

A stylized illustration at the top of the cover features a dark blue bridge with three vertical supports spanning a body of water represented by a large blue textured shape. In the background, there are rolling hills or mountains in shades of yellow, purple, and red, with a yellow sun partially visible behind the bridge.

Bridging Worlds

Developing Inclusive
Leadership for Interprofessional
Collaboration in Child Centres

Rachel Verheijen-Tiemstra

Bridging Worlds:

Developing Inclusive Leadership for
Interprofessional Collaboration in Child Centres

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Bridging Worlds: Developing Inclusive Leadership for Interprofessional Collaboration in Child Centres

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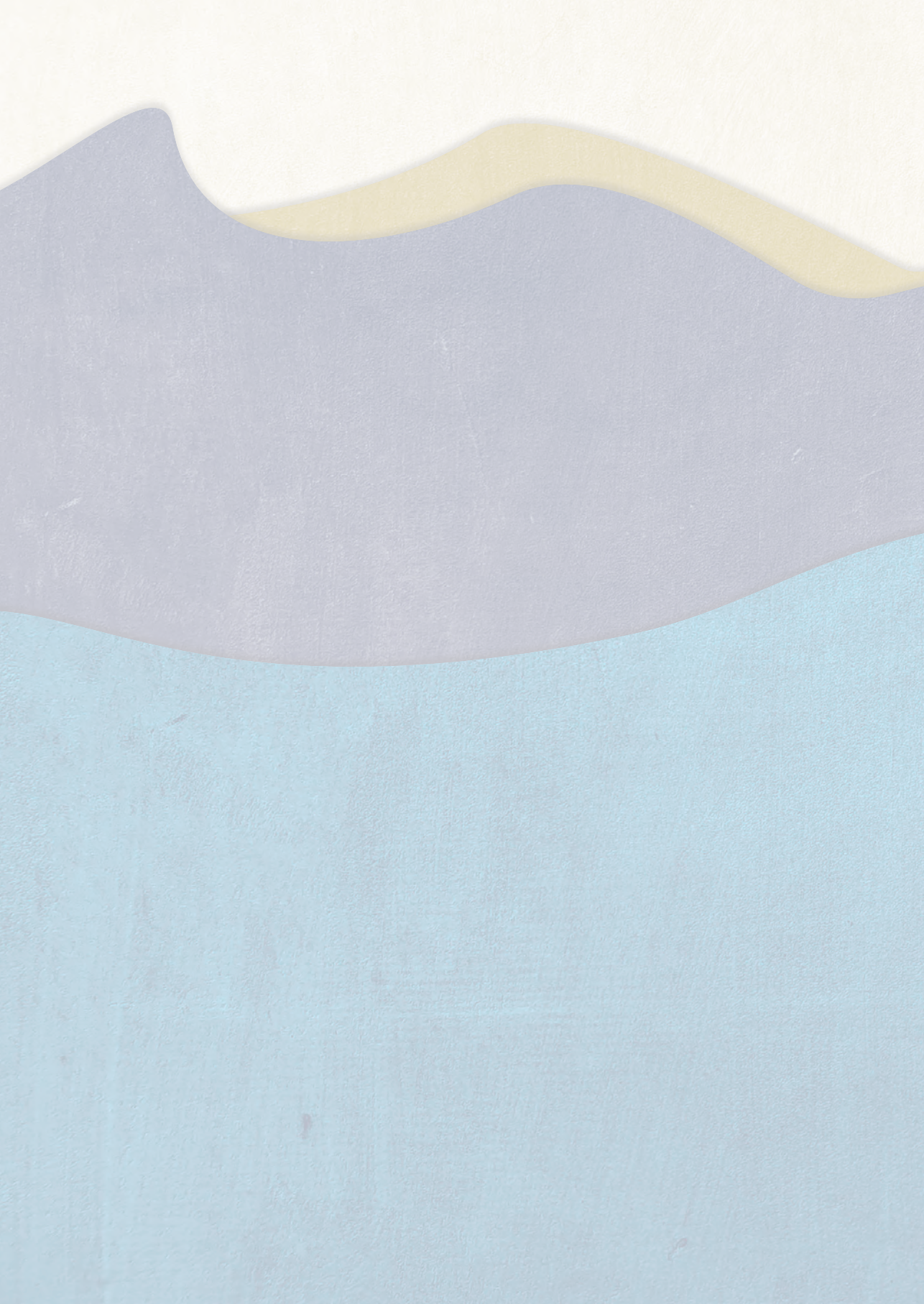
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CHAPTER
1

General Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Rayan is a three-year-old boy whose parents were originally from Syria. His mother, who is the heart of the family, manages household chores and looks after the children. Respect, politeness, and obedience are important in her parenting style. Earlier, the health visitor suggested that Rayan should attend four half-days per week of early childhood education and care (ECEC) at preschool, funded by the local council. Initially, his mother felt unsure because she noticed huge differences between how she was raising Rayan and the Dutch approach. Childcare worker Brenda noticed that Rayan is not speaking as much as expected for his age and sometimes struggles to understand what is being said. This leads to frustration, and he sometimes acts out by withdrawing or having “little accidents”. Brenda would like to team up with professionals who have different types of expertise, knowing that different perspectives would really benefit Rayan. She also believes that exposure to Dutch-speaking children could benefit Rayan, but the segregation between day care attendees and children like Rayan posed a challenge. While day care seems tailored for working parents’ children, children like Rayan are in a different group, often coming from backgrounds where there is not much chance for language-rich experiences. Soon, Rayan will turn 4. The child centre considers a warm transition from pre-school to school very important, but logistic challenges, including conflicting schedules and heavy workloads in education and childcare, make this difficult to achieve. There are more changes at the age of 4. The child centre’s childcare provider offers out-of-school care for children aged 4-12 years, providing for working parents. Additionally, from an equal opportunities standpoint, another organisation, supported by government funding, provides limited-hour free after-school activities within the child centre. These activities are similar to those offered by the out-of-school childcare provider...

Lisa is 5 years old and she is in grade 1 of primary school. After being on the waiting list for a while, she now attends out-of-school care (OSC) on Mondays and Thursdays. The OSC is located within the child centre. Her teachers are Miss Sandra on Mondays and Tuesdays, and Miss Janet on Thursdays and Fridays. On Wednesdays, she alternates between Miss Sandra and Miss Janet. At the OSC, Gwen is the regular staff member, along with an intern or relief staff. Gwen is addressed by her name, without the title “Miss”. Maybe, Lisa thinks, because she is not a real teacher? But Lisa has more questions. She wonders why there were two Santas at the child centre, one for the toddlers and one at school, and, more importantly: which one was the real Santa? She also wonders why she is not allowed to play on the climbing frame during OSC, when it is considered

too dangerous by legislation, while it is permitted during school hours. Lisa's parents have their own questions as well. When Lisa was absent due to the flu, they had to make separate calls to report her absence to the school and OSC, and when Lisa had to complete her course of medication, her parents had to make various arrangements with the child centre regarding administration of medication. Lisa's parents observed a lack of communication between the school and childcare staff. Due to having different systems, the school forgot to involve a speech therapist, despite the childcare provider's recommendation. In addition, there is minimal information exchange when incidents occur during school hours, leaving the childcare staff uninformed, and vice versa. Lisa's parents sometimes wonder what truly indicates that Lisa attends a child centre. Although child centres are often highlighted for their benefits, such as offering a seamless and integrated approach to education, care, and development, they seem to face vast challenges in practice.

The examples above illustrate the challenges of implementing interprofessional collaboration (IPC) between education and childcare in practice, despite the aspirations of policymakers, politicians, and professionals involved in achieving it as a way to increase opportunity equity for children (Dekker et al., 2016; Taskforce samenwerking onderwijs en kinderopvang, 2017; VVD et al., 2021). In this study, *interprofessional collaboration* (IPC) is defined as “the process in which organisations interact in sharing information, sources, activities and expertise, aimed at achieving common goals” (Bryson et al., 2015; Page et al., 2015; Thomson & Perry, 2006; Willumsen, 2006).

Lisa and Rayan are fictional characters taken from the vignettes used in the initial study described in Chapter 2, and Lisa also made an appearance during the professional development programme described in Chapters 5 and 6 of this dissertation. The examples outline the complexity of the problem, including multiple sectors, different legislation, and the divergent goals of education and childcare within child centres. A single perspective may not adequately capture the intricate dynamics at play. Despite its importance, little research has been conducted on IPC in the context of child centre development. The perspective of leadership within this context is highly relevant, as it is considered the key contributor driving organisational change and improvement (Harris, 2020). Thus, this dissertation aims to better understand how to effectively foster IPC for enhanced child centre development and how inclusive leadership can contribute to this. The relevance of this thesis is enhanced by the complexity of the context, which involves collaboration between two entities that differ significantly from each other.

This characterisation situates the present dissertation as an interdisciplinary work, combining insights from various fields and perspectives, including integrated care, educational science, human resource management, leadership, and human research development, within the specific context of primary education and childcare. This interdisciplinary approach proved indispensable in acquiring more complete comprehension of the complex context within which actors, encompassing both (school and childcare) leaders and employees, operate. In addition, it aided in the identification of factors that either foster or impede interprofessional collaboration.

1.2 Background of the Study and Context

When looking at the Dutch context, two elements are important in relation to this study. The first is how education and care for children under the age of 12 is organised, followed by how care and work are combined in the Netherlands. These elements are explained in order.

Primary Education in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, primary education typically starts at the age of 4, but it is not mandatory until the child turns 5 (Eurydice, 2019). The primary education system consists of eight year-based groups, with the first two being pre-primary. In 2022, regular primary education had 1,370,956 pupils in the Netherlands (Inspectie van het Onderwijs [The Dutch Inspectorate of Education], 2023). Each child starts their education in Grade 1 and typically progresses to the next year level annually until they reach Grade 8. The internal organisation and grouping of pupils in primary schools vary, with most schools organising classes by age. However, some schools adopt mixed-age groups or organise children according to their developmental levels. Primary schools can be either public schools or denominational private schools (e.g., Roman Catholic or Islamic), or may work from a certain pedagogical theory (e.g., Montessori schools). A third group, emerging in 1995, involves community schools (in Dutch: “brede scholen”; literally, broad schools), which have long-term partnerships with childcare providers and local child-welfare authorities, aiming to enhance pupils’ opportunities for development (Doornenbal, 2017). In general, teachers in primary schools hold a bachelor’s degree, which makes them qualified to teach all subjects, but attention in the curriculum to early childhood development is only a very limited part of undergraduate teacher training (Driessen, 2018). Like many other countries, the Netherlands is facing a teacher shortage. In 2022, the Netherlands had

about 110,000 primary education teachers and a shortage of 9,100 teachers (Dienst Uitvoering Onderwijs, 2023).

Primary schools in the Netherlands have the freedom, within government rules, to determine the time allocated to different subjects and the length of the school day, as long as at least 7,520 teaching hours over 8 years are offered. Schools can organise the school day according to their preferences while adhering to the minimum teaching hours set by the government (Rijksoverheid, n. d.).

Primary school children are generally free from school one or two afternoons a week, and at four out of 10 primary schools, it is common to go home for lunch (Mills & Täht, 2010; Plantenga & Remery, 2017; Van Breeschoten, 2019; Van Gennip & Wiersma, 2023; Willemsen & Van Grinsven, 2020). Primary schools must organise between-school-care during lunch breaks if parents request it. Schools can use volunteers for this purpose or contract it out to childcare organisations, except for schools with continuous schedules. In such cases, lunch supervision is mandatory and falls under the school's responsibility during the lunch break (Rijksoverheid, n.d.).

Childcare in the Netherlands

Childcare in the Netherlands is available for children from the age of 6 weeks until they leave primary school. A total of 960,290 children used some form of centre-based childcare in 2022 (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek, 2023). The childcare sector had 117,000 employees in 2022. There was a staff shortage of 6,600 employees in 2022, and depending on cyclical and policy changes, this is expected to increase further in the coming years (Van Gennip, 2022). Various forms of childcare exist, but the main types of formal centre-based childcare are: full day care for children under 4 years old, early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children from 2½ to 4 years old and out-of-school care (including before school care, afterschool care and vacation care) for school-aged children from 4 to 12 years old. In the Netherlands, ECEC holds a distinctive status within childcare services; it is specifically targeted towards toddlers aged 2.5 years who are deemed at risk of educational disadvantage (Das et al., 2023). This targeted approach grants municipalities overarching responsibilities and decision-making power about providing subsidies for children from low-income families. In contrast, day care and OSC are viewed as commercial activities, with allowances available for parents who work or study, based on their income (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). Unlike many other Western and Northern European countries where childcare and ECEC are primarily provided through public facilities, the Netherlands relies solely on private providers (Das et al.,

2023). And despite childcare being advocated as a crucial tool in addressing inequality, research indicates a disparity in its usage, with higher-income families more frequently accessing childcare services than lower-income families—a trend mirrored in the Netherlands (Roeters & Bucx, 2018; Van Lancker, 2018).

Emergence and Growth of Childcare Services in the Netherlands

In the last 20 years, there has been a sharp growth in the use of childcare services due to an increase in women's participation in the labour market. Whereas in 2005, only 345,000 children attended day care or OSC, this number had more than doubled to 905,000 in 2023 (Rijksoverheid, 2023; Van Oploo et al., 2008). However, the Netherlands is also a country with strong cultural norms of mothers working limited hours or staying at home, since they are often still considered to be primarily responsible for the care of their children (Mills & Täht, 2010; Van Breeschoten & Evertsson, 2019; Verhoef et al., 2016). In addition, there are strong cultural norms about how young children should grow up (Raaijmakers, 2013), and a substantial majority of Dutch parents believe that children should not be attending formal childcare more than 2 days per week (Merens et al., 2012; Portegijs et al., 2018). Thus, children in the Netherlands have a rather limited number of hours of formal childcare: 14.1 hours on average per week in 2020 (Rijksoverheid, 2021). An explanation for this can be found in the existing norms, but also in policies of the past decades reflecting these norms.

In contrast to certain other nations during the 1960s and 1970s, where family policies, driven by feminist ideals, were designed to invest in childcare to promote egalitarian opportunities within the labour market for men and women, this approach was not adopted in the Netherlands (Vandenbroeck, 2020). Instead, childcare remained conspicuously absent from the social and political agenda in the Netherlands until the 1990s, and only in 2005 did a privatised and market-centric strategy come into force (Yerkes, 2014). The choice of a market-driven childcare system in the Netherlands, a country with a traditional family background (Van Breeschoten, 2019), can be understood in the context of the prevailing political conditions in the 1990s, during which the system was developed. This approach facilitated the creation of childcare that was provided in response to parental demand, which meant that extensive public provision of childcare was not considered necessary (Yerkes, 2014). However, Noailly et al. (2007) found that the influence of market dynamics resulted in a geographic shift of childcare providing towards regions characterised by higher purchasing power, coinciding with a reduction in childcare availability in less urbanised areas. The

emphasis on profitability and treating childcare more as an employment tool than a pedagogical service could also have consequences for the qualification standards for childcare workers (Yerkes & Javornik, 2018). In the Dutch context, childcare workers must possess qualifications at the professional training level, ISCED level 3. In contrast, Nordic countries with public service-oriented childcare typically require at least a bachelor's degree for childcare staff (Eurydice, 2019).

Collaborative Efforts

Within this context, recent years have witnessed a growing emphasis on collaborative efforts between childcare and primary education, evident in both policy and practical initiatives at the local and national levels. This trend initially took root in the 1990s through the establishment of “community schools” and, for over a decade now, has been furthered by the advent of (integrated) child centres. While community schools and child centres share some similarities, they are not interchangeable terms. A community school traditionally concentrates on providing a comprehensive array of opportunities to children and their parents who face limited prospects, aiming to prevent or address educational disadvantages (Heers et al., 2016). A child centre caters to a broader target group, aiming at a comprehensive offering of school and childcare throughout the day, relieving parents, and offering continuous developmental paths (Van Gennip & Wiersma, 2023). Van Gennip and Wiersma (2023) identified the following bottlenecks that complicate cooperation between schools and childcare providers: cultural differences, different collective labour agreements and working conditions, increased cost of staff loans due to VAT, and different school hours.

