

**Academy Schools of England and Project Schools of
Turkey: Freedom for Schools, Innovation and
Accountability**

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Abstract

This thesis examines England's 'Academisation' policy and the Project Schools (PSs)' policy of Turkey. The school reforms that are claiming to enhance the freedom of schools are witnessed in various countries resulting in in-depth discussions and/or offers of solutions to the chronic problems associated with education systems. 'Academisation' and 'PSs' policies can be seen as an attempt at reform. It is worth noting here that Turkey and England have their own unique education systems, structures and customs, which are not only different but also affected the fundamentals of the policies and the policies that are studied in this research. Thus, it was expected that substantial differences would be encountered while conducting cross-national comparisons in this research. However, they also show certain similarities, which might be based on global trends, such as the decentralisation of public education and/or the pressures that many of the governments similarly face. Therefore, this research studies both policies' as well as the backgrounds, impacts and critical points based on the perspectives of the school leaders. The research focused on: the policy goals, reasons for school conversions, the effects of the policies and the overall perspectives and issues regarding the policies. The ultimate purpose of this research is to analyse 'Academisation' and project schools' policies based on the school leaders' perspectives and to provide policy-learning outcomes based on each other's experiences.

It is based on a qualitative-weighted methodology that uses multiple methods either for data acquisition or analyses in order to make a coherent and comprehensive analysis of school leaders' perspectives from two different countries. Surveys, interviews and documentary analysis were used as data collection methods. The data was primarily qualitatively analysed in this research. However, some correlation analyses regarding PS types were attached as appendixes as they showed some relevant results.

As a short conclusion, this research determines that the leaders of academies appear grateful for their conversion and appreciate the developments that came accordingly, even though they acknowledge several complications, such as increasing teaching staff and financial problems, greater pressures, restrictions on freedom, being politicised and the horror stories connected to them. Conversely, like many other stakeholders, even PS leaders seem confused about the policy and argue that they have not been adequately informed regarding the policy and their conversion, adding that they have some fundamental problems related to staff, finance and authority. However, PS leaders also express their conditional support of the policy and willingness to remain as PSs because of the enhanced reputation and the ability to attract students who are academically better to their schools.

Lastly, based on the cross-national comparisons and discussions, various policy-learning outcomes are suggested as research outcomes. Despite the fact these are not shortcuts to chronic problems, it is believed that these can be very helpful suggestions for future policies and/or amendments to these policies.

Key words: Academisation, Project Schools, policy analysis, policy-learning, policy-borrowing.

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This research is dedicated to improving education systems, especially for the children who are disadvantaged, along with all devoted and respected school leaders and teachers.

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List of abbreviations

AAA	Anti-Academies Alliance
APC	Academisation Policy Complex
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BSF	Building Schools for the Future
CEPA	Critical Educational Policy Analysis
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CTC	City Technology College
DCSF	Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007 - 2010)
DfE	Department for Education (1992 – 1995 and 2010 - present)
DfES	Department for Education and Skills (2001 – 2007)
ETF	European Trading Foundation
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
IPA	Interpretive Policy Analysis
HCL	House of Commons Library
GCSE	General Certificate of Secondary Education
MATs	Multi Academy Trusts
MoNE	The Ministry of National Education (Turkey)
NAO	National Audit Office
NEA	National Educational Authority
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
Ofsted	The Office for Standards in Education
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PSs	Project Schools
QTS	Qualified Teacher Status
SETA	The Foundation for Political, Economic and Social Research
TEDMEM	Turkish Education Authority
TIMMS	Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study
TUPE	Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of Employment
VET	Vocational Education and Training

Chapter One: Introduction

In 2000, Tony Blair's elected Labour government introduced the 'academisation' initiative. Two years after its inception, in 2002, the first schools began to be academised (Elwick, 2018). According to the GOV.UK website, academies are independent schools but funded publicly. They have several freedoms, for instance being exempt from following the national curriculum, are allowed to choose their own term dates and they are no longer under the control of local authorities (LAs). In addition, a number of academies, particularly the initial ones, have sponsors, such as universities or faith groups, who are seen as responsible for school improvements (GOV.UK, 2018).

In contrast, Project Schools (PSs) based in Turkey were introduced approximately 14 years later. Based on 2014's authorised legislation, schools began converting to PSs in the 2014-2015 academic year. The first regulation, which outlines the principles and procedures for processes and criteria, was released in 2016. During this period between 2014 and 2016, schools were converted without regulation or adequate reasons. Presently, the PSs are exempt from certain laws and regulations that apply to all Turkish schools. The lower level leaders and teachers are appointed to these schools based on the school leaders' suggestions made to the MoNE as of the 2014-2015 academic year (MoNE, 2016). The significance of this appointment stems from the fact that school leaders have been given the authority to participate in the selection of leaders and teachers for their schools, which is not common for schools in Turkey (Kaya, 2018, p. 33).

As seen in the definitions above, PSs and academisation policies have several similar objectives, such as increasing the freedom of schools. However, as expected, they also have considerable differences and different operations. Therefore, not only discovering the school leaders' perceptions regarding the policies that have been implemented in their schools but also establishing a basis for comparisons and policy learning from the experiences of both

countries was the aim of this research. School leaders' perspectives are applied as the main source of this objective because it was established that they are the best sources being not only the leaders of the operations but also observers of the effects on the ground. Other stakeholders' perspectives should also be valuable in this regard, although this would result in too much information and become a PhD project. Hence, this remains a limitation of this project but can be in the scope of subsequent research.

Except for some places in the reports from education associations, the master's thesis published by Kaya (2018) and an article selected from it, are the only significant and solid sources concerning the Project School initiative thus far. Moreover, Kaya's research concerns only one part of the policy, which is the effect of the change in the teacher recruitment system that came with PSs. This is interpreted as the most important change that arrived with the policy implemented by Kaya (2018). Kaya may have some justification in this regard, but it is an undeniable fact that the effects of the policy in schools where it is implemented go far beyond this. Furthermore, it should not be irrational to expect some impacts on the neighbouring schools. Therefore, it is evident that there is a considerable gap in the Turkish literature concerning PSs policy. Thus, this research will be the first comprehensive research that considers each section of the policy from the goals to the effects along with the problematic areas.

Alternatively, there is a substantial amount of literature from official reports to PhD dissertations with respect to academies. However, not all these areas were researched together based on the school leaders' perspectives in the past. The survey's undertaken in 2012 and 2014 by Reform, a think-tank, include a few of these objectives(see Bassett *et al.*, 2012; Finch *et al.*, 2014). These studies were used as context in this research as they provide an overall picture regarding Academy leaders' perspectives but they are weak to provide deeper understandings and a more comprehensive perspective. Furthermore, as mentioned earlier

deeper interviews were conducted with school leaders and these studies from Reform (Bassett et al., 2012; Finch et al., 2014) were also very beneficial as guidance for the interview processes as guidance. As already argued, it is believed that this research makes an important contribution to the academic literature because of the gap of deep interviews with school leaders regarding their perceptions of both policies, Academisation and PSs.

The true value of comparative research lies in the rigorous examination of the conditions under which some foreign practices yield desirable outcomes, followed by a discussion of how to adapt those methods to domestic settings instead of undertaking a wholesale implementation (Noah, 1984). Thus, comparative research and policy borrowing practices cannot be viewed and understood from a naive perspective that dismisses local, cultural or other distinctive circumstances in relation to societies and governments. However, according to Noah (1984), comparative studies can provide a useful set of precautions and warnings with some moderate encouragement for the parties that want to learn from other countries' experiences. Nonetheless, it appears that educational policy borrowing attempts conclude with more failures than successes. From this perspective, cross-national comparative studies can provide countries with valuable information, cautions, perspectives and recommendations as policy learning outcomes rather than delivering quick-fix answers to their problems. As a result, the policy learning approach might be considered a more comprehensive and developed way to profit from the experiences of countries than policy borrowing. By learning from accessible national and international data and experiences, policy learning appears to be a more effective approach for governments or policymakers to guide and develop policies (Chakroun, 2008; Chakroun, 2010). Therefore, this research seeks to offer policy learning outcomes for countries via cross-national comparisons and discussions after presenting the findings for each one.

Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) and Critical Educational Policy Analysis (CEPA) have guided this research and its methodology. A combination of these approaches guided not only the formation of the research questions but also seeks to find the answers, as it was expected that CEPA will help to establish a solid and systematic structure and IPA will help to gain a better understanding and information in line with the research aims. According to Taylor *et al.* (1997), the backgrounds, aims, contexts and developments regarding the policies are as important as the effects of the policies on the ground. Therefore, critical analysis must consider not just the policy texts but also their formulation and implementation procedures. In addition, the attached meanings and interpretations by policy actors and/or implementers are seen as much more valuable than the cost-benefit or assessments of success (Yanow, 1996). Both these aspects summarise the main objectives of CEPA and IPA. Therefore, school leaders' perspectives, as one of the most important policy actors and policy backgrounds, reasons for schools, the effects and other problem areas and leaders' overall perspectives form the scope of this research. Four main areas and relevant research questions are determined accordingly, in order to reveal leaders' perspectives as regards the policies, namely, the origin and goals of policies, schools' goals and reasons for becoming academies and PSs, the effects of the policies in the schools in which they are implemented, besides the problematic areas and overall perspectives of the leaders. Primarily, this thesis aims to reveal school leaders' perspectives in relation to these areas of the policies because policy analysis should consider not just the political documents or papers, but also the setting and background, as well as the short and long-term effects (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). Thus, all four areas are investigated in this research project based on the leaders' perspectives concerning both academisation and PSs policies.

Figure 1: Design of research questions

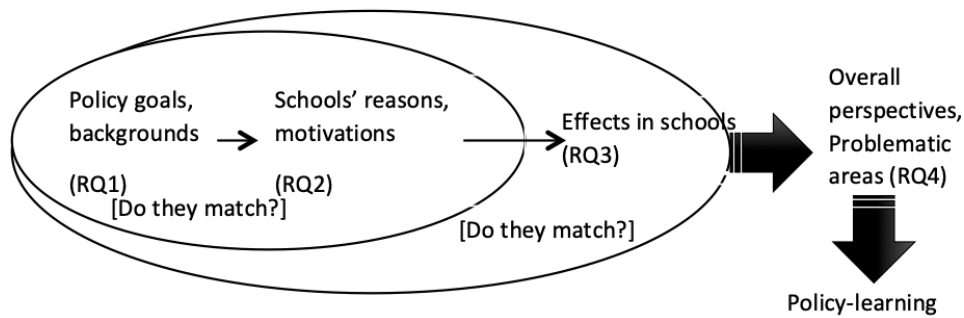


Figure 1 illustrates the focus of the research questions and the relationships between them. While the first question focuses on the leaders' perceptions regarding the goals of the policies, the second question focuses on the reasons why the schools have moved in that direction. In addition, relationships between these two research questions are also discussed in this thesis. The third research question seeks to discover the effects of policies on the schools. Again the consistencies between policy goals, the reasons for schools becoming academies or PSs and the effects this has on schools are discussed. To conclude, the overall perspectives of the leaders regarding the policies and related problematic areas are investigated under the fourth research question. In addition, the research findings follow the cross-national comparisons and discussions with thematic literature. Accordingly, the overriding and following research questions this research seeks to answer are:

Overriding Research Question

What are school leaders' perceptions of 'Academisation' and 'Project Schools' policies?

Research Questions

Q1. What are school leaders' perceptions of the background and goals of 'Academisation' and 'Project Schools' initiatives?

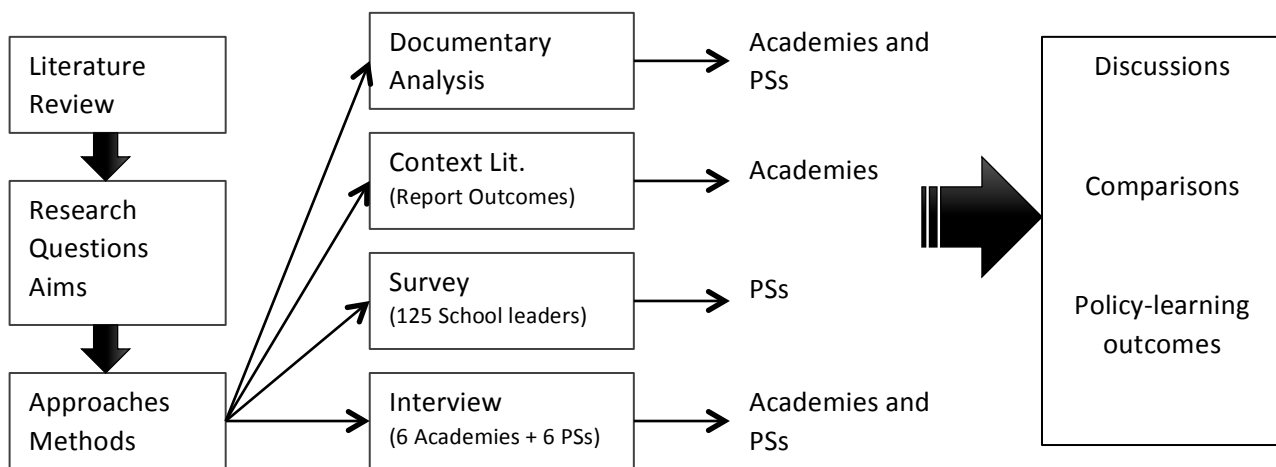
Q2. What are the main reasons for schools to become an Academy or Project School?

Q3. How have the policies affected the schools in which they are implemented?

Q4. What are the problem areas and overall perspectives of school leaders regarding the policies?

Figure 2 illustrates the research design and methods developed to answer these research questions. Furthermore, it summarises the research project as a whole.

Figure 2: Research design and methods.



This is qualitative weighted research that includes various methods either for data collection or the methodological choices were decided according to the research questions (Daymon and Holloway, 2003). Figure 2 explains the design and methods with respect to this research. The research questions and aims are finalised after the literature review. The research questions and aims shaped the methods. Four main methods are applied based on the research questions and available data, seeing as the nature of policy documents are always applied as the source of information regarding policies. These are the official publications and/or reports about the policies as well as policy texts primarily. The survey's undertaken in 2012 and 2014 by Reform (Bassett *et al.*, 2012; Finch *et al.*, 2014), are employed as context literature for the Academies. However, a survey adopted from Reform's reports (Basset *et al.*, 2012; Finch *et al.*, 2014) was conducted with PSs leaders while they serve as a context for the original Ph.D.

carried out based on interviews. There are two principal reasons for this use; first, there was very limited information available regarding PSs, therefore, even for the very initial steps such as research design, questions, or interview questions we needed some information. However, the reports from the organizations such as Reform (Basset et al., 2012; Finch et al., 2014) were very useful for Academies therefore a survey for PSs adopted based on them and conducted with PS leaders. Second, the main aim was to seek a broader and deeper understanding of certain aspects of school leaders instead of more general and commonly known points. The interviews were evaluated as the best way for this aim and many other information sources were available for a start to this for the Academisation part while for PSs a starting point was missing. In addition, it was determined that this design would help to establish a basis for comparisons between Academies and PSs. Thematic analysis was the main method for the analyses and was applied by using the Nvivo dynamic software. However, some correlation analyses were also conducted for the PSs survey in order to ascertain whether there are significant differences across the school types. They are presented as appendixes at the end of the thesis. These might be helpful for future studies. Finally, parallel to the research questions, discussions and comparisons between both policies were conducted and policy-learning outcomes were discussed.

My positionality and its effects as the researcher

First, I had previously been a teacher in one of the secondary public schools in Turkey previously, so I have some insight perspectives regarding the secondary schools of Turkey including PSs. In addition, it is worth noting here that this research has been conducted with help of a scholarship provided by Turkey's MoNE, and there is a strong possibility that I will be employed in the same department in the future. Therefore, it can be clearly said that I am not only an insider regarding the secondary schools of Turkey but also, possibly, will potentially be involved in shaping future policy for secondary schools of Turkey. This

positionality, of course, has inevitably affected how this research was conducted inevitably. I cannot ignore that I started this research having some predictions due to my experiences. However, I always tried to be careful to keep my personal perceptions or experiences away from the processes of data collection and analysis. For instance, the interviews were led by the participants mostly and I was only involved when the time arrived to elaborate on the topic with a question. Furthermore, the data and research participants shaped not only the themes but also the research questions; the research questions were amended several times due to that too. On the other hand, regarding the Academies of England, I can say that I was an outsider because I had only visited two of them during my master's education. However, I have continuously developed my knowledge and understanding of Academies and the Academisation policy since my master's degree because I always had the aim to focus on this policy development in more depth for my Ph.D. even before my master's education at Leeds University. I should add here that, especially due to the news stories about academies on the media, my perceptions were developed negatively in general, and, even though I could recognize that after this research's phases, these were misguided. However, following them and their developments in the political context enhanced my knowledge, and this contributed broadly during the processes of this research.

There have also been some epistemological or methodological implications of this positionality such as the implications for knowledge-generating processes such as elaborating the discussions during the interviews by asking further questions based on my personal experiences as a researcher who already had previously been a teacher in a similar school. Or, as an advantage of being an outsider, another implication is being more able to recognize the more general picture regarding academies without getting lost in details or controversial issues or horror stories. I also understand that this positionality might have effects on my objectivity as the researcher. Therefore, I always reconsidered my actions and records to stay

objective, especially during and between the interview processes. Furthermore, instead of myself, I positioned the participants as the leaders of the interviews so they always decided the direction of the conversations. Lastly, as explained more in the methodology chapter, in line with my methodological assumptions and interpretative perspective no further judgments are attempted during or after the data collection processes, and reminded myself always that the ultimate aim is being a voice for the participants.

The other chapters following the introduction are presented below as an outline and preview to the thesis. Chapter two is the literature review and consists of four main sections. First is a brief introduction followed by a section that considers policy borrowing and policy learning approaches in education. The sections titled: 'Academy schools of England' and 'Project Schools of Turkey' follow and review the underlying literature about the policies and provide basic information pertaining to them. The fundamentals of the policies are provided here because it was established to be crucial for the readers to have basic information, given that not everyone is expected to have them, particularly those people who are unfamiliar with one and not the other. The thematic literature is primarily provided in the discussions chapter.

Chapter three discusses the design and research methodology in ten different sections, from the philosophical assumptions to the data collection methods and limitations of the research. Chapter four presents the findings in line with the research questions. The outcomes are presented for both policies separately but show the links with complete tables that summarise the themes. Furthermore, as stated earlier, comparisons and policy learning outcomes with thematic literature are discussed in the next chapter. Chapter five is the discussion which initially discusses the findings relating to both policies, then discusses the policy learning outcomes based on the research findings. Finally, the conclusion provides the closing remarks and specifies recommendations for future research.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This chapter critically examines the literature on policy borrowing and policy learning approaches in education and provides details to develop an understanding of 'academisation' and project schools' policies. Being cross-national research, it aims to provide vital information regarding two different school policies from two distinct countries, specifically for those who are expected to have exceptionally limited information concerning the Turkish viewpoint. Subsequently, the policy borrowing and policy learning approaches in education were discussed in depth based on the related literature because the research is also aiming to present the perspectives regarding the origins of policy-borrowing and if there are any and proposes policy learning outcomes based on the school leaders' perceptions and experiences of the countries.

A number of keywords were identified from the literature review and in particular, the research questions which focus on 'academisation' and 'project schools' policies. The principal ones are: academy schools, academisation, converted academies, sponsored academies, 2010 Education Act, the Academies Programme; project schools, qualified schools, centralised student admission policy, policy learning, besides policy-borrowing.

It should be noted that a vast amount of literature emerged in relation to the academisation policy. The relevant ones have been selected based on the criteria of being under the spotlight of the research questions and reliable. Acts, Ofsted, the House of Commons Library, National Audit Office, Department for Education databases are reviewed, as well as the academic literature. The Council of Higher Education, Turkish Academic Network and Information Centre databases as well as the Ministry of National Education and Directorate of State Archives databases are reviewed for the PSS' literature. However, there is

very limited literature on the PSs of Turkey and very few official publications could be obtained. Only a handful of basic policy documents and some limited website publications were available together with a few academic publications. This also showed the gap in this respect. It also aimed to make a contribution to this gap by providing a complete and comprehensive review of the PSs of Turkey. Therefore, it aimed to establish an understanding of its beginning to the developments and changes made over time and the legal foundations, along with the research findings regarding the policy goals, reasons for schools, the effects and problem areas based on the perspectives of the school leaders are also presented in this thesis, so as to fill this gap. The next section of this chapter reviews the literature on policy-borrowing and policy learning approaches in the field of education starting from the genesis or early stages. Then the basic literature pertaining to the academy schools of England and PSs of Turkey is presented from their genesis to today's situation. Providing essential information about the policies, especially for the readers who are unaware of the other policy was the aim here, although more thematic literature related to the research outcomes is discussed in the discussion chapter after presenting the research findings.

2.2 Policy Borrowing and Policy learning Approaches in Education

An apt way to introduce this section is quoted by Sir Michael Sadler from 1900-

"We cannot wander at pleasure among the education systems of the world, like a child strolling through a garden, and pick off a flower from one bush and some leaves from another, and then expect that if we stick what we have gathered into the soil at home, we shall have a living plant" (Sir Michael Sadler (1900) cited in (Higginson, 1961, p. 290)).

After Marc-Antoine Jullien, was seen as 'the modern father of comparative education' by many academics (Phillips, 1992, p. 50), Sadler is one scholar, who is referenced the most in research on comparative education. Sadler was the Director of the British Office of Special Inquiries and Reports between 1895 and 1903. His teachings have influenced thought on the topic of policy adoption and cross-national studies (Higginson, 1961). Scholars have

developed and built the concepts of comparative educational study on the basis of Sadler's teachings, which influenced the debates in this area.

Sadler puts forward the view that researchers who conduct cross-national comparative studies should have the skills to make evaluations about the compatibility of the implementations 'with the conditions of English life' (Cited in Higginson, 1961, p. 288).

In 1900, after he lead comprehensive comparative studies in the British Office of Special Inquiries and Reports, Sadler delivered his 'well-known lecture on 'How far can we learn anything of practical value from the study of foreign systems of education?' (Higginson, 1961, p. 289). Higginson draws attention to Sadler's lecture and indicates that Sadler "insisted that education is not an isolated activity of human living... (therefore) we must also go outside into the streets and into the homes of the people" (p.290). Sadler's statement of going 'into the home' here refers to the cultural, local and country-specific features of the studied regions.

"The practical value of studying, in the right spirit and with scholarly accuracy, the working of foreign systems of education is that it will result in our being better fitted to study and to understand our own" (cited in Higginson, 1961, pp. 290-291).

Hence, fundamentally, it can be argued that cross-national studies can be very valuable to understand and help to develop the experiences of other countries and support seeing the broader possibilities and applications. Furthermore, Higginson specifies the two potential benefits of cross-national comparative studies based upon Sadler's viewpoints, which are being 'an instrument of reform' and 'an agency for the promotion of international understanding' (p.291). Each nation is obliged to discover their own social, cultural and national identities and characters to control and direct their future. Regarding that, Sadler's doctrines teach in terms of cross-national studies, that the realities behind and beyond the numbers and what is visible and apparent should be explored to shape the future of nations (Mallinson, 1981).

Rapid and broad developments have been observed in the field of comparative and cross-national studies many years after Sadler's doctrines. Cross-national comparative studies and looking for successful policy implementations among nations have increased thanks to the effect of globalisation and international rankings and reports by well-established organisations, for example the World Bank and the European Union. Furthermore, international standardised exams such as PISA and TIMSS run by organisations like the OECD and openly shared international rankings, focused governments, particularly those labelled as unsuccessful, to investigate and adopt the systems employed 'successful' countries in their own countries. Several of the aims related to raising standards, increasing competitiveness, avoiding political pressures, along with supporting the economy.

Academics investigate and evaluate the policy implementations and activities consistently and they always address the need to be critical about a 'quick fix' and 'uncritical policy transfer' applications (Chung *et al.*, 2012).

Therefore, following government attempts to import successful applications and research either by academics or institutions like the European Trading Foundation (ETF), terms like 'policy borrowing' or 'policy learning' are frequently referred to, whilst many recommendations and critiques have been given about the related literature.

2.2.1 Policy Borrowing

The term 'Policy Borrowing', also known in the literature as 'policy transfer' or 'policy adoption', in conjunction with the similar term 'Policy Learning', have been compared and discussed. They have been suggested as contradictory terms by some (Chakroun, 2010; Raffe, 2011; McGrath and Lugg, 2012; Hodgson and Spours, 2016). However, certain others claimed based on particular cases, that finding a balance between them during the implementation might reinforce 'developing a collective capacity' and 'quality' (López-Guereñu, 2019, p. 503), in order to improve educational standards.

According to Phillips, the educational borrowing approach 'can be traced as far back as Plato' but the correct concept began to develop in the early 1800s (1992, pp. 49-50). He lists some academically preferred terms such as 'copying, reproduction, appropriation, importing' that have been used to indicate policy transfer as well 'borrowing'. Prior to directing the focus with regard to the processes relating to it, he indicates 'the processes involved when policymakers in one country seek to employ ideas taken from the experience of another country' as the 'precise use' of the term of 'policy borrowing' (Phillips, 2004, p. 54). Put simply, Phillips and Ochs define policy borrowing as the 'conscious adoption in one context of policy observed in another' (Phillips and Ochs, 2003, p. 456; Phillips, 2005, p. 24). Phillips (2005, p. 24), also specifies that, by terms of 'conscious' here, he refers to the nature of being 'deliberate and purposive'. Moreover, Phillips argues that there might be very different kinds of global influences among countries but these influences cannot be specified as policy borrowing without 'a quite deliberate attempt to 'copy', 'appropriate', 'import' (etc.) a policy'.

Raffe (2011, p. 1), defines it as the pursuit of international policy implementations to find 'examples of unique, transferable best practice'. Moreover, the term is associated with studies to establish 'quick-fix' or 'shortcut' or 'easy-way', transferable solutions to failures and/or problems (Dolowitz and Marsh, 2000; Raffe, 2011; Morris, 2012; Chung, 2015). However, a number of case studies have indicated that its success was dependent on several variables and factors, for instance 'culture', 'system specifications', 'background', 'implementation capacity', 'historical customs' and more (Borrás, 2011; López-Guereño, 2019). Therefore in the 1980s, the term 'policy learning', instead of 'policy borrowing', began to be discussed (Borrás, 2011), with the discussions and extensions to it continuing.

Increasing concerns and different interpretations about policy borrowing and similar terms, such as policy transfer, policy lending, policy implant, have caused a focus shift from policy

borrowing to the policy learning approach (ETF, 2007a; 2008a cited in Chakroun, 2010). In regard to vocational education and training (VET) policies, Chakroun compares the terms 'policy learning' and 'borrowing'. He states that contrary to policy borrowing, policy learning 'puts a strong emphasis on the development of national capacities to lead the design and implementation of ...reforms' based on the learning from experiences as well as considering the local and country-specific circumstances and conditions (2010, p. 204).

2.2.2 Policy Learning

As a broad and explicit definition, Bennett and Howlett describe 'policy learning' as 'the commonly described tendency for some policy decisions to be made on the basis of knowledge and past experiences and knowledge-based judgements as to future expectations' (1992, p. 278).

It has been argued based on this definition, that 'unlike the policy borrowing approach, international experience is utilised for a wider range of reasons, such as making evidence-based policies, understanding the systems better, learning from history and experiences, predicting possible dangers in advance, besides comprehending the phenomena of change and its underpinnings (López-Guereñu, 2019, p. 507). Therefore, evidently, the experiences and reform attempts made by countries might be used as valuable sources to learn and predict to develop systems to solve problems instead of seeking easy, copy & paste and quick-fix solutions.

Chakroun lists three features that successful policy learning supports concerning policy-making, namely 'the involvement of new stakeholders'; 'collaborative decision-making' and 'evidence-based policies' (2010, p. 205). He also argues that the policy learning approach is more about developing the competencies of people who have authority in the policy-making and policy-making system itself.

In a policy briefing that criticises McKinsey & Company's (2010) report on the world's most improved school systems, Raffe (2011, p. not given), compares the 'policy borrowing' and 'policy learning' approaches. As a conclusion, he summarises the 'policy learning' approach in six doctrines as follows: (1) 'use international experience to enrich policy analysis, not to short-cut it' because it can broaden viewpoints and can help with different incidents in the future; (2) 'look for good practice, not best practice' because it can provide various transferable practices instead of miracles or best solutions, nonetheless, transferability judgments should be made at the end of the research, not at the beginning. (3) 'do not study only 'successful' systems' because there might be plenty of things to learn from failures and incorrect applications too; (4) 'use international experience to understand your own system' because others' experiences can help to understand and see the 'strengths and weaknesses'; (5) 'learn from history' because it is possible to be repeated implementation and 'policy learning approach combines this cross-national learning with a capacity and willingness to learn from the past; and (6) 'devise appropriate structures of governance' to maximise 'the opportunities and benefits from continuing policy learning'.

2.2.3 Discussions relating to the approaches

Certain scholars, such as De Wet and Wolhuter (2007), have studied media discourses pertaining to cross-national educational policy and practise suggestions that overlook differences between country-specific contexts. Some including De Wet and Wolhuter, interpret this situation as 'a highly questionable and dangerous practice' and conclude that 'the process of learning from others should replace the process of borrowing' (2007, p. 317).

However, similar to Phillips and Ochs (2003), comparative educational scholars indicate and define the policy borrowing approach to be a very much more complex and layered phenomenon than De Wet and Wolhuter's understanding which links 'policy borrowing' with terms such as 'unqualified take-over of practice' or 'futile' or 'potentially dangerous exercise'

(De Wet and Wolhuter, 2007, p. 319). In the light of comparative research disciplines, it appears too simplistic to interpret the 'policy borrowing' approach as copy and pasting without the consideration of any local, cultural or country-specific conditional differences. De Wet and Wolhuter refer to this point of view as a 'naive belief' (2007, p. 319).

After referencing a number of well-established publications such as those by Sadler and Noah on policy borrowing, Chung *et al.* (2012, p. 268), state that the adaptation of a policy from somewhere else 'remains a complex and difficult process'.

Moreover, Phillips and Ochs (2004, p. 773), declare 'policy borrowing' as a 'complex issue' and offer a four-stage model 'which can be tested empirically'. They have not explained how it can be clearly tested, but they specify that they can 'undergo further development as it is tested by means of many examples'. (Their policy-borrowing tool consists of the following four principal stages:

I- Cross-national attraction: impulses and 'externalising potential'

II- Decision

III- Implementation

IV- Internalisation/indigenisation (Phillips and Ochs, 2003, pp. 451-452).

In brief, the 'cross-national attraction' stage includes the determination of two main areas which are 'impulses and cross-national attraction' presences. The 'Decision' stage represents the decision-making processes for different categories, for example 'theoretical, realistic/practical, quick fix, phoney'. The 'Implementation' stage represents the plan and activities with regards to the actualisation phase, such as factors related to 'national/local support and resistance, significant actors, suitability, adaptation and change'. Lastly, the four steps pertaining to the 'Internalisation/Indigenisation' stage consist of the 'impact on the existing system, the absorption of external features, synthesis and evaluation' (Phillips and Ochs, 2003, pp. 452-457).

In their work, Phillips and Schweisfurth (2014, p. 186), list a variety of future challenges for the field of international and comparative educational research. They address the 'quick fix' policy critics prejudgements on the subject of comparative research at first. They suggest that it should be interpreted as 'using the expertise available in the field to analyse and understand what is happening outside of a particular national context and to make recommendations which are sensitive to both contexts: outside and inside', rather than making simplistic judgements and assuming that all the cross-national policy applications and studies are ignoring the related contexts like local, cultural or all other differences between the cases.

With a different and more complex perspective, Lingard (2010, p. 132), states that 'policy borrowing must be accompanied by policy learning' in order to be 'effective'. What is more, he specifies that the policy learning approach considers and evaluates 'research' on policy, for instance policy analysis and outcomes and makes use of these 'learning' outcomes 'through careful consideration of national and local histories, cultures and so on'.

In his study, he analyses Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd government's national schooling agenda. After analysing the agenda critically and contextually, in the concluding chapter, Lingard states that 'I acknowledge there is a lot of policy learning that is required to rethink a social democratic school reform agenda. This requires policy learning, not inert borrowing from elsewhere'.

Moreover, he emphasises 'the need for new', 'richer and more intelligent' educational accountabilities 'in calling for better policy learning and rejecting blind policy borrowing'.

As cited in Lingard (2010, p. 133), Hattie's study on school variables recommends and supports Lingard's emphasis and determination on the need for a new accountability approach. Furthermore, he argues that a new accountability approach situated among all policy-related parts like the policy, professionalism and local community would 'entail real policy learning

rather than simple policy borrowing' and through this to a new practice to 'better and more equitable student outcomes'.

Lingard states the six fundamental features of this new 'richer and more intelligent' educational specific accountability by referencing Linda Darling-Hammond (Lingard, 2010, p. 144). These features comprise the following: recognition: 'the responsibilities of all actors'; acknowledging 'the broad purposes of schooling'; rejection: seeing that improved test results are indicative of an improved school system; rejection: 'the top-down, one-way gaze upon teachers as the sole source and solution to all schooling problems'; recognition: 'the centrality of informed teacher judgment and quality of pedagogies to achieving better learning outcomes for all students'; recognition: 'the need to address poverty' (2010, p. 144).

2.2.4 Conclusion

In the preface of 'Comparative and International Research in Education', Crossley and Watson assert that "central to our thesis is respect for cultural and intellectual diversity, combined with an argument for the vastly improved bridging of cultures and traditions – be they intellectual, disciplinary, professional, paradigmatic, regional, human or other" (Crossley and Watson, 2003, p. xi). Moreover, Noah indicates that "the authentic use of comparative study resides not in wholesale appropriation and propagation of foreign practices but in careful analysis of the conditions under which certain foreign practices deliver desirable results, followed by consideration of ways to adapt those practices to conditions found at home" (Noah, 1984, pp. 558-559). Therefore, as scholars from the field discussed in depth, the cross-national comparative studies and policy borrowing approach cannot be seen and comprehended from a very simplistic point of view that identifies them as ignoring local, cultural and/or any other specific circumstances with respect to societies and states.

However, once again, Noah (1984, p. 556), states in his research that "my impression is that international borrowing of educational ideas and practices has more failures to record than

success....those who wish to benefit from the experience of other nations will find in comparative studies a most useful set of cautions, as well as some modest encouragement". It can be inferred from Noah's point of view that cross-national comparative studies can provide valuable information, warnings, perspectives and recommendations to countries as policy learning outcomes more than providing quick-fix solutions to their problems. Therefore, the policy learning approach can be considered as a more developed way to benefit from the experiences of countries than the policy borrowing approach. However, the very simplistic perception of policy borrowing and allocating the policy borrowing and learning approach as contrary terms appears uncertain and varied. Bearing that in mind, Chakroun argues that 'policy learning appears to be a more effective way for governments or systems of governance to inform policy development by drawing lessons from available national and international evidence and experience' (Raffe and Spours, 2007; Chakroun, 2008; Grootings, 2009; Chakroun, 2010).

Consequently, these points provide two significant directions for this research. First, whether or not policy borrowing as regards the policies is examined by investigating the origins of the policies, offering policy borrowing is avoided as a result of this research. Second, policy learning outcomes are sought following evaluations and discussions about the literature, although these are never proposed as quick-fix solutions to countries' chronic educational problems.

2.3 Academy Schools of England

Many countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Australia, along with European countries, are increasingly considering reorganising state education as a public service. This situation has become one of the main subjects of social policies (Bhattacharya, 2013). It should be mentioned that England's 1988 Education Act created a new management model for public schools (Ferlie *et al.*, 1996). It introduced the per capita funding model,

opened a route for more empowered schools, such as grant-maintained schools and promoted informed parental choices. Machin and Veroit (2011), indicate in this regard, that the 1988 Education Act gave authority to the government to cooperate with the private sector to supply public education. It opened a way to the creation of publicly funded but private, in terms of management model and autonomy levels, schools such as grant-maintained schools, city technology colleges (CTCs), together with academies (Machin and Veroit, 2011; Bhattacharya, 2013).

The approach and definition of academies has evolved over time and with changing governments. The most current definition on the official webpage of the UK government is the following;

'Academies are publicly funded independent schools. Academies don't have to follow the national curriculum and can set their own term times. Academies get money direct from the government, not the local council. They're run by an academy trust which employs the staff. Some academies have sponsors such as businesses, universities, other schools, faith groups or voluntary groups. Sponsors are responsible for improving the performance of their schools.' (GOV.UK, 2018).

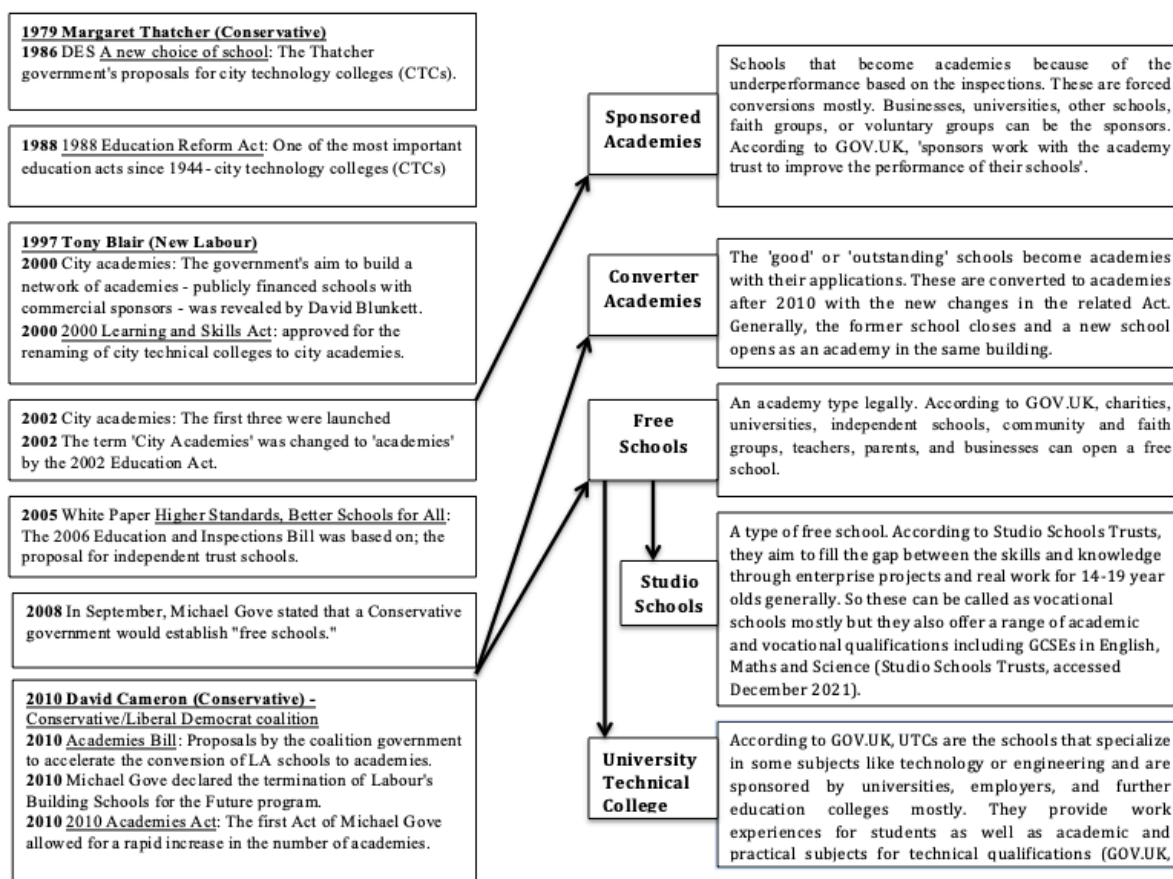
Academies are state schools, funded by the state, but represent a transformation and radical change to educational management in the publicly funded schools of England (McDool, 2016). It was claimed that public schools benefit from more funding and greater autonomy and freedom on staffing, curriculum, budget, school management by way of the academisation policy. Machin and Veroit (2011), define the features of academy schools' as schools which have autonomy on staffing decisions, the curriculum, school structure and timetable. In relation to the school budget, they also have the right to select 10% of their student intake; but they are not allowed to charge fees. Gunter (2011), identifies these schools as 'state-funded independent' schools because these are the schools that are directly funded by the government and removed from the Local Authorities (LAs) control. Either private and non-profit organisations (sponsors) or schools themselves manage these schools. McDool

(2016 p.173), stresses that, ‘Initially, the programme aimed to replace underperforming secondary schools situated in socially disadvantaged urban areas. Therefore, it can be claimed that the initial purpose of the academisation policy was improving and changing the circumstances of underperforming or failing schools by changing their governance especially for those in disadvantaged regions (DfES, 2004; Gorard, 2005; McDool, 2016; Shah, 2018). The National Audit Office (2010), specifies three fundamental applications of the academisation programme referring to this aim, which are increasing students’ outcomes, developing comprehensive and accomplished schools, as well as increasing standards and expectations of the communities in which schools are located in. Sponsors and academy trusts are seen as rescuers in this regard and their involvement in the school management processes was supported and potential sponsors promoted to be involved (Elwick, 2018). Many developments have been applied regarding the academisation policy over time. These are summarised below including a figure that shows the major changes and academy types.

2.3.1 The development over time

The figure below summarises the types of academies and their development over time. It consists of two main parts. On the one hand, it illustrates the main governmental developments at the time and conversely, it explains the types of academy and provides short definitions.

Figure 3: Types of academies and important developments regarding academies



Sources: DfE; GOV.UK; HoCL; legislation.gov.uk; parliament.uk

In 1986, Margaret Thatcher's government proposed the CTCs. The first CTCs were opened based on the 1988 Education Reform Act. CTCs are included in this figure for the reason that being a continuation of CTCs was one of the arguments regarding academies noted in the literature. This argument is reviewed below in the chapter after this section. The 'academisation' programme was introduced in 2000 by the elected Labour government of Tony Blair (Gunter *et al.*, 2008). Initially schools began to convert to academies two years after its introduction in 2002 (Elwick, 2018). In those years, the primary purpose of these early academies was to replace severely underperforming schools, whilst local authorities did not maintain the academies; instead, businesses, individuals, churches and other non-profit organisations paid the capital costs and then administered the schools (DfEE, 2000; West and Wolfe, 2019).

Only ‘sponsored’ academies were opened and expanded across the country from 2000 to 2010. These academies replaced the ‘failing’ schools evaluated based on the Ofsted reports. Primarily, they used the same school buildings and staff but different governing bodies. Alternatively, since 2010, ‘outstanding’ schools, evaluated once again based on the Ofsted reports, have been promoted to convert academy status to benefit from ‘more freedom’ and ‘more funding’ by the State (Gunter and McGinity, 2014; Elwick, 2018). ‘Failing’ schools are called ‘sponsored’ academies after the conversion because they are placed under the control of private and non-profit sponsors to achieve more successful and appropriate management. However, ‘outstanding’ schools are known as ‘converter’ academies after the conversion process because they continue to have the same management style but with ‘more freedom’, seeing as they are not under the control of the LA and have more ‘funding’ from the State (Gunter and McGinity, 2014; Elwick, 2018). It should be mentioned that sponsored and converter academies have fundamentally different features as a result of their nature. Therefore, the academy programme should be divided into at least two terms, specifically 2000-2010 and post 2010. Their categorical features should be considered before the evaluations and generalisations are made. For example, Bhattacharya (2013), provides some generalised assessments and findings on the academies without specifying whether they are sponsored or converter academies, even though her research was published in 2013, three years after converter academies had initially emerged. Nevertheless, it can be stated that most of her suggestions refer to sponsored academies due to references established prior to 2010. Lastly, free schools were introduced as another type of academy school.

Gunter *et al.* (2008, p.3), claim that the strategy behind the policy is giving the opportunity to privates (‘individuals, groups’) to ‘benefit from government investment’ by holding schools accountable for success by giving them control. Studio schools and university technical colleges, schools that primarily focus on technical and vocational education are types of free

schools and thus, types of academies too. Figure 3 above illustrates the types of academies and crucial developments concerning them since their introduction. The key arguments from the literature regarding academies are reviewed below in this section within the scope of this research.

2.3.2 Main arguments

Four different arguments with respect to the academisation policy are reviewed below. Primarily, it was claimed that charter schools in the US inspired the policy and in reality, it is the continuation of CTCs. Second, it was argued that the policy has been supported and continued by successive governments despite the mixed results and lack of robust improvement indications. Third, a strong argument was that the policy is a consequence of market logic and aimed at the marketisation of public education. Lastly, an argument is that increasing the autonomy/freedom of schools for innovation and rapid improvements was the principal idea.

1 Continuation of CTCs and inspiration from charter schools

CTCs were introduced and opened by the Thatcher government in 1988. The fifteenth and last CTC was opened in 1991 during John Major's government. According to Machin and Vernoit (2011), the academy school policy is a 'continuation and development of [the] CTC scheme' (p.5). Likewise, Gunter *et al.* (2008), contend that the strategy behind academies is based on two types of school. The first relates to City Technology Colleges, introduced by Kenneth Baker implemented by the Conservative party under the terms of the Education Reform Act 1988 (Evans, 1999, p.105; Walford, 2000), although they were ended by the elected Labour government in 1998 (Walford, 2000). The second is the Charter Schools found in the US (Gunter *et al.*, 2008). The 'free schools' of Sweden can be added to these two as well (Machin and Vernoit, 2011). Machin and Vernoit (2011), highlight the similarities of charter schools and academy schools in their study, providing examples on the

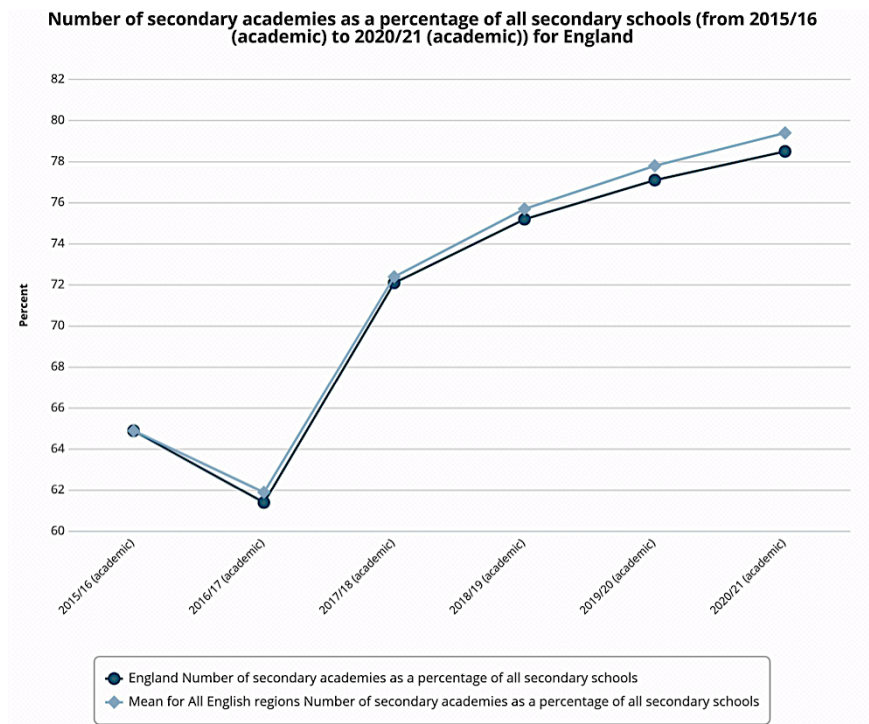
improvements to charter schools in the US as positive evidence (e.g. Hoxby, 2002; Bettinger, 2005; Booker *et al.*, 2008).

Various comparative studies that evaluate, compare and contrast the new types of school emerged by the implementation of new market logic for the field of education. For example, Elwick (2018), holds a comparative study on the academies in London, charters in New York and the schools of tomorrow in Rio de Janeiro. He indicates that these types of school show a variety of similarities but they are also different in some respects and operate using different methods. He also indicates that all these school types exist as solutions to underperforming schools mostly located in deprived regions. However, the academy school programme was expanded to outstanding and outperforming schools as well as underperforming or failing schools by the coalition government in 2010. Likewise, it was also extended to incorporate primary schools as well as secondary schools. Similarly, McDool (2016), draws an analogy in relation to the ‘charter schools’ in the US, ‘free schools’ of Sweden and ‘academy schools’ of England, in terms of their scope for drastic change and tendency to increase and develop better standards of education. The ‘project schools’ of Turkey and ‘tomorrow schools’ in Brazil may also be added to them in this regard as well. Moreover, the academy school programme of England was evaluated as a policy borrowed from the US because of the similarities with the charter school initiative, which has been employed in the US since the 1990s (Bhattacharya, 2013). McDool (2016), asserts that the fundamental similarities between academy and charter school initiatives have greater responsibility for the curriculum, staffing and school timetable. He also points out that there are several differences between them too, such as the sponsorship of academies or the implementation of private sector ownership of charter schools.

2 Strong support despite the mixed results

Many concerns such as privatization or student exclusions also have been raised by numerous academics about the programme since it was introduced (e.g. Needham *et al.*, 2006; Beckett, 2008; Chitty, 2008; Shah, 2018). However, an expansion of the programme has been continued by successive governments since its emergence with findings that strongly favour the policy (e.g. DfE, 2016). As a result, five years after their introduction, the White Paper titled: 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All' in 2005, noted that the academisation policy was gaining more and more momentum gradually (DfES, 2005; Papanastasiou, 2014). Moreover, the strong support and desire to expand the policy were apparent in the Labour Party's 2005 Manifesto which stated in the manifesto that '*we strongly support the new Academies movement*' (Labour Party Manifesto, 2005 cited in West and Bailey, 2013). The manifesto sought to construct at least 200 academies by 2010 in neighbourhoods with low ambitions and low performance (ibid, pp.37-38). There were 206 secondary academies in the 2009/10 academic year. This number increased dramatically during the 2011/12 academic year with 1166 secondary academies (LG Inform, 2021). This proves the government's strong support of the policy, which continues to this day. Currently, more than 78% of state secondary schools in England have been converted to academy status and this rate is increasing among primary schools too (LG Inform, 2021). The number of schools that became academies has increased year on year since 2000 and has reached this level that dominates the secondary school sector in England. The figure below illustrates the increase in the number of secondary schools since 2015/16 academic year.

Figure 4: Number of academies as a percentage of all secondary schools since 2015.



Source: Adopted from (LG Inform, 2021)

Therefore, the policy’s effect on England’s education system cannot be underestimated; Hence, it has been investigated by countless researchers. For instance, Rayner *et al.* (2018, p. 146), evaluate the policy as the most important part of the ‘systemic change’ that England’s education system has been confronted by since the 1950s when ‘the comprehensive schools’ initiative was launched. Moreover, they define it as a complex and comprehensive ‘system redesign’ instead of being neither simple nor complex policy combinations (p.147). Bhattacharya (2013) also refers systemic changes while indicating the transformation of schools. Furthermore, Shah (2018), explains it as the ‘most radical’ shift since the 1902 Education Act. However, he also argues that it has been implemented and expanded without ‘real public debate’ and without ‘clear evidence’ that shows both its advantages and positive outcomes after the application of the pilot scheme and the initial implementations. It can be argued here that this argument can be valid for the initial times of the policy but because of the current data, valuable literature and discussions on the policy, it cannot be promoted as an

argument (e.g. Gorard, 2005; Gunter, 2011; Callaghan, 2012; Kauko and Salokangas, 2015; Eyles *et al.*, 2016; Heilbronn, 2016). As some referenced earlier, the policy has received the attention of academics and the public at a high level. However, it can be argued that there are mixed results and conflicting/contradicting pieces of evidence concerning the consequences and outcomes (DfE, 2012; Elwick, 2018). Bhattacharya (2013, p.97), argues that the findings on the performance of academies remain ‘inconclusive’. Bhattacharya (2013, p. 97) rationalises this argument by providing evidence regarding a limited increase in GCSE test scores, although the increase in popularity and possible socioeconomic strata pertains to student intake, because previously, most of the students at these schools came from the lowest socioeconomic strata. Currently, it has changed with academisation but the increase in GCSE test scores remains limited. This means that the academisation also causes demographic changes in schools in terms of their student intakes. Therefore, it is argued that these demographic changes could have influenced reports pertaining to school performance (Bhattacharya, 2013). In addition, Wilby (2009), argued that the subjects of these debates are not appropriate. He claimed that neither creating ‘privately controlled’ and ‘non-accountable’ schools nor ‘exam results’ should have been the subjects of these debates; instead the focus should have been about seeking ways to improve schools. More specifically, the focus of the debates should have been about saving or improving schools if they are failing as ‘democratic institutions (Wilby, 2009). Nevertheless, it can be clearly argued that the policy is the greatest, most radical and effecting policy after ‘the comprehensive schools initiative’ and ‘1902 Education Act’ (Rayner *et al.*, 2018, p.146; Shah, 2018, p.2) and these schools are ‘the most well-known example of a new generation of school type’ to have emerged in England (Machin and Veroit, 2011, p.2).

While some evaluate it as a mandatory and projected transformation, Rayner *et al.* (2018, p.147), interpret it as an ‘architectural change that is beyond policy enactment’.

Notwithstanding that it has remained controversial since the first academy was opened, expansion of the policy and support for it have been continued progressively by all elected governments since the Blair government (Machin and Vernoit, 2011).

This continuity and stability of the policy are seen as crucial, especially when numerous educational stakeholders are complaining about the unstable and fast-changing education environments worldwide (e.g. Averal *et al.*, 2012). Nevertheless, the policy content and extent have been changed from term to term as well as insisting support of its main contexts. With continued support from each successive government since Blair, as mentioned previously, there are also strong arguments against it from different bodies such as those put forward by the 'anti-academies alliance'. Not enough information is provided on the website but on their Twitter account, the alliance is defined as 'a campaign composed of parents, pupils, teachers, MPs, councillors and unions' (<https://twitter.com/antiacademies>). They have published news and reports against the policy since 2010. One of their reports, for example, was referenced in Parliament and has been signed by 34 members as a motion. Most of these members are from the Labour Party. After congratulating the Anti-Academies Alliance on publishing its report, it was stated in the motion text that the academisation policy is damaging good equal opportunity practice in education, creating unfair funding between schools, besides undermining local democracy and community solidarity via the taking-over of schools by outside commercial interests and religious orders. As a result, the government was called 'to take full account of the findings of the inquiry and to make urgent moves to implement them' (*UK Parliament*, 2008).

Similarly, Shah (2018), argues that academisation is not only changing the direction of educational management, but that it is also radically altering the purpose of education and attempts to control the entire system. Moreover, he criticises the government as labelling academies as the sole and only way of achieving outstanding education (Shah, 2018, p.1).

The following statement made by (Beckett, 2008), in which he maintains that ‘academies promote the creation of two classes of school: the "good" schools, the academies and the sink schools, run by the local authority’, also supports this argument. Furthermore, Glatter (2009), claims that ‘there may be an inherent contradiction between a publicly funded schooling system and the notion of an ‘independent’ school’ in terms of ‘the originators and supporters of the Academy programme’. Furthermore, he claims that if the idea is providing more autonomy, partnership from outside of the schools and changing the governance models which ‘do not challenge the integrity of the public system or its democratic basis to the degree that Academies do’, this idea (or a way) could be found without challenging the integrity of the public system or its democratic basis to the degree that Academies do.

The interviews conducted by Elwick (2018), reveal different views of stakeholders in the wake of the expansion and support for academisation. These are indicated as follows: being the rescuer and a new hope for continuously failing schools; pushing schools to progress by offering a new and alternative governance and transformation; in addition to supplying an accessible ‘structural solution’ and even change for schools that have not converted. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES), the previous version of the DfE, as it no longer exists, specified similar goals as regards academisation in 2004. The goals can be summarised as forcing underperforming schools and culture to change, providing improved standards for education and creating change for the schools located in disadvantaged regions and where failing is seen as their fate. In addition, the DfE (2016), explains the government’s reason for the commitment to convert all schools to academies by claiming that academisation gives the control and management of the schools to people who would do the best job for their schools, in particular the teachers and school leaders. Furthermore, the Secretary of Education labels academy status as the ‘best way’ to provide outstanding education to every child in the country notwithstanding the differences in regional and/or

socioeconomic background. (DfE, 2016). Nonetheless, Shah (2018, p.1), claims that the academisation debates have been shaped and manipulated by the idea that the programme is ‘the only way’ for failing schools to survive because of its initial motivation and rhetoric concerning the improvement of ‘failing schools’.

The academy programme includes a number of different policies, texts, amendments and implementations and at times, it is challenging to cover every single aspect with one term. Thus, Rayner *et al.* (2018, p.146) developed the term ‘Academisation Policy Complex’ (APC) to express all the initiatives related to the academy school policy in a more precise way. They claim that the APC includes several of the characteristics of business and market forces like ‘performance management and measurement, private sector principals, marketisation and competition’. Furthermore, they also indicate that main political parties, at least the ones that have succeeded, is evident in their enthusiasm to continue the academisation policy and as they have a common positive opinion on that policy regardless of their different world visions. Referencing the consensus, continued support can draw a positive inference in favour of the academisation policy. However, the question of ‘what is the government’s evidence base for this decision-making?’ remains unanswered, demonstrating a gap in the literature in this respect.

3-Marketisation of public education

As indicated previously, the 1988 Act allowed the implementation of market logic and forces in the area of state education by increasing competition via parental choice and also increased the autonomy and freedom of schools in terms of school management (Bhattacharya, 2013). Loeb *et al.* (2011, p. 145), argue that this logic and pressure on the schools would lead to ‘constructive competition’ being created by way of increasing the focus on more effective and efficient working meaning that schools will implement better practices and will focus on improving themselves in order to also enhance student outcomes. It can be argued that this

was one of the main rationales behind the government's new approach. This logic and further investigation to develop school performances and student outcomes accordingly spread in England as well as all internationally. Various academics interpret the academisation programme as the greatest outcome raised from these investigations and applications of England (Rayner *et al.*, 2018; Shah, 2018).

Elwick (2018), maintains that governments worldwide frequently apply to create new types of state schools to increase student outcomes and to transform or convert underperforming schools based on the perception that state schools are repeatedly failing, especially if they are located in deprived regions. 'Charter schools' of the US, 'academy schools' of England, 'free schools' of Sweden, as well as Brazil's 'schools of tomorrow' all have certain features in common, can be given as examples from these countries regarding this endeavour. Moreover, it is also argued that creating the 'no excuses' plan for failing schools was one of the main objectives of these initiatives (Burgess and Briggs, 2010, p. 647). The market logic, as borrowed from business methods, requires free 'parental choice' and also increased the need to increase school diversity because market logic requires diversity of options while providing freedom of choice to eliminate failures but support and keep achievers. This led to the creation of new alternative school types and systems worldwide because two conditions were seen as necessary for optimal benefit as regards parental choice, namely the 'availability of diverse options' to choose and 'reasonable parental judgement' (Bhattacharya, 2013, p. 95). Increasing the diversity of schools and creating a competitive environment have been implemented in a variety of countries as a requirement of 'market logic' and/or learning from the business sector to achieve success and better outcomes (Sahlberg, 2007; Gibbons *et al.*, 2008). This is because it was suggested in the business model that reinforcing freedom and flexibility in governance would 'develop improve incentives to increase performance' and

create an environment ‘for all staff to do a better’ job (Machin and Veroit, 2011, p. 3), resulting in more dedication and success for the system.

‘In England, successive governments have aimed to improve pupil performance by increasing the amount of school choice and competition by introducing a number of school types to the English education system.’ (Machin and Veroit, 2011p.1)

Based on the above quotation from Machin and Veroit (2011), it can be suggested that the ‘academy school’ programme grew as a reaction or reason to the increasing trend for marketisation because this trend was gaining a significant and growing acceptance from both policymakers and scholars. In addition, Chubb and Moe (1990), argue that private schools have a greater sense of responsibility in contrast to public schools and their responsibilities are to parents or students in terms of their demands. In this regard, with the increase in parental choice, it is expected that this increased autonomy and freedom brings greater accountability. It is argued that initiatives increasing parental choice and creating competition increase the accountability to consumers who are parents and students in regards to the field of education (Miron and Nelson, 2002). Otherwise unlimited freedom and autonomy would cause have damaging consequences and would create schools that do not accept any external inspections. Furthermore, this situation would prevent the recognition of on-going problems in the schools.

It was also claimed that schools will have the opportunity to gain from each other’s expertise and resources when they join the academy chains by means of converting (DfE, 2014b). Thus, it is believed that being a part of the chain will improve collaboration among the schools if they are members of the chain. However, this situation does not appear supportive of the aim to establish common cooperation throughout the country because even though cooperation between schools within the same trust developed, the competitive environment overall has been increased by the academisation policy as it expected market forces to promote the improvement of schools (Slavin, 1985; McDool, 2016; Rayner *et al.*, 2018).

Some critics of the marketization of public schooling believe that, due to market forces and competitive culture, collaborative working with other schools has been damaged, as a result of schools not ranked as good in the Ofsted inspections working together (Rayner *et al.*, 2018). Therefore, the policy can be criticised in this regard because one of the aims was increasing the standards of schools by developing a collaborative and supportive working culture among schools (DfE, 2014b). Furthermore, Gorard (2005), argues that the reason and logic behind privileged treatment for the schools located in disadvantaged regions is no more valid after their standards have been raised and are equal to those of their peers. A further argument can be made here in terms of converter academies because they already had good standards and were performing well before the conversion. Thus, privileges aimed at the conversion of failing schools located in disadvantaged regions are not valid for potential converters. However, these privileges have remained and therefore can be evaluated as promotion, support or even pressure for the academisation policy (Shah, 2018).

4 The aim to increase the autonomy/freedom for innovation

According to the report published by Machin and Veroit, the argument of (sponsored) academy programme supporters was ‘combining independence to pursue innovative school policies with the experience of sponsors that will allow academies to drive up the educational attainment of the pupils’ (2011, p.3). Their findings on the impact of school conversions supported this argument. In other words, they claim that academy school conversion generates significant improvements in students’ performance. Their research was on the sponsored academies; these are the schools that were converted as a result of being reported as continued failures by Ofsted inspections. They also indicated the academic level of the students who choose these schools had changed in a positive way after the conversion. Therefore, it is possible that the schools’ significant improvements were also affected by this

factor because, as indicated previously, these demographic changes could have influenced the reports about the schools' performances (Bhattacharya, 2013)

Accordingly, Chapman and Salokangas (2012, p.474), indicate that the main supportive argument for the greater autonomy is that it would 'promote innovation and raise educational standards. It is also believed that increased autonomy will also direct the schools to be more innovative and creative to achieve success in accordance with the objectives and policies (Machin and Vernoit, 2011). Additionally, their findings on the academies clearly support this point of view. Much more interestingly, they also argue that the academisation of schools also positively affected their neighbouring schools, even though the academic level of their student intake dropped dramatically. They argue that it is not a coincidence and that it is the beneficial and significant external effect of academy schools on their neighbouring schools (p.46). This appears a very interesting and important finding as the House of Commons Education and Skills Committee suggested that neighbouring schools should be observed in terms of the impact of academies in 2005 (House of Commons, 2005, p.16). Curtis *et al.* (2008) had stated its importance as well but argued that there was insufficient research and evidence on it despite the fact this is a critical point for the evaluation of the whole system.

2.3.3 Context Literature Outcomes

The reports of Reform (Basset *et al.*, 2012; Finch *et al.*, 2014) from the literature were very useful for further investigations of Academies. The outcomes from the reports of Reform (Basset *et al.*, 2012; Finch *et al.*, 2014) are illustrated (by creating tables) and presented here under the title of 'Context Literature Outcomes', and these serve as a context for the original research and reduce the asymmetry to some extent. Therefore, again, it should be clearly stated here that the survey tables for Academies are from the previous literature (created based on Basset *et al.* (2012) and Finch *et al.* (2014)) and presented here, as contexts and references are included and clearly presented below them.

First, Table 1 below illustrates the outcomes regarding the reasons why schools are becoming academies (adopted from research conducted by Reform). As can be seen from the table, the factors related to freedom, autonomy and finance were the most effective reasons for schools' decisions.

Context:

	Reasons of becoming Academy Schools	Primary Reasons of becoming Academy Schools	If your academy is a converter, what were the reasons for converting?	
	% (2012)	% (2012)	% (2012)	% (2013)
Additional money	77.9	38.6	-	-
General sense of financial autonomy	72.8	10.3	54	55
General ethos of educational autonomy	71.4	22.8	53	51
Freedom to buy LA services from elsewhere	70	3.6	52	39
An opportunity to innovate to raise standards	56.9	7.9	42	34
Less LA involvement	51.5	4.9	38	32
Seems to be the general direction of travel	44.3	3.6	33	33
New opportunities for supporting/ collaborating with another school	37	3.6	28	24
Freedom from National Curriculum	35.3	1.8	27	17
Governors/ parents/ staff were keen	28.6	0.9	-	-
Flexibility over pay and conditions	22.1	0.6	17	11
Freedom to make changes to the school day	12.9	0.3	-	-
Freedom over term structures	11.5	0.3	-	-
Others in my chain/federation wanted to convert	4.5	0.6	3	3

Table 1: Reasons of becoming academies.

Source: Adapted from Bassett *et al.* (2012, pp. 4-6); Finch *et al.* (2014, p. 12)

First, the 'additional money' is seen as the main motivation and most persuasive factor with regard to schools becoming academies based on the survey results from 2012. However,

because of the change in the implementations and policy, this factor was excluded from the 2014 survey. Hence, factors relating to autonomy and freedom are the reasons that are referred to the most. These were already strong outcomes after the 'additional money' factor in regard to the 2012 survey. Thus, expectations concerning financial and educational autonomy and need for freedom either from LAs or from central obligations, for instance the central curriculum are the reasons why most schools become academies. The reasons why the academies convert shows strong similarities in regard to 2012 and 2014. Only the percentages decreased slightly except for the factor relating to 'general sense of financial autonomy', which increased from 54% to 55%. Financial and educational autonomy and an opportunity to be free from LAs are the most mentioned reasons in all surveys. 'Seems to be the general direction of travel' is also frequently cited as one of the reasons, although not as the main reason behind the decisions. Lastly, the factors pertaining to 'governors/ parents/ staff were keen', 'freedom to make changes to the school day' and 'freedom over term structures', were excluded from the 2014 survey. This can be seen as understandable as their percentages were already extremely low in the 2012 survey, with 0.9%, 0.3% and 0.3% respectively, given as the primary reasons. However, the factor regarding 'flexibility over pay and conditions' was retained even though its percentage (0.6%) as the main reason was exceedingly low. This might have been decided based on the expectation of schools using that freedom because the 2014 survey consists of robust messages regarding the positive outcomes if they made use of this particular freedom (Finch *et al.*, 2014).

Freedom for schools is one of the most highlighted discourses pertaining to the academisation policy. Freedoms related to school year, school day, terms and conditions, along with admission policy are provided to schools with the new status. Therefore, the surveys completed by Reform asked about these freedoms in order to investigate to what extent schools are using these freedoms and whether the changes have been implemented in this

regard. Table 2 below explains these results. Table 3 shows the differences based on the academy types regarding the changes that they applied on the structure and/or length of the school day and on the structure and/or length of school terms.

Context:

	Have you implemented or do you plan to implement changes to the school year?	Have you lengthened or do you plan to lengthen the school day?	Have you made or do you plan to make changes to the curriculum you offer?	Have you or do you plan to change the terms and conditions?	Using academy freedoms, have you changed or do you plan to change your admissions policy?
	% (2012)	% (2012)	% (2012)	% (2012)	% (2012)
No	55.4	76	29.1	64.9	64.3
Yes, we plan to make changes	15.3	6.2	31.6	12.9	17.1
Yes, we have made changes	20.6	10.7	30.5	12.0	12.2
Don't know	8.6	7.1	8.9	10.2	6.5
Total					

Table 2: Changes implemented or plans to implement in schools based on the Academisation

Source: Adapted from Bassett *et al.* (2012, pp. 26-29, 34)

As mentioned earlier, Table 2 was adopted from the survey conducted by Reform (2012). It explains that most of the schools are failing to use the freedoms or implement the changes that came with Academisation except for the changes that they offer to the curriculum. While 30.5% of them point out that they have made changes to the curriculums they offer, 31.6% reveal that they plan to make changes in this regard.

Context:

(2014)	Have you changed/Do you plan to change the structure and/or length of your day?		Have you changed/Do you plan to change the structure and/or length of your terms?	
	Converter Academies %	Sponsored Academies %	Converter Academies %	Sponsored Academies %
No	64	43	70	62
Not yet decided	20	14	21	23
Yes	14	34	6	6

Table 3: Differences between converter and sponsored academies regarding the changes to the school day and terms after Academisation

Source: Adapted from Finch *et al.* (2014, pp. 14-15)

Table 3 was once gain adopted from Reform's 2014 survey. It shows that 34% of sponsored academies are using or intend to use the freedoms or implement the changes regarding the

school days more than converter academies with 14%. However, for both types, more of the leaders claim that they neither made changes, nor do they have plans to make changes in this regard with 64% for the converter academies and 43% for the sponsored academies. Regarding the structure and/or length of their terms, only 6% of both types indicate that they made changes or that they plan to make changes. However, most of the leaders for both types of academy indicate that they have not made changes or that they do not have plans. The rates comprise 70% for the converter academies and 62% for sponsored academies. Finally, it appears that approximately 20% of the academies remain undecided with respect to implementing the changes and freedoms.

The use of the freedoms that came with academisation was investigated in the Reform survey. In general, schools were asked whether they are using the six freedoms, which are 'teachers' pay', 'the curriculum', 'employ unqualified teachers', 'teachers' contracts and terms and conditions', 'the school day' and 'the school term'. The results are presented below in Table 4. Moreover, Table 5 illustrates the distributed percentages pertaining to the converter and sponsored academies with the aim of showing the differences that these academies have with regard to the use of freedoms.

