ontological understanding of leadership as emerging within a process of relations. This echoes the leadership studies in the field of management and organisation studies, within which this approach has also been relatively rare (Ospina et al., 2020). In different disciplines and fields of research, things and phenomena have been viewed from different perspectives. When a management and organisational scholar draws from management and organisation theory, the educational leadership researcher focuses on educational theories and the activities with their related aspects and dimensions. There may be inconsistencies in the interpretation and application of the concepts in leadership research in the field of management and organisation, in general, and in educational leadership, in particular. The ontological commitments of the research are not always easy to interpret. Furthermore, educational leadership scholars have been less explicit about the ontoepistemological underpinnings of their study than leadership scholars in the field of management and organisation studies, where discussions on the different ontoepistemological approaches are lively within the constructionist, processual and practice-based leadership research (e.g. Crevani et al., 2010; Ospina et al., 2020; Raelin, 2016). Along with the advocates of pluralism in advancing science (e.g. Cunliffe, 2018; Reed & Burrell, 2019), we want to emphasise that, to understand leadership as multidimensional, it is important to understand and advance the different ontoepistemological approaches of the research. This also enhances consistency between ontoepistemological approaches and methods, whether qualitative or quantitative. Overall, this enables researchers and practitioners alike to better perceive the various aspects and dimensions of leadership manifestation in leadership studies, in general, and in educational leadership research, in particular.

**Limitations** Because there is not yet much academic research on Finnish educational leadership, national surveys and dissertations are a crucial part of constructing a knowledge base for Finnish educational leadership research. Therefore, the results of the present review would have looked a bit different if all the project reports, academic dissertations and book chapters excluded were considered as well. In addition, the literature search focused on databases that included publications in the field of educational sciences; therefore, for example, studies published in the field of psychology could have been left out.

## Appendix: Summary of the Reviewed Articles

1. Ahtiainen, Fonsén & Kiuru	2021	Finnish early childhood education and care leaders’ perceptions of pedagogical leadership and assessment of the implementation of the national core curriculum in times of change	<i>Australasian Journal of Early Childhood</i>
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(continued)

2. Antinluoma, Ilomäki, Lahti-Nuutila & Toom	2018	Schools as professional learning communities	<i>Journal of Education and Learning</i>
3. Fonsén & Soukainen	2020	Sustainable pedagogical leadership in Finnish early childhood education (ECE): An evaluation by ECE professionals	<i>Early Childhood Education Journal</i>
4. Halttunen	2016	Distributing leadership in a day-care setting	<i>Journal of Early Childhood Education Research</i>
5. Halttunen, Waniganayake & Heikka	2019	Teacher leadership repertoires in the context of early childhood education team meetings in Finland	<i>Journal of Early Childhood Education Research</i>
6. Harju-Luukkainen, Vettenranta, Kanervio & Pulkkinen	2014	Principals' perceptions for Finnish- and Swedish-language schools in Finland: An analysis of school-level indices from programme for International Student Assessment 2009	<i>Leadership and Policy in Schools</i>
7. Heikka & Hujala	2013	Early childhood leadership through the lens of distributed leadership	<i>European Early Childhood Education Research Journal</i>
8. Heikka & Suhonen	2019	Distributed pedagogical leadership functions in early childhood education settings in Finland	<i>Southeast Asia Early Childhood Journal</i>
9. Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake	2016	Investigating teacher leadership in ECE centres in Finland	<i>Journal of Early Childhood Education Research</i>
10. Heikka, Halttunen & Waniganayake	2018	Perceptions of early childhood education professionals on teacher leadership in Finland	<i>Early Child Development and Care</i>
11. Heikka, Kahila & Suhonen	2020	A study of pedagogical leadership plans in early childhood education settings in Finland	<i>South African Journal of Childhood Education</i>
12. Heikka, Pitkäniemi, Kettukangas & Hyttinen	2021	Distributed pedagogical leadership and teacher leadership in early childhood education contexts	<i>International Journal of Leadership in Education</i>
13. Jäppinen	2012	Distributed pedagogical leadership in support of student transitions	<i>Improving Schools</i>
14. Jäppinen & Maunonen-Eskelinen	2012	Organisational transition challenges in the Finnish vocational education: perspective of distributed pedagogical leadership	<i>Educational Studies</i>
15. Jäppinen & Sarja	2012	Distributed pedagogical leadership and generative dialogue in educational nodes	<i>Management in Education</i>
16. Kangas, Venninen & Ojala	2016	Distributed leadership as administrative practice in Finnish early childhood education and care	<i>Educational Management, Administration &amp; Leadership</i>
17. Keski-Rauska, Fonsén, Aronen & Riekkola	2016	Research on a joint leadership model for early childhood education in Finland	<i>Journal of Early Childhood Education Research</i>

(continued)

18. Lahtero & Kuusilehto-Awale	2013	Realisation of strategic leadership in leadership teams' work as experienced by the leadership team members of basic education schools	<i>School Leadership &amp; Management</i>
19. Lahtero & Risku	2012	Symbolic leadership and leadership culture in one unified comprehensive school in Finland	<i>School Leadership &amp; Management</i>
20. Lahtero & Risku	2014	Symbolic leadership culture and its subcultures in one unified comprehensive school in Finland	<i>International Journal of Educational Management</i>
21. Lahtero, Ahtiainen & Lång	2019	Finnish principals: Leadership training and views on distributed leadership	<i>Educational Research and Reviews</i>
22. Lahtero, Lång & Alava	2017	Distributed leadership in practice in Finnish schools	<i>School Leadership &amp; Management</i>
23. Lipiäinen, Jantunen & Kallioniemi	2021	Leading school with diverse worldviews: Finnish principals' perceptions	<i>Journal of Beliefs &amp; Values</i>
24. Mäntyjärvi & Puroila	2019	Has something changed? Leaders', practitioners' and parents' interpretations after renewed early childhood education and care legislation in Finnish private centres	<i>Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood</i>
25. Paulsen, Hjerto & Tihveräinen	2016	Exploring the moral and distributive levers for teacher empowerment in the Finnish policy culture	<i>International Journal of Educational Management</i>
26. Pulkkinen, Räikkönen, Pirttimaa & Janhukainen	2019	Principals' views on changes in the provision of support for learning and schooling in Finland after educational reform	<i>Journal of Educational Change</i>
27. Pyhältö, Soini & Pietarinen	2011	A systemic perspective on school reform. Principals' and chief education officers' perspectives on school development	<i>Journal of Educational Administration</i>
28. Soini, Pietarinen & Pyhältö	2016	Leading a school through change – principals' hands-on leadership strategies in school reform	<i>School Leadership &amp; Management</i>
29. Syysnummi & Laihonon	2014	Top management's perception of knowledge management in a vocational education and training organisation in Finland	<i>International Journal of Educational Management</i>
30. Uljens, Sundqvist & Smeds-Nylund	2016	Educational leadership for sustained multi-level school development in Finland – A non-affirmative approach	<i>Nordic Studies in Education</i>
31. Varpanen	2021	Early childhood education leadership in Finland through the lens of structure and agency	<i>Educational Management, Administration &amp; Leadership</i>
32. Weckström, Karlsson, Pöllänen & Lastikka	2020	Creating a culture of participation: Early childhood education and care educators in the face of change	<i>Children and Society</i>

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