1.3 Research Questions and Dissertation Outline

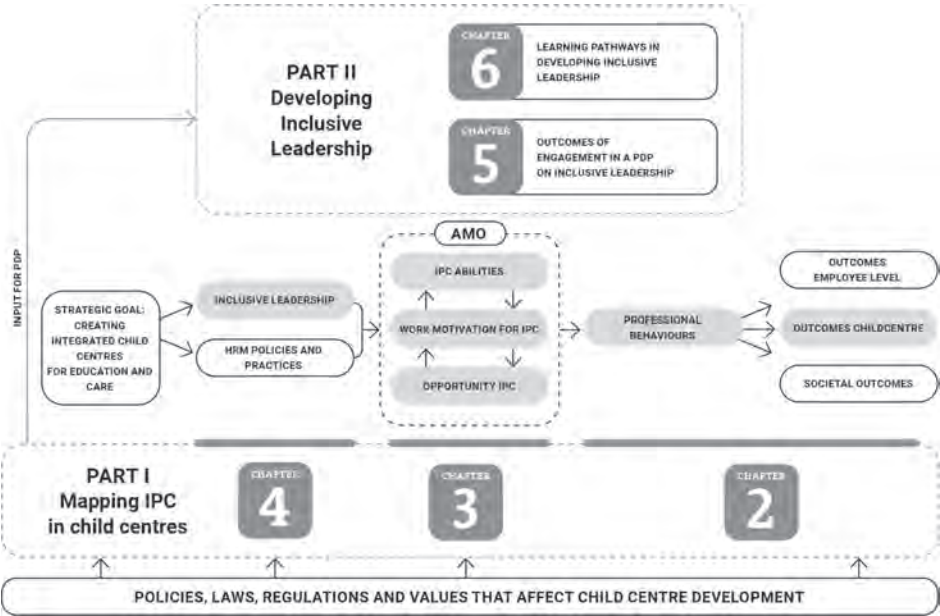
In light of the pressing need for extensive collaboration between the childcare and primary education sectors and acknowledging the key contribution of leadership in driving development processes, this dissertation focuses on the following overarching research question:

How can school and childcare leaders strengthen their leadership to foster interprofessional collaboration in child centres?

To address this research question, it is crucial to first comprehend the context of interprofessional collaboration in child centres. Therefore, Part 1 of this dissertation will

provide an overview of this context. To do so, the research model depicted in Figure 1.1 is used, drawing upon Knies and Leisink’s (2017) human resource management (HRM) value chain as the foundation for this part of the dissertation. This process model posits that HRM plays a crucial role in achieving organisational objectives by fostering the professional behaviour of employees necessary to attain these goals.

FIGURE 1.1
Research Model and Overview of the Studies Covered in this Dissertation (in grey), by Chapter



Although the model starts from the strategic goal on the left, its most coherent interpretation is achieved by then reading it from right to left. The strategic objective of child centre development is to offer a continuous pedagogical path to children; this requires IPC as a professional behaviour. HRM, in this context, must encompass policies and activities that enable teachers and childcare workers to effectively demonstrate such professional behaviour.

This is achieved through the implementation of various human resource (HR) practices by leaders, such as facilitating opportunities to engage in IPC and enhancing IPC abilities among employees. Supporting employees in the desired professional behaviour through leaders’ (inclusive) leadership behaviour is another relevant HR practice. Notably, the model also underscores the critical role of the contextual or

systemic dimension, where macro-level factors such as policies, laws, regulations, and values exert significant influence. The output of Part I has been incorporated in Part II of this dissertation, which focuses on professional development of school and childcare leaders for inclusive leadership.

In summary, to gain insight into how school and childcare leaders deploy and develop their leadership to enhance IPC, a series of five distinct studies were undertaken. These studies are included in full as Chapters Two through Six. These chapters are organised into two empirical parts: Part I, titled “Mapping Interprofessional Collaboration in Child Centres”, comprised of Chapters Two through Four, and Part II, titled “Developing Inclusive Leadership”, comprised of Chapters Five and Six.

In Chapter **Two**, the following research question was formulated:

What is the nature of IPC between childcare and primary education, how is it perceived by staff members and leaders across the two sectors, and what bottlenecks arise from this IPC?

This study shed light on the nature of the IPC between childcare and primary education and into the bottlenecks arising from it. A multiple case study was conducted among 16 child centres to investigate the nature and intensity of IPC. Data were gathered using two data collection methods: a focus group interview with staff members from both sectors and individual interviews with school and childcare leaders. For data analysis, an analytical framework was developed, drawing upon a validated model used in the healthcare setting.

In Chapter **Three**, the following research question was addressed:

To what extent do teachers and childcare workers at child centres perceive themselves to have the abilities, motivation and opportunities (AMO) to engage in IPC and to what extent can barriers to engaging in IPC identified by these professionals be classified using the AMO framework?

The aim of this study was to gain insight into barriers to IPC from an HRM angle, using the ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) framework. The AMO framework has garnered widespread acceptance in the HRM literature as an explanatory tool for understanding the connection between human resources practices and performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023). To this end, quantitative and qualitative data were collected from staff in 16 child centres offering joint preschool, school, and childcare.

In Chapter **Four**, the aim was to answer the following research question:

How well can school and childcare leaders' leadership practices be understood on the basis of the proposed model of inclusive leadership?

In contexts characterised by strong fault lines, such as the context of this dissertation, inclusive leadership has emerged as a promising approach (Chung et al., 2020; Shore & Chung, 2021). However, it is unclear whether school and childcare leaders actively adopt this leadership approach. To address this gap in the literature, thorough insight was sought into the applicability of a recent theoretical model for inclusive leadership (Randel et al., 2018) for identifying the inclusive leadership behaviours demonstrated by school and childcare leaders who are collaborating within child centres. Data were collected through in-depth interviews conducted with 12 school leaders and 12 childcare leaders.

In Chapter **Five**, the design criteria that formed the basis of the professional development programme (PDP) were analysed. This study aimed to answer the following research question:

What were participants' perceptions of how their engagement in a professional development programme contributed to their advancement in inclusive leadership behaviour?

To structure the professional development programme, six design criteria were established, based on the literature on leadership development. Thus, this chapter provides insights into both the implementation of these design criteria and how the participants experienced them within the context of their professional development in ILB. The content of the PDP was grounded in the findings of Chapters 2 through 4. Data collection involved qualitative interviews with the participants and self-evaluation before and after the PDP and observations during the four sessions.

Chapter **Six** explores this PDP in greater depth, aiming to answer the following research question:

How do school leaders and childcare leaders develop their inclusive leadership behaviours in the workplace during a dedicated professional development programme?

This study examined the development of inclusive leadership among school and childcare leaders by attaining an understanding of the combination of learners’ perspectives and behaviours, alongside the learning pathways they have undertaken. The Interconnected Model of Professional Growth (IMPG), as proposed by D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), was used to scrutinise the learning pathways of school leaders, stemming from workplace learning and with a strong focus on reflection-based learning. A longitudinal qualitative research design was used and, in pursuit of triangulation, the study drew on learning logs written by the participants in their solicited diary and reflective interviews that took place after each session.

In Chapter **Seven**, the findings of all chapters are brought together in a comprehensive summary of the entire work, and theoretical and practical implications of this dissertation are discussed.

Table 1.1 lists an overview of the empirical chapters, showing the two parts of this thesis, the chapters covered by each part, the research question answered in each article, the method used, and the status of the article. An overview of related definitions and abbreviations is included in Appendix A.

TABLE 1.1
Overview of the Research Questions and Methods of the Empirical Chapters

Part	Chapter	Research question	Method	Status
1	2	What is the nature of IPC between childcare and primary education, how is it perceived by staff members and leaders across the two sectors, and what bottlenecks arise from this IPC?	28 focus group interviews with staff members and 26 individual interviews with school and childcare leaders in 16 child centres	Published as: Verheijen-Tiemstra, M. R. E., Ros, A. A., & Vermeulen, M. J. M. (2020). Werelden van verschil: Aard en intensiteit van interprofessionele samenwerking tussen basisonderwijs en kinderopvang [Worlds apart: Dimensions and levels of intensity in interprofessional collaboration between primary schools and childcare services]. <i>Pedagogische Studiën</i> , 97(1), 59–75.

Part	Chapter	Research question	Method	Status
1	3	To what extent do teachers and childcare workers at child centres perceive themselves to have the abilities, motivation and opportunities (AMO) to engage in IPC and to what extent can barriers to engaging in IPC identified by these professionals be classified using the AMO framework??	Questionnaires (n=256) and focus group interviews (n=26) among 83 primary school teachers and childcare workers in 16 child centres	Published as: Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M., & Poell, R. F. (2024a). Barriers to collaboration between school teachers and childcare workers: Implications for HRM and school leadership. <i>International Journal of Educational Management</i> , 38(1), 96–114.
	4	How well can school and childcare leaders' leadership practices be understood on the basis of the proposed model of inclusive leadership?	In-depth interviews with 24 school and childcare leaders in 12 child centres	Published as: Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M., & Poell, R. F. (2024b). Fostering collaboration through inclusive leadership: Exploring the behaviour of childcare and school leaders in Dutch child centres. <i>Educational Management Administration & Leadership</i> (ahead-of-print), 1–17.
2	5	What were participants' perceptions of how their engagement in a professional development programme contributed to their advancement in inclusive leadership behaviour?	Observations, semi-structured interviews, and self-evaluations of 17 school and childcare leaders in 8 child centres participating in the PDP	A revised version of this chapter is published as: Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M., & Poell, R.F. (2024c). Strengthening inclusive leadership: Insights from a professional development programme for school and childcare leaders. <i>Professional Development in Education</i> . (ahead-of-print), 1–16.
	6	How do school and childcare leaders develop their ILB in the workplace during a dedicated PDP?	Research-solicited diary and reflective interviews from 17 school and childcare leaders in 8 child centres participating in the PDP	Under revision as: Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M., & Poell, R.F. (2024d). Understanding leaders' learning pathways in inclusive leadership: Integrating learning logs with guided reflection.

1.4 Intended Contribution to Theory and Practice

Several contributions to the literature are intended with this dissertation. Primarily, there is limited scholarly knowledge regarding collaboration between professionals in the primary education sector and related sectors such as childcare (Borg & Drange, 2019; Kahila et al., 2023). This is despite substantial changes in the landscape surrounding child facilities due to societal developments, such as women's growing labour force participation. Collaboration between these two sectors takes various forms in different countries, yet systematic insights into the nature of this IPC are notably scarce (Fukkink & Lalihatu, 2020). Scientific knowledge about IPC is predominantly situated within the integrated care context, and this dissertation investigates the applicability of tools developed in this context, such as Valentijn's Rainbow Model for Integrated Care (Valentijn, 2015), within the context of our study. The second intended contribution pertains to application of existing human resource management (HRM) and human resource development (HRD) research within the context of education and childcare in order to understand opportunities and barriers in IPC. Thirdly, inclusive leadership represents a promising distinctive leadership approach in a professional landscape where collaboration increasingly occurs across disciplines or sectors, such as the present research context (Aboramadan et al., 2022; Ashikali, 2023; Fu et al., 2022; Mitchell et al., 2015; Roberson & Perry, 2021). Inclusive leadership has been studied in public organisations (Ashikali, 2023), healthcare organisations (Fu et al., 2022; Minehart et al., 2020) and diverse organisations in general (Nishii & Rich, 2014). These studies focused on, for instance, professional status differences as found in education and health (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006), especially when there are strong fault lines, leading to "us versus them" contrasts (Mitchell & Boyle, 2020), as is the case in this study. Therefore, this dissertation aims to contribute through empirical research to the rapidly growing body of knowledge on this topic by studying inclusive leadership in an interprofessional context.

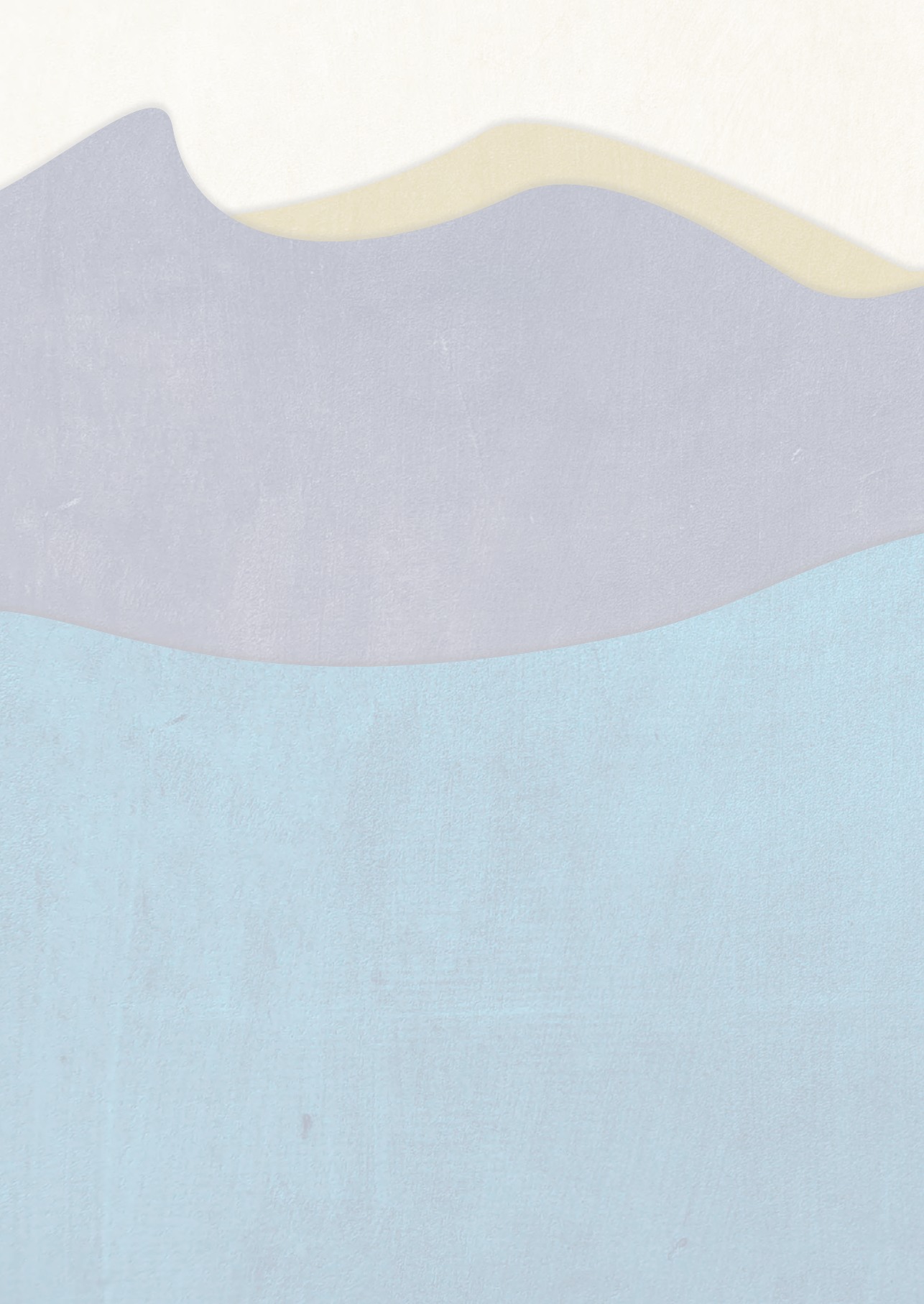
The second part of the dissertation aims to deepen the knowledge in the field of professional development of school and childcare leaders, a research field that has been relatively little studied compared to the professional development of teachers (Daniels et al., 2019; Potter & Chitpin, 2021). The empirical studies presented in this dissertation provide insight regarding the elements of a professional development programme that are perceived as essential by school and childcare leaders in advancing inclusive leadership. Using the Interconnected Model of Professional Growth developed by D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) for assessing teacher professional growth, the