Context:

How many schools are using or plan to use their freedoms? (2014)*						
	Teachers' pay	The curriculum	Employ unqualified teachers	Teachers' contracts and terms and conditions	The school day	The school term
%	59	35	34	33	19	6

Table 4: Freedom use or use plans of Academies.

Source: Adapted from Finch *et al.* (2014, p. 3)

As seen in the table, the freedom given in relation to the teachers' pay is used or planned to be used by more than half of the academies (59%) which answered the survey. Around one to a third of the schools are using or planning to use the freedoms given as regards the curriculum, unqualified teachers' employment and teachers' contracts and terms and conditions with 35%,

34% and 33% respectively. To conclude, for the freedoms concerning school day and term, most of the leaders indicate that they are not using them nor do they have plans to use them.

Context:

Is there a difference between the freedoms that sponsored and converter academies intend to use? (2014)*						
	Change teacher pay	Change staff contracts	Change admissions policy	Change school term	Change school day	Depart from National Curriculum
% (Sponsored)	51	38	14	6	34	27
% (Converter)	62	30	18	6	14	38

Table 5: The differences of freedom use or use plans between sponsored and converter Academies.

Source: Adapted from Finch et al. (2014, p. 13)

Table 5 illustrates the distributed percentages of freedom use over academy types. It can be argued here that converter academies are using the freedoms or have this aim slightly more than sponsored academies. It appears that the changes in the teachers' pay are the most applied ones based on the freedom given. As the table demonstrates, while 62% of converter academies changed or plan to make changes to the teachers' pay, 51% of sponsored academies applied this. Similarly, 38% of converter academies have left or plan to leave from the national curriculum, whilst 27% of sponsored academies have done that. It should be mentioned that relatively lower and closer percentages are seen regarding the changes in the admission policy and school terms for both types of academies. In two areas, however, sponsored academies are using freedoms or have a greater intention than converter academies, specifically staff contracts and schools day. Additionally, reasonably close results are seen as regards the changes to staff contracts (38% and 30%), although in school days, sponsored academies are using the freedom or have planned much more appropriately than converter academies.

The 2012 survey included a question regarding the impact of academy status on schools' financial outlooks. As it can be seen in Table 6, most of the schools indicate that academy status has improved their financial outlook. This is to be expected as schools were provided with extra grants when they became academies at those times. However, this implementation was changed in later years. Therefore, this sort of question was not included in the 2014 survey, which seems understandable.

Context:

	How has academy status impacted your school's financial outlook?
	%
Greatly Worsened	3.5
Worsened	3.5
About the same	19.4
Improved	59.7
Greatly improved	16.6

Table 6: Financial effects of Academisation

Source: Adapted from Bassett *et al.* (2012, p. 35)

Accordingly, in the 2014 survey, school leaders were asked whether they have introduced changes to the teachers' pay policy, including the implementation of performance-related pay. As can be seen in the table below, 59% responded yes, whilst 35% said no (see Table 7).

Context:

(2014)	Since becoming an academy have you introduced changes to teacher pay policy, including the implementation of performance related pay?
	%
No	35
Yes	59

Table 7: Teacher pay policy changes applied

Source: Adapted from Finch *et al.* (2014, p. 22)

Relationship changes with local groups was one of the subjects that was investigated in the Reform surveys. As seen in Table 8, more than one to a fifth of schools that answered the survey claim that their relationships with the community groups, local HE/FEW providers

and local schools have improved on account of academisation. However, 18% of them claim that their relationships with LAs have worsened since becoming academies, even though 14% of them argue the opposite.

Context:

2014	As an academy, how has your relationship with each of the following changed?			
Percentage of schools	Community groups	Local HE/FEW providers	Local schools	Local authority
Worsened (%)	1	3	7	18
Improved (%)	28	21	26	14

Table 8: Relationship change with local groups

Source: Adapted from Finch *et al.* (2014, p. 24)

As Table 9 below illustrates, only two groups completed the survey in 2012, namely relationships with LAs and other schools. The LA-relationship question was only intended for converting academies. Surprisingly, while more than 17% (total relating to 'improved and greatly improved 15.9+1.2=17.1%'), maintained that their relationships has improved against 14.7% (total for worsened and greatly worsened 12.3+2.4=14.7%), claimed they were worse, whilst most (68.2%) argued that they remained the same. Similar percentages with the 2014 survey can be seen in Table 9 regarding the relationship-change with other schools. More than a fourth alleges that their relationships with other schools have improved, although most (68.9%) also assert that there has been no significant change regarding this.

Context:

	Has your relationship with the local authority changed since converting? (Converting academies only)	Have your relationships with other schools changed since becoming an academy?
	%	%
Greatly Worsened	2.4	0.2
Worsened	12.3	5.4
About the same	68.2	68.9

Improved	15.9	21.9
Greatly improved	1.2	3.5

Table 9: Relationship change with LAs and other schools

Source: Adapted from Bassett *et al.* (2012, p. 31)

In the survey conducted by Reform, leaders are asked that what would they change about being and the processes of Academisation policy if they had the chance. Table 10 below is adapted from the results of these questions. It represents the problematic or change needed areas pertaining to the academies according to leaders' perceptions.

Context:

(Problematic areas)	
The leaders would change about being and/or process of Academies.	
-	Bureaucratic, costly, uncertain, antagonistic and tiring processes.
-	The competence of the YPLA and the Department for Education in processing academy conversions.
-	LAs' annoyance (by opposing conversion on political grounds, by refusing to cooperate, or by reneging on previous commitments for capital investment or maintenance)
-	The legal requirements of charities law, companies' law and education law to be a considerable constraint and source of uncertainty.
-	The failure of the YPLA and the Department for Education to provide a definitive guide to the process or an outline of what legal steps and checks are required.
-	Financial uncertainty around new reporting requirements, banking arrangements, financial years, capital investment and VAT.
-	The uncertainty surrounding the Local Government Pension Scheme.
-	More freedom over their admissions and exclusions to avoid what they see as the potential for local authorities altering admissions arrangements for other schools to the detriment of academies.
-	Financial independence.
-	The terminology used to refer to converter academies – to help parents and local stakeholders to understand the different backgrounds and purposes of converter and sponsored academies.

Table 10: The areas where leaders would make changes about being Academies

Source: Adapted from Bassett *et al.* (2012, pp. 40-41)

The findings presented in Table 10 can be interpreted under two categories. On the one hand, leaders demonstrate their experiences regarding the problems associated with the procedure related to becoming an academy. The problems they face during the processes establish this category. They are: difficulties regarding the conversion processes, the incompetency of the authorities, frustrations of the LAs, problems regarding the legal requirements and lack of guidance in this, financial uncertainties, along with the uncertainty surrounding the Local Government Pension Scheme. Conversely, they specify the problems of being an academy relate to the second category. In this category, leaders predominantly indicate that they need more clarity, more freedom in some areas, including financial independence. All are presented in Table 10 above. In addition to this, leaders are also asked in the survey what the reasons are for not using the freedoms given via academisation. The answers given to this question also reveal a variety of points regarding this objective. Table 11 illustrates these answers below.

Context:

If you do not plan to make use of academy freedoms in these areas why not?						
	Existence of national pay and conditions makes it culturally difficult	No need/desire to further incentivise/reward staff using pay	Sufficient curriculum freedom within National Curriculum	TUPE makes it difficult to vary pay and conditions in my school	Union opposition makes it difficult to vary pay and conditions in my school	LA provides adequate services and I have no need to go elsewhere
%	<u>59.9</u>	<u>39.8</u>	<u>39.4</u>	<u>30.3</u>	<u>20.4</u>	<u>3.5</u>

Table 11: Why academies not using their freedoms

Source: Adapted from Bassett *et al.* (2012, p. 38)

As seen in the table, six different reasons are stated by leaders for not using the freedoms that come with academisation. First, leaders see the existence of national pay and conditions as the biggest limitation the academies are confronted by in relation to making use of academy freedoms with 59.9%. Principally, they argue that it makes adopting related changes difficult

culturally. Changes in teachers’ pay is seen as one of the main areas of freedom. Regarding the use of the freedom of staff pay, leaders argue that they do not need or desire to incentivise or reward their staff using the money (39.8%). The right to differ from the National Curriculum is another freedom. More than 39% of the academies are confident within the National Curriculum to be sufficient and free. Hence, they reveal this as another reason for not using that freedom. Two external factors on the other hand regarding varying pay and conditions are stated by academies as reasons. They claim that the TUPE (30.3%) and union opposition (20.4%) are making it difficult for them to vary pay and conditions in their schools. Lastly, a very limited number of leaders (3.5%) contend that the services they need are adequately provided by LAs so that they do not need to obtain them from elsewhere.

Concerning this category, Reform’s surveys include a question regarding whether leaders recommend becoming an academy to other schools. Table 12 below illustrates these results.

Context:

Would you recommend becoming an Academy to other school leaders?		
	2012	2014
	%	%
Yes	83.6	80
No	1.2	9
Not sure	15.2	11
Total	100	100

Table 12: Leaders' recommendations to other school regarding becoming an Academy

Source: Adapted from Bassett *et al.* (2012, p. 9) and Finch *et al.* (2014, p. 11)

As the table illustrates, the majority of the academy leaders are recommending academy status to the other schools. In the 2012 and 2014 surveys 83.6% and 80% of the leaders recommend Academisation to other leaders. As Table 12 illustrates, the percentages show

similarities in both years. However, the percentage of leaders who do not recommend academy status increased in the 2014 survey from 1.2% to 9%.

2.3.4 Conclusion

With all the stated features of academies, the fundamental characteristics should continuously be kept in mind before any comparisons or evaluations are made. These are that they were receiving higher funding than their counterparts, they have the freedom to select students by way of aptitude and via religious preference, their student intake might be changing after gaining academy status, their effort and additional motivations to compete and overcome market forces are higher than their counterparts due to sponsors or additional ambitions. These are especially valid in relation to early academisations prior to 2010. However, many major changes have been applied to the policy since its introduction into the system over 20 years ago. The changes that came with the 2010 Education Act can be evaluated as the most significant as they changed not only the processes but also the overall fundamentals behind the implementations. These changes have affected perceptions of people about the schools as well as the outcomes of studies and evaluations of numerous researchers. Therefore, investigating all these changes and making judgments is not easy and is not within the scope of this research and literature review. Nevertheless, four main arguments regarding academies are acknowledged in the relevant literature as conclusions. A perception that sees the policy as a follow up to the CTCs and considerably affected by Charter schools is the first one. Strong support of the policy from different parties and the government in its more than 20 year history was remarkable and a variety of academics from the field argue that this support continued to exist notwithstanding the lack of strong outcomes and development indicators. Finally, the market logics and the idea of increasing innovation with greater autonomy and freedom are seen as the principal reasons behind the policy.

Lastly, the context literature outcomes based on the reports of Reform (Basset et al., 2012; Finch et al., 2014) have been presented above in order to provide initial perspectives and starting points to discussions as these are investigated further in the interviews and presented in the findings chapter.

2.4 Project Schools of Turkey

Like many developing countries, models, reforms and policy implementations of other countries especially after successful implementations in developed countries have also influenced Turkey's education system. These global influences pushed governments and led to many reforms and investigations and implementations (Yalcinkaya, 2004). Scholars from the field of education argue that in spite of its highly centralised management structure, which has been regularly criticised, alternative models have been proposed and attempts made to implement reforms in many different areas of the education system in Turkey. The 'Project School' initiative is one and has been begun to be implemented following strong criticism against Turkey's the highly centralised education system. It is perceived to be a pioneer and a serious attempt at the decentralisation of the Turkish education system (Kaya, 2018a). Koc and Bastas (2019) state that the PSs are the latest reform for the Turkish education system and this reform includes some radical and 'brand new' innovations. Schools began to convert to Project Schools in the academic year 2014-2015 based on the 2014 delegated legislation.

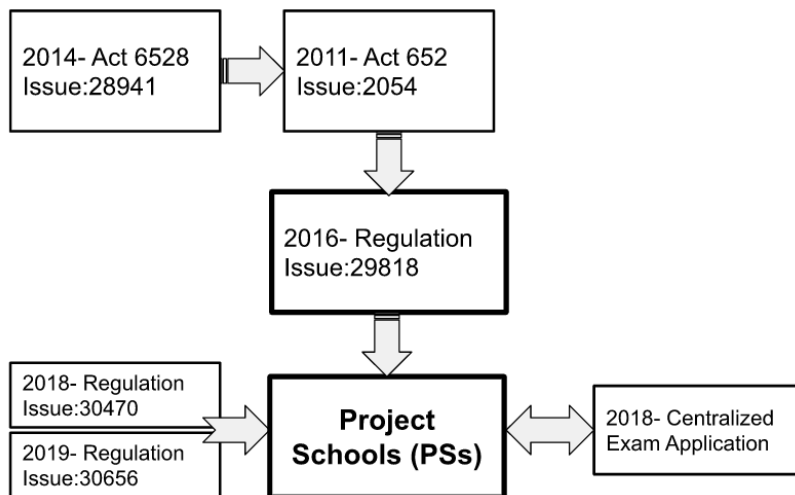
In the Turkish education system, which is dominated by a highly centralised administration, studies relating to the decentralisation of education have been kept constantly on the agenda by researchers and policy-makers for the last two decades (Karataş, 2012; Gürel and Gül, 2021). However, as well as some small-scale and short-run attempts, any sustainable and significant implementation were altered until the Project School initiative. Kaya specifies that the Project Schools should be carefully monitored as it is envisaged that they have a unique

school management model, a model that has the potential to make a remarkable difference for the education system in Turkey over time. It is also predicted that the Project Schools will continue to make a difference to the system and that they have the potential to be exemplary and a critical application for policymakers and practitioners in the future (2018, p. 9).

2.4.1 The genesis and legal foundation

In brief, the Project Schools are exempt from certain provisions of the laws and regulations applicable to all schools in Turkey. The below diagram (Figure 5) has been established to illustrate the genesis of the PS implementation based on its legal foundations. It illustrates all the legal changes made related to PSs, and they are explained further in the following paragraph.

Figure 5: Legal foundations of Project Schools (PSs).



Initially, based on the articles of 22/9 and 22/10 of 2014's Act numbered 6528, two new articles have been added to the 2011-delegated legislation Act numbered 652 titled 'The Delegated Legislation on the Organisation and Duties of the MoNE'. Literal translations of them are given as follow respectfully;

22/9: "The appointments of teachers and leaders are made by the Minister of Education for those schools that are within the framework of cooperation agreements

with national and/or international organisations or other countries; schools selected as Project School by the approval of the Minister of Education that are conducting specific educational programmes, reforms and national and/or international projects; and that are directly affiliated to the MoNE by the approval of the Minister”.

22/10: *“The provisions and regulations concerning the appointment of academics and teachers working in the Ministry to the schools specified under the 9th paragraph shall not apply. Personnel appointments to the schools covered by the 9th paragraph shall not entitle the beneficiary to the rights acquired for the appointment and promotion”* (The Official Gazette, 2014, p. 6).

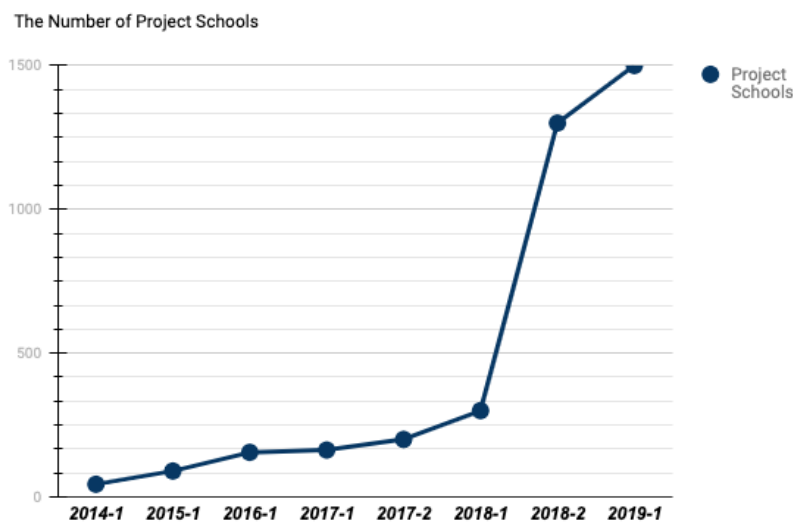
For Project Schools some changes on 'The Delegated Legislation on the Organisation and Duties of the MoNE' (2011- Act 652) were needed for the legal basis. In 2014 Act 6528 has been published for these changes and the legal basis. Therefore, it can be said here that Project Schools (PSs) of Turkey have been established based on the Act number 6528 published in 2014 that makes amendments to the MoNE Fundamental Act and a number of delegated legislations. However, in 2016, a regulation (numbered 29818) was published in order to organize implications and implementations on the ground, and this regulation has been updated with new regulations twice in 2018 (numbered 30470) and 2019 (30656). Lastly, it is worth noting here that the fundamental change made to the centralized exam application for the admissions of students to secondary schools both influenced PSs legislation and was influenced by the PSs. That is why the arrow in Figure 5 between PSs and 2018- Centralized exam application is two-sided. In short, after this change, PSs became the only schools that accept students based on the centralized exam scores, and also the Centralized Exam Application for student admission to secondary schools has been changed fundamentally and became an optional procedure only for certain 'qualified' schools.

From the initial implementations, it can be seen that initially, converted schools were the schools that were acknowledged as being extremely successful and/or that implement a specific education reform and programmes. They were also schools that organise national and

international training projects and activities with modern classrooms, libraries, laboratories and many other facilities (Kaya, 2018, pp. 32-33).

As it can be seen in the line chart (Figure 6) below, the number of schools that approximately 40 schools converted to Project Schools in 2014. It increased gradually between 2014 and 2018 and reached more than 300 schools at the beginning of 2018. As a result of a radical change in the student admission policy for secondary schools in Turkey, the number of Project Schools increased dramatically in the same year and numbered around 1300, reaching about 1500 in 2019. Although not all these schools were labelled Project Schools, they had the same rights and the same differences applied to them as the Project Schools. Therefore, in practice, they all can be accepted as Project Schools. It can also be seen in the related literature that all these schools are commonly called Project Schools (see NTV, 2018; TEDMEM, 2019).

Figure 6: Number of PSs since their introduction into the system.



Except for some limited suggestions in the reports from educational think-tank organisations, for instance, TEDMEM, SETA and ERG that are in service in Turkey, Kaya's (2018), masters research and an article taken from it are the only significant and solid sources concerning the Project School initiative thus far. Specific articles also mention them in

relation to their topics such as leadership studies in addition to this limited literature. After reviewing this literature, three arguments have been developed regarding the PSs and are presented below in this section.

2.4.2 Main Arguments

1. Lack of clarity and standards

When these first conversions are examined, it has been determined that these schools have certain shared features, such as implementing a specific education programme and/or innovation, more opportunities, facilities and smaller classroom sizes, in addition to organising national and international training projects and activities (Kaya, 2018, p. 32). The 2014 delegated legislation defined the Project Schools in the following four steps:

“Project Schools are the schools which are established within the framework of a cooperation agreement with domestic or foreign organisations or countries (1); schools which are conducting new national or international projects (2); schools which are implementing specific educational reforms and programmes and are selected as Project Schools with the approval of the Minister (3); and schools which are directly affiliated to the Ministry central organization with the approval of the Minister (4)” (MoNE, 2014 article 22/9).

As it can be seen in this a word-for-word translation, the definition is not clear enough to understand nor any specific aim referring to their needs and any criteria with relation to conversion and approval processes have been stated in the legislation. It is realised that a significant part of the current and controversial debates on project schools are caused because of the lack of a clear definition, along with conflicting explanations (TEDMEM, 2016, p. 32). Thereby, a few different definitions can be understood from the related literature. Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018, p. 691) specify the Project School policy as the last attempt to seek qualifications in secondary education in Turkey. They define these types of schools as 'the schools that are prominent in educational and social actions, maintain a project or an educational reform or have disadvantages yet to be improved'. Kaya (2018, p. 11) simplifies the definition of the Project School based on the same legislation and defines it as

'educational institutions implementing national projects or international projects conducted according to bilateral or multilateral agreements and protocols'.

However, as can be seen from the articles relating to the 2014 Act, the term Project School is incredibly confusing and unclear and it is not easy to predict which schools were permitted to be converted to Project School status. The MoNE published a regulation in 2016, two years later from the related Act, which regulates the procedures and principles of the Project Schools (MoNE, 2016). There was not a specific regulation about the implementation process of this new initiative for around two years until 1 September 2016. Schools were therefore converted without the regulation and satisfactory explanations between 2014 and 2016. Consequently, the lack of clarity and standards were obvious. As a result of this, especially the first conversions and initial implementations have been criticised and objected to by various shareholders such as students and parents (see CNN Turk, 2016; Mynet, 2016; TEDMEM, 2016).

The regulation published in 2016 known as the 'MoNE Regulation on Educational Institutions Implementing Special Programmes and Projects' setting out explanations and guidance regarding the Project Schools was published in 2016 (MoNE, 2016). However, two amendments have been published, one in 2018 and one in 2019, the 2016 Regulation (issue: 29818) is still in force as the main regulator for the initiative. In its first article, the MoNE explains the purpose of the regulation as follows;

“to set procedures and principles for the determination of Project Schools and their approval by the Minister, the appointment of teachers and leaders and admission of students to these schools” (MoNE, 2016, article 1)

However, it gives the impression that the regulation could not fill the gap regarding confusion and lack of standards on its own. The report issued by TEDMEM (2016, p. 32) argues that the qualification and competency criteria related to the staff appointments envisaged in the

PSs are not clearly determined. Kaya (2018a) has published an article from his research data. His sample consists of 14 teachers and 4 leaders of two different PSs. The research investigates the following nine areas in schools: (1) the current circumstance, (2) the difference in the system, (3) the structure and operation, (4) the authority usage of leaders and teachers, (5) the success potential of the new structure and operation, (6) the culture formation, (7) the job satisfaction of leaders and teachers, (8) the professional competence of leaders and teachers, and (9) the project activities in these schools. As a result of this research, participants argue that the lack of 'preliminary preparation' and 'informing' phases prior to the implementation of the policy caused various problems and strikes by parents and students. Problematic areas such as not having a 'clear regulation', 'place-secured appointment', 'communication between policy-makers and schools', and 'political concerns' were also indicated as problematic regarding the implementation phases of the policy.

A similar concern also was stated in SETA's report in 2016. It emphasised that it is of utmost importance that school standards be formally determined and that the standards can be checked for compliance with these standards. However, conditions such as 'to be historically important based on the alumni who are important figures in the country such as politicians, which is stated in the 2016 Regulation, are unstandardised and vague (SETA, 2016, p. 324). Therefore, these regulations should be reconsidered and more straightforward and transparent regulations should be published for public information otherwise it is inevitable that the applications would continue to be controversial (SETA, 2016; TEDMEM, 2019).

Therefore, as a conclusion, it is argued that there has been widespread confusion in relation to the PSs initiative in Turkey, especially in the first two years of their introduction into the system. It is evident that this confusion still continues among the shareholders despite the regulation published in 2016.

2. Too rapid an increase, irregularity and a centralised system

It is argued in TEDMEM's report issued in 2016, that the aims of Project School policy can only be accomplished with talented teachers. However, in the regulations, neither any concrete criteria nor clear definitions were specified in terms of teacher selection procedures despite the increase in the number of PSs (TEDMEM, 2016, p. 32). TEDMEM makes two important criticisms of the PSs-related applications in its 2016 and 2018 annual evaluation reports. A strong criticism in the reports was against preventing conversions of schools by means of the changes made to the admission of students to secondary schools in 2018. It was reported that the number of schools that have Project School status has surprisingly increased via this change, but it is uncertain what criteria and projects have been applied to these schools to allow them to convert (TEDMEM, 2019, p. 8). Furthermore, while the relevant legislation and preliminary background applications are expected first, hundreds of schools have been suddenly declared project schools regardless of whether they are currently fulfilling the requirement of being a project school (TEDMEM, 2019, pp. 170-171).

According to the OECD, 'empowering schools to meet the needs of local contexts while maintaining national coherence' is seen as one of the key challenges of Turkey's education system as it was criticized for being highly centralized (OECD, 2020, p. 17). According to the report, many decisions related to schools are taken by central authorities such as decisions about schooling, curriculum, financial, teaching, and human resources. Schools have boards that include representatives of teachers, parents, and leadership but these boards are not empowered for decision-making and do not include members of the community. It is argued that Turkey recently focused on the allocation of the central authority to Provincial Directorates instead of to schools themselves even though the intention to bring decision-making closer to schools was appreciated. This reality is weakening the ability of the system to answer local needs and solve school-specific problems (OECD, 2019; OECD, 2020).

Certain academics associate these kinds of issues with Turkey's highly centralised education system because the extreme centralism and lack of participation by educational shareholders are emphasised as the primary reasons behind the inability of the Turkish education system to transform and update itself (Yalcinkaya, 2004). According to them, these are the results of the system and causing loopholes and chaos because they are not developed from a base and do not always match the reality. Therefore, it is argued that any radical and systemic change could not be accomplished successfully in this system in the direction of a more decentralised transformation (Şişman and Turan, 2003; Yalcinkaya, 2004). According to Altinkurt and Yılmaz (2011), school teachers also think that the highly centralised education system is the main reason behind some of the fundamental problems seen in schools in Turkey. Moreover, it is argued that this situation is an obstacle for schools in regard to discovering and fulfilling their goals and identities (Kaya, 2018).

In addition, in the OECD's report, it was referred that learning environments are problematic in Turkey's schools, and it was emphasized that developing the leadership in schools can help to create better learning environments because 'attracting, retaining, and developing good-quality school leaders is critical to improving the quality of learning environments' (OECD, 2020, p. 13). School leaders argue that their roles in schools are largely administrative and they are not able to focus on educational or leadership-related improvements due to the other workloads.

Therefore to summarise, the rapid increase in the number of PSs and/or rapid changes in any area related to schools is seen as problematic because it is argued that these changes are causing anomalies and that frequently, they reality does not match these changes. Likewise, some academics argue that these kinds of problems are the result of Turkey's highly centralised education system. Moreover, some believe that the accomplishment of fundamental reforms and real improvements are not possible by means of this system.

3. Teacher appointment: A minimal advantage or freedom

The current teacher and school personnel appointment model pertaining to the Turkish education system have been specified as an obstacle against innovation and a positive working atmosphere in schools and create difficulties in forming suitable teams in line with the schools' specific missions (Gundogdu *et al.*, 2008; Altinkurt and Yılmaz, 2011; Memduhoglu and Kayan, 2017).

As of the 2014-2015 academic year, regarding the PSs initiative, the lower level leaders (deputies) and teachers are appointed to these schools based on the school leaders' proposals to the MoNE (MoNE, 2016). The importance of this appointment originates from the fact that the school leaders have been empowered to participate in the decision to select the deputy leaders and teachers to be appointed in their schools (Kaya, 2018, p. 33).

In particular, this new model has enabled the appointment of more suitable leaders for schools and has given them the freedom to create their own working team based on their perceptions regarding making the best decisions for their own organisations (Kaya, 2018; Kaya, 2018a). In other words, an authority held by bureaucrats in the MoNE was transferred to school leaders. Notwithstanding, it was a very limited and partial transfer, it gave an opportunity to school leaders to participate in decision-making concerning their organisations. According to TEDMEM's 2018 report, the primary aim of the PSs is to ensure to continue and support the success of outstanding schools and to increase quality in education practices (TEDMEM, 2019). It was also stated in the 2016 report that the MoNE aims to carry out special projects in these schools by establishing the staff for them (TEDMEM, 2016, p. 30). Furthermore, it was the aim to provide essential facilities for more successful implementations in these schools, this includes all sorts of financial means and improvements in the teaching staff (TEDMEM, 2016).

The authority given to school principals to choose not only the teachers but also the deputies who will work with them is seen as the most important innovation that came with the project schools, and this authority allowed the school leaders to build their own teams as the most important difference of these schools from others (Koc and Bastas, 2019). Therefore, Koc and Bastas evaluate PSs as a 'new and innovative' model that 'attaches great importance to teamwork in school management' (2019, p. 924).

Kaya (2018) indicates two fundamental aims pertaining to his research. First, the overall aim of his research pointed out an attempt to understand whether or not the practice and approach of Project Schools are a sign of a new paradigm shift in the school management structure and operation of Turkey's education system. Second, the more specific aim of his research was explained as an investigation to determine how the freedom of 'creating their own teams' given to the PS leaders has been understood and interpreted by the school leaders themselves as well as teachers who work with them (Kaya, 2018, p. i). The interpretation of 'creating their own teams' represents the freedom given to school leaders to choose their teaching staff and deputy leaders that has only been given to the Project School leaders by the MoNE via the Project School initiative. Except for the Project Schools, generally, as a rule, all school personnel including teachers and leaders are appointed centrally by the MoNE based on their scores from a centralised exam known as KPSS for teachers (Public Personnel Selection Examination). This freedom given to the Project Schools is the main feature and also a difference as regards other state schools (Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018). However, it is not clear to what extent the leaders have received specific training to undertake these recruitment tasks or which selection criteria they employ because neither are specified in the related regulation (MoNE, 2016).

Nevertheless, numerous participants in the research conducted by Kaya asserted that the advantages of PSs definitely outweigh the disadvantages and the opportunity to select a

teacher is an important advantage. The following themes can be listed accordingly as the main supportive arguments that have been established based on the teachers and leaders discourses by (Kaya, 2018a, p. 69):

'Supporting creating a team spirit in the schools', 'increasing the potential to avoid and solve the problems of schools', 'increasing the hope to make a difference in the system', 'increasing taking the initiative and innovation in schools', 'increasing the willingness, self-devotion, communication and the innovative practices of the school shareholders', 'supporting job satisfaction and the professional competence of teachers and leaders'.

It is worth noting here that Kaya was a deputy principal in a PS when he was conducting the research. Notwithstanding that he claims that this circumstance provided him with an advantage to see the realities in greater depth and enriched his data in a positive way, it is possible that this might influence his criticisms and interpretations.

In addition, the SETA report stated that academics from the universities can be assigned to give lessons in the Project Schools according to Article 38 of Higher Education Law numbered 2547. It is seen as an important development for the students in these schools to take lessons from academics to gain experience in different fields (SETA, 2016). However, the most important factors that differentiate the Project Schools from other schools are observed in the student selection, besides the teacher and school leader appointment policies. Consequently, monitoring and auditing mechanisms should also be conducted in a beneficial way to prevent arbitrary implementation and favourability (SETA, 2016). In the light of similar concerns, it was argued in the report that there are various shortcomings and unclear points in some critical parts that should be reorganised and it is seen as essential to cooperate with the relevant persons, institutions and experts in order to improve the quality of schools and implementations(SETA, 2016, p. 326).

2.4.3 Conclusions

These changes and declarations have captured the attention of many and are interpreted as an important transformation and as a start that might be a pioneer for the paradigm shift towards a more decentralised education system (Kaya, 2018; Kaya, 2018a). Moreover, Kaya (2018) puts forward the view that the PSs are the first such innovative reform in the long history of Turkish state schools (p. 32). Based on the analysis of data obtained from eighteen face-to-face interviews, Kaya makes a conclusion that demonstrates strong support towards the freedom given to PS leaders to create their own teams. This is because it was evaluated that this has increased the sense of team spirit, the use of initiative and innovation in schools, along with the level of professional satisfaction in schools (Kaya, 2018, p. i). According to Kaya, the management model applied to the PSs can be seen as an approach that allows the school leaders to form their own teams with the aim of increasing their success and student outcomes by having a shared vision and a positive working atmosphere in schools which allows innovation and new practices by providing more freedom (Kaya, 2018, p.33). Kaya (2018, pp.6-7), contends that this is not only an increased opportunity to achieve success in PSs with a group of leaders and teachers who have a common vision, but also a known fact that it will be easier to achieve success in systems with accountability.

Similar to scholars such as Memduhoglu and Kayan (2017) and Altinkurt and Yılmaz (2011), Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018), also claim that the current regulations, legislative limitations, the curriculum and highly centralised exam-based education system are seen as the main causes of problems and obstacles against innovation and development in schools. With all these problems, it is also implied that different and more innovative applications can be seen in PSs. For instance, the leadership and social responsibility projects 'help the students to learn in various processes and to take an active role in life' in these schools. According to Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018, pp. 713-715), the PS policy 'has created opportunities for a free

education process' and most of the school leaders who participated in their research suggest that this freedom is seen as 'meaningful' and 'increased the quality of school management', although it is not enough and should be developed.

With all this support, in addition to the concerns and criticisms specified earlier, Kaya counters the view that the PS initiative is the signal for a new paradigm as regards the management structure and operation of schools in Turkey. And it is expected that it will be continue to be implemented and expanded (Kaya, 2018, p. 10). Hence, it is of the utmost importance to study the policy by considering every single aspect as well as all the shareholders' perspectives. Additionally, this research studies the policy goals, schools' reasons for participating, the impact on the schools, and further important facts such as problematic areas, based on the school leaders' perspectives. Thus, it is believed that this study will make a clear and important contribution to this limited literature and will illuminate future research despite its limitations.

2.5 A global trend that Turkey is late: 'decentralization'

'Decentralization', and school-based management based on it, is seen as one of the most common strategies of countries around the world aiming to improve the quality of education systems. The World Bank Report on decentralised decision-making in schools by Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009) is very useful in order to outline the global trend around decentralization of school management systems. The report outline the school-based management model and global trends regarding it and argue that many governments are trying new and different strategies in order to improve their public education systems and the emphasis on the 'quality' is getting stronger. Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009) indicate that every school-based management application is unique; there are weak and strong versions of it.

In both reports by OECD (2013 and 2020) Turkey's education system has been defined as highly centralized and argued that schools' authorities and capacities to answer local needs

and solve chronic problems, and improve their services are quite limited. It has been argued in a 2013's report that assessment and accountability applications have been focused to evaluate schools' or stakeholders' compliance with regulations or central policies instead of focussing on real improvements (OECD, 2013). Therefore, the effects of these tools on school-based implementations and outcomes are quite limited and it seems that these have not been improved since 2013 as similar criticisms exist in OECD's 2020's report.

However, Kaya (2018) argues that PSs can be seen as a start on the way to a school-based management system. This perception can be understood because some applications of it can be seen as quite innovative in such a highly centralized education system as Turkey's. For example, even though Turkey's policymakers' late take-up and the need for research in this context are obvious, while it is very rare in other countries partial authority regarding the hiring of teachers has been given to schools with PSs policy in Turkey. It is also worth noting here that no one (neither policymakers nor school leaders) is seeing them (PSs) as a school-based management model but some features of it are seen as very similar to this global trend, and Kaya (2018) argues that this is a start in the way of a school-based management model.

Therefore, it should be very beneficial here to review WorldBank's recommendations to policymakers as preconditions regarding the implementation of a school-based management model because some scholars argue that PSs are strong indicators in this way or later or soon Turkey will be obligated to try such a model (e.g. Kaya (2018) sees the PSs as the start of this global trend for Turkey).

Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009) indicate six different authorities that are transferred to schools from central managements within the decentralization reforms. These are: 'budget allocation, hiring and firing of teachers and other school staff, curriculum development, textbook and other educational material procurement, infrastructure improvement, and monitoring and

evaluating of teacher performance and student learning outcomes' (p. 99). However, they also argue that only two of them are common in developing countries which are textbook and other educational material procurement and infrastructure improvement, and they add that 'monitoring and evaluating of teacher performance and student learning outcomes' are seen rarely even in school-based management implementations. The authorities of 'budget allocation' and 'hiring and firing of teachers and other school staff' are not seen as given to schools even in school-based management models in most developing countries (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009).

(Barrera-Osorio *et al.*) make six important recommendations in WorldBank's 2009's report in this regard. Table 13 below, adopted from Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009, pp. 101-102), illustrates these recommendations and key issues that should be settled by the governments or policymakers before school-based management applications.

<u>What:</u>	<u>How:</u>
1- A clear definition	Clearly define; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Autonomy and accountability perceptions within the new system - The services/jobs/authorities that will be transferred - To whom they will be transferred - The resources/budgets that will be available and how they will be used - The new model (as all school-based management models are unique)
2- Capacity consideration	Consider and build; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The leadership or managerial capacities of key actors (e.g. school leaders, teachers, parents, or community groups)
3- A clear explanation of changes/targets	Clearly explain; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The targets and their time frame - And 'ensure that everyone involved understands the amount of time required so that their expectations are realistic'
4- Short and long-	Establish;

term goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 'Short-term process goals, intermediate output goals, and longer-term outcome goals' - Impact assessment evaluation system
5- Steps and changes for each stages	Specify; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What is expected at different stages to reach the goals - The components of the new system - The new roles of the stakeholders
6- Evidence-based interventions and impact evaluation program	Efficiently use; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Whatever evidence is available - The impact assessment evaluation system and the date from it

Table 13 Recommendations for 'decentralization' and a possible school-based management model.

Source: Adapted from Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009, pp. 101-102).

Countries' political economies are determinant and important in shaping their school management models. And it can be argued here that possible school-based education reform's effects can be extremely crucial either positively or negatively therefore each country must consider its own conditions and realities carefully because even though there is no one type that works for all 'different types of SBM reforms may be successful under different circumstances' (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009, p. 104).

As shown by Table 13, in order to increase the chance of successful school-based management implementation, Local authorities can be evolved to be more accountable by directing them to involve school stakeholders in the decision-making processes and to listen to their voices regarding the needs of schools. The impact evaluation and assessment systems are seen as quite important regarding the implementation of a possible school-based management model. Therefore fundamentals for them should be established in advance and independent organizations can be encouraged to do this as well as government departments themselves such as MoNA (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009, p. 105). Sharing of the good or best school-based management practices or outcomes not only from the schools around but also

from other similar countries would encourage the stakeholders and help to spread these experiences and good practices as innovations (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009, p. 105).

As decentralization reforms, school-based management implementations have been started implemented for more than 25 years in many countries such as Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Cambodia, El Salvador, Hong Kong, China, Israel, Kenya, Mexico, the United States, and England (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009). Schools in these countries have been provided with more authority and autonomy such as the power to hire and fire all teaching and non-teaching staff in the UK.

According to Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009, pp. 97-98), 'increased school autonomy, greater responsiveness to local needs, and the overall objective of improving students' academic performance' are some of the common characteristics of OECD countries' school-based education reforms. Furthermore, they argue that school-based education reforms are increasing in developing countries and emphasize that the countries are aiming to empower school leaders and teachers, to strengthen the professional motivation of staff as well as parental involvement (2009, p. 98). However, Barrera-Osorio *et al.* argue that 'there are no rigorous evaluations of ...(these) programs so there is no convincing evidence of the effects of these reforms on student achievement' (2009, p. 11). This argument has been based more than ten years ago so there might be some studies since. However, at least for the UK, the studies on student achievements provide mixed results (see DfE (2012) and Elwick (2018) for example) and it can be argued here that still there is no convincing evidence of the effects of decentralization reforms on student achievement. Of course, student achievements are not and should not be the sole indicators of the effects of reform attempts. Moreover, as this research argues, many studies are missing to evaluate the reforms from the angle of school leaders even though they are the key actors for all kinds of changes on the ground. In addition, it is also seen from these developments in other countries that Turkey became very

late for not only implementing or piloting but also researching them. These also prove the contribution and originality of this research for both countries, Turkey and England.

Of course, such reform needs political support at some level but the support, from several stakeholders such as teachers and unions, looks so important for a sustainable school-based management model because eventually, it may increase the pressure and workload of them and give parents and community members more power (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009). Some side effects are also possible such as deterioration of the relationships between school staff and parents or community members because it is not easy to establish a balance regarding the outside interventions (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009, p. 103). Accordingly, some of the primary challenges regarding a school-based management model are: 'the need for all the relevant actors to accept and support the reform, the fact that greater time and work demands are placed on teachers and parents, and the need for more local district support' (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009, p. 105).

However, many more benefit expectations out of it have been recognized. For example, the increase in staff motivation, a positive school climate, a better curriculum, the eagerness of students to learn, and more support from parents and the community has been specified as some of the expected benefits of a more decentralized system. Moreover, it has been argued that 'decentralizations' would benefit to increase the quality, outcomes, and satisfaction due to three reasons: first, it is expected that the demand for a better education would increase with it; second, local stakeholders' knowledge and experiences regarding local systems, needs, or problems are much greater than the central policymakers', and third local priorities, values, and needs would be met much more effectively by it (Barrera-Osorio *et al.*, 2009, p. 2).

Lastly, with all these, there are also some articles that argue that neoliberalism has affected Turkey's education policies. Karapehlivan (2019) argues that the education system of Turkey

has been managed and developed in line with a neoliberal and conservative religious ideology by the government since 2002. She separates the current government's term into two phases between 2002-2011 and after 2011. It has been argued that the first phase of these periods is dominated by neoliberal policies. For example, 'devolving financial and governance responsibilities to schools through the adoption of School-Based Management' and 'introduction of Total Quality Management and performance assessment of teachers' has been given as examples to neoliberal policies adopted by the government. Similarly, as a critic, Polat (2013) links market values, decentralization, and liberal ideology and studies neoliberalism in the context of Turkey's education policies, and she bases the ideology's genesis on the deficiencies of the social state or conflicts of the social state. She states that, according to neoliberalism, 'the social state cannot serve its purpose in terms of democracy or social welfare and it cannot protect individual freedom', and 'cannot produce efficient service with its structure, which has become unwieldy', and such problems can be solved neoliberal principles such as 'autonomy, participation, customer satisfaction, the right to choose, and transparency' (2013, p. 166). Polat (2013) argues that an education system based on market values does not fit and cannot help to accomplish the objective of raising free people, and emphasizes 'the necessity of continued critical policy analysis and a critical pedagogy is emphasized' (p. 161).

2.6 Conclusion

The literature regarding the policy borrowing and policy learning approaches, academy schools of England and PSs of Turkey has been reviewed as the primary objective of this research. The chapter started by reviewing policy borrowing and policy learning in the field of education historically because pursuing policy borrowing and developing policy learning outcomes are one of the ultimate aims of this research project. From this perspective, as reviewed above, although the policy borrowing approach has not be seen in a very simplistic

manner, such as copying a policy without considering any local circumstance, the policy learning approach has been adopted because it was reviewed as proposing learning outcomes from countries' experiences with the intention of making the policies better instead of offering a wholesale changes or imposing something foreign as it takes time to consider all the details.

Regarding both policies, their features and developments over time as well as various understandable definitions are presented. Providing an overall and simplistic view of each one is the aim here because this was essential for the readers, particularly those who are unfamiliar with the other one. Accordingly, it was also believed that these would establish a foundation for making cross-national comparisons and policy learning outcomes.

As within the scope of this research, the main arguments regarding both of the policies are reviewed. Four arguments are presented for the academies and three arguments for the PSs. Finally, the global trend around decentralization and freedom for schools and countries' positions in this respect have been outlined mostly based on the World Bank's report by Barrera-Osorio *et al.* (2009).

In addition, it is worth acknowledging here that the arguments presented here regarding Academies and PSs have primarily emerged in the scope of this research. However, more a thematic literature is provided in the discussion chapter along with the outcomes and themes of the data analysis found in this particular research.

Chapter Three: Research Design and Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Without making profound discrimination between science and social science, the term 'science' has always been presented with a very clear link in terms of having a 'methodology' and 'systematic' conduct to increase the understanding of human being by producing new knowledge. Research projects refer to the production of this scientific knowledge that has a 'methodology' and 'design' to accomplish this mission (Marczyk, 2005). On the one hand, the research methodology is kind of an umbrella term and more about beliefs, values, assumptions and approaches to the research that guide and shape the research processes. On the other hand, the research design is a thoughtfully developed plan to answer the research questions and accomplish the project's objectives (Blanche *et al.*, 2006; Bailey, 2008; Leedy and Ormrod, 2010). Creswell specifies “adding to knowledge, improving the practices, and informing policy debates” as three fundamentals and common outcomes that demonstrate the importance of the research valid especially for social research (2012, pp. 4-6). I consider all these are quite parallel with the objectives of this research but having a robust and reasonable methodology and design has been specified more importantly in order to accomplish these fundamentals or outcomes properly.

Therefore, this chapter discusses the research design, data collection methods, and methodological assumptions concerning the empirical parts of the project. The project itself includes several stages and research phases therefore chapter three presents detailed information and discussions in order to provide a good sense to understand the methodology of the project.

First, the theoretical framework of the study and philosophical assumptions that guide the establishments of this research have been presented and discussed. Second, the research

questions and objectives have been presented and discussed. The research design and data collection methods have been introduced as follow. After that, the data analysis processes, and methods have been indicated. Lastly, the ethical considerations and trustworthiness concerns have been discussed in this chapter.

3.1.1 Research Paradigm

Briggs *et al.* (2012, p. 11) specifies that the ‘ontology and epistemology affects the methodology of a researcher’s work’. Accordingly, Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, p. 21) state that ‘ontological assumptions will give rise to epistemological assumptions which have methodological implications for the choice of particular data collection techniques’. Furthermore, it has been argued that these assumptions and positions of the researchers among these philosophical underpinnings have clear effects on the research studies especially for social sciences even they are not recognized and declared by the researchers themselves (Marsh *et al.*, 2017). Therefore, the philosophical assumptions of the researchers guide and direct the fundamentals of the research either intentionally or unintentionally so the indication and comprehension of them are important for a research project. Marsh et al. use a brilliant metaphor to show the indisputable importance of them in terms of their effects on the research, which is “a skin not a sweater” so their effects cannot be avoided or they cannot be put aside of taken off (2017, p. 177).

‘Ontology’ is seen the most fundamental and first phase for all research studies and researchers (Grix, 2002). The term is about “the nature of reality” and “what can be known about it” (Blanche *et al.*, 2006, p. 6). It can also be identified as a field of study or branch of knowledge that interests the existence of things or reality, or theories about them (6 and Bellamy, 2012). According to Hay (2002, p. 61) the answers of the questions “what is the nature of the social and political reality to be investigated? And, what exists that we might acquire knowledge of?” would indicate the ontological position of a person. As the researcher,

my ontological position to the social realities would match with the understanding of the realities as being “the symbolic world of meanings and interpretations”, which are co-constructed by social actors as they make sense of their worlds (Blaikie, 2000, p. 116). Because as it is constructed by humanity through the purposes, activities, movements, interpretations or implementations of people there is a very complex and invisible structure of social reality (Searle, 1995, p. 4) and I see that this kind of approach will be necessary to comprehend this structure, as it is a key due to the nature of this research project. This ontological position called ‘anti-foundationalism’ that recognizes realities always constructed by social actors and this position can be seen as relativism broadly in the field (Lowndes *et al.*, 2017). For instance, Blaikie stresses that this position based on the ‘idea that there may be multiple and changing realities’ by calling it ‘relativist’ ontology (2000, p. 116). This rejects to seeing the social reality as single and independent from the social actors and interpreters. Because they are either actors who have effects on the reality itself or who are or will be the key associates to reveal this reality. Furthermore, it has been argued that social reality is “partially a mental construct” and its recognition cannot be entirely impartial due to the expectations and lenses of the actors and interpreters (Bailey, 2008, p. 268).

Goldman claims that “epistemology deals with knowledge” and most of the current knowledge has been accumulated via “language and social communication” so on this wise it is “a cultural product” (1986, p. 1). Reasonably, this argument can be accepted more valid especially for social sciences or subjects that related to social, cultural actors or phenomena. Scott and Morrison point out the clear relation between ontology and epistemology and their effects on the research designs and methods then they define epistemology from the perspective of educational research and indicate that it is about “how educational researchers can know the reality that they wish to describe” (2006, p. 85). Morrison (2012, p. 15) emphasises the term of ‘epistemology’ as “central to research endeavour” and relates it with

‘the theories of knowledge’ as answers given to the question of ‘what is the relation between what we see and understand?’ and ‘how we can know reality?’ (Scott, 2012, p. 109). Epistemological positions of the researchers always routed by their ontological positions, and, as discussed and adopted above, the anti-foundationalist and relativist ontology routes the researchers toward having an ‘interpretivist’ epistemology (Lowndes *et al.*, 2017). The term ‘interpretivism’ is defined as “an epistemological position that requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action’ (Bryman, 2012, p. 712). Bryman reflects that it is more about understanding of social factors and perceptions than seeking explanations behind their existences. Blaikie (2000, p. 116) argues that interpretivism addresses the ‘meanings, interpretations, motives and intentions’ as central for social research and identifies researching these “insider” points of view as the main assignment for an interpretivist approach that identifies the social reality as “the symbolic world of meanings and interpretations”. Accordingly, within the perspective of social sciences or educational research more specifically, studies are supposed to be based on the experiences of the individuals who are the part of the education (Morrison, 2002). This research fundamentally relies on school leaders’ and/or writers’ and interpreters’ of the documents and policy texts, such as policy makers, interpretations, discourses and implementations as they are the key contributors to the data of this project and key players of the policies, which are under the subject of this research. Therefore, as the researcher I believe that an interpretivist epistemological position will fit very well and open the way to accomplish aims of the research especially regarding to understand motives, meanings and interpretations related to subjected school reform policies.

In conclusion, as it has been discussed above and due to the nature of this research which is highly related to social actors, their interpretations and implementations, the anti-foundationalist, relativist ontology and interpretivist epistemological position have been

adopted in order to have suitable perceptions about the educational policy implementations and insights relating to them which are the main topics of this study.

3.1.2 Main Objectives and Research Questions

Overall, the study directs at two goals to understand how the two specific school reforms have affected the education systems in which they are implemented and to provide aspects in order to improve them.

Therefore, five research objectives underpinned the research project. First, the research aimed to reveal the goals of two policies. Second, it aimed to reveal the perceptions of school leaders about the 'project school' initiative of Turkey, as they are the key players who implement the policy in the field. Third, to understand and discover the background of the 'academy schools' of England. Fourth, to discover whether the 'project school' policy is a borrowed policy and to infer policy learnings from the experiences in order to provide aspects for their improvements. Lastly, it aimed to establish the adaptability of some further components of 'academy schools' that re not in the scope of 'project schools' yet for the sake of presenting a perspective for future policymakers.

In the light of these research objectives, the research has one overriding and five underlying research questions as follows;

Overriding Research Question

What are school leaders' perceptions of 'Academisation' and 'Project Schools' policies?

Research Questions

Q1. What are school leaders' perceptions of the background and goals of 'Academisation' and 'Project Schools' initiatives?

Q2. What are the main reasons for schools to become an Academy or Project School?

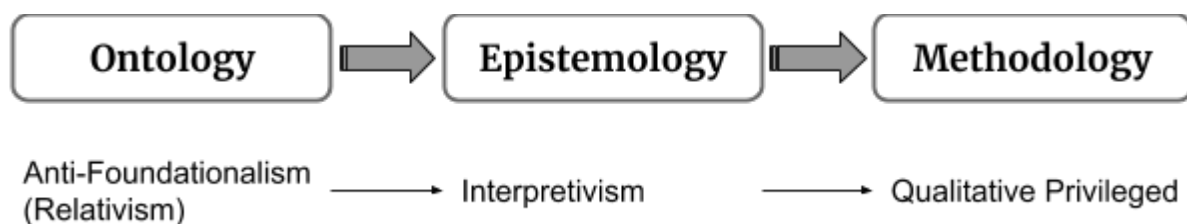
Q3. How have the policies affected the schools in which they are implemented?

Q4. What are the problem areas and overall perspectives of school leaders regarding the policies?

3.2 Qualitative Methodology

The methodology is the basis for all the activities related to the research study and in this manner, it represents a superior phase than methods or techniques used for a research study but it should indicate and explain the rationales behind these methods or techniques (Briggs *et al.*, 2012). The researcher's epistemological position guides and has clear effects on methodological preferences on how the research study has been conducted (Marsh *et al.*, 2017). Moreover, overall, epistemology can be seen as an investigation for establishing the research methodology regarding the social research studies in particular and therefore the methodology can be seen as part of the epistemology (Goldman, 1986). As it can be seen from the Figure 7, narrated based on the research's assumptions, predominantly, an interpretivist epistemology directs the researchers to the qualitative methodology based on its assumptions to discovering the ways to reach the reality that constructed by social actors.

Figure 7: Connecting ontology, epistemology and methodology of the research



Source: Adapted from Marsh *et al.* (2017, p. 179)

As based on the epistemological assumptions, Daymon and Holloway argue that a qualitative methodology and qualitative methods would be the best way to investigate collectively established meanings and complexity with the help of their character and capacity "to delve into meaning, and the critical or interpretive ways of thinking which are concerned with the social construction of reality" (2003, p. 5). A qualitative approach is not only seen optional but also necessary if the research study interested in social shareholders' perceptions and

understandings about their world and/or implementations (Marsh *et al.*, 2017), and Vromen stresses its importance regarding policies and their implementations (2017), and Morrison's emphasis regarding the education and/or educational policy studies supports that (2002). These arguments clarify that the place and role of the qualitative methodology in the interpretive inquiry are solid and preferred by the researchers but, in order to portray robust and trustworthy outcomes, the political, social and cultural contextuality of the subjects should also have been included and considered carefully in the scope of the research practices (Creswell, 2007).

In addition, Creswell argues that qualitative methodology can be the best way to answer research questions if there is a piece of very limited information or literature about the subject matter especially (2012). This situation exists regarding the project school initiative in particular. Therefore, even the survey adopted as a qualitative survey with other methods in harmony as they have been discussed in the following parts of this chapter.

Yin (2009) emphasises one of the main aims for conducting qualitative research as discovering the complicated social circumstances and phenomena via understanding the shareholders' perceptions. In accordance with Yin's emphasis and due to the nature of the research project and philosophical assumptions referred above, the qualitative approach was adopted for the methodology of this research with some quantitative elements after considering the other possibilities thoughtfully.

Creswell (2012) presents some main characteristics of qualitative studies step by step in accordance with the main research phases. The Initial phases can be summarized as developing a detailed and holistic understanding with justifications and discussions alongside the related literature regarding the research problem. After that, "stating the purpose and research questions in a general and broad way so as to the participants' experiences" and

collecting data in order to obtain participants' views are indicated as next stages. Then, "analyzing the data for description and themes using text analysis and interpreting the larger meaning of the findings" and "writing the report using flexible, emerging structures and evaluative criteria" are specified as final characteristics (Creswell, 2012, p. 16).

Silverman (2013, p. 38) argues that qualitative researcher's 'tendency to identify research design with interviews has blinkered them to the possible gains of other kinds of data, for it is thoroughly mistaken to assume that the sole topic for qualitative research is 'people''. Silverman's thought in this regard guided me to recognize and consider the documents and questionnaire responses as valid and as important as the interview data. Therefore, these data included and threatened in the same way with a clear conscience.

Bryman (2012, p. 714) states that "qualitative research usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data". However, according to Stake (2010), it is quite possible to have some quantitative ideas in a qualitative study. Moreover, Creswell (2012, p. xvii) claims that "often in educational research, studies are not entirely either quantitative or qualitative but contain some elements of both approaches". Accordingly, even though this research is highly qualitative it also includes some quantitative data too, obtained via some questions of the conducted survey.

With all the positive and favourable aspects of the qualitative approach, which are fundamentally interconnected with the nature of this research, the research aims and questions should be the main navigators for the methodological choices (Daymon and Holloway, 2003). Thus, the suitability of them for achieving research aims and answering the research questions should be the main interest and guidance for researchers (ibid). Thus, accordingly, the relationship overall structure between research aims and questions and

methodological preferences have been tried to illustrate in the following sections titled as research design and methods.

3.3 Research Design

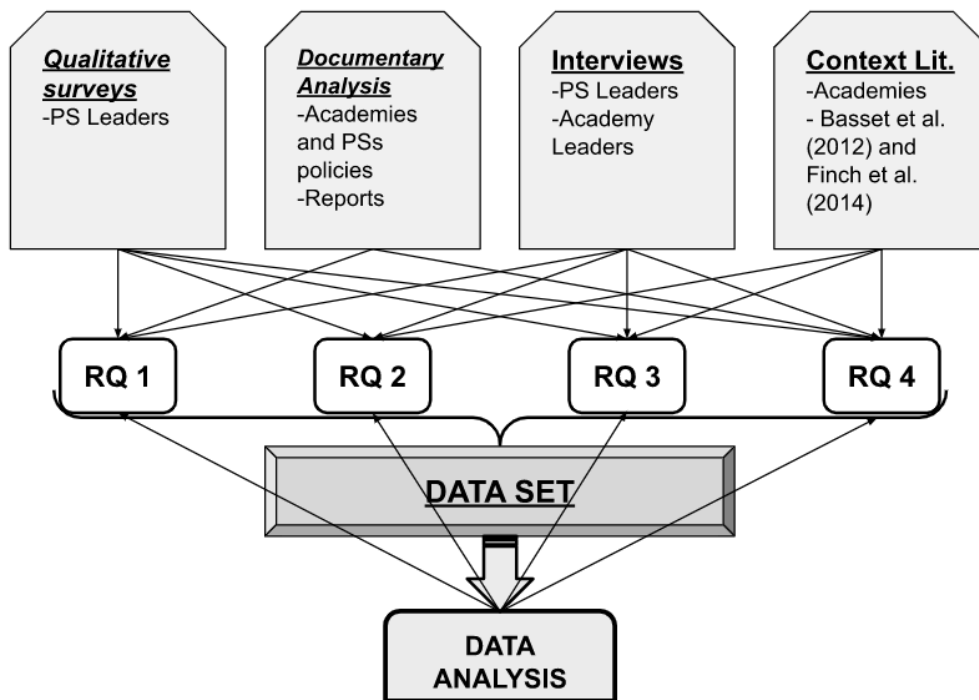
The common or natural relationship between interpretative approach and qualitative research has been noticed previously. However, it can also be recognized that their scopes are quite broad and can involve very different research designs and/or practices (Scott and Morrison, 2006). The research design is an overall and comprehensive image that illustrates how the research has been framed and planned in order to answer its questions and accomplish its aims and has been expected to be affected by the researcher's decisions, assumptions (Scott, 2012) and by the nature, context and culture of the topic.

Therefore, the research design has been started to be shaped with very early phases of the research alongside the early thoughts, such as the research proposal, aims, literature review and the recognized gaps in the literature, even before the methodological decision/s. But, even this situation is valid for most projects and the research designs are established gradually and naturally through the periods in the life of the research developments, it is also important and seen necessary to reflect and demonstrate it to see and show the compatibility and connections among research components such as aims, questions, methodological assumptions and methods (Creswell, 2007; Richards and Morse, 2013).

Robson defines the prime focus of the research design in a straightforward way as "turning research questions into projects" hence the appropriateness between research questions and methods or methodological decisions is the key and fundamental criterion (2002, pp. 79-80). The compatibility between research questions, purposes, methods, samples and data should be reviewed systematically and they should be revised if any discordance perceived (ibid). Figure 8 has been compiled to show this compatibility an overall representative of the

research design in accordance with the viewpoints of the scholars about the importance of its clarification as discussed above.

Figure 8: Research Design: The relationship between research questions and methods

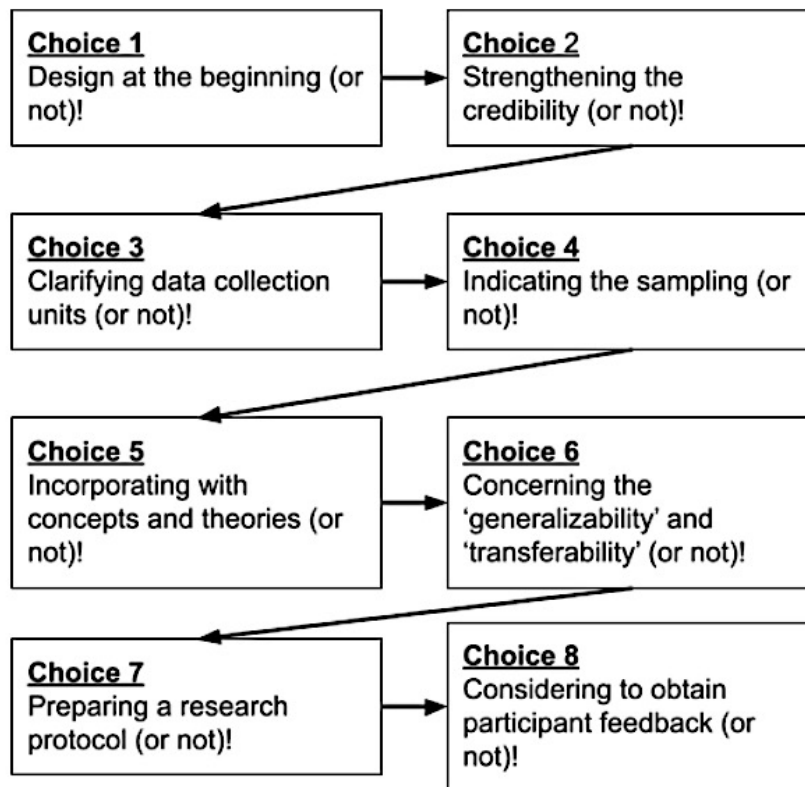


The structure of the research project and data collection procedures have been explained in this section. It has been proposed to establish the research design that is underpinned by research methods that are seen as essential in order to accomplish the research objectives introduced earlier in this chapter. The exploratory research design has been delivered in this regard. Therefore, the research design designated as an international comparative qualitative research design that uses multiple data collection methods. In this manner, the research design of the project is presented in two phases in terms of being a ‘qualitative’ and ‘cross-national comparative’ study as follow.

Yin indicates that, like others, qualitative projects have research designs as well but they are not expected to be fixed and designed fully in advance and qualitative researchers have

opportunities to adopt and amend different plan and strategies of their designs in order to improve the quality of their research study (2016, p. 83). And, as it has been demonstrated in Figure 9, he provides eight different choice opportunities for designing qualitative research step by step in order to provide a basis for researchers to establish their qualitative research designs (ibid, p. 84). The following section aims to demonstrate and explain the design of this research by using Yin's framework that provides choices for building qualitative research designs (2016).

Figure 9: Eight choices for research design



Source: Adapted from Yin (2016, pp. 83-115)

3.3.1 Qualitative Research Design that Uses Multiple Methods

Denzin and Lincoln define the role and function of qualitative research design in accordance with the clarification of 'a flexible set of guidelines' that represents a comprehensive picture of the research from theoretical bases to ground activities (2011, p. 14). Being 'flexible' here has been evaluated as one of the strong aspects of qualitative designs and the research

processes and designs of the qualitative studies are not expected to be fully predesigned and unalterable so it is possible that some changes have been applied during the journey even on some fundamental components of the project such as amendments on the research questions, tools or samples (Robson, 2002).

Therefore, as the decision to answer choice one of the Yin's framework (2016), a guiding research design has been established for this research at the beginning after the gap in the literature and value of the research has been recognized. But, as expected from a qualitative design it has been amended several times during the processes and exploration of the field. Accordingly, it is also possible to extend the scope of the research by adding to research questions in line with the capacity of the data to discover further details but the important point here is the reflection and indication of these evolutions cause it is expected from the researcher as well (ibid). Robson recommends that these can be documented under the title of 'an interesting avenue for further research' if they are evaluated and decided not included in the scope of the research (2002, p. 83).

Yin 's second procedure is about the opportunities and decisions in order to improve the 'credibility' of a qualitative research study. The term can be defined as "the truth value" (Cohen *et al.*, 2018, p. 248) or as being "free from bias and distortion" (Scott and Morrison, 2006, p. 76) but Yin (2016) describes it similar to the aspect of 'validity' that used mostly for quantitative approaches. Yin specifies four sub choices of this procedure which are regarding 'trustworthiness', 'triangulation', 'validity' and 'rival thinking'. These have been discussed as equalized to 'internal validity' of positivist perspective in this thesis under the title of 'trustworthiness' of this chapter with a more holistic approach to triangulation, authenticity and trustworthiness for qualitative research. This section provides more detailed discussions on these aspects regarding this research project, but a summary provided here as a part of the research design. First, the three terms have been adopted and conformed in this research in

order to strengthen credibility. As a summary, three different data collection methods have been used to ensure methodological triangulation. Second, the criteria of authenticity have been adopted in order to accomplish its sub-standards through a fair and ontologically, educatively, catalytically, and tactically authentic research (Manning, 1997; Lincoln and Guba, 2007; Bryman, 2012). These terms have been discussed in the same section as well. Third, four different sub-criteria have been adopted in order to ensure 'trustworthiness' criteria of the research. These are 'credibility', 'transferability', 'dependability', 'confirmability' and they square with the 'internal validity', 'external validity', 'reliability' and 'objectivity' terms of positivist approach respectfully (Lincoln and Guba, 2007, p. 18; Bryman, 2012, p. 390). And again respectfully, they are for ensuring a good-enough research practice, for providing the platform in terms of transferability discussions of the research, for having an auditing approach for all research phases, and for having objectivity references of the researcher (Lincoln and Guba, 2007; Bryman, 2012).

The third choice regards the decision of whether or how much explaining the details about the data collection instances and units at broader and narrower levels. The following Figure 10 illustrates these details regarding this research project.

Figure 10: Data collection units and instances

Context	Level of data collection unit		Instances
	<i>Broader level</i>	<i>Narrower level</i>	
Academisation Policy of England	<u>Survey data</u> (secondary data) → England <u>Interview data</u> → The region of North-East <u>Documentary data</u> → England	<u>Survey data</u> (secondary data) → Academy leaders <u>Interview data</u> → Academy leaders <u>Documentary data</u> → Official and institutional publications	<u>Survey data</u> → 478 academies <u>Interview data</u> → 6 leaders <u>Documentary data</u> → X documents
Project Schools Policy of Turkey	<u>Survey data</u> → Turkey <u>Interview data</u> → The region of Marmara <u>Documentary data</u> → Turkey	<u>Survey data</u> → Project school leaders <u>Interview data</u> → Project school leaders <u>Documentary data</u> → Official and institutional publications	<u>Survey data</u> → 255 project schools <u>Interview data</u> → 6 leaders <u>Documentary data</u> → X documents

Yin's fourth choice regards whether including the sampling details for data collection in a broader or narrow level (2016). As specified earlier more than one data collection methods have been used in this research project for two different policies have been implemented in two different countries. Thus, I believe that sampling approaches and practices should be indicated step by step to provide a logical, clear and understandable picture. First, the data consist of three different sources. A secondary survey data collected from the academy leaders has been decided to use for the academisation part. And this survey has been adopted, tested and improved in order to conduct with Project School leaders. Therefore, practically data collection process started with this survey application with Project School leaders. This survey has been sent to all the project schools that converted before 2018. 2018 decision is because of a dramatic and aberrant increase in the school numbers after 2018 with regulatory and political changes this has been discussed in the following chapters. So, this research focused only on the first phase of this kind of school as they have a long-enough experience, wholly converted and not flawed and unsettled regarding a very dramatic change atmosphere. 125 responses from school leaders have been collected which is more than one-third of focus. Moreover, a question at the end of this survey was included asking whether the survey

participants are willing to take part further in this research with an interview for providing deeper perspectives in this manner. Interviewees have been selected among the positive answers given this question. Eight interviews were conducted accordingly. The number has been decided based on my judgment of the data-sufficiency during the process as the researcher. I made a brief and overall analysis on each interview data then decided when projected the interview data was enough to answer related questions. Two of them was evaluated to exclude out of eight based on the interviewees' unwillingness and lack of knowledge regarding the policy-based questions. Geographically, the interviewees have been selected from the Marmara region as most of this kind of schools located in this region and most of the responses given to the survey were from this region. Lastly, the criteria of representativeness have been adopted in order to ensure a different kind of project schools' representation in the research. After Project School surveys, similarly, six different Academy Leaders were interviewed in the UK as well, to provide the same amount as it was suggested for a proper comparison base. As the Marmara region was focused for Project School surveys, the North-east region was focused for the Academy Schools. Two reasons can be given for this decision, first, the Academisation Policy spread quite well all-around England and we wanted to focus on a region, and accessibility to them was more ergonomic for me as the researcher. Lastly, two criteria were determined in terms of selection of the documents to analyse as data for this research: being officials' publications or being published by well-established institutions as reports. As expected, while very limited documents appeared regarding the Turkish context too many documents appeared regarding the English context. Therefore, some eliminations have been applied for academisation-related documents under the criteria of their sameness, authenticity and usefulness in terms of the questions and aims of this research.

3.3.2 Cross-national Comparative Design

The research has a comparative nature as including two educational policy cases from two different countries, contexts, and cultures that are based on Turkey and England. On the one hand, an important point here is that both cases have been investigated in their contexts alongside the consideration of country specific circumstances. On the other hand, it is believed that due to having some similar goals and implementation applications comparison the two educational school initiatives would provide extraordinary outcomes in order to provide different aspects, policy learnings for and from each extensive school reform implementations and experiences of states. Bryman (2012) defines a comparative research design as studying two cases supposing to entail better in-depth understandings about the social facts. Furthermore, Hantrais (1995, p. not given) indicates some possible benefits of a comparative study as including potentials to provide 'deeper understandings', 'new perspectives', and 'the identification of gaps' which have not been recognized earlier in one or another case. These possible advantages provided by the nature of a comparative study address the objectives of the project. However, regional and cultural factors and characteristics of traditions should not be ignored because they might affect the whole research somewhat (Hantrais, 1995). Differences always will be kept in the consideration and will not be ignored to avoid 'the dangers of cultural interference' and the results always will be interpreted 'in relation to their wider societal contexts' (Hantrais, 1995)

Hantrais (2009, p. 11) mentions five advantages for international comparative research in relation to policy: informing policy; identifying common policy objectives; evaluating the solution proposed to deal with common problems; drawing lessons about best practices; and assessing the transferability of policies between societies.