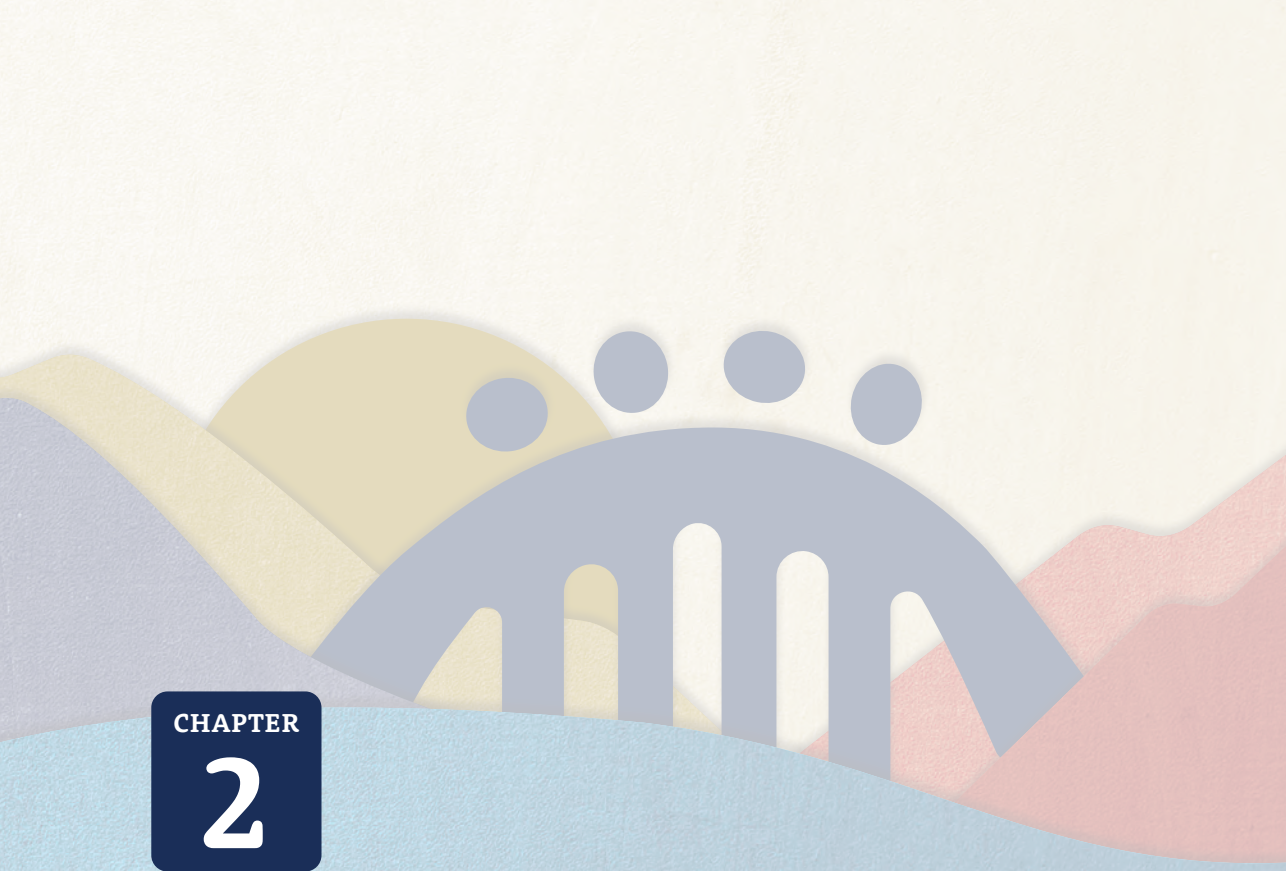
dissertation also sheds light on how professional growth in inclusive leadership of school and childcare leaders unfolds through various learning pathways.

Moreover, this dissertation aims to offer relevant insights for practice: for school boards and childcare boards, and for policy officers at both the national and municipal levels who are engaged in developing policies concerning educational facilities for children. As such, this thesis is related to recent developments on IPC between primary education and childcare as well as the debate on a possible change in the childcare system in the Netherlands. This dissertation also aims to develop theoretically grounded tools to promote IPC and child centre development, exploring the leadership behaviours and beliefs that facilitate IPC and how this leadership can be developed. In addition, leadership educators and HRD professionals can leverage the insights gained regarding ILB development and the design criteria valued by leaders in such professional development programmes.



Mapping Interprofessional Collaboration in Child Centres





CHAPTER

2

Worlds Apart

Dimensions and Levels of Intensity of Interprofessional Collaboration between Primary Schools and Childcare Services

This chapter was published in Dutch as:

Verheijen-Tiemstra, M. R. E., Ros, A. A., & Vermeulen, M. J. M. (2020). Werelden van verschil: Aard en intensiteit van interprofessionele samenwerking tussen basisonderwijs en kinderopvang [Worlds apart: Dimensions and levels of intensity in interprofessional collaboration between primary schools and childcare services]. *Pedagogische Studiën*, 97(1), 59-75.

Abstract

Intensive collaboration between primary schools and childcare services is increasingly deemed necessary to provide children with alignment of pedagogical and learning pathways. However, despite widespread public awareness of this issue, scientific understanding of the phenomenon is still quite limited. Hence, this study aims to gain more insight into the nature of interprofessional collaboration (IPC) between childcare and primary education and the barriers arising from it. A multiple case study was conducted among 16 child centres to investigate the nature and intensity of IPC. Data were gathered using two data collection methods: a focus group interview with staff members and individual interviews with school and childcare leaders in both sectors. For data analysis, an analytical framework was developed, drawing upon a validated model used in health care settings. The findings revealed that IPC is a multidimensional construct: IPC occurs simultaneously with different levels of intensity. Seven of the 12 subdimensions are on the level of cooperation. A low level of IPC intensity was found within the normative dimension. Analysis of the barriers demonstrated significant disparities between the collaborating partners, thereby impeding the intensification of the IPC.

2.1 Introduction

The environment in which children grow up has become more complex over the past decades, partly because of an increase in the number of children combining school and home environments with a form of day care or out-of-school care (hereafter referred to as OSC). In the Netherlands, this number has increased from 345,000 children in 2005 to 824,000 children in 2019 (Rijksoverheid, 2019; Van Oploo et al., 2008). Combining these different environments provides added pedagogical value for children (Doornenbal & Fukkink, 2014). In this respect, intensive and structural collaboration between primary schools and child centres is essential (Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands (SER), 2016; Taskforce samenwerking onderwijs en kinderopvang, 2017), but such collaboration has not yet become commonplace. (Ploeger & Fukkink, 2013). In this context, Doornenbal and Fukkink (2014) spoke of a “wicked problem”. Although initiatives have been developed since the mid-1990s to bring the two areas together (Bakker & Van Oenen, 2007; Studulski & Van der Grinten, 2006; Valkestijn et al., 2010), there appears to be no structural interprofessional collaboration between education and childcare (Doornenbal & Fukkink, 2014; Fukkink & Van Verseveld, 2019; Van der Grinten et al., 2019). In this study, interprofessional collaboration (IPC) is defined as “the process in which organisations interact in sharing information, sources, activities and expertise, aimed at achieving common goals” (Bryson et al., 2015; Page et al., 2015; Thomson & Perry, 2006; Willumsen, 2006). IPC thus applies to both the primary process in which activities are shared interactively and to sharing expertise or sources such as equipment and spaces. In spite of the focus - from policy practice as well as politics - on the issue of IPC between childcare and primary education, scientific knowledge of collaboration between the specified sectors is still highly limited. Moreover, existing models for detailed mapping of IPC between the two sectors have proved inadequate (Van der Grinten et al., 2019). Therefore, the aim of this research is to gain more insight into the nature and intensity of IPC between childcare and primary education and into the barriers arising from it.

2.2 Theoretical Framework

IPC between Education and Child Care in the Dutch Context

Onderwijsraad [Education Council] (2019) observed that the preferred structural and organisational integration between education and day care has been realised

insufficiently. Research by Boogaard and Van Daalen-Kapteijns (2012), for example, showed that there was structured dialogue on the pedagogical policy between primary education and out-of-school care (OSC) at only 3 % of the participating locations. Occasional dialogue on the pedagogical policy between the two sectors took place at just over a quarter of the OSCs, and two-thirds of the OSCs had no contact whatsoever with primary education about pedagogical views (Boogaard & Van Daalen-Kapteijns, 2012). This is undesirable, because a mutual awareness of the pedagogical views is important for a good continuous developmental path (Doornenbal & Duin, 2012; Oostdam et al., 2014).

The continuity between pre-school services and primary education is also relatively unstructured. A case study by Ploeger and Fukkink (2013) showed that IPC between primary education and childcare was perceived as being less effective and primarily occurred at the management level. Managers also tend to have a more positive view of IPC than their staff members. Of a more recent date is the longitudinal research into what are known as PACT-pilot projects – nationwide pioneers in the area of collaboration between day care, education and health care – indicating that encouraging and supporting IPC has, among other things, led to an increase in commitment (Fukkink & Van Verseveld, 2019). According to the authors, a positive attitude towards one another may well be a first step towards effective IPC. In line with this approach, research by Bongers (2018) also pointed to the role of institutional logic – straightforward rules and moral values in organisations – as an impediment to IPC between childcare and primary education. Bongers (2018) stated that childcare and primary education acknowledge different forms of institutional logic and that persistence in their own logic reduces willingness for IPC.

Apart from these studies, we do not know of any other Dutch scientific research on an organisational level into the mechanisms of IPC between professionals in childcare and primary education. However, on a national level, several evaluations have been carried out to outline the collaboration between schools and childcare services, initially by means of what are called “jaarberichten” [annual reports] under the authority of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, followed by two assessments of “Samenwerking in beeld” [Focus on Collaboration] (De Weerd et al., 2014; Kieft et al., 2016; Kruiter et al., 2012; Van der Grinten et al., 2019). Additionally, policy reports have been published in which collaboration between education and day care was examined on a national, regional or local level. In many of these policy reports (De Graaf, 2013; Kruiter et al., 2016; LSBS & Oberon, 2013; Rops & Huyskes, 2014; Stolwijk & Vossen, 2018; Studulski & Kruiter, 2016; Ten Doesschate & Van der Pol, 2013; Vervoort et al.,

2014), IPC was classified according to increasing intensity: back-to-back (also called: stand-alone), face-to-face, hand-in-hand, cheek-to-cheek (also called: all-in-one), sometimes supplemented by a fifth alternative. In the back-to-back alternative, there is no IPC whatsoever, and at the other end of the spectrum, there is one organisation with one team and one management. A comparison between the results of these studies is not always possible, however, as the definitions of the characterisations were quite diverse and in many instances lacked justification. Another restriction is that IPC was considered a unidimensional construct with underlying characteristics, and research by demonstrated that not all child centres can be classified with these characterisations.

The most predominant indicators that managers used to classify the current level of collaboration indicated lower intensity IPC. The majority of school leaders and childcare leaders provided the fact that they are together in the same building and occasionally organise joint activities as a characteristic of this collaboration (Van der Grinten et al., 2019). Working on a smooth transition to Grade 1 (vertical transition) and from school to OSC (horizontal transition) was mentioned by 80% of the respondents. Approximately half of the primary schools and childcare organisations operated on the basis of their own views and goals, but with mutual goal alignment, over a third did not align their views and goals and approximately 15% had stated joint views and goals. It is noteworthy that childcare leaders tended to assess collaboration intensity more than school leaders.

IPC in Health Care

To achieve a better understanding of the IPC construct, we used international research literature on healthcare, a sector in which IPC has been a long-standing research topic. As illustrated in a systematic review of IPC, many models have been developed around a specific context, such as a particular syndrome. (Lyngsø et al., 2014). The rainbow model of integrated care (RMIC) by Valentijn (2015) is an exception to this, according to a review study by Bautista et al. (2016). In their systematic review, Bautista et al. (2016) evaluated 209 models to measure IPC. The authors judged the RMIC to be the most complete and tested model: the validated model offers a coherent understanding and interpretation of the various interactions that may occur within the different dimensions of integrated care.

In accordance with previous research (for an overview, see Kodner, 2009), the RMIC is based on IPC as a multidimensional construct in which, apart from a systemic dimension on the macro-level, five dimensions, areas of possible collaboration, can

be distinguished: clinical, professional, organisational, functional, and normative. Each dimension is then subdivided into various subdimensions. The clinical dimension refers to collaboration aimed at the smooth development of the primary process of patient-focused care. The professional dimension refers to shared service delivery by professionals, and the organisational dimension centres on collaboration on an organisational level. The functional and normative dimensions are two preconditional dimensions needed to achieve intensification of IPC on a clinical, professional, or organisational level (Valentijn et al., 2015; Valentijn et al., 2013). The functional dimension centres on elements of business operations such as ICT or housing, and according to Valentijn (2015), the normative dimension is about “social preconditions” such as shared values and an organisational culture based on mutual respect. With the exception of the clinical dimension, the dimensions used in the RMIC are identifiable with regard to collaboration in child centres, which could make this model adaptable for measuring IPC between the primary education and childcare sectors.

In addition to the substantive IPC dimensions, IPC intensity is also a relevant aspect. There is consensus in the literature that there is a continuum from full segregation through a “middle range” to full integration (Ahgren & Axelsson, 2005; Boon et al., 2004; Gaboury et al., 2010; Keast et al., 2007; Maslin-Prothero & Bennion, 2010; Willumsen, 2008). The characteristic of the intermediate forms between the two extremes is that there is no centralised management structure, as a result of which negotiations about a whole range of subjects have to be conducted constantly (Valentijn, 2015).

There appears to be less consensus about the operationalising the middle range between the two extreme gradations of IPC, although a classification into four or five gradations appears to be sufficiently distinctive and applicable for research purposes (Ahgren & Axelsson, 2005; Keast et al., 2007; Sandfort & Milward, 2008; Woodland & Hutton, 2012). The 3C typology by Keast et al. (2007) clarified that cooperation, coordination, and collaboration are three distinctive concepts that describe this middle range and increase in intensity (McNamara, 2012). In this typology, cooperation is the low-intensity starting point of IPC: this form focuses exclusively on informally sharing basic information, and is frequently small-scale and short-term. There are hardly any risks attached to this noncommittal form of partnership: participating organisations retain their complete autonomy and work from their own goals.

Coordination is an instrumental form of partnership with moderate intensity. In this form, not only exchange of information takes place, but also harmonisation focussed on the realisation of one’s own goals. This form of partnership also involves a larger number of staff members. Organisations still predominantly act in accordance

with their own procedures and practices (Mandell et al., 2017). According to Keast et al. (2007), collaboration is the form of IPC that is characterised by high intensity and aims at achieving new and common goals. Participating organisations are aware that they are interdependent in achieving these goals. This form of partnership requires considerable time investment and a high degree of trust.

2.3 Methods

Research Question

In this study, we aim to gain more insight into the nature of IPC between childcare and primary education as well as the potential barriers that may explain any stagnation. To achieve this, we use the IPC dimensions and intensity levels as applied in healthcare, converted to the sectors of childcare and primary education. In view of the fact that earlier research indicated that there can be differences in perceptions by managers and staff members (Ploeger & Fukkink, 2013) as well as by childcare leaders and in primary education (Van der Grinten et al., 2019), it is essential to examine whether these differences are also apparent in this study. This leads to the following research questions:

1. Within which dimensions – and at what intensity – does interprofessional collaboration occur between childcare and primary education?
2. What differences, if any, exist in perceived interprofessional collaboration between staff members and leaders and between the two sectors?
3. What barriers, if any, arise in the interprofessional collaboration between childcare and primary education?

Data Collection

In order to examine within which dimensions and at what intensity interprofessional collaboration between childcare and primary education can occur, we conducted qualitative research in 16 integrated child centres in developing child centres. In each child centre, the nature and intensity of IPC were examined by means of two data collection methods: a focus group interview with staff members and individual interviews with leaders in the two sectors. To reduce the likelihood of socially desirable answers, instead of questioning respondents directly about the extent of the collaboration, we let them tell us about their behaviour and asked them for specific

examples. The answers were then analysed according to an analytical model based on the RMIC model validated by Valentijn (2015).

Participants and the Procedure

To find suitable research locations, we contacted board members of two childcare organisations from two different regions – one urban region and one region with a rural character – in the province of North-Brabant, as well as their collaborative partners from primary education (one and two school boards, respectively), hereafter Regions A and B, respectively. Participating management boards from both sectors cooperated because they wished to intensify collaboration between childcare and education in their own region and to gain more insight into the current state of affairs. Collaboration with youth care did not apply to these management boards and was therefore not considered in this study. There had already been a form of collaboration at the management level in both regions: in Region A, this partnership was defined in a collaboration agreement in 2017; in Region B, a structural partnership (comparable to the coordination intensity of IPC, see Appendix B) was designated as the lower limit by the school boards, childcare organisations and local authority involved. In selecting the research locations (hereafter: child centres), maximum variety in size and degree of urbanisation was then pursued. In Region A, 11 child centres were invited, all of which participated; in Region B, 10 child centres were invited, five of which participated in the research. Table 2.1 shows the distribution by size and region.

TABLE 2.1
Participating Child Centres Categorised by Size and Region

	Small (< 145 pupils)	Medium (145-300 pupils)	Large (> 300 pupils.)	Total
Region A	4	4	3	11
Region B	1	1	3	5
Total	5	5	6	16

Thus, a total of 16 child centres were selected, in which 54 interviews occurred. These interviews were conducted by the first author. Each interview lasted about an hour. In the smaller child centres, one mixed focus group was organised for education and day care staff members, and in the medium-sized and larger child centres, there were two focus groups: one for education staff members and one for day care staff members. One focus group was cancelled at the request of the research location because of special

circumstances. To compose the focus groups, all leaders were asked to establish a group of approximately three to five staff members who could be regarded as representative of the location with respect to age, experience, and attitude towards creating child centres. Furthermore, in each child centre, in-depth interviews were conducted with the school leader in charge and with the childcare leader (28 interviews). In four locations, one manager was in charge of both childcare and education. Altogether, 83 staff members participated in the focus groups: 37 childcare staff members, 45 education staff members, and 1 staff member with a combination job.

Nearly all of the teachers were employed in the lower grades (ages 4–8), with only a few in Grade 6 or higher (ages 9–11). The childcare staff members were employed in day care (ages 0–4), pre-school education, and out-of-school care (OSC). Nine staff members were employed in OSC, 11 were employed in day care, 10 in pre-school education, and seven staff members were employed in a combination of day care, pre-school education, and/or OSC.

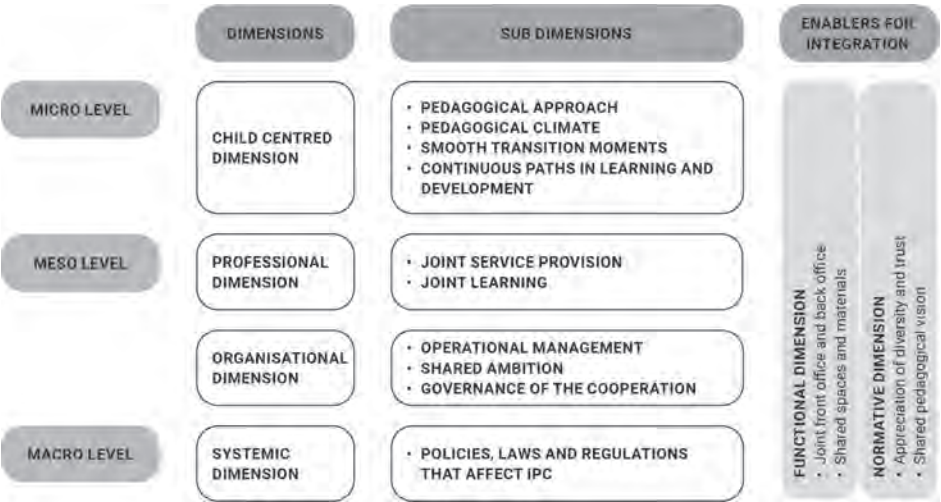
Instruments

Child Centre Integration Model. Drawing upon the RMIC, a tool was developed – the Child Centre Integration Model – in order to be able to conduct a content analysis of IPC between primary education and childcare on the dimensions as well as intensity of the IPC. In doing so, the following steps were taken. In the first step, the tool was contextualised by translating the definitions of the dimensions and subdimensions of the RMIC into (sub)dimensions compatible in content with the collaboration in child centres. To define the subdimensions derived from the RMIC and fitting with collaboration in child centres, existing IPC policy models were used. To this end, content analyses were carried out on 48 policy documents with 8 different models (Bureau KOCK, 2012; De Graaf, 2013; Doornenbal & Pauwels, 2016; Kieft et al., 2016; Kruiter & Studulski, 2019; Kruiter et al., 2016; Rops & Huyskes, 2014; Stolwijk & Vossen, 2018), by placing the IPC aspects stated in these models within the dimensions of the RMIC. In this way, the RMIC dimensions were loaded with content from the collaboration between childcare and primary education.

This step resulted in a concept model with a division into dimensions and subdimensions (see Appendix B). In a second step – by way of an expert check – the model was submitted to a panel of 12 school leaders, all of whom were involved in creating child centres in their own region. We assessed to what extent the panel recognised the (sub) dimensions described and considered the definitions unambiguous. This led to some adjustments in the final version. An example of an adjustment was the replacement of: “Professionals inform one another about job-related matters” from the child-centred dimension by “During moments of horizontal and vertical transition there is a transfer of

information”. In step three, IPC intensity was added to the model. To this end, we applied the 3C typology by Keast et al. (2007) along with the two extremes of “segregation” and “integration”, so that a total of five gradations could be distinguished. Characteristics belonging to every subdimension were operationalised into concrete actions for each IPC intensity to make the analytical model applicable as a measurement tool. A pilot version of this operationalisation was submitted to 13 internship supervisors from this area of expertise at Fontys University of Applied Science, Department. Child and Education, who considered it quite recognisable. The fourth step involved establishing the inter-rater reliability. To do so, 105 text fragments reflecting the 54 interviews, subdimensions, and IPC gradations were selected. These 105 text fragments were coded by a fellow researcher; to determine the conformity between the two raters, the intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) was calculated. The resulting ICC = 0.96 (between 0.93 and 1.00 on the dimensional level) indicates very high conformity between the raters. Figure 2.1. shows a simplified representation of the final model, comprising the subdimensions within five main dimensions. Appendix B offers a more detailed elaboration of the CCIM.

FIGURE 2.1
Simplified Representation of the Child Centre Integration Model



Interview Guidelines School and Childcare Leaders. At each location, individual interviews occurred with the primary school leader in charge and with the childcare leader in charge. On the basis of the literature discussed in the theoretical framework, interview guidelines were developed in which managers were asked to describe the

collaboration and to provide examples of practices and processes in the child centre. In this way, the underlying themes of the different dimensions were addressed in the interviews. The order in which the dimensions were to be dealt with was not pre-established, allowing the leaders room to talk in their own words about IPC at their own location. Every interview began with an opening question concerning the current collaboration between childcare and education staff members. Subsequently, the other dimensions were discussed. Throughout the interview, the researcher regularly recapitulated the answers and inquired whether these recapitulations were correct. Possible follow-up questions were drawn up in advance to explore the subject in greater depth. One example from an interview, including clarifying questions, is as follows (all examples of questions and responses are translated from Dutch):

- **What do you consider possible impediments to establishing collaboration here?**
- In my opinion, this is explicitly related to the fact that we did not form it together. The whole string of vision, mission, and pedagogical and didactical practice, we did not shape it together.
- **So there is an OSC mission and a primary school mission?**
- Yes, that's right (...). And another obstacle is the school hours. OSC only lasts a very short time, so it is also like a refined babysitter. It has no substance, and it is not an essential part of our programme.

Staff Member Focus Groups: A Vignette Study. In each child centre, focus groups were organised in which staff members, with the help of a vignette study, were interviewed about the IPC in the child centre. Throughout the focus groups, that all participants were given a chance to speak was monitored: Less active participants were involved in the conversation by engaging them directly with questions such as “And what are your views on (...)?” The interviewer would also interpose clarifying questions to confirm that the answers had been understood correctly. Two short descriptions of a meaningful situation close to their own everyday practice were the starting point for a conversation about the child-centred dimension of IPC in their own location. The two vignettes were created in advance by the researchers and submitted for validation to a manager of a child centre not participating in the research.

Vignette 1 describes the specific situation of Lisa, a 5-year-old girl from Grade 1 who goes to OSC 2 days a week and who gets in touch with a great number of professionals during the day. The objective of this vignette was to evoke statements about specific

behaviour concerning the pedagogical climate and continuity in this child centre. Then, the following question was asked: “And what if Lisa came to your child centre?”. Through follow-up questioning, we could also focus on other dimensions, as shown by the quotes below:

- **Is becoming a child centre a priority?**
- Yes, it certainly is, because it has a positive impact on attracting new children.
- **And how do you notice it being prioritised by the management team?**
- That’s challenging to say. I’ve encountered several management teams, all of whom expressed the intention to prioritise the development of a child centre. Unfortunately, despite the verbal commitment, little progress was made each time.
- I don’t. Not in meetings or things that are taken up.
- No, we do not have joint working groups, on, for instance, around the transfer between childcare and education.

Data Analysis

All interviews and focus groups were recorded using a voice recorder and fully transcribed afterwards. From these 54 transcripts, meaningful fragments were selected and subsequently coded with the help of Atlas.ti. Statements – mostly comprising one or two sentences – referring to IPC were thus selected as being “meaningful”. Whenever a new issue was touched upon, a new fragment was started. Each coded text fragment is traceable on the basis of a unique ID, consisting of a combination of the transcript number and sequence number. To increase the data reliability, in 13 of the 16 locations, a member check occurred within 6 months after conducting the interviews. On that occasion, preliminary results on the level of the child centre were disclosed and subsequently discussed with the school and childcare leaders in charge. In three of the locations, member checking did not occur because of the intermediate resignation of the persons involved.

Using the child centre integration model, 1,644 text fragments were coded to answer the first sub-question. Each code consists of a combination of a dimension, an IPC subdimension, and an IPC intensity score, ranging from 1 (segregation) to 5 (integration); for example, functional dimension - joint front and back office - IPC gradation: 3. To this end, instructions for the analytical model were written for the coders, offering examples of suitable statements for each subdimension and intensity. These instructions also explained that the intensity ratings should be based on the

actual situation and not on future plans or ambitions. After coding the text fragments, the average intensity rate of each subdimension was calculated in SPSS, per group of respondents and per child centre. For this calculation, the sum of the intensity of all text fragments per child centre and per group of respondents was divided by the total number of text fragments for each child centre. A correlation matrix was created to investigate the possible relationship between the different subdimensions. To this end, the interview ($n = 54$) was defined as the level of aggregation.

To answer the second sub-question, the Atlas.ti file was imported into SPSS. Subsequently, independent samples *t*-tests were performed to determine whether there were significant disparities in the average IPC intensity scores for the subdimensions between staff members and leaders and between childcare and primary education respondents.

To answer the third sub-question, all statements in the interviews indicating a barrier were coded in Atlas.ti. In this context, a *barrier* was defined as “a circumstance that may cause difficulties”. Subsequently, a code occurrence table was created. From this, it appeared that on a dimensional level, 471 unique text fragments were coded as “barrier”, with the code indicating the dimension to which the barrier applies. Because a text fragment can contain multiple barriers in different dimensions, the overall number of coded text fragments was higher, namely, 619. An example of a quotation with such a double barrier is as follows:

It's not an issue with average children, but it's different with children who, both at school and at OSC, show the kind of behaviour you will have to address. I simply know that for kids like [child's name], an action plan is made with the help of experts, and it would be great if the same approach was adopted at OSC. But I don't think they are familiar with it.

This quotation includes a barrier to the horizontal continuous developmental path of the individual child (child-centred dimension), but the same quotation also shows a barrier to sharing professional expertise (professional dimension).

2.4 Findings

Extent of IPC

The first sub-question asked about in which dimensions – and within them to what extent – IPC occurs in the participating child centres. Table 2.2 shows the descriptive

data, and for each dimension and subdimension, the number of coded statements (n), the average IPC intensity based on the statements per subdimension (M), and the standard deviation (SD)

TABLE 2.2

Intensity of IPC Based on Coded Text Fragments - By Dimension and Subdimension

Dimension/subdimension	M	SD	n
<i>Child-centred dimension</i>			
Continuous paths in learning and development	2.19	0.80	159
Smooth transition moments	2.49	0.71	170
Pedagogical climate	2.08	1.04	87
Pedagogical approach	1.97	0.85	86
<i>Professional dimension</i>			
Joint service provision	2.30	0.74	135
Joint learning	2.33	0.81	132
<i>Organisational dimension</i>			
Operational management	3.77	0.64	86
Shared ambition	1.93	0.88	76
<i>Functional dimension</i>			
Joint front-office and back-office	2.39	0.73	90
Shared spaces and materials	2.39	0.58	83
<i>Normative dimension</i>			
Appreciation of diversity and trust	1.76	0.88	453
Shared pedagogical vision	1.74	1.03	85

Note. Possible values for IPC intensity are: 1 (segregation), 2 (cooperation), 3 (coordination), 4 (collaboration), and 5 (integration), from lowest to highest intensity.

Table 2.2 shows that the child centres were positioned between the levels of *cooperation* (2) and *coordination* (3) for seven of the 12 subdimensions. An important distinction between these two gradations - apart from the degree of non-commitment - has to do with the extent of the collaboration: the level of *cooperation* is mainly aimed at collaboration among the group of professionals engaged in pre-school and early childhood education, while in *coordination*, a larger group of professionals gets involved, including other teachers and OSC staff members. “There may well be contact with the school teachers in grade 1-2, but far less so with the other teachers” (childcare worker). A childcare leader remarked that the OSC plays a more solitary role within the child centre.

I think the continuous developmental path receives significant attention in the age group of 2-6 years, where the resources are deployed. This gets a strong focus because ‘that child will soon join Grade 1 of primary school’. And to be honest, OSC is after working hours, they simply don’t see each other that much.

The highest average score was seen for the subdimension of operational management within the organisational dimension, which was situated between *coordination* (3) and *collaboration* (4). The higher score can be attributed to management by a single leader for both education and childcare in four of the child centres. In addition, six of the child centres had a shared management team (MT), a distinguishing feature indicative of the *collaboration* level.

At the start of this school year, the childcare leader was appointed as coordinator zero-six, who is simply part of the management team. Which makes the collaboration a little easier as well, for she knows our bit. (school leader)

The lowest average scores were seen for both subdimensions of the normative dimension, in the event of a shared ambition, and when building a pedagogical approach within the child-centred dimension. With regard to the normative dimension, childcare workers, for example, still experienced a lack of confidence in their specific skills: “They sometimes think we are just fiddling around. Then I think like ‘Hello-o, we too have been trained to work with children, we’ve got our own expertise’” (childcare worker). This lack of confidence was a preconception that was actually confirmed by some teachers:

“I find it difficult to... well, I literally see what they’re doing in OSC, which is giving those kids the freedom to enjoy themselves and a game now and then, but it is all quite noncommittal. They are just busy braiding the children’s hair.” (teacher)

The affective aspects of *confidence* were also addressed. Reflecting the level of *segregation*, both childcare workers and leaders from seven different child centres described an “uneasy feeling”, for example, indicating that a common staff room is not perceived as being common at all. One childcare worker, for instance, explained: “I still find it difficult, if the staff room is completely full, to step inside. I always feel very much like I’m being watched, they will probably think ‘Oh! it’s her again’”.

A school leader at another child centre noticed a similar pattern: “There is always a consciousness of ‘This is childcare and that is education’. Childcare workers, for example, never come into the joint staff room and if they do, it’s always with a kind of ‘I hope I’m not disturbing’ attitude” (school leader).