3.4 Research Methods

Briggs *et al.* (2012, p. 117) describe the methods as “tools or techniques used to collect, analyse and interpret data” and they break it down to three categories which rule the processes of the data. These can be summarized as follows: first category is about the rules for the key element and/or overall concepts of the research; second is about the rules for data collection; and third one is about the rules to analyse and interpret the data. Cohen *et al.* see the methods as activities to collect data that will establish the foundations of the research “for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction” (2007, p. 47).

Bell (2010) draws an overall and simple perspective in terms of data collection methods and their specifications under the nominal terms such as ‘quantitative’, ‘qualitative’, ‘case study’, ‘action research’. Essentially, she puts forward the importance of data in the heart of the research and methods that allow the accumulation of them. Therefore, the methods should be shaped by the purposes of the research and research questions, and further she does not distinguish a very strong and inflexible link between approaches and data collection methods. She argues that of course there are some certain links between some methods and some approaches, but they are not exclusive and there can be transitivity between them depends on the required data and purposes. (2010, p. 115). Denscombe also supports this view by indicating that chosen strategies or approaches do not and should not eliminate opportunities in line with suitability of the research objectives. Researchers should act wisely to see the capacity and choice to use or merge different methods. Furthermore, merging the different methods can open a gate for triangulation to receive very different points of views and angles (Bell, 2010, pp. 153-154).

Robson (2002, p. 92) takes a similar position with Denscombe (2010) and Bell (2010) and states that “specific methods of investigation need not be tied to particular research

strategies”. However, he draws a sharp distinction between quantitative and qualitative methodologies by categorising them as ‘fixed’ and ‘flexible’ respectfully in terms of characteristics of research designs before the data collection activities have been started.

As discussed and explained thoroughly previously in this chapter qualitative methodology has been adopted due to the nature of this research. Cresswell specifies the nine common characteristics of qualitative research. As one of them he argues that instead of using one source or analysing one type of data qualitative studies generally apply different types of sources and use multiple methods and data (2007, p. 38). Daymon and Holloway support this argument too and they see this as an important feature for qualitative research in order to provide a basis for cross-referencing and comparison potentiality (2003, p. 321).

However, they are complementary and interrelated sometimes the nature of research questions might be different in terms of the best methods to be used for unswerving them. According to Robson, multiple or mixed methods can be useful and effective for this kind of research designs as different methods might be used to answer different questions or objectives. Correspondingly, Somekh and Lewin acknowledge using different methods and data sources as a strength of case studies in the way to have well-established understanding based on the different perspectives (2005, p. 33).

3.4.1 A definitional Issue: Multiple or mixed methods research?

In his book ‘Real World Research’, Robson characterizes the real world enquiry and argues that the real world research has tendency to use multi or mixed methods instead of using a ‘single method’, and more specifically, he links case studies with this as one of their typical characteristics and important points deserves to be stated (2002). Robson uses both terms for the same purpose. Robson emphasizes that some research questions might be answered in a better way with more than a single method and he argues that "there is no rule that says that only one method must be used in an investigation" (2002, p. 370). Moreover, according to

him, this might be very advantageous in terms of decreasing the 'inappropriate certainty' via having different point of views and supportive answers, and providing the 'triangulation' opportunity via using multiple or mixed methods and types of data.

Creswell (2007) indicates that most often qualitative researchers collect data from more than one data collection methods. Creswell (2012) again specifies several forms of data from interviews to audio-visual materials. He associated these forms with the specific approaches. For example, he specifies the following six forms as typical: documents, archival records, interviews, direct observation, participant observation, and physical artefacts. He sees multiple methods of data collection as necessary to build “an in-depth picture of the case” or cases and to understand “the complexity” of it or them (Creswell, 2012, p. 132). And, gives he and Asmussen and Creswell’s a case study as an example for that, in which interviews, observations, documents, and audio-visual materials have been used as multiple forms of data to be used to analyse to answer their research questions (Asmussen and Creswell, 1995).

It can be commonly recognized that many scholars includes a chapter, mostly called as ‘mixed methods’ in methodology sourcebooks (see Briggs *et al.*, 2012; Bryman, 2012; Creswell, 2012) as an alternative to qualitative and quantitative methodologies. Therefore, the term of ‘mixed methods’ represents not simply having different ways to collect data but mixing the paradigms for the same objectives. For instance, Nachmias and Nachmias claim that ‘mixed methods’ research can provide exceptional advantages for researchers by allowing to use methods from the both quantitative and qualitative phenomena (Nachmias and Nachmias, 1992).

Therefore, it is accepted in this research that there has been a clear distinction between the terms of 'multiple' and 'mixed' methods. Based on this acceptance, 'multiple-methods' refers using different types of data and/or data collection methods under the same parading without

changing this base, however, 'mixed-methods' refers using both qualitative and quantitative methods within the same research.

The different methods under the qualitative paradigm adopted for data collection in order to reach the foundations and broadest scope of the subjects and gain access for the most accurate and proper information and this is called as 'multiple methods' for this research. These multiple methods are specified and discussed in the following sections separately.

3.4.2 Methods for Data Collection

Questionnaires, interviews, observation and documents have been frequently referred as most common and fundamental methods for social sciences. Denscombe indicates them as research tools “that help the researcher to gain: a clearer picture of things; an accurate measurement of things; facts and evidence about the subject matter” (2010, p. 153). As indicated earlier too the overall aim is providing the full understanding via the data gathered from multiple resources.

Figure 11: Data collection methods

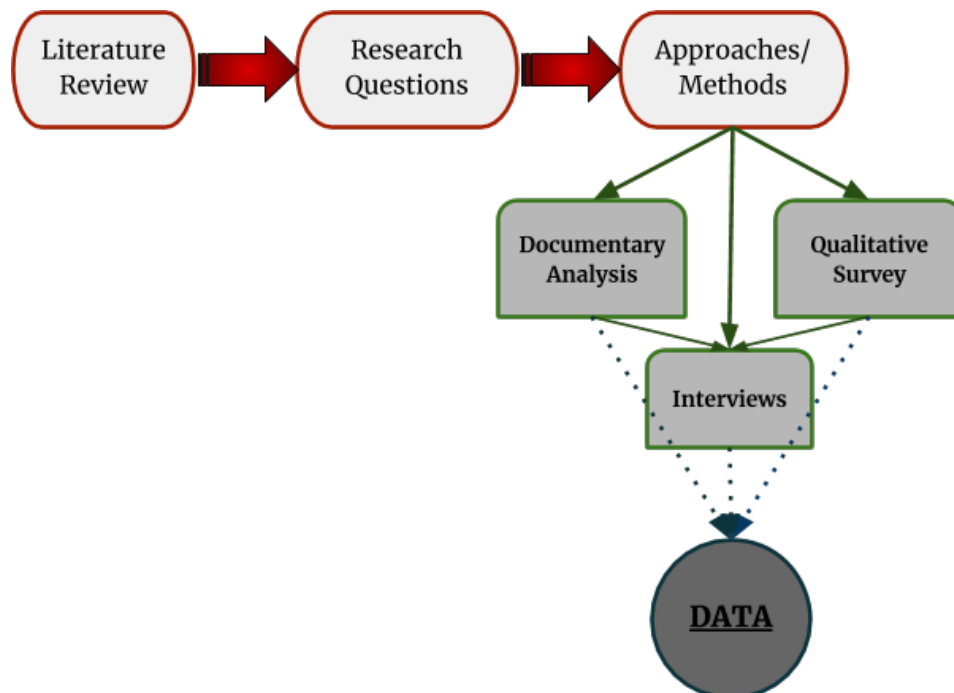


Figure 11 above shows the methods used in this project for data collection. The literature review guided the research objectives and questions and the research questions guided approaches and methods that have been adopted to answer and accomplish research aims in the best way. Then the data have been accumulated and established via these methods. The surveys were either conducted with PS leaders or referenced via Basset et al. (2012) and Finch et al. (2014) as context were used as valuable guides for interview processes as well as other information sources such as available literature, documents, or policy texts at least. Finally, all the methods shown in Figure 11 above constituted the data of this research as a whole.

3.4.2.1 Documentary Analysis

In today's world, a bulk and very rich number of documents emerged and published by the organizations in order to assure the accountability or some other explanatory reasons. Denscombe claims that these records should be transparent in every detail by providing "a fairly systematic picture of things that have happened" and should be available publicly in order to be open for close examinations and control of related parties (2010, p. 218). Robson classified the documentary research as one of the additional methods of data collection for social sciences, and argued that the documentary analysis, especially the written documents, increasingly draws attention of social researchers as a research method even though the data sources are produced and/or presented for different purposes than used by researchers as data (2002, p. 348-349). In their study titled as 'Key Ideas in Educational Research', Scott and Morrison approach to the term of 'documentary research' from the perspective of Educational Research (2006). Similarly to Robson (2002) they point out the social researchers' interest to the documentary research with a stress to origin or original purposes of the documents.

Documentary analysis is a well-known and favoured method among qualitative researchers especially for the case studies (Creswell, 2007). This method and documents are seen as

important sources for qualitative research as Daymon and Holloway state: reachability and accessibility of them in today's world; the potential and richness of them in term of the information provided; their character to be exist for long times and their potential capacity to provide the base for seeing different viewpoints and comparisons in time (2003, p. 277).

Documents can either be a part of multiple methods research as supplementary data or can be the sole data sources alone too but techniques such as cross-checking, triangulation and corporations with different perspectives with the consideration of their context have been strongly recommended (Daymon and Holloway, 2003). Denscombe supports this approach to the documents and indicates that “documents can be treated as a source of data in their own right” (2010, p. 216).

Based on Bohnsack *et al.* (2010) that focuses on the educational kind of documentary research, the aim of the documentary research can be summarized as ‘reconstructing the implicit knowledge’ to see and understand meanings, motivations, or even reasons behind and beyond the practices, actions and applications (p. 20). Especially for case studies, documents can provide much richer data than a possible questionnaire or interview applications in short times with a limited participant group (Daymon and Holloway, 2003, p. 278).

Documents can be specified as “a valuable source of information” among the four fundamental types of qualitative data which are ‘observations’, ‘interviews and questionnaires’, ‘documents’ and ‘audio-visual materials’ (Creswell, 2012, p. 223). Creswell emphasises that documents can be very fruitful especially to comprehend the “central phenomena” of the subject matters of the qualitative research with the help of the rapidly expanding data sources supplying documentary based data thanks to the era of the internet. However, he also lists potentials being difficult to reach and being “incomplete, inauthentic,

or inaccurate” as disadvantages points (p. 223). Denscombe designates three advantages and three disadvantages about the documentary research. Advantages are; first accessibility of documents is mostly easier and less costly; second it might be a very cost-effective method in terms of reaching the valuable data such as official statistics or documents; third due to their availability by public they are expected to be or can checked or inspected by third parties and that supports their credibility. On the other hand, disadvantages are; hardness to assure the credibility of the sources especially for the internet documents as its undisciplined and open nature; second, as being secondary data mostly, their characteristic to have specific audiences and other purposes than researchers’ objectives; third, their potential to include interpreted information as data instead of providing realities as pure and unadulterated (Denscombe, 2010, pp. 232-233).

Duffy (2010) likens the literature and documents searches in terms of their practices and indicates that the character of the research should guide the researcher in order to decide which sources should be covered. He points out two different documentary analysis approaches called ‘source-oriented’ and ‘problem-oriented’ approaches. While the sources and documents frame the research project and/or questions in the ‘source-oriented’ ones; the research questions, subjects or theories, which are established by initially via literature reviews or other methods, are investigated in the ‘problem-oriented’ ones. As Duffy states, the usage of the second approach can be seen much more than the first one in the literature (2010). Due to nationwide and governmental characteristic of this, mostly, national and some well-established think-tank institutions’ sources have been selected to reach include related documents for this research. However, some local documents which address focused policy have been included as well.

Cohen *et al.* (2007) states six phases for a documentary analysis project. These are ‘gathering data’, ‘external criticisms for authenticity’, ‘internal criticism for accuracy’, ‘synthesis’,

‘testing of the hypothesis’, and ‘writing of the final report’ as last. External and internal criticisms can be applied for available documents to evaluate their genuineness, authenticity or even potency. External criticisms refer more to trustworthiness of the author(s) and documents. On the other hand, the internal criticisms refer more about the contents, types, purposes, contexts, methods and wholeness of the documents. The ‘synthesis’ among them is defined as “piecing together an account of the events embraced by the research problems” and seen as the hardest part and indicated that requires some substantial skills such as high perception and consciousness. In addition, it is claimed that the writing and reporting phase also requires “creativity and high standards of objective and systematic analysis” (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p. 195).

‘Authenticity’, ‘Credibility’, ‘Representativeness’ and ‘Meaning’ have been suggested as four criteria to guide for assessing the qualities of documents and/or sources by Scott (1990). As parallel to the external and internal criticisms; Scott links the ‘authenticity’ criteria with ‘genuineness, soundness and authorship’, the ‘credibility’ criteria with ‘accuracy, sincerity and distortion’, the ‘representativeness’ with ‘survival, availability and typicality’, and the ‘meaning’ criteria with the ‘attached meanings, interpretations and literal understanding’. (p. 6).

Similar to Scott (1990), Denscombe (2010) lists the “authenticity”, “representativeness”, “meaning” and “credibility” as criteria to check the validity of documentary data in addition to other indispensable foundational research standards valid for any kind of research data.

In addition, the ‘bias’ or ‘fact’ assessment has been indicated as a part of these criticisms in the both resources. Cohen et al. state three sources of bias via referencing Travers (1969); which are those arising from the subject, arising from the researchers, arising from the subject–researcher interaction (2007, p. 195). Duffy (2010) explains that in more detail. He

suggests to watch terms for partisanship or to search whether the author has fixed arguments always supported by the evidences and was he or she supporter of a clear direction, and or any pressure and fear deviated the authenticity (2010, p. 132). With all that, he argues that “in some cases the most useful evidence can be derived from biased sources which accurately reveal the true views of an individual or group”. Therefore, the documents can still be used as data and analysed even if they are evaluated as biased in some certain aspects because they could still provide valuable information and point of views but they must be analysed with a high carefulness and comparison with other sources available (p. 132).

Cohen et al. emphasis that document must be examined and evaluated before acknowledged as reliable information sources because they are socially produced instruments under certain circumstances or in specific contexts and might be incomplete, partial, coloured, and tendentious (2007). They list a number of ‘What, Where, When, How’ questions accordingly to be answered to comprehend the context of the documents. Sometimes it might be difficult to recognise the distinctions between interpretations and fact in the documents, and accordingly, even after this recognition, their context remains to be very important to perceive the whole picture and understand them legitimately (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In addition, Fitzgerald emphasises the importance of the ‘context’ and the integration of other data sources for proper interpretations and furthermore she argues that researchers need to have substantial skills for reaching and interpreting them (2012).

The reasons behind the publications have been seen as important in terms of their reliability and validity for the research as they might have some special purposes and agendas, therefore, all the factors and specific contexts should be considered wholly (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Therefore, the context, circumstances, incidents or the atmosphere in where the documents are produced are evaluated as very important elements in this research. This is one of the main components of Critical Educational Policy Analysis approach (CEPA) that has been

adopted for this research and discussed in detail in the analysis chapter. Thus, that situation considered during the analyses as well.

Based on the aspects discussed above, documentary analysis can be a very valuable and fortunate supplementary method for multiple methods research by via providing different point of views from different terms and perspectives to the data collected (Daymon and Halloway, 2003). As a consequence, the risks of being biased potentially can be reduced and even furthermore, a more elaborated and precise information sets can be established (Deacon, 2007).

Furthermore, triangulation or ‘corroboration’ with other documents strongly recommended for documentary analysis to ensure validity and reliability (Robson, 2002; Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Bell, 2010). Institutional, political and governmental publications and official statistics have been the fundamental data sources for documentary studies especially in developed countries because, as argued, they are expected to be “authoritative”, “objective” and “factual” data sources (Denscombe, 2010, p. 217). Obviously the internet documents and web pages are the most used and preferred in this digital age. However, they are also seen very risky due to be very hard to control and very free to publish. Therefore, Denscombe suggests to be more careful “in terms of their authorship, their credibility and their authenticity” while using these kind of documents (2010, p. 223).

Mainly, official, institutional and political publications, and officials’ and politicians’ published statements as well as the main policy documents have established the documentary data of this research. The existing archive and texts helped me undeniably to understand both contexts. The lists of documents for both context used as data sources and analysed can be reached in the appendices.

The analysis of the documents collected for the study constitutes an important part of this research. As recommended by Fitzgerald (2012) primary documentary data can be treated as interview transcripts or questionnaire responses. Therefore, and because the data collected via multiple sources has been analysed together due to the nature of this research. Clearly, it is expected that the epistemological and methodological assumptions of the researcher guide the analysis applications (Scott and Morrison, 2006). These details in terms of the analysis of documentary data the whole data analysis including the analysis of data via collected other methods has been indicated thoroughly in a single section in the following chapter, titled as ‘Qualitative Data Analysis’.

3.4.2.2 The Qualitative Survey

"Qualitative surveys collect information on the meanings that people attach to their experiences and on the ways they express themselves" (Fink, 2003, p. 61).

Documents can help to investigate and understand organizations’ systems, operations and values (Fitzgerald, 2012). But, the existence and availability of documents as data sources can be at very different levels in different countries or cultures. This situation is generally positive in the favour of westerns countries. For example, a clear difference can be recognized between Turkey and England in terms of ‘Project’ and ‘Academy’ school reforms as these are the two main subjects of this research. It can clearly be claimed that England is very literate and rich to publish plenty of documents while on the other hand a few reliable documents can be reached regarding Turkey’s policy. This reality is one of the fundamental rationale behind adopting an additional method to collect data from the ‘Project’ schools, and that method is a qualitative survey. In addition, the other reason might be that while ‘academy’ schools have a quite long history and discussions behind, the ‘project’ schools are newer than them. This section is about the qualitative survey adopted for investigation of ‘project’ schools from a research conducted for ‘academy’ schools.

Both qualitative and quantitative data can be accumulated via surveys even though they are linked with quantitative studies mostly and the written responses given to open-ended questions in a survey can provide a rich amount of qualitative data for researchers (Denscombe, 2010). Robson argues that including open-ended questions in a survey to establish a route for further discovery is not something inaccurate but it is not something preferred by researchers mostly due to the difficulties expected for their analysis (2002, p. 234).

Creswell (2012) supports this point of view and specifies the danger of missing contextual circumstances of the respondents that might have affected their responses directly or indirectly. Therefore, as it has been clarified several times in this research, the 'context' should and has been taken into consideration. In addition, having the triangulation and multiple data collection methods have also decreased that danger efficaciously in that manner. Respondents or people whose opinions are the matter can be provided with more autonomy and free space to express their perceptions via open-ended questions in a survey without any restriction to their words (Cohen et al., 2007). Furthermore, thanks to these kinds of questions, "the authenticity, richness, depth of response, honesty and candour" related to a social phenomenon, that either can be aims or strong points of interpretive, qualitative studies, can be achieved (ibid., p. 330). At that point, expressing the questions in a clearly understandable way and providing some clues, if seen necessary, to show what kind of information requested are is seen as important points (ibid.).

Even though, the term of 'survey' rests upon a positivist approach and reminds statistical survey, Jansen (2010) names these kind of surveys as 'qualitative surveys'. According to Jansen "*It is not inherent ontology but analysis which determines whether a study is qualitative or quantitative.*" (Jansen, 2010, p. n/a). She also argues that using some

quantitative elements in a qualitative survey confusing researchers or readers but, as it can understand from her words quoted above, instead of the data itself or data collection methods, this situation is much more about how the data has been analysed (2010, p. n/a). According to Marsland *et al.* these kind of surveys, are drawing the attention of researchers since 1980s as an alternative to shortcomings of classic statistical surveys such as being insufficient for gaining a whole or deep understanding and information about the subjects matter (Marsland *et al.*, 2000).

Qualitative surveys can be very fruitful and effectual especially in order to research "the feelings, opinions, and values of individuals and groups" and besides that for deeper understandings and personalized expressions of the shareholders (Fink, 2010, p. 62). As one of the earliest explanations and/or definitions by Fink (2003) quoted at the beginning of this section, the fundamental or well-received role of qualitative surveys is discovering the 'meanings' that attached to the experiences, actions, discourses or policies shareholders. Therefore, as one of the data collection methods, qualitative surveys can be a direct design mostly in order to study diversities in the populations and more usefully they can be a part of a bigger project or one of the multiple data collection methods of a comprehensive research, in a multiple case study research for instance (Jansen, 2010).

Jansen defines the qualitative survey as "the study of diversity (not distribution) in a population" without narrowing the definition based on the technical data collection and/or analysis differences and furthermore he explains it more explanatory as follow:

"The qualitative type of survey does not aim at establishing frequencies, means or other parameters but at determining the diversity of some topic of interest within a given population. This type of survey does not count the number of people with the same characteristic (value of variable) but it establishes the meaningful variation (relevant dimensions and values) within that population." (Jansen, 2010, p. n/a).

He divides the qualitative surveys to two different type which called as ‘open (inductive)’ and ‘pre-structured (deductive). While “relevant objects/topics, dimensions (aspects of objects, variables) and categories (values at dimensions) are identified through interpretation of raw data” in the earlier type, “some main topics, dimensions and categories are defined beforehand and the identification of these matters in the research units is guided by a structured protocol for questioning or observation” in the later type.

With all these efficacious characteristics specified above, Cohen et al. also indicates the following danger and challenges of open-ended questions in surveys or now we can call them as qualitative surveys. First, the researchers can find themselves in a difficult situation or confusion while justifying their philosophical assumptions and epistemological assumptions because the method looks like mixing paradigms or, at least, borrowing one's tool for another one. Second, the analysis of the responses and making categorizations and comparisons for drawing trustworthy conclusions might be difficult. And third, due to their nature for requiring longer time and ability to express their feelings, opinions or experiences with their own words, respondents might not be quite willing to replay questions as expected. But, respondents of this project are well-qualified school leaders, therefore, they are expected to be very experienced and qualified either to express their feelings, opinions or experiences with their own words or to comprehend intentions and expectations with the open-ended questions.

Furthermore, Jansen indicates that even though some academics judged the interview-based qualitative studies as being weak methodologically, they do not offer a solution and/or identification of the problem (2010, p. n/a). And, she argues that her research titled ‘The Logic of Qualitative Survey Research and its Position in the Field of Social Research Methods’ is providing a clarification to this methodological problem and proposing “the concept of qualitative survey” approach (2010, p. n/a).

Jansen compares the qualitative and statistical surveys in a table under four main categories of a research project, which are called by her as “defining knowledge aims, sampling, data collection, and analysis”. The main differences can be seen under the section of ‘analysis’ in her comparison as parallel as her strong emphasis to the ‘analysis’ in terms of categorisation whether studies are qualitative or quantitative. She divides the analysis of qualitative surveys to three different levels. While the first level covers ‘coding’ practices, second level covers ‘synthesis’ applications, and third level covers the ‘explanation’ part (Jansen, 2010, p. n/a). As specified earlier a comprehensive data has been collected for this research via multiple methods and the analysis of them has been handled as a whole and the section of ‘qualitative data analysis’ under the next chapter explains all aspects with regards to the analysis of entire data as well as the documents.

Jansen proposes three levels for analysing the qualitative survey data which are named as 'unidimensional description', 'multidimensional description' and 'explanation' respectively (2010, p. n/a). While the first level refers to the open or broad coding, the second level refers the reduction or combination of the codes emerged at the previous level, and third-level is about the interpretation or explanation of codes and meanings attached them (2010). As it can be recognised from each level's explanation, her approach shows similarities with the classic qualitative data approaches referred many times in the related literature. The data analysis approach adopted for this research has been presented as a whole for all data collected via multiple approaches in the following chapter with a discussion, including Jansen's approach. The section in the following chapter called ‘Qualitative Data Analysis’ explains how all the data collected via multiple methods expressed in this chapter has been analysed qualitatively to answer the questions of this research.

As conclusion, the purpose of the research or data collection should guide the selection weather to choose qualitative or statistical survey or convert the surveys each other (Ibid.).

In this research, as based on the ground of the interpretive approach, the meanings attached to the actions, texts, policies or discourses are seen very important and main concerns as that specified at several points in the methodology chapter.

The survey used by Bassett *et al.* (2012, p. 24) and by Finch *et al.* (2014) titled as 'Academies survey: freedom and innovation' was modified to fit for PSs of Turkey and used to collect qualitative survey data from PS leaders for this research. Both versions can be reached into the appendices. Lastly, it is also believed that the previous survey served as a context for this research and also provided a great base to make comparisons between the two contexts.

3.4.2.3 Interviews

Interviews are one of the most preferred data collection methods in qualitative research (Daymon and Holloway, 2003) and the most common one in field of education (Scott and Morrison, 2006). However, the nature, characteristics and capacity of the data can be very different with regards to the research's objectives, adopted approaches and philosophical assumptions, even though the same method has been used (Scott and Morrison, 2006). Searching for a fully detailed and whole understanding of the topic, that might be induced via experiences, perceptions or policies, is the fundamental aims of most qualitative interviews.

Therefore, interviews can be very productive and captivating tools for digging to understand how experiences have been established and how shareholders "regard situations from their own point of view" and moreover "the interviewer can press not only for complete answers but also for responses about complex and deep issues" (Cohen *et al.*, 2007, p. 349). However, some drawbacks and risks of interviewing are also stated by Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 349) as follows; "they are expensive in time, they are open to interviewer bias, they may be inconvenient for respondents, issues of interviewee fatigue may hamper the interview, and anonymity may be difficult". Of course, as discussed in an earlier section about the

qualitative surveys the analysis plays a very important role for "conceptual and theoretical coherence" and "epistemological and methodological" research objectives (Scott and Morrison, 2006, p. 136; Jansen, 2010).

Three different aims for interviewing can be noticed in the related literature, which are: data collection; confirmation for hypotheses or assumptions or details for the facts; and triangulation or as a part of a bigger multiple-methods project (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). On the other hand, roughly interviews are classified under three categories in the most sourcebooks (see Daymon and Halloway, 2003; Briggs *et al.*, 2012). The ones called as semi-structured are commonly used forms among them, especially for social studies. It is suggested that considering to establish 'prompts' and 'probes' in advance can be helpful to accomplish interviewing aims. While 'prompts' reflects the clues or short notes that help for indicating the interview questions and their intentions in a clearly understandable way, 'probes' reflects the hints for elaborating, extending, clarifying and going deeper to understand respondents' with all the aspects referred (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

Kvale (1996, pp. 29-36) summarises the main structures of qualitative interviews under twelve fundamental key points. The following points have been adopted as principles during the interviewing processes of this research based on Kvale's vantage point of the qualitative research interviews. The conversations are tried to be kept around the central themes that are specified in advance based on the research objectives and interviews are guided accordingly. Qualitative interviews should be handled as theme-oriented or the focus should be on the participants' experiences, beliefs and perceptions about these themes otherwise it would be very hard to analyse or waste of time for irrelevant data at the end. Accordingly, the meanings that have been attached to these themes by the participants are considered as special interests and focus because they are one of the fundamental aims of qualitative inquiry and this research particularly. Pure descriptions of participants' experiences, opinions,

actions or understandings have been sought without any further interpretations because otherwise can misguide the researcher. The participants are always guided to be as specific as possible because it is observed that they tend to speak very broadly or too general and can being lost without relevant and useful data. Clarifications are always sought with elaborative questions sometimes if seen necessary generally for the flue points and contradictory statements to avoid any misinterpretations due course (Kvale, 1996, p. 29-36).

Interviewing the key players will always be applied as an important data collection method for educational researchers but their potential, required skills for the researchers and shortcomings and limitations should be awarded and kept in the mind always for the successful practices (Scott and Morrison, 2006). Due to their nature of being interactive, the participants of interviews are expected to be motivated and involved than therefore they are also expected to be more sufficient and fruitful in terms of complex topics and difficult points of the facts (Oppenheim, 2000).

Participants must trust the researchers as interviewers and a secure, warm and confident environment should be created for an honest, sincere and reliable interview conversation. This atmosphere has been defined by Daymon and Holloway as “social interaction through which they collaborate to produce meaningful, situated accounts of participants’ experiences” (2003, p. 220). Therefore, an objective and unjudging approach has been adopted and behaved very carefully to avoid some potential risks that may cause uncomfortableness for participants such as revealing their biases or values (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). As recommended by many scholars, all the participants have been informed in detail about all the aspects of the interviews including the focus, purposes, data storage, anonymity and confidentiality policies. As these aspects are under the scope of ethical considerations, all aspects including the ones related to other data collection methods of the research have been discussed comprehensively under the section of 'ethical considerations' in this chapter.

In line with the considerations of point stated above, six interviews with academy leaders and six interviews with project school leaders have been conducted. A question that asks their willingness to participate in an interview was added to the survey for the project school leaders and interviewees were selected based responses to this question with the criteria of establishing diversity. All positive responses were accounted to conduct interviews however randomly choosing was made if only more than one leader from the same institution wanted to participate in. The six academy leaders have been interviewed with the criteria of establishing diversity under a focus to the region of North East.

Initially, participants were informed clearly on the basis of voluntarism, data protection, confidentiality, anonymity, and ethical standards, and were also informed briefly about the research and the researcher. Then all the participants were provided with 'Information Sheet for School Leaders' (Appendix 1 and 2) before the interviews and they were given some time to read them. Following this, they were asked whether they have any questions, these questions were answered accordingly if they did not have any questions only then they were invited to sign the 'Consent Form for School Leaders' (Appendix 3 and 4). In addition, it was clearly expressed that they have the right to withdraw from the research anytime either during the interview or after it. The actual interview processes were started to conduct after all these steps, and the interviews were guided by the semi-structured interview protocol and questions (Appendix 5 and 6). However, as already explained, processes and questions were not used as a strict instruction in the interviews due to the nature of qualitative research. They were used only as guidance for the times such as deadlocks, and the participants and the concerns or points that they wanted to indicate have led the interview processes most of the times. For example, as seen in Appendix 9, teacher appointment and selection processes were the most important point for PSL2 regarding PSs, therefore, the questions were shaped accordingly during the interview to elaborate on this point.

More details about the participants of all data collection methods have explained in the sampling section.

3.5 Data Analysis

A qualitative approach has been adopted to analyse interviews, documents, and any other written data such as reports and parliament discussions. NVivo dynamic data analysis software was used in this regard and the interpretive policy analysis approaches to data were adopted as well. On the other hand, a quantitative and qualitative approaches together were adopted to analyse the surveys due to survey questions' variances. The quantitative data from some survey questions was analysed quantitatively. Remaining open ended questions and interpretive-based questions of the survey were analysed with a qualitative approach again by using NVivo and by adopting interpretive policy analysis concepts. Relating and linking all findings from different resources can be seen one of possible challenges here therefore all the data has be analysed with bearing the research focuses and questions in mind and all links and relations have been highlighted in this regard in order to establish a consistent and coherent study.

3.5.1 Two Guiding Policy Analysis Approach

Dvora Yanow's Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA) and Sandra Taylor's Critical Educational Policy Analysis (CEPA) approaches have shaped and guided not only the analysis but also the methods of this research. It can be argued that a combination of their approaches established my way to answer the research questions and to implement the processes of this research. Because, while IPA fits and provides convenient insight the CEPA provides a clear and systematic structure to this research and both fits very well in order to answer the research questions and accomplish the research aims.

On the one hand, Taylor *et al.* (1997, p. 44) claim that "we need to understand both the background and context of policies, including their historical antecedents and relations with

other texts, and the short- and longer-term impacts of policies in practice”. Therefore, the CPA “must pay attention not only to the content of the policy, but also the processes of policy development and implementation” (Taylor *et al.*, 1997. p. 20). On the other hand, the question of “How actors go about interpreting and creating policy meanings?” explains the main perspective of IPA (Yanow, 1996, p. 17). It’s focus persists around the investigation of meanings attached to policies all related parties from policy-makers to implementers (Yanow, 1996). Neither applying to the cost-benefit analysis nor questioning the success of policies are in the scope of IPA. Instead, it prioritises the viewpoints of all shareholders who have been involved in any process related to the policy.

3.5.1.1 Critical Educational Policy Analysis (CEPA)

According to Bell and Stevenson (2006, p. 11), CEPA provides a simple framework and starting point for and can form the basis of policy analysis. Ball recommends to design concepts to choose devices that “offer the best possibilities of insight and understanding” (1994, p. 2) and Taylor *et al.* (1997) reference his perception in order to avoid closing off “possibilities for interpretation” by choosing a theory. Therefore, although they clearly state that ‘there is no recipe approach’ because of the uniqueness and nature of being multi-levelled they also provide ‘a useful framework which encompasses this breadth distinguishes between contexts, texts and consequences of policy’ (Taylor *et al.*, 1997, pp. 36, 44). Furthermore, they see the ‘values’ and ‘assumptions’ as very important to understand the policies that are to be investigated.

Taylor *et al.* emphasize the importance of questions that might be asked in a CEPA approach and state the importance of “the particular questions” in terms of the “kind of information or data” with regards to the aims of the analysis (1997, p.41). At this point, it can be argued that they divide their approach to three phases as ‘gestation’, ‘content’ and ‘implementation’ studies and that shows a clear analogy with their formal classification which consists of three

phases as 'contexts, texts and consequences' analysis. They relate the genesis analysis of the policy with key policy-makers and pressure groups; the content analysis of the policy with "policy documents itself and associated documentary material including minutes of meetings, perhaps submissions and cognate policies"; and the implementation and consequences analysis of the policy with case studies in where policies are implemented by key players (1997, p.41). Accordingly, they position the 'what', 'how' and 'why' questions of Kenway (1990) in a very central position of their approach. The 'what' question here is more about the "approach to education, curriculum, assessment, pedagogy". The 'how' question is about the financial, recruitmental, authority and administrative applications. And, the 'why' question is more about the reasons, specific conditions, interests and people behind the decisions taken before during and after the processes of policy production (Kenway, 1990 stated in Taylor et al., 1997, p.39).

CEPA approach of Taylor et al. criticizes the typical 'macro, meso and micro' classifications of policy analysis as not being critical but being over simplified and 'arbitrary'. They argue that the "multi-levelled character of policy processes" and "the articulations or linkages" among these levels has not been understood or considered in policy analysis works (1997, p.44). It is possible here to create a link with the multi-levelled emphasis and characteristics of IPA approach and that will be applied again later in this chapter. Furthermore, Bowe *et al.* (1992) and Ham and Hill (1993) draw attention to the need of a perspective that considers multiple levels of policy analysis from background analysis to short and long-term impact analysis. As expressed in the Taylor *et al.* (1997), Bowe et al.'s three contexts classification can be given as a good example of this, which are the policy contexts of 'influence', 'text' and 'practice' (Taylor *et al.*, 1997, p.44). Accordingly, it can be argued that a policy analysis should consider not only the political texts or documents but also 'the background and context' and 'the short- and longer-term impacts' (Taylor *et al.*, 1997, p.44). CEPA offers a

step-by-step framework for that aim which consists of ‘context’, ‘text’ and ‘consequences’ analysis of the specific targeted policies.

Context

The analysis of policy contexts constitutes the first phase of CEPA approach because the policies are “ideological texts that have been constructed within a particular context (and) the task of deconstruction begins with the recognition of that context” (Codd , 1988, pp. 243-244 stated in Taylor, 1997, p.28). Accordingly, Taylor (1997) argues that educational policies should be considered with a broader context including the “economic, social and historical” backgrounds with indicating a necessity “to take account of both ‘micro’ and ‘macro’ levels” that has been recognized by policy researchers (1997, p.32). The policy analysis should be carried out with a broad ‘context’ that “simply refers to the antecedents and pressures leading to the gestation of a specific policy” (Taylor, 1997, p. 33; Taylor *et al.*, 1997, p. 45). According to Bell and Stevenson (2006), “an analysis of context can take place at any level” and furthermore it is possible that different contexts might apply in different levels and it is crucial to recognize and analyse all “if the aim is to build up as full a picture as possible of the policy process” (p. 12). As stated earlier, it is expected that contexts of policies are unique and specific to their circumstances, conditions and aims in where they are developed and enacted. However, the following themes are referred in the literature as most and they might guide policy analysis studies somehow by opening a road to answer ‘why’ and ‘why now’ questions of CPA: ‘the antecedents and pressures leading to the gestation’; ‘the economic, social and political factors’; ‘previous initiatives and development, and historical background’; ‘the contemporary and/or historical contexts’.

Text

In overall, this phase “refers to the content of the policy itself” (Bell and Stevenson, 2006, p. 12). The ‘what’ and ‘how’ questions have been placed in the centre of this phase of the CEPA. Although, again, the nature of being multi-levelled should be considered as these analyses

can be conducted at various levels (Taylor *et al.*, 1997). The language, or specific words and discourse style used in documents, might be very informative as well the text itself. Furthermore, “the silences of a policy may be very telling” (p. 50) and even the statements are understandable and texts are clear “there is considerable scope for interpretation” and implication (Bell and Stevson, 2006, p. 12). Because of the all possibilities stated above, Bell and Stevson argue that this phase of CEPA “is not a simple and straightforward activity” (2006, p. 12). Mainly, all reports, supporting documents, underlying policies, regulations published to organize implementation phases, discussion papers and so on can be considered as data for this phase of CEPA approach.

Consequences

As stated earlier, different interpretations and implications emerged from policy texts are unavoidable as different meaning can be attached to them or to the statements included in (Bell and Stevson, 2019). Therefore, it has been suggested that “instead of searching for authorial intentions, perhaps the proper task of policy analysis is to examine the differing effects that documents have in the production of meaning by readers’ (Codd, 1988, p.239 stated in Taylor, 1997, p.26). Based on this argument it can be argued that “different interests can give very different emphases to various aspects of the policy” and “very different things can be done legitimately”. There is also a very “real potential for distortions and gaps in policy implementation- sometimes referred to as ‘policy refraction’” (Freeland, 1981 stated in Taylor *et al.*, 1997, p. 50). Thus, neither predicting the impacts nor analysing the consequences of policies are an easy and straightforward job to accomplish. Because “any analysis of the effects and consequences of policy needs to consider many levels of the policy process, interactive top-down and bottom-up relationships, as well as the short and longer term” impacts. It has been highlighted that “the ongoing character of the processes of policy implementation so that any assessment at a specific point does not provide, in any sense, the

‘final word’” for the analysis of policies which are in implementation and obviously are quite open for any kind of amendments and different interpretations (Taylor *et al.*, 1997, p. 52).

3.5.1.2 Interpretive Policy Analysis (IPA)

Yanow (2007, p. 118) argues that “policy analysts and others are increasingly facing the limitations of approaches and tools that ignore the social realities - the lived experiences - of policy-relevant publics”. Accordingly, she criticises the traditional policy analysis approaches, which are “resting on the technical-rational expertise of practitioners, deny not only agency but also local knowledge of their own circumstances to those for whom policies are being designed” (idip, p. 112), as having many limitations to understand policies and related actions completely (Yanow, 1996). Furthermore, she emphasises the importance of 'local knowledge' in policy analysis strongly and claims that "policy analysts need interpretive methods" to reach and understand the local knowledge which will open the way to understand the reasons and motivations behind actions, implementations, texts and discourses. Because, “not only analyst’s but all actors in a policy situation (as with other aspects of the social world), interpret issue data as they seek to make sense of the policy (Yanow, 1996, p. 6). Therefore, the meanings that have been attached to the policies by all actors, from policy-makers to implementers, are seen very important and placed in the focus of an IPA approach (Weick , 1995; Yanow, 1996, p. 8). This standpoint endorses and requires considering the underlying interpretations of different implementations, understandings and discourses before or instead of labeling them as right-wrong (Yanow, 1996). Of course, there might be right or wrong implementations, actions or applications but an IPA takes account of these possibilities and try to discover the underlying realities before to reach a rapid judgement. The problems and implementation differences or distortions between implementations and policy texts (or discourses) are seen some problematic areas that should be solved right away by policy analysts. However, Yanow argues that they might be a valuable data for deeper

understandings and “should be dwelled on, even cherished” (1996, p. 8). There are at least three fundamental (policy-makers, implementers and affected groups) and more sub parties that establish meanings by interpreting the policies (Yanow, 1996). In addition, an IPA can be much more helpful and constructive by providing deeper insight making the issues more understandable by unmasking parties’ standpoints that would help them to understand each other more thoroughly. Moreover, Yanow (1996) argues that the different interpretations emerged from policy texts are the fundamental reasons for implementation problems and, therefore, it is an important mistake made by policy analysts to reduce and accept a core meaning emerged from a policy text as a basis for policy analysis and assessments. The question of “How is the policy issue being framed by the various parties to the debate?” has been accepted as central and the emerging differences recognized at this point not only as a result of different interpretations from different parties but also the differences based on the different values, beliefs, feelings (Yanow, 1996).

Yanow summarizes the IPA approach in four phases. First, IPA calls attention “the meaningfulness of human action” that refers to identification of the “artifacts” that shows or represents the meanings attached to the policies and texts by actors. Because, IPA’s “central characteristic is its focus on meaning” (Yanow, 2007, p.110). Second, the recognition of the “communities” is seen important because there might be very different levels and/or groups depending on the policies and these might understand and implement the policies very differently from each other. For example, the meanings of the same texts to policy-maker, to implementers, and to affected groups might be quite different in some points. Third, the “discourses”, which carry specific meanings and importance, might be context dependent and the identification of them is seen as an important phase of the analysis. Fourth, “the points of conflict” and their roots and related actions by actors and “the intentions underlying (these)

actions” are seen important because these “reflect different interpretations” of different policy-related parties, groups or communities.

3.5.2 Qualitative Analysis

Coding or creating the themes is seen as fundamental and the ‘starting point’ for analysing the qualitative data (Bryman, 2012, p. 575), moreover, it is stated as ‘an important first step in the generation of theory’ (p.568). This method helps to see and establish the concepts and to have initial anticipations whether they are suited or not. The following three steps stated by Burns (2000, p. 435) have been used for coding in this regard; developing the themes from the data, coding the data based on the themes, and gathering the coded data together for deeper investigations.

The data were collected and analysed in order to see the sufficiency and suitability alongside the research objectives and questions. A thematic analysis was applied to data by establishing themes and sub-themes in this regard. Interviews were transcribed for NVivo dynamic software which was used for the qualitative analysis. The software of Descript was used to transcribe interview records then all the interviews were read in order to gain an initial perspective for the analysis. The following paragraph illustrates the steps and how Nvivo was used for the analysis and findings.

As mentioned earlier the initial data and literature review had shaped the questions of this research, then now the research questions guided the analysis of the interviews via Nvivo. After all the transcripts were uploaded into Nvivo, the analysis processes were started with initial coding, and these processes were applied separately in separate Nvivo projects for Academies and PSs due to the comparative design of the research. First, initial codes were generated and memos via Nvivo were created simultaneously in order to develop concepts and categories. These memos were also used beneficially while writing the outcomes of the analysis. Afterward, tentative themes are created by referencing the codes then they were re-

read for creating the themes and categories based on. Lastly, themes were finalized and categories were created in line with research questions in order to write the findings chapter. In addition, all the tables that show themes and categories presented in the findings chapter were created based on these Nvivo projects, and illustrations such as word clouds and diagrams presented in the findings were created via Nvivo again.

A constant comparative method has been used while analysing the qualitative data ‘in order to develop concepts; by continually comparing specific incidents in the data’ and coordination of these ‘into a coherent explanatory model’ Taylor and Bogdan (1984, p. 126) cited in (O'Donoghue, 2006; Bryant, 2016). It can be said for a clear explanation that a constant comparative method represents the method of coding and analysing the qualitative data at the same time, which allows researchers to develop ‘a substantive theory’ from the pure data through the constant and comparative codings and analyses (Glaser and Strauss, 1967; Kolb, 2012, p. 83). Glaser and Strauss (1967, p. 105) outline the constant comparative method in four phases with specifying that each phase ‘provides continuous development to its successive stage’ continuously during the whole process. These four phases explained distinctively in their study are: *(1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory*’ (1967, p. 10).

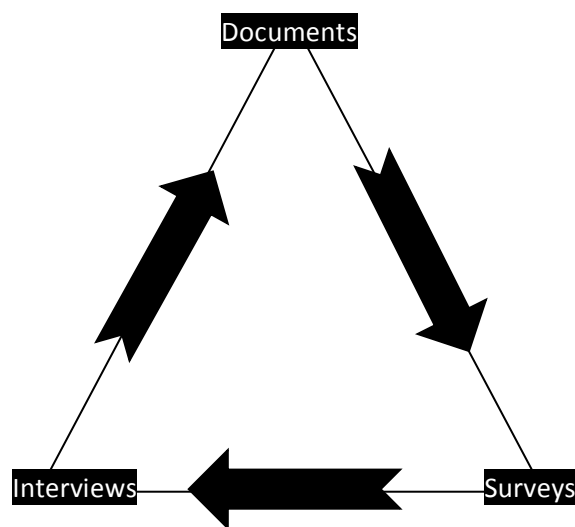
3.6 Triangulation, Authenticity and Trustworthiness

Tony Bush clarifies the ‘triangulation’ as “comparing many sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomena” for validation and he specifies the two types of it as “methodological triangulation” and “respondent triangulation” (2012, p. 65). While former refers applying different methods later refers applying different participants in order to reinforce and enrich the data. Creswell also entitles the later one as ‘member checking’ that is a strategy applied by social researchers to “validate qualitative accounts”

(2012, p. 259). Triangulation was also described as “the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour” by Cohen et al. and specifies six different types of it including the “methodological triangulation” (2007, pp. 141-142).

The (methodological) triangulation was adapted to enrich and reinforce the research data and to provide validity of the research. The following diagram illustrates methods used for the data collection that also ensures the triangulation pursuant to research phases.

Figure 12: The figure of triangulation (methods)



‘Authenticity’ and ‘trustworthiness’ are two terms that are introduced into the qualitative methodology literature by Lincoln and Guba (1985); Guba and Lincoln (1994) as alternative terms to ‘validity’ and ‘reliability’, which are associated with quantitative methods predominantly (cited in Bryman, 2012, p. 390). Creswell links these terms with the ‘accuracy’ and ‘credibility’ of qualitative research (2012, p. 259). Schwandt argues that “to successfully defend our interpretations we appeal to criteria of both trustworthiness and authenticity” (2007, p. 14). Manning argues that while ‘trustworthiness’ perceived as parallel to “validity, reliability, and objectivity” terms of positivism ‘authenticity’ is unique for the qualitative paradigm with “no parallel in the positivist paradigm” (1997, p. 94). Lincoln and Guba verify

this argument by establishing two subtitles named as “Parallel Criteria of Trustworthiness” and “Unique Criteria of Authenticity” (2007, pp. 18-20). According to Bryman, the ‘realist’ approach that takes the position for the point of view that appeals that there is “a single absolute account of social reality” is the main reason behind the Guba and Lincoln’s counter-view to the terms of ‘reliability’ and ‘validity’ (2012, p. 390).

Authenticity

‘Authenticity’ can be defined as “the quality of being real or true” and it obviously hints the ideas and criteria gathered around it. Five fundamental criteria for ensuring authenticity of a qualitative research listed as follows in the related literature: fairness, ontological authenticity, educative authenticity, catalytic authenticity, and tactical authenticity.

‘Fairness’ among them designated as “very much more important” but “less ambiguous” than the others and defined as “a balanced view that presents all constructions and the values that undergird them” by Lincoln and Guba (2007, p. 20). Bryman links the fairness criteria with the answer given the question of “Does the research fairly represent different viewpoints among members of the social setting?” Taking the position in a most possible fair was to the all different perceptions and parties and having the aim of presenting them “in an inclusive portrayal of the context” can be stated as the main responsibility of the researchers in accordance with the criteria of ‘fairness’ (2012, p. 393).

The “Ontological authenticity” is linked with the participants of the research in terms of the improvements or positive changes as results of the research. The “Educative authentication” is linked with improving the understandings of the each other’s perspectives of research participants as a results of the research. The “Catalytic authenticity” criteria is linked with the action and motivation regarding the changes of circumstances or ideas or anything related the research case. And lastly, the ‘Tactical authenticity’ criteria is linked with the empowering

the participants to take action on desired changes related the data and findings from them (Manning, 1997; Lincoln and Guba, 2007; Bryman, 2012).

All these criteria reserved and adopted as values by me as the researcher during the whole research processes by attaching the most attention to the ‘fairness’. Valuing and being aware of them will provide the standards to meet the ‘Authenticity’ for the study. This is seen very much important from the point of Manning as he argues that “If the researcher fails to meet these commitments, the quality of the research is questionable” (1997, p. 94).

Trustworthiness

The term of ‘trustworthiness’ can be linked with adopting, establishing and conducting all the research phases properly and in the right ways (Guba, 1981; Guba and Lincoln, 1989; Lincoln and Denzin, 2003). As it is cited above, it was presented as alternative and parallel terms to the positivism's ‘internal validity, external validity, reliability, and objectivity’ criteria. It was described as involving four different sub-criteria listed respectfully as follow: ‘credibility’, which parallels internal validity; ‘transferability’, which parallels external validity; ‘dependability’, which parallels reliability; ‘confirmability’, which parallels objectivity (Lincoln and Guba, 2007, p. 18; Bryman, 2012, p. 390). In a few words, ‘credibility’ represents the good-enough research practice and confirmation research participants about the interpretations of the researcher; ‘transferability’ represent providing the platform in terms of transferability discussions of the research; ‘dependability’ refers having an auditing approach for all research phases; and ‘confirmability’ indicates objectivity references of the researcher (Lincoln and Guba, 2007; Bryman, 2012).

As a conclusion, this research has attempted to reflect all these criteria of ‘triangulation’, ‘authenticity’ and ‘trustworthiness’ in order to facilitate and conduct a proper, solid, reliable and scientific research as they are tried to be designated as above.

3.7 Ethical Considerations

"Ethical issues are of paramount importance when studying people, either directly through participation and shared experience, or indirectly through an independent, outsider's view." (Somekh and Lewin, 2005, p. 60)

The University Ethics Committee has granted its approval for this project to progress based on the submitted ethical approval form for the research project. Indeed this application was made two times due to some changes that might be considered 'significant' to some extent because it was stated by the Committee that 'if you make any significant changes to your project then you should complete this form again as further review may be required'. Both outcomes that grant the Committee's approval for the project to progress have attached as Appendix 12 at the end of this thesis. However, as Creswell (2007, p.47) argues, good ethical research "involves more than simply the researcher seeking and obtaining the permission of institutional review committees or boards". The researcher should have adequate information about the ethical challenges and threats and should clarify them in the research (Creswell, 2007) because we are human beings as researchers therefore our research activities should be surrounded by ethical considerations (Briggs et al., 2012). Overlooking or disregarding the ethical considerations may cause many serious problems. Daymon and Halloway (2003, p. 59) specify seven different serious risks in this respect as follows: "harm to participants, damage to the reputation of the department, university or organization, conflicts with funding agencies and grant-holding bodies, denial of access to organizations and participating institutions to researchers, problems for supervisors, litigation, and non-completion of the research". Therefore, in order to avoid these risks and keeping aware of either the researcher or readers, the ethical considerations of this research are clarified below.

In order to gain their supports, a researcher should clearly reveal and inform the participants with clarifying the aims of it that they are being part of a research study but should definitely avoid any misleading and disinformation (Creswell, 2007, pp. 141-142). Therefore, as the

most basic ethical principles, the participants were informed in detail about the content, aims, sponsor, and institution of the research and their rights to make changes and withdraw from the research any time without providing any reason. And, their informed consents were obtained afterwards. But, beyond this, it can be argued that the anonymity of the participants was the most significant ethical concern of this research because the research is including some politically controversial and contentious subjects and these might be harmful to the participants if they are identified. Bell argues that "if you say that participants will be anonymous, then under no circumstances can they be identified" (2010, p.48). Therefore this norm was one of the guidance of this research to avoid any harm. As the researcher, I promised the participants for their anonymity. Basically, the codes were assigned to use instead of participants' names such as AL1 (Academy Leader 1) or PSL1 (Project School Leader 1), etc. But the processes and research writings were reviewed and developed several times in this respect. For example, at the beginning, I had the intention to present the regions of the schools but I knew that this might cause to identify some of the participants. Then figured out that there was only one specific school type, which is within the scope of this research, in some regions. Therefore it was decided that decided to present none of the schools' regions in the research. Or, in the surveys, the school names or emails were asked in order to eliminate more than one reply from the same institution. But, the participants were promised that this information will not be used in the dissertation, and will be erased after the final coding and/or transcription process as similar as to the voice records of the interviews.

Even though anonymity and confidentiality mentioned together generally they should be considered separately for an appropriate application because anonymity is essential for and provides protection to some degree for confidentiality but it is not enough itself for it (Somekh and Lewin, 2005). Even if the researcher is able to recognize the participants from the information or data provided the confidentiality should be secured to avoid this for the

public or any other parties (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Moreover, "confidentiality is a principle that allows people not only to talk in confidence, but also to refuse to allow publication of any material that they think might harm them in any way" (Somekh and Lewin, 2005, p. 57). Therefore, the confidentiality of the participants was secured in this research and they were informed about this in detail. For example, some of the participants indicated or were asked to inform about their sponsors or outside organizations supporting them but they were guaranteed that any of their identities and any related information would neither be typed nor shared. Or, some of the participants provided information about some specific incidents they faced and took place in the media. These also were erased from the research because of the danger to reach their identities through the media records. Or, some of them just mentioned the confidential information about their staff and of course, these also were not presented anywhere.

3.8 BERA and Newcastle guidelines

BERA (2018) classifies its guidelines under five categories as responsibilities in order to supervise educational researchers. These are the responsibilities to participants, to sponsors, clients and stakeholders in research, to the community of educational researchers, for publication and dissemination, and for researchers' wellbeing and development. All the instructions and protocols are comprehended and appreciated in advance and during the research processes and the points, which cared pre-eminently from the guidelines due to the nature of this research, were expounded here in this chapter.

The first guideline of it is the principle of respect to any persons who take part in the research. Due to the cross-national nature of the research, as the researcher, I faced a diversity of characteristics from different political beliefs to different nationalities and or ethnicities. So to be respectful, fair, sensitive to all the participants without making any separation was the main, absolute, and unchangeable principle. Furthermore, as clearly indicated in BERA's

guideline (2018, p. 4), "all social science should respect the privacy, autonomy, diversity, values and dignity of individuals, groups and communities". The Newcastle University's guidelines of code of good practice in research also emphasize the importance of this as placing the 'integrity and honesty' code as the first guide.

Transparency and openness are other fundamental requirements for good research practices highlighted by both guidelines. It was argued that all researchers should constantly aim to be as honest and transparent with all stakeholders as feasible within their study designs, without endangering their own safety (BERA, 2018; NCL, 2020). If the research project was sponsored, for example, it should be shared openly if it is appropriate and there is no other agreement in place. Therefore, as the researcher, I always disclosed and explained the MoNE of Turkey as the sponsor for my PhD as well as my history and potential future role in the Turkish educational system. If the research project was sponsored, for example, it should be shared openly if it is appropriate and there is no other agreement in place. Therefore, as the researcher, I always disclosed and explained the MoNE of Turkey as the sponsor for my Ph.D. as well as my history and potential future role in the Turkish educational system.

In accordance with the University Safety Policy, every researcher is required to maintain high safety standards and to convey these standards to all those participating in research (NCL, 2020), and high precautions and measures regarding any publication or stored data should be established and secured for the protection of agreed confidentiality and anonymity (BERA, 2018). These were, of course, applied in this research's processes and data management in line with cooperation with professional bodies such University's ethical community and educational authorities or supervisors because the researchers should be aware of the expectations and are expected to observe and follow the guidance from professional bodies (BERA, 2018; NCL, 2020). For instance, all the data was kept in a secured and password-

protected cloud storage, and all the participants were anonymized in this storage, and also, as promised, the voice records were deleted right after full transcriptions of them.

Lastly, in addition to the university, researchers themselves have ethical obligations and/or important responsibilities to protect the physical and psychological wellbeing themselves (BERA, 2018). In-depth risk assessments and forms were applied before the related field works especially before the school visits. And furthermore, some precautions and measures were taken to protect and/or minimize the harmful effects of the serious Covid-19 pandemic that ascend during the research period. Being in communication with family members and staying away from the risky environments were in consideration as well as following the health advice from the authorities for instance.

3.9 Limitations

First, and probably the most remarkable, limitation of the research is its ultimate focus on school leaders of the schools where the policies are implemented even though the policy subjects are related to more parties such as teachers, parents, students, or other school leaders. Because there was an important gap in this regard especially in the Turkish context and therefore it was decided to focus on the leaders' perspectives in this research. And, of course, the other parties' perspectives can be evaluated as possible subjects of future research.

Second, twelve school leaders in total were interviewed from both policy subjects six for Academies and six for PSs. These numbers can also be evaluated as limited to generalize the outcomes. However, these results were supported with survey outcomes, which were responded by more than one to third of the schools for both, and also it is worth noting that the research did not have an aim to generalize the outcomes.

There are, of course, limitations of making cross-national comparisons and providing policy-learning outcomes. Noah (1984) specifies the lack of comparability of data collected, and

ethnocentric bias among the limitations and/or problems of comparative studies. These also might apply as limitations of this research. As the researcher, I have much broader background and experience regarding the Turkish education system and PSs than Academies and English education system. However, as the researcher, I also believe that being in the UK for more than four years, visiting different schools, and meeting with different authorities including some educational policymakers have developed my perspective in this respect and reduced the risk somewhat. Regarding the comparability of data collected, on the other hand, this is definitely a problem valid for all cross-national research. In this research, instead of making pure comparisons, cost-benefit analysis, and ultimate judgments, the focus was always on the perspectives of school leaders and providing policy-learning outcomes. Therefore, it can be argued that two different perspectives, evaluations, and experiences regarding the policies were presented for policy learning and further benefits so it is also possible that this headset reduced the problems that might occur based on the lack of comparability of data.

In addition, as explained earlier, there is a clear difference between the academies data and the PSs data in this research. While the PSs' data is based on documents, surveys, and interviews, the Academies' data is based on the documents and interviews only. This situation creates an asymmetry and limitation for this research. There are two reasons for this. First, there was very limited information available regarding PSs to start the research while the situation was quite opposite for Academies. So even for the very initial steps such as research design, questions, or interview questions we needed some information. The reports of Reform (Basset et al., 2012; Finch et al., 2014) from the literature were very useful for Academies therefore a survey for PSs adopted based on them and conducted with PS leaders. Second, for Academies, the main aim was to seek a broader and deeper understanding of certain aspects instead of more general and commonly known points. The interviews were evaluated as the

best way for this aim and many other information sources were available for the starting points. However, these reasons cannot compensate for the gap or limitation of this research, therefore, this stands there as a gap and limitation of this research that can be filled by future research.

Finally, it is not rare to face that qualitative and/or case studies might be indicted as being too descriptive but the description can be the aim of the research too, such as aiming to discover and present information to show how a policy is implemented and works in practice (Daymon and Halloway, 2003). This research can also be criticized to be too descriptive. This might be evaluated as one of its limitations however it should not be forgotten that being a voice of the school leaders who are key policy implementers and showing how a policy is implemented and works in practice are among the primary aims of this research.

Chapter Four: Presentation of the findings

4.1 Introduction

As a result of the analysis, the findings are presented in four sections, one for each of the four research questions. The structure of these sections consists of survey and interview outcomes as well as tables constructed from the survey and interviews. A table that illustrates the categories and themes with respect to each research question is presented at the beginning of each research question as a summary and overall picture. Survey outcomes related to the research questions comprising tables and interview findings exploring these outcomes in more detail are subsequently presented. The PSs policy has been in place for roughly fifteen years more than the academisation programme. The literature and research concerning the academies have guided the PSs parts of the research owing to the significant gap in Turkey in this respect. Therefore, the findings regarding the academies presented prior to the PSs in this chapter together with further comparisons and the policy-learning outcomes can be found in the discussion chapter.

Revealing the perceptions of school leaders regarding the policies is the main objective of this project. Therefore, the findings are presented here without further evaluation. However, correlation analyses that demonstrated significant differences based on the project school types are presented at the end of this thesis as appendixes as that can be used in future studies. Providing policy-learning outcomes based on cross-national comparisons is also one of the research goals of this project. Nevertheless, as stated previously, these outcomes are presented as parts of the discussion chapter because it was assessed that these will only be meaningful after comparative discussions, whilst related thematic literature will also be provided.

Even though, interviews were conducted for both Academy and PS leaders, the surveys were only conducted with PS leaders because of two reasons. First, there was very limited

information available regarding PSs while the situation was quite opposite for Academies. So even for the very initial steps such as research design, questions, or interview questions we needed some information. The reports of Reform (Basset *et al.*, 2012; Finch *et al.*, 2014) from the literature were very useful for Academies therefore a survey for PSs adopted based on them and conducted with PS leaders. Second, for Academies, the main aim was to seek a broader and deeper understanding of certain aspects instead of more general and commonly known points. The interviews were evaluated as the best way for this aim and many other information sources were available for the starting points. These explain our rationale behind this decision, but these also cannot compensate for the gap or limitation of this research especially because of the reason that the Reform's surveys were conducted almost a decade ago. Therefore, this stands there as a gap and limitation of this research that can be filled by future research.

However, this situation has created an asymmetry, especially for the findings chapter therefore the outcomes from the reports of Reform (Basset *et al.*, 2012; Finch *et al.*, 2014) are illustrated (by creating tables) and presented in the literature chapter under the title of 'Context Literature Outcomes', and these serve as a context for the original research and reduce the asymmetry to some extent.

Before the presentation of findings in detail two diagrams are presented below in order to illustrate the categories' and themes' logical construction. Figure 13 illustrates the Academies' themes and categories and the links between them. And Figure 14 illustrates PSs' themes and categories and the links between them. More details and interpretations about them are provided in the following sub-sections of this chapter.

Figure 13 Categories and themes regarding Academies

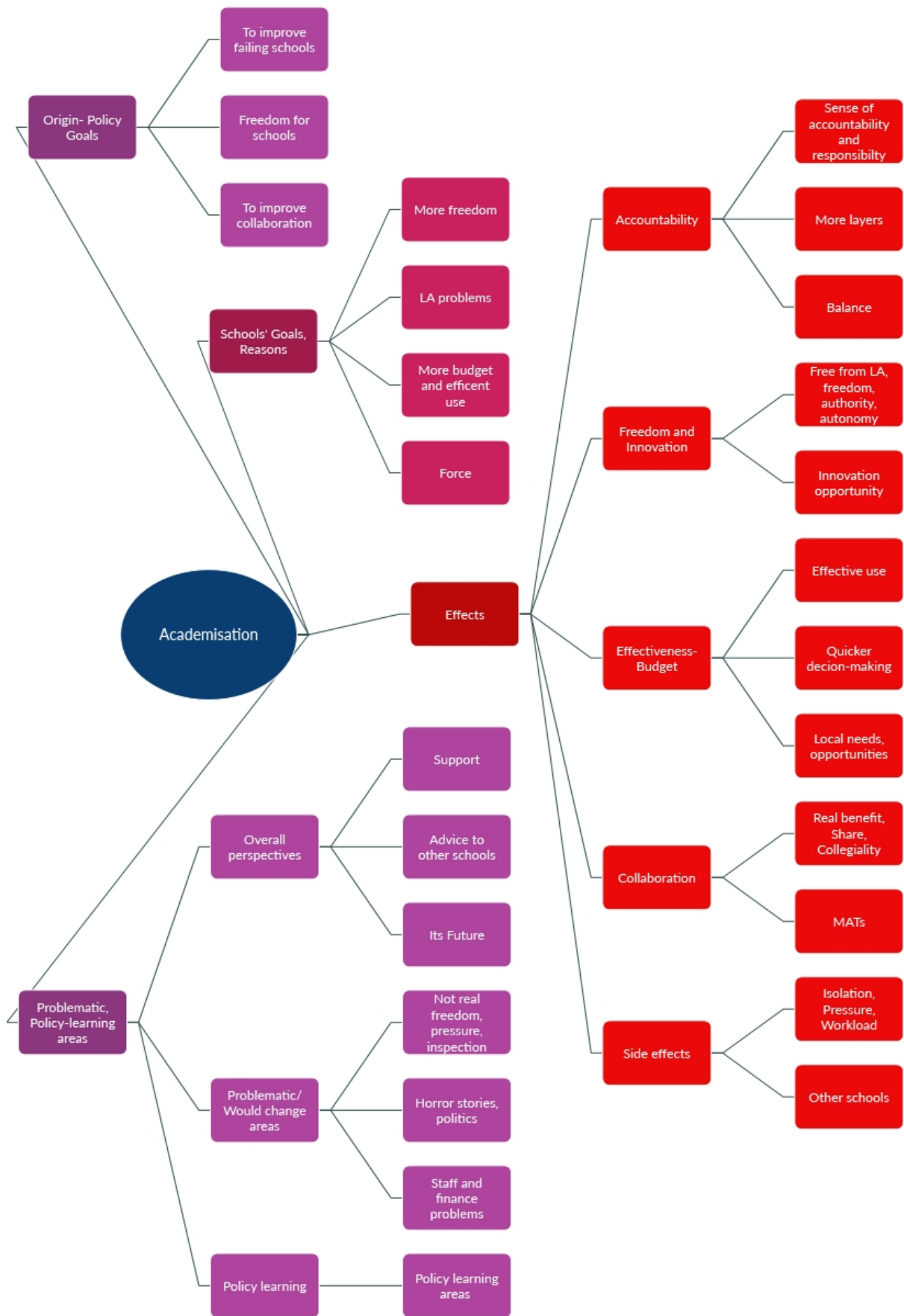
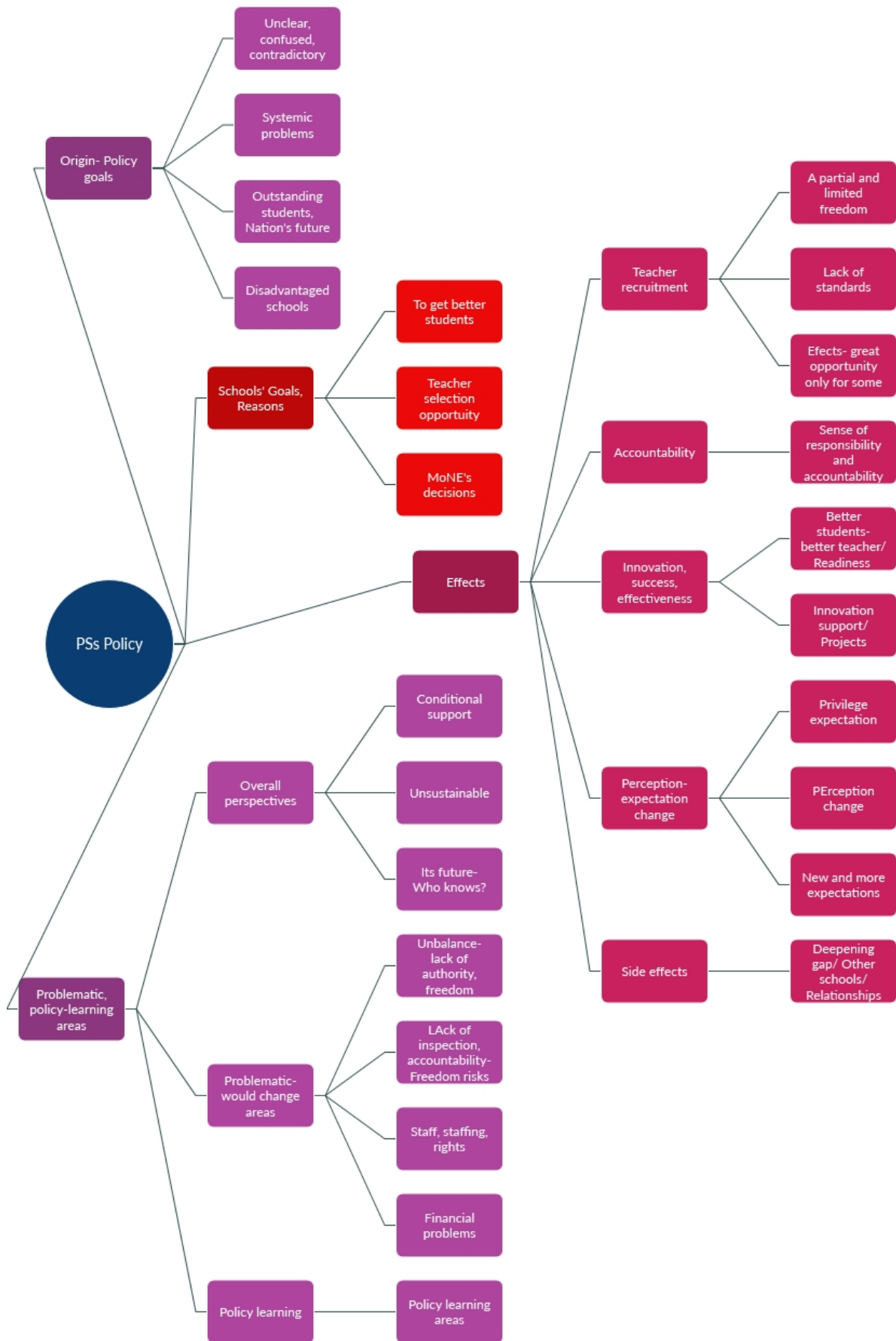


Figure 14 Categories and themes regarding PSs



4.2 Q1: The origin-goals of policies

Question 1: What are school leaders' perceptions of the background and goals of 'Academisation' and 'Project Schools' initiatives?