TABLE 2.3
Correlations between the Subdimensions

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.	11.
1.											
2.	.277										
3.	.192	.328									
4.	.310	.419*	.536**								
5.	.373*	.246	.274	.324							
6.	.490**	.353*	.262	.411*	.383*						
7.	.302	.300	.109	.432*	.367*	.243					
8.	.490**	.341	.222	.522**	.446*	.295	.744**				
9.	-.021	.399*	.248	.322	.216	.175	.099	.159			
10.	-.160	-.084	.199	-.006	.003	-.018	.257	-.208	.017		
11.	.369**	.383**	.493**	.534**	.413**	.416**	.573**	.722**	.144	.441**	
12.	.295	.153	-.030	.269	.386*	.418*	.140	.267	-.043	.428*	.436**

Note. * $p < .05$; ** $p < .001$ (two-tailed)

1. Continuous path in learning and development, 2. Smooth transition, 3. Pedagogical climate: atmosphere, rules of conduct, 4. Pedagogical approach, 5. Joint service provision, 6. Joint learning, 7. Operational management, 8. Shared ambition, 9. Joint front-office and back-office, 10. Shared spaces and materials, 11. Appreciation of diversity and mutual trust, 12. Shared pedagogical vision.

Table 2.3 shows that there were mainly low to intermediate correlations between the subdimensions, which indicates that different constructs are involved. It is also evident that *appreciation of diversity and mutual trust* was consistent with 10 of the remaining 11 subdimensions. There was a high correlation between the two subdimensions within the organisational dimension and between *cognitive and affective confidence* and *shared ambition*.

Perceived Differences

To answer the sub-questions about differences between the various types of professionals, for each subdimension, an independent samples *t*-test was

implemented to check score disparities between staff members and leaders. For two subdimensions, the differences between the values found were significant. For the subdimension *Continuity/content*, there was a significant difference between the scores of leaders ($M = 2.43$, $SD = .101$) and staff members ($M = 2.09$, $SD = .78$), $t(157) = 2.50$, $p = .013$. A second significant difference was found for the subdimension *Sharing spaces and materials*; however, the staff members' score ($M = 2.52$, $SD = 0.92$) actually turned out to be significantly higher than the leaders' score ($M = 2.22$, $SD = .079$), $t(81) = -2.52$, $p = .014$.

Likewise, an independent samples t -test was performed for each subdimension to answer the sub-question focused on differences between respondents from the two sectors. These t -tests indicated that on the basis of their statements, there were no significant disparities between respondents from childcare and primary education as far as IPC intensity was concerned.

Barriers

In four of the child centres, barriers were hardly an issue (< 25), in nine of the child centres, the number of barriers varied from 25 to 50, and in three of the child centres, the number of barriers exceeded 50. Table 2.4 shows the IPC dimensions to which these barriers were related.

TABLE 2.4
Number of Barriers per Dimension

Barriers per dimension	n	% of total	Min-max per child centre
Child-centred dimension	86	13,89	0-19
Professional dimension	144	23,26	0-19
Organisational dimension	122	19,71	1-16
Functional dimension	63	10,18	0-14
Normative dimension	204	32,96	2-43
<i>Total number of barriers</i>	<i>619</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>12-87</i>

Barriers within the *child-centred dimension* often related to finding moments of information exchange, for instance, during vertical or horizontal transitions. Sometimes these consultation meetings occurred during simultaneous playtime: "In fact, that's the only opportunity you've got, but it also reflects the level of quality you aim to achieve regarding playtime" (school leader). Lack of time played an important role:

How can I make that transition [to OSC] as smooth as possible if I don't have time? I walk the children to the schoolyard, and in the meantime I quickly have to drop off [child's name] at the OSC and then there's already a parent waiting for me. (teacher)

Furthermore, not all teachers considered this their job:

I don't think the transition should be ours. Recently, [child's name] had to take two puffs during the day, so the parents let us know. But then we have to pass that on to the OSC. I'm not comfortable with that. (teacher)

Within the *professional dimension*, the inequality people experienced regarding time for professional development was the biggest barrier. In particular, childcare staff members had little budgetary room to use for collaborative learning. "You cannot keep asking people on a voluntary basis all the time while others are here in paid hours", one school leader claimed. For OSC staff members, there was also the practical issue that professional development events often occur during OSC hours: "If there is a seminar, the children often go to the OSC. Which means it's extra busy" (childcare worker).

Within the *organisational dimension*, barriers were related to inequality in competence, budgets and prioritisation: "Traditionally, a school has always been a fairly autonomous institute. As a school, you may choose your own vision or certain teaching materials or educational methods. With us, it's all much more centrally coordinated" (childcare leader). Differences in control mechanisms can clash when people want to work with the same system in a child centre:

We would really like to use one pupil monitoring system. Here we use [system name], and it would be great if they would use it as well. It's just that... [name of childcare organisation] has their own system and that applies to all their locations. (teacher)

A difference in budgets was also experienced as a barrier: "I've got 20 euros per staff member to spend, and they have no less than six times as much. A person. That holds you back if you want to do something together" (childcare leader). Sometimes the school's and childcare provider's priorities differ: "We may have made some concessions in the joint development as a child centre, but if you have some solid issues as a school, you will simply need the necessary energy for that" (school leader).

With regard to the *function-oriented dimension*, both staff members and leaders indicated that the lack of space formed a barrier. This means, for example, that the OSC has not got their own room, but that they get an area in, for instance, the assembly hall, a preschool classroom, or the (preschool) gym. “We are now in a preschool classroom, but the oldest children are eight and their knees hit that there [points]. And I sit there as well, don’t I?” a childcare worker remarked. Another childcare leader pointed out that OSC children are bothered by the fact that they do not have a space of their own:

The group of the oldest OSC children are in the assembly hall. But OSC is not always considered. Children may, for instance, build a high tower and put a note on it saying ‘Don’t touch please’ and the next day it’s nevertheless knocked down. (childcare leader)

Barriers within the *normative dimension* were frequently related to status differences based on educational attainment or expertise and dissimilar values and job perceptions. Respondents from 10 of the child centres identified differences in expertise: “Didactic is often seen as something extra, while pedagogical is seen as ‘something we all can do’. Didactics is something you have really had to study for, that is almost the standard view” (childcare leader). Differences in education level were specifically mentioned by respondents from 11 of the child centres:

It’s two worlds having to get to know each other. Particularly day care has to learn how things can be done differently. Which brings me to education level. I don’t want to sound derogatory, but if someone has a [bachelor’s] degree, well, you can definitely tell. (school leader)

Childcare workers also mentioned experiencing status differences, specifically related to differences in education level:

Especially at the beginning, I really felt a bit like the day care dork, if you know what I mean. (...) As a school teacher, you need a bachelor’s degree, and for day care, usually post-secondary vocational will do, and somehow, you can just feel that. (childcare worker)

Another distinction was made between “thinkers” and “doers”. “At a joint study session, the people from day care were also present, and then I realised that we talk at too high a level for them. These are the doers, you should work a lot more with images” (school

leader). When appreciation was expressed for childcare workers, it often related to practical matters: “Those vocational-trained employees are so practical, these young ladies roll up their sleeves and jump right in. That adds something, considering that our thinking is always policy-based and goal-oriented in education” (school leader).

Barriers concerning differences in values and job perceptions were mentioned by respondents from 15 of the 16 child centres. These could be more practical differences, such as greater flexibility within the childcare sector compared with the education sector: “We are used to thinking in fixed structures, so you know where you’re at” (school leader) or, viewed from the other side:

Education is very meticulously planned: they make a year calendar and then everything is set. Then, in April, I got the question if I already knew the consultations for the whole of the next school year. It took a while to get used to that. (childcare leader)

Respondents from education, on the other hand, had to get used to the fact that the childcare sector is a market sector in which you simply cannot make long-term plans:

Education as a sector, is private, not-for-profit, but to [name of childcare organisation] it is important to have as many applications as possible [they have a commercial purpose]. Also, there are more changes. If parents are laid off, they will take their children out of day care, but not out of school. (school leader).

For example, this conception was reflected in how “collaboration with parents” – considered important by both parties – was being covered. The conversations with teachers and school leaders showed that teachers clearly indicated to parents what they stood for: “You don’t need to offend parents, but if a child engages in specific behaviour, you simply have to tell the parents what you observe” (school leader). This still seems less commonplace in childcare, as another school leader observed: “We have much more of the idea of ‘we are the professionals,’ we believe that this is the right thing for your child. Childcare sometimes leans the other way: as long as the parent is happy” (school leader). Or, as a teacher from another child centre put it: “If you notice that a child falls way outside the scope, you must not be afraid to blow the whistle. But their vision is ‘parents pay for us, so it’s hard for me to report this’” (teacher). This statement of a childcare worker at another child centre is in line with that interpretation:

Parents are our customers: they bring their children to us so that they can go to work themselves. So if we were to close the place down because of a joint study day, we would actually go against our core business.

Therefore, within childcare, collaboration with parents was an important issue as well, but compared to primary education, the issue was addressed in a substantially different manner.

2.5. Discussion and Conclusion

This study aimed to gain more insight into the nature of IPC between childcare and primary education and the barriers arising from it. With the help of the analytical model we developed on the basis of a validated tool from healthcare, IPC between childcare and primary education has been defined more precisely, which allows the extent of IPC to be characterised more accurately. The analytical model proved to be effective for categorising respondents' statements about daily collaboration within child centres by content (subdimension) and IPC intensity. Thus, a more objective view was obtained than if respondents had been asked to categorise themselves. However, given the limited scale of this research, a follow-up study is advisable to further verify the newly developed measurement tool. We recommend incorporating what we view as "IPC precursors" in this follow-up study to be able to assess the intensity level of *integration* as well. The correlations found between the IPC subdimensions were predominantly low to intermediate. On this basis, it can be concluded that IPC is a multidimensional construct: IPC occurs simultaneously with different intensities. This offers a possible explanation for why in previous research (Kieft et al., 2016; Van der Grinten et al., 2019), 25%–25% of the respondents could not be classified according to one of the unidimensional collaboration models.

In retrospect, several noteworthy observations can be made regarding the data collection process. Firstly, it is important to note that the research was conducted with a restricted sample size, comprising only 16 child centres. Secondly, the selection of child centres was made through two channels that specifically targeted establishments already engaged in intensive collaborative efforts at the management level between the childcare providers and primary schools. This recruitment approach could have introduced a bias that plausibly accounts for the elevated score observed within the subdimension of *operational management*. This means that the results of this study

are not necessarily representative of all child centres in the Netherlands, but they could well be representative of child centres with similar collaboration agreements.

A third remark pertains to the decision to use combined focus groups in the smaller child centres. This decision was primarily driven by practical considerations, aiming to facilitate focus group sessions despite the limited presence of (childcare) staff members at these specific sites. However, it is conceivable that this choice may have introduced bias, given the status and expertise identified across numerous child centres. In hindsight, it is evident that this decision was not optimal.

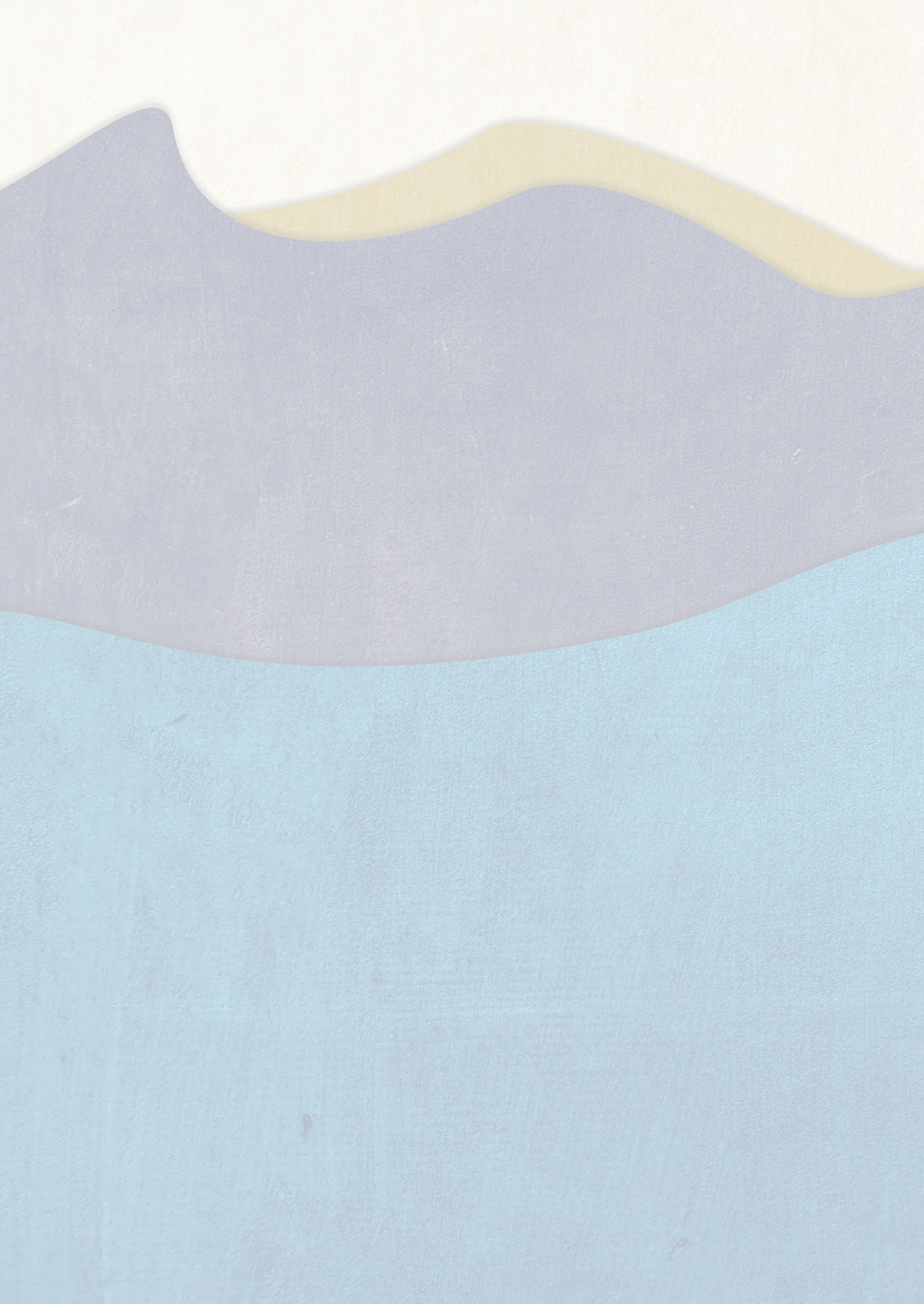
At the child centres in this study, the IPC intensity was on the level of *cooperation* in seven out of the 12 subdimensions, indicating low IPC intensity characterised by non-commitment. At this level, IPC is also strongly focused on the pre-school and early childhood periods, while OSC is less involved. The lowest IPC intensity was found in what are termed the “softer” characteristics of IPC, such as the two subdimensions of the normative dimension (*appreciation of diversity and mutual trust* and *shared pedagogical vision*), the organisational dimension (*shared ambition*) and the child-centred dimension (*pedagogical approach*). Here the level of *cooperation* had not been achieved yet, and an “us and them” culture was found. With the exception of the *operational management* subdimension, intensive collaboration as desired by, for example, the Onderwijsraad [Dutch Education Council] (2019) had not yet been achieved in our research locations.

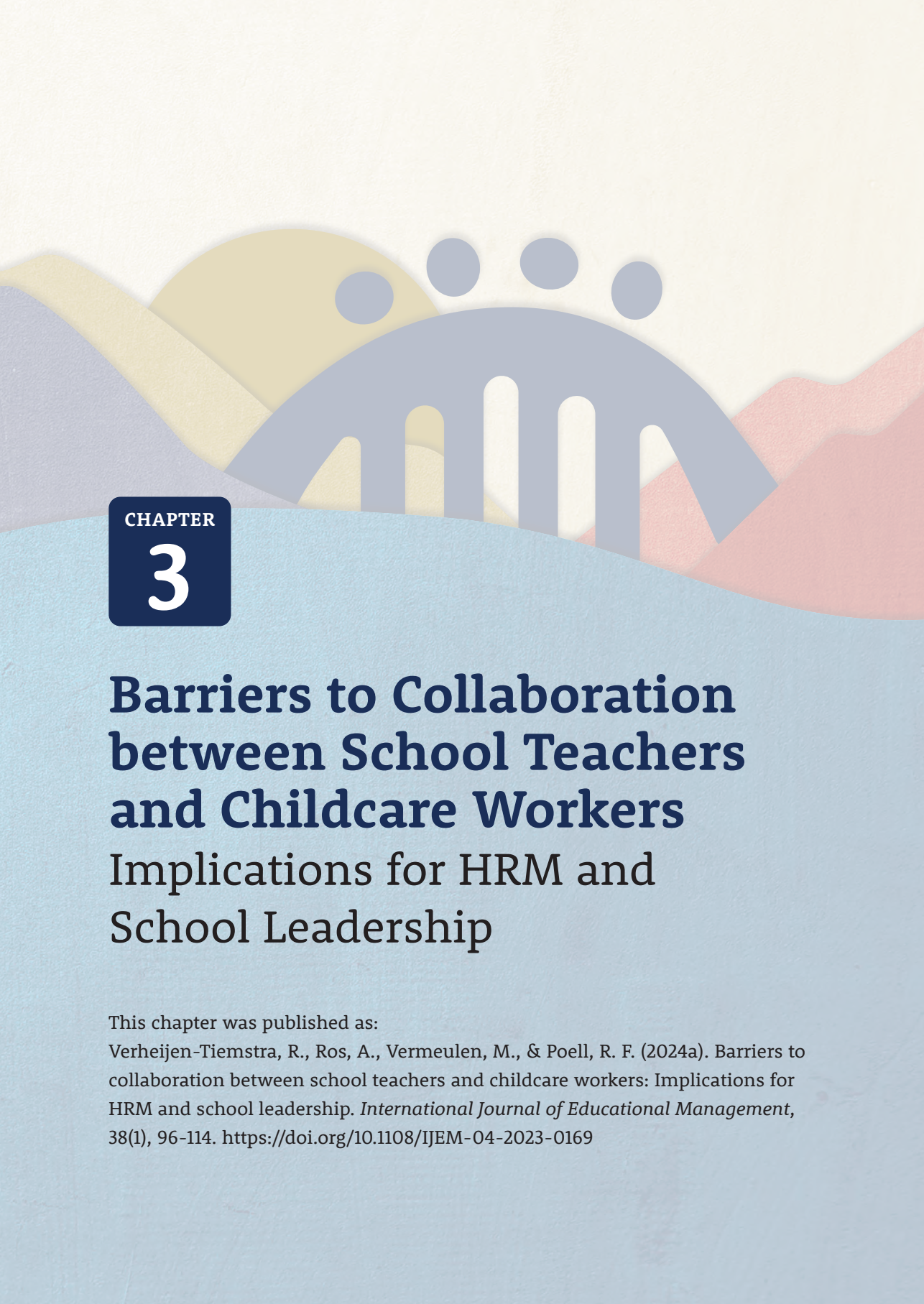
No significant distinctions were found between participants hailing from the education sector and those originating from the childcare sector. The distinctions between leaders and staff members were limited: compared to staff members, leaders perceived a higher extent of IPC regarding the continuous path in learning and development, and a lower extent of IPC about sharing spaces and materials. With respect to the other 10 subdimensions, no significant distinctions were found. This is not altogether consistent with Ploeger and Fukkink (2013), who found that managers perceived a higher extent of IPC than did staff members.

A possible explanation for the relatively low IPC intensity in the child centres – in spite of the high ambitions of the management teams involved – is offered by the barriers that were mentioned in the interviews. Based on the identified barriers across various dimensions, it is evident that there is a lack of equality, with the education sector being the dominant partner in the collaborative partnership. The cited underlying factors encompassed the higher educational qualifications of staff members, the greater value attributed to didactic expertise compared with pedagogical expertise,

and disparities in facilitating professional development, competence, budgets, and prioritisation. In comparison with childcare leaders, school leaders generally have higher budgets at their disposal – for professional development, for instance, or for material procurement – and they have greater autonomy to use these budgets for the benefit of their own school. The interviews shed light on the existence of this inequality between the childcare and education sectors in general, and specifically between OSC and education. This disparity permeates various aspects, including collaborative learning, daily transition meetings, and job perceptions. It is paramount for management teams, school leaders, and childcare leaders to acknowledge that such inequality poses a hindrance to the ongoing development of IPC.

A third of the identified barriers stem from the normative dimension, which encompasses status differentials rooted in educational attainment, expertise, and divergent job perceptions. Two recent studies into IPC in the Netherlands (Bongers, 2018; Fukkink & Van Verseveld, 2019) also point out that upholding one's own rules, standards, and values can impede IPC. In our study, we did not investigate the extent to which managers act as role models in bridging these disparities, and we posit that this topic warrants further exploration in a subsequent study. To foster interprofessional collaboration (IPC) between childcare and primary education, it is imperative to invest in cultivating shared values and promoting equality.





CHAPTER

3

Barriers to Collaboration between School Teachers and Childcare Workers

Implications for HRM and School Leadership

This chapter was published as:

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Abstract

Purpose – While an urgent need for collaboration is increasingly seen in education to better respond to socio-educational challenges, in practice, collaboration between primary school teachers and their partners is hampered by barriers. The aim of this study is to shed light on these barriers from a human resource management angle, using the ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) framework.

Design/methodology/approach – Quantitative and qualitative data were collected among staff in 16 child centres offering joint pre-school, education and childcare.

Findings – Our findings suggest that in general, both teachers and childcare workers perceive themselves as skilled and motivated for collaboration. They perceive aspects of opportunity to perform as most important barriers.

Practical implications – Based on this research, school leaders are advised to organise opportunities for collaboration, especially by fostering an inclusive organisational climate and scheduling sufficient time for collaboration.

Originality/value – This paper adds to the limited research on HRM in the education sector and shows how the AMO model can be used to give insight into how educational managers might enhance collaboration between teachers and childcare workers.

3.1 Introduction

The notion that school improvement is enhanced by fostering professional collaboration is widely supported, and internationally innovative practices that aim to address related challenges have emerged in many places (Armstrong et al., 2021; Azorin & Muijs, 2017). This issue calls for an approach from the perspective of educational management, as educational management concerns the responsibility for the proper functioning of a system in an educational institution (Connolly et al., 2019). An area where these innovative practices are found is collaboration between school and childcare staff. Driven by the rising number of children growing up in diverse pedagogical environments and a growing recognition of the benefits of childcare for children beyond meeting parental needs, collaboration between primary schools and childcare is increasingly perceived as essential for optimal support of children's development (Fukkink & Van Verseveld, 2019; Plantenga & Remery, 2017).

In response to this need, new initiatives have emerged in the Netherlands, such as the establishment of what are called “integrated child centres for education and care” (hereafter referred to as child centres). These child centres combine primary education with out-of-school care (OSC), coupled with pre-school (ages 2-4) and day care (ages 0-4), offered by organisations from two different sectors, namely primary schools and childcare providers, each with their own legislation and labour agreements and professional educational backgrounds (Eurydice, 2019; Fukkink & Boogaard, 2020). In the present study, the term interprofessional collaboration (IPC) is used to refer to this specific school-to-childcare collaboration, where professionals with different types of expertise – primary school teachers and childcare workers – work together to optimise children's opportunities for development. Despite the relevance of IPC in child centres, Keuning et al. (2022) concluded that IPC is still often short-term oriented, occurs on a small scale, and is characterised by low levels of cohesion. Moreover, OSC occupies a vulnerable position within IPC, manifested by the fact that in many countries OSC receives little priority and faces low status (Cartmel, 2019; Hurst, 2020; Jutzi & Woodland, 2019). Yet, it is specifically between school and OSC that one would expect frequent IPC, given that children experience boundary crossing from school to OSC daily.

From an educational management angle, this issue holds significance since educational management encompasses the responsibility for ensuring the effective operation of a system within an educational institution (Connolly et al., 2019) and human resource management (HRM) can serve as a catalyst for effective schools

(Loeb et al., 2012). Therefore, a more comprehensive grasp of factors that hinder the educational ecosystem, such as collaboration between teachers and childcare workers, is imperative to address this concern adequately. Based on the premise that the quality of teachers is widely acknowledged as a crucial factor in educational outcomes (Darling-Hammond, 2023), the importance of HRM in schools as a mechanism to achieve high levels of teacher performance and school effectiveness is increasingly being stressed (Bryson et al., 2023; Huang et al., 2023; Loeb et al., 2012). Boselie (2014) defined HRM as “management decisions related to policies and practices that together shape the employment relationship, and are aimed at achieving certain goals”. However, despite the growing recognition of the need for HRM in education, human-resource related concepts are still under limited study (Aboramadan et al., 2020) and alignment between strategic goals and human resource (HR) practices is still lacking (Vekeman et al., 2016). Nevertheless, it is imperative to acknowledge the pivotal role of HRM in education and its potential to contribute to the needs and development of individual teachers (Runhaar, 2017; Tuytens et al., 2021). Within this perspective, the application of the ability, motivation, and opportunity (AMO) framework offers a promising lens for our research, not only because it is widely recognised as one of the prevailing theories in the field of HRM research (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023), but also because it has been fruitfully utilised in qualitative research in a rather similar context, to elucidate explanations for the (lack of) knowledge sharing among health professionals with diverse professional backgrounds (Currie et al., 2015).

The AMO framework proposes that individuals perform [here, collaborate] well when they have the ability (A), the motivation (M), and the opportunity (O) to perform (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llusal, 2018; Marin-García & Martínez Tomás, 2016). Although AMO is often used on an organisational level, in which employees are considered consumers of HRM (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Meijerink et al., 2016), we use the AMO framework at an individual level, by using employees’ own perceptions of their AMO for IPC as a starting point. The rationale behind this choice is that providing insights into needs from an employee’s perspective enables the alignment of HRM from an educational management perspective accordingly. This is important, as Bohlmark et al. (2016) stated that “principals provide management in a complex and knowledge intensive organisation” (p. 913), and our study sheds light on a specific part of this complex environment. An example illustrating the complexity in relation to HRM was provided by Van Beurden et al. (2021) who demonstrated that HR practices that are available but not considered effective by teachers are negatively associated with employee engagement and job performance. Obstacles to HRM implementation as identified by Runhaar and Sanders (2013) encompass teachers’ limited recognition of

the usefulness of HR practices and perceived incompetence of managers in fulfilling their HRM responsibilities, which is an educational management issue.

Thus, the intended contribution made by this paper is twofold. By empirically exploring whether the AMO framework is a suitable framework for explaining barriers to IPC, we aim to offer insights that can be utilised for developing effective HR practices in education, a context where acknowledgement of the added value of HRM is not always evident. By doing so, we concurrently add to the growing body of literature on HRM in education. And secondly, this study has great societal relevance for principals who want to enhance IPC, which is useful in many countries and various educational contexts. Hence, we aim to answer the following two research questions:

1. To what extent do primary school teachers and childcare workers at child centres perceive themselves to have the abilities, motivation and opportunity to engage in IPC?
2. To what extent can barriers to engaging in IPC mentioned by teachers and childcare workers be classified using the AMO framework?

3.2 Theoretical Background

In this section, we briefly introduce existing literature about HRM within the education context and the AMO framework, followed by a specific definition of the AMO factors, focusing on IPC.

HRM within the Education Context

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in HRM within the context of education (Tuytens et al., 2023). Several reasons can be identified for this. Firstly, from an international perspective, there is a growing shortage of teachers, which can be attributed to both the ageing population of current teachers and younger teachers leaving the profession (Darling-Hammond & Podolsky, 2019; Donitsa-Schmidt & Zuzovsky, 2016; Seeliger & Håkansson Lindqvist, 2023), which can be considered an HRM problem. Furthermore, perceived control-oriented HRM, dissatisfaction with performance appraisal, and little autonomy may also cause teachers to consider leaving their jobs (Dahle & Urstad, 2024). Additionally, teaching is increasingly regarded as a demanding and complex occupation necessitating additional requirements, such as the abilities to adapt to changing environments, exhibit innovative behaviour, and collaborate more effectively to support children's learning and development (Pagán-

Castaño et al., 2021). This calls for effective support from an HRM perspective to achieve strategic goals through effective collaboration between teachers and other professionals with related expertise.

AMO: Key Determinants of Employee Performance

The AMO framework is widely applied to study factors that influence work performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023). Within this framework, the different AMO factors interact with each other (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Jiang et al., 2012). At the individual level, opportunity seems to be a prerequisite that may also enhance motivation and ability (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llusar, 2018; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Kellner et al., 2016). In their review study, Bos-Nehles et al. (2023) offered an explanation for this assertion, concluding that opportunity provides an environment in which ability or motivation can flourish. Bos-Nehles et al. (2013) revealed that ability emerged as the strongest predictor of performance, while opportunity exerted a moderating effect on this relationship. In the same vein, Boselie (2010), in the health care sector, found that ability-enhancing practices and opportunity-enhancing practices had a stronger effect on professional behaviour compared with motivation-enhancing practices. These findings align with Van Berkel et al. (2022), who advocated providing opportunities to perform for street-level bureaucrats, frontline professionals such as police officers, healthcare providers, and teachers (Lipsky, 1980), as a crucial boundary condition for enhancing their performance. Taylor (2007) argued that motivation-enhancing practices, such as incentives or evaluations, have no effect on improving teachers' professionalism, a viewpoint consistent with the findings of Andreeva and Sergeeva (2016). In their study of knowledge-sharing behaviour in secondary schools, they revealed that autonomous motivation was the key predictor of desired behaviour when ample opportunities to perform existed, whereas controlled motivation had no impact. However, in situations where opportunities to perform were limited, controlled motivation became critical, while autonomous motivation became irrelevant (Andreeva & Sergeeva, 2016).

Abilities for IPC. Ability is generally defined as the knowledge, skills and competencies that individual employees possess (Marin-Garcia & Martinez Tomas, 2016). Because of the large number of IPC abilities and measures referred to in the literature (Schmitz et al., 2017), we narrowed down IPC abilities to three core ones that will be outlined below.

Understanding and appreciating professional roles and communicating effectively in an interprofessional setting are widely considered two core competencies for successful IPC (Garvis et al., 2016; Suter et al., 2009). Following Suter et al. (2009), we define *interprofessional communication* in our study as “meaningful and responsive formal and informal communication in which language is adjusted to professionals with another professional background”, and *role understanding and appreciation* as “acknowledging and respecting the professional roles and responsibilities of all professionals and valuing their benefit to the child”. Thirdly, we take *reflexivity* into account as IPC ability, that is, the extent to which professionals reflect upon and adapt their working methods and functioning within their team, as it is widely recognised as a key element for successful IPC (Doll et al., 2013; Knickel et al., 2019).

Work Motivation for IPC. Work motivation is defined as “a set of energetic forces that originate both within and beyond an individual’s being, to initiate work-related behaviour and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration” (Pinder, 1998, p. 11). However, in HR research, various measures are used, including indicators of intrinsic motivation such as commitment and engagement, as well as indicators of extrinsic motivation such as financial rewards and job security (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Knies & Leisink, 2014; Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018). This lack of clarity is problematic, as evidenced by Trépanier et al. (2020), who found that employees respond differently to work-related situations depending on the type of work motivation that drives them. Moreover, the dichotomy between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation is too vague to apply to work settings (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Based on self-determination theory by Deci and Ryan (1985), work motivation is distinguished as amotivation (the absence of motivation), three controlled regulation processes and two autonomously regulated processes (Gagné et al., 2015).

The three types of controlled motivation are distinguished as follows. External-social regulation is driven by the wish to gain approval from others or to avoid criticism (Gagné et al., 2015). External-material regulation is driven by more tangible reasons, including financial rewards or job retention. Introjected regulation refers to behaviour that arises because of internal pressures (e.g., feelings of shame when not exhibiting the behaviour).