The first research question considers what are the school leaders' perceptions concerning the background and goals of the 'academisation' and 'project schools' policies. The table below illustrates the perceptions of school leaders as regards the goals of the policies based on the survey and in-depth interviews conducted with them. This table is presented here for academies and PSs in order to provide an overall and concise understanding of research question one.

Academies	Project Schools	Categories
Themes	Themes	
Aim to improve schools	Better education for outstanding student group and the nation's future	<u>Origin – Policy Goals</u>
Freedom for schools	Systemic teaching staff and further problems	
Aim to improve collaboration	Unclearness and Confusion	

Table 14 What are school leaders' perceptions of the background and goals of 'Academisation' and 'Project Schools' initiatives? (Research Question 1)

Three different themes have emerged for each policy regarding the perceptions of school leaders regarding the origins and goals of policies. These themes are as follows: "aim to improve schools", "freedom for schools" and "aim to improve collaboration" for academies; 'unclearness and confusion', 'systemic teaching staff and further problems' and in relation to PSs, 'better education for outstanding student groups for the future of the nation'. The outcomes are presented as follows for academies and PSs respectively.

4.2.1 Academies

According to school leaders, freedom for schools, improving the failing ones and enhancing collaboration among them should be the main policy goals of ‘academisation.’ The table below sets out the primary reasons for a school to become an academy. Most of the items are related to having more freedom, such as financial and educational autonomy or freedom from local authorities (LAs). There are also items that support the collaboration and failing themes, for example financial support and new opportunities for supporting/collaborating with another school.

Aim to improve schools

The ‘academisation’ programme was initially implemented in ‘failing schools in England, specifically those that fail based on an Ofsted inspection. Discussions with the school leaders supported this view. During the interviews, they indicated that the initial purpose was improving failing schools. Furthermore, more radical and aggressive terms were also used regarding these schools including the "worst schools", "serious weaknesses" or "failing for generations". According to Academy Leader 5 (AL5) and Academy Leader 1 (AL1):

“...the original reason for academisation was to take over and support schools that were not doing very well. The government's original proposal was to do that ... In other words, an Academy trust or chain or the new court, might take the school and immediately implement a particular style of timetable, standard teaching style of assessment, a particular behaviour policy that has had a proven track record in one of its other schools or elsewhere ... sometimes that is needed to give institutionalised, organisational places, a fresh start with some new ideas.”
(AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020)

“...that was very much about taking schools that were, I guess generalising, but the worst schools in the country and giving them almost like a facelift and injection of money and a new sense of governance to try and move them forward.”
(AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

This theme is also apparent in the interviewees' discourses while explaining how their schools were converted. For example, AL2 claims, “Those were turnaround schools that have been failing for generations”. AL3 indicates that the policy has started to be implement in “the three poorly performing schools in the local authority” in their region. Accordingly, school

leaders specify a variety of reasons behind the decision to assess those schools as ‘requires improvement’ or ‘failing’. AL3 states that because “... the building was deplorable, the behaviour was really bad, the results were very poor, have been stuck for a long period of time.” Similarly, AL1 says, “... If you experience a challenging inspection and maybe go into a category of special measures or serious weaknesses, you can be directed to become an academy.”

As mentioned above, according to school leaders, the aim to improve schools especially the ones that are assessed as ‘requires improvement’ or ‘failing’ by Ofsted was one of the primary aims of the academisation policy. In this respect, school leaders also suggested several implementations "try to help to get the educational attainment" (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020) at those schools. Some school leaders indicated that the main focus was on schools being helped by others. For example AL4 states: that was is important is "being taken under the wing and the umbrella of the more successful school" (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020). AL3 thinks that funding is important in order to improve schools stating that "the sponsors had to put some funds... into an endowment fund in the school" (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020). Also injecting new governance structures and strategies, as stated by AL1 should be the main focus believing that the policy provided "a new sense of governance ".

Freedom for Schools

The argument for freedom for schools was one of the most voiced discourses and claims for the academisation of schools in England. It is therefore not a surprise that freedom for schools has emerged as one of the main themes regarding the origins and policy goals of the initiative based on the academy leaders' perceptions. This theme has also been linked with the previous one concerning school improvements. AL3 describes "the political climate" as a motivation "to give schools different freedoms.... in order to improve (or) to accelerate improvements". It was also claimed that giving "freedom was the best way of immediate

improvement" (AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020). Accordingly, it seems that there were two different reasons behind the increase in "freedom for schools" discourses.

First, there was motivation to solve the on-going problem of failing schools owing to the authority being accountable for this failure and being accepting of it. According to AL2 "schools that have been failing for generations" and:

“...the government wanted to reduce the impact of the control of local authorities on schools ...the conservative government would see local authorities as being too accepting of mediocrity.” (AL1 , Male leader, Jan 2020)

Releasing the schools from the control of local authorities was probably one of the primary reasons why freedom is deemed to be so important. AL6 claims that even though "it's confused in the eyes of politicians and educationalists", the main motivation was based on:

“a desire to reduce the control that local authorities had over schools. So, to give individual trusts, businesses, educationists, universities, other schools, the freedom to run schools in the way they think best, a sort of desire to see, a creative, innovative, free, very diverse sector.”

Moreover, AL2 argues that politicians used to be quite provocative in terms of excluding local authorities in the management of schools. In one interview, the leader indicated it was like ‘removing the dead hands’ over the schools. Hence, it can be clearly seen that "the freedoms, the so-called freedoms that you get from being an Academy was the rhetoric" (AL1) at that time and it was much more about being free from the LAs.

In 2010, the policy was broadened to include ‘good’ and ‘outstanding’ schools based on the Ofsted ranking. Important amendments were applied. The freedom for schools perspective was also amended with these changes because the perspective evolved from removing the dead hands to freeing the outstanding organisations. Thus, as AL3 indicated, "they allowed schools to be convertor academies ...so, if the government body was great, they could convert ...and have different freedoms..." for further improvements without LA obstructions. Further quotes around this were given by other school leaders, suggesting that all schools could apply for academy status.

“the rationale for academisation now is different to it was when it first came into being ... Good schools and doing well and performing well would also consider

becoming an Academy as well as those who were not doing so well and thought the academisation and freedom was the best way for immediate improvement.” (AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020)

“...the government, particularly (the) education secretary had an almost an evangelical view of freedom, almost like a free market idea within economics. I think they saw the private sector as being fantasy ... So they wanted to encourage good and outstanding schools to go down the academies road in order to free up the curriculum and have freedom around some financial aspects and in the hope that it would release a degree of entrepreneurial spirit within schools that would drive improvements. So, I think it was largely based on I think what happened initially.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

To summarise, freedom for schools was a strong motivation behind the policy. Initially it aimed to free schools from the hands of failed local authorities but then it evolved to allow outstanding and extremely successful schools to also free themselves and to manage their own affairs.

To Improve Collaboration

Collaboration was not a robust debate or claim at the beginning, either in the policy texts or in the survey results. However, collaboration became one of the central themes regarding the aim to become an academy. AL4 claims that the current direction of travel emerged based on "the idea of a good skill share and good practice to others". This has been seen as "the (new) political landscape and trend" (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020), in particular with the rise of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and the government's directions and support in order to bring schools together since 2010. According to AL4 and AL3 -

“... the political landscape changed again. And then in came, the kind of movement in which schools were being asked to join together and collaborate.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“... we were in the category of a successful school that was going to start to sort of stand on its own two feet and then help and support others with the skills.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

According to leaders AL5 and AL3, the real benefit of coming together is belonging to a MAT. Being on your own as a single academy does not really lead to change nor ensure the

proposed improvements. Policymakers also adopt this view. AL3 argues that coming together or joining another MAT is the most effective and efficient form of academy.

“So, they stopped single converter academies. You can’t do that now. You can only be subsumed into another trust.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“where we are potentially now, at least there may be schools that don't need that level of newness and regime change, but where it would still be of benefit for them to become part of an Academy trust where there are economies of efficiency, where they're putting the resources, where they are sharing staff, where they have access to greater networks, good skills and practice share may be a benefit for school improvement.” (AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020)

It is evident that school leaders see “collaboration” as one of the most important initiatives around academisation. AL2, shares their experiences in the direction of significantly increasing collaboration following the academisation as follows;

“...the way the schools work together massively improved, ...the barriers are completely removed ... if that was the goal, it's certainly significantly reduced the barriers between schools working together, once they become part of a Multi-Academy Trust, but as to what the actual government wanted, ask them!” (AL2, Female leader, Jan 2020)

To conclude, this first research question set out to discover the school leaders’ perspectives regarding the aims and goals of the policies. In summary, improving the school, establishing freedom for schools and enhancing the collaboration among schools are the three main themes that came from the leaders’ perspectives in regard to academies. The following section presents the findings in relation to the PSs to the first research question based on the perspectives of the project school leaders.

4.2.2 Project Schools

The table below shows the results obtained from the survey completed with the Project School leaders when asked about their perceptions regarding the goals of the Project School policy (RQ1).

Gathering successful students,	Quality improvement	Qualified citizens, Nations’	Systemic problems and	Innovation	Autonomy
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better education		future	changes		
38.4%	24%	10.4%	18.4%	5.6%	4%

Table 15 Policy goals of Project Schools

PS leaders were asked about the overall and main goals of PS policy in the survey. As shown in the table above, there are seven policy goals according to PS leaders. Out of those seven, four make up the principal goals. Concerning the survey 125 leaders answered. According to 48 leaders, gathering successful and the best students in the country together and giving them a better education is one of the goals of PSs policy (38.4%). Out of all the school leaders who answered the survey, 29.6% stated that this was the main goal (see table above). More than 10% of the leaders believe that the aim of project schools is developing competent people and educating students for the future of the country. Furthermore 12% believe that this is the primary goal of the policy. Around one quarter of leaders argue that one of the goals and/or the main goal relates to improvement. More than 18% of leaders argue the policy was implemented owing to chronic problems in the system. Finally, a small number of leaders also specify three further goals as one of the overall goals but not the main goal of the policy, namely

- innovation (5.6%)
- autonomy (4%) for schools
- improvement and/or restoration for Imam Hatip schools (4%).

Three main themes have emerged based on the analysis of the in-depth interviews regarding the perceptions of the PS leaders in relation to policy goals. Two cover the main goals specified in the survey outcomes. It can be therefore argued that there are obvious consistency between the results of the survey and interviews. The first theme is 'better education for outstanding student groups and the nation's future', which covers the 'gathering successful students, better education' and 'qualified people, nation's future' outcomes of the

survey. The second theme is 'systemic teaching staff and further problems', which covers the 'systemic problems' and 'quality improvement' outcomes of the survey. Finally, 'unclearness and confusion' was another theme that emerged based on the interviews conducted with school leaders even though it was not one of the survey outcomes. It is possible that in the interviews, the school leaders were not sure about the policy goals and thus, faced several contradictory requests although they specified a number of expectations in the survey. These findings are presented below with quotes from the interviewees, which in turn, provides a broader understanding of the leaders' perspectives.

Better education for outstanding student groups and the nation's future

The school leaders are not only recognising the PSs as incredibly important for the future of the nation but also they claim that the policymakers and government have adopted this perspective and furthermore, that they have attached greater meaning to the policy, such as being crucial for the future national targets. According to leaders, these schools are aiming to provide a better education for outstanding student groups with the aim of preparing them for the nation's future. Therefore, a number of the leaders argued that there was an elitist point of view behind the policy because of the objectives to supply the best education to the best but limited number of students in the country instead of implementing improvements nationwide.

PSL2 argues that the objective is to create several special schools “in order to provide a good education at least for a particular group of students with their peers at the same level” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019). Accordingly, leaders contend that the principal reason behind the policy is the aim of gathering successful and hardworking students together in a school. Leaders also argue that even though it might have changed slightly since the beginning, supporting these schools with exam-based admission to enable the best students in the country to be selected and creating a different and high-level atmosphere was the primary goal. They believe that the change made to the teachers' recruitment system that these

schools employ is supporting this perspective and claim that bringing these students together with the best teachers in the country was the idea. The perspective and desire to 'provide an exceptional education at least for the best kids' (PSL6, Male leader, Sep 2019), is the reason because the hope as regards the school improvements and reforms via PS policy was not adopted for all schools throughout the country. A few examples from the interviews supporting these points are presented below.

“Basically, by distributing Project Schools among the types of schools, the aim or reason behind them is to make the most successful students choose these schools. It’s like saying; ‘we’re going to attach great importance to some schools and want the most successful students to go to those schools’.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“The project schools aimed to create special schools and provide the best students with a special education. Student-centred work with guides and teachers should be created over a certain period of time and the teachers will be assigned depending on the quality. ... A limited number of schools but entirely innovative performance, and quality-oriented schools. And to improve the quality of schooling accordingly. ...at least for that student group.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019).

Systemic teaching staff and further problems

School leaders also recognise systemic teaching staff and further related problems as one of the main reasons behind the Project Schools policy. In the survey for instance, 22 (17.6%) school leaders mention that the main goal of the policy is to solve systemic problems in schools. The challenges regarding the teaching staff and their recruitment are the issues that leaders referred to the most during the interviews. PSL4 asserts that-

“I believe the implementation of project schools resulted from the congestion in the system. The system was blocked so this initiative was pursued in order to address some systemic problems.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Many school leaders associate these systemic problems in their schools with the exceptionally centralised teacher appointment system and to the lack of authority that schools' or school leaders' have concerning their staff. They clearly state that the system has an impasse regarding the employment of teaching staff and their performances, which as a consequence is harming the management abilities of the leaders. PSL1 emphasises the staff-

related problems and their lack of authority and claims that these have affected the development of this initiative-

“In order to address their system-related problems, such as unqualified, incompetent or even teachers who are not doing their jobs, the starting goal of the Project Schools may be the need to transfer authority to our schools themselves because no one could replace them in the past.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Leaders claim that this theme explains why the policy has been implemented in “the most successful and well-known schools in the country” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019). PSL3 argues that; *“At first, there was a claim about the problematic, unsatisfactory teachers of many well-known, popular secondary schools. These were the teachers who had been working there for years, thirty-forty years maybe. But because of the system, these poor teachers could not be fired”* (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019). The question as to how these schools are extremely successful if their teachers are not good enough can be asked here.

PSL3 explains this as follows:

“...the argument was that the students at these schools are already very good, so the real success does not belong to the teachers but is success based on the high-level background of the students. Plus, many school leaders were suffering from this. So, the initiative might have emerged from this problem, although now, the paradigm has changed slightly even though this point is still an issue.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

To summarise, the deadlock and dilemmas associated with an exceedingly centralised education system were causing some systemic problems and leaders see these as the reasons behind the PSs policy. Furthermore, the problem regarding the recruitment of teachers is one of the main ones according to these leaders. Likewise, it can be claimed that the problems are also related to the centralised student admission system. There are "very central and well-known popular schools" (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019), which are attracting the best students anyway because of their reputation. However, they also have serious challenges with their teachers, however, schools or leaders do not have the power to replace them because of the system. Hence, school leaders argue that these systemic problems might have triggered

the initiative, although these are predictions only because the officials have never stated them officially.

Confusion

As stated previously, while it was not an outcome of the survey, many leaders revealed in the interviews that the policy is surrounded by confusion and a lack of clarity. They argue that they even feel this as leaders of these schools, thus, it is likely to be confused in the eyes of other stakeholders such as parents and students. There appears to be many contradictory discussions and operations that are causing this confusion. PSL4 and PSL2 expressed the following:

“...there is uncertainty and unpredictability about the process. There are no clear objectives and the rationale behind that has not been explained. ... so people and teachers are confused ... even the school leaders.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“Actually, at the government level, the goals and long-term plans are just not established, not clear. Even we, as the principals of these schools, are not sure.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

It would seem that the policymakers and/or government have failed to explain the rationale behind the policy. The school leaders complain of not being informed enough in relation to the aims of the policy and their expectations. They indicate the difficulties in the implementation of the changes and new policies because of this ambiguous and confusing environment. PSL3's comments below provide an overall picture of this theme:

“Ironically, even the school leaders were not sufficiently informed about what the Project Schools were aiming for and what the real expectations were. The goals must be decided by the MoNE and shared and they must be clear. There are in addition, contradictory perspectives. For example, our general directorate's and secretary's discussions are more about creating schools that do not only educate students academically but also prepare them for the realities of life and develop them socially by improving their social and cultural skills. But on the other hand, the system is dominated by central examinations, whilst the implementation and direction of the provincial directorate are opposite. So, during the implementation, we felt confused and faced resistance. ... the Department needs to be clear.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

To summarise, the school leaders argue that they as well as other parties are not sufficiently informed as regards the goals and aims of the policy and the expectations. Additionally, they add that this is creating further problems, such as resistance from stakeholders and a lack of a positive atmosphere when implementing the required changes in their schools.

4.3 Q2: Schools’ reasons for becoming ‘Academies’ and ‘Project Schools’

Question 2: What are the main reasons for schools to become an Academy or Project School?

The principal reasons and the intentions of the schools to become 'academies' or 'project schools' are the focus of the second research question. Table 16 below illustrates the main findings with the intention of providing an overall picture regarding academy and PS leaders' perceptions of the reasons for their schools' conversions.

Academies	Project Schools	
Themes	Themes	Category
More freedom	To get better students	Schools’ Goals-Reasons
Local Authority (LA) Problems	Teacher selection opportunity	
More budgets and efficient usage of it		
Force	Ministry of National Education (MoNE) decision	

Table 16: What were the main reasons of schools to become an Academies or Project School? (Research Question 2)

Table 16 above, shows that 'more freedom', 'LA problems', 'more budget and efficient use of it', along with 'force' emerged as the main themes with respect to the academisation of the schools. For PSs, in contrast, 'to acquire better students', 'teacher selection opportunity' and the 'MoNE's decision' are the themes regarding reasons for their conversion. These findings are presented below following the survey outcomes along with the direct examples obtained from the more detailed interviews. Thus, results of the first survey followed by more details

regarding the themes from the interviews that were guided by the survey outcomes are presented for each policy.

4.3.1 Academies' reasons

Detailed interviews with the school leaders were conducted considering the outcomes regarding the reasons and motivations schools become academies. The themes of 'more freedom,' 'LA problems' and 'more budget' have been determined based on the interviews as similar to the survey results with a strong correlation. As shown in detail below, they cover most of the factors in the survey results, such as 'general ethos of educational autonomy' or 'less LA involvement'. In addition, the theme of 'force' to become academies has also been determined in the interviews. Although not as much as the other themes, this theme also demonstrates certain correlations with the survey elements, such as 'seems to be the general direction of travel' or 'others in my chain/group wanted to convert.' These results are also presented below with examples from leaders' perspectives with the aim of providing a better understanding of the perceptions of leaders concerning the reasons behind their transformations to academies.

More Freedom

According to leaders, one of the main reasons for their schools to become academies involves having more freedom. The leaders elaborated upon this perspective in the interviews and stated that the idea of a general sense of financial and education autonomy or freedom to make changes about terms was also vital. Hence, according to the leaders, having the freedom to innovate and further developments in their schools was the reason for the schools. However, they mostly associate this with the idea of being free from the local authorities (LAs). Several argue that LAs are the barriers to schools that want to be more innovative and forward-thinking. In the interviews, AL4 and AL1 mentioned the following:

“... the goals, probably, were further skills improvement...we'd seen, you know, a real increase in attainment and progress or outcomes for students for better. We

had things that were much better about personal development, wellbeing and those aspects, but we were still really under the guidance of local authorities...which were not particularly forward-thinking and we're really trying but we just didn't have as much freedom and it just seemed like the next step for development was just...sort of good being alone." (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

"...we just felt that if we became an academy, we would be a little bit more independent of everything that was going on around us, be less directed by the local authority ... It just felt like we're almost being forced down a road with them and the only way to avoid that was to become academies." (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

As indicated above, the idea of being free from LAs is the aspect that is referred to the most as regards the more freedom theme by leaders. The next theme 'LA problems' emerged as an important reason in the interviews and provides a broader understanding of the perspectives of school leaders pertaining to more freedom.

LA Problems

Connected with the theme of more freedom, school leaders declare their problems with LAs and argue that the idea of being free from LAs encouraged them to become academies. So the problems they face with LAs also surfaced as a theme in relation to answering research question two. Primarily, leaders see LAs as being disconnected, ineffective and restrictive. AL6 and AL4, for example, describe the LAs and LA system as being "quite pedestrian, quite a slow-moving system" (AL6, Male leader, Jan 2020) and "quite removed from the classroom and the schools" (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020). AL4 elaborates on the ineffectiveness of the LAs view by providing examples of first-hand experiences. These are much more about ineffective use of the resources and unwelcome interventions by LAs.-

"...if we're going to keep staff in a workplace, we'll need new opportunities for growth and development ...certainly within the model where we're a local authority school... Some of them...they go more for the local authority as an adviser, leave the classroom and actually that was a huge drain on the classroom ... experienced teachers going off to advise other teachers, although they never actually returned to the classroom to teach... That was something we were keen to avoid... We wanted the best teachers to teach... the dorm become an auxiliary service to a skill." (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

According to AL4 and AL3, many schools just wanted to separate themselves from the LAs. They use relatively strong words while expressing this and argue that these are not only their views but also the views of many other academies:

“The reason why academisation happened was because a lot of local authority work wasn’t effective, wasn’t efficient and wasn’t having an effect. What’s more, we used to say here that ‘free suddenly got rid of the whole education department’.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“... (some) local authorities are dreadful ... so schools wanted to be get rid of that ... The converter period gave schools and the governing bodies an opportunity to decide ... they thought that they could get out of the local authority.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Additional Budgets

The theme of 'more budget' emerged as one of the reasons for the schools to become academies especially at the beginning of the initiative. It is evident that the opportunity to have bigger budgets was one of the leading reasons for the earlier sponsored academies to become sponsored academies prior to 2010. Based on the school leaders' viewpoints, it can also be argued that the government and/or policymakers used this as encouragement and an incentive to open a way for a quick transformation in the early stages. AL3 and AL1 express their views in this respect as follows:

“... a huge number of schools ... converted because they thought they were going to get more money and they did for a period of time...” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“If you look at all of the schools which converted, there's a myriad of different reasons. And ...I think it's been driven by financial reasons, not always educational reasons.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Conversely, acknowledging its power and the impact on the earlier conversions, school leaders also claim that currently, this is not a very effective reason because the budget related are reduced. Therefore, there is not such a big difference regarding this presently. AL3 explains this based on their experiences as an early academy:

“...the way in which we were funded in the beginning was very beneficial...you get ... an amount of money for each child...and also ...the local authority shares the funds. ...I have the money. So, we had more money than a local authority

school in the early years... now there is little difference” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Force

As stated previously, ‘force’ was not among the survey outcomes regarding the reasons for schools becoming academies. However, the elements of ‘seems to be the general direction of travel’, ‘governors/parents/staff were keen’ and ‘others in my chain/group wanted to convert’ were among the reasons for becoming academies and also imply the theme of ‘force’. The interviews were not guided by the survey outcomes to include a discussion regarding this perspective. However, the discussions evolved and the thematic analysis of the interviews established this theme as another reason behind schools’ decisions to become academies.

The theme includes several supporting arguments. First, it is obvious that the early sponsored academisation was forced upon the ‘failing schools’ because “*if you are failing or categorised into the category of special measures or serious weaknesses, you can be forced to become an academy*” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020). As an early academy leader, AL3 states that it was not an option but forced upon them-

“It wasn’t a intended conversion. It was a forced academy conversion in the first phase of academies back in 2008.... (the process) was quite political ...The staff and the previous head didn’t want, ...the governing body at the time didn’t want to do that, so it was forced...” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Second, it was also argued that the funding system was used to force schools and/or LAs in that direction. According to leaders, some funds were not provided unless LAs included academies in their regions, so various operations were evaluated as ‘politically driven through the back door to get academies’ (AL3). AL3 also argues that the government forced academies into the procedures by playing with the financial system-

“There was a lot of internal politics from the central government going on where local authorities had to make decisions that they weren’t going to get the money unless they include academies, (government), which forced academies into the process.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Third, many leaders accept academisation as the political direction of travel and a number of them articulate that there was no other way but to become an academy. For instance, while AL6 claims that 'there was some pressure put on schools as well', AL1 evaluates it as 'the only way' now:

“...we were very clear that we didn’t want to become an academy on our own, we didn’t see any value in that, but it was the only way to avoid...being forced down a road with local authority. ...We all also felt the political direction was more schools wanted to become academies ...and most of the funding was being taken away from local authority ...so we felt as though we weren’t really getting anything from local authority. So, that was another driver to apply to become an academy. There’s no benefit at the moment being within the LA” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

4.3.2 Project Schools’ reasons

Table 17 below illustrates the reasons why schools become PSs based on the surveys conducted with school leaders. School leaders mostly specify external factors when explaining the reasons for their conversion because many of them argue that it was not only their choice and the MoNE was also important in this respect.

	Reasons of becoming Project Schools	The Main Reason of becoming Project Schools
	%	%
School’s Success+ History+ Students+ Teachers	59.6	52.8
To improve	20.8	22.4
School Type	20.8	7.2
The MoNE’s decision	19.2	12
Facility, Building	16.8	11.2
To acquire better students	15.2	9.6
Projects	12.8	10.4
Teacher selection	4.8	-

Table 17: Reasons of becoming Project Schools

More than half of the leaders suggest that their schools' success and history, along with the quality of their students and teachers are the main reasons why their schools have become Project Schools. This is understandable because as the school leaders argued, the central management (MoNE) chooses and/or decide most of the conversions instead of allowing

schools' to make their own proposals or decisions. Besides, again based on the leaders' arguments, the success and popularity criteria are key factors as regards these decisions. According to leaders, the desire to improve their schools is one of the reasons for becoming a Project School. More than 20% of leaders suggest this factor while explaining the reasons. According to school leaders, 'school type', the 'MoNE's decision', 'facility, building' and 'projects' factors are the other external primary reasons, notably for the conversions and/or decisions made by the MoNE. The table illustrates that 'to acquire better students' and 'teacher selection' are the only internal reasons for school leaders in addition to the desire to improve their schools. However, the 'teacher selection' factor did not appear among the primary reasons specified by school leaders.

In the interviews, leaders argue that all the science schools were directly converted to PSs because of that. This point of view is also supported by the survey outcome as seen in the table above because 17% of the Science, Social Science and other schools claim that their school type was the main reason. This ratio is extremely low for other school types. None of the Anatolian leaders mention school type as the main reason, although 5% of Imam-Hatip leaders did. This 5% should be among the 'Imam-Hatip Science' schools for the reason that it is known that this sort of school can be found amongst the Imam-Hatip schools even though their numbers are extremely limited. Lastly, as a significant difference, 'to improve' is the factor indicated the most by the Imam Hatip leaders to explain the most important reasons for becoming PSs; 32% argue that the idea to improve their schools was the main reason while this ratio is only 18.4% in relation to the total average.

As mentioned previously, detailed interviews were conducted in light of these survey outcomes. Three main themes emerged representing the school leaders' perceptions about the main reasons for becoming a PS in Turkey:

- being a PS was the most important feature to acquire better students in their schools.
- they would have an opportunity to choose the teachers who will work in their schools.
- the MoNE's decision was the reason and the success of the school was behind this decision.

To acquire better students

Leaders argue one of the biggest incentives is attracting good students of any status or practice for all the schools in Turkey. They believe that the success of schools primarily depends on the success of students. Therefore, if you have better students your success rate will increase naturally. It was a factor in relation to being a PS because of the opportunity and reputation that was provided via the status of PSs. PSL3 assesses this as 'the biggest advantage' and PSL5 states that this was the main motivation:

“Clearly, the biggest advantage of being a Project School is attracting more academically successful students.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

“...there are glowing eyes here, students who are enthusiastic and eager to learn. These students, I believe, are not only the main source of motivation for teachers but also for leaders. Therefore, having good students through exam-based admission was the main motivation.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

This theme has been associated with the exam-oriented student admission system employed by school leaders in Turkey. Based on the lack of a school evaluation or accountability system, the centralised exam results are seen as the only indicator of school performances.

PSL4 argues that schools do anything to attract better students-

“To be honest, the criteria of success are mostly related to the quality of the students we accept and the change in this. ... The main aim of all the schools is having good students so schools want anything that helps this aim. It is much easier to implement desired changes and to be successful with the students who are already good in terms of behaviour and academic achievements. ... This is one of the main reasons behind the desire for all schools to become a Project

School. ...They may not acknowledge it, but it is a reality.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

To summarise, during the interviews, leaders frequently remarked on the importance of finding better students or keeping that feature of their schools while explaining the reasons for becoming a PS. According to leaders, being a PS and having the status is directly effective in determining the characteristics of students in the schools. Therefore, this theme was analysed as one of the important motives regarding the second research question that considers why schools become PSs, despite the fact it is the sixth main reason in the survey outcomes with 9.6%.

Teacher selection opportunity

Understanding the teacher appointment system in Turkey is a precondition in order to completely understand this theme. The teacher appointment system is very centralised throughout the country. All teachers are appointed to the schools by the central management (MoNE) based on their appointment scores. Candidates' appointment scores are established with the scores obtained from a standardised exam and interviews conducted by the MoNE (Detailed information regarding this system can be found in the literature review chapter). Hence, all the teachers are appointed centrally but there is an exception or privilege relating to Project Schools in this respect. The PSs initiative claimed that schools that become PSs would have the opportunity to choose their teachers among the teachers who are already appointed in their regions or cities. It means that they will have the opportunity to take other schools' teachers in their regions if teachers agree and the authorities approve. The effects of this change are the focus of the third research question. The negative effects on other schools are presented as a finding under this part but it is considered as a theme here as well because leaders see this as an opportunity, which was one of the reasons to be willing to become PSs. As seen in the following quotes, PSL3 and PSL2 assess this as a great opportunity to establish their own teams:

“The teaching staff is the key to success... It has a positive impact on the atmosphere and working environment of the school ... So to create their own team is a great opportunity” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

“...you need to work with the A-team, the best teaching personnel in this type of school ... There are very strong students, so very strong teaching staff have to be there who can be good enough for them. ... We wanted to have the chance to choose our employees ...didn't want to miss it.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

MoNE's decision and schools' success

The 'success' and the factors pertaining to the 'MoNE's decision' and the connection between them follow the survey outcomes. In the interviews, school leaders elaborated on this perspective while explaining the reasons for becoming PSs. Principally, the leaders argue that the MoNE is the authority that decides the conversion of schools rather than schools themselves. The schools might also apply but it is not necessary. The MoNE chooses and/or decides which schools are going to be PSs. Leaders argue that the conversions made based on the schools' applications are extremely limited, so the MoNE makes most of the conversions directly. Besides, according to PS leaders, the success of their schools is the main reason behind the MoNE's decisions. Leaders use phrases such as 'best ones', 'successful schools', 'best schools', 'popular schools', 'respected schools', 'our success', 'our success history' for themselves while explaining this success factor. Interestingly, these were the sub-themes that emerged based on the thematic analysis of the interviews.

“Both the schools' entry base scores and their success in university placements were examined. I believe the assessment was made according to the region's student potential. ... More successful schools have been taken into account ...our school, because it was a very successful and popular school, was one of the first schools to be considered in this context.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“The initiative began with the top, very well-known and respected secondary schools, such as... and other science schools. These are the schools known as the most successful schools in the country. They were initially converted so that the main criteria were based on the success.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

In addition, while some of the leaders contend that they did not have a voice in their conversion process, some also reveal that their opinions were taken in advance. This shows that there is not a standard procedure in this respect and operations showed differences from

school to school. PSL2's and PSL4's comments below illustrate this difference in the implementation process:

“...we also wanted that, but the main decision was made at the ministry level because we are primarily a very successful school.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“It certainly did not happen on the basis of any of our desires, requests or authority, but with the MoNE's eagerness and decision.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

4.4 Q3: Effects of the policies in schools

Question 3: How have the policies affected the schools in which they are implemented?

The third research question considers discovering school leaders' perspectives as regards how the policies have affected the schools in which they are implemented. 'Freedom', 'accountability' and 'innovation' were the initial categories established based on the surveys and literature. These categories guided the interviews conducted with school leaders. In addition, categories pertaining to 'side-effects' and 'other highlighted effects' have been created depending on the interviews with the school leaders. Table 18 below illustrates these categories and the themes they include, for both academies and PSs, as an overview and summary with respect to research question one.

Academies	Project Schools	Categories
Themes	Themes	
Free from LA- Freedom, authority, autonomy	A partial and limited recruitment freedom Implementations- Effects (A great opportunity only for some)	Freedom
On the sense of accountability and responsibility Financial scrutiny	Sense of accountability and responsibility	Accountability
Innovation opportunity	Better students and better teachers- Readiness Innovation support- Projects- Flexibility	Innovation
Budget and Effective Use Collaboration: Share/Collegiality, MATs, Real benefit	Expectation Change: Privilege expectation + New and more expectations	Other Highlighted Effects

Isolation- More pressure and workload	Deepening Gap Other Schools Relationships	Side Effects
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Table 18: How have the policies affected the schools in which they are implemented? (Research Question 3)

As Table 18 above illustrates, the themes under the categories show several differences but few similarities between Academies and PSs. The freedom category includes only teacher recruitment-related themes for PSs, however in relation to Academies it represents a more general approach to freedom including being free from LAs and having more autonomy and authority. Only one theme is determined for changes in the accountability category of PSs, which is the effects on the sense of accountability and responsibility. However, on the topic of Academies, it includes the theme 'financial scrutiny' as well as changes in the sense of accountability and responsibility. Concerning the innovation category the opposite is evident. While 'innovation opportunity' is the only theme for academies regarding the changes in the innovation category, 'better students and better teachers- readiness' and 'innovation support-projects-flexibility' are two themes that emerged for PSs. Changes in the budget and collaboration were important according to academy leaders, whereas the changes in the expectations were important for PS leaders as these created themes and a further category titled 'other highlighted effects'.

To conclude, the possible side-effects were the focus of RQ3 too, so this established the last category. One side-effect theme for each policy emerged based on the leaders' perspectives. The theme for academies pertains to leaders themselves, which is 'isolation- more pressure and workload ', while for PSs it is about the other schools including more than one aspect. All the themes under the categories are presented below following related survey findings with examples from school leaders.

4.4.1 In Academies

Freedom

Freedom for schools is one of the most highlighted discussions pertaining to the academisation policy. Freedoms related to school year, school day, terms and conditions, along with admission policy are provided to schools with the new status. In the interviews, leaders predominantly suggest the increase in their freedoms when they are asked about the changes on the ground. According to the leaders, the freedoms schools have as well as autonomy and authority have been enhanced via academisation and was one of the genuine effects. AL2 says that academisation reduced bureaucracy and gave schools more autonomy, whilst AL5 argues that now they have the flexibility to do the best for the community.

“It reduced bureaucracy and gave us more autonomy ... We're on the ground, we're making the decisions and we're highly paid professionals. We should be able to manage the school ourselves and seek help and support when we need it ... We have quite strong ideas about the way we want to do things and it suits us to be able to do the things we want to do.” (AL2, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“We have ...significant freedoms to offer an education that we think that best fits the community and the peoples that we serve. So, we have that flexibility within us to be able to do that. ... we have been able to ...modify our offer depending on what is needed here at any one point in time... that's important.” (AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020)

The leaders clearly associate the changes in their freedom, autonomy and authority with being free from LAs now. They claim that most of the changes in this respect naturally came with the exclusion of LAs from their system. However, certain leaders assert that the LAs were barriers to innovation and further improvements in their schools. As a result, the freedoms that came after their exclusion are important.

“...we would have had all sorts of things like redundancies and all of the other things... So, actually, once we stepped outside of the control of the local authority to our own plan, we just didn't waste it. ...we used to say here, free suddenly got rid of the whole education department at the ...(LA).” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“...as we've started doing more of the things that we feel are necessary for our schools, it probably reinforces the view that actually we don't need the local

authority and we can be a little bit more creative about the solutions we want to find.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Accountability

Accountability is one of the main parts of management that comes with the authority, especially for state departments. Changes in the accountabilities are expected along with the changes in freedoms or perspectives on freedom. Therefore, the changes in the accountability were one of the subjects in the interviews with leaders, despite the fact there were no strong indications in the surveys. Two themes represent the changes in the accountabilities after Academisation: ‘a sense of accountability and responsibility’, coupled with ‘financial scrutiny’.

Regarding a sense of accountability and responsibility

Leaders signify that Academisation has affected their perceptions of accountability and sense of responsibility. Generally, they feel that their sense of accountability and responsibility has been enhanced after Academisation because their feelings of responsibility heightened and LAs were removed from the accountability phases between schools and central management. AL4 argues that based on the changes in their authority, they now have more corporate responsibility.

“...corporate responsibility feels more personal because we're much more responsible, so corporate responsibility lies much closer to us than it would have been like in a local authority school, but the service lies closer to us as well.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Similarly, as more freedom is one of the themes stated above, AL6 associate this change with the changes in their freedoms. Plus, AL1 advocates the need for the balance between accountability and freedom in this respect. Therefore, it can be argued that the changes in the sense of accountability and responsibility are seen as normal or expected for academy leaders because they are an integral part of authority and freedom.

“I think it's harder to pass the buck, it's harder to blame other people when you have the freedom to do stuff...” (AL6, Male leader, Jan 2020)

“I think as a headteacher you recognise that you've got freedoms and the authority to set your school up as you want to. But I think you always recognise that that

comes with a level of accountability, that ultimately, you're responsible for the behaviour, the attendance, the academic outcomes, all of those that go with it as well. So, I would say that they're balanced in that everybody knows where they stand ...you can't have one without the other.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

As stated earlier, this effect was linked with removing the LAs and their accountabilities from the system according to school leaders. It meant that the LAs' share in the accountability has been transferred to the MATs or to schools themselves if they are single sponsored or single converted academies. Thus, accordingly, school leaders argue that, as expected, this caused 'a massive change' in accountability in particular for the academies that are standing alone instead of being a part of the bigger MAT. AL3 indicates this fact as follows:

“...a massive change in accountability ...I do all of that here. It's just because we're still a single sponsored academy. We've not gone into a Multi-Academy Trust. So, the accountability I have here is much bigger than some of the other heads in other places.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Financial scrutiny

Finally, academy leaders clearly specify that the enhancements in the financial scrutiny after Academisation have changed accountability and the feelings of accountability in their schools. As seen below, AL1 clearly claims that the financial scrutiny of academies is much more precise and detailed than other schools.

"I've never been audited in 15 years as a head (but) I've been audited three times in 12 months as an Academy. So, I think that probably they keep locking the door after the horse has bolted in some ways. So, it's much more rigorous." (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

According to leaders, fundamental changes in the funding and related inspection models created this. AL5 below elaborates on this by emphasising them as the biggest changes. Moreover, AL4 also points out these developments regarding financial accountability and believes that it is heavily scrutinised and more effective, even though it is also more challenging for them.

“...what has changed is the funding model completely, the way in which the school was resourced as you has had to be considered very carefully and dealt with very differently, ... One of the biggest changes is the (financial)

inspectorate. ... For example, we're funded on a monthly basis so you have to really think carefully about any big spend that you might have to profile over a period of time. ...decisions in a month's time, financially, on outcomes, on staff wellbeing, on people wellbeing, safeguarding, etc.” (AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020)

“...there has been a difference in terms of, how we had the bills, our own accountability and our own infrastructure for evaluation ... It is much more effective.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Innovation

Opportunity to Innovate

According to school leaders, Academisation developed the capacity to innovate and opportunity for the schools. They argue that it opened ways for schools to be more innovative by removing the barriers, such as LAs or limited authority over the use of their budgets. AL1, states that Academisation has created opportunities in this respect and that this changed his perspective regarding policy in a positive way, although ideologically, he did not support it in the past.

“I'm not ideologically in favour of academies per se, but what I would say relates to the experiences; I wish that we'd done it years earlier... For instance, when we appointed an educational psychologist as a maintained school, if I had tried to do that using funds from five or six schools, the local authority would have pulled the plug on it and said no, no way, you're not doing that, you have to use these staff. So, I think it's created opportunities to be a little bit more creative and meet the needs of our schools more.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Accordingly, leaders fundamentally argue that Academisation has enhanced the innovation and entrepreneurship culture of schools. While AL6 describes this atmosphere, AL1 provides examples from their application in this respect.

“Another advantage is it gives us space for, I believe to be more profound, it encourages leaders who were more entrepreneurial and ambitious. ... I think the Academy movement provides a climate in which leaders if they want to, can be quite innovative and ambitious and try new things.” (AL6, Male leader, Jan 2020)

“...that's probably made us a little bit bolder in terms of some of the things that we, we try and do. (For instance), we've appointed an ex HMI Ofsted inspector, he works for us 30 days a year on school improvement ...we wouldn't be able to afford to do that ... They (the LA) would say 'no, we don't do that for anybody else, we're not doing it for you'. My view is, 'well, that's fine, but we don't have to spend that money with you. We'll go somewhere else', which is exactly what we've done.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Other Highlighted Effects

Budget and Effective Use

In the interviews, leaders still mentioned the increases regarding their budgets even though the changes reduced the big difference between other schools regarding this. This might be associated with having real control over their budgets at the moment. In parallel with the expectations concerning the budget increase and one of the reasons for becoming academies (RQ2), school leaders indicate that now they have more money than they had previously.

“Because of the financial aspects of the academisation we do have more money now ..., we have more money than we had before.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

It is worth noting here that it appears that this is a very distinctive fact, especially as regards the early adopters. There was a huge difference favouring academies. This is expressed by AL3 and AL2 with phrases such as ‘huge amounts of money’ and ‘big chunks of money’. However, this difference has gradually reduced in line with the expansion of academy schools.

“...in the early adopters, the initial converters gained huge sums of money from the local authority, because ... you don't have that money taken off that when it comes to you directly. So, ...the early adopters made huge sums of money in the first few years. Then gradually, as more schools become academies, the amount of money became less and less.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Effective budget use/quicker decision-making

In the interviews, school leaders point out the apparent change in effective budget use and quicker decision-making after becoming academies, much more than the increase in their budget. Basically, once again, this change relies on the freedom associated with budget use that comes with academisation. Additionally, AL4 indicates that now they have much more power in relation to how to use the allocated budget.

“There are also financial aspects. So, in terms of, you know, how budgets are devolved on a scale and how you can buy services and procure and everything like that, you have a lot more freedom.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

According to leaders, this change allows schools to procure services from who they like, to be much quicker and more cost-effective. They simply argue that all the processes and decision-making are much quicker now.

“Things are quicker because you don't have to go to the local authority for permission to do some of the things that we wanted to do in terms of recruitment and retention, in terms of remote, changing the curriculum, HR sort of processes. Those things are much quicker because the decisions are made at the local level and then enacted pretty quickly.” (AL2, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Based on the all facts mentioned above, school leaders argue that this budget and financial system is much more rigorous. School leaders supply three different arguments supporting this claim. First, they argue that the related ineffectiveness in the LA system was reduced. Second, they claim that now they are much more able to address local needs and opportunities. Third, they believe that the entrepreneurship culture and ability of schools or MATs are enhanced. AL1 argues in this respect that 'we have done many things that we would not have done as a LA school', whilst AL4 emphasises that 'the connection is much closer' now:

“...we are a trust of eight schools, whereas the local authority is 400 schools. So, for example, we are much more connected to the person who does health and safety. ...I had never met him or her (previous one), I didn't even know where the team was or anything like that ...but now I see (him) every week here. So, the connection is much closer, so that is better.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

To conclude, in spite of all the positive perspectives regarding the changes to the budget and its use, AL6 argues that academisation offers greater opportunities to improve effectiveness by means of budget freedoms but many MATs are still not completely using them. Furthermore, freedom pertaining to teachers' pay is the most discussed issue among them.

"For example, there was a promise that it would be more cost-effective, but I don't think many Academy trusts in this region are definitely using their freedoms to pay staff differently. But if they were doing that would be a more significant impact for recruitment and retention.” (AL6, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Therefore, the power given to make changes to the teachers' pay policy is seen as one of the main and/or most remarkable changes.

Collaboration: Share/Collegiality, MATs, Real benefit

The relationship changes presented above also clearly indicate the improvement in the collaboration between schools. Therefore, the school leaders were asked about this aspect during the interviews. According to them, the collaboration among schools has improved markedly, specifically for the schools within MATs. Three sub-themes showing the improvements in terms of collaboration were determined based on the interviews with leaders. First, school leaders indicated that there was a need to improve sharing good practice and collegiality and that the academisation of their schools generated remarkable improvements in this respect. In regard to this, AL4 and AL6 argue that this was a natural responsibility with respect to being an academy so that collaboration between schools is developed.

“I don't see school as an Academy, as a freestanding entity. What we need is a partnership within education. We need to be sharing good practice and we need shared experience.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“We are more involved in collaborating with schools across the area. And of course, because we're also now part of a multi-academy trust with six schools in total, we are on the positive side of collaborating within the trust.” (AL6, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Second, MATs and the MAT system are seen as an important part of this impact on collaboration. In addition, as secondary schools, they also argue that academisation has opened a new route for them to collaborate with primary schools in their areas, which was less possible previously.

“...within our trust, the way the schools work together, the barriers are completely removed. It certainly massively enhanced interschool working. So, when schools come into the trust with family, there are no barriers and we all help each other in this, as there's no competitiveness. We all want each other to do well.” (AL2, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“...we know more about primary schools now. We wouldn't have if it had been a local authority school because all of the networking within an authority was secondary, secondary. At the trust level we've actually got infants, juniors, we've

got secondary and we've also got a sixth form. So that wealth of experience is something different and access to that is something different that we didn't have one before" (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Third, more radically, some of the leaders claim that this was the real or even the core benefit of the entire academisation policy. According to AL1, 'it's not impossible that you could do some of these things as a group of maintained schools, but I think it's highly unlikely that you would ever get enough people together who would buy into it' (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020). Accordingly, a few argue that it does not make any sense now to be an academy if it will not develop collaboration with schools or be a part of a bigger trust.

"...that group of schools working together ... The thing we keep saying to people is that that's where the benefits are in Academisation, it gives you a chance to do things if we are working as a partnership with schools" (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

"wealth of experience and share that we've got the trust is something different and access to that is something different that we didn't have before. So, I think I'm going to have to sit on the fence on that one." (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Side-Effects

Isolation- More pressure and workload

It might be surprising or even confusing to have both the 'collaboration' and 'isolation' themes but this theme has emerged especially in terms of single sponsored and single converted academies. According to the leaders, academisation has increased their workloads as well as created a more isolated position for school leaders. AL3 indicates the increase in the workload by emphasising being a single sponsored academy as follows-

"I am accountable for absolutely everything because I'm a single sponsored academy. I'm the principal of educational issues but I'm (also) in charge of health and safety, finance, every single thing I do have to know ...I'm legally responsible for everything ... So for me, coming over here was a huge job." (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Similarly, AL4 states that "the spine of the work can be very difficult, as regards staff recruitment, difficult results, failure, staff leave, etc.". Leaders even use relatively strong phrases to express the effects in relation to the increase in isolation. For instance, AL2 argues that a school leader could become fairly isolated if relationships are not built. Additionally,

AL1 states that academisation brought a degree of isolation, whereas AL2 argues that schools can be very lonely places for leaders to be because you are much more on your own while doing the job. Leaders also indicate that based on the increase in their workload and responsibilities as well as isolation, the pressure they feel has increased.

“There is always pressure and I don’t know that this is extra if I’m honest but there’s always things to do with, you know, big things like health and safety. ... When you are an authority school there is a whole host of other people that share corporate responsibility. I think in an academy school it is different. Now we have our (own) head of health and safety.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

This is associated with two factors by the school leaders. These are yet again LAs' withdrawing from the system and competitiveness in the system. Regarding this, AL3 says that as the leader you don't have any local authority to fall back on and when things go wrong, you don't have anybody to ring so you feel isolated, lonely. AL2 provides a budget-related and financial example by associating them with the increase in responsibilities and pressure. In addition, AL1 criticises the competitiveness in the system and argues that the academisation movement has dramatically increased competition.

“Although it's been generally positive, it (also) means that we have a much more fragmented school system than we have ever had before. And when you've got people like Michael Fullan, ... talking about how school collaboration is the secret to successful school systems. Our system is built on competitiveness. So why would we want to work with the school down the road? Because if we help them and they get better, then our results are going to suffer. So, I think that competitiveness in the system has been accentuated by the Academy movement more than it ever has done before.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

4.4.2 In Project Schools

Part of the second question considers the impact of the PSs policy in the schools that become PSs. Therefore, in the survey, PS leaders are asked what has changed regarding their practices after becoming a Project School or what their plans are based on being a PS. The seven areas that require change are the ones that the leaders have indicated the most and are presented in the Table 19 below.

What are the changes you have implemented or are planning to implement in your school due to being a PS? -3							
	Academic improvement	Projects	Teaching staff change	No very much, not allowed	Outside support	Facility	Exam preparation
%	30.4%	37.6%	29.6%	28%	12.8%	5.6%	4.8%

Table 19: Changes implemented or plans to implement in PSs

As seen in the table above, owing to the responsibility they have as part of being a PS, 37.6% of the leaders indicate that they are applying or planning to apply new and/or different plans with their students. This is the change that is mentioned the most by leaders. Conversely, many leaders (30.4%), respond to this superficially and claim that they have made academic improvements although they do not identify concrete changes implemented on the ground. Additionally, 29.6% the leaders maintain that they have created changes regarding their teaching staff based on the rights that come in conjunction with PSs whilst 12.8% suggest that they are receiving support from outside because PSs are not only provided with this right but also encouraged to do so. A limited number of the leaders point out that they have made or plan to make changes to their facilities (5.6%) and their systems to prepare their students for the standardised exams (4.8%). However, 28% clearly state that they have not applied any real change and they do not have any plans either. They argue that the reason for this is that in reality, they are not empowered and/or allowed to do so. The interviews were conducted with school leaders considering the survey outcomes to provide broader perspectives concerning the impact of the policy in the schools. Seven themes under five categories emerged based on the thematic analyses of the interviews. The categories comprise 'freedom', 'accountability', 'innovation', 'other highlighted effects' and 'side-effects', as mentioned previously. As seen in Table 18, all the themes relating to the freedom category are regarding teacher recruitment on account of the changes made to PS policy. The changes in accountability and responsibility fulfil the accountability category. The 'innovation' category

consists of two themes: ‘better students and better teacher- readiness’ and ‘innovation supports project flexibility’. The changes regarding expectations were also determined as significant based on the thematic analysis, while the related themes are classified under the ‘other highlighted effects’ category. To conclude, the result of the policy was also a consideration in the interviews and broadened the gap between schools and harm to the relationships between schools were included in the ‘side-effects’ category as a result of the findings. Each of the themes are explored below in this chapter with direct quotations from the interviewees also presented.

Freedom

Freedom is the first category and it includes the themes of 'a partial and limited recruitment freedom' and 'implementation effects (a great opportunity only for some)'. In the survey, school leaders were asked whether PS leaders have more freedom than other school leaders. The results are presented below with significant differences based on the PS types before the themes and details about them obtained from the interviews.

Do you think that project school leaders have more authority and independence than other schools?	
	%
Yes	40.0
No	51.2
Not sure	8.8
Total	100.0

Table 20: Freedom changes in PSs

As seen in Table 20, leaders are separated into two different opinions regarding the increase in freedom after becoming a PS. While 51.2% of them argue that there is no difference from other schools, 40% of the leaders claim that the freedoms they have are greater than other schools, whilst 8.8% are unsure.

As mentioned previously, more detailed interviews were conducted with the changes in teacher recruitment being the most mentioned freedom in this area. According to leaders, this area is where the most significant modifications have been produced based on the policy. 'A partial and limited recruitment freedom' and 'implementations and effects' are the themes that emerged under this category. These are the themes related to schools' teacher recruitment policy. These are presented below based on the interviewees' perspectives with direct quotations from them.

A partial and limited recruitment freedom

PSs policy offered freedom in terms of the recruitment of teaching staff to the schools to some degree. As indicated earlier, according to the leaders, this change is interpreted as the most significant change that came with PSs in an extremely centralised education system. Moreover, many leaders mostly define being a PS by indicating this change only. PSL2 says that it is the most significant change and PSL1 argues that being a PS means that you are allowed to choose your own teachers.

“The most significant modification is that Project Schools are closed to the central teacher appointment. This means that if there is a vacancy and a new position emerges, teacher recruitment is done for certain periods, not directly by central management, but on the basis of our proposals.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“In short, this (being a PS) means that you are allowed to choose your own teachers and your programme has more flexibility based on your projects.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

However, this freedom is evaluated as partial and limited by school leaders. Three main arguments have been identified as supporting this viewpoint. First, schools or leaders are still not authorised to replace or lay off their current staff. They are only allowed to propose new teachers for an empty position or if a new position emerges. There is an eight-year rule for this, after eight years teachers in PSs are required to be replaced. However, it should be noted that after four years, school leaders are asked whether or not to continue with these teachers, especially as their opinions are important. Nevertheless, if a teacher was appointed to the

school before the process of becoming a PS was initiated, he/she was provided the right to stay in that school for another eight years by means of the court's decision. According to leaders, at first, policy-makers had aimed to replace them promptly but the court prevented this. As seen below, PSL4 and PSL2 emphasise this limitation.

“If there is a place or need in our teaching staff, we can propose someone who is already appointed to our city or district for that place or need ...but we cannot replace our current staff even if we are not happy to work with them ... I guess in 2022 we will have a voice on that if the current practice continues.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

"So, it's kind of a partial delegation of authority ... It gives an opportunity for us to select the best teacher for an empty position. In other words, it provides the school administration with this authority, this power. But this has not yet been fully implemented.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Second, leaders suggest that they can only propose a teacher among the ones who are already appointed in their region or city by way of a central appointment. It means that teachers should already have been appointed to another school in the region or city. Hence, leaders are simply allowed to recruit a teacher from another.

“We are authorised to select and appoint that position if there is a vacancy in our teaching staff, but only among the teachers who are already appointed by a central appointment in our city or district. So, they're generally teachers from other schools.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Lastly, schools cannot recruit their teachers directly, approval from higher authorities is required. Consequently, that implies that they can only recommend teachers to the higher authorities, although they also add that their proposals are decisive. PSL3 evaluates this as a requirement and provides an example from their own experiences-

"We can recommend teachers, after agreeing with them, but of course, the authorities' approval is required. So, it's really a partial and arbitrary freedom, but better than nothing. To be honest, I mean, last year for instance, I suggested eight teachers that I would like to work with, but only two of them could be appointed. The directorate in the district rejected some of them and the provincial directorate rejected some of them. ...I was once told that 'we know this teacher and we do not agree with his thoughts' or the teachers in disadvantaged regions were not expected to be displaced.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Implementations- Effects (A great opportunity only for some)

Initially, regarding the implementation and processes, leaders argue that the MoNE has not set any regulations or standards. Thus, leaders had to set the rules and standards. A few leaders argue that there is chaos and different applications due to the lack of regulation and standards. They claim that each leader seeks to develop their own system and standards. Therefore, regulation and standards set by the MoNE are vital. PSL1 points out this lack-

“...this is our implementation, the MoNE do not provide and regulation or standards. ...I myself built this. In other words, for us, this is a specific method for us, there is no defined method, there is no record or procedure determined by the related regulation.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

In contrast, leaders stress that the effects of this change are incredibly positive despite this problem. They see it as an extremely positive and necessary development but not enough. They undeniably would like to be able to create their own teams and have the power to replace teachers if it is not possible to work with some of them. They see this lack of this power as a serious shortcoming in the current system. PSL4 points out this issue by indicating the problems they face in their school currently and provides a picture of this perspective-

“...in my school, there are teachers who have been working here for 30, 32, 20 and 25 years ...no one can change their places. Rotation is absolutely necessary for the teachers to improve the effort and to increase productivity ... Teachers need to know that their performance will be evaluated and whether or not to work with them in the next few years will be determined according to this performance. ...They need to be pulled into more self-sacrificing and more competent work. So I think it is an opportunity. It will surely have a positive effect as a contribution in a slightly motivating and compelling way. Moreover, I believe it will have a positive effect on teachers to establish good relationships with students and to be good examples and role-models for them outside of the class too ...It is not enough but better and some schools benefited from that more. We are looking forward to it.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

As a final remark, in the survey, the leaders were asked how the policy has affected their staff recruitment processes. The results and significant differences based on school types are presented below.

How did being a PS affect staff
--

recruitment issues?	
	%
Negative	19.2
Positive	43.2
Positive but	8.0
Same	29.6
Total	100.0

Table 21: Effects of the teacher recruitment changes

As seen in Table 21, more than half of the leaders see its impact as positive. However, 8% add that the impact is not enough. Conversely, 19.2% of leaders evaluate the effects as negative and 29.6% of them do not see any tangible effect.

Accountability

Sense of accountability and responsibility

Briefly, PS leaders claim that their perceptions and sense of accountability and responsibility have improved after becoming a PS.

“Personally, this kind of school excited me and I felt that my responsibilities have increased ...I know it is not an easy job and harder than being a normal school principal because you have to be self-sacrificing and devoted without any extra financial benefit, but it is also more satisfying and worth it.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Leaders associate this change with the increase in the expectations from them and relatively more authority provided them. Certain leaders attach greater meaning to being a PS, such as being vital for the nation's future. Thus, according to them, the feeling of responsibility and accountability has increased naturally. Leaders also indicate that being a PS has had a positive effect on their teachers' feelings of responsibility. However, they see this effect as limited and insufficient. They associate this situation with the teacher recruitment system and the delay in the implementation of the new recruitment authority that came with the PS policy.

“... you feel your country's responsibility to your nation. Your superiors are also there but the responsibility here is more than a feeling of accountability towards your superiors. So, you feel responsible to yourself, ... to your country, ...to

children. You feel like 'I have to use this power for the benefit of our people, for the benefit of the nation' in the best way” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

In addition, it appears that for a number of PSs (Imam Hatip Schools, for example), new accountability measures emerged. They point out that they are provided with a 'vision document' and they are asked to provide an annual report accordingly. Not all schools are asked for this report, only some PSs. It includes questions concerning their projects and developments related to being a PS. Thus, as expected, this also increases the feeling of accountability for school leaders.

“We are provided a vision document that indicates the expectations from us as Project Schools (Imam Hatip). And to be honest, accounted and audited based on them. We are presenting annual reports regarding them to our general directorate.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Innovation

As seen in Table 18, 'better students and better teachers- readiness' and 'innovation support-project flexibility', have emerged as themes under the category of innovation based on the PS leaders' evaluations in the interviews.

First, the PS leaders claim that as schools they are much more ready, equipped and qualified to be more innovative thanks to having better students and better teachers in their schools.

"In terms of innovation in the school, I see associated positive effects. On the one hand, our teachers are not only good at their jobs but also aware and ready to meet our expectations. They understand that this is a project school so that they are prepared to develop and implement new projects... For the students here, from the very beginning, there is something similar, they are hardworking, more demanding as well because they see that being here as a privilege ... So, in short, high-quality teachers and students meet, join together here ...; it changes everything” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Second, PS leaders claim that they are more supported to be innovative and they are given more flexibility by the authorities after becoming PSs. Similarly, they indicate that they are expected to produce and apply new projects in their schools. Based on these aspects they argue that “there is a motivation to be innovative and create new projects, ...(and) being a project school allows this motivation to continue and even get stronger” (PSL3, Female

leader, Sep 2019). Additionally, they proclaim that they are allowed to sign agreements and acquire services from other public and/or private organisations or institutions for example. According to them, this has opened a route to improve the education in their schools. When they are asked why this cannot possibly be implemented in schools other than PSs, they argue that it is unlikely because they are not supported in this regard and that these schools do not make use of this particular approach.

“I believe that some opportunities have been created to encourage our schools to move forward... to be more forward-looking and innovative... and new projects are expected and supported. That's why this is a process that I support.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“...some of these could, of course, be implemented by other schools, maybe, but in the Project Schools it is different because we have extra support or were even encouraged and there was some pressure in this respect. But feel that we have a little more flexibility and opportunities or tolerance from the central management.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Lastly, PSL3 gives an unusual example in order to illustrate the greater flexibility and tolerance they experience from the authorities in this respect. This even can be evaluated as breaking the legal rules and being outside of the standards. The central authorities encouraged or gave the leaders the confidence to act this way.

"I feel more tolerance, more flexibility. Sometimes for instance, the regulations may be too strict, so we do something to overcome it, like we assign a teacher to a class but officially show it differently in order to get their payments. Or for a project, we assign a teacher but demonstrate that again as a supporting course in order to get the payment. Otherwise, these works cannot be done. I feel a little more understanding from the authorities as a project school. I think it is beneficial for both students and teachers, so I feel like it is fair and ethical in itself, even though it's not entirely legal.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Other Highlighted Effects

Expectation change: Privilege plus new and/or more expectations

Expectation change is another theme that emerged based on the thematic analysis of the interviews conducted with PS leaders. It is classified under the category of other highlighted effects because it was not one of the survey outcomes and it is not related to the established categories. Two different aspects have been attached to this theme. The first one is 'privilege

expectation', which pertains more to the new expectations of schools or school leaders after becoming PSs. The second one, the aspect of 'new and more expectations' is more about the new expectations that the authorities, parents or students have from schools after they become PSs, because according to leaders, the changes in the other stakeholders' expectations are also significant.

There are three main indications observed in the interviews concerning leaders' expectations regarding privileges. First, they argue that the number of PSs should be limited, the number should not be increased and PSs should be special schools that are well supported. Second, they claim that PSs should be supported financially more than other schools and that their teachers' wages should be better than other schools' because teachers are expected to work more in these schools. Third, leaders argue that not only they but also many others see these schools (PSs) as especially important for the future of the country and for future generations. Therefore they attach greater meaning to these schools along with the expectations associated with privileges.

As seen in the quotes below, PSL5 argues that the numbers of PSs should be limited so that these schools remain special otherwise it does not make sense, PSL1 asserts that these schools and teachers should be supported financially, whereas PSL2 claims that these schools are crucial for the future of the country.

“These schools should remain special and they should be limited in terms of numbers. In other words, this school is meaningless when there is another school in my district. It reduces the quality here. I mean, if all kinds of students can attend these schools, that qualification and success will drop. Therefore, I think their numbers should be limited, but they should be well supervised and they should be very well supported.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

“Teachers who work here should be given some special rights and privileges because they are selected, hard-working teachers who do far better in state schools than other teachers. But now with the same rights, every teacher gets the same wage, even though our teachers sacrifice more. No differences exist.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“I personally see this kinds of schools as very important, ...there should be some extra support for them, ...for the future of the country, for future generations.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Regarding the new as well as additional expectations, on the other hand, PS leaders primarily indicate that the expectations placed on them are exceedingly high from all parties involved. They claim that these expectations have increased and that after becoming a PS there are more. It appears that acquiring the best or very successful students from their region is the most important reason behind these expectations of PSs.

“In all respects, expectations for these types of schools (PSs) are very high.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“I can say the expectations at Project Schools are very high. There are various expectations, different requirements and we are trying to satisfy them. While much less would be sufficient for a normal school to be seen as sufficient, this is not enough here.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

“...these are very successful students; therefore, the parents expect much more from these schools, of course ... More importantly, society has expectations and sees them as very important for the nation's future.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Leaders also believe that these are occasionally exhausting for them. Moreover, they argue that the support provided by central management or community is not enough and schools' experiences do not always match these expectations. PSL3 criticises the perceptions and behaviours of the parents in this respect and evaluates them as tiring and compelling. Additionally, PSL4 emphasises the imbalance between expectations and their experiences.

"The expectation of parents is very different. They see that having their children here is a blessing provided by them for us so that they can be too demanding. The kid coming here, for instance, is seen as having to go to a good university or having a very good career. These increase the burden of our work and tire us ...it is exhausting.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

“The expectations of these schools are very high ...not just from the State, but from parents, students and society as well. But with them, opportunities and rights don't match. On the one hand, the quality and success are expected, and on the other hand, these schools face many fundamental difficulties ...such as financial ...(that) doesn't seem reasonable.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Finally, leaders also claim that even though these changes have improved their reputations among the people they have also caused negativity for other schools in this respect in their regions. Furthermore, this situation establishes the theme of the next category, which is titled side effects.

Side Effects

Various negative effects on the relationships were anticipated because of the changes, such as recruiting teachers from other schools and opposition in the media. Moreover, the surveys by Reform reveal some of the effects of academisation on the schools' relationships with LAs and other schools accordingly. Therefore, this subject was in the interview content as well as two questions in the PSs survey. The table below shows school leaders' answers to these specific questions.

	How becoming a PS has affected the relationship with the National Education Authority?	How becoming a PS has affected the relationship with other schools?
	%	%
Greatly worsened	2.4	0
Worsened	3.2	8.8
About the same	68.8	60.8
Improved	18.4	23.2
Greatly improved	6.4	6.4
Total	100.0	100.0

Table 22: Effects on the relationships with local national education authorities (NEA) and other schools

As seen in Table 22, around one-quarter (18.4+6.4) of the leaders claim that their relationships with their local national education authority (NEA) have greatly improved after becoming a PS. However, much more than this, the majority of leaders (68.8%) state that their relationships are not really affected and they remained roughly the same. These results noticeably differ from the academies' results (this is interpreted in the discussion chapter in detail).

As mentioned above, this subject was also the focus of the interviews with the leaders. And even though there was no strong indication of side-effects in the survey results, themes regarding the increasing gap between schools and the side-effects on the relationships were determined based on the interviews with school leaders. It is a remarkable point here because most of the school leaders answered that there has been no apparent effect on their relationships depending on the PSs policy, although in the interviews, they point out several adverse effects with schools and local authorities. Moreover, beyond their relationships, leaders highlight the huge gap between schools as a problematic area and contend that the PSs policy is intensifying this gap. Therefore, these are analysed as side-effects based on the interviews conducted with leaders.

“Let me tell you that the difference seems to be increasing, the gap between the Project and other schools is becoming greater. For other schools, it has created negatives and disadvantages.” (PSL6, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“...this situation has created huge problems for some neighbouring schools.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

According to school leaders, the biggest problem for other schools is their deteriorating reputations and the difficulty they have in attracting students to their schools. Leaders claim that several schools already had this problem but PSs have exacerbated that problem for other schools in their regions. They also specify that vocational schools and non-Project Imam Hatip schools are the ones that are negatively impacted the most.

“the first choice of the students is Project Schools ...no one wants to go to other schools ...especially normal (non-Project) Imam Hatip and vocational schools are facing this difficulty extremely ...vocational schools are about to die, ...non-Project Imam Hatip schools are in a very difficult position; there are radical discourses like ‘Project Schools are killing other schools’”. (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

PSL2 stresses the importance of vocational education and the value and requirements of vocational schools in detail. Subsequently, he argues that vocational schools are failing, but people are ignoring that-

“...People don't say as much but all kids want to go to Project Schools or Anatolian Schools. Vocational schools have failed for two years to accept pupils; 3-4 years in it will get even worse. Hundreds, maybe thousands of vocational schools are not going to be able to find applicants, because they're coming to an end. ...There is a lot more investment in vocational schools... but there are no students, the students do not want to go ... There is a possibility of wasting a lot of many resources ... We need to identify this problem, hiding it does not help anyone, otherwise there will be no solution.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Furthermore, it should not be too hard to recognise that given rights or advantages, for instance taking other schools' best teachers and attracting the best students are not helping to close the gap between schools. It is adversely increasing it. Consequently, leaders reason that their relationships with other schools have been negatively impacted and they feel this especially during the process of recruiting their teachers.

“To be honest our relationships with other school leaders are damaged because of the teacher recruitment. ...and also, due to taking the best students in the region. Many of my relationships have been harmed because of that. For example, I was accused of stealing or taking their best teachers.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

4.5 Q4: Overall Perspectives and Problematic Areas

Question 4: What are the problem areas and overall perspectives of school leaders regarding the policies?

The problematic areas and overall perspectives of school leaders with reference to the policies are the focus of the last research question (RQ4). Leaders are asked accordingly in the surveys and in the interviews. The themes in these areas are presented in the following table below for both policies as an overall picture prior to the details.

Academies	Project Schools	Categories
Themes	Themes	
Pressures- Inspections- Not real freedom	Unbalance- Lack of Authority and freedom	Problematic Areas- Would change
Horror stories- being politized	Freedom risks- Lack of inspection and guidance	
Staff and finance-related problems	Staff- Staffing- Rights Finance related problems	
Support	Conditional support	Overall Perspectives
Advice to other schools	It's Future- Who knows	
It's future		

Table 23: What are the problem areas and overall perspectives of school leaders regarding the policies? (Research Question 4)

As seen in Table 23, the themes are classified under two main categories based on the fourth research question, which are 'problematic and would-change areas', along with 'overall perspectives'. Three themes emerge in the category of problematic and would-change areas for academies. The first one implies that the freedom is not real due to the inspections and pressures schools are under. The second considers the horror stories and politics about academies as problematic, whilst the last one denotes the staff and finance-related problems experienced by the academies. Similar to academies, three themes emerge in this category for PSs too. First leaders reveal the imbalance between their authority and responsibility and accordingly the arguments about the lack of authority and freedom. In addition to this, leaders identify the risks in the case of an increase in a freedom due to the lack of inspection and guidance for schools. Second, they reveal the problems related to their staff and staff recruitment systems. Lastly, the finance-related problems form the final theme of this category for PSs.

Two parallel themes emerge for the category of overall perspectives for both policies. The first themes apply to leaders' support of the policies and their advice to other schools and the second themes pertain to their future perspectives regarding the policies. All the themes and related survey results are explored below in this chapter in relation to academies and PSs. Moreover, policy-learning outcomes are designed and discussed based on these findings. It should be mentioned that they are presented in the next discussion chapter because it is considered that these are meaningful only along with the thematic literature and related discussions.