The two autonomous regulation processes are theoretically distinguished as identified regulation and intrinsic motivation. In identified regulation, there is congruence between the underlying importance of the work and one’s personal goals and values. Intrinsic motivation is used when the work itself is “fun” and satisfying (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Gagné et al. (2015) argued that many activities in

work organisations are not intrinsically interesting, but when they correspond with personal goals and values, they still represent autonomous motivation. Thus, autonomous motivation, being a broader concept than intrinsic motivation, is more relevant in work settings (Cerasoli et al., 2014).

Opportunity to Engage in IPC. Opportunity to perform, which may be defined as a set of environmental or contextual enablers of “productive behaviour” that are external to the individual (Bos-Nehles et al., 2020), has been operationalised in various ways (for an overview, see Marin-Garcia & Martinez Tomas, 2016). However, in general four aspects seem important to consider: enough time to perform the task, professional autonomy, a favourable work environment, and supportive leadership (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Meijerink et al., 2016; Salas-Vallina et al., 2021; Van Waeyenberg & Decramer, 2018).

Firstly, employees should perceive they are able to spend enough time on IPC, as providing enough dedicated time positively affects performance (Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Conway & Monks, 2008).

Secondly, professional autonomy is defined as the degree of independence and liberty that employees experience in how they carry out their tasks (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017). This is important in our context, considering the difference in professional autonomy between primary education teachers and childcare workers (Boselie & Veld, 2012; Strong & Yoshida, 2014).

Thirdly, a favourable work environment in accordance with a particular organisational climate substantially affects team and organisational outcomes (Carlucci & Schiuma, 2012; Schneider et al., 2017). An organisational climate is based on shared perceptions about the psychological impact of the work environment on employee well-being (James et al., 2008). School-to-childcare collaboration is still characterised by “us and them” distinctions, which indicate a lack of inclusion between all staff working together around providing education and care to children (Keuning et al., 2022). This would make an inclusive organisational climate a favourable work environment for IPC. An organisational climate can be considered inclusive to the extent that its policies, practices, and procedures demonstrate that all individuals in the organisation perceive themselves to be valued members of the workplace, without pressure to assimilate in order to be accepted (Shore et al., 2011).

Fourthly, following from organisational support theory, employees are more likely to exhibit the behaviour desired by the organisation when they perceive leadership behaviour as supportive (Wright & Nishii, 2013). In summary, Table 3.1 provides a brief overview of the AMO factors for IPC variables.

TABLE 3.1
Summary of AMO Factors for IPC (Definitions Adapted to the Context of Our Study)

AMO factor	Definition and aspects
Abilities for IPC	The knowledge, skills and abilities individual employees possess: – Understanding and appreciating professional roles: respecting and valuing roles/ responsibilities and expertise of professionals with different expertise and being able to use the knowledge of one's own role and that of other professionals for the purpose of optimal development and guidance of the child (adapted from Suter et al., 2009) – Communicating effectively in IPC settings: meaningful informal and formal communication in a responsive and accountable manner focused on the child's development and guidance (adapted from Carmack & Harville, 2020) – Reflexivity: conscious reflection on the functioning of interprofessional cooperation by professionals involved (adapted from Knickel et al., 2019)
Work motivation for IPC	A set of energetic forces that originate both within and beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behaviour and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration: – Amotivation, lack of motivation – External (social/material) motivation, driven by the wish to gain approval from others or (financial) rewards. (Gagné et al., 2015). – Introjected motivation, driven by internal pressures (Gagné et al., 2015). – Identified and intrinsic motivation, corresponding with personal goals and values or when the work is inherently enjoyable.
Opportunity to engage in IPC	A set of environmental or contextual enablers of productive behaviour: – Enough time to carry out the task – Professional autonomy, the degree of independence and liberty that employees experience in how they carry out their tasks – Inclusive organisational climate, a climate in which all individuals in the organisation perceive themselves to be valued members of the workplace, without pressure to assimilate in order to be accepted – Supportive leadership, supportive behaviour, aimed at increasing commitment and development

3.3 Methods

Our study followed a convergent mixed-methods design, which means that quantitative and qualitative data were gathered around the same time and data were merged in the interpretation phase of the research. This type of research allows a

broader and deeper understanding of complex human phenomena for which using quantitative or qualitative data alone would not be sufficient (Doyle et al., 2019), as is the case with IPC in our context.

Sample

This study is part of a larger project on leading interprofessional collaboration within child centres (Verheijen-Tiemstra et al., 2020). The first phase of the sampling involved convenience sampling based on the geographic location of the child centres, followed by purposeful variation sampling aiming to achieve a depth of understanding (Robinson, 2014), for example, by seeking variety in pupil and staff numbers. A total of 21 child centres were invited, 16 of which participated in our study. Employees could voluntarily decide whether they wished to participate based on an information letter.

Quantitative Data. A total of 495 questionnaires were distributed online and 273 questionnaires were received. Of these 273 questionnaires, 17 were deleted because participants did not complete the questionnaire, resulting in a response rate per child centre ranging from 33.3% to 81.3% with a mean of 51.7%. Thus, the final sample in this study was 256 employees. The majority of the sample were primary education teachers (72%), compared to 28% childcare workers, while 5 respondents listed “other” as a function or combined functions. Participant age ranged from 22 to 65 years. The average age of childcare workers ($n = 72$) was 41.6 years ($SD = 10.4$), for teachers in Grades 1-3 ($n = 82$) it was 41.1 years ($SD = 12.1$), and for teachers of Grades 4 and above ($n = 97$) it was 40.7 years ($SD = 10.8$). Not all participants responded to all items, especially among childcare workers.

A common rule is to have at least 10 to 15 participants per variable (Field, 2018, p. 683). Given that our study involved 9 variables, our sample size was adequate for further analysis.

Qualitative Data. To investigate what barriers were perceived by employees, we conducted focus group interviews. These interviews were conducted in Dutch by the first author. The focus group interviews were all audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim afterwards. To compose these focus groups, leaders were asked to identify a group of approximately three to five staff members per focus group who could be regarded as representative of their staff with respect to age, experience, and attitude towards child centres. In sum, 83 staff members took part in one of the 26 focus groups: 38 childcare workers, 29 school teachers Grades 1-3, and 16 school teachers Grade 4 and above. On average, the interviews lasted about 45 minutes.

Instruments

Questionnaire. The questionnaire was tested prior to this study by a validation field study (factor analysis and internal consistency reliability analysis) among 159 participants working at 13 other child centres. With the exception of inclusive organisational climate, all subscales showed Cronbach alpha scores above .75, which is in general considered adequate for research. Therefore, only some minor adjustments were made in this subscale. All items used a 6-point Likert-style response scale, from 1 (fully disagree) to 6 (fully agree). The questionnaire was in Dutch; sample items were translated into English for this article. The final scales are explained below.

IPC Abilities. Abilities at the individual level are often measured with the construct of occupational self-efficacy, an individual's belief in their ability to be successful in certain situations or to accomplish a specific task (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Knies & Leisink, 2014; MacLeod et al., 2022). A researcher-designed 12-item scale using the wording, "I am skilled in (...)," was developed, based on the three earlier mentioned IPC core competencies. A sample item is "I am skilled in working with other professionals to see how we can collectively improve an activity next time." We conducted a principal components analysis (PCA) to check the consistency of the three subscales. Preliminary analysis indicated that the data and variables were appropriate (Field, 2018) for PCA: KMO = .917; Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(66) = 1619.97$, $p < .001$. PCA revealed one factor explaining 50.7% of the total variance for IPC abilities. Based on this outcome, it was decided to work with a combined scale for IPC abilities.

Motivation for IPC. Motivation for IPC was measured using 15 items from the validated Multidimensional Work Motivation Scale (Gagné et al., 2015), adjusting the original scale by asking why people put effort into IPC instead of "in their work". A sample item is "I put effort into interprofessional collaboration, because it has personal significance to me." Preliminary analysis indicated that the data and variables were appropriate (Field, 2018) for PCA: KMO = .86; Bartlett's test of sphericity, $\chi^2(153) = 3175.913$, $p < .001$. However, the PCA revealed only four factors, explaining 72.56% of the total variance, instead of the six theoretically distinguished variables. Identified motivation and intrinsic motivation, in line with previous research by Trépanier et al. (2022), appeared to be one variable – autonomous motivation – explaining 33.54% of the variance. A second component corresponding to introjected motivation explained 22.86% of the variance, the third component corresponding to materially regulated motivation explained 9.97% of the variance, and the fourth component, corresponding to amotivation, explained 6.19% of the variance. The items corresponding to socially

regulated motivation did not form a separate component and loaded on both materially regulated motivation and introjected motivation. Therefore, items corresponding to socially regulated motivation were removed in further analysis.

Opportunity to engage in IPC. Opportunity to engage in IPC was measured using a researcher-designed scale addressing perceived professional autonomy (4 items, $\alpha = .834$, $\mu = 4.50$), opportunity to spend enough time on IPC (3 items, $\alpha = .779$, $\mu = 3.28$) inclusive organisational climate (4 items, $\alpha = .76$, $\mu = 4.44$) and supportive leadership (4 items, $\alpha = .82$, $\mu = 4.33$). A sample item is “In my job, I have the opportunity to apply my own ideas about interprofessional collaboration in practice”. Preliminary analysis indicated that the data and variables were appropriate (Field, 2018) for PCA: KMO = .89; Bartlett’s test of sphericity, $\chi^2(105) = 1751.886$, $p < .001$. The PCA revealed four factors that exactly matched the theoretically distinguished variables, explaining 67.31% of the total variance.

Focus groups. Focus groups were organised in which staff members were interviewed about IPC in their child centre. Throughout the focus groups, all participants were given a chance to speak; less-active participants were involved in the conversation by engaging them directly with questions such as, “And what are your views on (...)?” Two short vignettes of a meaningful situation close to their own everyday practice aimed to establish a recognisable and equal starting point for the focus groups. The vignettes were created in advance by the researchers and submitted for validation to a manager of a child centre not participating in the research.

Vignette 1 described the specific situation of Lisa, a 5-year-old girl who is in Grade 1, attends OSC two days a week and appears to have difficulties with the transitions between school and OSC. The focus group interview started with the opening question: “And what if a child like Lisa came to your child centre?” Vignette 2 involved the specific situation of Rayan, a 3-year-old boy about whose language development concerns exist and therefore multiple professionals would need to be involved. For Vignette two, the same initial question was asked.

Data analysis

Questionnaire. Given the focus on IPC in the early childhood education and care (ECEC) domain (from toddler groups up to and including Grade 3), we analysed the data using one-way ANOVAs in SPSS, followed by a Bonferroni post-hoc analysis to assess differences between groups. We distinguished between childcare workers, primary school teachers working in Grades 1 through 3, and school teachers working in

Grade 4 and above. Due to limited operating hours, only a few childcare workers work exclusively in OSC and most of them combine this job with working at pre-school play groups. Therefore, childcare workers could not be distinguished into two subgroups. Based on our 6-point scale, we defined mean scores up to the scale midpoint 3.5 as indicating a major barrier, scores between 3.5 and 4.5 as a minor barrier, and scores above 4.5 were not considered a barrier.

Focus groups. Qualitative content analysis of the transcripts was conducted, divided into inductive and deductive approaches as described by Elo and Kyngäs (2008), for which we used Atlas.ti 22. In a first stage, we identified 264 text fragments that mentioned a barrier to IPC, mostly comprising one or two sentences each. In this study, a barrier was defined as “a circumstance that may cause difficulties for IPC”. In a second stage, we analysed these text fragments with the aim of assigning them to one of the theory-derived AMO aspects. Thus, we coded each barrier as a lack of abilities, lack of motivation, or lack of opportunity. The third stage involved identifying underlying sub-aspects, with the sub-variables used in the questionnaire as a guide in coding. Reliability of the coding process was ensured as follows: we started with coding the first interviews by the first and second author independently and differences were discussed in order to reach consensus. Then, the first author coded the remaining interviews and results were discussed by all four authors. After finishing the coding process, we analysed the coded text fragments using two distinct approaches. Firstly, we scrutinised the occurrence of relevant codes across the focus group interviews, thereby considering the number of interviews in which these codes emerged. Additionally, we employed the same three respondent groups as utilised in the quantitative analysis. Considering the unequal group sizes of these three groups, comparing absolute numbers could lead to misleading interpretations and to address this concern, we included normalised numbers instead of absolute numbers. This addition enabled a better comparison of the number of coded text fragments per respondent group. Lastly, a thematic description was formulated for each category of barriers, where, for the purpose of this article, the quotes used were translated into English.

3.4 Results

The presentation of our findings is organised by our two research questions, aiming to understand the perceptions of primary school teachers and childcare workers at child centres regarding their AMO for IPC, and whether perceived barriers could be classified using the AMO framework.

RQ1: Perceived AMO for IPC

IPC Abilities. The high scores for IPC Abilities (see Table 3.2) indicate that staff from both sectors generally felt that they were skilled in IPC. A one-way ANOVA was conducted to compare abilities for IPC between childcare workers, teachers working in Grades 1-3, and teachers working in Grade 4 and above. Post hoc comparison analysis revealed a statistically significant difference ($p = .048$) in the perceived levels of IPC abilities between childcare workers and teachers in Grades 1-3, with the latter group ($M = 5.175$) reporting higher perceived ability compared to childcare workers ($M = 4.988$).

Work Motivation for IPC. Table 3.2 reveals higher scores for autonomous motivation to engage in IPC than for controlled motivation and amotivation. One-way ANOVAs also demonstrated statistically significant differences in the four types of work motivation for IPC among the three respondent groups. The ensuing significant distinctions will be presented below, based on post hoc comparison analysis.

Firstly, post hoc comparison analysis determined a statistically significant difference ($p = .016$) between teachers in Grades 1-3 and teachers in Grades 4 and above concerning the extent to which they lacked motivation for IPC. Teachers in Grade 4 and above ($M = 1.78$) were more likely to agree that they had no motivation to put effort into IPC, compared with teachers in Grades 1-3 ($M = 1.44$).

Secondly, concerning controlled, materially regulated motivation, post hoc comparison analysis determined a statistically significant difference between teachers in Grades 1-3 and childcare workers ($p = .049$), and between teachers in Grades 1-3 and teachers in Grade 4 and above ($p = .005$). For teachers in Grades 1-3, material benefits were less of a driver for putting effort into IPC, compared with the other two groups.

Thirdly, post hoc comparison analysis determined a statistically significant difference among the three groups concerning introjected motivation. A significant difference was found between teachers in Grades 1-3 and childcare workers ($p = .021$), as well as between teachers in Grades 1-3 and teachers in Grade 4 and above ($p = .002$). Both childcare workers ($M = 3.18$) and teachers in Grade 4 and above ($M = 3.30$) were more likely to put effort into IPC due to self-imposed expectations compared to teachers in Grades 1-3 ($M = 2.59$).

Lastly, post hoc comparison analysis determined a statistically significant difference ($p = .016$) between teachers in Grades 1-3 and teachers in Grade 4 and above in terms of autonomous motivation. Teachers in Grades 1-3 ($M = 5.15$) exhibited a higher dedication to IPC driven by personal value, compared with teachers in Grade 4 and above ($M = 4.84$).

TABLE 3.2
Perceived AMO for IPC (Means and Standard Deviations) at Child Centres, by Employee Type

Variable	Childcare workers (n = 72)		Teachers grades 1-3 (n = 82)		Teachers grade 4 and above (n = 97)	
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Abilities*	4.99	.62	5.18	.44	4.99	.49
Amotivation*	1.70	1.04	1.44	.67	1.78	.99
Controlled material motivation*	2.05	.99	1.63	.96	2.15	1.26
Controlled introjected motivation*	3.18	1.27	2.60	1.39	3.26	1.39
Autonomous motivation*	5.02	.79	5.15	.67	4.84	.77
Professional autonomy	4.37	.81	4.57	.81	4.52	.82
Sufficient time for IPC	3.13	1.03	3.26	1.32	3.33	1.08
Inclusive organisational climate	4.24	.86	4.52	.66	4.49	.70
Supportive leadership	4.23	.83	4.43	.86	4.30	.90

Note. Response categories for AMO aspects range from 1 (fully disagree) to 6 (fully agree).

* One-way ANOVA significant at $p < .05$.