4.5.1 Academies

Problematic and would-change areas

In order to provide a broader understanding, more detailed interviews are conducted with school leaders regarding the problematic points in the light of the survey findings. It can be

argued here that problematic areas, such as pressures/inspections or financial/staff-related problems beyond the survey findings are analysed depending on the interviews. The following three following themes emerged accordingly and they are presented below as a part of the problematic and would-change category. These are titled 'not real freedom: pressures-inspections', 'horror stories-being politicised' and 'staff and finance-related problems'.

Not real freedom: Pressures- Inspections

“...we recognise that every school is only one inspection away from problems.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

As AL1 implies in the quote above, basically, school leaders believe that schools are controlled via inspections and everything is directed based on the criteria of these inspections. As a result, it is not real freedom even though schools have more freedom to some degree within the academy model. As can be expected, leaders claim that Ofsted performs the leading role in this matter. Regarding this, AL3 uses strong phrases such as dictatorship for this situation and argues that it is not real freedom and inspections are directing and decisive in most aspects. Furthermore, AL3 adds that they should be able to do what is best for their students as the leaders of schools.

“...you are tied into all the government regulations so that all of the curriculum, all of the attendance procedures, exclusions, finance, everything, is all set by central government ...So, there isn't the freedom to do what you want ...we all have to do what we're told ...It's the issue around the accountability matters in this country and the dictatorship around Ofsted ... It's putting too big burden on what you can do in schools now ...That is a huge issue in this country ...You are being bulldozed into what you need to do by Ofsted ...I think you need the freedom around the regulator to do what's best for your children.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

AL5 argues that the inspection system is not sufficient to inspect development in a school as regards all these aspects because it is based on numerical progress although not everything can be measured numerically. In addition, AL5 adds that this is causing some very good and unique applications to stop as they are not counted as beneficial by the system especially in disadvantaged schools. Thus, leaders see this problem as being much more effective in

disadvantaged schools. AL1, as a school leader who worked in a disadvantaged school previously, argues that these schools are in a much more challenging position in this respect. AL1 continues by adding that these schools don't have those freedoms to the same extent as other schools in practice and a leader would feel worse and constrained in a disadvantaged school. Accordingly, leaders reason that inspections should take into account the school-specific circumstances, realities and conditions. Moreover, certain leaders recognise the increasing effect of the EEF (Education and Endowment Foundation) in this regard in addition to Ofsted. Several of them strongly claim that the EEF is another actor harming schools' abilities and the ability to be innovative in particular in terms of school-specific contexts.

“...that looks good in outstanding schools ... I don't feel constrained here but in my previous school, I would have felt more constrained because attendance wouldn't be so good, level of engagement with students wouldn't be so good, behaviour definitely wasn't as good. You couldn't recruit the really good staff into the school and keep a hold of really good staff. And you always felt like you were fighting fires so that the driver there was to get up to a level that you had to escape the clutches of the office there, then we'd go into a category...Ofsted should be satisfied...” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

To conclude, a number of leaders suggest that many MATs are opening a new type of school called 'studio schools' for the students who are expected to perform poorly. Obtaining higher results for their main schools from the inspections is the aim behind this. This illustrates that the inspection system and related pressures are also causing illegal methods or back-door applications. AL1 states this clearly in the following interesting example:

“I lot of the big chains set up studio schools ...(for) those students, who I know are going to perform really poorly. If I could take them off the school roll, then they don't count against our results and all of a sudden my results look much better. ... So, they don't count against my results in our main school, they sit in the studio school, they get to do the same curriculum and do the same exam, but the results count against the studio school. But the studio school bizarrely doesn't fit into your league tables. So, it's a con, it is just offered in another name. ... It's all about results ... because that's still driving a lot of the picture.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Horror stories- Politics

Academies were subjected to tough discussions and accusations in the media. Leaders argue that an atmosphere and perceptions are generated regarding the academies by way of politics and the horror stories in the media. For instance, AL4 states that even though there is no supporting evidence, in the media, academies are shown as harmful for the other schools in the same region. Or AL1 points out that there are many horror stories about financial irregularities and the mismanagement of academies even though academies undergo much more robust financial scrutiny.

“I know that the academy sector is full of horror stories about financial irregularities and mismanagement, but my experience has been that they undertake far greater financial checks than I've ever experienced within the maintained sector. ... The financial scrutiny of academies is a million times more precise and more detailed than the maintained sector.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

School leaders believe that these stories affected the shareholders' perceptions, such as teachers and parents and also increased the tension. AL1 claims that the teachers' unions are part of this and they repeat all the negative stories, resulting in an increase in the friction between staff and governing bodies. In addition, some of the leaders added that, in some regions, LAs and councils from the opposition party adopted political standing in this regard and they distorted the reality.

Finally, as well as the countless horror stories in the media, leaders recognise several of the issues and problems in some academies. However, they argue that most are not directly related to academies and also existed before the academies were established. So according to them, they are more complex issues rooted in a number of fundamental chronic problems but generally discussed over simplified by the media. AL2 says that many similar problems exist in the maintained schools as well but they are not addressed frequently in the media as much as academies because they are just not popular. Furthermore, according to AL4, many of the issues are more complex and are not discussed properly.

“I think there's some quite big press campaigns about the academies, but you know, things happen and go wrong in maintained schools as well. It's just not popular in the press. ... it's not really linked to whether or not it's an Academy. I also take the view that there are bad actors in all walks of life. People who want to steal or do bad things will do bad things and steal, it wouldn't matter if it's a maintained school or an Academy school. That can be remembered by all sorts of unfortunate things going on long before academies even existed.” (AL2, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“...there are always very complex issues ...I don't think academisation created (them). I think that these are complex issues that are often spoken about and difficult things to resolve ... and they persist and then get muddled because they're an academy, which is why they are doing this ... That is a really over-simplistic view of what is a much bigger issue.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Staff and finance-related problems

According to leaders, teaching staff and the finance-related problems are the two areas leaders are confronting now and believe will continue to be challenging in the near future for academies. AL1 asserts that the financial challenges and pressures they feel as school leaders have increased in the last ten years even though they benefited financially from the policy in the early years.

“The other thing is the financial challenges that you face as an Academy ...things like the pension deficit zone. ...I think schools over the last 10 years have been under increasing financial pressures and early adopters benefited but later adopters definitely didn't.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Accordingly, leaders also claim that there is a degree of confusion and uncertainty regarding the funding of the schools. AL6 implies that funding remains a question for schools and contends that academies should be provided with more funds in order to be innovative and use their freedoms.

“...funding remains a question. So, I think there should be more freedom or perhaps a little bit more, that the funding should have been a little bit more generous to allow academies to have exercised that freedom, or at least there'd be funds to apply to this sort of innovation ... some funding for innovation.” (AL6, Male leader, Jan 2020)

Regarding problems with teaching staff, on the other hand, leaders maintain that the problems of finding and/or retaining skilled people in the schools particularly with respect to teaching are getting worse. They highlight the serious shortages in some fields, such as maths and the

need for action to be taken to solve this. AL3 strongly argues that the teacher shortage is an important problem and it is becoming a crisis in England, whilst AL4 says the sciences, MFL and maths are the fields where the most difficulties are being faced in this regard.

“...the teacher shortage is a big issue ... There just needs to be a realisation that once the economy grows people won't go into teaching because it's too difficult and it's too badly paid to make it attractive. But the pay is not always the issue, people come into it and get absolutely hammered by it and the hours and the difficulty on a daily basis in a school ... a crisis ... And a lot of really good young people that trained, we put loads of investment in them, they have done really well and they then say, 'all right, I'm going abroad' or I'm going to do this ... then you lose them ... I think that the government needs to address those issues. The recruitment crisis is a big issue...” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“...our teaching staff we are primarily recruiting through an advert ... Some areas we find it very difficult ... the sciences, MFL and maths, we still find that very difficult.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Overall Perspectives

The category of overall perspectives consists of two themes, which are 'support/ advice to other schools' and 'its future - direction of travel'. While the first one represents leaders' overall support for the academisation policy and their advice to other schools, the second one includes their perceptions about the future of the policy. The themes and related outcomes from the surveys are presented below with quotes from the school leaders.

Support/Advice for other schools

Overall, not surprisingly, leaders' strong support for the policy is clearly seen and they appear very confident with their positions in this respect. They provide strong arguments behind their support. The remarks pertaining to 'freedom', 'effectiveness', 'autonomy', 'innovation and entrepreneurship', 'higher standards' are the rhetoric of the ones that are frequently used by school leaders while they are expressing their arguments.

Many leaders highlight the freedom and autonomy that came with academisation as important arguments for their support. AL3 argues that there is no way any school wants to go back to local authority control and AL2 claims that as leaders, they enjoy the autonomy and being the

decision-maker. As seen in the quotes below, AL5 and AL4 clearly express their support for the policy.

“...academies are a positive thing and a strong thing and I think we should continue with schools potentially becoming academies, but for all of the right reasons and the right rationale for that particular school.” (AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020)

“I’m a real supporter of academisation. I think it is about skills being responsible and the steering of their own ship and having the responsibility but also the rights that go with that. So, you can make decisions, which can be a good thing I think.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

AL4 simply argues that this system is much more effective than the previous one because it is led by the people and experts on the ground and within the field of teaching. Moreover, AL6 claims that the policy will be even more effective and beneficial in the long-term by establishing higher standards, more choice for parents, a culture of innovation and opportunities for staff development.

“I think it (academisation) will bring positives. I think the positives will be higher standards in some areas and some schools. I think there'll be more choices for parents in certain areas. I think that our profession benefits from that culture of innovation that we're speaking about and also benefits from there being opportunities so that the staff as a whole, the staff body will be stronger...”

“I actually think the model has got so much more effective ...I think partly because it's practitioner-led. It's led by experts within the field of teaching currently, in the areas that they are experts, as opposed to people that have become quite removed from the classroom, from the schools and quite removed from the current climate.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

At this point, the perspectives of leaders were asked in the interviews with the aim of gaining a greater understanding regarding their recommendations to other schools to become academies. Leaders are primarily recommending other schools to become academies mostly based on their experiences as academies. Obvious remarks in this respect can be observed in the following quotations:

“...for me personally, yes, I would say that I enjoy the freedom that comes with it.” (AL2, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“Yes I would advise because I do think it gives a head some degree of freedom, and I think it's quite good to not answer to a local authority because I don't think some local authorities know what they're doing. I think some of them are not very good.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

"Definitely I would advise them but for all of the right reasons and the right rationale for that particular school." (AL5, Male leader, Jan 2020)

'Freedom', 'autonomy' and 'LA problems' are the arguments frequently applied while they are supporting their reasons for this advice. As stated earlier under research question two, these are one of their main reasons to become an academy. However, some leaders also add that it might change from school to school and school-specific realities and circumstances should have been considered for that decision. For instance, AL6, claims that it might change from school to school based on their circumstances, but strongly advises that schools should chose to be part of MATs if they are not yet academies. Likewise, AL4 claims that a LA school can also be incredibly successful but also adds that because of the lack of clarity as regards who is in charge, it is just a little bit harder.

“You can be a local authority school and very successful, you can be an academy and very successful. I would say it's you we are all masters in that respect and can still be as in a local authority school. It's just a little bit harder there I think because it does seem as though there's a lot of power struggles between who's in charge. I think if that's the case, then actually you're better off cutting loose and doing it yourself. So, I wouldn't say to a school become an academy, but neither would I say don't. I think you've got to look at it. You have got to look at the circumstances and what the offers are. ...but it (academisation) has been an absolutely fantastic opportunity for us.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

It's Future- Direction of travel

Looking at the future, leaders expect that the academisation policy will continue and academy schools will always be a part of the system. They see the academies as the direction of travel for the schooling system in England. AL2 maintains that the key policymakers and creators of the academies are in charge again, so a continuation and acceleration is expected. Furthermore, AL1 claims that even if a change occurs in the government and the opposition

party is in charge, academy schools will continue to exist as the implementation has gone too far.

“Even if Labour were to get back into government, I think we've gone too far down the route... So, I think we will always have academies now. I think they're here to stay. I think there's so many people that have got used to that flexibility and freedom that I think they would struggle with schools going back into the arms of local authorities. And I don't think that's the right idea either. So, I think they are here to stay.” (AL1, Male leader, Jan 2020)

In addition, several of the leaders are of the opinion that the policy will continue although they believe that it will not be as aggressive and that in the next wave schools will be encouraged to combine and collaborate for further improvements that give them greater freedoms and power. AL4 supports this view and argues that the partnership is necessary and MATs will be the way forward in this regard and adds that MATs should not evolve and become something akin to how LAs are. AL5 also shares similar views and argues that MATs might be very beneficial in improving smaller schools much more rapidly than other ways. Moreover, AL3 says the government in practice has now terminated single academisation.

“I think the process has slowed down at the moment. The government is a little bit nervous of it at the moment, but I don't think it will stop. I think the policy of academisation or free schools and all of the different kinds of things that are on offer will continue.” (AL3, Female leader, Jan 2020)

“What we need is the partnership within education ... So, Academy Trusts, I think is probably the way forward. What they need to be careful with regarding Academy Trusts is that they don't replicate what the local authority is ... We need to make sure that in the next wave of this, we don't replicate the thing that we were scared of with local authorities.” (AL4, Female leader, Jan 2020)

Therefore, as a final remark, there are two ways to become an academy; single conversion and being part of a bigger multi-academy trust (MAT). Hence, it was the prediction towards single academisation that will be stopped but MATs or this method will continue. Accordingly, AL6 asserts that there is no way to return back and the expansion of

academisation is inevitable because freedom and autonomy for schools is the direction of travel and LAs are not equipped anymore to manage schools.

“...the government seems to now be a closed book on this at the moment. There was a time when it was very clear that they wanted to force the academisation of all schools ... we seem to have gone quiet on that. I think that will probably accelerate again. I don't think it's the top of the current government's priority list but given that...I think that the direction of travel is continued freedom and autonomy for schools. I don't see there being a return. ...I think that where we are here, the local authority doesn't really want to control the secondary schools, because it doesn't actually have the infrastructure now in the education services to cope with that. So a point of no return is reached, I think. So, I think increased academisation is inevitable.” (AL6, Male leader, Jan 2020)

4.5.2 Project Schools

As illustrated above, similar to the academies, ‘problematic and would-change areas’ and ‘overall perspectives’ are the categories regarding the PSs part in relation to the last research question.

Three different themes emerge in support of the first category. The ‘imbalance’ theme considers the perceptions of leaders regarding the lack of authority and freedom when compared to their responsibilities. The second theme represents the leaders' problems with their staff and staff recruitment systems, whereas the third theme is related to the financial problems associated with schools. Alternatively, two different themes emerge for the second category titled overall perspectives. The first theme in this category demonstrates leaders' conditional support of the policy and limited advice to other schools. Finally, the second theme considers the future perspectives of leaders as regards the policy.

Problematic Areas- Would change

Questions are included in the survey regarding this category. Hence, initially, the survey outcomes, which also guided the interviews, are presented here, before more detailed aspects from the interviews. First, leaders are asked that what they would change about being a PS. Table 24 below illustrates their results in this respect. Second, similar to academies, leaders are questioned about the possible reasons for not using the freedoms given. Table 25 shows

their results to this question as an indicator for the category pertaining to problematic and would-change areas. Lastly, even though no significant differences are noticed in relation to the school types regarding the ‘would-change’ question, significant differences emerge concerning the perceptions of leaders about the reasons for not using the freedoms. Therefore, these outcomes are also presented following the survey results with the distributed percentages relating to PS types (see Table 32).

One thing the leader would change about being a PS- 19							
	Autonomy, authority, freedom, power	Staffing autonomy	Number, privilege	Budget, Facility	Support	Accountability, inspection	Teaching staff
%	<u>32.8</u>	<u>28.8</u>	<u>27.2</u>	<u>20</u>	10.4	6.4	4.8

Table 24: The areas where leaders would make changes if they had the chance

As Table 24 above shows, leaders' biggest concerns and complaints are about their real powers by way of their autonomy, authority or freedoms. Hence, 32.8% clearly state that they would increase their autonomy, authority or freedoms if they had the chance. It gives the impression that staff recruitment is the leading autonomy with 28.8%. More than one-fourth (27.2%) of the leaders also argue that the PSs should be privileged schools; therefore, their numbers should not be increased too much. Consequently, they reveal that they would reduce the number of PSs if they had the chance. In addition, with 20%, school budgets and facilities are seen as a priority areas according to leaders. Regarding accountability and inspection, school leaders contend that there is a need in the system in this respect. Hence, 6.4% say that they would make changes with regards to personal accountability and inspection systems if they had the chance, 10.4% of the leaders evaluate the support provided by the authorities as inadequate therefore they claim that they would increase this if they had an opportunity. Finally, only 4.8% of leaders mention that they would change their teaching staff if they had the chance although considerably more of them want this autonomy (28.8%). In addition, it is

worth noting that, regarding the different PS types, no statistical difference has been identified in things that PS leaders would change if they had the chance (Scheffe Test).

Six different possible reasons are suggested by school leaders as being behind the schools' attitudes for not using the freedoms given. Table 25 below illustrates these areas and their percentages in the survey.

Why freedoms given to school leaders aren't used?						
	Lack of leadership	Lack of autonomy, power	NEA (Local Authority), Political pressure	Regulations, bureaucracy, pressure	They are used!	Other
%	<u>26.45</u>	<u>20.66</u>	<u>14.88</u>	<u>18.18</u>	<u>14</u>	5.78

Table 25: Reasons of not using the freedoms given

More than 26% of the leaders claim that it is the leaders' responsibility to benefit from the freedoms. Therefore, the main reason is the incompetence and lack of leaders ability to lead if schools are not benefiting from the freedoms effectively. Conversely, many leaders also contend that cumbersome and exhausting bureaucracy and regulations (18.18%) and a lack of genuine autonomy and power (20.66%), are the reasons behind not using the freedoms provided. Approximately 15% claim that the attitudes of their local authorities and the political pressures (14.88%) that school leaders face are other reasons behind this fact. Finally, while 14% stress that the freedoms are employed, so they do not see any reason, 4.8% argue there are other reasons.

As stated previously, interviews have been conducted with school leaders to obtain a greater understanding regarding the points that came across. The previously indicated themes that emerged from these interviews are presented below in this chapter along with the related survey parts and quotes from the interviewees.

Imbalance-Lack of Authority and freedom

As seen above, the lack of authority and freedom and imbalance between authorities and responsibilities are not only one of the main reasons for not using the given freedoms, but they are also among the problematic areas where school leaders argue that changes are necessary. Following the survey outcomes above, leaders are also asked about a possible increase in the autonomy and freedom that schools have.

	Do you agree that project school leaders should have more autonomy/freedoms than the current situation?	Do you agree that all school leaders should have more autonomy/freedoms than the current situation?
	%	%
Yes	84.8	67.2
No	12.8	24.0
Not Sure	2.4	8.0
Total	100.0	99.2

Table 26: Leaders' perception about a possible freedom increase in PSs and other schools

School leaders argue that their autonomy and freedom are not sufficient for effective leadership. Most of the PS leaders (84.8%) believe that PS leaders should have more autonomy and freedom (see Table 26). Furthermore, as the table illustrates, more than 67% of PS leaders also assert that not only PS leaders but also all other schools and leaders should have more autonomy/freedoms than the current situation. However, 24% object to this and 8% indicate that they have concerns about this matter. No statistical difference has been identified in leaders' views about an increase in autonomy and freedom for the different types of school (Scheffe Test). Furthermore, leaders are asked whether they want to have authority and independence as a school in certain areas. The results are presented in Table 27 below.

Do you want to have authority and independence as a school in the following areas?											
	Staff Recruitment	Teacher Recruitment	Budget Management	Curriculum	Terms and conditions	Teacher salary/ payment	Student selection	Admission policy	Staff salary/ payment	School year	School days
% (Yes)	83.2	81.6	80	60	52.8	49.6	45.6	42.4	38.4	32.8	16.8

Table 27: The areas where PS leaders would like to have independence

According to these results, more than 80% of the leaders would like to have more authority and/or independence pertaining to budget management, as well as teacher and staff recruitment in general. While almost half would like to have more authority and/or independence in relation to teachers' pay, admission policies, student selection, school terms and conditions, 32.8% want it throughout the school year and 16.8% want it during the school days. Finally, 60% want to have authority and independence as regards the curriculum they offer as schools. Regarding the different PS types, no statistical difference has been identified in the areas where PS leaders would like to have independence for the different school types (Scheffe Test).

As described above, leaders elaborated upon their views in the interview. Principally, PS leaders do not see their authority, power and freedom as sufficient and acceptable in order to manage their schools and meet the expectations. PSL2 and PSL5, for example, express the imbalance between their authorities and responsibilities. Primarily, they argue that they are responsible for everything as school principals but they are not allowed in line with that responsibility. Moreover, PSL5 reveals that he/she is considering quitting the job because of this problem in addition to the stress and as there are no benefits.

“As school leaders, particularly when a problem arises, we are responsible for everything, but we are not allowed that much. That is truly stressful, then. For example, we are responsible for all student transportation or the canteen, but we are not fully authorised to run the services or from where we purchase the services.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Three different areas, where school leaders think they need authority and power mostly, emerge in this respect. First, they believe that their power with respect to the teaching staff is not sufficient and that is causing their schools to be ineffective. Therefore, they believe that the power to promote or fire teachers should be in under the control of the schools themselves. PSL1, for example, argues that it is quite possible to empower leaders in this respect, otherwise attempting to manage schools with that limited authority is challenging. Similarly, PSL2 argues that they still do not have enough power. However, the expectations are exceptionally high and it is not possible to meet these expectations with the current staff and without leadership.

“...we can be authorised as school leaders to be able to reward, promote and encourage our teachers for greater efficiency ...or vice versa like replacing them. It is possible to increase administrative and managerial powers ... These are the ones that come to mind now, but the argument is that the school leaders should certainly be empowered, otherwise these schools cannot be handled successfully because of the lack of authority and thus the lack of successful leadership in most of them is really challenging right now.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Second, school leaders believe that they should have more authority particularly in relation to the on-the-ground matters and/or circumstances that arise during the implementation and school-specific opportunities and positions. PSL2 argues that their intervention would be quicker and more effective if they have the authority and a need arises in the school. Additionally, PSL3 claims that they would benefit much more from their local opportunities and human resources if they had the freedom and power. What is more, PSL2 gives an example of this from his/her own experiences in the school and argues that leaders must be empowered so that they can apply effective solutions to the school-specific issues.

“...the decisions for the school could be much faster, much more responsive. For example, we should not write to the MoNE and wait three months for an answer. They could make decisions and intervene right away. Do not waste time, because you cannot bring back time. The intervention you make later may not make any sense.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Third, leaders claim that a school-specific budget and the power to use it should be established. PSL4 argues that schools should be given more authority than the current situation, with budget use being one of the areas that they should have more control over.

“I definitely think that more authority should be delegated to the schools themselves. It is necessary for efficiency. That might be power on the budget usage, I mean having a budget that can be used freely in order to meet needs and make improvements. Or other in-school things can be added to that because we are the closest people and should be able to solve things at the time.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

In addition, even though leaders strongly claim that they should be provided more freedom as PS leaders, they also express their concerns due to the lack of an established inspection system.

“...we still do not have a proper mechanism for that. Therefore, prior to freedom, good training for leaders and proper accountability or an inspection mechanism are required.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

They point out four areas of risk relating to this concern. First, they believe that there is a lack of professionals and professionalism in the schools to use that freedom properly. The management of financial freedom and such huge budgets are their main concerns in this regard. They argue that the qualities and competencies of school leaders and leadership teams should be developed prior to that. Second, they maintain that they might face political pressures and favouritism during the use of the freedom provided. PSL3, for example, says that they are already facing this kind of annoying situation and argues that this might increase after freedom if precautions are not applied. Third, basically, they specify that even now their workloads are too much to handle and they are very busy. Therefore, they have concerns that it is expected that they will have greater responsibility and considerable workloads with more freedom and that might cause an unmanageable position with the current resources, staff and realities. Lastly, they claim that this might harm their personal relationships, especially with the teachers. While PSL3 links this concern with possible money-related relationships with

staff, PSL1 associates it with the lack of a professional understanding especially regarding recruitment and/or replacement processes.

"...individuals need to be well educated in this respect ... Things would certainly work much better than the current system but there are risks with that much freedom and without a proper inspection and accountability in the system. ...and qualified professionals are needed. A good control system that audits the use of power should be in place. The abuse of this power also needs to be prevented. I can use it well in my own school, but another school, if there is no control, can use it very differently, very badly." (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Staffing and staff recruitment problems

PS leaders reveal three different points as problems regarding this theme. First, they see their power and authority concerning the teachers and teacher recruitment as unsatisfactory. They believe that they should be empowered to be able to create their teams and have a healthy and effective working atmosphere in their schools. For instance, as well as showing similar thoughts regarding increasing their authority, PSL2 and PSL4 complain about the failure of their teaching staff and they state that they will have to fire some of them when they are empowered to do so.

"It is very important to create your own team, have a proper working atmosphere, support each other and work with passion and harmony. Therefore, because all of these are based on that, the teacher recruitment mandate given to schools or school leaders is very important ... You do not have any power over a teacher who is centrally appointed even if he doesn't do his job. You can do nothing, you can't fire, you can't apply any penalty, so this situation not only harms your reputation as the leader but also the school's entire working atmosphere." (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Second, school leaders claim that the grounds and opportunities to motivate and encourage their staff are incredibly limited and inadequate. They primarily argue that expectations from PSs and their teachers are extremely high and that they are expected to work with passion and more than other teachers. Nevertheless, they are not provided with anything extra in return and nor do they have the opportunity to motivate them. Leaders state that there are no opportunities to inspire and increase the performance of their teaching staff even though they

are supposed to work more than other teachers. They reveal that they see this as an important shortcoming of PSs.

“As school leaders, it is difficult for us to motivate our teachers because there is no outside mechanism for motivation. For leaders, it is a duty but difficult to achieve. I see this as a shortcoming. Leaders can be empowered accordingly by increasing promotion scores, performance assessments or financial reward.” (PSL3, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Finally, leaders indicate that personal rights for both, teachers and leaders, should be enhanced to attract, recruit and keep high-profile professionals. For instance, PSL1 claims that good teachers can be motivated financially. However, on the other hand, PSL5 states that he/she has some doubts about financial motivation and contends that higher values must be adopted instead of money.

“Even though many leaders and teachers agree ... I have doubts about expectations regarding financial motivation because there is a high risk of employing the wrong person ... Some may choose a position because of this financial attraction, but in the field of education, I believe that sincerity, devotion and true passion are much more important than money. ...(therefore), I have doubts about it, but I also think that not only for teachers but also for leaders, the motivational basis is very weak.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

Finance related problems

The finance-related problems establish the last theme of this category with respect to PSs. In the interviews, without an exception, it is evident that all the school leaders complain about the financial problems they face as schools. Leaders claim that even though there have been a few limited improvements from following the PS policy for their schools, the importance of financial problems remains the same.

“The most important point is financial problems. You know we have certain privileges as Project Schools; there are many demands, there are things to do, but there is no shift in budget and financial permits and resources. At the moment, this is the biggest challenge, because we are not able to create our own budget and have our own money and we are not supplied with a proper budget. With just parent-teacher associations’ help and donations, we are struggling to cope with this.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Many school leaders believe that their financial problems are the most serious challenge and argue that this is the underlying fact of many other related problems. For example, PSL4, expresses that it is their greatest problem and creates an unpleasant atmosphere and places them in an incredibly difficult position up against their parents because the school needs parents' donations to survive and the school leaders are the ones asking for these donations. Similarly, PSL3 expresses the reality of this situation and evaluates this as very problematic. PSL5, on the other hand, reasons that political discourses are one of the facts harming their reputations and putting them up against parents in relation to this matter. He/she claims that the authorities should either change these political discourses or solve schools' the serious financial problems. Finally, PSL1 emphasises the urgent change required in this regard, although they also argue that a robust inspection mechanism is a prerequisite to avoid further or more significant problems.

“Financial challenges are our greatest problem. The Problem of the Budget. We struggle to overcome these challenges. We frequently ask for donations from parents. We feel like we are begging for money many times and this is a very unpleasant situation as we should never have found ourselves in that situation with that kind of successful school. We need their donations, and we must ask for their donations. We are leaders in education, we are not business executives, it is not right that we are pushed against parents to this position. It is not right that we have to look for money to run the school.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Overall Perspectives

Two themes emerge regarding PS leader's overall perspectives concerning the policy. First, their conditional support of the policy and limited advice to other schools, and second, their perspectives about the future of the policy and PSs.

Conditional support/limited advice to other schools

The PS leaders commonly express their conditional support of the policy and PSs. After indicating certain chronic problems, they mainly argue that the policy should continue but that their problems should be solved too. Moreover according to them, more importantly, the

number of PSs should be kept limited. Hence, it is apparent that they support the continuation but not the expansion of the policy with a condition regarding solutions to their chronic problems. After expressing their support for the policy, leaders claim that the number of PSs should not be increased with the intention of maintaining quality and success in these schools.

“I support the project schools, but I do not think it will be correct to increase the number of project schools at this point, since their number should be limited in order to maintain success, ...not their numbers, but their qualities and possibilities should be increased. If, however, the need arises, the number can, of course be increased proportionally on a regular basis. They should, basically be special schools that attract the best students.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Similarly, PSL5, after clearly expressing his/her hope for the future of PSs, argues that the qualities, opportunities and standards that PSs have must be increased instead of their numbers and their problems should be solved as soon as possible. Likewise, PSL4 stresses that PSs are accepting the best students in the country, therefore they should not have any finance or resource-related problems and argues that increasing their numbers does not make any real improvements in the country’s education system.

“If the goal is to make real improvements, changing the titles and increasing the numbers make no difference. ... We are the schools that get this country's top students, the best students, so under this reality we should be approached. ... We should not face financial, constructive challenges, we should not face inadequate resources and we should not have to deal with inadequate and incompatible employees. ...these must be resolved if this policy continues.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

The survey includes a question regarding the advice PS leaders give to other schools. Consequently, essentially, leaders are asked whether they recommend other schools becoming PSs. Table 28 below illustrates these results. Most leaders are uncertain about recommending other schools to become academies. Moreover, no significant differences are seen in this regard based on the school types. Table 28 below shows these results.

The leader would recommend other schools becoming PSs. (%)	
Yes	29.6
No	20.8
Not sure	42.4
Other	.8
<u>Total</u>	93.6
Missing	6.4
<u>Total</u>	100.0

Table 28: Leaders' recommendations to other schools

As seen in the table, even though leaders' support the continuation of the policy suggested above, the PS leaders do not deliver a strong recommendation to other schools to become PSs, with 29.6% recommending the status, although 42% are unsure, whereas 20.8% do not recommend that other schools become project schools. In addition, no statistical difference has been identified in leaders' recommendations to other schools as regards the different school types (Scheffe Test).

It's Future: Who knows?

The last theme in this category considers leaders' future perspectives concerning the policy and PSs. Surprisingly, even the leaders of PSs imply that they cannot foresee the future of PSs and PS policy. PSL2, for example, argues that 'nobody is aware of the MoNE's long-term views and plans about the PSs. In the future, we just do not know what will happen, we will just see' (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019). Similarly, PSL5 uses supporting discourses and gives a few examples from past experiences:

“They might continue if they are supported. But also, they might not continue. They might be ended or changed all at once. ...This is Turkey everything can happen as happened to the Super High Schools or to the Anatolian High Schools in the past.” (PSL5, Female leader, Sep 2019)

PSL4 claims that this uncertainty about the future of PSs' has negatively affected the teachers' reasons for adopting and establishing the required changes to become a PS.

“...so, there is a perception that it is not certain what will happen in the future. ...uncertainty and confusion have negatively affected the planned changes and the teachers too ... Many shareholders think as it can be changed suddenly.” (PSL4, Male leader, Sep 2019)

Finally, PSL1 and PSL2 have different perceptions pertaining to the MoNE's future approach, though they do share the view that everything can be changed suddenly. While PSL1 expresses hope for the future due to the new education secretary, PSL2 claims that there is no indication of the secretary's support regarding policy.

“...you know, anything can change immediately here, so I'm not sure, but because of our current education secretary, I have hope. He has a very good educational background and is open-minded. So, we can expect very good developments if the current political conjecture allows and this policy has been endorsed but cannot be sure.” (PSL1, Male leader, Sep 2019)

“I'm not sure what is the government's future plan for the Project Schools policy. ... I haven't heard strong support from the new secretary of education ...so, the political direction can change all of sudden.” (PSL2, Male leader, Sep 2019)

4.6 Conclusion

This chapter presented the findings of this research regarding the four research questions and related objectives. As a summary, the following two-word clouds, adopted from Nvivo projects, are presented to show the general discourses and differences regarding Academies and PSs and between them.

The findings regarding these questions are presented in four sections in parallel to the questions. In a summary, while the themes of 'aim to improve schools', 'freedom for schools', and 'aim to improve collaboration' come out for the goals of academies; the themes of 'outstanding student group and nation's future', 'teaching staff and further problems', and 'unclearness and confusion' come out for the goals of PSs. The reasons of PSs for conversion consist of 'to acquire better students', 'teacher selection opportunity', and 'MoNE decision'. 'More freedom', 'LA problems', 'bigger budget, efficient use', and 'force' are the reasons of academies, on the other hand. The two policies' effects in schools show both similarities and differences. The increase or change in freedom, accountability, and innovation aspects are mutual even though the scopes and extents regarding them show differences. However, the themes of 'budget and effective use' and 'collaboration', as positives, and 'isolation, pressure, workload', as side effects, come out about the effects special to academies. For PSs, on the other hand, the themes of 'expectations change' and 'widening gap, other schools' come out about the effects in schools. Staff and finance-related problems show similarities for both as the fourth research question considers. Nevertheless, while academy leaders see the inspections and pressures, and horror stories and politics as problem areas; PS leaders see the lack of authority and teacher recruitment as the most problematic areas for their schools. With all these, academy leaders express their support for the policy and advise other schools to convert in accordance with this support. However, even though PS leaders express their conditional support to the policy they do not recommend an expansion because they believe that PSs should remain as special and the number of them should be limited in this respect. Finally, while academy leaders see the academies as the direction of travel and permanent in England's education system, PS leaders argue that everything can change all of sudden and no one can predict what will happen regarding PSs in the future.

A discussion comparing these findings to the literature is carried out in the following chapter as well as cross-national comparisons and policy-learning outcomes.

Chapter Five: Discussion of the findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter consists of five different stages. It starts with a short introduction to the chapter. Then the research findings regarding academies are discussed with links to the related literature. Similarly, the findings regarding PSs are discussed critically in light of the related literature. However, it is worth reminding here that there is very limited literature regarding PSs and this thesis is also intended to add to the gap in the literature of PSs. Fourthly, cross-national comparisons between the academies of England and PSs of Turkey are conducted based on the research findings and the discussions related to these comparisons are established. To conclude, possible policy learning outcomes are derived and discussed based on the comparisons.

5.2 Academies

Policy Goals

It is obvious that the academisation of public schools in England has been the main priority of various governments in the UK for a number of years. Successive governments from the Labour Party to the Conservatives and even the coalition government voiced their support of the academisation process (NAO, 2018). In its more than twenty years history, many changes/amendments have been applied to the policy. However, it is argued that improving school and education standards throughout the country was always the underlying goal of the policy (NAO, 2018). Three principal areas stand out regarding the academisation policy goals based on the perspectives of the school leaders who participated in this research, specifically 'aim to improve schools', 'freedom for schools' and 'aim to improve collaboration'. It can be argued here that the improvements in schools have been achieved by increasing collaboration between schools and also by providing schools with greater freedom. This supports the perceptions of academy leaders, who participated in this research, as 'aim to improve schools' emerged as the first finding regarding their perception of the academisation policy goals.

In line with this perspective, the main intervention undertaken by the DfE for underperforming schools since the policy was introduced was instructing underperforming schools to become academies (NAO, 2018). This aim remains valid however, although not at the same level or type as previously targeted by the sponsored academisation of failing schools because most of the current academies were already good or outstanding schools prior to becoming academies that converted after 2010 with substantial changes made to the policy (NAO, 2018).

In addition, various leaders also argue that for tangible improvements to be made, the focus should be on in-class activities and the quality of teaching and teaching-related practices rather than more general formational or structural changes that the academisation policy has primarily delivered. It is claimed that the most effective way to improve students' outcomes and the quality of education is by way of good teaching and in-classroom developments such as teaching staffs' subject knowledge and the quality of teaching in the classrooms (Coe *et al.*, 2014). This point also supports the concerns of school leaders in terms of missing the real issue by focusing on the structural and policy level changes as school leaders indicate in the interviews conducted in this research. Furthermore, this point shows the importance of school leaders' concerns regarding the shortage of teaching staff they are currently facing as can be seen in the findings chapter. This point is discussed later in this chapter as a problematic area according to the school leaders who participated in this research.

Reasons for becoming Academies

According to the leaders, schools' reasons for becoming academies partially match these policy goals indicated above. As presented in the findings chapter, 'more freedom' and 'LA problems' are specified among the principal reasons for schools to become academies. These two themes are related to each other as schools wanted to be free from LAs due to the problems they face. This matches the policy goal of 'freedom for schools'. Moreover, school

leaders also indicate 'bigger budgets and efficient use of them' as another reason for schools to become academies. The bigger budget element was an effective reason, in particular for the initial academisations. However, according to leaders, the situation regarding this has now changed and there is not such a substantial difference. The 'efficient budget use' part of this theme remains an important reason for converting to academies, because many academy leaders argue that they use their budgets much more effectively than LAs.

Finally, even though the literature does not mention it very much, there are some indications that generate the theme pertaining to 'force' regarding the reasons why schools convert to academies. First, as commonly recognised, the conversion was not optional for early sponsored academies that converted from 'failing schools' based on Ofsted inspections. Second, a number of participants maintain that the funding system was used to force, not only schools but also LAs, to participate in the academisation of schools. For example, some funds were not provided to LAs unless they introduced academies in their region. Lastly, some academy leaders, who participated in this research, argue that they felt at that time that this was a political objective and the only way forward. Therefore, these indications lead to the 'force' theme regarding reasons why schools convert to academies. Keddie's research (2016, pp. 180-181), supports this point, as it was stated in the research that "the head teachers in this paper expressed a particular aversion to forced academisation and to joining a large academy chain... while resigned to academisation, the head teachers' view was that they could retain a sense of autonomy through controlling the timing and type of their conversion... the head teachers were fearful that delaying conversion may lead to a situation of forced academisation where they may have little say in the type of model they became part of". This theme might be investigated further because, as mentioned earlier, the literature has scant information on this matter.

These are the goals and reasons for academisation based on the school leaders' perspectives as discussed above and established the academies part in relation to the first and second research questions. The third research question is related to the impact of the policy in schools and the findings regarding this are discussed below. 'Freedom for schools', 'accountability', 'collaboration' and 'side effects' are the themes discussed below as they relate to the main findings regarding the effects of policy (Q3).

Freedom for schools: not real

As conveyed many times in the findings chapter, one of the most important discourses of academisation was 'freedom for schools'. The increase in the freedom that schools have is mostly recognised and appreciated either by the school leaders, who are the participants in this research or by the researchers in the field. In the report published by the House of Commons Library (HCL), it is stated that academies have more freedom as well as more responsibilities than maintained schools. For example, they have the freedom to "set staff pay and conditions, and determine their own curriculum, and they are directly responsible for financial as well as educational performance" (HCL, 2019a, p. 4). Similarly, the National Audit Office (NAO, 2018, p. 6), argues that "academy trusts acquire substantial new freedoms and responsibilities that maintained schools do not have, including responsibility for financial as well as educational performance".

However, three implementations on the ground conflict with the claim of 'freedom for schools'.

First, it is argued that the multi-academy trusts (MATs) are one of the reasons that the freedom of schools is restricted. The academy leaders, who participated in this research, appreciate the increased collaboration among the schools arrived via the MATs system. They see this as one of the positive effects of the academisation policy as presented in the findings chapter. However, it is also argued that MATs are limiting the freedom of schools

themselves, which conflicts with one of the fundamental aims behind the entire policy. For example, according to West and Wolfe (2019), even though, the policy was originally aimed at giving schools greater freedom, it in fact created less freedom for individual schools than they had before becoming academies. The Sutton Trust's report (Hutchings and Francis, 2018), referencing West and Wolf (2018, p.13), argues that "many MATs now require their academies to adopt a prescribed curriculum and practices, and the academies thus have little or no autonomy". It can be argued here that, freedom may possibly have been increased by academisation on the trust level, but for many schools, this claim is not valid anymore due to the attitudes of the school trusts in terms of their implementations on the ground. Therefore, some schools have not been benefiting from greater freedom even if they are academies. Hence, this justifies one of the concerns of school leaders who are participating in this research because, as they argued, MATs might become like LAs and repeat their mistakes in terms of narrowing the actions of schools and limiting their freedom on the ground.

Second, it is argued that this is not real freedom due to the accountability measures and inspections. As presented in the findings chapter, AL3, for example, criticises this situation using strong phrases, such as dictatorship while describing it and maintains that it is not real freedom and inspections are controlling and decisive in many cases. Similar to academy leaders, some academy chains that are primarily operating in disadvantaged regions, argue in the Sutton Trust report (Hutchings and Francis, 2018, p. 42), that certain incentives or accountability measures are not necessary for their 'disadvantaged students' and cause unnecessary pressures. Accordingly, it is argued in the report that "accountability measures and Ofsted inspections are a much greater threat for the schools which are least likely to meet the targets set, and so it is obviously tempting to focus on targets even when this may lead to action which is not beneficial for individuals" such as 'off-rolling'.

Third, 'there is no mechanism for an academy to return to local authority control' or 'there is currently no mechanism for a school that is part of a MAT to unilaterally decide to leave or transfer to another MAT' (Roberts and Danechi, 2019). It means that a school cannot leave a trust or return to being under the control of a LA even if the school stakeholders believe that being a MAT or academisation is not working for their school or students. Therefore, this implementation is not increasing the freedom of schools but weakening it even though it might be so for MATs. Moreover, West and Wolfe (2019, p. 4), contend that the schools in MATs "no longer exist as legal entities and cannot – at the initiative of the head teacher or local governing body – decide to leave the MAT". West and Wolfe (2019, pp. 6-7) provide solutions to several current issues regarding academies without dramatic changes to the system and re-imposing the previous system, and, concerning the issue of autonomy for schools within MATs, they state that "restoring the autonomy and legal identity of schools could allow for the mobility of academies between MATs" and, according to them, "a further step, would be to allow academies (newly freed from chains by being reinstated as separate legal entities) to become maintained schools".

Accountability

Regarding the accountability of academies, the leaders of academies, who participated in this research, reason that their accountabilities were strengthened after becoming academies. To support this argument, they specify three specific changes. First, they indicate that now, there are more layers in the management structure, which in turn, is strengthening accountability. Second, they claim the academies' fiscal management is scrutinised much more. Thus, they state clearly that accountability is greater in relation to financial matters. Lastly, they argue that the sense of accountability and responsibility among staff, including the leaders, was increased by means of academisation so that they feel more responsible and accountable now because they have more authority.

However, in the literature, Ofsted's failure to inspect the trusts was heavily criticised. In the HCL report (2019a, p. 6), it is argued that "Where there have been serious failings at academy trusts the Department has not had an effective regime to sanction the academy trustees and leaders who were responsible". On 15 July 2019, a press was released on the gov.uk website based on a report from Ofsted (2019). The most important message was that of 'Ofsted titled: Let us inspect multi-academy trusts (MATs)'. The following statement by the Chief Inspector of Ofsted, Amanda Spielman, presented in the release, show their perceptions and stress the importance regarding the lack of Ofsted inspections of the MATs:

"Given the power and influence of MATs, it's important that they are properly accountable to parents. The fact that Ofsted is unable to inspect trusts directly means parents and policy makers are only given a partial view of what is happening in our schools. This presents some very real risks, which we have seen highlighted by the recent failures of some academy trusts." (GOV.UK, 2019)

In the report that the press released based on 'the need for a model in which both MATS and individual schools are inspected by Ofsted', it informed the DfE that:

"While accountability at the school level is strong, accountability at MAT level needs to be strengthened, not least in the light of weak implementation of internal accountability at trust level in many MATs. Inspection arrangements should reflect this." (Ofsted, 2019, p.26).

This reveals that Ofsted was not empowered to inspect academy trusts and resulted in criticism by many parties. However, on 13 December 2018, Ofsted published 'Summary evaluations of multi-academy trusts' and updated it on 14 September 2021. In the report it is stated that:

"...summary evaluations of MATs are not inspections and are carried out with the cooperation and consent of the MAT being reviewed. They consider key information about the MAT, which includes academy inspection outcomes, discussions with MAT leaders and survey visits to some of the MAT's academies. Their aim is to give the MAT helpful recommendations on aspects that could be improved, and to recognise where the MAT is having a positive impact on the quality of education that its academies provide." (Ofsted, 2021, para. 5)

Consequently, these were not forced inspections but completed in cooperation with trusts and intended to publish recommendations to trusts in order to improve the quality of education

they provide. These summary evaluations by Ofsted are not seen enough, and as Ofsted claimed too, it was advised that "Ofsted should be empowered to undertake formal inspections of academy chains and to make judgments on their provision, based on clear criteria" (Hutchings and Francis, 2018, p. 6). In addition, Regional Schools Commissioners (RSC) (DfE appointees) have certain responsibilities that strengthen the accountability of academies such as;

"taking action where academies and free schools are underperforming"

"intervening in academies where governance is inadequate"

"taking action to improve poorly performing sponsors" (Roberts and Danechi, 2019, p. 8)

However, these responsibilities are seen as a more general addition to the primary responsibilities of RSCs regarding the conversion process as regards academisation. It should be mentioned here that no report or real action in terms of the responsibilities specified above has been seen so far.

In its 2019 report, the DfE specifies the intervention and performance risk of trusts as one of the three risks of the policy. In addition, it is argued that the DfE improves its supervision to reduce trust failing in the future including any educational, governance or financial failures. It is argued that the "DfE will continue to make improvements to its scrutiny of trusts' adherence to the accountability framework" (DfE, 2019, p. 52). The Sutton Trust's research (Hutchings and Francis, 2018, p.6) on the effects of academy chains also supports this perspective and in the report, it was advised that, so as to prevent irreversible harms to the young people's lives, "RSCs must act more firmly with chains that do not deliver improvement over time".

Collaboration

As indicated earlier, academy leaders, who participated in this research, think that improving collaboration between schools might be another goal behind the policy. The 2010 White Paper emphasises collaboration between schools as a way for schools to improve (DfE,

2010) or the DfE's guidance to schools to benefit by increasing collaboration by sharing expertise and pooling resources also supports this perspective (DfE, 2014a). It is evident that the importance of collaboration as regards school improvements increased with the MATs and also the policy is seen as the direction of travel. Moreover, according to a number of academy leaders, who participated in this research, increased collaboration by means of schools coming together is seen as the principal benefit for converting to academies. However, some individuals claim that 'otherwise there is no point'.

Some people argue that academies also created further and more competitive pressure on schools. Various academy leaders, who participated in this research, argue that the competitive atmosphere has been increased overall or evolved into a new type, even though it appears that the collaboration between schools within the same trusts improved. AL1, for example, reasons by arguing that the academy movement has heightened the competitiveness in the system more than ever. There is also evidence supporting this in the literature. For example, Baars *et al.* (2014, p. 77), allege that "in addition to the potential role of academies in directly improving performance as a result of their academy status, some interviewees suggested that another function of academies may have been to apply pressure for improvement across the system through the existence of an alternative form of governance".

It is argued in the Sutton Trust's report (Hutchings and Francis, 2018), that collaboration and sharing good practice specifically the best chains, should be supported more, and the government and RSCs should establish foundations and develop tools for this. Hargreaves (2010, p. 8), states that "competition between school clusters similarly drives the mutual improvement within and between clusters to the next level, but it takes skilful leadership to recognise when to build on collaboration by the introduction of the friendly competition that drives up standards in the interests of collective achievement".

Therefore, it is apparent that the mutual existence of 'collaboration' as well as 'competition' within a balance in the system is inevitable. The balance that exists between them appears to be the key for greater improvements. Therefore, this point is discussed later in this chapter as policy learning including discussions pertaining to marketization.

Side-effects

The academy leaders, who participated in this research, are not seeing significant side-effects as a result of the policy on maintained schools. Moreover, some argue that this affected them even positively by encouraging them to be better. However, it is argued that the funding cuts from the LAs have negatively affected the maintained schools that remain under the control of LAs. In addition, the HCL report (2018), asserts that the academisation of schools as well as the funding cuts is also costing LAs more and owing to this, a number of LAs are charging schools fees to compensate for this. Therefore, with the DfE's funding withdrawal either provided per-pupil or provided for struggling schools, the LAs can encounter significant budget cuts "which affects their capacity to support their remaining maintained schools" (HCL, 2018, p. 6). At least, this shows a side-effect of the policy for other schools. Furthermore, it may well be possible to establish further side-effects, such as a deteriorating reputation as one academy leader, who participated in this research, suggested. Therefore, this area should be researched more even though the majority of academy leaders, who participated in this research, do not see that. Finally, West and Wolfe (2019), reason that the policy might have negative effects on teacher retention in other schools because of the academies' freedom in relation to teaching staff's pay and conditions.

Research question four considers the problematic areas and overall perspectives of school leaders. These are presented in the findings chapter. The themes related to academies regarding the fourth research question and the related literature are discussed below.

Financial problems, pressures

According to the academy leaders, who participated in this research, staff and finance-related problems are becoming more serious each day. The House of Commons Library (HCL) published the Fourth Annual Report of the Chair of the Committee of Public Accounts as the third special report of session 2017–19 (HCL, 2019, p. 6). In the report, 'the continuing financial strain on schools, lack of authority over academies' are stated as troubling situations regarding the Department of Education. Moreover, the report by the Education Committee argues that schools are facing a serious financial crisis (Education Committee, 2018), whereas the HCL report maintains that this only confirms their serious concerns regarding the financial issues in schools (HCL, 2019). However, "despite the funding pressures the sector is facing, neither Ofsted nor the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), is assessing the impact of these pressures on the quality of education and the outcomes schools achieve" (HCL, 2019a, pp. 3, 7).

Ofsted's report carried out in 2018–19 regarding schools searching for solutions when they are under pressure financially, illustrates a variety of points related to the financial effects of the academisation of schools too. It is stated in the report that leaders of academies suggest that "reductions in local authority services had led to a 'major impact' on financial pressure in their school" (Ofsted, 2020, p.12).

In addition, it is also argued in the report that less popular schools with lower student numbers are suffering more because the funding allocations are mainly determined by the number of students that schools have (Ofsted, 2020, p.12). Therefore, several schools are attempting to increase their student numbers with the aim of acquiring more funding or finding ways to save money (Ofsted, 2020). Accordingly, it has been advised that these attempts by schools to reduce financial pressures should be examined as to "whether the quality of education and the outcomes schools achieve are being adversely affected by the need to make savings" (HCL, 2019a, p.7).

As indicated earlier, the participants of this research also mention the financial pressures they are confronting though they do not directly associate them with the academy status. They generally argue that the financial pressure they feel increased in the last ten years and there is a degree of confusion and uncertainty regarding the funding of the schools, which consequently is increasing this pressure. Ofsted's (2020) related findings support the outcomes of this research because the report contends that schools are concerned about the uncertainty and late announcements regarding the financial adjustments and worried about unforeseen pressures as a result.

Moreover, this point refers to two different findings concerning this research: the first is the finding that relates to a side-effect which is increasing the pressure on schools and leaders. The second one is a problematic area that school leaders believe that should be solved.

Staff-related problems: teacher shortage

Regarding problems with teaching staff, academy leaders suggest that the problems of finding and/or retaining skilled people in the schools, particularly with respect to teaching are becoming worse. They emphasise the serious shortages in some subjects, such as maths. It is also acknowledged by Hutchings and Francis (2018) that there is a teacher shortage, particularly in specific academic subjects and that some schools/trusts are struggling in this regard. Therefore, it is stated in the report that "there should be continued efforts to increase teacher supply in academic subjects where there are currently shortages, and strategies should be devised to ensure that struggling schools are able to recruit subject specialists" (2018, p. 6). This situation is suggested by the participants of this research as an issue that schools are currently encountering. One participant argues that difficult working conditions and poor pay are the reasons behind this, because as she experienced several times, the good teachers are either leaving the profession or moving abroad because of these problems. She adds that the teaching profession is a challenging job by nature but at least these professionals should get

what they deserve financially. She alleges that if it continues like this, this crisis will have disastrous effects.

Overall perceptions: Future of the policy

Overall, the academy leaders, who participated in this research, express their support for the policy and claim that academy schools will always be a part of the system and the academisation policy will continue in the same direction through MATs but conversions will not be forced too much upon them.

According to the DfE report (2019, p. 8), while the number of academy trusts has reduced the number of students who are attending academies has increased. This denotes that the trusts are growing in number and also supports one of the research findings as the academy leaders claim that it is now time to come together and develop the capacities of MATs instead of single conversions. They also assume that it is not only more beneficial but also that the government will continue to be supportive of the academisation policy in the future. However, the DfE published three main risks pertaining to academisation for the year of 2017/18 (DfE, 2019, p.52). The capacity of the MATs and sponsors to include and support underperforming LA schools is seen as a risk as reported. It is argued that "more good and outstanding schools have been encouraged to become sponsors and approval has been restricted to potential sponsors who can demonstrate a track record of assisting other schools to improve" as well as support for the growth of high-quality MATs in size to reduce the effect of this risk. In addition, it is suggested that the MAT Development and Improvement Fund has been used to support the academisation of underperforming schools and "RSCs have encouraged high-performing MATs and sponsors to work across and between regions, to help spread capacity" (DfE, 2019, p.52). However, in the NAO report (2018), it is reasoned that no evidence or evaluations have been shared yet considering the impact of this funding even though it has been applied since 2012-13.

Accordingly, the NAO also underlines this risk in its 2018 report. The report states that "there appears to be a shortage of sponsors and multi-academy trusts with the capacity to support new academies" (NAO, 2018, p. 12). The DfE should investigate the reasons behind these capacity limits and disconcerting factors and why certain schools such as the underperforming ones are not converting. Furthermore, the DfE's position in terms of the assessments of MATs regarding their readiness to expand argues that the DfE is "not seeking to impose or favour any particular size for multi-academy trusts, and there is no clear view on the optimal size for these trusts" (NAO, 2018, p. 12).

In addition to the capacity risks as acknowledged by different official bodies, there is a greater risk for certain schools too. As clearly stated by various academy leaders, who participated in this research, it is alleged that 'no one wants some certain schools even LAs'. Hence, the risk is much greater for them in this specific system. The NAO' report (2018, p.12), emphasises certain challenges for these types of schools, such as reducing student numbers and funds or problems with recruiting and retaining teaching staff. Therefore, it is argued that it is much more challenging for the DfE to find sponsors or trusts for this sort of school. This supports the concerns of academy leaders who participated in this research. The NAO (2018) expects the effects of these challenges to increase in the future even though the DfE is not clearly demonstrating its current position and policy regarding the policy that fundamentally affects the schooling system in England.

Regarding the future of the policy, the NAO (2018) report stated that the DfE's current position and perspective is not clearly explained. The last clear objective was stated in the 2016 White Paper as converting all schools or involving them in the process at least by 2020, and this objective has not actually happened. Moreover, it is argued that the DfE's objective concerning converting all schools is not currently being adopted, although the aim to improve schools has been continued (NAO, 2018).

5.3 Project Schools

Policy goals and reasons for schools

As a result of this research, PS leaders refer to the following two policy goals in relation to PSs. First the intention to solve the chronic problems that schools face, primarily because of impasses in the system and second the objective of the government or the MoNE to provide a better education and improve standards at least for the best students in the country. 'To acquire better students' and the 'opportunity to select teachers' are the main reasons schools convert to PSs. It is apparent that these two reasons match the policy goals mentioned above because while attracting the most successful students and providing better education is seen as one of the policy goals, issues with teaching staff are seen as the most significant chronic problem that the PS policy aims to resolve, according to school leaders.

However, many of the school leaders argue that there is also confusion and uncertainty regarding the goal of PS policy because many of the PSs converted by the MoNE and the decisions regarding converting schools were made by the MoNE and not by schools even without their applications, so that leaders allege that the reasons behind their conversions are ambiguous. Moreover, they state that even as the leaders of these schools, they are poorly informed. These perceptions of school leaders are supported in the related literature even though studies on the PSs of Turkey remain extremely limited.

Better education at least for the country's top students

Along with the central exams, secondary schools that accept students with higher central exam scores, which are assumed to provide a better education than other secondary education institutions, have started to be opened (Meseci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018, p. 691). According to Meseci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018, p.691), Turkey's search for quality in education mostly developed and finished with the most successful students attending certain schools. PSs can be seen as the latest attempt to move in this direction. The PSs student intakes are based on the scores of the students from the centralised exams. These schools are classified as the best

schools in the country and 'the quality of education in these PSs has an important role both in students' nominative benefit and in raising a human resource that will improve the nation and overcome the country's existing problems' (Meseci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018, p. 692). However, the results from the standardised exams do not demonstrate the successes of these schools but the students, because these students were already very successful and they were just gathered in the same place (school) (TEDMEM, 2018).

Therefore, this shows no real proof of educational development in these schools because either the schools or the government is focusing on gathering the successful students together instead of on genuine education and in-class improvements and solving the problems that schools encounter.

Kaya (2018, p.84), states that most of the participants in his research contend that PSs will create a unique school culture that is distinctive and focuses on the academic success of the country's outstanding students. He adds that there is statistical data supporting this fact, because the students who prefer PSs consist of students who have attained better academic success and there is an elite school culture that brings together a successful student group. Therefore, according to Kaya (2018), there is a perception that PSs have a mission to take the country's best students and enhance their academic successes. These findings support the findings of this research regarding the perceptions of PS leaders, while they are explaining the goals of these schools as gathering the best students in their regions and creating the best learning environment as well as providing them with better teachers.

Increasing the quality of education and maintaining the success of successful schools in practice were stated as the main purpose of the PSs policy. It was stated that the essential and additional support would be given to those schools by the MoNE (MoNE, 2016; TEDMEM, 2018). Moreover, the education minister of the time, Ismet Yılmaz MP, claims that they also intended, as the MoNE, to spread the good practice associated with these successful schools

to other schools by relocating the teachers (MoNE, 2016) (this practice is known as 'teacher rotation' in the literature). However, this argument appears to be a total misstatement or misinterpretation because, as can be clearly seen based on these particular research findings and other conclusions in the literature (see Kaya, 2018a), PS leaders believe and act in line with the idea that one of the key aims is removing the bad or poorly qualified teachers and finding and taking the best teachers from other schools who are already appointed (centrally) as teachers in a school in the same city.

Meseci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018), maintain that the PS policy had intended to increase the quality of education and its implementation has created opportunities for free educational processes. However, as conclusive remarks, they claim that these schools are far from being satisfactory in terms of education and training and to respond to the quality of the students, even though they are educating the most successful students in the country and/or possibly teaching future leaders (Meseci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018). These remarks match the findings of this research because this research shows that school leaders, as well as higher authorities, have focused on PSs attracting the most successful students and that to some extent, the schools are accomplishing their aims. However, these schools still have serious problems related to the educational procedures although these are not very visible because these schools are accepted as remarkably successful schools due to their students' academic successes.

Systemic problems: Teacher problems

Kaya (2018) contends that school leadership policy has achieved some kind of accountability criteria with the changes that the MoNE undertook in 2011. These changes empowered the MoNE to replace school leaders if necessary. However, this practice did not include teachers. Therefore, not only the MoNE but also schools do not have the power to replace their teachers even if they are not suitable or good enough. Therefore, it was argued that one of the

goals behind PSs is to solve this systemic and chronic problem related to the teaching staff in schools because, as Kaya (2018) argues, no one can dismiss a teacher if he/she has a high enough service score (gaining based on the service time in public schools) and does not want this. Moreover, as several of the participants in this research express too, some schools, in particular those in the city centres or good locations, have been filled by elderly teachers with high service scores. Hence, this is a situation which hinders the appointment of other teachers who can contribute to the education process in these schools. Kaya (2018a, p.71), maintains that the administrative structure and procedures in PSs eliminate this problem because there is a school management structure and operating model in which high-performing teachers can work. It is worth noting that the working period of a manager or teacher in PSs is limited to 4+4 years, a total of 8 years.

It was argued in the report issued by TEDMEM (2016), that the MoNE aspires to create leadership and teaching staff in certain schools to perform various special projects and/or programmes for the best students in the country because these would not be possible with the current staff at these schools. Moreover, the participants of this research provide further examples of the systemic problems that PS policy aimed to solve. The problems related to creating a positive working atmosphere, a lack of resources or school infrastructure, are examples of this. Therefore, as explained above, solving the systemic problems is seen as one of the policy goals of PSs. However, these are not only the problems of PSs but the problems that many of the schools in Turkey face. Thus, why are the authorities only attempting to solve these problems for the PSs instead of pursuing more deep-rooted and permanent solutions. Moreover, it can be argued from this point that the MoNE and the main authority of all the schools in Turkey are failing to trust the teachers who are all appointed by the MoNE.

Confusion: The MoNE decided

As presented in the findings chapter, it is obvious that there is confusion and uncertainty regarding the aims and policy goals of PSs. The school leaders associate this situation with the contradictory applications and lack of necessary information sharing by the MoNE with the shareholders of the schools. This includes parents, students, school leaders and even local educational authorities as groups that were not informed enough. According to Kaya (2018), it is clear that, especially with respect to the early years of the implementation, no one was sure what was meant by the concept and idea of PSs and no clear information was shared by the authorities regarding this. Moreover, he also asserts that even the school leaders and teachers were not informed about the policy in schools where the practice still continues.

Kaya (2018a), also argues that because the policy is still in its early years it is not understood how it will evolve and how the policymakers' perspectives will be developed. However, a few participants in Kaya's research state that PSs do not make a difference in the education process in their schools up to the present moment regarding the management or leadership, but there may be a difference in the process in the future. TEDMEM argues that the criteria for converting schools to PSs are not clear and adds that the admission of relatively more successful students should not be the only criteria for PSs status. Moreover, it is also maintained that quality should be sought in the differences or improvements in the educational practices to be carried out in accordance with the interests, abilities and capacities of the students, especially in these schools, where the students with the highest level of success are expected to be selected (TEDMEM, 2016; 2018).

From this perspective, it is apparent that there is confusion regarding the PSs and their roles in the system. These reviews support the findings of this research as it presents the school leaders' evaluations concerning the confusion and ambiguity regarding the PSs and their goals.

The effects of the policy in schools (Q3)

A limited freedom increase: Teacher recruitment

Based on the findings obtained by this research, it can be clearly stated that the area of teacher recruitment is the area that is most problematic for the schools in Turkey by means of PS policy. This impact is evaluated through two key aspects. On the one hand, it is evaluated as a partial and limited increase in freedom regarding teacher recruitment towards schools. Alternatively, even though its effects are assessed as being mostly positive, according to school leaders, it is only an opportunity for a few limited schools because not all the PSs are benefitting from this in the full sense.

It should be noted that sharing the authority with school leaders regarding the appointment of school personnel is seen as an innovation in the current system.

This sharing of authority can be envisaged as a preliminary indicator of a new management model within the school management structure and implementation because this practice is taking place for the first time in the Turkish Education System. Kaya (2018) argues that the potential of PSs to create a unique school culture will be established over time and the existence of a selected education team in PSs will create a unique school culture with common goals, a communication-oriented atmosphere and academic success. The fact that leaders and teachers appointed to PSs are assigned at their own will, shows that a unique new school culture will be created in which volunteering, team spirit, self-sacrifice, intense communication and success will be standardised. In addition, in terms of teachers, it is obvious that the PSs model provides advantages as it offers successful teachers the opportunity to work together in these schools (Kaya, 2018). According to Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018, p.713), the PS policy 'has created opportunities for a free education process' and 'giving the authority to the project school principals has given them some freedom'. The limited authority given to leaders is seen as the most important freedom from this perspective. It is argued that this is enhancing the administrative power of school leaders and

bringing dynamism and competitiveness to schools, which in turn, increases the success (Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018). Likewise, after the research, they conducted with teachers, Koc and Bastas conclude three important positive outcomes on the PSs' this feature as follows: 'teachers in PS are satisfied with the new management model, there has been an increase in collective teacher adequacy due to the teamwork shaped around the school principal's leadership, a higher teacher performance is achieved' (2019, p. 937).

However, this development or freedom has been evaluated as limited in terms of two aspects. First, even among the PSs, only a limited number of schools are able to implement this change on the ground because of the court decisions and giving teachers the right to eight-years if they would like stay in the same schools. Thus, this delayed the implementation of this change for eight years for some schools. Second, even though school leaders are empowered in this respect, teachers are appointed after the approval of local National Education Authorities (NEAs) and the MoNE. Therefore, it can be argued that it is not a full but limited authority. It is claimed that this change developed the leadership and management capacity of school leaders to some extent, although it is not sufficient enough because of its limits (Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018). It is stated as a conclusion in their article that 'the majority of the administrators interviewed stated that this initiative was found to be meaningful, but not sufficient and increased the quality of school management' (Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018, p. 713). A school principal in this research, for example, maintains that there is nothing beyond this, but that there should be, for instance an extra budget for these schools (Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018, p.725).

The necessity for better or well-resourced teachers is also one of the findings of this research, as many PS leaders highlighted and as presented in the findings chapter. Moreover, PS leaders appear comfortable choosing their teachers without set criteria or robust regulations, although they acknowledge the gap regarding this in the related regulation because primarily

they contend that they do not need further limitations but more freedom in this respect. According to PSL4, for example, school leaders should have been trusted in this respect because no school principal wants someone who is incompetent or who does not work effectively to be assigned to their school, irrespective of whether it is for a teaching or a managerial position.

Innovation: More support, more ready

PS leaders believe that their schools' ability to innovate and implement were indirectly affected by two aspects based on the PSs policy. First, they believe that they have more flexibility than other schools, and second, they reason that they are supported and/or backed more by the authorities in this regard.

According to Kaya (2018a), there is a perception regarding PSs that these schools should continuously be innovative and should develop new and innovative projects for their students to support learning and educational activities. This view is not only adopted by the higher authorities but also schools themselves. Furthermore, Kaya (2018), adds that the data from his research confirms that PS shareholders see this as a requirement to be a PS and they believe that innovative activities and new projects in these schools should always be carried out and continued. Kaya (2018), also implies that as a result of his research, not only school leaders but also teachers in PSs are doing more and using their initiative more than other school teachers or leaders because they do not only feel the flexibility or tolerance in this respect, but they also feel responsible to act in this way.

According to Meseci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018), the support, freedom or encouragement regarding being innovative and developing projects is not only seen by the higher authorities, but also witnessed by school leaders. Furthermore, it is clearly seen that the MoNE and local educational authorities are supporting the PSs to be more innovative. The following statements on the MoNE website regarding a seminar meeting conducted with PS leaders

clearly illustrates this perspective: "In the seminar, while evaluations were made about the projects implemented in PSs, ideas were exchanged about the new projects to be implemented. In addition, new approaches, innovative and original practices to increase the quality of education services in PSs were discussed, while sharing and communication networks between PSs were established too."

Second, again as illustrated previously, it was believed that the capacity to innovate and the application of PSs are positively and indirectly influenced by the policy based on the changes towards having better students and better teachers than other schools or than they previously had. Based on his data, Kaya (2018), argues that schools are becoming more popular after gaining PS status and that they are attracting better students than in the past. Besides, as it is one of the findings of this research, these schools are recruiting better teachers from other schools too. Consequently, it is not a surprise that the environment within these schools underwent a positive change. Meseci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018), maintains that teachers who work with students with higher academic success also have the opportunity to go beyond the curriculum given to them. In this way, teachers can use the freedom to act outside the curriculum and be more innovative while scheduling their lessons.

Side-effects

This research seeks also to determine the side-effects of the policy too. According to school leaders, the impact on the other schools and their relationships with other schools have been affected negatively. As clearly recognised, these are the schools that were already doing well for many years, even prior to becoming PSs. Additionally, it can be argued here that this policy is not only providing further advantages for these schools but also creating disadvantages for other neighbouring schools. There are two obvious facts pertaining to this, while PS leaders' comments in the interviews confirm this problem, as the findings chapter presents.

First, PSs are allowed to take successful teachers from other schools in the same city. Undoubtedly, this might seriously affect the other schools and create disadvantages for them. The consequences of the situation on other schools should be investigated further but if PS leaders are mentioning this in this research, it is possible that serious problems may well be created. Second, it is apparent that the PS title gives advantages to these schools which enables them to attract the best students in their regions so that the student intakes of the other schools are adversely affected as a result. Likewise, this is creating another side-effect for other schools.

Based on the findings of this research, it appears that the MoNE supports these schools in particular and more than other schools. The statements of one of the main officials in the MoNE evidence this perspective. Basically, he mentions the importance that is attached to PSs by the MoNE, and he says that "incredibly good things are being done in these schools, many beautiful and successful studies... (and) as the MoNE, we will continue to provide all kinds of support for these schools, and they will continue to be pioneers and role models for other schools... the PSs will be able to contact us very easily in respect to any problem they face and every obstacle in front of them" (MoNE, 2016).

The MoNE's major policy document, titled: 'Turkey's Education Vision 2023', was published in 2018 and includes a five-year plan (MoNE, 2018). It can be asserted that one of the most profound claims with respect to this vision is reducing the gap between schools across the country. The document claimed that there is an enormous gap and discrepancies among Turkey's public schools, which is having an adverse effect on the system. This situation has also been emphasized by the OECD for many years as according to several OECD reports, in Turkey 'students' academic proficiency differed widely across schools and by socio-economic background' (OECD, 2012; OECD, 2016; OECD, 2018; OECD, 2019). The MoNE states that their fundamental vision for the year 2023 is changing the curriculum or

perceptions of the curriculum from a collection of information to a source of skills and subsequently to positive ways of living. Then they argue that the key considerations for this aim are developing teacher training, minimising the inequality and gaps between schools, and consequently, reducing the exam pressure (MoNE, 2018, p. 9). Furthermore, the following statement is expressed several times in the document as one of the main goals: "Achievement gaps among schools will be reduced, and school quality will be improved" (MoNE, 2018, p. 3). Therefore, it can be stated here that the impact of PSs regarding increasing the gap between schools and further side-effects on other schools that are already disadvantaged are in disagreement with the MoNE's main policy document.

Overall perspectives and problems (Q4)

Overall, the PSs leaders, who participated in this research, see the PS policy as positive overall or better than nothing at least, and they express their conditional support for the continuation of its implementation in the future.

To some extent, these findings support the research undertaken by Kaya (2018). Most of the participants in his research evaluate the PSs initiative as positive. Moreover, he argues that the PS model is sustainable as a school management model and has the potential for success in the system because the policy has more advantages than the disadvantages. Kaya (2018), bases his arguments on studies conducted about the possible implementation of a school-based management model in Turkey. However, it is relatively hard to accept the PS initiative as a school-based management model because it is still far from being a decentralised model and neither the schools nor the people who work in them are empowered enough to practice school-based management. Also, it should be mentioned that the MoNE still holds most of the power. These points have been clearly expressed by the school leaders who participated in this research.

Nevertheless, it is also worth noting here that there are quite serious reservations regarding the implementation of a school-based management model in Turkey. Balcı (2000), explains that many aspects related to the implementation of school-based management in Turkey are not realistic enough with respect to Turkey's situation. Notwithstanding that this is an ideal system or more ideal than the current one, at least for now, Turkey is far from ready to implement such a system at present.

Ideally, it is suggested that students and teachers should be given an active role in decision-making processes, and that parents should be encouraged to participate in this process. However, surprisingly, the research reveals that teachers and parents see participation in administrative processes as a burden or chore, and in an exam-oriented system, not only students but also parents focus only on the exam results (Başaran and Çinkır, 2013; Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018). Accordingly, teachers work under pressure because of this exam-oriented system and given that they are not remunerated and rewarded for the time they devote to managerial processes, they most likely see undertaking a task and taking responsibility here as a waste of time (Başaran and Çinkır, 2013; Meşeci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018).

The reasons behind these beliefs should be studied in detail, however some of the participants of this research mention various concerns that might be related to them. For example, the terror problems experienced in certain regions, lack of human and financial resources, or just the characteristics or inclinations of people on the ground. Moreover, certain leaders narrate and tell stories regarding the problems with corruption and favouritism and believe that such a system would intensify these kinds of problems.

Problems

The leaders of PSs indicate three main problems. First, they definitely believe that their responsibilities and authorities are not reasonable. They see that their responsibilities, in the

eyes of parents and the MoNE, are much greater than the power that they have on the ground. Therefore, according to them, this is causing intense pressure on the school leaders, especially those working in the PSs, because there are no rewards such extra pay or status. Second, as a result of the first one, school leaders want to have the authority to choose their staff. Furthermore, they argue that the lack of authority over staff causes carelessness and/or an unprofessional working environment. Finally, several of the leaders say that they are facing serious financial issues from term to term and they assert that they are spending most of their limited energy solving their financial and infrastructure problems instead of focusing on genuine educational improvements. It is obvious that these are some of the common problems not only for PSs but also many others in Turkey. However, it is claimed that the effects are more serious for PSs because of two particular reasons: first, the expectations are much higher, second, it is believed that they are educating the nation's best minds.

Koc and Bastas (2019) indicate three problematic areas, related to PSs, expressed by the participants of their research, who are teachers in PSs. The first one is the lack of required budgets and qualified staff to fulfil the capacity of those schools. The second one is the overwhelming workload of the staff in these schools from leaders to teachers. Lastly, the third one is that centralized exams (especially the university entrance exam) hinder the capacity of these schools to implement different projects as these are expected from them (p. 937). Kaya (2018) suggests that the shortcomings related to schools' physical infrastructures and financial situations are the problems that are highlighted the most regarding the PSs. He argues that the administrators and teachers working in the schools in the PSs practice should receive extra financial support (Kaya, 2018, p.85). Yet again, this recommendation is understandable and fair, but it is a basic requirement not only for PSs but also for all the others. Therefore, the MoNE should take serious and immediate action to improve these

types of standards and solve the problems associated with schools in this respect because it is the MoNE which is holding the power and funds to deal with these kinds of issues.

As seen, finance and accountability are clearly specified as two of the main problem areas by PS leaders as participants of this research. The MoNE mentions them and offers some solutions in the main policy document known as the '2023 Education Vision', not only for PSs but also for all the schools nationwide (MoNE, 2018). In the report, it is stated that the capacity will be created for financial resources via a structure for charitable donations to education and through cooperation with other departments (like the Ministry of Finance or Justice). The report also argues that there is a need for resource diversification in order to meet the additional financing needs in addition to the financing provided from the central budget. In addition, it recommends international grants, charitable donations, schools own funds for vocational and technical education as well as using the existing resources more efficiently. The structure has been presented in the report at the provincial and ministry level, and legislation, software and access guidelines will be implemented as a part of it so that people who donate to education and schools can donate in diverse ways. The report also states that educational benefactors will be presented with options to make donations via the Geographical Information System where schools can be viewed and school-parent union revenues, which predominantly consist of donations from parents, will be restructured (MoNE, 2018). This report also focuses on the development plans specifically designed for the schools. Similarly, it was claimed that the schools will be provided with extra 'development budgets' in order to support their developments in line with the plans. It is claimed that each school will be given an extra budget and the schools that are disadvantaged will be supported more (MoNE, 2018).

Historically, most of the schools in Turkey are supported financially by donations from parents. It is not a surprise, but the discourses of government or politicians place the schools

in a difficult position because, politically, from term to term, it is claimed that schools are provided with sufficient funds and they should not ask for donations from parents. However, in reality, it is not correct because schools cannot continue without donations from parents or from other charitable organisations. A leader, interviewed in this research, asserts that they feel like they are begging for money and it is harming their reputation as well as removing them from concentrating on educational matters. They even say that they feel like beggars in front of their parents. Therefore, the plans and structures presented in the report look hopeful because it shows the MoNE's acceptance of schools' financial problems and their requirements and practices in relation to obtaining donations from parents. However, it is not certain how many of these plans have been implemented since 2018. What are the outcomes? Why the school leaders are not mentioning them. And there has been no research regarding the outcomes of its implementation except for the perspectives of the education shareholders. Nevertheless, positive opinions are presented regarding the document though with some reservations about its applicability to this system (Doğan, 2019; Ertürk, 2020; Kösterelioğlu, 2021).

5.4 Contribution to Knowledge

Three aspects of contribution regarding research outcomes and related literature are discussed in this chapter; namely, cross-national comparisons, policy-learning outcomes, and enactment of policy in schools as discussed by Ball et al (2012).

5.4.1 Cross-national comparisons

Starting points

Academisation policy has been initiated to implement in failing schools first based on Ofsted inspections. Research by Eyles and Machin (2019, p.1107), establishes the positive and significant effects of sponsored academies on the performance of secondary school students. Concerning sponsored academisation, Eyles and Machin appreciate the increase in freedom and its positive and significant effects on outcomes of the students. They argue that

"improvements in performance are greater for pupils in urban academies and for those converting from schools that gained relatively more autonomy as a result of conversion". Moreover, according to them, there is no indication that the changes in student compositions caused this effect. However, they add in the conclusion that their research considered only sponsored academies prior to the fundamental amendment to the policy made in 2010 and that post-2010 converter academies should be researched in this respect (Eyles and Machin, 2019). The converter academies were already successful schools, so a rapid and significant improvement in student performance should not be expected. In fact, as mentioned earlier, mixed results are seen in the literature in this regard (see Hutchings and Francis, 2018). These schools (converters) show similarities with Turkey's PSs with respect to being successful already. Hence, to see the effects of more freedom for schools that are successful already, they can be compared for the sake of learning from each other. As PS policy was implemented in the most successful schools in Turkey serious objections for were raised at the beginning of the implementation of the policy. This was not entirely the case for the academies in England because it was easy to support intervention or look for solutions for continuously failing schools, but much harder for the schools that were already doing well. Moreover, while failing schools in England have been forced to convert, it is in fact the outstanding schools in Turkey that have been compelled to make the change. This situation brought up the why question among many stakeholders because they were already doing well and at least this could be an voluntary choice for them.

Furthermore, as it might be expected, these kinds of central policies encountered different reactions based on regional differences. Thus, as AL1 argues, the problems or reactions to the academisation policy were different in the Northeast in comparison to London. Resistance was much greater in the Northeast because the LAs, were primarily from a different political party than the central government. Moreover, it was claimed by some that the academisation

policy is London-centric so does not work for the Northeast. Similarly, some school leaders in Turkey argue that a possible decentralisation or expansion of PSs will not work all around the country, especially for regions such as the South-east. PSL6, for example, associates this with the terror problem in some regions and argues that there is no way the control of the schools can be given to the local people in certain regions, adding that this might be ideal for the future but that at this moment, Turkey is not ready for this to happen.

Academy and PS leaders have identified four main areas of concern, which are the concerns related to 'teaching staff', 'finance', 'inspections' and 'lack of clarity'.

Teaching staff

According to OECD, many school leaders in Turkey argue that their schools' capacities are blocked by teachers as they are not qualified enough or working adequately (OECD, 2020). Likewise, according to the PS leaders in Turkey, staff recruitment remains the most significant issue for their schools, although they state that it is better in PSs than other schools. They claim that they want more authority and control of this matter. It should be mentioned that PSs have slightly more authority because their leaders are provided with limited authority if there is a vacancy or if new staff are employed, as presented earlier. This authority is limited because they are allowed to offer teachers who are already appointed to another school in the city by way of the centralised appointment system and the higher authorities need to endorse their offers. The other schools do not have these rights, so their teachers, for example, are appointed by the central government meaning that they have to work with them. That is why PS leaders say that it is better than nothing.

Regarding the current staff, there is an eight-year rule in which existing staff are protected for eight years once a school becomes a PS. A similar rule can be seen in relation to the academy conversions too because 'where an academy converts from maintained school status, transferring staff are protected by TUPE (Transfer of Undertakings and Protection of

Employment) arrangements' (Roberts and Danechi, 2019, p. 13). However, 'when hiring new staff, or in the case of entirely new academies and free schools, academy trusts can determine their own pay, terms and conditions for staff, providing they comply with employment law and any relevant terms in their funding agreements' (Roberts and Danechi, 2019, p. 13). Comparing the employment systems of both schools here might not appear logical due to the fundamental differences. For example, schools in England employ their staff on limited time contracts (one year mostly), but in Turkey, they are appointed centrally without any time limits, and their employment cannot be terminated unless there is a serious issue. Moreover, "unlike maintained schools, an academy is not required to employ teachers with Qualified Teacher Status (QTS)" (Roberts and Danechi, 2019, p.23).

However, school leaders' concerns show similarities with respect to both countries. Without exception, all the leaders want qualified and hardworking staff, teaching staff particularly, but while academy leaders worry about teachers leaving their posts, teachers' low pay and working conditions, PS leaders are complaining about not being able to control staff.

Financial concerns

It appears that both academies and PSs have financial concerns and are feeling the pressure accordingly. These are also emphasised in the report issued by the HCL (2019). In addition, the DfE (2019), includes schools' resource management as a potential risk regarding the academies and MATs because, after academisation, the schools or MATs now have the authority to manage significant budgets. This situation shows similarities with PS leaders' concerns regarding the allocation of authority to schools in terms of budget use or management. In actual fact, it can be argued that this issue was the one that PS leaders highlighted the most regarding freedom for schools in Turkey. The DfE (2019, p.52) stresses that the efficient use of resources is the key to good management and financial health in the academies and MATs and sees this as an area of risk. It reasoned that "a range of information,

tools and training has been produced to help schools reduce costs" in order to help schools manage this risk. Moreover, the DfE claims that advice for financial plans and data for school self-assessments are shared as a package. It added that now, trusts are "expected to carry out three-year financial planning and have to submit three-year forecasts in their forecast returns to the DfE" in order to feed the preventative strategy of the ESFA (DfE, 2019, p.52).

Inspections

The accountability measures and/or inspections are criticised in regard to two aspects, either for being too oppressive or being too weak. As AL1 and AL3 contend, schools in disadvantaged regions that have deprived students are feeling the pressure and constrained as these measures are much greater. AL3 claims that this system is penalising the schools for having deprived kids whose social situations are extremely challenging. In addition, AL1 claims that MATs are opening alternative schools known as 'studio' or 'alternative revision' schools to avoid this penalty for certain students. Or some schools are just trying to exclude these particular students so that they achieve better results (Benn, 2008). These instances are creating further problems for the children who are already challenged within this system. AL6 expresses this risk as follows: "there is a danger that people will wash their hands of young people who are particularly challenging within the system, with the aim of wanting school performances to be better". Concerning the PSs, conversely, it appears that this is an issue beyond being a risk for this kind of children and school leaders do not hesitate to express this. As it is indicated in the findings chapter, PS leaders suggest that their biggest reason for becoming PSs is to attract better students to their schools and they see this as a normal aspiration and key factor for success. According to PSL3, for example, attracting students is the biggest motivation for becoming PSs. Therefore, improvements should be provided for certain schools in both countries, especially for those that are serving in deprived regions, because it appears that these pressures are forcing schools to ascertain ways

to avoid certain students, who are primarily disadvantaged, in order to be successful in the eyes of authorities. On the other hand, the NAO (2018) argues that the academisation policy is providing trusts/schools with new freedoms and responsibilities not only as regards educational performance and activities but also for financial management and applications, which include substantial budgets consisting of public money. For that reason, it is specified in the report that there must be full confidence that trusts/schools have the 'capacity and capability' not only to manage the education processes in the schools but also to manage the vast school budgets, whilst it is also essential that they are trusted and reliable in this regard (NAO, 2018, p. 6). Thus, inspections regarding the actions of MATs/academies should be detailed. One of the main concerns of PS leaders regarding a possible increase in freedom in relation to budget management, schools in Turkey are not ready because they neither have the qualified human resources nor is there an environment of trust at present. In the OECD report, it has been argued that 'both teacher appraisal and school inspection have not yet been fully harnessed to support system development' in Turkey (2020, p.6). These are seen as the important fundamentals not only for decentralized but also for any effective system. Accordingly, in the OECD reports, 'aligning teacher appraisal, school inspection and system evaluation with national priorities and building capacity among school teams to ensure outcomes inform development' have been recommended for Turkey several times to develop its education system (OECD, 2020, p.7). School leaders also argue that within the education system, there is no effective accountability system or inspections at this moment. Moreover, they mention some greater risks such as corruption, conflict and the horror stories that might damage a school's reputation. Therefore, for both countries, it is apparent that there should be no gap regarding the accountability measures in order to establish trust and reliability in schools. However, these measures should not either limit the capacities of schools or generate extra challenges for the students who are already challenged within the current system.

Lack of clarity

According to PS leaders, one of the biggest problems regarding PS policy was the lack of required information and guidance not only for the public but also for schools themselves. They clearly specify that even as the leaders of these schools they are not informed enough. So it is seen that, like many others, this is also a top-down policy for schools in Turkey and consequently, school leaders see that as problematic. The situation with regard to the academisation policy is quite different in terms of sharing information and sharing the underlying goals it with public and with schools. Many official documents were published about academies until 2016. For example, important areas have been allocated to the academisation policy in the white papers published between 2000- 2016. However, since 2016, the direction of policy and the position of the DfE, especially regarding the academisation of all schools in the country, has not been clearly explained, a situation that has been heavily criticised (see HCL, 2019). The DfE has also been criticised for failing to adequately guide all of the shareholders in the system. The DfE's focus on the academies is clearly evident, however maintained schools, LAs, pupils and parents are crucial parts of the system along with the academies (HCL, 2018). Moreover, in the same report, it is stated that the DfE's "policy for converting schools to academies is unclear, and there is substantial regional variation, not only in the extent to which schools have become academies but also in the quantity and quality of support available to struggling schools" (HCL, 2018, p. 3).

Therefore, it can be claimed here that in both countries any lack of information and guidance has not been tolerated particularly for matters that are impacting not only public systems but also the lives of young people. The situation is better for England as many official documents were released and explanations provided by the officials. However, especially since 2016, there have been shortcomings, which the various stakeholders are not willing to tolerate.

Pertaining to Turkey, on the other hand, it appears much worse, because many school leaders are claiming that they are even left in the dark, in an unacceptable situation. This is because

no one can expect a successful implementation from the people on the ground if they are not even informed about the basics regarding the policies and their objectives, steps and guidance, etc.

5.4.2 Policy learning outcomes

Academies experiences

Four areas emerge where school leaders believe that lessons can be taken from the experiences of the academies and improvements and/or future policies can be developed under the light of these learning outcomes. First, they say, "there is no one size fits all solution" and argue that the policies directly related to schools themselves may possibly create some adverse and/or unwanted secondary effects in schools. They suggest that all schools are unique and it is somewhat expected that their contexts and issues differ from each other. Accordingly, AL5, for instance, argues that differences and having different school types can be a more suitable and beneficial atmosphere instead of being a single type. Similarly, AL4 and AL6 support this and claim that what is best for the school can change from school to school based on their circumstances.

Second, because of the current accountability and ranking system, school leaders indicate that there is a risk for the students who are already academically challenging and argue that schools may not want them in order to improve their scores or rankings. AL6, for example, argues that "there is a danger that people will wash their hands of young people who are particularly challenging within the system... (so) we must avoid this and ensure that academy trusts are not incentivised too heavily to avoid more challenging young people". It is argued in the Sutton Trust's report that "academy chains have admirably stuck to their initial mission of addressing schooling in areas of social deprivation – but this also presents an additional challenge in improvement... (and). That this level of challenge was naively disregarded by policy-makers, is disappointing" (Hutchings and Francis, 2018, p.41)

Third, AL4 warns that previous mistakes or ineffective policy implementations should not be replicated and changes should only be applied if they create real differences and improvement for students. Similarly, after indicating his/her perspective regarding innovation in schools, AL1 argues that classroom and student level innovations are necessary instead of huge reforms and ideas. Finally, AL4 again emphasises that there is a need for stability and development instead of huge changes and claims that ironically, Brexit helped the creation of this atmosphere in education by changing the focus and leaving it alone. Therefore, leaders argue that there is a need for stability and classroom level improvements instead of silver bullet ideas or huge changes.

One of the participants of this research cautions that there is a danger that the previous mistakes will be repeated and MATs can become similar to LAs in terms of holding the rope and restricting schools. The HCL report (2019, 2019a) decries the lack of transparency in academies as well as the main focus of the department to the rapid conversion of a substantial number of schools. In the report, it was argued that parents are even struggling to obtain important information from MATs, and that they occasionally have to fight and officially claim for the information they need. The report evaluates this situation as worrying indeed and recommends immediate action by the department, such as establishing a complaints procedures for MATs (HCL, 2019; 2019a). Similarly, West and Wolfe (2019, p. 5), highlight concerns about the lack of transparency in academies and reducing the democratic standards that came with academies, with respect to the management procedures found in public schools. They maintain that the appointment of trustees is opaque and that RSCs are very important. However, the appointment of governors (of maintained schools), is made by an open process and "decisions in relation to maintained schools, are taken by local authorities under the oversight of elected local councillors which operate in meetings subject to 'public participation' obligations" (West and Wolfe, 2019, p. 5). Moreover, it is contended in their

report that there is a serious transparency issue in academies, such as a lack of public notices, reliable information and external inspection. Therefore, they warn that academies are open to possible corruption or abuse of funds as well as the acceptance of low standards. This situation might be evaluated as the misapplication or misunderstanding of the discourses of 'freedom for schools'. Freedom is not the opposite of transparency and it requires transparency as well as accountability and inspection. Therefore, this cause and effect should be kept in mind to avoid any discussions on the side-effect of freedom as it is becoming common in Turkey as well as in many countries. In addition to accountability and inspection, the basics of transparency should have been established as preconditions before the allocation of greater freedom and/or a share of authority to schools. The need for more transparency either for academies or for PSs regarding the governance and/or management of these schools is undoubtedly witnessed. Therefore, transparency arrangements should be introduced for schools in both countries and these "arrangements could include common statutory arrangements around governance" too (West and Wolfe, 2019, p. 6).

Fourth, based on their experiences, leaders claim that there needs to be more clarity in several aspects but especially regarding responsibilities and accountabilities. AL6, for instance, argues that the 'governance' and 'operation' of schools should be separated and comprise clear structures and that the accountability measures and expectations should be set according to this. AL4, conversely, argues that "there's always been a disconnect between an individual skill and what their provision is" and adds that, therefore, "there is still a lot of work to do to clarify what the service is and what it provides and where the authority, care and support and provision is and where schools are in terms of education generally" (AL4). Finally, AL6 gives an example from the NHS and makes a suggestion in this respect with the intention of improving clarity and establishing more structured accountability.

PSs experiences

Specific learning outcomes can be pursued for the future of the policy and/or policymaking based on the experiences of PSs leaders on the ground. School leaders generally refer to five areas from which they can learn some valuable lessons for the future.

First, the school leaders clearly state that the exam-based system is preventing the implementation of many of the required changes. They specify that standardised central exams are the priorities of students and parents and add that not only students but also teachers are under pressure as a result of these exams. PSL1, for example, claims that it is very difficult to adopt fundamental changes under this exam-based regime. In the literature, the education system in Turkey has been criticised for being highly exam-oriented, a fact that is seen as one of the biggest issues and which is preventing real improvement in Turkey's education system (Altun and Buyukduman, 2007; Gül, 2008; Büyüköztürk, 2016). It can be argued that the centralised exams are the real leaders of this system because not only students but also all other stakeholders prioritise the exams and the results. It is not hard to claim that this fact is behind the failure of many attempts at reform, which aimed to enhance educational practices. In the OECD report (2020) it is argued that Turkey's education system has been based on the central exams and academic selections extensively. It has been emphasized in the report that the educational preferences of parents or students have been affected directly by the country's perspectives regarding employment, skills, and the labour market. Accordingly, it is argued that, in Turkey, 'academic selection funnels many students into programmes with lower labour market outcomes' (OECD, 2020, p.10). Meseci Giorgetti *et al.* (2018) emphasize this problem indeed as a deadlock against PSs in order to be qualified schools. They argue that the students, who continue their education in PSs by showing remarkable success in the centralised exams, require exam-oriented education because they need to be successful again in the central exam so as to transition to higher education. Thus, any different policy implementation and/or reform other than exam-oriented practice is not

welcomed by the students or parents. Therefore, the central exams are seen as the most effective drivers of a system that is leading many practices on the ground. Nonetheless, they are also seen as the biggest barrier to reforms or any new applications that do not help students to attain higher scores in the central exams (Meseci Giorgetti *et al.*, 2018).

However, it should also be recognized here that the secondary schools' placement system (based on the centralized exam results), which is directly related to PSs, has been reformed recently in Turkey, and in the OECD report, it is argued that addressing 'inequities created by early tracking' was the aim of this reform (OECD, 2020, p.11). Furthermore, OECD appreciates this reform as it is argued that the previous system 'was seen to put pressure on learners, narrow the curriculum and promote shadow education' and was mandatory for all students (OECD, 2019 and 2020, p.11). In the new system, admissions are mostly made based on personal preferences and residence, and only around 10% of them are allocated for admissions via central examination. All of the schools within this 10% have converted to PSs and even though the places are 10% of the total most of the students (more than 85%) take the test and want to these schools. This situation shows the need to carefully manage oversubscription to those schools and quality differences between them and other schools, at least in the eyes of parents or students. However, OECD argues based on the early analysis of the system that the effects of students' socioeconomic status and school types on the mean test scores have been reduced due to the reform, and the MoNE expects an increase in this when the system is settled and the schools and parents become more familiar about it (OECD, 2019 and 2020). OECD also points out that the new secondary school placement system of Turkey should be explained more clearer by providing procedures for oversubscription policies in schools, reducing the side effects of the central exams.

Second, they voice that there is a 'trust' problem among the stakeholders from the top to the bottom. They state that "no one trusts each other, teachers do not trust leaders, authorities do

not trust schools, leaders do not trust teachers, etc.". The need to build trust is seen as crucial for many areas or sectors in Turkey but especially for the education management area as the 'OECD also identified the need to build trust and support for change within society by better communicating national learning goals' (2020, p.7). PSL2 describes this as "a trust crisis" and argues that it is not only hindering developments but also affecting policies and how the system works. This crisis might be based on the lack of inspection and accountability measures because OECD indicates two key challenges for Turkey's education system in this respect. First, Turkey should develop its capacity for reliable data, and create information sources for an evidence-based system that develops and improve implementations continually. Second, it has been criticized that there is a lack to provide qualitative feedback for improvement at all levels in Turkey, therefore, not only for school inspections but also for student assessment practices qualitative feedback routes should be opened and prioritized for more effective improvements (OECD, 2020, p.15).

Third, connected to the trust issue, school leaders believe that there is a communication gap between the implementers and policymakers and that is affecting their beliefs in policies as well as neglecting the local issues. PSL5, for instance, maintains there is no effective communication between policymakers and local people, although the people who are on the ground (like teachers) understand the local issues much better than the policymaker. Therefore, good communication routes must be developed urgently.

Finally, the last two areas are chronic "court decisions" and ongoing "rapid changes", where school leaders believe lessons should be taken and changed. Regarding "court decisions", leaders imply that many court decisions were taken directly after the release of the policy and that they are affecting the policies as well as stakeholders' motivation to implement and accomplish policy goals. PSL2 says that this may possibly be because of the weaknesses associated with the legal basis of the policy and argues that there will always be certain

parties that are against some policies and which also want to pursue the matter in the courts. However, he/she also adds that it is better to be prepared for them and establish legally strong policies before the implementation of the policy. Otherwise, attempts result in many things being wasted, such as resources and people's hopes. Finally leaders point out that the rapid changes are producing instability and unsuccessful implementations, as well as a failure to achieve the policies and goals. PSL4, for example, argues that "rapid changes and instability are one of the reasons behind inadequate policy implementations... (people) think that everything has changed rapidly, so this will probably be changed again... Therefore, many parties are not embracing changes. And even if they do not directly affect them, they are ignoring them."

In addition to these, learning outcomes concerning 'market logic' and 'general supervision of the schooling policies' are the final remarks for both contexts. They are presented prior to the conclusion.

Market logic

Market logic is based on neoliberalism and has been a fundamental political philosophy since the 1990s (West, 2014). Particular parties contend that market logic was central to the academisation policy (McDool, 2016; Wilkins, 2017). Put simply, market or quasi-market logic in education aims to improve standards by creating a competitive environment, which increases autonomy, choices and freedom of choice. The schools that attract more parents or students are able to do this as they have more funding than others in the system. It is argued that school-based education in England has been developed using market logic to increase the importance of parental choice regarding schools, school autonomy and competition in the system. It is also argued that the education system has been marketised as a result of neoliberal market logic and that the competitive environment in schools has been heightened with increased options, policies relating to school choice, and that more providers and

academies, specifically with the introduction of sponsors and MATs, are evaluated within this market logic and the privatisation of public education (Purcell, 2011). For example, McDool (2016), claims that increasing school autonomy and school choice, are the key features of academisation. According to West and Bailey (2013), these neoliberal policies have caused more differences for education providers in the countries because the goals behind those policies relate to increasing efficiency by way of increasing choice and diversity as well as competition. They add that while the roles of locally elected bodies have diminished, the roles of the private bodies that use public money, have actually increased.

The market logic and performance-oriented perspective as the result of it focus on the rankings, central exam results, and competition via them. Ball *et al.* (2012) call them 'policy technologies' that prioritize the 'economy' and its sake, and it is argued that, in this approach, schools are used or demanded to contribute to the competition of countries via these policies. It is argued that, within this perspective, the governments and policy-makers miss or ignore school-level equilibriums and their complexity because 'schools and teachers are expected to be familiar with, and able to enact, multiple (and sometimes contradictory) policies that are planned for them by others and they are held accountable for this task' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 9). Ball *et al.* (2012)'s seminal research and the contribution of this research over their perspectives are discussed more in the following sub-section.

West and Bailey (2013), argue that there is a big shift towards the system provided and delivered privately instead of the complete public system like before and academies in England are the biggest part of this. This raises the question of how this affects the intended increase in collaboration among schools as it is claimed as one of the policy goals of academisation because competition is seen as being opposite to collaboration. It is apparent here that a balance and talent are necessary because, as Hargreaves (2010, p.8), points out, "it takes skilful leadership to understand when to build on collaboration through the introduction

of friendly competition that drives up standards in the interests of collective achievement". In addition, because there are examples of it in countries like the US, there are concerns and/or questions regarding further privatisation and if laws in the future will allow MATs to profit from running academies (West and Bailey, 2013, p.154). Similarly, Gunter and McGinity (2014, p.301) argue that, with academisation, "the shift from a predominantly public 'system' to private 'provision' is not yet settled or complete but there are visible trends through the promotion of parental choice, the shift of public assets into private hands, the outsourcing of provision to private interests, and the discourses around 'for-profit' educational services, interplayed with localised compliance and development of 'independence' schemes". These policies and market logic have been criticised within the field of education with several concerns expressed. For example, it is reasoned that private bodies might prioritise other interests rather than the education of children, can harm the democratic culture, could deepen the segregation and hierarchy or quality gap between schools or cause the exclusion of particular students for the sake of competition (see Gunter, 2011; West and Bailey, 2013).

According to Polat (2013), neoliberalism's effects have been seen increasingly in Turkey too since 1980s, and the field of education has always had a very central position for this neoliberal environment. According to Polat (2013) many developments or changes during this time period have happened thanks to the neoliberal ideology such as privatization, decreasing public expenses, enforcing flexible working, leaving employees without insurance, and making the curriculum more conservative. Moreover, Polat argues that, since 1980, 'the provision of social services such as education, health, and social security was shifted from the public to the private sector' (2013, p. 159), and argues that these fields were opened to market or privatization. However, as the year 2022, it is very hard to accept or verify these arguments because still these services are majorly under the control of the state.

Therefore, as participants of this research argued many time too, at least for the field of education, it can be argued that Turkey's system appears to be quite far from market logic because there is no real freedom and choice based on the highly centralised management and exam-oriented system. However, the MoNE's main policy document (2018) titled: 'Education Vision 2023', asserts that the school development model applied in Turkey "will adopt an understanding that is based on sharing, rather than competition, at all levels of education" (MoNE, 2018, p.27). It is hard to say that there is competition among schools in the current system in Turkey, but among the students, there is intense competition due to the exam-oriented system. Therefore, the focus of schools is to attract better students instead of concentrating on self-improvement. This point is supported by the findings of this research regarding the aim of schools to attract better students (Q2). According to the main policy document (MoNE, 2018), it is claimed that reducing the difference/gap between schools is one of the main objectives for 2023. However, it appears that the most important point that causes this gap/difference has been missing, which is the tendency to gather together successful students in certain schools. Furthermore, it does not appear to be possible to reduce this gap without reducing the importance of standardised exams in the admission of students. Moreover, competition between schools along with collaboration could be helpful as regards improving schools but it requires balance as well as skilful leadership (Hargreaves, 2010).

General oversight of the schooling policies

It was argued in the report published by the HCL (2019, p.6), that 'the Department's supervision of academies needs to improve' because of the failures, harm to children's education and as it is expensive. Moreover, it was argued that "some academy trusts have misused public money through related-party transactions and paying excessive salaries" so the possibility of this kind of consequence must be prevented in advance (HCL, 2019a, p.3).

The DfE was criticized in the same report for rushing to academise all the schools instead of carefully evaluating the schools/trusts' capacities or capabilities to become academies. It was added that the situation is better now in terms of the DfE's evaluations, however it is too late for many conversions. Likewise, it is evident that the DfE did not learn any lessons from the previous mistakes or academy failures. According to the HCL report, this situation is worrying because it is a very important matter pertaining to the use of public money and also with respect to public education (HCL, 2018, pp.3, 5).

It is a known fact and the participants of this research also claim that the government was supporting the policy unconditionally and without any reservation. Therefore, they suggest that the government supported and pushed through all the policy implementations and conversions in this respect without any monitoring, even disregarding the issue at times. Therefore, as a policy learning outcome, it can be suggested here that any policy or implementation should not be supported unconditionally and should not be released without arrangements being made to conduct inspections and establish monitoring because there are many variables, conditions and different understandings and it is not always possible to count on all of them. Many factors can affect not only the implementation of policies and also the approaches and application of people on the ground who are the real implementors.

It is seen that the strong political discourses such as 'all schools will be academised' or 'the PSs as the qualified schools' are having a profound effect and it is not easy to modify them even though essential amendments are required. The NAO report (2018, p.9), argues that the DfE is not able to convert all schools to academies and that in the future, many maintained schools are expected to be in the system. However, the previous objective regarding the academisation of all schools in England created serious consequences for LAs, especially in terms of their funding of education. Thus, it is expected that they will continue to manage/control some of the schools in the system. Therefore, "there is a risk that, because of

the loss of this funding, local authorities will reduce their support for maintained schools". In addition, it is argued that the LAs still play an important role in the public education system such as providing places for schools in spite of their reduced control of school capacity (NAO, 2018, p.9). Moreover, West and Wolfe (2019, p.6), argue that LAs remain responsible for having an adequate amount of schools for their communities, but they lack direct authority to do so now. Similarly, it is argued in the report issued by the HCL (2018, p6), that "local authorities' ability to fulfil their statutory responsibilities, including their duty to provide school places, is undermined in areas where a high proportion of schools have become academies". Considering this, it can be argued here that the serious effects on the remaining schools, as well as an objective change regarding the academisation of all schools, should have been considered and the government should have been more careful before taking serious action that might affect not only institutions or LAs but also the lives of young people.

Furthermore, a more integrated system that includes different school types and management models has been suggested because it is always possible that local issues and needs might consist of considerable differences and they might not be anticipated or expected. Similarly, Turkey's minister of education at the time stated that the 'qualified schools' had a great influence on the country. Not only because of this, but currently, there are huge differences between PSs and other types of schools as regards their reputation, which in turn influences both students and parents. Moreover, this perspective is harming one of the current objectives of the MoNE, which is, as emphasised many times in the 'Education Vision 2023' document, pertains to reducing the great differences among schools. Therefore, as a policy learning outcome, more caution and being moderate can be suggested once again, as well as an acceptance that it is not always possible to consider every aspect, especially in such big countries with significant local differences and in fast-changing environments.

These evaluations are considered important policy learning outcomes that can be beneficial for future policies and/or amendments to the current policies.

Finally, it should always be remembered that the quality of teaching within classes is the most important aspect of education and the lives of young people, particularly for the young people who are disadvantaged due to many factors. In addition, the general supervision of the school policies should be improved and the expectations of schools should be reviewed because “schools alone cannot solve the challenges of social inequality” (Hutchings and Francis, 2018).

5.4.3 A contribution to enactment of policy in schools as discussed by Ball *et al.* (2012)

Historically policy analysis research has focused on the cost-benefit studies and/or 'how well policies are implemented' much more than schools' realities, struggles or challenges they face during the implementation such as dealing with contradictory orders or multiple and unclear policies (Ball *et al.*, 2012). Ball *et al.* (2012) differ the policy 'implementation' and 'enactment' and place the schools at the centre of policy 'enactment'. However, contrary to mostly seen, they also emphasize that all the schools are not the same but unique and complex organizations, and there are many variables that directly affect any policy enactment or implementation at school level. In particular, question four of this research proves and illustrates that schools might have several specific issues and challenges related to policy enactments such as financial, infrastructural, and student or teacher-related challenges. For example, AL3 indicates the serious teacher shortage in specific subjects in their region, or PSL4 expresses their financial challenges and problems with parents accordingly. Therefore, 'the material, structural and relational contexts of schooling need to be incorporated into policy analysis in order to make better sense of policy enactments at the institutional level' and 'any further research needs to take context more seriously' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 148).

Policy analysis studies have been criticized to be made from an isolated perspective by approaching them as separated from the other factors (Ball *et al.*, 2012), such as school-specific realities, backgrounds, interpretations, effects, and views regarding the problematic areas. Accordingly, Ball *et al.* argue that their 'study takes a multi-policy approach in order to chart and understand contemporary policy enactments in a more realistic/holistic manner' (2012, p. 10). Ball *et al.* (2012) provide some educational policy studies as examples of the general situation and criticize them for not helping to understand how and why policies or certain parts of them are chosen within schools, who decides them, and what the consequences are. And they argue that these studies or approaches 'do not help us understand how and why school leaders and teachers negotiate with, manage and put sometimes conflicting policies into practice simultaneously' (p.5). Ball *et al.* state that, with their research, they were 'seeking to chart any discrepancies that might have arisen between 'readings' of texts by different policy actors as well as attending to the role of authoritative actors in producing pre-emptive 'readings'' (2012, p.15). For both 'academisation' and 'PSS' policies, the school leaders can clearly be accepted as the most important policy actors, especially regarding the on-ground changes or implementations. Therefore, their perceptions or 'readings' of these policies are crucially important. Therefore, it is legitimate to argue here that this research contributes to the literature in this respect as it analysis two very important schooling policies within the specific contexts of the schools by applying to school leaders' experiences and perspectives, making comparisons within their contexts, and trying to provide learning outcomes based via experiences on the ground.

Ball *et al.* (2012) provide eight different positions that take place in policy implementation or 'enactment' their preferred term, and they argue that some people move between these positions/roles because they are not fixed and not attached to specific people. Namely, these are narrators, entrepreneurs, outsiders, transactors, enthusiasts, translators, critics, and

receivers. The head teachers (school leaders) can take most of these positions and are the main actors in policy implementation related schools, especially in countries like Turkey where the education system is highly centralized and the head teachers are the first, if not only, contact of the central management in a case of the implementation of school-related policies. For example, school leaders may be 'transactors and entrepreneurs as well as narrators; enthusiasts are often translators but will also be receivers, etc.' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 50).

'Interpretation' and 'translation' are seen as very important processes of policy enactments on the ground and these processes are inevitably affected by the school-specific values, experiences, and realities. Moreover, it is also frequently seen that policies have been updated, changed, or rewritten when the governments' objectives and key bureaucrats such as educational secretaries are changed (Ball *et al.*, 2012). '...putting policies into practice is a creative and sophisticated and complex process. Policy work has its pleasures, satisfactions, and seductions and for some, it has personal benefits. Policies are suffused with emotions and with psychosocial tensions. They can threaten or disrupt self-worth, purpose, and identity. They can enthuse or depress or anger.' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 8)

Ball *et al.* argue that the actors on the ground in the schools approach policies reactively many times and 'bigger' discourses that shape the interpretation and translation of the policy are seen many times (2012, p. 10). This research's outcomes support this argument as the participants of it have voiced 'bigger' discourses more than one time. For example, the themes of 'educating the best students', 'nation's future', or 'freedom for schools' have emerged based on the school leaders' interviews as big discourses related to policies.

According to Ball *et al.* (2012), in the related literature the term 'educational policy' is used as a problem-solving effort at the government level. Such an approach sees the educational policy as 'a linear, top-down and undifferentiated conception of policy work in schools', and

'it views all policies and all schools and all teachers in the same way' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p.4). They see this use and perception as problematic because it ignores many other aspects such as development processes or applications around and in the schools and does not consider the activities that transform the policy texts into practices. There are many expected interpretation activities at different levels before these practices and many of them happen at the school level therefore seeing the policy as a process instead of a document or order has been adopted in this research.

Therefore, specially the processes and actions within schools fill most of the policy enactment because policy 'texts cannot simply be implemented' (p.3) as the actions mostly are not clear, and school-specific factors or challenges are missed, and they have to be translated from text to action and this transfer is 'sophisticated, contingent, complex and unstable' (p.3) and includes 'interpretations of interpretations' (Rizvi and Kemmis, 1987). Necessities, experiences, context, values, and interests can affect the policy processes and interpretation and translation activities within schools (Ball *et al.*, 2012). For example, as a participant in this research, PSL2 clearly states the importance of their schools historically in their region and he indicates that they should prioritize their historic role and keep the values and accomplish the responsibilities attached to them so they need a highly qualified student group in their school. Therefore, as the school, their top priority is the admission of highly qualified students and creating ways for attracting them to their schools. It is expected that this priority is affecting not only the implementation of PSs policy but also any other policy that is implemented in the schools. It is expected that school leaders create some tools, resources, or illustrations to show their staff the policy objectives and what has to be done, and sometimes these applications become the representations of the policies themselves and become effective for the meaning of the policies (Ball *et al.*, 2012). Moreover, Ball *et al.*, title them

'artefacts', argue that 'to a great extent, policies are not possible without artefacts', however many of the policy analysis studies miss them (2012, p. 136).

The link between political orders or necessities and school-specific values and priorities is established via the meaning-making activities and interpretations play a key role in this process and they are 'set over and against what else is in play, what consequences might ensue from responding or not responding' and 'set within the schools' position in relation to policy (performance levels, league table position, Ofsted rating) and the degree and type of imperative attached to any policy and the contextual limitations of budget, staff, etc.' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 44). Naturally, the leaders schools are expected to lead, direct, and affect these processes. While all the actors in the schools are taken as equal mostly as a part of interpretation activity, school leaders are approached differently and they are 'given particular attention, and seen to be working on and with policy in similar ways – as receivers and agents' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 49).

The school leaders or head teachers 'seek to make disparate policy expectations coherent and render policies sensible, palatable and doable for their colleagues' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 16). Therefore, they play a very critical, if not the most important role, in the enactment of the policy in schools such as 'Academisation' and 'PSs' policies. Based on their case study research Ball *et al.* state that; 'head teachers were sometimes aware that they had to work hard to convince their staff of the worthwhileness of policy ideas and indeed were sometimes unconvinced themselves' (2012, p. 50). Therefore, choosing the head teachers, as the participants of this research, has been evaluated as the best starting point because of two reasons. First, for both countries, Turkey and England, the school leaders' perceptions regarding PSs and Academies have not been studied as comprehensively as this. In fact, in Turkey, there is no research but in England, most of the studies are focusing on the students' performances or cost-benefit analysis. Second, especially for Turkey's PSs, no other parties

(parents or teachers) but head teachers are aware or informed about the processes or changes that arrived due to the implementation of the policy. Eventually, it can be argued here that this research is contributing to the theory of Ball *et al.* (2012) by studying two different school-related policies via school leaders' perceptions in two different countries as these leaders are playing most of the eight roles specified by Ball *et al.* (2012) as policy actors.

Ball *et al.* emphasize the 'importance of context' for educational policy enactments because, mostly, policies emerge to solve 'problems' in the shade of school-specific realities such as values, commitments, experiences, resources, or challenges. Therefore, based on the data from their case study research in the four schools, they offer four contextual dimensions as a framework to understand the dynamics of the 'context' and its importance better (2012).

The first one is 'situated contexts' and that refers the factors that are related to the schools historically and locationally. The second dimension is 'professional cultures' and refers the school-specific variables such as ethos, teachers' values, and commitments. The third one is called 'material contexts' and refers to more physical or financial aspects of schools such as buildings, maintenance, and budgets, but also to levels of staffing, information technologies, and infrastructure. Lastly, the fourth dimension is 'external contexts', and with these, it is aimed to refer to outside school factors that cause expectations or pressures such as Ofsted ratings, league table positions, legal requirements and responsibilities, local support, and relationship with other schools. School-specific factors affect policy enactments in various ways such as they can create extra pressure, limitations, or enablers. However, these factors are frequently ignored not only by policymakers but also researchers in the field (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 19). This research supports the findings of Ball *et al.* (2012) in this respect as they clearly state:

'Policies enter different resource environments; schools have particular histories, buildings and infrastructures, staffing profiles, leadership experiences, budgetary situations, and teaching and learning challenges' (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 19).

For instance, as a participant in this research, PSL4 (PS leader) states that the financial challenges in the school are their greatest problem in this respect. Similarly, AL6 (Academy leader) expresses the extra challenges in their schools regarding the implementation of the policy due to the socio-cultural backgrounds of their students and/or parents and extra pressures created via Ofsted inspections and expectations.

It seems that this 'oppressive' environment is common especially for the disadvantaged schools as Ball argues that in England, due to the lack of trust, accountability measures take too much time for schools and detract them from focusing on real educational processes or issues (2003). There might not be much room for other things in schools that need to focus on the bureaucracy and the danger of league tables, exam scores, and reputation as well as all the accountability measures like inspections, audits, and quality matters (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 145). In this atmosphere, practice may actually be displacing policy in a fast-paced environment where school leaders must predict and foresee what is around the corner in terms of policy (Woods, 2011). Not same but similar in the respect of the consequences, PS leaders also argue that there is a trust crisis around the educational environments and that is causing a more centralized system because not only the government but also the other stakeholders are demanding the control of the state. They simply state that the reason behind this is the reality of 'no one trusts each other'. However, they also argue that the lack of accountability is obvious and this might be the cause but also the effect in this manner. In other words, they indicate two different theories; first, lack of accountability caused trust crisis, and trust crisis caused a more centralized system; second, a highly centralized system caused lack of accountability and lack of accountability caused trust crisis. In all cases, it is

clear that the areas of accountability, trust, and centralization are problematic in their eyes and they should be improved somehow.

However, interestingly, based on their case study research data, Ball *et al.* argue that the 'resistance' against the policies is 'rare and fleeting', and they base this argument on the lack of time to think differently or to be against constant change due to the accountability measures such as performance (2012, p. 138). Furthermore, they link this with the effects of neoliberalism instead of blaming the school staff as follows:

"Here we do not 'blame' the teacher for a failure of political insight, indeed we recognize, only too immediately, the ways in which we are all deeply implicated in, and bound up and into, the contemporary neo-liberal and globalizing settlement and its triumph are that most of the time we do not even notice it is there." (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 139)

Market values, national competitiveness, and globalization under neoliberalism are seen as the reasons behind that settlement, and this settlement aims to create 'economically useful citizens' and the examination is the focus of this settlement instead of learning or education (Ball *et al.*, 2012, p. 139).

For many staff in schools, especially for the new ones, such as the teachers appointed recently, policies are directly related to their classroom activities, for them, they just have to be done they do not pay much attention to understand them or the rationale behind them. The bigger policy goals and/or the reasons are not always clear to them, and mostly their perceptions rely on the 'interpretations of interpretations' as Rizvi and Kemmis (1987) worded it. As a finding of this research, even for school leaders the policy goals and rationale behind them are not clearly understood always. Many of the PS leaders, for example, indicate that there is confusion in the respect and even they are not sure what are the goals and rationale behind the policy (PSs) they are implementing in their schools. For example, PSL2 states that 'even we, as the principals of these schools, are not sure' or PSL4 states that 'the rationale behind that has not been explained. ... so people and teachers are confused ... even

the school leaders'. Or AL2 states that '...as to what the actual government wanted, ask them!'. Of course, they have some perceptions of this respect but for some, if not many, there is still confusion in many aspects.

Accordingly, the feeling of exhaustion and the desire for easily doable recipes or step-by-step tactics for policy implementations are understandable, especially in fast-changing and oppressive times. However, most of the time they are not possible, and schools find themselves in tough situations such as being obligated to implement multiple and sometimes contradictory policies (Ball *et al.*, 2012). And mostly, even though they have emerged with a claim to solve problems, new policies bring new challenges for the schools. Accordingly, Ball *et al.* argue that "policy enactment is not a straightforward and rational process – although sometimes it is made to appear so – and its outcomes are not easy to read off from their policy origins" (2012, p. 141). In addition, the effects and outcomes also cannot be predicted easily via looking at the policy goals and objectives. Therefore, in this research policy goals, school reasons, effects, and other related issues are researched all together based on the school leaders' perspectives. And it shows some unexpected outcomes and newly created problems as presented in the findings chapter.

Chapter Six: Conclusion

This research aimed to analyse academisation and PS policies under four research questions and provides policy learning outcomes by means of cross-national comparisons and the experiences of countries regarding the implementation of policies. The table below illustrates a summary of the research findings that are presented in detail in the findings chapter.

	Policy Goals (Q1)	Reasons of Schools (Q2)	Effects (Q3)	Problems+ Overall Perspectives (Q4)
Academies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aim to improve schools - Freedom for schools - Aim to improve collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More freedom - LA problems - Bigger budget, efficient use - Force 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in freedom - Accountability and responsibility - Financial scrutiny - Innovation opportunity - Budget and effective use - Collaboration - Isolation, pressure, workload 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Not real freedom, pressure, inspections - Horror stories, politics - Staff, finance problems - Overall support, advice to other schools - Direction of travel (future)
PSs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Outstanding student group and nation's future - Teaching staff and further problems - Unclearness and Confusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To acquire better students - Teacher selection opportunity - MoNE decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Limited increase in freedom - Accountability, responsibility - Innovation (readiness, support) - Expectations change - Widening gap, other schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unbalanced: Lack of authority, freedom - Staff, recruitment problems - Finance problems - Conditional support - Future (Who knows)

Table 29: Summary of research findings

Based on the interviews conducted with school leaders, on the one hand, it can be argued that at least the school leaders of schools that have been transformed into academies appear pleased with their conversion. In contrast, the leaders of PSs seem to be confused about the policy and argue that they have not been sufficiently informed. However, they state their conditional support and willingness to remain as PSs especially because of the better reputation and as a result of attracting better students to their schools even though these

conflict with the MoNE's current policy as stated in the Education Vision 2023 document (MoNE, 2018).

As revealed in the table above, it can be argued the changes regarding school freedoms is the area that is most affected and is related to many other themes, such as 'efficient budget use' or 'innovation'. The academy leaders, who participated in this research, appreciate their autonomy from LAs and the associated changes that arrived with academisation. However, they assert that even though this is better than the previous LA system this is not genuine freedom due to the accountability measures and inspections. They argue that they are free from LAs but not from central management. In addition they also point out the risk regarding the MATs for limiting the freedom of schools and also repeating the previous mistakes made by LAs, notwithstanding that collaboration between schools within the same MATs has improved.

Alternatively, teacher recruitment that arrived with the PS policy, is the most important change for schools in Turkey. A limited increase in freedom has been provided to PS leaders regarding choosing the recruitment of teachers who will work in their schools. According to the leaders, this is a positive change that has generated various improvements, such as a more positive working environment and in-class improvements. However, leaders do not believe that this change is sufficient and that it is only a partial, and strongly argue that they need more power in relation to this.

These are the two points that the school leaders from both countries raise the most, as well as the numerous other points presented and discussed above. As indicated earlier, providing policy-learning outcomes for both countries via cross-national analyses are the fundamental objectives of this research. An attempt has been made to accomplish the aims of this research and the outcomes are presented below.

Firstly, the reforms or policy changes should not be seen as a panacea and governments should develop their supervision of the educational policies. As leaders indicate, especially for such large countries like England and Turkey, there is no one size fits all around the country owing to the numerous local differences and/or different perceptions. Therefore, the educational system in such countries is expected to include variety and this system should always be developed by learning from the experiences of others so that the previous mistakes are not repeated. There is also a need to be more cautious regarding disadvantaged regions or students while making changes because some changes can make their situations much worse if all the factors are not completely considered, even though the aim is to make improvements. Market logic can be used for certain developments without harming the culture of collaboration between schools because collaboration is seen as a more important mechanism as regards improvement. Therefore, there is a need to establish a balance between them. It is extremely evident that there is a need for clarity in every sense in terms of the policies that are developed to be implemented in schools. Transparency is essential and communication routes and trust among educational stakeholders should be established for the successful policy implementation. To conclude, it appears that schools are weary of the rapid changes and interventions. School leaders argue that it is now time for stability, improvements and in-classroom improvements instead of the structural changes because what is taking place within classrooms is crucial for the education of younger generations.

In addition to filling a gap in the literature regarding the policy perspectives of school leaders, as discussed earlier in the discussion chapter, there are three main aspects of the contribution of this research. First, cross-national comparisons provide valuable contributions by illustrating either similarities or differences to recognize the fundamentals of the policies. For example, while the starting points of the policies are quite different, similar problems about them have been raised by the school leaders, such as financial or teaching staff problems.

Second, it is believed that policy-learning inferences, as discussed above, would be quite beneficial for the policies' future and policy-makers future actions because these are based on the real experiences of the people on the ground. Third, a contribution to the enactment of policy in schools as discussed by Ball et al (2012). Mainly, the importance of the context, school-specific realities, translation and interpretation activities within schools, and the role of actors have been discussed in this perspective. Again more of them have been discussed above in the discussions chapter.

In light of the findings and discussions presented above, it is believed that this research fills a gap in the literature and contributes to knowledge, and future benefits such as positive effects to the policymaking processes are hoped. However, as mentioned earlier, its sole focus on the school leaders is probably the most remarkable limitation of this research. Simply, the rationale behind this preference is that this was evaluated as the best starting point in terms of the value and contribution for such research. However, other stakeholders' perceptions, such as teachers', students', and parents' perceptions, are missing and this creates a gap that can be filled by future research. Especially teachers' perceptions are quite important and research in this respect can make a huge contribution to this research because of two reasons. First, either Academisation or PSs policies are directly related to teachers and create changes regarding their employment. Second, as presented in the findings chapter, the change created by PSs policy regarding the appointment and status of teachers in those schools is the most important change. Therefore, the perceptions of teachers in this regard are crucial and need to be studied.

Twelve interviews (6+6) can be evaluated as a limitation too because there are many schools that are implementing the policies at this moment. However, as mentioned earlier, this research does not aim to generalize its outcomes, and these are acceptable numbers when inevitable consequences of restrictions on time, financial resources, access, Covid-19

pandemic are considered. Nevertheless, the outcomes can be checked with research conducted with more participants, and also a comparison base can be created in this way.

Comparative research has limitations that come from its nature as comparing two or more different things or different contexts. Moreover, comparing two different countries would increase this risk due to the greater cultural, economic, and systemic dissimilarities. However, in this research, the aim and focus are more on learning from each other's experiences rather than comparisons. That is why 'policy learning outcomes' and 'cross-national comparisons' is presented under the sub-section of 'contribution to knowledge' because perspectives and experiences regarding the policy experiences from very different cultures would be seminal in some respect. In addition, this objective reduced the extent of this limitation that might occur based on the lack of comparability of data.

Lastly, as mentioned earlier, there is an asymmetry regarding the data set of this research because while the PSs' data is based on surveys, and interviews, the Academies' data is based on the interviews only. The reasons behind this were explained earlier as follows: there was very limited information available regarding PSs to start the research while the situation was quite opposite for Academies so a survey was run around them; and the ultimate aim was to seek a broader and deeper understanding of certain aspects instead of more general and shallow perspectives as they are already available for Academies and interviews were evaluated as the best way for this aim. However, these reasons cannot compensate for the gap or limitation of this research, and this stands there as a limitation. A fresh survey can be conducted with Academy schools as future research in order to see the changes in the perspectives over time.

Finally, as the researcher, I have some future intentions for this research. First, three different publications from it have been planned; one for PSs, one for Academies, and one regarding cross-national and policy-learning outcomes. Second, I would like to study teachers' perspectives too as these are crucially important as mentioned earlier. Third, I definitely would like to research the effects of the policies on other neighbouring schools and disadvantaged students because during my Ph.D. journey and visits to schools I recognized that disadvantaged schools and students are so vulnerable to these kinds of policies and the effects on them can be catastrophic if they are ignored. Lastly, as my Ph.D. journey started with a scholarship from the MoNE, I always had the intention to affect the policies positively at the policymaking level in light of this research's gains from the ground level. Then now, a real opportunity came out for this as my future employment so hopefully, this research and the experiences that I gain during this journey will contribute to future policy discussions and decision-making processes that I attend at the ministry level.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 Information Sheet for School Leaders (Academies)



Information Sheet for School Leaders

Title of Study: Academy Schools of England and Project Schools of Turkey: Freedom for Schools, Innovation and Accountability

Invitation and Brief Summary

You are being invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not you wish to take part it is important that you understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please read this information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part. If you do decide to take part, you will be asked to sign a consent form. However, you are free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without any penalty or loss of benefits.

What is the purpose of the research?

In many countries of the world together with England and Turkey investigations and reforms have been conducted actively for many years to overcome the chronic problems of state education and to build better school systems. England's 'Academy' and Turkey's 'Project' schools can be seen as examples of these efforts. In addition, these examples can be raised by 'Frees Schools' of Sweden, 'Tomorrow Schools' of Brazil and 'Charter Schools' of the USA.

It can be seen from a preliminary analysis that 'freedom for schools', 'innovation', and 'accountability' are the fundamental themes surround these policy discourses indicated above. For instance, in Turkey, it is known that the schools that are successful in national and/or international examinations and that implement some different and more innovative applications have been converted to 'Project' school status since 2014 and different legal regulations are applied them with higher expectations and missions imposed them. On the other hand, the England's Academy School initiative started to implement in 2000 with new regulations for underperforming or failing schools (Blunkett, 2000) and over the years it became the fundamental state policy, spreading to many regions and covering the different school levels.

When the investigations are made, it is seen that these two and the other school reforms voiced above have some similarities as well as some certain differences. We believe that comparative analysis of different systems and initiatives could lead to valuable gains and learnings in terms of benefiting from experiences rather than direct copying from each other. Therefore, pursuing to answer the question of 'What can countries learn from each other's experiences?' can be very constructive in terms of future developments and political decisions because, in principle, all these implementations aim to establish more effective and improved schools systems to achieve better results even though countries' national and regional conditions and mainstream applications are quite different.

As a result of a gap in the related literature, it is considered that this study will make a significant contribution to the literature by referring to the relevant stakeholders and examining the practices. In addition, it is aimed to raise awareness of new and different educational management models and applications among education shareholders and to present inspirational experiences at points where output is sought and developed.

In this context, the specified school reforms and initiatives in the countries will be studied and examined and a comparative analysis will be carried out with taking into consideration of cultural, local and regional characteristics between systems. The experiences and opinions of the school leaders will be unearthed in this context for the consideration of those concerned.

What does taking part involve?

The interview, which is planned to last around 40 minutes for one time, is sufficient for the participation. A flexible flow of interviews will be conducted by asking semi-structured questions.

What information will be collected and who will have access to the information collected?

No personal information that is disconnected from the context will be asked. Sensitive questions in anyway will not be asked. As a researcher, the information and records will only be stored on the

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Information Sheet for School Leaders

encrypted secure disk that I have access to, and the voice recordings will be deleted immediately after the interviews are transcribed anonymously. Data will not be shared with third parties and will not be used for any other purpose. Your own name, the name of your institution will not be shared and / or any information that will allow you to be reached will not be included in the publications including the thesis.

Why have I been invited to take part?

You have been invited to participate in the research based on your possible experiences and knowledge accumulated by working as a school leader in an institution within the scope of this study. All school leaders and policy makers in this context are the potential participants of this research.

What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Possible benefits include providing the ground for expressing your experience and ideas and contributing to the right steps by offering first-hand information for future policies.

What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?

No risk and disadvantageous situation are foreseen as a result of participation in this research. In case of any full responsibility will be taken.

(For research involving high risk) What procedures are in place if injury were to occur?

Is any compensation or medical treatment available? If so, what does this involve?

Who is the sponsor and data controller for this research?

As a researcher, I am a Ph.D. student at the University of Newcastle as an official scholarship student of the Ministry of National Education of Turkey and I assume all kinds of authority and responsibility, including access and control of data.

Has this study received ethical approval?

This study has received ethical approval from the University of Newcastle University Committee on 18/02/2019.

Who should I contact for further information relating to the research?

İbrahim Selman BAKTIR-

Contact Details: (+44) 7404346281/ i.s.baktir2@newcastle.ac.uk

Who should I contact in order to file a complaint?

René Koglbauer (Supervisor)

Contact Details: +44 (0) 191 208 8453/ rene.koglbauer@ncl.ac.uk

If you are not satisfied you can also complain to the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO):

<https://ico.org.uk/>

Appendix 2 Information Sheet for School Leaders (PSs- Turkish)



Okul Liderleri için Bilgilendirme Metni

Araştırma Başlığı: Academy Schools of England and Project Schools of Turkey: Freedom for Schools, Innovation and Accountability

Davet ve Kısa Özet

Akademik amaçlar için hazırlanmış olan bu araştırmaya katkı yapmak için davet edildiniz. Dahil olup olmama noktasında net kararınızı vmeden önce araştırmanın neden yapıldığını bilmeniz önemlidir. Lütfen be bilgilendirme metnini dikkatlice okuyup sormak istediğiniz şeyler varsa çekinmeden sorun. Devam etip etmeme noktasında karar vermek için zaman talep edebilirsiniz. Devam etmeye karar vererseniz bunun için bir rıza formu imzalamanız istenecektir ancak bilmesiniz ki istediğiniz her aşama ve zamanda hiçbir mazeret sunmadan ve yaptırım olmadan geri çekilme özgürlüğüne sahipsiniz. Bu hakkınız bakidir.

Araştırmanın Amacı

Dünyanın birçok ülkesi ile birlikte İngiltere ve Türkiye’de de yıllardır kronik eğitim sorunlarının üstesinden gelmek için yeni ve daha iyi okul sistemleri kurmanın yolları aktif olarak araştırmaktadır. İngiltere’nin Akademi ve Türkiye’nin daha önce Proje şimdi sınavla öğrenci alan ortaöğretim okulları bu çabalara örnekler olarak görülebilir. Bunlarla beraber İsvç’te ‘Free Schools’, ‘ABD’de ‘Charter’ okulları ve Brezilya’da ‘Tomorrow Schools’ bu okul reformu çabalarına örneklerdir. Türkiye’de ulusal sınavlarda başarılı olan ve/veya özel ulusal veya uluslararası projeler uygulayan okulların “Proje Okulu” kapsamına alınarak farklı bazı düzenlemeler getirildiği, bu okullara misyonlar yüklendiği bilinmektedir.

Öte yandan İngiltere’nin Akademi Okulu girişimi 2000 yılında başarısız okullara yeni düzenlemeler uygulaması ile başladı (Blunkett, 2000) ve yıllar içerisinde temel bir devlet politikası halini alarak bir çok alana yayılıp çoğu ortaöğretim kurumunu kapsar hale geldi. İncelemeler yapıldığında bu iki ve yukarıda değinilen diğer okul reformlarının bazı benzerlikleri paylaşımları ile birlikte birbirlerinden oldukça farklı yönlerinin de olduğu görülmektedir. Farklı sistem ve girişimlerin karşılaştırmalı olarak incelenmesinin çıktılarını direkt kopyalanıp alınmasından ziyade tecrübelerden istifade edilmesi noktasında değerli kazanımlara yol açmasının muhtemel olduğu analizi yapılmıştır.

Bu nedenle, ‘Ülkeler birbirlerinin tecrübelerinden neler öğrenebilirler?’ sorusuna cevap vermek gelişim ve gelecekteki atılacak adımlar açısından çok faydalı olabilir, çünkü prensip olarak, her biri daha iyi sonuçlar elde etmek için yeni ve geliştirilmiş okul sistemleri kurmayı ve daha etkili gelişmeler sunmayı amaçlamaktadır. İlgili literatürde bu bağlamda bir boşluğun olması hasebiyle de bu çalışma ile ve ilgili paydaşlara başvurularak, uygulamalar incelenerek literatüre önemli bir katkı sağlanacağı düşünülmektedir. Bununla birlikte eğitim hissedarları arasında yeni / farklı eğitim yönetimi modelleri konusunda farkındalığın artırılması, çıkış aranan ve geliştirilmesi düşünülen noktalarda ufuk açıcı tecrübelerin sunulması da hedeflenmektedir. Bu bağlamda bahsedilen okul reformları ve ülkelerdeki girişimler incelenecek ve araştırmalar yapılacak ve okul sistemleri arasında kültürel, yerel ve bölgesel özellikler de dikkate alınarak karşılaştırmalı bir çalışma yürütülecektir. Okul liderlerinin tecrübe ve

Okul Liderleri için Bilgilendirme Metni

benim erişimim olan şifrelenmiş güvenli diskte tutulacak ve mülakatler yazıya aktarıldıktan sonar ses kayıtları hemen silinecektir. Veriler üçüncü şahıslarla paylaşılmayacak ve başka bir amaçla kullanılmayacaktır. Tez dahil yapılacak yayınlarda hiç bir suretle kendi isminiz, okulunuzun adı paylaşılmayacak ve/veya size ulaşılmasını sağlayacak hiç bir bilgiye yer verilmeyecektir.

Neden siz davet edildiniz?

İlk olarak anket çalışmasına vermiş olduğunuz cevap ve ikinci ve daha önemlisi çalışma kapsamındaki bir okulda idareci olarak çalışmak suretiyle tecrübe ve bilgi birikiminize istinaden araştırmaya katılmaya davet edilmiş bulunmaktasınız.Bu bağlamdaki okul idarecileri ve politika üreticiler araştırmanın potansiyel katılımcılandır.

Katılmanızın sağlayacağı muhtemel faydalar

Tecrübe ve fikirlerinizi ifade etme zemini sunması ve gelecek politikalar için ilk elden very sunarak doğru adımların atılmasına katkı sağlamak muhtemel faydalar arasında sayılabilir.

Potansiyel dezavataj veya riskler

Bu araştırmaya katılım sonucu oluşacak herhangi bir risk ve dezavanjlı durum öngörülmemektedir. Olması durumunda her türlü sorumluluk üstlenilecektir.

Araştırma sponsoru ve veriyi control eden

Araştırmacı olarak ben Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı resmi burslu öğrencisi olarak Newcastle Üniversitesinde doktora öğrencisiyim ve verilere erişim ve kontrolü dahil her türlü yetki ve sorumluluğu üstlenmekteyim.

Araştırmanın etik onayı

Veri toplanmasına başlanmadan önce araştırma için Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı ve Newcastle Üniversitesinden olmak üzere iki farklı etik onayı temin edilmiştir.

Araştırma sonrası için irtibat kurulacak kişi

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Daha üst bir kurum arzularsanız Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı Yenilik ve Eğitim Teknolojileri Genel Müdürlüğü'ne (<https://yegitek.meb.gov.tr/>) veya İngiltere Bilgi Komisyonu Ofisine (ICO) (<https://ico.org.uk/>) başvurabilirsiniz.

Appendix 3 Consent Form for School Leaders (Academies)



Consent Form for School Leaders

Title of Study: Academy Schools of England and Project Schools of Turkey: Freedom for Schools, Innovation and Accountability

Thank you for your interest in taking part in this research. Please complete this form after you have read the Information Sheet and/or listened to an explanation about the research study. You will be given a copy of this Consent Form.

Please initial box to confirm consent	
1.	I confirm that I have read the information sheet dated 06/07/2019 for the above study, I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and I have had any questions answered satisfactorily.
2.	I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without giving any reason. I understand that if I decide to withdraw, any data that I have provided up to that point will be omitted.
3.	I understand that my research data may be published as a report.
4.	I consent to being audio recorded and understand that the recordings will be destroyed immediately after transcription and stored anonymously on password-protected software and used for research purposes only. I understand that being audio recorded is optional and therefore not necessary for my participation in this research.
5.	I agree to take part in this research project.
<p><i>Participant</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>Name of participant</i> <i>Signature</i> _____ <i>Date</i></p>	
<p><i>Researcher</i></p> <p>_____</p> <p><i>Name of researcher</i> <i>Signature</i> _____ <i>Date</i></p>	

Consent Form Version II / Date 06/12/2019

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Appendix 4 Consent Form for School Leaders (PSs- Turkish)



Okul Liderleri için Rıza Formu

Araştırma: Academy Schools of England and Project Schools of Turkey: Freedom for Schools, Innovation and Accountability

Araştırmaya katılmayı ve katkı yapmayı Kabul ettiğiniz için çok teşekkür ederiz. Lütfen araştırma hakkındaki bilgilendirme metnini okuduktan ve açıklamaları dinledikten sonra bu formu doldurun. Bu formun bir kopyası size verilecektir. Teşekkür ederiz.

Lütfen kutulara isminizin ilk harferini yazarak onaylayınız.		
1.	Yukarıdaki araştırma hakkındaki 06/07/2019 tarihli bilgilendirme metnini okudum, üzerine düşünme ve sorularımı sorma fırsatım oldu ve sorularım tatmin edici bir şekilde cevaplandı.	
2.	Katılımımın gönüllü olduğunun ve istediğim herhangi bir zamanda sebep sunmadan çalışmadan çekilebileceğimin farkındayım ve eğer arzu edersem verilerimin silineceğini anlıyorum.	
3.	Sunduğum bilgilerin kime ait oldukları belirtilmeden rapor vb olarak yayımlanabileceğini biliyorum.	
4.	Mülakat için ses kaydımın alınacağını onaylıyorum, bu kaydın yazıya geçirildikten hemen sonra silineceğini bu süreçte şifreli ve güvenli bir yerde tutulacağını biliyorum. Bununla birlikte istemediğim takdirde bu kaydın alınmayacağını da biliyorum.	
5.	Bu çalışmaya katılmayı onaylıyorum.	
<i>Katılımcı</i>		
_____	_____	_____
<i>İsim-Soyisim</i>	<i>İmza</i>	<i>Tarih</i>
<i>Araştırmacı</i>		
_____	_____	_____
<i>İsim-Soyisim</i>	<i>İmza</i>	<i>Tarih</i>

Rıza Formu / 06/07/2019

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Appendix 5 Interview Protocol and Questions (Academies)

Academies Interview Protocol: Freedom, Innovation and Accountability

1- Start with brief information about the research and the researcher.

3- Clear information is provided on the basis of voluntarism, data protection, confidentiality, anonymity and ethical standards. In addition, it is stated that they have the right to withdraw anywhere in the interview.

4- They are asked whether they have any questions or concerns, and the interview is not started until the questions are answered and concerns are revealed.

5- Interview is started.

6- A brief introduction is made with the participants and information is given about their backgrounds and schools.

7- Interviews are conducted with the guidance of the semi-structured questions stated below.

Semi-structured interview questions

1- Could you explain to me how this school became an academy? What were the goals in converting to academy status?

1.1- What are the reasons for your school becoming an academy? (Ask the criteria for conversions+ advantages and policy goals)

2- To what extent has your decision-making process changed after becoming an academy in terms of staff recruitment, curriculum, financial and budget-related situations? Where did you see the biggest change?

2.1- Do you think you should have more authority and responsibility for them?

3- How has your level of autonomy have been affected?

3.1- To what extent has the level of autonomy allowed you to be more innovative?

3.2- With more autonomy, comes also higher level of accountability? Could you give examples?

4- As an academy school, to whom are you accountable to and who is accountable to you?

4.1- How have the situations changed after becoming an academy? (Increased sense of responsibility, changed expectations, feeling of pressure, etc.).

4.2- Is there anything that you think needs to be improved or changed in this regard? (The increase of authority, responsibility, inspections and expectations in balance. How to ensure balance among them, etc.)

5- Would you advise other schools to become academies or would you advise that the changes applied to the academies should be extended to other schools too? Why?

6- Is there anything you want to change about being an academy? Why? Which aspects could be strengthened or are there any aspects could be included?

8- In summary, what do you think about the 'academisation policy' overall? (An evaluation for implementation all around England) How do you see the effects of the initiative in the long term? How do you see the future of academy schools and/or all schools in England?

9- Is there anything you want to add?

---Many Thanks

Appendix 6 Interview Protocol and Questions (PSs- Turkish)

Project Schools Interview Protocol: Freedom, Innovation and Accountability

1- Start with brief information about the research and the researcher.

3- Clear information is provided on the basis of voluntarism, data protection, confidentiality, anonymity and ethical standards. In addition, it is stated that they have the right to withdraw anywhere in the interview.

4- They are asked whether they have any questions or concerns, and the interview is not started until the questions are answered and concerns are revealed.

5- Interview is started.

6- A brief introduction is made with the participants and information is given about their backgrounds and schools.

7- Interviews are conducted with the guidance of the semi-structured questions stated below.

Semi-structured interview questions

1- Could you explain to me how this school became a project school and how you implemented the project school policies? (Applications, effects, positive and negative aspects etc.)

1.1- What are the reasons for your school becoming a 'project school'? (Ask the criteria for conversions+ advantages and policy goals)

2- As a project school, you follow different staff recruitment practices. How different are the staff recruitment practices? Could you illustrate them with examples?

2.1- Do you think that as a project school you should have more authority and responsibility in terms of staff recruitment for your school?

2.2- How the autonomy have been changed? To what extent has the level of autonomy allowed you to be more innovative? With more autonomy, comes also higher level of accountability? Could you give examples?

3- Considering your current curriculum offer, to what extent has this been changed after becoming a project school?

3.1- Do you think that as a project school you should have more authority and responsibility in this regard?

4- Considering your current financial and budget-related situations, to what extent have them been changed after becoming a project school?

4.1- Do you think you should have more authority and responsibility for this? (What about other schools?)

5- As a project school, to whom are you accountable and who are accountable to you?

5.1- How have the situations changed after becoming a project school? (Increased sense of responsibility, changed expectations, feeling of pressure, etc.).

5.2- Is there anything that you think needs to be improved or changed in this regard? (The increase of authority, responsibility, inspections and expectations in balance. How to ensure balance among them, etc.)

6- Would you advise other schools to become project schools or would you advise that the changes applied to the project schools should be extended to other schools too? Why?

7- Is there anything you want to change about being a project school? Why? Which aspects could be strengthened or are there any aspects could be included?

8- In summary, what do you think about the 'project school policy' overall? (An evaluation for implementation all around Turkey) How do you see the effects of the initiative in the long term? How do you see the future of project schools and/or all schools in Turkey?

9- Is there anything you want to add?

Appendix 7 Interview Transcript (Academy leader)

AL1 Interview Transcript

January 2020

R:: Researcher **AL1:: Academy Leader 1**

R:: [00:00:00] Thanks once again. Thank you so much for this great tour around the school. Thanks so much. Um, just, uh, I would like to start with, for how long are you in charge in this school? Yeah.

[00:00:41] **AL1::** [00:00:41] Yeah, this is my eighth year as a head teacher. Yeah. Um, previously I was a head teacher of another school for six, six and a half, seven years before coming here.

[00:00:52] **R::** [00:00:52] So for, for how long are you in charge that head teacher

[00:00:56] **AL1::** [00:00:56] As a head teacher since 2006, 2006 yeah.

[00:01:01] **R::** [00:01:01] Okay. Um, could you explain to me how the school became an Academy?

[00:01:09] **AL1::** [00:01:09] Yeah. So, um, I've never been particularly keen to become an Academy. It's, it's been something that, uh, is, I guess, over the last five to six years, there's been a drive towards more schools becoming academies.

[00:01:25] And it was never something that I was particularly interested in. I was quite happy working in a school that was within the local authority. I thought it was a lot of advantages within that. I didn't think that they. The freedoms, the so-called freedoms that you get from being an Academy was the rhetoric and they were particularly great.

[00:01:42] Um, and the reason why we changed was partly because of, I mentioned about the system here moving from a three tier system to primary, secondary. It was, um, quite a contentious change. A lot of parents didn't particularly, um, wanted and. They, um, we just felt that if we became an Academy, we would be a little bit more independent of everything that was going on around us.

[00:02:15] Be less, um, less directed by the local authority because there'd be, there'd been a change in local authority from a labor administration to conservative administration. The conservative administration was very much in tune with the parent, a vocal parent body. So it just felt like. W w we're almost being forced down a road with them on to be done.

[00:02:40] And the only way to avoid that was to, to become academies. But we were very clear that we didn't want to become an Academy on our own. We didn't

see any value in that, but it was the only way to avoid this (being forced down a road with LA). So we formed a multi-academy trust with five of our primary schools. And we did that immediately to say those five primary schools feed directly into our secondary school.

[00:02:58] So there's a real. Benefit is working together because of being academies. We've probably been able to accelerate that work more quickly than we would have done. Had we been part of maintain sector because as a CEO of the trust, I can set in, in play in, in, in train, some actions that I know have to be taken through.

[00:03:19] Whereas if you're working as a group of six individual schools, you can have a good idea, but had teachers can say, Hmm, Thanks, but no thanks. Whereas as a, as a multi-category trust, we can say, actually, we're all doing this and, and, you know, um, we're going to make sure it does happen. So that's the one thing that I think we've we've found is different as, as a group of schools working together has given us much more collegiality and much more buy-in than we would have had previously.

[00:03:45] R:: [00:03:45] Mm, okay. I see. And, um, what were the main criteria for conversion or for counting?

[00:03:54] AL1:: [00:03:54] Okay. Yeah. So at the moment, Th there are two ways to become an Academy either. If you're currently rated good or outstanding in Ofsted terms, you can apply to convert. And as long as you have to, you have to make an application for that and go jump through lots of hoops.

[00:04:11] But as long as your budget is, is in. At least balanced or in surplus, preferably. And you've got a good track record of success as a school and it's good or outstanding. Then you can go through fairly, fairly smoothly. Um, the alternative is if you suffer a difficult, uh, if you are failing, um, If you experience a challenging inspection and maybe go into a category of special measures or serious weaknesses, you can be directed to become an Academy. So you can be forced to become an academy.

[00:04:36] And we all, we all also felt that the political direction was more schools wanted to become academies and. As within the local authority as more and more schools became academies that they provisioned within the local authority with diminished because most of the funding was being taken away from local authority. So actually look authority when in a position to support schools like ours, that time was spent supporting schools that were in real difficulty.

[00:05:00] So we felt as though we weren't really getting anything from the local authority. So that was another driver to apply, to become an Academy, to say, There's no benefit at the moment being within the local authority will get no, no

benefit from that. We might as well plow our own. flow our own Oh, and, and do, do we want to do so?

[00:05:18] Um, and we also recognise that every school is only one inspection away from problems. You know, if you have a safeguarding issue and I guess one of the things that crystallized is crystallized it for me was we were inspected here in October, 2017, October, 2016, sorry. And that was a really successful inspection.

[00:05:38] But it was just shortly after the decision to go to primary, secondary. And then six months later in March, we had a no notice inspection. Yeah. Where I got phone call at 8 in the morning to say three inspectors were sitting in the car park. They'll be with me in two minutes. And they were doing an inspection based on an anonymous complaint.

[00:05:58] And they couldn't tell me who the complaint was from. They couldn't tell me what the nature of the complaint was. Only that it was serious enough to warrant an immediate inspection. And as it turns out by, by 11 o'clock, the lead inspector said to me, this is, this was a complete joke. This is somebody who's being malicious or vexatious in their complaints.

[00:06:18] But for me, it was part of this political followed and parent all upset about primary, secondary. And I dare say somebody thought somewhere, if, if the school has a safeguarding issue, it will go into special measures. You'll have to be taken over as an Academy. And the middle school, next door is an Academy that can join up and then we can keep three tier.

[00:06:40] So I think that made me realize that we were quite vulnerable as a school to this. And we, I think as a group of schools, we felt it would be much better to take control of our destiny a lot more by saying we'll form our own multi-category trust. And that way it gives us a degree of protection that we wouldn't have as a maintain school.

[00:06:58] **R::** [00:06:58] Um, so in that case, how do you see. What the word, the policy goals behind this, you know, academization and policy culture?

[00:07:11] **AL1::** [00:07:11] Do you mean at the central government level.

[00:07:13] **R::** [00:07:13] Yeah.

[00:07:14] **AL1::** [00:07:14] Yeah. I think it was very ideologically driven. So Academy, the Academy movement initially came in under Tony Blair's labor government. And that was very much about taking schools that were, um, I guess generalizing, but the worst schools in the country and giving them a, uh, almost like a facelift and injection of money and a new sense of governance to try and move them forward. The conservative government, particularly education secretary,

Michael Gove at the time, his education secretary, Had an, almost an evangelical view of, of, um, freedom, almost like a free market idea within, within economics.

[00:07:56] And I think they saw private sector as being a fantasy. You know, public school was brilliant, you know, they, their results are fantastic and we should allow state schools to be more like the private sector. And so that was why I think they wanted to, to encourage good next outstanding schools to go down, to go down the academies road in order to freedom up around the curriculum, freedom around some financial aspects. Yeah. And the, in the, in the hope that it would release a degree of entrepreneurial spirit within schools that would drive improvements. So I think that was, that was, but it was largely based on, um, I think what happened initially was that in the early adopters, the initial converters gained the huge sums of money from the local authority, because the way funding works is that central government give them money to Northumberland. For instance, for all their schools and nothing will top slice a certain amount to cover all their backroom staff as an Academy.

[00:08:58] You don't, you don't have that money taken off that when it comes to you directly. So while local authorities were quite, um, Full of staff and, and had quite a lot of overheads. The early adopters made huge sums of money in the first few years. And then gradually as more and more schools became academies, that amount of money became less and less and less.

[00:09:18] So local authorities had to pare back their staffing and the support services. Because of the Academy movement. So I think there was another angle. I think the government wanted to reduce the impact of the control of local authorities on schools. I think they were desperately, I think they, the conservative government would see local authorities, um, as, as being, um, too accepting of mediocrity. I think we did that view.

[00:09:45] R:: [00:09:45] Okay. Do you see any particular change in terms of their vision? Of, you know, since, uh, Michael Gove or since the Blairs government is that changed any particular level?

[00:09:59] AL1:: [00:09:59] In this region?

[00:10:00] R:: [00:10:00] Yeah.

[00:10:00] AL1:: [00:10:00] Um, yeah, I think, I think the Northeast has been, uh, it's been fast, slower to, to academize schools. That'd be much slower to do that up here than elsewhere in the country and what you don't have here. Is the idea of the big chains, the big sort of, you know, um, I kept multi-category trust with 10, 15, 20, 30, 40 schools. You don't tend to have that here. And partly it's because of geography, you know, it, it Northumberland for instance, has 16 secondary schools.

[00:10:37] If you were to do a trust for all of those. The area would be enormous to try and navigate and, and keep in touch. Whereas in London, you can have 16

secondary schools that you could probably throw a blanket over them because they're so close together. So I think they, the Academy movement is probably lends itself well to a London centric model because of the close proximity of, um, schools and the size of the population.

[00:11:01] Whereas in the Northeast it's been, it's been, that's less likely to happen. I think the other thing in the Northeast is. You've got far more Labour held councils. So therefore, because it was a conservative led policy. Yeah. Labour held. I local authorities have been very, um, I've not been very, very, very supportive of it.

[00:11:24] So in the early days here, one of the things that when you convert to an Academy is that the local authorities will look at your pension deficit and say, right. That's when you take all your assets and your liabilities with you, one of your liabilities is your pension deficit. So, um, w what Northumberland would do early on is to say, rather than paying that off over 25 years, you have to pay it in seven years.

[00:11:49] Well, it made the payments prohibitive. You'd be talking about 250,000 for a year. What schools can't afford to do that. So a lot of schools would look at becoming an Academy and the main thing financially it can make that work. So we'll just, we'll just sit back and just stay where we are. Um, so I think those two things made a significant difference.

[00:12:10] **R::** [00:12:10] And to what extent, um, has your decision making process changed after becoming an academy, especially in terms of, you know, Staff recruitment curriculum or, you know, financial or budget related situations.

[00:12:28] **AL1::** [00:12:28] Surprisingly very littlest. It changed around, um, recruitment, no different, um, uh, our approach to the curriculum. Hasn't hasn't altered significantly because of becoming an Academy. I think that the only thing where we see a difference is around some aspects of finance, sort of. The financial scrutiny of academies is, is a million times more precise and more detailed than for, for maintained sector. I mean, I know that the Academy sector is full of horror stories about financial irregularities and mismanagement, but my experience has, has been that they undertake far greater financial checks than I've ever experienced within the maintain sector.

[00:13:17] I've never been audited. Uh, in 15 years as a head, I've been audited three times in 12 months as an Academy. So I think that probably they keep locking the door after the horse has bolted in some ways. So, but it it's, it's much more rigorous. The things that we aren't doing differently as a group of schools is we're trying to become a little bit more entrepreneurial about how we use our funding.

[00:13:41] So, um, local authority for. Usually provide support for SEN students, special educational needs students. And what we find was that we would book authority would have a service level agreement, they'd say, right, this is what we'll

offer you. I would go back to the local authority and say, actually what you're offering, isn't really what I'm looking for.

[00:14:04] I'd like this bit and this bit what I'd like some other bits as well. And because the local authority in a consumer customer relationship or they haven't got that right. Their minds around that, what they would come back to me is saying no, actually [REDACTED] and that's what you get. So if you want it, that's what you get. There's no flexibility. There's no negotiation. So. My response to that was, well, that's not what I want and I'm not paying for something I don't want. So we've gone ahead and we've across our group of six schools. We've appointed our own educational psychologist who works for our trust. We've appointed our own, I suppose, provision who works within our trust.

[00:14:48] We've appointed our own language teacher who works within the primary schools. So we've done many things that we wouldn't have done as a local authority school. We probably would never would have been able to do before, because it was six schools. And if you're appointed a member of staff, it was like, well, Who owns the contract and who takes responsibility for that.

[00:15:04] And if there's redundancies, how can we guarantee that everybody's going to pay towards that? It was all messy. Whereas as a trust, the trust is now the employer. So no, no individual school has to hold that. It's the trust that holds that. And so that's, that's probably made us a little bit bolder in terms of some of the things that we, we try and do.

[00:15:23] We we've appointed a, uh, an ex, um, HMI Ofsted inspector he works for us 30 days a year on school improvement. Again, we wouldn't be able to afford to do that. Had we not been working as a group of schools? So I think there are things that maybe we've looked to the local authority for in the past that we've now decided to say, and it's not because we don't want the local authority to do it we've gone to local authority and said, we want a bespoke package. We want you to, this is what we want. And instead of them saying, okay, yeah, we can make that work. What they've said is, well, they would say 'no, we don't do that for anybody else. We're not doing it for you. And my view is, well, that's fine, but we don't have to spend that money with you.

[00:16:02] We'll go somewhere else, which is exactly what we've done. And as we've, as we've started doing more of the things that we feel are necessary for our schools, it probably reinforces the view that actually we don't need to look authority and we can be a little bit more creative about the solutions we want to find. So I think those things have helped.

[00:16:21] R:: [00:16:21] Ok I see. Do you think you, you should have more authority on the, you know, other, other issues as well, like curriculum, like financial change, should be adopted to your other other areas as well.

[00:16:37] AL1:: [00:16:37] Yeah. I mean, I think, I think there's a lot of freedoms within, within the curriculum and so on. I don't, I don't feel as though we are wearing this. Any kind of straight jacket or constrained in any way? I, I do think that, um, you've got on one hand, the statutory curriculum, you've also then got the Ofsted, you know, driver around what they, they view curriculum as. So there's this balance of, um, you know, a two year key stage three and a three-year key stage four versus the opposite, you know, three-year key stage three and two-year key stage one and nowhere in the statutory guidance. Does it say what she should have. But Ofsted presence, cast a shadow over that. So people will, will, will change. So I think no matter what, what you put down, Ofsted have this influence, that means that it will direct you to the way that schools operate or lead tables will, will direct behaviors in certain way.

[00:17:36] And at the moment, you've got a challenge where schools have gone down a route of three-year key stage fours on the, the, the grades are up Ofsted, uh, I I've taken those schools to task. And at the moment, there's this, this sort of jockeying for position as to which one's the most important. And some schools will say, well, it's the leaked table position Ofsted will say it's about the curriculum. And I think that's, that's, that's the challenge for schools. I think within the system and the system seems, feels to be quite fragmented because what government are after is strong outcomes, they don't really care about the curriculum. They just want strong outcomes.

[00:18:11] So that looks good, you know, in most schools or in outstanding schools and so on. Whereas Ofsted, I think are gradually moving towards a model. That's much more about what schools should really should be offering the students. And it's not just an assembly line and a factory for exams. It should be about a really rich learning experience.

[00:18:27] So I think within an Academy model, you've got the freedom as a head to do what you believe is the best thing to do. But I guess the challenge at the moment is are you driven more by Ofsted or lead tables. And I, I would say in a school like this, I I'm, uh, I'm in a very privileged and fortunate position that I'm in a school where, um, attendance is good. Behavior is good. Students have bright and enable, I've got really good staff and therefore we can be confident to say, we're going to do what we think is right. Uh, forget about Ofsted, forget about lead tables. We were going to do what we think is right. And actually in the process, results are going to be pretty good. That looks good in outstanding schools.

[00:19:06] And Ofsted should be satisfied, but we're not being driven by those. I don't feel constrained here but in my previous school, I would have felt most constrained because attendance wouldn't be so good, level of engagement with students wouldn't be so good, behavior definitely wasn't as good. You couldn't recruit the really good staff into the school and keep a hold of really good staff.

[00:19:24] And you always felt like you were fighting fires so that the driver there was to get up to a level that you had escape the clutches of office there, then we'd go into an category. So I think schools, regardless of whether you're an Academy or not, you, it depends on whether you're constrained or confident about your ability to be creative with the curriculum or with your staffing profiles or anything.

[00:19:51] But I, I don't feel here constrained the all I feel like in terms of my staffing, I can, I can staff the curriculum any way I want to. I can, I can give. Um, you know, for instance, languages, languages is, is pretty much compulsory here, but in most schools throughout the country, it's, it's an optional subject.

[00:20:08] So I can do that. And even though most schools don't do it because it has an impact on the results. I'll I, except that it's going to be the case, but that's part of the argument to say, I think students should be exposed to foreign language. I think one of the issues of our country is, is that, um, Children are potentially growing up without a knowledge of other cultures and languages.

[00:20:32] And what does that mean to be British and, and even with Brexit and everything that goes along with that, I think students should be exposed to languages and they should be forced to do it. And this should keep it right through to GCSE. And, but I'm not, I don't, I know that. My results would be much better if I took them out and put them in something else. But it's a, it's a judgment called by us that's the most simple, that's what I think is most important. So you just stick to that. So nobody's driving me one way or the other.

[00:21:01] **R::** [00:21:01] Um, I see. Um, so you mentioned a little bit, but, um, has, um, do you see the balance between your autonomy or freedom and your accountability, you mentioned that Ofsted issues, regardingly are they balanced or how we can ensure this balance between, you know, your freedom and your accountability.

[00:21:30] **AL1::** [00:21:30] Yeah. Yeah. I think, I think, I think, I think, I think as a head teacher, you recognize that, that you've got, you've got freedoms and authority and the authority to do set your school up as you want to. But I think, I think you always recognize that with, that comes that level of accountability, that, that ultimately you're responsible for the behavior, the attendance, the academic outcomes, all of those that goes with it as well.

[00:21:59] So I think there, I would say that the, the they're balanced in that everybody knows where they, where they stand in terms of, you know, you can't have one without the other. I think coming back to what I said before is that some schools are in a, in a much more difficult position. I think a number of schools don't have those freedoms to the same extent that they, in theory they do.

[00:22:21] But in practice, if you can't recruit and really good teachers, if you can't keep the good teachers you've got, um, if you've got, if you, if your support you're serving, uh, I really need the area where parents don't really value education and don't insist on their kids go in there and don't support them.

[00:22:39] It's a much more difficult job than it is here. My previous job was, was in a much more challenging school in here. And there was different challenges here. Yeah. More about parents' expectations, the drive to, to, you know, to be one of the better schools in the area. So it's a different kind of pressure or accountability, but it's, it's, it's much more manageable than, than the previous one.

[00:23:01] I've got a staff here who actually worked with me in my previous school and I can think of two, I can think head of maths and my previous school, brilliant teacher and he took a 10,000 pound pay cut to come and work here, just so that he could work in a school where, you know, he could teach it wasn't under the pressure that he'd been under when, when, when my successor joined the school, another one took 15,000 pound pay cut because he wanted to work in a school where, you know, he didn't have the threat of Ofsted at hanging over them all the time. So, you know, there was those two teachers really needed to be in the previous school, not here. Um, but from my point of view, it's brilliant. I've got them here because they are great members of staff.

[00:23:40] R:: [00:23:40] So, um, sorry regardingly, do you see the, this, you know, uh is this staff, recruitment system, um, effective?

[00:23:49] AL1:: [00:23:49] It, it, yeah, I think, I think it, I think it, I think it is in so much as, uh, the, the processes is fairly similar to the way it's always been. I think the difference now is that in terms of staff recruitment, is that staff have been. I think are far more, um, thoughtful about schools that they want to apply to. And in the past, people might be willing to go to a much more challenging school and do three or four years as, as a stepping stone to something else. Whereas now it's, it's almost like career suicide. You go into a really difficult school. You'll never get out of it. So I think. It's people are being much more cautious about that. And that's one of the things that I think is as a, as a stronger school here, that my view is that that's how we can support some weaker schools. Is that where they can't recruit? I can, so we could over-recruit and then effectively deploy some staff out into those schools to support them.

[00:24:47] So that's what, what I have in mind is how we're going to support schools over the next few years. But when we're not there yet, we just need to be establish yourselves properly as an 11 to 18 school before we started doing that.

[00:24:59] R:: [00:24:59] Okay. Um, as an Academy school to whom are you accountable and who is accountable to you?

[00:25:08] AL1:: [00:25:08] Right? So. Um, there, there are definitely more layers of accountability as a, as an Academy school. So we have a what's called an Academy committee, which was used to be what would be the governing body. And then there's a board of directors who, who are really the accountable body for all the schools within our trust.

[00:25:28] So I'm immediately accountable to the Academy committee for our school, but ultimately to the board of directors and beyond the board of directors, there isn't anything really, other than secretary of state, there's a big, there's a huge big gap between board of directors and then the secretary of state, but that's really where it, where it lies. Whereas in the past, as I maintained school, that would be your governing body. And then local authority and the local authority would be accountable to the sector of state. So in S in the multi-category trust model, the board of directors become the local authority. And in terms of who's accountable to me, um, that's an interesting question, actually, because most of the time you think about who, who you are accountable to, um, I, I would say I'm not sure that anybody's accountable to me. In, in the sense that I think we all have as a mutual accountability within schools, which when you work in a school, um, all the staff are, you could argue, are accountable to me, but equally I'm accountable to them. And the students are accountable to us and we're accountable to them and parents. So I think there's, there's this, there's this, um, you know, interaction between parents, staff.

[00:26:45] Uh, students and, and there's, there's almost a kind of mutual accountability with insurance. And if, if you get that right, so if parents uphold their side of accountability in terms of making sure the children are in school, ready to learn, they reinforce the school rules, they support the school, they support the kids in learning great. If the students do their bit and then staff do their, but then actually. Things work much more effectively. And inevitably when it, when it falls down is because elements those three don't work and certainly don't work in harmony.

[00:27:20] R:: [00:27:20] Have you ever recognized, you know, any change in terms of, you know, um, about the sense of responsibility or expectations among your staff after becoming an academy?

[00:27:36] AL1:: [00:27:36] No. No. I would say when we, when we try to, when we look to convert prior to me joining here, um, so about 10 years ago that previous head teacher had, um, explored becoming an Academy and 70% of the staff threatened to go on strike. If the school went ahead with it, It was largely around a lack of trust, probably thinking, you know, this, this head's on me and it from cell why'd you, but why did you want to do that?

[00:28:05] And Academyies had a bit of a bad name at the time and when we did it, um, there, there were no dissenting voices, but really what I'd said to the staff was

the only thing that you'll notice is different is that you'll have a trust line, your art rather than pontoon high school. So other than that, you won't notice a difference.

[00:28:22] There'll be the letter have to look different. And, and that was the aim was to say, actually become an Academy wasn't about wholesale significant changes. It was about saying we're doing really well as the school and we're confident in what we're doing. Let's take that step and become really independent.

[00:28:41] And for all the reasons that I've mentioned, we'll work in partnership with our primary schools, that gives us a chance to really explore how do we support transition from primary to secondary and make sure that students do the best they possibly can ultimately to get the best outcomes and the best experience, but actually nothing's going to change dramatically and you won't really notice the change. And that was a big thing that a lot of the unions would, the teaching unions really talk about all the negative stories about academies. If you were to ask our staff here, they would say I was in the London yard. They're not, they've not noticed anything different.

[00:29:15] Um, and I think that's, that's a positive actually. I think if, if you needed to become an Academy in order to introduce certain changes or, or, or. Make certain demands on staff. And then I think that's, that's a bit of a weak reason to become an Academy in the first place.

[00:29:31] R:: [00:29:31] Oh, Would you advise the other schools to become academies as well?

[00:29:38] AL1:: [00:29:38] Yeah. Yeah. It's interesting. Actually, quite a few times recently, I've been asked to go to secondary schools to, to, to talk to senior leadership teams or governing bodies about what are the benefits of becoming an Academy and. What I've said to all the ones I've been to is that when we combine it, it, as I said, it was for lots of different reasons, but I wasn't an ideal log.

[00:30:01] I I'm, I'm not ideologically in favor of academies per se, but what are, what I would say relates to the experiences, I wish that we'd done it years earlier, because I think just there's a, there's a, there's a feeling of, um, having more control and being a bit of a control freak. That's that's quite good. I think there's a, there's a feeling of nobody stay into you can't you know, you can't do this. So for instance, when we appointed an education psychologist as a maintained school, if I had tried to do that using funds from five or six schools, the local authority would have pulled the plug on it and said no, no way, you're not doing that, you have to use these staff. So I think it's, it's, it's created opportunities to be a little bit more creative and meet needs of our schools more.

[00:30:48] And. I just, I just think, I think actually the financial scrutiny is a good thing as well. I think that's a really good thing. It's it's I don't always feel like that when I

was doing audit after audit, but it gives me confidence that the money that we're being given by central government is being used effectively on what accountable for that, that, that expenditure.

[00:31:08] So I think that's, that's a good thing as well. And as I said, as a, as a maintained school, that a budget was never wasn't account wasn't audited in 15 years of being ahead. I just think how could that possibly be the case? Um, so yeah, so I I'm, I'm more of an advocate now for a academization than I and I ever have been previously, but I'm still not ideologically aligned to it as a, you know, you have to do because it's the only way forward.

[00:31:36] I don't think that's, that's true. I think that if you go into it for the right reasons, then I think it does offer you a little bit of a boost at the right time.

[00:31:47] R:: [00:31:47] Hmm. Do you think, can these, you know, good changes, changes be expanded or be applied to other schools, you know, without changing, you know, to the academies without changing their titles?

[00:32:02] AL1:: [00:32:02] No, I T C I, I think multi-category trust at the moment you get, I think you get three kinds of four kinds of multi cademy trusts. You get single academies that are just on their own, which it doesn't make any sense to me. You get secondary schools that are quite predatory and try and pick up schools, particular ones that are in difficult circumstances.

[00:32:24] So they build up a size from that, but they're all disconnected because geographically, they don't tend to be close together, certainly in the Northeast, you get primary schools that club together and form a trust because that gives them a bit of size and some economies of scale. But I think the the best model is, is ours.

[00:32:45] Where if you were starting from scratch, you would always, I think you would always say, you want to get your primary schools feeding into secondary school, get that group of schools working together. That's the model you'd want because educationally that's, what's going to make the biggest difference, the students to make sure that their curriculum across all the primaries is as well-planned and consistent and coherent, and that the experience of those children as they come through the secondary is um, similar. So they're on a similar platform before they start in secondary school and that the work in between secondary primary as well established, so that transition arrangements are seamless. That's what you would want to do. Um, and so that's, that's the thing we keep saying to people is that that's where the benefits are in Academisation, it gives you a chance to do things that if we were working as a partnership with schools, there's no way we could have appointed the language teacher ed site the sports provision, which, we couldnt have done joint residentials, because nobody would have taken taking the lead. Nobody would have said I'll, I'll hold the contract for that person.

[00:33:49] So it would have fallen. It would, it would have been a good idea that you wouldn't been able to push through with, whereas now, as an Academy, because of somebody can, somebody can be a decision-maker, you can, you can pull people with you. So I, I, I think that it would. It's not on, it's not impossible that you could do some of these things as, as a group of maintained schools, but I think it's highly unlikely that you would ever get enough people together who would buy into it.

[00:34:17] **R::** [00:34:17] I see. Um, how do you see the future of academies?

[00:34:25] **AL1::** [00:34:25] Um, I think one of the things that we've we've noticed at the moment is that there's just, there's just lots of really sort of fragmented individuals and so on. And so our view is that we need to probably within the next two years, three years, we need to grow in size.

[00:34:44] And so we're having discussions at the moment, but how does that, what does that look like? Are we going to be, um, Trying to pick up schools that are in difficulties that we pick up primary schools that we pick up secondary schools. Should we be targeting certain schools and saying, come and join us?

[00:35:01] Should we be looking at other multi-category trusts and saying, right. You know, we've a multi-category trust. You've got one there. Why don't we come together and join and make a bigger multi-category trust? So I think, I think from our point of view, we need to have a look at all of those possibilities.

[00:35:16] And, um, I, I think, I think. Even if Labour were to get back into government, I think we've gone too far down the route that the line of academies that wouldn't be able to advance it. So I think we will, we will always have academies now. I think they're here to stay. I think there's so many people that have got used to that, that flexibility and freedom that I think they would struggle with schools going back into the arms of local authorities. And I don't think that's the right idea either. So I think they are here to stay, but I do think we need to think much more clearly about a strategic view of Academies. So if you look at Northumberland, it's, it's a really, it's an odd, so selection of, of how people are in different academies.

[00:36:00] And then if you look at the Northeast, it's probably, it looks even more odd, so there's no rhyme or reason to it. And I think that's part of the problem that governments desire to get everybody to come very, very quickly. And that there was a rush of people doing it with no sense of actually, what does this mean?

[00:36:18] And schools shouldn't be operating in isolation. They should be operating much more collegiately. And part of the problem in, in the, in the, uh, Academy movement is that there's been a degree of isolation. Schools are less likely to work together than they ever have done. Partly because of Academisation.

[00:36:36] R:: [00:36:36] Um, Can you also, evaluate it for the, all around the England, the, uh, the effect of academization policy to the England education system?

[00:36:50] AL1:: [00:36:50] Yeah. Um

[00:36:52] R:: [00:36:52] You know, you know, not just for your school.

[00:36:55] AL1:: [00:36:55] Yeah. I think probably over the last 10 years, it's probably been, it's probably been the most profound change. That we've found in, even with changes in league tables, changes in Ofsted. And so on. They, the academisation movement has probably created more significant change than that, than anything else I think on balance. Um, even with them, with the horror stories around, um, funding issues and, and, and, you know, pay levels and so on.

[00:37:24] I think in some ways, uh, it's overall been a good thing. I think what it's done is it's created a degree of entrepreneurial spirit within schools that possibly wasn't there previously. Um, and I think actually reducing the, the, the role of local authorities in running the schools is probably not a bad thing either.

[00:37:46] So I think that's, that's been quite a positive feature. And the fact that you've now gotten within the secondary schools, I think 65 to 70% of schools are academies. So the vast majority are now academies anyway. So it's, it's been successful in so much as. If, if you measure it just purely numbers, then it's been a significant, a significant change.

[00:38:06] But I think if you, if you look at all of the schools which converted, There's a, there's a myriad of different reasons. And I don't think it's often driven. I think it's been driven by financial reasons, not always educational reasons. Um, and so I think we will, we'll look back on it. And this is the other key feature of, although it's been generally positive, it means that we have a much more fragmented school system we have than we have ever had before. And once when you've got people like Michael Fullan, from kind of the, talking about how School collaboration is the secret to successful school systems.

[00:38:44] Our system is built on competitiveness. So why would we want to work with the school down the road? Because if we help them and they get better, then our results are going to suffer. So I think that that, that competitiveness in the system is, is, has been accentuated by the Academy movement more than it ever has done before.

[00:39:02] R:: [00:39:02] Hmm. Do you think the schools are using their autonomy or freedom, you know, to innovate? Um, or so you know for school improvements? Um, if they are not, what would be the reasons behind?

[00:39:21] AL1:: [00:39:21] Yeah, I think, I think to some extent, yes, but I think innovations, you're talking about small scale innovations that are school specific, possibly. I think a lot of academies, um, this is not innovation as such, but some people would see it as but Ofsted've had to offer a link. So in year 11, for instance, we have 260 students in year 11. Um, if I could take 20 of those students, those students who I know that are going to perform really poorly. If I could take them off the school roll, um, then they don't count against our results and all of sudden my results look much better. So Academy chains have recognized that there's, there's a way of doing that. So what they used to do was local authorities can open up new schools now, but Academy chains can't, so we can set up a studio school and studio schools, a lot of the big chains set up studio schools, and all they really were was to take the kids in year 11 out, but it meant to this school. So they don't count against my results in our main school, they sit in the studio school, they get to do the same curriculum and do the same exam, but the results count against the studio school. But the studio school bizarrely don't fit you're league tables. So it's a con it just offer by another name. So they, the government realized what was going on and so said, shoot, your schools will be inspected under the same hospice as anyone else. And then the loan behold studio schools have now become alternative provision schools. It just changed the name of them, but we tended to provision schools on inspected.

[00:41:02] So, so these, these big chains are now opening alternative revision schools. Just so the year Eleven's can be bumped into there. And again, it's all about results. So, um, I think some of the innovations that you see are often more about league table positions and outcomes, because that's still driving a lot of the picture, the, the view, what, what I would say in certainly our experience here with our schools is that it's created some innovative thinking around the curriculum and particularly how the curriculum it, how we, how we joined up the curriculum from primary to secondary, because in the past primaries and secondaries, you don't really mix. And, and, you know, students are coming into the, into the school and, and not knowing really what they'd done previously from the middle schools.

[00:41:55] So I've actually been able to work with our primary schools much more closely and do some creative thinking around curriculum. So, um, Uh, uh, thing in the summer for year six, we did a B project. Um, and we did a lot of what were the primary schools in years and the year six students around bees and beekeeping and a lot of the, the, the theoretical work around it.

[00:42:15] So then when the students came up here and art and music and dram..., sorry science and English and geography, we hired a B focused project for the first four or five weeks. So it was connecting what they'd done previously. With coming up here and that's that's, those are things that have been really useful.

[00:42:33] Um, but in terms of innovation, I think we're entering a period of time where the Education and Endowment Foundation, if you've come across E E F is, um, because, because of the whole notion of being researched and formed, there's a

feeling that there's no point in trying anything because the EEF will tell you what you should do in the school. And I think that's, I don't agree with that at all. I think, EEF've just, I've just become a monster. They shouldn't be allowed to thrive because they're saying, well, why would you do, you know? So for instance, all of our staff do action research projects every year, small scale, we did it for about three or four years and it really gets staff into being creative and thoughtful about their classrooms, trialing different things.

[00:43:21] EEF said just there's no point in doing that. What you find out what works in, insist on everybody doing X. I, I just think my last that's not education and that's not teaching. And we want our staff here to be reflective. We want them to be learners in the same way the students are. And they, the action research has really been a great way of, of creating innovative solutions, but within, within the context of the school, make it context specific.

[00:43:46] So there are the things we're doing, whether that's that's common across the border, I'm not a hundred percent sure. I'm sure it is to a greater or lesser degree, but huge innovations. I'm not sure that those, like coming back to what we said at the start that schools are quite complex, but actually they're quite conservative with a small C changes happen slowly.

[00:44:09] People tend to know what works, so they stick with it. And if you look at what a classroom looks like in 2020 and go back, that's what they looked like in 1920, actually like pretty much the same 30 desks, 30 chairs, a Blackboard, a teacher. Not much has changed.

[00:44:29] R:: [00:44:29] Just boards maybe changed.

[00:44:30] AL1:: [00:44:30] Yes, exactly. Gone from Blackboard to whiteboards. That's been a big change. Um, so, so really I think, I think th th the innovation for me is, is not looking for wildly innovative things, but it's about sort of fine tuning and tweaking and refining practices in light of what, what the needs are for our children, rather than looking at sort of this sort of light bulb moment say, this is it Eureka. If we all did X. We'd be salted and, and that's, that's the problem with education in, in, in our countries. There's too much of a silver bullet idea. You know, if we can all do asserted mentoring, if we can all do retrieval practice, if we could just all do, then we'll be salted and it's educational like that.

[00:45:12] If it was, you know, you get rid of teachers and just have robots to do it for us. So it's. It's um, yeah, I th I think that the whole innovation side of things is, is interesting. My view is small scale, innovations, like classroom level as well. What, what schools really need, what they don't need has had teachers coming up with great ideas to say what all doing that.

[00:45:39] Why is that?

[00:45:40] R:: [00:45:40] Um, as last question, um, Is there anything you would like to mention about academisation policy?

[00:45:51] AL1:: [00:45:51] Um, in terms of changes to it or reflection?

[00:45:59] R:: [00:45:59] Changes or future future of them or, you know, in government level, anythink

[00:46:07] AL1:: [00:46:07] I would. I mean when we had a new head of education skills, starting the fumbling recently in the local ... recently to say 18 months ago, two years ago now. And I met with him early on and I gave him one piece of advice and he completely ignored. But my advice was if he had any sense, he would insist on every single school becoming an Academy straight away and actually change the dynamic and the relationship between the local authority and academies and set all the academies up in little partnerships, primaries, and secondaries, feeding them together, families of schools.

[00:46:45] And I just said in the Northumberland and that make it, that would make it geographically manageable. It would, you'd be able to support small schools to survive, but actually the dynamic then for the local authorities that rather than providing services, that you really become commissioners and, um, holding schools to account. By making sure that that what they provide is, is a good service. And I can understand why he ignore that completely because it would have diminished his responsibilities at a stroke, but that's what it needs. I think it needs bold leadership to say this isn't the model actually. And we can't, you know, we're in this halfway house, we'd be better off just saying everybody become Academy.

[00:47:26] Yeah. But you can't, you can't force people to do that. So that needs to be. Uh, a narrative that says, this is the reasons for doing it. And at the moment, I don't think there's a strong enough narrative for why people do it. Because as I said, you've either got individual academies. You've got secondary schools that are predatory, you've got primaries that are doing it just for size.

[00:47:45] And I'd like to think we've got the right model of primary and secondary because it's educationally driven, but there's not enough of a voice. There's not enough people who are doing that to, to, to justifiably create a narrative. That's compelling enough for other people to do it.

[00:47:59] And then the other thing is the financial challenges that you face as an Academy. That's, um, things like pension deficit zone. I think if there was more financial support, then it would make it easier to do that. I think schools are over the last 10 years have been under increasing financial pressures and early adopters benefited later adopters definitely didn't. I'm wearing this Twilight zone at the moment where we don't know where that additional funding is coming. How it will look in practice, but schools are, I think, I think schools need to come together as

groups of schools, because I think individual schools surviving over the next five to 10 years, it's going to be tough. So I think there's, there's a real benefit financially of coming together, but there's more benefits around educationally coming together on, on very similar similarly held principles and beliefs. There's not enough of that sometimes in schools.

[00:48:55] R:: [00:48:55] Thank you so much. That's it.

[00:48:56] AL1:: [00:48:56] Okay. Good questions.

[00:49:00] R:: Thank you so much.

Appendix 8 Interview Transcript (PS leader- Turkish)

PSL2- Interview Transcript

September 2019

R:: Resercher PSL2:: Project School Learder 2

R:: [[00.00.48]] Hocam merhaba, arařtırmadan bahsetmiřtim... ben direkt sorularıma geiyorom herhangi bir sorunuz yoksa?

[[00.00.58]] **PSL2::** Yok buyurun

R:: [[00.01.00]] řimdi öncelikle Okulumuzun proje okul olma sürecini anlatabilir misiniz hızlıca?

[[00.01.06]] **PSL2::** Milli Eđitim Bakanlıđı'nın yayınlamıř olduđu bir genelge var orada proje okulları olabilecek okullarla ilgili bazı kriterler mevcut bazı belki biliyorsunuzdur bazı kriterler bakanlık getirdi, mesela liseye geiř sınavı ile ilgili yüzde 5 dilim de yer alması ile ilgili, yada okulun iřte gemiř yıllardaki spor sanat ve kültürel faaliyetler de ki proje bazlı yaptıđı başarılı faaliyetlerin olması, daha başka kriterlere de mevcut, bu kriterleri sağlayabilen okullar Bakanlıđın yönergesine göre, proje okulları yönergesine göre, Proje Okulu olarak tarif edilmektedir, proje okulu yapılmaktadır. Bizim okulumuz da ■■■■■ da 5. sırada, %2 lik dilim den yüzde 5 lik dilime kadar liseye geiř sınavının puanına göre öğrenci alan bir okul, o açıdan bakanlıđımıza teklif edildi, önce biz teklif ettik bakanlıđımızda uygun gördü ve onayladı. Bu řekilde olduk.

[[00.02.20]] **R::** Yani sizin teklifiniz üzerine oldu deđil mi hocam?

[[00.02.24]] **PSL2::** Evet biz de bunu istedik, ancak asıl karar bakanlık düzeyinde verildi çünkü öncelikle çok başarılı bir okuluz. Bakanlıđımıza Proje Okulu olmaya iliřkin kapsamlı bir rapor hazırlıyoruz, bunu sistem üzerinden dolduruyoruz kendi okulumuzla ilgili.

[[00.02.34]] **R::** Raporda Neler Oluyor?

[[00.02.40]] **PSL2::** İřte pek çok soru oluyor genel olarak neden Proje Okulu olmanız gerekiyor üzerine. Yani yönergede proje olmak üzerine belli bařlı hususlar var. O nedenleri enine boyuna anlatıyoruz. Bunu yaparken okul olarak yaptıđımız projeleri, Avrupa Birliđi, Tübitak veya daha kapsamlı projeleri falan anlatmak gerek, ekliyoruz oraya. 3 ya da 5 yıllık bir envanter istemiřlerdi bizden veya iřte bu tip iyi yaptıđınız şeyler yada birincilikler, Türkiye derecelerimiz vesair oraya ekleniyor sonra yetmiyor sorular var o sorulara da cevap vermeniz gerekiyor, yani okulunuzun bir arka planı gemiř olması gerek başarılı olmak yetmiyor. Yani yüzde beře girmiř olmanız da

yetmiyor. Bölgenizde, toplum nezdinde uzun bir katma değer olması gerekiyor. Okulunuzun isim de yapmış olması için gerekiyor, iyi okul olduğu gösterilmeli.

[[00.03.50]] **R::**Hocam şeyi merak ediyorum Proje Okulu olmak istemişsiniz siz neden istediniz? Ne motive etti sizi?

[[00.03.59]] **PSL2::** Tamam onau da ifade edeyim. Şimdi bizim okulumuz 1998 yılında açılan bir okul 2018-19 yılına yaklaşık bu sürece hep sınavla öğrenci aldığı için ██████ genelinde okulumuz bir yer edindi, iyi öğrenci alma, tercih edilme yerini muhafaza etti okulumuz. O zamandan bu zamana oluşturduğu bu kültür devam etti. Evet öğrencilerin akademik anlamda daha başarılı olanlarını aldı. Bu çocuklara yönelik üniversiteye yerleştirme ve farklı yönlerden de hazırlıklar, çalışmalar yaptı. Üniversite sınavlarındaki sonuçlarda da iyi sonuçlar elde etti ve burada bu çocukları sağlıklı yönlendirebilirsiniz çok güzel sportif, sanatsal, bilimsel faaliyetler üretiliyor. Yani bu 20 yıllık süreçte bahsettiğim hususlarla ilgili okulumuzun çok iyi çalışmaları oldu. Biz bugün kültürün, birikimin bundan sonra da yaşatılarak devam etmesinin, bu kazanımın devam etmesini istedik. Çünkü bu bir kazanımdır, oluşturulmuş bir kültürdür. Bunun da bundan sonraki yıllarda devam etmesi kolay olmuyor, bunları elde etmek bu noktalara gelmek kolay olmadı, bunları kayıp etmek istemedik. Çünkü Mahalle Okulu mantığı olsaydı bizim okulumuzun bulunduğu bölge biraz Anadolu'dan değişik zor coğrafyalardan gelen insanların, sosyo ekonomik düzeyi düşük olan insanların yoğun olduğu bir bölge bu bölge diyebilir. Yani oraya yakınız. En azından bu sebeple eğer öyle bir şey olsaydı sadece bölgeden öğrenci alabilecektik ve oluşturulmuş olan bu kazanımlar boşa gidecekti. Oluşturduğumuz bu kazanımları ██████'ya farklı şekillerde yansıtılmak istedik, yani bunları kaybetmeyelim istedik. Yapmış olduğumuz değerlendirmede de, yukarıda, Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nda da takdir gördü ve Proje Okulu olduk.

[[00.06.18]] **R::** Yani temel motivasyon öğrenci kalitesini yüksek tutmak yönünde hocam, doğru mu anlıyorum?

[[00.06.22]] **PSL2::** Yani evet, kazanımları, kazanımlarımızı da muhafaza etmek tabii.

[[00.06.27]] **R::** Peki için hocam Proje Okulu olunca neler değişiyor yani yönetsel olarak soruyorum?

[[00.06.32]] **PSL2::** Şimdi en önemlisi bu okullara merkezi öğretmen ataması yok. Tercihe dayalı görevlendirme. Bir kere yönerge okuldan ayrılan öğretmen yerine, boş norma, bu ortamda o işi en iyi yapabilecek öğretmeni seçmesine fırsat veriyor. Yani bu yetkiyi, bu gücü okul idaresine veriyor. Bir yetki Yani bu sizin kadronuzu tabii ki güçlendiriyor. Ama uygulamada bu tam gerçekleşmesi biraz 4 yıl öteye atıldı ne yazık ki. Önce öyle değildi sonra Proje Okulu olduktan sonra buradaki öğretmenler 4 yıl daha burada kalacak dendi. Bu kötü oldu, bizi biraz zayıflattı açıkçası. Yani boşluğumuz olmadığı için yeni öğretmenler seçimi noktasında bir 4 yıl ileri atılmış

oldu. Bu tür bir okuldan beklentiler her bakımdan yüksek. Ama takdir edersiniz ki okulunda kendisini bu beklentileri gerçekleştirmek için yenilemesi gerekiyor. Bu anlayışta çalışan öğretmenlerinde kendisini yenilemesi lazım. Eski çalışanlarla bunu sağlamak pek mümkün olmuyor, muhakkak %30-40 fire veriyor. Yani çalışan kadromuzda da, öğretmen kadromuzda da bir yenilik, bakış açısı değişimi gerekiyor. Yani yürürken koşmamız gerekiyor ama bu eski şeylerle, eski yöntemle mümkün olmuyor. Bu nedenle hükümet bu önemli okulların kadrosunu değiştirmek istedi. Ama bu uygulama en azında 4 yıl ertelendi. Bu sebeple bu durum bize hayli bir zaman kaybı sağlayacak. Tabi şu an mevcut olanları da iyileştirmeye çalışıyoruz, bunların yollarını arıyoruz biz, yani Proje Okulu mantığı nedir onlara anlatıp, izah edip, bu yarışta hızlı koşmalarını, daha verimli çalışmalarını sağlamaya çalışıyoruz. Yani onları yukarı doğru çıkarmaya çalışıyoruz ama yeterli olmuyor, bazılarıyla hiç olmuyor.

[[00.08.01]] **R::** Hocam Hiç bahsettiğiniz yöntemle siz kendiniz öğretmen aldınız mı?

[[00.08.07]] **PSL2::** Evet evet iki farklı yılda 4 öğretmen aldım.

[[00.08.15]] **R::**Bunların seçim sürecini nasıl yaptınız hocam?

[[00.08.19]] **PSL2::** Ben milli eğitimde, ████████'da eski bir idareciyim. Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'nda şube müdürü olarak da çalıştım. Yani o açıdan bir çevrem var. ████████'da eğitim çevrem var, üst düzey okullarda veya meslek yada düz okullarda fark etmez, yani işini iyi yapan öğretmen soruşturuyoruz, soruyoruz çevremize, araştırıyoruz. İşini iyi yapan gerçekten verimli olacak öğretmenleri takip ediyoruz, okulumuza davet ediyoruz. Onlarla bir yani bir saatlik bir çay-kahve sohbeti, mülakat gibi, yaptık. Orada sorular soruyoruz, sohbette, neden bu okula gelmek istiyorsunuz, okula neler katabilirsiniz ve benzeri. Daha sonra kendilerinden neler beklediğimizi ifade ediyoruz. Bu noktada okulumuzun kendilerinden neler beklediğini izah ettim, yani bizim idareci yönetici olarak neler beklediğimizi izah ettim. Eğer beklentilerimiz karşılıklı olarak uyuyorsa bunu daha sonra milli eğitimden istiyoruz, teklif ediyoruz onlar bakanlığa bizim bu arkadaşları teklif ediyor, atanması için çalışmak istiyoruz diyor. Şunu söyleyebilirim hiçbir baskı, zorlama bir şeye maruz kalmadık, bu noktadaki yönlendirmeleri falan da kaale almadık biz.

[[00.09.29]] **R::**Anladım hocam. Peki bu anlattığınız yöntemi siz kendiniz mi geliştirdiniz? Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı'ndan bu yönde bir yönlendirme, yönetmelik vesair var mıdır?

[[00.09.39]] **PSL2::** Bu benim kendi tarzım. Yani siz şu andaki durumları politik konjonktürü falan da biliyorsunuzdur. Sendikanın, ya da siyasi otoritelerin baskısı gelebilir, ama ben böyle gelecek hiç kimseyle çalışmam yani kendi tarzım ve yöntemimiz anlayışım için gereken her şeyi yaparım. O tip baskıları falan olursa da hiç durmam istifa ederim. Yani şunu ortaya koyayım baya bir insan bilir, bilmiyorum

benim geçmişimi okudunuz mu, okula faydalı olmayacak birisi bana dayatılırsa bu noktada bu okulda kendim mesuliyeti alırım durmam yani.

[[00.10.04]] **R::**Anladım hocam şunu da merak ediyorum yani bakanlığın bu işi nasıl yapılacak, bu sistem nasıl yürüyecek şeklinde bir yönlendirmesi, aşama aşama sunduğu size tarif ettiği bir yöntem var mıdır?

[[00.10.15]] **PSL2::** Bakanlığın bu noktada bir tarifi yok, yani somut sunduğu bir şeyler yok maalesef. Bazı şeyler, kriterler, var 2 yıl öğretmenlik yapmış olması, gereken mecburi hizmet kalkmış olması gerekli vesaire böyle. Ama bu tip kriterleri yok, yönlendirici, gerçekten işini iyi yapan işinin ehli öğretmenleri seçme yönünde bize kriterleri ve veya yönlendirmeleri sunması söz konusu değil. Yani bu noktada bir açık var diyebilirim. Yani bir Proje Okulu'nda, bu denli kapsamlı bir okulda görev yapamayacak düzeyde yetersiz bir arkadaşta çok rahat atanabilir, görev yapabilir. Bu noktada iyi yönetilmeli, sistem bu noktada açık, açıkları var. Politik de bir atama mümkün olabilir. Çok zayıf olan, yetersiz biri sendika vesair yoluyla atanabilir. Şu an tabi idareciler buna direniyor olabilirler, kendi yöntemlerini gerçekleştiriyor olabilirler ama yarın öbür gün ne olacağı belli olmaz ben bu noktanın zayıf olduğunu düşünüyorum.

[[00.10.46]] **R::** Hocam ben buradan şunu anlıyorum, eksik yönleri ile eksikleri ile birlikte, bazı eksiklikler olduğunu söylüyorsunuz ama siz bu öğretmen seçme olayını destekliyorsunuz? Olmalı diyorsunuz. Doğru mu anladım?

[[00.10.58]] **PSL2::** Yani bu şuna benziyor biz bu okulun lideriyiz, yani şöyle şirket gibi düşünsek burayı bura bir iş yeri ve lider olarak buranın patronu bizim olmamız gerek. Yani bu noktada çalışanlarınızı kendiniz seçtiğiniz zaman ortak bir hedefte, ortak bir çalışma kültürü içerisinde uyumlu çalışmanız daha kolay oluyor. Daha güzel daha verimli çalışmalar oluyor, şimdi böyle bir yetkinin okula verilebilmesi, verilmesi, çok güzel çok olumlu. Kesinlikle iyi kullanması lazım ama az önce de bahsettiğim endişeler de tabii ki mevcut. Müdürlere baskı yapılmaması lazım ve müdür idarecilerinde kendi okullarında en verimli çalışabilecek şekilde öğretmenleri seçmeleri lazım. Yani yetkiyi bu yönde kullanmaları lazım, bu yönde yetiştirilmeleri lazım yoksa onun dışında müthiş bir şey bu, çok çok mükemmel bir şey bir yerde, onun dışında ben fen liselerinden de öğretmen alabiliyorum, onlarla da görüştüm, farklı yerlerden de öğretmenler ile görüştüm. Yani ben bu durumda o yüzden imkanları açabilecek çok olumlu bir şey olarak karşılıyorum şahsım adına. Yani çok fazla öğretmen araştırdım, çok fazla kişi ile görüştüm, bayağı bu seçtiklerim en faydalı olabileceğinin bunların olduğunu düşündüğüm için seçtim, gerçekten verimli olarak söylediklerine düşünerek seçtim, kararım da da haklı çıktım. O yüzden bu şekilde kullanımı verimli buluyorum.

[[00.11.43]] **R::** Peki hocam o insanları, o öğretmen adaylarını cezbedecek ne var? Yani onları okulunuzda çalışmaya ikna etme noktasında sizin elinize ne tür kozlar var bunu nasıl yapıyorsunuz?

[[00.11.53]] **PSL2::** Bu soruyu çok güzel sordunuz. Yani özlük hakları açısından bu durumun hiçbir ekstra cazibesi yok, bu okulda çalışmalarını teşvik edecek motive edecek hiçbir şey yok ama yalnızca ve yalnızca öğretmenlerdeki mesleki doyum sağlıyor burada çalışmak. Bu denli kaliteli bir okulda ve bu denli kaliteli öğrencilerle çalışmak için. Öğretmenler mesleki doyum tercihinden dolayı daha çok geliyorlar. Yani burada öğretmeni dinleyen, dinlemek isteyen, öğretmenden bir şeyler öğrenmek isteyen bir öğrenci grubu var, talep eden, öğretmeni mesleki doyum yaşamasını sağlayan bir öğrenci grubu var. Anlamak isteyen bir öğrenci grubu var, öğretmenim mesleki doyum sağlayabilecek bir öğrenci grubu var. Yani bunun dışında öğretmene farklı bir şey yok. Ne özlük hakları açısından, ne maddi imkanlar açısından farklı bir şey yok, söz konusu değil. Tabii yani öğretmenlerin kendisini bireysel geliştirmeleri için müthiş bir alan, müthiş bir fırsat onu tabii ki söyleyelim yani.

[[00.12.30]] **R::** Yani bunu bir eksiklik olarak görüyor musunuz hocam?

[[00.12.35]] **PSL2::** Kesinlikle görüyorum, yani proje okuluna gelen bir öğretmen çok daha fazla çalışmak durumunda, daha gayretli olmak zorunda, bunun içinde bakanlığın okul müdürleri ve yöneticileri bu noktada desteklemesi lazım bunun arkasını beslenmesi lazım, onları teşvik edecek bazı düzenlemeler yapması lazım bakanlığın. Yani bu bu noktada çok sürdürülebilir bir şey değil bu. Yani bugün yarın bu şekilde üç beş sene gider gider ama yarın öbür gün öğretmen veya idareci şunu der, yani kardeşim burada rahat rahat çalışmak varken, yatmak varken ben niye gideyim orada koşayım, bir sürü zaman harcaşayım, burada yürümek ya da yatmak varken. Rahat rahat gidiyorum aynı maaşı alıyorum, aynı özlük haklarım var, rahat rahat takılıyorum niye gidip orada bir sürü daha fazla çalışayım der gider, der yani. Dolayısıyla bu sürdürülebilir bir şey değil, bu noktada bunun arkasının desteklenmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum, iyi performansı diyorsunuz ya bu performansın bir karşılığı olması lazım, performansı yöneltir yönlendirecek bazı motivasyonların olması gerek, bunlar eksik.

[[00.13.16]] **R::**Anladım hocam yani bu noktada önerileriniz olur mu peki ya bunu sağlamak adına önerebileceğiniz şeyler var mıdır?

[[00.13.21]] **PSL2::** Evet kesinlikle. Tabii Yani birkaç şey söyleyebilirim, yani öğretmenlerin özlük haklarının daha iyi olması lazım, yani hizmet karşılığı aldığı puanlar da bir değişiklik yapılabilir, daha cazip hale getirilmesi gerekiyor, önemsenmesi gerekiyor. Yani bu kadar çok öğretmen neden sürekli proje faaliyeti yapmalı veya daha verimli daha gayret işler yapması bekleniyor, akademik çalışmalar bekleniyor. Bu sene ... Anadolu Lisesi bakanlık tarafından soru havuzu

hazırlama okulu olarak belirlendi yani ... Lisesi öğretmenleri Eba modülüne yani bakanlığa soru hazırlayacaklar, bunun için de çalışacaklar. Bunu neden yapacaklar? Yalnızca mesleki doyum bunun için, ekstra bir şey var mı öğretmenlere sağlanan? Hayır. Ama bu, iş yüklerini arttıracak. Yani bunun arkasına başka bir şey yok, yani bu okulun öğretmenlerine bunun için veya farklı şeyler için özendirici hiçbir şey yok, ya bir özlük hakkı düzenlemesi yapılmadı, bu yapılabilir. İkinciside burada çalışan öğretmenlerin ek ders ücretlerinin daha da artırılması gerekiyor veya maaşlarına bir ek gösterge ile biraz daha ilave yapılması gerekiyor. Ya da bu tip düzenlemeler yapılması gerekiyor. Yani her şey tabii ki para değil, bunun biz farkındayız ama yapmış oldukları çalışmanın da karşılığını almalılar. Bu da ekstra bir motivasyon sağlayacaktır bir de bunu da hak ediyorlar. Çünkü buradaki öğretmenden çok şey istiyoruz, çok şey bekliyoruz bunu da sağlıyorlar yani burada öğretmenin işi öğrenciler gittiğinde bitmiyor. Bu okulda ders saati bitti mi öğretmen işi bitti değil. Onun dışında ekstra çalışıyorlar, velilerle ekstra irtibat kuruyorlar, daha fazla mesayi harcıyorlar, daha fazla zamanları gidiyor. Bu alan çok zayıf ya bu alanın çok zayıf olduğunu kat kat ifade etmek isterim. Yani bu alan ve öğretmen seçiminde kriterleri daha şeffaf daha uygun şekilde ayarlayamazlarsa uzun vadede bakanlık ve okullar çok sorun yaşar. Yani bu iki alanı proje okulları için çok önemli görüyorum, yani bu durum proje okullarının geleceğini de olumsuz yönde etkileyebilir. Tabi bakanlığın ileride proje okulları hakkında daha farklı planları varsa, kaldırmayı düşünüyorsa, o farklı bir şey. Tabii bunlar bu şekilde kalabilir ama bu şekilde uzun süre sürdürülemez. Bunlar düzeltilmesi gerekiyor.

[[00.14.52]] **R::** Hocam şimdi peki öğretmen seçimine dönelim idareciye okul liderlerine bu noktada bir yetki aktarılmasını yetki verilmesini olumlu karşıladığınızı söylediniz. Ben bunun gibi buna benzer farklı alanlarda da okullara, okul liderlerine başka yetkiler aktarılması gerektiğini düşünüyor musunuz? Başka şeyler de var mıdır?

[[00.15.57]] **PSL2::** Yani yetki ve sorumluluk arasında bir dengesizlik adaletsizlik olduğu söyleniyor. Evet anladım. Yani açıkçası bir okulu iyi bir şekilde yönetme noktasında elimizde yetkilerin olduğunu düşünüyorum ama, yetki varsa tabii sorumluluk da var. Bu ikisi birlikte gelir, okulun tepeden tırnağa kadar her şeyinden siz sorumlusunuz, okulla ilgili her şeyden sorumlusunuz, seni arayan bunlara bazen müdahale etme noktasında ilçeye ile veya bakanlığa sormanız gerekiyor okulla ilgili şeylere bazen direkt müdahale edemiyoruz. Yani bir sahada her şeyi anında pratik olarak müdahale edemiyoruz. Yani bu konuda merkezi anlayıştan biraz daha mahalli Ademi merkezîyetçi anlayışa geçilebilir. En basitinden mesela bunu bu hafta bu iyileştirme kurslarında yaşadık yani bu kurslar için sınıflar açıldı ama bunları öğretmen atayamadık, öğretmen veremiyoruz yetkimiz yok buna. Neden? Çünkü sisteme müdahale edemiyoruz, öğretmen bulacağım ben başka her türlü öğretmen de bulurum ama yani kendi hâlihazırdaki öğretmenlerimden atayım, ama bulduğumuz öğretmenler veya kendi okulumuzaki öğretmen daha önce kurs modülünde kurs açmak istiyorum şeklinde başvuru yapmadığı için onların üzerine

şimdi biz kurs açamıyor onları kurslarda görevlendiremiyoruz. Mesela bu çok saçma bu yetki bu durum böyle tıkanmaması lazım, bize yetki verilmesi lazım. Yani öğretmene kurs açmak istiyorum, dışarıdan da bir okulda çalışmak istiyorum şeklinde bir tercih yapmadığı zaman, yapmadığı için zamanında, ben onları atayamıyorum buradaki sistem bizim elimizde değil. Mesela yani bu tip şeyler saçma. Yani bu nedenle biyoloji ve kimya derslerinden bazıları boş geçti mesela. Yani böyle birşey olabilir mi? Yani böyle bir anlayış olabilir mi mesela, çok saçma bu kadar merkeziyetçi bir yaklaşım olur mu bu noktada? Ya bu sürdürülebilir bir şey değil, yani yukarıdakiler aşağıdakilere karşı güven duymuyorlar galiba? Güven noktasında bir sıkıntı var zannediyorum. O sebeple bunlar oluyor, güven sorunu var. Kimse birbirine güvenmiyor, öğretmenler liderlere güvenmiyor, yetkililer okullara güvenmiyor, liderler öğretmenlere güvenmiyor vs. Bu bir güven krizi olarak adlandırılabilir. Onlar yapamaz beceremez veya idarecileri yetersiz mi görüyorlar bilmiyorum anlamadım ama bunu anlamak mümkün değil. Ve bu sürdürülebilir bir şey değil yani. Burada bize yetki devri etmesi lazım, pratik olarak anında olaylara etkili bir çözüm sunabilmemiz burada elimizde, yetkimiz olacak hemen o anda o öğretmeni görevlendirme öğretmen çalışmak istiyoruz. Biz görevlendirmek istiyoruz ama yapamıyoruz, neden, sistemimizden, yani 10 saat kimya dersi boş mu gençsin, böyle saçma bir şey olur mu, yani bunu ben farklı şekilde başka öğretmenlerle takviye edebiliyorsam bugün yolunu bulabiliyorsam, edebilmem lazım. Elimde de fırsat var, sistem bunu tıkamaması lazım ki bunu yetkim olursa yapabilirim yani o sistem o modül benim önümde bir duvar olmaması lazım. Bu bir örnek.

[[00.17.00]] **R::** Yani hocam şöyle düşünebilir miyiz bu verdiğiniz örneği geneli temsil eden bir örnek olarak düşünüp ya bu tip şeylerde bu tip noktalarda okulla yetki verilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyoruz.

[[00.17.19]] **PSL2::** Yani biz bu okulların lideri ise yöneticisi ise bunlar verilmesi gerekiyor şimdi yeni sistemde uluslararası literatürde de görüyoruz Buna çeviklik diyoruz yani olaylara anında müdahale edebilme daha etkili çözümler bulabilme o çevikliği gösterebilmemiz için bazı hızlı ve erken kararlar almamız lazım, bunu yapabilmemiz lazım yani mevzuatın ve yetkinin buna uygun olması lazım.

[[00.17.48]] **R::** Hocam sistem çok daha merkeziyetçi, yani bir yerde toplanmış. Ama mesela daha farklı ülkelerde işte bütçe, öğretmen seçme gibi her şey okulların yetki ve sorumluluğu da oluyor. Bunlar okul yönetimlerine, okul idarelerine veriliyor. Öğretmen maaşlarından tutunda işte okullara okula harcanacak paraya kadar. Yarın böyle bir sürece geçişte bu kadar radikal olmasa da yani böyle geçişler için bizim okullarımızın ve idarecilerimizin in veya bizim sistemimizin hazır olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz?

[[00.18.08]] **PSL2::** Yani yasal altyapısının iyi oluşturulması gerekiyor ve insanların iyi eğitilmesi gerekiyor bu konuda. Yani iyi eğitilmiş insanlar olursa denetim mekanizması ve yasal altyapı güzel olursa olabilir. Yani bunlar sağlandığı zaman ve bu yetkiler

böyle dağıtıldığı zaman kesinlikle şu anki sistemden çok daha iyi şekilde işler yürüyecektir. İşler kesinlikle mevcut sistemden çok daha iyi işleyecek, ancak sistemde bu kadar özgür ve uygun bir denetim ve hesap verebilirlik olmadan riskler var. ...ve kalifiye uzmanlara ihtiyaç vardır. Güç kullanımını denetleyen iyi bir kontrol sistemi mevcut olmalıdır. Bu yetkinin kötüye kullanılması da engellenmelidir. Ben kendi okulumda iyi kullanabilirim ama başka bir okul kontrol olmazsa çok farklı, çok kötü kullanılabilir. Yani bir özel okul mantığı gibi düşünebiliriz, özel okulda ne oluyor, sahibi kişi sadece okuldan sorumlu kararları çok daha hızlı alıyor, çok daha çevik yani. Böylece okul için kararlar çok daha hızlı, çok daha duyarlı olabilir. Örneğin MEB'e yazıp üç ay cevap beklememeliyiz. Hemen karar verebilir ve müdahale edebilirler. Zamanı boşa harcama çünkü zamanı geri getiremezsin. Daha sonra yapacağınız müdahale bir anlam ifade etmeyebilir. Karar alıp müdahale etmeliyiz, zaman kaybetmiyor yani, çünkü zamanı geri getiremiyorsunuz. Sonradan yaptığınız müdahalenin bir manası olmayabiliyor. Ancak, bununla beraber ben devlet yapısı içerisinde niyetlerinde gözetilmesi gerektiğinden yana bir insanım o ayrı. Yani bu sebeple bizim yani milli kültürel bazı hassasiyetlerimiz, değerlerimiz var. Bunlar da gözetilmesi gerekiyor bu sebeple yetki verilmesi gerekiyor ama aynı zamanda da iyi bir denetim sistemi olması gerekiyor ki yetkiyi vereceğiz ama denetleyeceğiz de. [[00.18.50]] **R::** Kuvvetli bir denetimle yetki verilmeli diyorsunuz

[[00.18.53]] **PSL2::** Bu yetkinin kötüye kullanılmasını da engellemek gerekiyor. Ben bunu [REDACTED] da kendi okulumda iyi kullanabilirim ama adam başka bir okulda başka bir yerde çok farklı çok kötü şekilde kullanılabilir denetim olmazsa.

[[00.19.05]] **R::** Hocam peki müfredat ve bütçe yönetimi finansal yönetim noktalarında Proje Okulu olmak herhangi bir şeyi değiştirdi mi?

[[00.19.10]] **PSL2::** Yok Hayır bir değişiklik olmadı o mevzuat şu an aynı. Eskiden nasılsa aynı şekilde devam ediyor diğer okullardaki sistem nasılsa mevzuat neyse bizim için de aynısı geçerli.

[[00.19.17]] **R::** Peki hocam sizde ve öğretmenlerinizde ya da okulunuzda hesap verilebilirlik bilincinde, sorumluluk bilincinde bir değişiklik meydana getirdiğini düşünüyor musunuz Proje Okulu olmanın?

[[00.19.30]] **PSL2::** Yani şunu söyleyebilirim Proje Okulu olmayan okullardaki genel tablo, durum buradaki öğretmenlerin kendini daha iyi hissetmelerini sağlıyor diyebilirim. Orada bana göre bir geriye çekilme geriye gidiş var. Belki mahallinden çocuklar daha rahat ettiler ama akademik hedefler bakımından geriye bir çekilme gerileme var yani. Siz de belki bunu görüyorsunuz insanlar bunu çok dile getirmiyor ama, demiyor ama bütün çocuklar Proje Okullarına ya da Anadolu Liselerine gitmek istiyor. Meslek liseleri iki yıldır öğrenci alamamakta; 3-4 yıl içinde daha da kötüleşecek. Yüzlerce, belki binlerce meslek okulu bitmek üzere olduğu için aday bulamayacak. ...Meslek okullarında çok daha fazla yatırım var...ama öğrenci yok,

öğrenciler gitmek istemiyor... Çok fazla kaynak israf etme ihtimali var... Bu sorunu tespit etmemiz gerekiyor, saklamanın kimseye bir faydası olmaz, yoksa çözüm olmaz.

[[00.20.19]] **R::** Şu son değişikliklerin buna bir etkisi olmadı mı?

[[00.20.23]] **PSL2::** Yok olmadı, bu sene de olmadı pek. Bizim mesela komşu Meslek Lisesi var bir iki sınıf yani bazı bakanlık bunu desteklemek yönünde bazı çalışmalar yapıyor ama şu anda pozitif bir etkisi yok. 1500-2000 kişilik okullar. Böyle giderse 3-4 yıl sonra 100-200 kişiye düşer. Aslında meslek liselerine yapılan yatırım Anadolu liselerinden çok çok daha fazla. Yapısında atölye sistemi olduğu için oraya alınan alet edevat makinede çok fazla yatırım var ama öğrenci yok, öğrenciler gitmek istemiyor. Yani bu kadar kaynağında heba olma ihtimali var diyebiliriz, yani ben bunu takip ediyorum kimse bunu dile getirmiyor maalesef. Bu bir sorundur dile getirilmesi gerekir, çözüm aranması gerekir, yani burada ilçe de il de böyle üç maymunu oynuyor, bakanlığa bu noktada çok sağlıklı bir rapor gitmediğini düşünüyorum. Bakanlığın, bakan beyin çok sağlıklı bir şekilde bilgilendirilmediğini düşünüyorum. Meslek Lisesi eğitimini şu anda kaybediyoruz bunu görmek lazım bu sorunu tespit etmek lazım, bunu gizlemenin kimseye bir faydası yok, yoksa soruna çözüm bulunmaz. Yani şimdiden bir şey yapılmazsa bu 5-10 sene sonra artık telafi edilemeyecek bir noktaya erişecek. Yani öğrencilerinde neden tamamen Anadolu Lisesi'ne gitmek istediği anlaşılabilir bir şey değil gerçekten. Şu an 45-50 kişilik sınıflar oluştu burada kalabalıktan sorun var diğer yerde öğrenci bulamıyor çok güzel meslek okullar var çok güzel binalar var öğrenci gitmek istemiyor neden?

[[00.21.44]] **R::** Liberal bazı politikaların da getirdiği bir mantık var bu noktada da, belki söyleyeceğiniz şeyler vardır? Yani bu marketleşme mantığını destekliyor musunuz? Yani özetle edevlet bir planlamaya bir zorlamaya gitmeden biraz daha serbest bırakın okul çeşitliliğini arttırsın ve velilere seçme hakkı versin hangi okullar çok tercih edilirse o okulların sayısı artsın, hangileri başarılı olursa onların sayısı kapasitesi artsın, başarısız olanlarda otomatik elensin yani böyle bir markette işin mantığını uygun görür müsünüz ne düşünürsünüz?

[[00.22.11]] **PSL2::** Yani bu noktada şu anda öğrenciler hep Anadolu Lisesi'ne gitmek istiyor, ya da Fen Lisesi diyelim. Sınavlı da olsa sınavsız da olsa Anadolu Lisesi'ne gitmek öyle bir durumda tamamen okulların tamamı Anadolu-Fen Lisesi olacaktır. Bugün mesela bir veli geldi bana öğrencisini Meslek lisesinden Anadolu Lisesi'ne almaya çalışıyor bunun için uğraşılıyor. Ona rehberlik yapmaya çalıştık durumu anlatmaya çalıştım. Bence iyi değil.

[[00.22.30]] **R::** Hocam 4 yıl sonra sizin görüşünüze başvurulacağı için, öğretmenle çalışmaya devam edip etmeme noktasında siz belirleyici olacağınız için, öğretmenlerdeki sorumluluk hissinde, çalışma verilerinde bir değişiklik, bir artış meydana getirdi mi proje okul olmak?

[[00.22.43]] **PSL2::** Yani bu noktada mesafe alan öğretmenlerimiz var bazılarında pozitif yönde değişiklik meydana getirdi ama bu sürecin bizim okulumuz için 4 yıl öteye atılmış olması bu verimi elde etmemiz de bir gecikmeye yol açtığını düşünüyorum. Çünkü her şeye rağmen ilerleme sağlayamadıklarımız da var yani bazıları ile çalışmamız mümkün olmayacak. Bu yetki verilirse biz yani gerçekten bazı öğretmenler ile yollarımızı ayırmamız gerekecek bununda gerekli ve olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Biz artık iyileştirme diyoruz, hiç kimseyi iyi kötü diye ayırmıyoruz ama herkesin muhakkak güçlü yönleri de vardır ama okul paradigmasına okulun çalışma ortamına uyum sağlayamıyor ise bu okulun şartlarına ayak uyduramıyor ise onun da değişmesi gerekiyor veya kendini iyileştirmeleri gerekiyor ama yetersiz olanlar yetersiz olacaklar da var maalesef yani ellerinden tutuyoruz bir şeyler olsun diye çabalıyoruz yetiştirmeye çalışıyoruz ama kimileri ile de olmuyor bu yol görünmüyor.

[[00.23.20]] **R::** Hocam proje okullarının çıkış noktasının ne olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? Bu proje okulları nereden çıktı desem ne dersiniz? Ve Sizce bu politikanın amaçları nelerdir?

[[00.23.31]] **PSL2::** Yani anladığım kadarıyla öğrencilerin okullara girişimlerinde bölgesel farklılıklar meydana geliyordu Yani çocuklar oturdukları mekanlardan çok daha uzak yerlere okullara gitmek zorunda kalabiliyorlardı yani önceki liseye giriş sınav sistemine göre böyle oluyordu. Bakanlığımız her çocuğun kendime mahalinde kendi bölgesinde okunması gerektiğini, okumasını sağlamak istedi ama bunu yaparken bir kısım okulları da böyle yani yüzde birlik yüzde onluk kesimdeki okulları da bu şekilde başarılı olarak tutmak istedi yani bu tip bazı başarılı öğrencilerin de farklı konjonktürde farklı bir mantıkla devam etmesini yetişmesini istedi. Zannediyorum bakanlık hepsini birbirine katılmayalım belli bir kısmında böyle kalsın dedi galiba. Bu yüzden en azından belirli bir öğrenci grubuna akranlarıyla aynı düzeyde iyi bir eğitim verebilmek için bu okulları tutmak istediler. Ancak, MEB'in PS'lere ilişkin uzun vadeli görüş ve planlarından kimsenin haberi yok. Gelecekte ne olacağını bilmiyoruz, sadece göreceğiz. Hükümet düzeyinde, hedefler ve uzun vadeli planlar henüz belirlenmedi, net değil. Bu okulların müdürleri olarak bizler bile emin değiliz. Hükümetin Proje Okulları politikası için gelecek planının ne olduğundan emin değilim. ... Şu andan itibaren yeni eğitim bakanından güçlü bir destek duymadım, bu yüzden siyasi yön aniden değişebilir.

[[00.24.22]] **R::** Aslında sonraki sorum onla ilgili, siz nasıl görüyorsunuz uzun vadede?

[[00.24.31]] **PSL2::** İleride ne olacak, uzun vadede uzun perspektifte neler düşünüyor bilmiyoruz. Bunun sayısını azaltacağız diye bir ibaresi var belki duymuşsunuzdur. Bilemiyorum. Ben şahsi olarak bu tarz okulların olmasından yanayım, devam etmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Ben şahsen arkasında durulması gerektiğini düşünüyor destekliyorum güçlü bir şekilde destekliyorum. Çünkü burada

yapabildiğimiz yaptığımız çalışmaların her okulda yapılması mümkün değildir. Bazı okullarında bu şekilde kalması gerektiğini düşünüyor yani çok öğrenciyi olmasından veya öğrencisi seviyeleri arasındaki aşırı farktan dolayı burada yapabildiğimiz projelerin çalışmaların bazı okullarda yapılmasının mümkün olamayacağını da görüyorum açıkçası. Okullarımızı ilerlemeye... daha ileriye dönük ve yenilikçi olmaya teşvik etmek için bazı fırsatların yaratıldığına ve yeni projelerin beklendiği ve desteklendiğine inanıyorum. Bu yüzden desteklediğim bir süreç. Ben şahsen bu tür okulları çok önemli görüyorum, ve aynı zamanda onlara, ülkenin geleceği için, gelecek nesiller için ekstra destek olunması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Tabii şunu da söylemek lazım, onu da söyleyeyim size, iş şu anda biraz daha siyah beyaz uç noktalara gidiyor gibi. Yani okullar arasındaki fark, uçurum artıyor gibi. Sınavlı okulla sınavsız okul, Proje Okulu ile proje olmayan okullar arasında fark artıyor gibi. Birde bu tip okullar öğrencileri çok daha iyi hazırlıyor, proje okulları, diye düşünüyorum. Yani öğrenciler arasındaki farkı da artıyor gibi rekabet açısından yani. Çünkü buraya gelen öğrencisi zaten almaya hazır belli bir donanımı olan öğrenci burada çalışan öğretmenler de aynı şekilde daha gayretli çalışıyor daha iyi işler yapıyor. Dolayısıyla bu aradaki şeyi artırıyor yani uçurumu açıyor. Yani bu biraz daha öğrenci kalitesinden dolayı, burada oturmuş olan çalışan verimli yürüyen okul kültürünü yaşatma geliştirme şansımız var bizim. Ama bu tabii diğer okullar için maalesef olmuyor, olumsuz durum oluşturuyor.

[[00.25.31]] **R::** Hocam bu Yetki devri konusuna tekrar dönmek istiyorum ya bu noktada başka önerileriniz de olur mu yani şu yetkililer de bize verilirse iyi olur dediğiniz kalem kalem şeyleri olur mu?

[[00.25.40]] **PSL2::** Evet Yani şunu söyleyebilirim. Bu öğretmen seçme olayın bazı okullar için 4 yıl ötelemesi gerekiyordu. Bence bu bazıları sadece tabelada Proje Okulu olmasına yol açtı yani o çok önemli bu bu tip şeylerin gerçekleştirilebilmesi için onun bir an önce hayata geçirilmesini isterim. O yetkiyi çok önemsiyorum o yetkinin okullara idarecilere verilmesini arz ederim yani siz Proje Okulu olarak bizlerin önüne hedefleri koyduysanız insanların önüne hedefleri koyuyorsunuz yani bunu bu hedeflere nasıl ulaşılacağı konusunda da kapılar açmanız yetkiler vermeniz imkanlar sağlamanız gerekiyor. Yani şans tanımanız gerekiyor. Yani bunu eğer o yetkileri, o bizden beklenen şeylere, bu kadroyla erişemeyeceksek nasıl olacak yani onlar bekleniyorsa şeylerde sorumluluklarda bize güçlerde bize aktarılması gerekiyor. Yeni açılan okullar için, kadrosu öğretmeni olmayan okullar için bu çok büyük avantaj oldu

[[00.26.05]] **R::** Yani yeni açılan okullar için büyük avantaj diyorsunuz

[[00.26.10]] **PSL2::** Kesinlikle, mesela bizde [REDACTED] var yani orası yeni açılan bir okul olduğu için oranın lideri müdürü öğretmen kadrosunu tamamen kendisi seçti. Onlar için çok mükemmel bir şey oldu bu durum. Mesela başka okuldan bir örnek vereyim ben sizin için ya geçen sene o okulda hiç öğrencilerin hiçbiri ekstra yetiştirme destekleme kurslarında kalmazken. Bu yıl 108 öğrencinin 104'ü almaya

karar verdi neden çünkü öğretmen kadrosundan. Ondan dolayı yani o yetiştirme destekleme kurslarında eğitime değer veren öğretmenleri artık ne istiyorlar devam etmek istiyorlar ya neden çünkü okulda ekip kuruldu iyi bir ekip yani ekip varsa aile çocuk bunu görüyor zaten o yüzden daha gayretli oluyor ekipte daha iyi çalışıyor yani burada. Bu tür okullarda en iyi öğretmenlerden olan A takımıyla çalışmanız gerekiyor çünkü çok güçlü öğrenciler var, bu yüzden onlar için yeterince iyi olabilecek çok güçlü öğretim elemanlarının orada olması gerekiyor. Bu nedenle çalışanlarımızı seçme şansına sahip olmak istedik, çok büyük bir fırsattı, bu yüzden kaçırmak istemedik. Tabiri caizse çok güçlü öğrenciler var çok güçlü kadrolar olması gerekiyor ki öğrencilere hazırlayabilirim yetiştirebilirim. Şimdi biz de o kadroyu kendimiz oluşturamadığımız için maalesef bu tip şeylerde sorun yaşıyoruz. Dışarıdan öğretmen falan bulmaya çalışıyoruz yani diğer türlü bir süre sonra artık öğrenci gelmiyor. Çünkü verim yok çalıştığı kurs aldığı, ders aldığı öğretmen ona hitap edemiyor.

[[00.27.07]] **R::**Anladım hocam daha genel sorarsak üst bir pencereden, sadece kendi okulunuz değil de, Türkiye'nin geneli açısından bu proje okulları politikası Türkiye eğitim sistemini nasıl etkiledi?

[[00.27.21]] **PSL2::** Bu proje okulu mantının doğru buluyorum devam etmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum arkasında durulması gerekir diye düşünüyorum eksikliklerin olduğu notları var ama bunların giderilerek iyileştirilecek devam etmesi gerektiğini, arkasında durulması gerektiğini düşünüyor, örneklerin artırılması iyi örneklerin yaşatılması adına bu okulların sürecimizde olumlu güzel katkıları olacağını düşünüyorum, sistemimizde olması gerektiğini düşünüyorum, bunu yani zaten görüyoruz, zamanla daha çok göreceğiz. En azından belli bir oranda ki öğrencilerimize de kendi emsalleriyle kendi kalibresinde ki arkadaşlarıyla daha kaliteli yarışarak daha iyi eğitimler almalarını sağlayabiliriz. Bağlı fırsatlar verildiğini düşünüyorum o açıdan ben bu süreci destekliyorum. Azaltılması ya da ortadan kaldırılması ortadan kaldırılmasının 32 yıllık bir eğitim yöneticisi olarak doğru olmadığını düşünüyorum olumlu olacak kanaatinde değilim. Bakanlık süreci çok iyi izlemesi gerekiyor, çok iyi takip etmesi gerekiyor, iyileştirmeler yapılması gerekiyor. Bu okullarla ilgili yasal altyapının iç politikanın daha sağlam bir zemine oturtulması gerekiyor. Daha açık daha dayanıklı, kendimizi daha kuvvetli hissedebileceğimiz şekilde bir politika zinciri bir yasal dayanağının oluşturulması gerekiyor. Okullara yönetici olarak atanacak müdürlerin ilgili daha da güçlendirilmesi gerekiyor. Onların da özlük haklarının iyileştirilmesi gerekiyor bir ara akademisyenlerin atanacağı söylenmişti var da bilmiyorum ben tarih doktorası yaptım bakabildiniz mi bu tip akademik yönlerin de daha güçlendirilmesi gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Yani bu tip idareci olarak atanacak kişilerinde böyle daha iyi daha yetkin kişilerden seçilmesi gerekiyor. Herkes sendikalı olabilir tabii oluyor ama sendika vesair gibi baskı unsurlarının ortadan kaldırılması gerektiğini düşünüyorum. Sadece liyakata dayalı atama yani şu an benim gördüğüm bir sorun özellikle proje okulları atamasında bu saydığım şeyler baskı ve sendika olayları öne çıkıyor. Maalesef bu işi gerçekten

yapabilecekler değil de sendikanın önerdiği ya da farklı şekilde referansları olan kişiler atanıyor bunlar yanlış iştir. Yani bunlar bu okullardaki hedefli, gayretli çocukların heba edilmesi, bu öğrencilerin vizyonunda yara almasına sebep verebilir. Bu çok tehlikeli bir şeydir, yani okulun lideri vizyonsuz olursa öğrencilerin vizyonu da daralır. Bu sebeple bunu kesinlikle sağlam kriterlere bağlanması gerekiyor gerçekten. Yetkin liyakatli kişilerin atanması gerek, her şeyden bununla başlıyor, özellikle liderlik sürecinin güçlendirilmesi gerekiyor, sağlam bir altyapıya somut kriterler konularak bu liderlerin seçilmesi gerekiyor. Yani ne olursa olsun baskı liyakatsizlik bu okullarda olmaması gerek. Gerçekten liyakatli olan kişiler atanması gerekiyor sonra da yetki de verirsin. Başta bakanlığın bunu çözmesi lazım. Onun dışında burada çalışan çok çalışan insanların belki bir performans mantığına göre özlük haklarının iyileştirilmesi motivasyonlarının artırılmasına yönelik şeylerin yapılması gerekir ve okul müdürlerine bu anlamda kendi ekibini motive etme noktasında daha fazla yetki devredilmesi gerekiyor. Bu şekilde diyebilirim.

[[00.30.10]] **R::** Burada bitirebiliriz hocam. Çok teşekkür ederim hocam katılımınız için.

[[00.30.14]] **PSL2::** Ben teşekkür ederim, kolaylıklar diliyorum çalışmanızda. Biz de sonuçları iyileştirmelirmizde kullanabiliriz diye umuyorum. Bakanlığın izin onayını da gönderirseniz memnun olurum.

[[00.30.22]] **R::** Tabi hocam atarım hemen.

[[00.30.14]] **PSL2::** Kolaylıklar diliyorum

[[00.30.22]] **R::** Çok sağolun, teşekkürler.

Appendix 9 Interview Transcript (PS leader- Translated to English)

PSL2- Interview Transcript

(Translation to English from Turkish)

September 2019

R:: Resercher **PSL2:: Project School Learder 2**

R:: [[00.00.48]] Hello sir, I talked about research... I'm going directly to my questions, if you don't have any questions?

[[00.00.58]] **PSL2::** No I don't go ahead

R:: [[00.01.00]] Now, first of all, can you quickly tell me about the processes of your school becoming a project school?

[[00.01.06]] **PSL2::** There is a regulation published by the Ministry of National Education, there are some criteria about the schools that can be project schools, some maybe you know, some criteria have been brought by the ministry, For example, it is related to the fact that it is included in the 5th percentile regarding the high school transition exam, or criteria such as the school has successful project-based activities in sports, arts and cultural activities in the past years. There are other criteria as well, schools that can meet these criteria are defined as Project Schools according to the directive of the Ministry, according to the directive of project schools, these are converted to project schools. Our school is also in the 5th rank in [REDACTED], a school that accepts students from the 2% to the 5% level according to the score of the high school entrance exam. In that respect, it was offered to our ministry, we offered it first, our ministry saw fit and approved it. This is how we became.

[[00.02.20]] **R::** So it was based on your offer, right, sir?

[[[00.02.24]] **PSL2::** Yes, we also wanted that, but the main decision was made at the ministry level because we are primarily a very successful school. We are preparing a comprehensive report for our ministry on being a Project School, we fill it out on the system, about our own school.

[[[00.02.34]] **R::** What does the report contain?

[[00.02.40]] **PSL2::** There are many questions about why you should/need to become a Project School in general. In other words, there are certain points about being a project in the directive. We explain those reasons in detail. While doing this, we need to tell about the projects we have done as a school, such as the European Union projects, Tübitak or more comprehensive projects, we add all of them there, or this kind of thing you do well as a school. They had asked for an inventory of 3 or 5

years, our Turkey degrees and so on are added there; then it's not enough, there are questions, you have to answer those questions... that is, your school must have a background, history, it is not enough to be successful only. In other words, it is not enough to be in the five percent. There needs to be a long added value in your region, in the eyes of the society. It is necessary for your school to have popularity or name, it must be shown that it is a good school.

[[00.03.50]] **R::** Sir, I'm wondering what you wanted to be a Project School, why did you want it? What motivated you?

[[00.03.59]] **PSL2::** Okay, let me express that too. Now, our school is a school that was opened in 1998. Since it has always accepted students through exams throughout 2018-19, our school has gained popularity and a good place in [REDACTED], our school has kept its place of accepting good students and being preferred. This culture has continued since then. Yes, our school took the students who were more successful academically, and made good preparations and studies for these children in university placement as well as in many different aspects. It also achieved good results in the results of the university exams, and also here you can guide these children in a healthy way, very nice sports, artistic and scientific activities are being produced here. In other words, in this 20-year period, our school has done very good work on the subjects I mentioned. We as the school wanted that the culture, accumulation, these gains to continue. Because this is an achievement, a culture that has been established with devotion. It is not easy for this to continue in the following years, it was not easy to achieve these points, we did not want to lose them. Because if there was a Neighborhood School logic... the region where our school is located might be said to be a region where people from Anatolia, from different difficult geographies, and people with low socio-economic level are concentrated. We're close to that region. At least for this reason, if such a thing were to happen, we would only be able to take students from the region and these achievements would be wasted. We wanted to reflect these gains we created to [REDACTED] in different ways, in other words, we wanted not to lose them. As well as in the evaluation we made, it was appreciated by the Ministry of National Education above and we became a Project School.

[[00.06.18]] **R::** So, the main motivation is to keep the student quality high, sir, do I understand correctly?

[[00.06.22]] **PSL2::** So yes, of course, to preserve our gains too.

[[00.06.27]] **R::** So why, sir? What changes when it becomes a Project School, I mean regarding the management of school?

[[00.06.32]] **PSL2::** The most significant modification is that Project Schools are closed to the central teacher appointment. This means that if there is a vacancy and

a new position emerges, teacher recruitment is done for certain periods, not directly by central management, but on the basis of our proposals. Optional assignment. For one thing, the directive allows the empty norm to choose the teacher who can do the job best in this environment, for the place of a teacher left the school. In other words, it gives this authority, this power to the school administration. It's an authority. So, of course, it strengthens your staff, but you can only offer certain people. And also, in practice, this full realization has unfortunately been pushed back 4 years. It wasn't like that at first, then it was said that after the Project School, the teachers here will stay here for 4 more years. This was bad, it weakened us a little, frankly. In other words, since we do not have a vacancy, we have been pushed forward 4 years at the point of selection of new teachers. So, it's kind of a partial delegation of authority ... It gives an opportunity for us to select the best teacher for an empty position. In other words, it provides the school administration with this authority, this power. But this has not yet been fully implemented. In all respects, expectations for these types of schools are very high. However, you should appreciate that the school needs to renew itself in order to accomplish these expectations. Teachers working with this understanding need to renew themselves. It is not possible to achieve this with ex-employees, it definitely gives 30-40% energy wastage or inefficient work. In other words, an innovation, a change of perspective is required in our staff and our teaching staff. So we have to run not walk, but this is not possible with the old things, the old way. Because of that, the government wanted to change teachers in the most successful and well-known schools in the country, in these schools. But this change was postponed for at least 4 years. For this reason, this will lose us a lot of time. Of course, we are trying to improve the existing ones, we are looking for ways for them, that is, we try to explain and explain what the Project School logic is, and try to enable them to run faster and work more efficiently in this race. So we're trying to push them up, but it's not enough, with some it doesn't work at all.

[[00.08.01]] **R::** Sir, have you ever hired a teacher yourself with the new method you mentioned?

[[00.08.07]] **PSL2::** Yes, yes, I got 4 teachers in two different years.

[[00.08.15]] **R::** How did you do the selection process for them, sir?

[[00.08.19]] **PSL2::** I am a former administrator in national education in [REDACTED]. I also worked as a branch manager at the Ministry of National Education. So in that sense, I have a circle. I have an education circle in [REDACTED]. It doesn't matter in high-level schools or vocational or regular schools, we inquire about teachers who do their job well, we ask questions around us, we search for them. We follow the teachers who will be really productive who do their job well and invite them to our school. We had a one-hour tea-coffee conversation with them, like an interview. We ask questions there, in the interviews, why do you want to come to this school, what can you contribute to the school, and so on. Then we express what we expect from them. At

this point, I explained what our school expects from them, that is, what we expect as administrators or school leaders from them. If our expectations are mutually compatible, then we ask for it from the national education, we offer them, then they offer these friends to the ministry, they say, we would like their appointments to that school etc. I can say that we have not been subjected to any pressure, we have not been subjected to anything forced, we have not taken into account any force at this point.

[[00.09.29]] **R::** I understand. So, did you develop this method yourself? Is there any guidance, regulation, etc. from the Ministry of National Education in this direction?

[[00.09.39]] **PSL2::** This is my own style. You know the current situations, the political conjuncture, etc. Pressure from the union or the political authorities may come, but I will not work with anyone who will come like this, so I will do whatever is necessary for my understanding of my own style and method. Even if there is such pressure or something, I will never stay here and resign. So let me put this out, a lot of people know, I don't know if you have read my past/CV, if someone who will not be useful to the school is imposed on me, at this point I will take the responsibility myself in this school, or I resign.

[[00.10.04]] **R::** I understand, sir, I'm also wondering if there is a direction of the ministry on how to do this job, how this system will work, is there a method that it offers to you step by step?

[[00.10.15]] **PSL2::** The Ministry does not have a recipe at this point, unfortunately, it does not offer anything concrete. There are some things, criteria, it is necessary that he has taught for 2 years, that the compulsory service has been abolished and so on. But there is no such concrete criteria, it is out of the question that it does not offer us criteria and or directions for selecting competent teachers who are guiding, really good at their job. So I can say that there is a gap at this point. In other words, a friend who is inadequate at a level who cannot work in such a comprehensive school can easily be appointed in a Project School due to that gap. At this point, it should be managed well, the system has gaps at this point, it has vulnerabilities. A political appointment may also be possible. A very weak, incompetent person can be appointed through a union pressure and so on. At the moment, of course, the administrators/school leaders may be resisting this, they may be implementing their own methods, but what will happen tomorrow or the next day is not clear, I think this point is weak.

[[00.10.46]] **R::** Sir, I understand that here, you say that there are some shortcomings along with its deficiencies, but you support this teacher selection thing? You say it should be. Have I got it right?

[[00.10.58]] **PSL2::** So it looks like that, we are the leaders of this school, so if we think like a company, this is a workplace here and as a leader, we should be the boss of this place. At this point, when you choose your employees yourself, it is easier for you to work in harmony with a common goal and a common working culture. There are better and more productive works in this case, now I see that it is very nice and positive that such an authority can be given to the school leaders. It definitely needs to be used well, but there are of course also the concerns that I just mentioned. There should be no pressure on the principals, and the principals must choose the teachers in their own schools to work most efficiently. In other words, they need to use their authority in this direction, they need to be trained in this direction. Otherwise this is an amazing thing, a very very excellent thing in one place. Apart from that, I can get teachers from science high schools, I talked to them, I talked to teachers from different places, many opportunities. I mean, in this case, that's why I see it as a very positive thing that can open up opportunities for myself. In other words, I researched a lot of teachers, I talked to a lot of people, I chose these because I thought these were the most beneficial teachers, I chose them considering what they said as really efficient, and I was right in my decision. That's why I find this authority efficient to use this way.

[[00.11.43]] **R::** Well, teacher, what is there to attract those people, those teacher candidates? In other words, what kind of leverage do you have in convincing them to work at your school, how do you do it?

[[00.11.53]] **PSL2::** You asked this question very well. Actually, this situation has no extra attraction in terms of personal rights, there is nothing to motivate them to work at this school, but working here only and only provides professional satisfaction for teachers. To work in such a quality school and with such quality students. Teachers come more because of their professional satisfaction preference. In other words, there is a student group that listens to the teacher, wants to listen, wants to learn something from the teacher, there is a student group that demands it and ensures that the teacher experiences professional satisfaction. There is a group of students who want to understand, my teacher, there is a group of students who can provide professional satisfaction. So apart from that, there is nothing different for the teacher. There is nothing different in terms of personal rights or financial opportunities, it is out of question. Of course, let's say it is a great space, a great opportunity for teachers to develop themselves individually but no extra financial or as status.

[[00.12.30]] **R::** So, do you see this as a shortcoming, sir?

[[00.12.35]] **PSL2::** I definitely see it, that is, a teacher who comes to the project school has to work much harder, he has to be more diligent, the ministry should support school principals and administrators at this point too, it should be backed, the ministry should make some regulations to encourage them. So it's not very sustainable like this, at this point. So today, tomorrow, three or five years will go like

this, but then, the teacher or the administrator will say, that is, why should I go to run there, work harder, spend a lot of time, when there can be walking or sleeping here, when my friend can comfortably work and not working here and getting the same money. I go comfortably, I get the same salary, I have the same personal rights, I hang out comfortably, why should I go and work there a lot more, he says. Therefore, this is not sustainable. At this point, I think that the back of it should be supported, you ask for a very good performance, then there should be a reward for this performance, there must be some motivations that will direct the performance, these are missing, shortcomings.

[[00.13.16]] **R::** I understand, sir, so do you have any suggestions at this point, are there any things you can suggest in order to achieve this?

[[00.13.21]] **PSL2::** Yes, definitely. Of course, I can say a few things, namely, the personal rights of teachers should be better, that is, a change can be made in the points they receive in return for service, they should be made more attractive, they should be given importance. In other words, why are so many teachers expected to carry out project activities or to do more efficient and more diligent work, academic studies are expected. What is the point for them/teachers? For example, this year, Anatolian High School has been designated as a question pool preparation school by the ministry, so school teachers will prepare questions for the Eba module, so it means that they will work for it too. Why will they do this? Professional satisfaction only for this, is there anything extra provided to teachers? No. But this will increase their workload. In other words, there is nothing behind this, that is, there is nothing that encourages the teachers of this school for this or other things. There is no personal rights regulation, this could be done at least. Secondly, the additional course fees of the teachers working here need to be increased further or their salaries need to be added with an additional increase. Or such arrangements need to be made. Of course, money is not everything, we are aware of this, but they should be paid for the work they have done. This will provide extra motivation and they deserve it. Because we want a lot from the teacher here, we expect a lot from the teacher, and they also provide this. For example, the work of the teacher here does not end when the students leave. The teacher's job is not over when the lesson time is over in this school. Apart from that, they work extra, have extra contact with the parents, spend more time, spend more time. I would like to express that this area is very weak, very very weak. In other words, if they(MoNE) cannot adjust the criteria in this area, and in teacher selection are regarding more transparently and appropriately, the ministry and schools will have many problems in the long run. In other words, I see these two areas as very important for project schools, so this may negatively affect the future of project schools. Of course, if the ministry has different plans about the project schools in the future, if it is considering removing it, that is a different thing. Of course, they can stay that way, but they cannot be maintained this way for long, cannot sustainable. So, these need to be fixed.

[[00.14.52]] **R::** Sir, now let's go back to the selection of teachers. You said that you welcome the transfer of authority to school leaders at this point. Do you think that other authorities should be transferred to schools and school leaders in different fields like this one? Are there other things?

[[00.15.57]] **PSL2::** That is said to be an imbalance between authority and responsibility. Yes I understood. I mean, frankly, I think we have the authority to manage a school well, but if there is authority, of course, there is also responsibility. These two come together, you are responsible for everything from the top to the bottom of the school, you are responsible for everything related to the school. However, sometimes you have to ask the district or the ministry to interfere with these, sometimes we cannot directly intervene in school-related things. In other words, we cannot intervene practically everything in a field instantly. In other words, it is possible to switch from a central understanding to a more local decentralized understanding in this regard. For example, we experienced this in these improvement courses this week. Classes were opened for these courses, but we could not appoint teachers, we do not have the authority to do so. Why is that? Because we cannot intervene in the system, I will find teachers, I will find any other teacher, but I could assign them from my current teachers, but since the teachers we found or the teacher in our own school did not apply as I want to open a course in the course module, we cannot open a course on them now and we cannot assign them to the courses. This is an example and it is just ridiculous, this authority should not be blocked like this, we should be given authority. In other words, when the teacher does not make a choice such as I want to open a course in the system, I want to work in a school from outside, I cannot appoint them on time because he did not click that bottom. The system here is not in our hands. For example, this kind of thing is nonsense. That's why some of the biology and chemistry courses were empty this week, for example. So something like this could happen? I mean, can there be such an understanding, is there such a ridiculous, centralized approach at this point? This isn't sustainable like this. The above people don't seem to have confidence/trust in the ones below? I think there is a trust issue here. That's why these things happen, there is a trust issue. No one trusts each other, teachers do not trust leaders, authorities do not trust schools, leaders do not trust teachers, etc. This can be called as a trust crisis. I don't know if they that they can't do it or they see the administrators as incompetent, I don't understand, and it is not possible to understand this, but this is not sustainable like this. We need to be delegated authority here, we have the ability to offer an effective solution to the incidents practically immediately, when we will have the authority, we want to appoint that teacher at that moment and work as a teacher. We want to assign it, but we can't. Why? We want to assign them, but we can't. Why, should we have 10 hours of chemistry lesson empty through our system, is such a ridiculous thing possible, if I can support it with other teachers in a different way, if I can find my way today, I should be able to do so. I have the opportunities but the system should not block it. I

can do this if I have the authority, so that system, that module should not be a wall in front of me. This is just an example.

[[00.17.00]] **R::** In other words, sir, can we think of this example as an example that represents the general issues. So, you think that schools should be authorized for these kinds of things?

[[00.17.19]] **PSL2::** Actually, if we are the leaders or administrators of these schools, these should be given. Now we see it in the international literature in the new system, we call it agility. That is, we need to make some quick and early decisions in order to be able to intervene in the events immediately, find more effective solutions, and show that agility.

[[00.17.48]] **R::** Sir, the system is much more centralized, that is, it is gathered in one place. But for example, in different countries, everything such as budget, choosing teachers is also the authority and responsibility of schools. These are given to school leaders and school administrations. From teacher salaries to money to be spent on schools at work. Do you think that our schools and school leaders or our system are ready for such transitions, even if it is not so radical in the transition to such a process tomorrow in the future?

[[00.18.08]] **PSL2::** The legal infrastructure, foundations need to be well established and individuals need to be well educated in this respect. In other words, if there are well-educated people, it can be possible if the control mechanism and legal infrastructure are good. In other words, when these are provided and these powers are distributed like this, things will definitely work much better than the current system. Things would certainly work much better than the current system but there are risks with that much freedom and without a proper inspection and accountability in the system. ...and qualified professionals are needed. A good control system that audits the use of power should be in place. The abuse of this power also needs to be prevented. I can use it well in my own school, but another school, if there is no control, can use it very differently, very badly. In other words, we can think of it as a private school logic, what happens in a private school, the owner only takes the decisions responsible for the school much faster, so much more agile. So, the decisions for the school could be much faster, much more responsive. For example, we should not write to the MoNE and wait three months for an answer. They could make decisions and intervene right away. Do not waste time, because you cannot bring back time. The intervention you make later may not make any sense. Then we can make a decision and intervene, so don't waste time, because you can't turn back time. Your intervention afterward may not make sense. However, I am a person who favors that intentions should be observed within the state structure. That is why we have some national and cultural sensitivities and values. These also need to be observed, so it needs to be authorized, but at the same time, there needs to be a good control system that we will give the authority, but we will also supervise.

[[00.18.50]] **R::** You say that it should be authorized with a strong accountability?

[[00.18.53]] **PSL2::** The abuse of this authority/power should also be prevented. I can use it well in my own school in [REDACTED], but a man can use it very differently in another school, in another place, very badly, if there is no inspection or measures.

[[00.19.05]] **R::** Sir, did being a Project School change anything in terms of curriculum and budget management and financial management?

[[00.19.10]] **PSL2::** No, there has been no change, that legislation is currently the same. It continues in the same way as in the past, as the system in other schools is, the same applies to us as to the legislation.

[[00.19.17]] **R::** Well, Sir, do you think that being a Project School has brought about a change in the awareness, sense of accountability and responsibility in you, your teachers or your school?

[[00.19.30]] **PSL2::** Actually, I can say that the general picture in schools that are not Project Schools makes the teachers here(in PSs) feel better. There's a pullback going back there for me. Maybe the local children were more comfortable, but there is a retreat in terms of academic goals. You see this too, maybe. People don't say as much but all kids want to go to Project Schools or Anatolian High Schools. Vocational high schools have failed for two years to accept pupils; 3-4 years in it will get even worse. Hundreds, maybe thousands of vocational schools are not going to be able to find applicants, because they're coming to an end. ...There is a lot more investment in vocational schools... but there are no students, the students do not want to go ... There is a possibility of wasting a lot of many resources ... We need to identify this problem, hiding it does not help anyone, otherwise there will be no solution.

[[00.20.19]] **R::** Didn't those recent changes have an effect on that?

[[00.20.23]] **PSL2::** No, It didn't, it didn't happen this year either. For example, our neighboring Vocational High School has one or two classrooms, MoNE is doing some work to support this, but it has no positive effect at the moment. Schools for 1500-2000 people capacity. If it continues like this, after 3-4 years, it falls to 100-200 people. In fact, the investment made in vocational high schools is much more than in Anatolian high schools or others. Since there is a workshop system in its structure, there is a lot of investment in the tools and machinery bought there, but there are no students, the students do not want to go. In other words, we can say that there is a possibility that all these resources may be wasted, so I follow this, unfortunately, no one mentions it. This is a problem, it must be stated, a solution must be sought. Actually, three monkeys are playing like this in the province, not the district, and I

think that a very healthy report has not been sent to the MoNE at this point. I think that the ministry is not very well informed about this issue. We are losing Vocational High School education right now, we need to see this, we need to identify this problem, there is no benefit to anyone to hide it, otherwise, there will be no solution to the problem. To be honest, if nothing is done now, it will reach a point where it can no longer be compensated after 5-10 years. In fact, it is also not really understandable why the students want to go to Anatolian High Schools only. At the moment, there are classes of 45-50 people. There is a problem with the crowd here. There are no students elsewhere. There are very nice vocational schools. There are very nice buildings. Why doesn't the student want to go there? Why?

[[00.21.44]] **R::** There is a logic brought by some liberal policies at this point, maybe you have something to say? So do you support this marketing logic? In short, the state should leave a little more freedom, increase the diversity of schools and give the parents the right to choose, without making a plan, without forcing, whichever schools are most preferred, the number of schools should be increased, whichever schools are successful, their capacity should be increased, those who fail should be eliminated automatically, that is, such a market logic. do you see fit, what do you think?

[[00.22.11]] **PSL2::** So at this point, students always want to go to Anatolian High School, or let's say Science High School. Going to Anatolian High School, whether with or without an exam, in such a case, all of the schools will be Anatolian-Science High Schools. For example, a parent came to me today, he is trying to get his student from Vocational High School to Anatolian High School. We tried to guide him, I tried to explain the situation. I don't think it's good.

[[00.22.30]] **R::** Since your opinion will be sought after 4 years, and you will be the determinant at the point of whether or not to continue working with the teacher, has being a project school brought an increase in the sense of responsibility and working efficiency of the teachers?

[[00.22.43]] **PSL2::** Actually, in this matter, we have teachers who have made great progress at this point, some of them have made a positive change, but I think that the fact that this process has been delayed for our school by 4 years has caused a delay in achieving this efficiency. Because despite everything, there are some teachers that we have not been able to make progress with, so we will not be able to work with some of them. If this authority is given, we will have to part ways with some teachers, we won't continue to work with some, and I think it is necessary and should be. We call it improvement now, we do not distinguish anyone as good or bad, but everyone definitely has strengths, but if they cannot adapt to the school paradigm and the working environment of the school, if they cannot keep up with the conditions of this school, they also need to change or they need to improve themselves, but there are also those who are inadequate, unfortunately. We hold

their hands, we try to make things happen, we try to raise them, but with some, this way is not visible and not possible, so there is no other way.

[[00.23.20]] **R::** Sir, what do you think is the starting point of project schools? What would you say if I asked where these project schools came from? And what do you think are the aims of this policy?

[[00.23.31]] **PSL2::** As far as I understood, there were regional differences in the students' attempts to schools. In other words, children might have to go to schools far away from the places where they live, or, according to the previous high school entrance examination system. Our Ministry wanted to ensure that every child should study in their own region, but while doing this, they wanted to keep some schools in this way, that is, the schools in the one percent and ten percent section as successful, so it wanted some successful students of this type to continue with a different logic in different conjuncture. I think the ministry said let's not join them all together, let it stay like this in a certain part, I guess. So they wanted to keep these schools in order to provide a good education at least for a particular group of students with their peers at the same level. However, nobody is aware of the MoNE's long-term views and plans about the PSs. In the future, we just do not know what will happen, we will just see. At the government level, the goals and long-term plans are just not established, not clear. Even we, as the principals of these schools, are not sure. I'm not sure what is the government's future plan for the Project Schools policy. ... I haven't heard strong support from the new secretary of education since now, so the political direction can change all of a sudden.

[[00.24.22]] **R::** Actually, my next question is about it, how do you see it in the long term?

[[00.24.31]] **PSL2::**
We do not know what will happen in the future, what is considered in the long-term perspective. There is a phrase that we will reduce the number of these, maybe you have heard. I do not know. Personally, I am in favor of such schools, I think they should continue. I personally think that they should be backed, I support it, I strongly support it. Because the work we can do here is not possible to be done in every school. It is thought that it should remain this way in some schools, and also I believe that it will not be possible to carry out the projects that we can do here in other schools due to a large number of students or the extreme difference between the student levels. I believe that some opportunities have been created to encourage our schools to move forward... to be more forward-looking and innovative... and new projects are expected and supported. That's why this is a process that I support. I personally see these kinds of schools as very important. And, I also think there should be some extra support for them, for the future of the country, for future generations. Of course, I have to say this, let me tell you that, things seem to be going a little more black and white extremes right now. In other words, the gap

between schools seems to be increasing. The difference seems to be increasing between schools that acquire students with exams and schools without exams, between Project Schools and non-project schools. I also think that such schools prepare students much better, the project schools. In other words, the difference between students seems to be increasing, so in terms of competition. Because the students who come here are ready to learn, the students who come here more ready, and the teachers who work here work more diligently and do better jobs. Therefore, it increases the huge gap between students. In other words, because of this more student quality, we have the chance to develop the school culture that lives and works efficiently. But of course, this does not happen for other schools, unfortunately, it creates a negative situation for them.

[[00.25.31]] **R::** Sir, I would like to return to this Delegation of Authority issue again. Do you have any other suggestions at this point? I mean, do you think it would be nice if some other authorities were given to you as school leaders? Are there things you would suggest?

[[00.25.40]] **PSL2::** Yes, I can say something about it. This teacher selection opportunity was delayed by 4 years for some schools like us. I think this has led some to just have Project School on the title. This point is very important. I want it to be implemented as soon as possible so that this type of thing can happen. I care very much about that authority, so I would like that authority to be given to schools and administrators. If you, as the Project School, set goals in front of us, you set goals for people, so you need to open doors, give the authority and provide opportunities to reach these goals. So you have to take a chance. I mean, what if we can't achieve those powers, what is expected of us, with this staff? If they are expected, responsibilities need to be transferred to us in powers. This has been a great advantage for newly opened schools and schools converted without teachers.

[[00.26.05]] **R::** So you say it's a big advantage for newly opened project schools.

[[00.26.10]] **PSL2::** Definitely, for example, we have [REDACTED], so since it is a newly opened school, its leader/ principal chose the teaching staff completely. This was the perfect thing for them. For example, let me give an example from another school. While last year no one wanted to attend courses in that school, This year, 104 of 108 students decided to take it, just because of the new teaching staff. That's why students want it because now there are teachers who value education in those training support courses. Why do they want to continue? Because the team was formed at the school level. If there is a good team, the family and children see it anyway, so they are more diligent and work better in the team. You need to work with the A-team, the best teaching personnel in this type of school because there are very strong students, so very strong teaching staff have to be there who can be good enough for them. For this reason, we wanted to have the chance to choose our employees, it was a very great opportunity so didn't want to miss it. To be honest,

there are very strong students here so there must be very strong staff so that we can prepare and train students. Now, unfortunately, we are having problems with this type of thing, since we can't create that teaching team ourselves. We are trying to find a teacher or some solutions from outside. After some point, students no longer come to courses because there is no efficiency if there is no good teacher, the teacher he studied and took lessons from cannot appeal to him.

[[00.27.07]] **R::** I understand, sir, if I ask more generally from a higher perspective, how did this policy of project schools affect the Turkish education system not only for your own school but also for Turkey in general?

[[00.27.21]] **PSL2::** I think that the logic behind project schools is correct, I think it should continue, I think that it should be supported. There are points where there are deficiencies, but I think that they should be improved and continued, they should be supported, I think that these schools will make positive contributions to our process in order to increase examples and keep good examples alive. I think, we have already seen what they achieved, and we will see more in time. At least to a certain extent, we can ensure that our students receive a better education by competing with their peers and friends of their own caliber. At least some of them. I think that some opportunities are given, in that respect, I support this process. As a 32-year-old education manager, I think it is not right to reduce or eliminate it, I do not think it will be positive if they are finished. The Ministry needs to monitor the process very well, it needs to follow it very well, improvements need to be made. The legal infrastructure related to these schools and the domestic policy needs to be placed on a more solid basis. A policy chain, a legal basis must be established in a way that will make us feel freer, more durable and stronger. Principals/leaders to be appointed as administrators to schools need to be further strengthened. Their personal rights also need to be improved. It was said that academics would be appointed at some point. I don't know could you check, I did a doctorate in history, and I think that this type of academic aspect should also be strengthened. In other words, those who will be appointed as administrators/leaders of this type should be chosen from such better and more competent people. Everyone can be a union member, of course, but I think that pressure elements such as unions and others should be eliminated. Appointments should be based on merit only, that is, a problem I see right now, especially in the assignment of project schools, these things come to the fore as pressure and union issues. Unfortunately, people who are recommended by the union or who have different references are appointed, not those who can actually do this job, this is so wrong. In other words, it means that these purposeful, diligent children in these schools to be wasted, and these students may be injured in their vision. This is a very dangerous thing, so if the leader of the school is visionless, the vision of the students will also be reduced. For this reason, it really needs to be tied to solid criteria. Qualified people need to be appointed, it starts with this, especially the leadership process needs to be strengthened, these leaders need to be selected by setting concrete criteria on a solid infrastructure. Therefore, no matter what,

oppression and lack of merit should not be in these schools. The truly qualified people have to be appointed, and then you give the authority, freedom. First of all, the ministry needs to solve this. Other than that, things should be done to improve the personal rights of the hardworking people working here, perhaps according to a performance logic, to increase their motivation, and in this sense, more authority should be delegated to the school principals in terms of motivating their own team. I can say those about overall.

[[00.30.10]] **R::** We can finish here, sir. Thank you very much sir for your participation.

[[00.30.14]] **PSL2::** I thank you and wish you success in your work. I hope we can use the results in our improvement. I would appreciate it if you would send the permission approval of the Ministry as well.

[[00.30.22]] **R::** Of course, teacher, I will send it immediately again.

[[00.30.14]] **PSL2::** I wish you good luck.

[[00.30.22]] **R::** Many many thanks.

Appendix 10 Project Schools Survey: Freedom and Innovation (Turkish)

Değerli eğitimciler,

Öncelikli olarak, sadece akademik amaçla hazırlanmış olan bu çalışmaya katkıda bulunduğunuz için ve değerli zamanınız için şimdiden çok teşekkür ederiz.

Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı resmi burslu öğrencisi olarak Newcastle üniversitesinde doktora yapıyorum ve kısaca ifade etmek gerekirse çeşitli okul reformları ve etkileri üzerine bir analiz araştırması yapıyorum. Sorulara samimi ve objektif bir şekilde cevap vermeniz araştırma bulgularının selahiyeti için önem arz etmektedir.

Araştırmaya katılanların şahsi bilgileri (isimleri, okulları, bölgeleri vs.) hiçbir koşulda üçüncü şahıslarla paylaşılmayacak ve yayımlanmayacaktır. Kişisel bilgileriniz gizli kalacak ve bu konudaki her türlü sorumluluk üstlenilecektir. Lütfen sorulara mümkün olduğunca gerçekçi ve detaylı cevaplar veriniz.

Çalışmanın gerçekleri yansıtarak ve dünyadan da örnekler sunarak okullarımız için yapılacak değişimlere faydalı bir yol gösterici olması temennisi ile. Destek ve katkılarınız için tekrar çok teşekkür ederiz.

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1. E-mail adresi/ okul adı? (Opsiyonel)
2. Göreviniz?
Okul Müdürü
Müdür Yardımcısı
Diğer
3. Okulunuzun türü nedir? (Eğer Proje Okulu olan bir Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi veya Proje Okulu olan bir Fen Lisesi iseniz Proje Okulu seçeneğini işaretleyiniz).
Proje Okulu
Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi
Fen Lisesi
Diğer
4. Okul türünüz daha spesifik olarak nedir? *
Düz Lise
Anadolu Lisesi
İmamhatip Lisesi
Anadolu İmamhatip Lisesi

Sosyal Bilimler Lisesi

Fen Lisesi

Diğer:

5. Q1. Proje okulu olmanızın nedenleri/gerekçeleri nelerdir? *
6. Q2. Proje okulu olmanızın en temel nedeni nedir? *
7. Q3. Proje okulu olmanızdan dolayı okulunuzda uyguladığınız veya uygulamayı planladığınız değişiklikler nelerdir? (Yetki ve sorumluluk artışından kaynaklı olabilir) *
8. Q4. Proje okulu liderlerinin diğer okullara nazaran yetki ve bağımsızlıklarının daha fazla olduğunu düşünüyor musunuz? *

Evet

Hayır

Kararsızım

Diğer:

9. Q5. Proje okullarının şuanki duruma nazaran daha bağımsız yada özerk olması gerektiğini düşünüyor musunuz? *

Evet

Hayır

Kararsızım

Diğer:

10. Q6. Tüm okulların şuanki duruma nazaran daha bağımsız yada özerk olması gerektiğini düşünüyor musunuz? *

Evet

Hayır

Kararsızım

Diğer:

11. Q7. Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü ile olan ilişkinizi nasıl derecelendirirsiniz? *

1

2

3

4

5

12. Q8. Milli Eğitim Müdürlüğü ile olan ilişkiniz proje okulu olduktan sonra nasıl değişti? *

Çok daha kötüleşti

Kötüleşti

Değişmedi

İyileşti

Çok daha iyileşti

Diğer:

13. Q9. Diğer okullar ile olan ilişkiniz proje okulu olduktan sonra nasıl değişti? *

Çok daha kötüleşti

Kötüleşti

Değişmedi

İyileşti

Çok daha iyileşti

Diğer:

14. Q10. Bölgenizdeki diğer okullar ile birlikte yaptığınız şeler var mı, neler? Onlara herhangi bir desteğiniz veya bu hususta planınız var mı? *

15. Q11. Proje okulu olmanızdan dolayı okulunuzda okumak isteyen öğrenci sayısında bir artış oldu mu? Veya, bu yönde bir beklentiniz var mı? *

Hayır

Evet bir artış oldu

Evet bir artış beklentimiz var

Fikrim yok

Diğer:

16. Q12. Okul dışından (Üniversite, özel sektör vs.) herhangi bir destek alıyor musunuz? Veya almayı planlıyor musunuz? *

Hayır

Evet almayı planlıyoruz

Evet alıyoruz

Fikrim yok

Diğer:

17. Q13. Proje okulu olmak okulunuzun ekonomik durumunu nasıl etkiledi? *

Çok kötüleştirdi

Kötüleştirdi

Etkilemedi

İyileştirdi

Çok iyileştirdi

Diğer:

18. Q14. Proje okulu olmak personel alımı ve müfredat konularını nasıl etkiledi? *
19. Q15. Okulunuzu büyütme planlarınız var mı? *
- Evet
- Hayır
- Bilmiyorum
- Diğer:
20. Q16. Eğer idarecilere verilen yetki ve bağımsızlıklar yeterince kullanılmıyor ise bunların nedenlerinin neler olduğunu düşünürsünüz? *
21. Q17. Diğer okullara da proje okul olmalarını önerir misiniz? *
- Evet
- Hayır
- Emin değilim
- Diğer:
22. Q18. Proje okulu olma sürecinde değiştirmek istediğiniz birşey ne olurdu? *
23. Q19. Proje okulları hakkında değişmesi gerektiğini düşündüğünüz şeyler nelerdir? (Yaygınlaştırılması, güçlendirilmesi, artırılması, azaltılması ya da kaldırılması gereken şeyler olabilir) *
24. Q20. Okul olarak aşağıdaki alanlarda yetki ve bağımsızlığa sahip olmayı ister misiniz? (İstedığınız kadar seçeneği işaretleyebilirsiniz) *
25. Q21. Proje okulu uygulamasının amaç ve sebeplerinin neler olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? *
26. Q22. Proje okulu uygulamasının temel sebebinin ne olduğunu düşünüyorsunuz? *
27. Eklemek, belirtmek istediğiniz herhangi bir şey varsa lütfen iletiniz.
28. Son olarak bu konulardaki tecrübe ve birikimlerinizden daha iyi istifade etmek için sizinle görüşmek isteriz bunun için irtibat kurabileceğimiz bir iletişim adresi (tel, eposta vb.) paylaşabilir misiniz?

Appendix 11 Project Schools Survey: Freedom and Innovation (English)

Dear school leaders,

First of all, I would like to thank you in advance for your valuable time and contribution to this research, which is prepared only for academic purposes.

As a formal scholarship student of the Ministry of National Education, I am doing PhD at Newcastle University. As a matter of fact I am studying on the various school reforms, their implications and impacts on the school systems. Responding to the questions in a sincere and objective manner is important for the competence of research findings.

The personal information (names, schools, regions, etc.) of the participants will not be shared with third parties and will not be published in any circumstance. Your personal information will remain confidential and will bear all responsibility. Please provide as objective and detailed answers as possible.

By reflecting the facts of the study and by providing examples from the world, the study aims to be an informative and useful guide for the future changes to the schools.

Thank you very much again for your support and contributions.

İbrahim Selman BAKTIR

Email: i.s.baktir2@newcastle.ac.uk

1. The school name or email address? (Optional)
2. Your position?
 - Principal
 - Deputy
 - Other:
3. What is the type of your school? (If you are a Science or Social Science Project School please select the Project School option). * Mark only one oval.
 - Project School
 - Social Science School
 - Science School
 - Other:
4. What is the type of your school more specifically? *Mark only one oval.
 - Regular High School
 - Anatolian High School

Imam Hatip High School

Anatolian Imam Hatip High School

Social Science School

Science School

Other:

5. Q1. What are the reasons for your school becoming a 'project school'? *

6. Q2. What is the primary reason for your school becoming an 'project school'? *

7. Q3. Having freedoms, have you implemented or do you plan to implement changes in your school that were earned due to having 'project school status'? *

8. Q4. Having freedoms, as a project school leader do you feel that you have more on your hands than other school leaders? * Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Other:

9. Q5. Having freedoms, do you agree that project school leaders should have more autonomy/freedoms than the current situation? * Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Other:

10. Q6. Having freedoms, do you agree that all school leaders should have more autonomy/freedoms than the current situation? * Mark only one oval.

Yes

No

Not Sure

Other:

11. Q7. How do you rate your relationship with your local National Educational Authority? *
Mark only one oval.

1

2

3

4

5

12. Q8. Has your relationship with the local authority changed since becoming a project school?
*

Mark only one oval.

Greatly worsened

Worsened

About the same

Improved

Greatly improved

Other:

13. Q9. Have your relationships with other schools changed since becoming a project school? *

Mark only one oval.

Greatly worsened

Worsened

About the same

Improved

Greatly improved

Other:

14. Q10. What are you doing/do you plan to do to support other schools in your region? *

15. Q11. Have you experienced or do you anticipate an increase in student applications to your school because of project school status? * Mark only one oval.

No

Yes, academy status has led to an increase in first choice applications

Yes, I anticipate academy status will lead to an increase in first choice applications

Don't know

Other:

16. Q12. Using freedoms, have you taken support from outside of the school (from private sector or fro universities etc.) or do you plan to take? * Mark only one oval.

No

Yes, we plan to make changes

Yes, we have made changes

Don't know

Other:

17. Q13. How has project school status impacted your school's financial outlook? * Mark only one oval.

Greatly worsened

- Worsened
- About the same
- Improved
- Greatly improved
- Other:

18. Q14. What impact has this had on your staffing or curriculum offer? *

19. Q15. Are you planning to expand your school in following years? *Mark only one oval.

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know
- Other:

20. Q16. If the authority and freedoms given to the school leaders are not used sufficiently, what would be the fundamental reasons for this? *

21. Q17. Would you recommend becoming a project school to other schools? *

- Mark only one oval.
- Yes
- No
- Not Sure
- Other:

22. Q18. If you could change one thing about the process of becoming a project school, what would it be? *

23. Q19. Is there anything you would change about being a project school? Are there elements of project school status you would like to be expanded or reinforced? *

24. Q20. Do you want to have authority and independence as a school in the following areas? (You can select as many options as you want) *

25. Q21. What do you think about the goals and reasons of the project school initiative? *

26. Q22. What do you think about the primary reason of the project school initiative? *

27. Is there anything that you would like to add?

28. Finally, we would like to have an interview with you in order to learn from your experiences and opinions about these issues deeper. Can you share a contact information (phone number, email, etc.) in this regard? (Optional)

Appendix 12 Ethical approval documents

Ethics Form Completed for Project: England's Academy Schools and Turkey's Project Schools: Freedom for schools, equity, effectiveness and efficiency

Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University <noreply@limesurvey.org>

Tue 19/12/2017 08:59

To: Ibrahim Baktir (PGR) <I.S.Baktir2@newcastle.ac.uk>

Ref: 2850/2017

Thank you for submitting the ethical approval form for the project 'England's Academy Schools and Turkey's Project Schools: Freedom for schools, equity, effectiveness and efficiency' (Lead Investigator:Ibrahim Selman Baktir). Expected to run from 04/06/2018 to 13/09/2019.

Based on your answers the University Ethics Committee grants its approval for your project to progress. Please be aware that if you make any significant changes to your project then you should complete this form again as further review may be required. If you have any queries please contact res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

Best wishes

Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University Research Office

res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

Ethics Form Completed for Project: England's Academy Schools and Turkey's Project Schools: Freedom for schools, Innovation and Accountability

Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University <noreply@limesurvey.org>

Mon 18/02/2019 13:40

To: Ibrahim Baktir (PGR) <I.S.Baktir2@newcastle.ac.uk>

Ref: 10956/2018

Thank you for submitting the ethical approval form for the project 'England's Academy Schools and Turkey's Project Schools: Freedom for schools, Innovation and Accountability' (Lead Investigator:Ibrahim Selman BAKTIR). Expected to run from 15/04/2019 to 27/09/2019.

Based on your answers the University Ethics Committee grants its approval for your project to progress. Please be aware that if you make any significant changes to your project then you should complete this form again as further review may be required. If you have any queries please contact res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

Best wishes

Policy & Information Team, Newcastle University Research Office

res.policy@ncl.ac.uk

Appendix 13 Correlation Analyses Outcomes of PSs Survey

1- Related to the Research Question 1

Significant differences in leaders' perceptions pertaining to PS policy goals have been identified across the school types based on the analysis of the survey data (Chi-square (8)= 22.40, $p < 0.001$; Effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.299$, $p < 0.001$)). Table 30 illustrates the percentages distributed across the school types. Anatolian, Imam-Hatip, and Science, Social Science are the general types of schools in Turkey. All the schools in this research are all converted to PSs from different school types as explained in the literature review. So, for example, a school can be a PS and an Anatolian school at the same time. Meanings regarding the policy are interpreted in the following paragraph.

Policy goals of PSs	School			Total
	Anatolian High Schools	Imam-Hatip Schools	Science, Social Science and other schools	
Gathering successful students	30%	37%	14%	30%
Quality improvement	19%	32%	17%	25%
Qualified citizens, Nation's future	11%	5%	28%	12%
Systemic problems, changes	24%	17%	10%	18%
Other	16%	8%	31%	16%

Table 30 Policy goals of Project Schools as distributed over school types

The most significant finding seen in the table above is that Science, Social Science and other leaders' perceptions differ from the Anatolian and Imam-Hatip schools. While only 14% of Science, Social Science leaders suggest that the aim is gathering successful students together and examining them, more than 30% of Imam-Hatip and Anatolian school leaders indicate the same goal. This point of view can be evaluated as relatively understandable because it is acknowledged that the science schools are constantly the ones which are chosen by the most

successful students in the country even before the PSs. Conversely, 28% of Science, Social Science and other school leaders claim that the policy goals are much bigger, for instance developing competent people and securing the nation's future, while only 5% of Imam-Hatip and 11% of the Anatolian leaders refer to this goal. A reasonably high proportion of Science, Social Science and other school leaders mention the other goals which are 'innovation', 'autonomy' and 'for improvement of Imam-Hatip schools as primary goals (31%)'. This demonstrates a correlation with the argument put forward by the leaders of the Imam-Hatip schools claiming the primary policy goal was the improvement of their schools in terms of quality, 32%. This is a much higher ratio than other schools. Lastly, 24% of the Anatolian High school leaders perceive the policy to be a solution to the systemic problems, which is significantly more than the other schools.

2- Related to the Research Question 2

When the survey data were subjected to quantitative analysis, it was determined that there are several significant differences in the leaders' perceptions regarding the reasons for their conversion to a Project School based on the different school types. It was evaluated that these differences are also important outcomes not only for this research but also for future investigations. Therefore, these are presented below with distributed percentages across the school types (see Table 31) and interpretations following.

Main reasons for becoming PSs	School			Total
	Anatolian High Schools	Imam-Hatip Schools	Science, Social Science and other schools	
Success	65%	25%	38%	40%
To improve	0	32%	14%	18.4%
MoNE Decision	22%	2%	14%	10.4%
Facility	5%	17%	7%	11.2%
Better students	5%	10%	7%	8%
School type	0	5%	17%	6.4%
Other	3%	8%	3%	5.6%

Table 31: Reasons of becoming Project Schools as distributed over school types

Based on the analyses of the survey data, significant differences were discovered concerning school types in leaders' perceptions regarding the reasons for becoming PSs (Chi-square (8)=44.79, $p<0.001$; Effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.423$, $p<0.001$)). Table 31 above illustrates the distributed percentages of reasons over school types. As seen in the table, 'success' factor is the reason mentioned the most for Anatolian High Schools and Science, Social Science and other schools with 65% and 38% respectively.

In the interviews, leaders simply explain this factor with the argument that they are already remarkably successful and that they are amongst the top schools in the country, which is why the MoNE has chosen them as PSs. The results of the 'MoNE decision' factor supports this argument too. Hence, 22% of Anatolian High and 14% of Science, Social Science and other schools, which are more than the total average (10.4%), argue that principally, it was the MoNE that decided to convert them and that is the main reason. Yet again, in the interviews, they claim that their successes and reputations were behind these decisions. There is a limited number of science schools in Turkey, for instance one in each city and they are commonly known as the top schools in Turkey.

3- Related to the Research Question 3

It appears that there are significant differences based on the PS types concerning these perspectives (Chi-square (8)=25.82, $p<0.001$; Effect size (Cramer's $V =0.321$, $p<0.001$)). Table 32 below shows the percentages distributed according to PS types, whilst meanings are also interpreted in the following paragraph.

Changes implemented or plan to implement.	School			Total
	Anatolian High Schools	Imam-Hatip Schools	Science, Social Science and other schools	
Academic improvement	30%	25%	17%	25%
Projects	19%	36%	14%	26%

Teaching staff change	8%	25%	45%	25%
Not very much, not allowed	35%	7%	14%	17%
Other	8%	7%	10%	8%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 32: Changes implemented or plans to implement in PSs as distributed over school types

As Table 32 illustrates, 35% of Anatolian high school leaders argue that they do not make significant changes because they are not allowed. However, 30% of them indicate that they focus on academic improvements and the changes in this respect. The percentages pertaining to these factors are higher for Anatolian high schools than any other PS type. It appears that the projects are the principal focus of the Imam Hatip schools given that 36% imply this. Finally, regarding implementing changes for their teaching staff, Science, Social Science and other schools attained 45%.

However, results show differences in PS types. Based on the analyses, significant differences are observed in this respect over the school types (Chi-square (8)=16.102, $p < 0.001$; Effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.254$, $p < 0.001$)). These are presented below with distributed percentages in Table 33.

Do you think that PS leaders have more authority and freedom than other school leaders?				
Increase in freedom	School			Total
	Anatolian High Schools	Imam Hatip Schools	Science, Social Science and other schools	
Yes	35%	54%	17%	40%
No	62%	34%	72%	51%
Not sure	3%	12%	10%	9%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 33: Freedom changes in PSs as distributed over school types

As seen in Table 34, the perceptions of Imam Hatip school leaders with respect to the increase in freedom clearly separate from other types. On the one hand, even though 34% of Imam-Hatip schools believe that PSs do not have more authority and freedom than other schools, more than half of them (54%) argue that yes, as PSs they have more authority and freedom than other schools. The majority of the Anatolian and Science, Social Science and other schools' leaders believe that they do not have more authority and freedom than other schools as PSs. Additionally, 62% of Anatolian and 72% of Science, Social Science and other schools answer no.

In addition, based on the analyses, significant differences among leaders from different PS types have emerged in this respect (Chi-square (8)=28.94, $p < 0.001$; Effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.340$, $p < 0.001$)). The distributed percentages based on the school types are presented below in Table 34 in this regard and interpretations are presented in the following paragraph.

Impact on staff recruitment	School			Total
	Anatolian High Schools	Imam-Hatip Schools	Science, Social Science and other schools	
Negative	5%	27%	21%	19%
Same	57%	8%	38%	30%
Positive	38%	63%	41%	50%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 34: Effects of the teacher recruitment changes as distributed over school types

While the positive effect is mostly rated excellent by all the other PS types, the majority of Anatolian High schools (57%) argued that there was no real change in this regard, though 38% say that the effects are positive. Despite the fact 41% of Science, Social Science and other schools indicate the positive effects, 38% argue that there was no real effect, which is similar to 57% of Anatolian high school leaders. Lastly, while more than 20% of Imam-Hatip and

Science, Social Science and other schools see the policy's effects on staffing as negative, only 5% of Anatolian high school leaders see the effects as negative.

In addition, no statistical difference has been identified in the leaders' answers regarding the relationships with the NEA in relation to different PS types (Scheffe Test). The second part of Table 34 illustrates the answers regarding relationship changes with other schools. Somewhat similar outcomes with the NEAs are seen in this respect. While around 30% of the leaders indicate that their relationships have become more positive, 60% argue that they have remained the same. However, significant differences in the answers given regarding the relationship changes with other schools as regards the school types have been identified based on the statistical analysis (Chi-square (8)=16.044, $p < 0.001$; Effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.253$, $p < 0.001$)).

The relationship with other schools	School			Total
	Anatolian High Schools	Imam Hatip Schools	Science, Social Science and other schools	
Worsened	5%	12%	7%	9%
About the same	81%	46%	66%	61%
Improved	14%	41%	28%	29%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 35: Effects on the relationships with other schools as distributed over school types

Table 35 above illustrates the distributed percentages with regard to school types regarding the leaders' answers about relationship changes with other schools. As indicated previously, most school leaders feel that PS status did not affect their relationships with other schools. Nonetheless, this ratio is very higher especially for Anatolian High and Science and Social Science schools with 81% and 66% respectively in contrast to the Imam Hatip schools. However, 41% of Imam Hatip leaders and 28% of Science, Social Science and other school leaders believe that their relationships with other schools improved after becoming PSs. Only

a very limited number of leaders believe that their relationships with other schools have worsened. The highest ratio for it is 12% which belongs to the Imam Hatip leaders.

4- Related to the Research Question 4

As mentioned earlier, significant differences in reasons for not using the freedoms as regards the school types are seen based on the analysis of this data (Chi-square (8)=18.746, $p < 0.001$; Effect size (Cramer's $V = 0.278$, $p < 0.001$)).

Table 36 below shows the distributed percentages of school types in this respect and are interpreted in the following paragraph.

Reasons of not using the freedoms	School			Total
	Anatolian High Schools	Imam-Hatip Schools	Science, Social Science and other schools	
Lack of Leadership	42%	25%	11%	26%
Lack of Autonomy and power	28%	14%	25%	21%
NEA (Local Authority), Political pressure	6%	18%	14%	15%
Regulations, Bureaucracy	8%	23%	29%	18%
They are used!	17%	12%	14%	14%
Other	0	9%	7%	6%

Table 36: Reasons for not using the freedoms given as distributed over school types

As seen in Table 36, the Anatolian High Schools are especially differentiating from the other two types in this respect. While more than 20% of Imam-Hatip and Science, Social Science, and other schools argue that the regulations and bureaucracy are the main reasons behind leaders' attitudes for not using the freedoms, only 8% of Anatolian High school leaders agree with this. However, 42% of Anatolian High school leaders claim that the lack of leadership and leadership ability of school leaders is the key reason behind this. However, considerably

fewer Imam-Hatip and Science, Social Science and other schools' leaders mention that as the reason.