Opportunity. Findings show that no significant differences were found among the participant groups. Overall, participants agreed that not enough time for IPC was provided (see Table 3.2). The average scores for all three respondent groups were considerably below the theoretical midpoint value of 3.5 (min-max: 1-6), indicating a barrier. Overall findings showed that inclusive organisational climate and supportive leadership may be considered minor barriers, taking into account their mean scores between 3.5 and 4.5.

RQ2: Classifying Barriers Using the AMO Framework

Table 3.3 provides a comprehensive overview of barriers identified in the study, presenting the number of focus group interviews in which each barrier emerged. Additionally, the table offers a more detailed analysis of the distribution of these barriers across the three respondent groups mentioned earlier, presenting normalised numbers, adjusted for differences in group sizes.

TABLE 3.3**Classification of Barriers, Using the AMO-Framework (in Normalised Numbers)**

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
Lack of abilities	20	59	43,7	80,1	57,1
Lack of motivation	8	8	6,6	5,7	15,6
Lack of professional autonomy	18	26	30,6	28,6	10,4
Lack of sufficient time	25	65	72,1	77,2	25,9
Lack of inclusive organisational climate	21	63	78,6	42,9	62,3
Lack of supportive leadership	16	35	26,2	51,5	25,9

Note. 1. Variable 2. Number of focus groups in which the topic was mentioned ($n = 26$) 3. Total number of coded text fragments 4. Normalised number of quotations by childcare workers. 5. Normalised number of quotations by teachers Grades 1-3 6. Normalised number of quotations by teachers Grades 4 and above.

Lack of Abilities for IPC. Table 3.3 reveals that a lack of ability as a barrier to IPC emerged in 20 of 26 focus groups and was predominantly mentioned by teachers in Grades 1-3. A considerable number of these comments had to do with a widespread lack of interprofessional communication concerning the children's transfer from school to OSC and a lack of reflexivity about how IPC could occur more effectively. A lack of interprofessional communication could relate to practical matters or procedures (Example 1), but even when there was basic communication, it did not always have a pedagogical nature (Example 2):

I think there have been times that a younger child was lost because they walked home alone instead of walking to OSC. But often the opposite happens: children who mistakenly think they must go to OSC. It happened just this week, and for me it was unclear what to do. (teacher, Grades 1-3)

They [childcare workers] bring the little ones into the classroom, but nothing of any communication is ever given. They stick their heads around the corner and say, 'Oh yes, the teacher is already there, have a nice day!' (teacher, Grades 1-3)

Barriers that were linked with a *lack of reflexivity*, concerned the extent to which staff reflected upon and adapted their interprofessional working methods. Some respondents did not even consider the idea of reflecting on IPC, and some mentioned it as something that "just does not happen".

Sometimes it has to do with the right timing. For instance, practising evacuation together. Then they [the teachers] think "what an inconvenient

time”, but if they choose a time themselves, it’s inconvenient for us again. So if you were to discuss it together, you could look together at how you could do it better next time. (childcare worker)

Lack of Motivation for IPC. The absence of motivation emerged in 8 focus group interviews, with the normalised numbers indicating a slightly higher representation among teachers in Grade 4 and above. In general, the quotations revealed that respondents did not always see the point of IPC or simply showed a lack of interest in the matter.

Well, it’s called out-of-school *care*. What I see, is that they give the kids the opportunity to relax, but I don’t consider it an extension of school. So actually it doesn’t interest me that much. (teacher, Grade 4 and above)

Lack of Opportunity for IPC. A lack of opportunity for IPC was addressed in all focus group interviews. Within this category, the lack of sufficient time for IPC stood out in particular: this was mentioned in 25 of 26 focus group interviews. The lack of an inclusive organisational climate was mentioned in 21 of the interviews, followed by the lack of professional autonomy (18 interviews) and the lack of supportive leadership (16 interviews). Considering the normalised numbers presented in Table 3.3, the following observations come to light. Time constraints for IPC emerge as the largest barrier for teachers in Grades 1-3 and childcare workers, whereas it was less prevalent among teachers in Grade 4 and above. A lack of an inclusive organisational climate was experienced as an important barrier by childcare workers, to a slightly lesser extent by teachers in Grade 4 and above, and to the least degree by teachers in Grades 1-3. The lack of supportive leadership was predominantly experienced by teachers in Grades 1-3, while it was less prominent among teachers in Grade 4 and above and childcare workers. Finally, a lack of professional autonomy was perceived as a relatively minor barrier, with teachers in Grade 4 and above reporting it the least.

With regard to *lack of time*, participants mentioned a lack of dedicated time, not having enough time available for IPC, but also not being able to find shared moments for IPC, for instance, due to the different working hours:

What I really struggle with is the fact that if [name of childcare worker] wants to join a joint meeting, she has to do it in her free time. Whereas with us, meeting time is part of your work, it happens during working hours. (teacher, Grades 1-3).

Actually, we speak to each other very little. Because they [childcare workers] only start after the school day. They are then straightaway busy with the children, while we are doing everything that has to be done after school. (teacher, Grades 1-3).

The second topic, *lack of an inclusive organisational climate*, reflected that sometimes employees – in general childcare workers – did not feel they were treated with equal respect, as a professional, and sometimes quotes from teachers in Grade 4 and above seemed to indicate less respect for the childcare worker profession.

Not all teachers do this, but there are still some who act like they are better than us, like “they’re just childcare workers, all they do, is change diapers”. It’s a bit disrespectful, if you’d ask me. (childcare worker)

I don’t think that if our school was smaller, we’d have more contact with the childcare workers. Childcare and school are two separate things, they work in a different way with the children. There is a big difference between saying, “You can choose between playing football, running around in the gym, or, uh, lying on the couch,” and saying, “All right, let’s do some math now.” It’s like a whole different world to me. (teacher, Grade 4 and above).

The third topic concerned *lack of supportive leadership*. Whereas childcare workers in particular experienced limited availability of their supervisors (who often manage several centres), teachers especially in Grades 1-3 were hindered by management teams giving little priority to IPC and failing to put their words into action.

Is becoming a child centre a priority? Yes, it certainly is because it has a positive impact on attracting new children. *And how do you notice it being prioritised by the management team?* That’s challenging to say. I’ve encountered several management teams, all of whom expressed the intention to prioritise the development of a child centre. Unfortunately, despite the verbal commitment, little progress was made each time. (teacher, Grades 1-3)

Fourthly, regarding the *lack of professional autonomy*, it became apparent that teachers are used to having a great amount of professional autonomy, whereas this is less common for childcare workers. This was expressed, for example, in working practices where teachers imposed and childcare workers followed.

You know, sometimes they [the teachers] just impose things on us, like what we have to put on our windows. It's like, "Hey, this is the theme, so stick this on your windows." But for us in OSC, it would be way more fun to hang up crafts and stuff. But the school doesn't allow that. They want everything to have a unified look. The problem is, we don't have any say in how things should look. It would be so much better if childcare workers were included in the working group that decides on the building's appearance. But right now, we're left out of that decision-making process. (childcare worker)

3.5 Discussion

The aim of this study was to investigate the extent to which using the AMO framework is helpful in understanding the lack of further development of IPC in child centres and by doing so, offering insights for developing effective HR practices. We studied this by identifying to what extent teachers and childcare workers perceive themselves to have AMO for IPC, and to what extent the barriers they experience to IPC can be categorised within the AMO framework. Indeed, the latter turned out to be highly feasible, as evidenced by our empirical data. Moreover, our results revealed that a perceived lack of opportunity to perform is the main obstacle to further increasing IPC.

Our data provided strong evidence that teachers in Grades 1-3 play a pivotal role in IPC within child centres. They demonstrate the highest ability for IPC, as shown in their self-assessment and their ability to identify barriers arising from insufficient IPC by others, as shown in the qualitative data. Moreover, this group exhibits the most favourable motivation profile, characterised by elevated levels of autonomous motivation coupled with low levels of controlled motivation and amotivation. Opportunity to perform was found to be the most important barrier to IPC, based on both qualitative and quantitative data, and for all three respondent groups. While the questionnaires did not reveal significant differences, the focus group insights indicated that teachers in Grades 1-3 primarily faced barriers related to time constraints for IPC and a dearth of supportive leadership. In contrast, childcare workers predominantly encountered barriers arising from a poor inclusive organisational climate and limited time allocated for IPC. Childcare workers report feeling less included by teachers, while the group of teachers in Grade 4 and above, in turn, also included childcare workers less, due to inequality in the nature of their respective roles and responsibilities they perceive between themselves and childcare workers. Currie et al. (2015) showed that

in the healthcare sector, status differences hinder IPC between professionals with a different professional background. A similar situation may be at play here, given that the education and healthcare sectors are related fields both characterised by hierarchy and strong professional norms (Edmondson et al., 2016). Our findings add to the body of knowledge on AMO research. The presence of opportunity to perform affects autonomous motivation (Andreeva & Sergeeva, 2016); therefore, when opportunity to perform is perceived as a barrier, autonomous motivation may not contribute to performance (here: IPC) and the high quality of autonomous motivation we found among both teachers and childcare workers may not affect their performance in IPC.

Dividing teachers into two groups, Grades 1-3 and Grade 4 and above, appeared useful. The ANOVA results showed that these are two different groups with their own perceptions of IPC between childcare and education: teachers of Grade 4 and above have lower motivation compared to teachers in Grades 1-3. This distinction was confirmed in the qualitative data, which showed that teachers in Grades 4 and above – adjusted for group size – felt less connected to the child centre and, maybe for the same reason, experienced the fewest barriers to IPC. The lower percentage of children attending OSC among pupils from Grade 4 and above may be a factor in this, and this could be studied further.

Some findings from our study merit comments, which will be outlined next. In our study, we operationalised AMO for IPC with a questionnaire that, in a pilot version, produced reliable scales. The qualitative data contributed to further robustness, because they provided an accurate view of what these barriers relate to in daily practice, especially concerning the opportunity to perform in IPC. Notable is the discrepancy between the high scores concerning perceived abilities and the significant number of barriers related to abilities in the qualitative data, which would suggest a lower score on this variable in the quantitative data. A plausible explanation for this paradox lies in the non-identical nature of the measurements employed. The questionnaire utilised self-efficacy for IPC as a measure of IPC abilities, based on the theoretical premise that self-efficacy serves as a significant predictor of professional behaviour in specific contexts (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023). The qualitative data, on the other hand, identified challenges, primarily revolving around the lack of abilities in others rather than the participants' own deficiencies. This is evident in the considerably higher scores on ability reported by teachers in Grades 1-3, who also expressed a greater dearth of IPC abilities in others, as indicated by the higher number of barriers they reported under abilities, compared to childcare workers and teachers in Grades 4 and above. Another explanation was found in the research conducted by Jones et al. (2021) on self-efficacy in IPC settings, which revealed that respondents exhibited high self-

efficacy in communicating with others and in role valuation, but low self-efficacy in more intricate scenarios such as interprofessional conflicts and providing feedback in IPC settings. Similarly, our questionnaire addressed aspects of communication with others and role valuation, where the qualitative data actually revealed barriers that had links to more complex situations involving conflicts and disputes.

Our study also has several limitations. Firstly, the questionnaire used self-reported data and for practical reasons we did not measure whether the perceptions of teachers and childcare workers corresponded to their actual behaviour. Secondly, the distinction made in literature between the three core IPC abilities was difficult to maintain in the quantitative data. This could have been caused by the wording of the items, which led to the possibility that they may have measured an overarching factor, “being skilled”. In addition, fragments indicating a barrier due to not applying an ability do not always provide insight into the backgrounds of non-use. Besides not having the ability, non-use may also be caused by either a lack of motivation or not having the opportunity to use the ability. This is supported by Bos-Nehles et al. (2023), who stated that motivation and opportunity can interact with abilities.

Theoretical Contribution

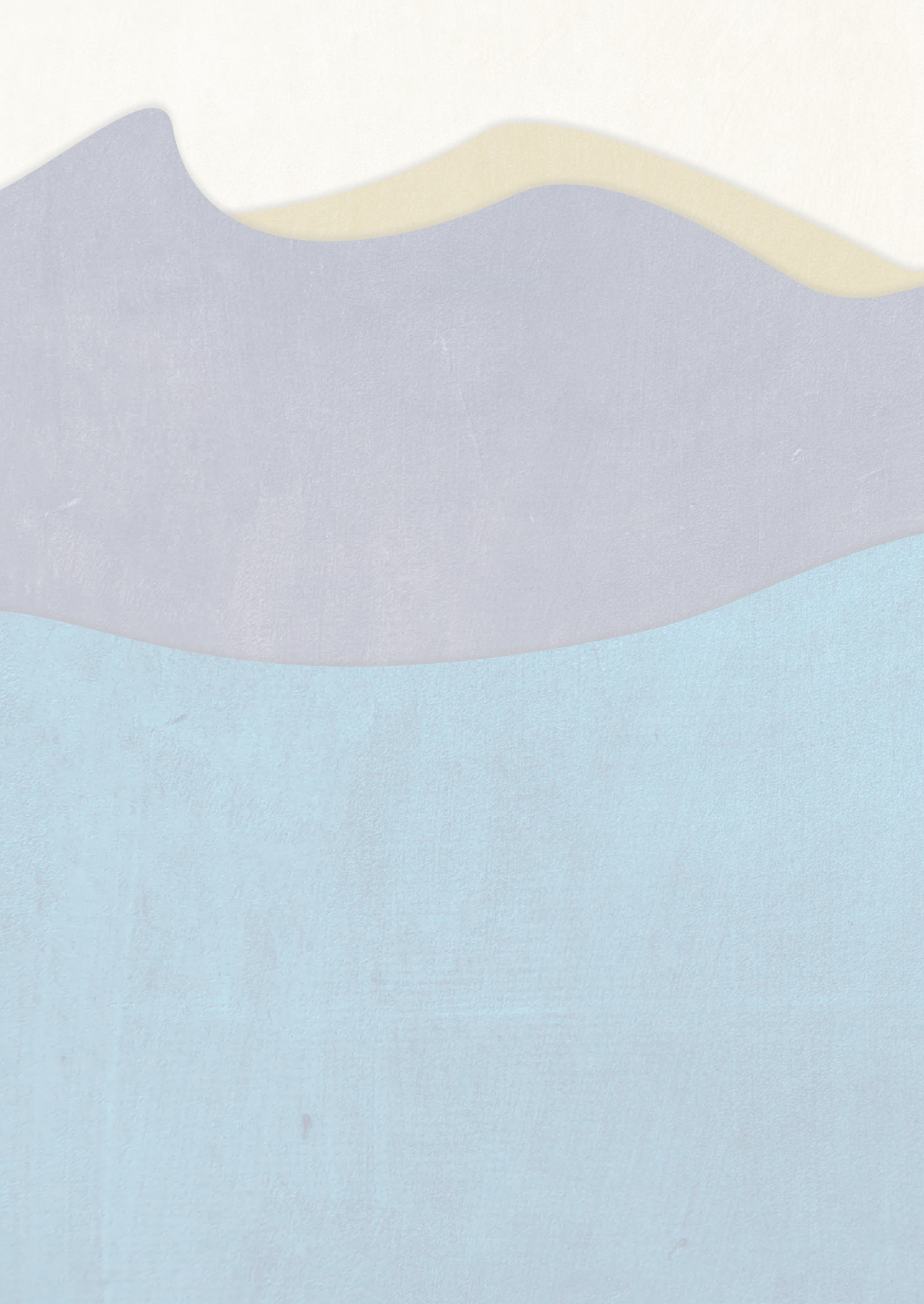
Our primary theoretical contribution lies in the insights into the employee perspective concerning their ability, motivation, and opportunity to perform in IPC. The mixed-method design proved of great value in gaining a thorough understanding of the context in which childcare workers and teachers in Grades 1-3 and Grade 4 and above engage daily in shaping IPC. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first HRM study to examine IPC from an employee perspective within the education sector. By accumulating this knowledge, valuable insights can be derived to inform the development of effective HR practices tailored to this specific context. This knowledge may also be relevant to other collaboration networks involving schools, such as school-to-school collaboration between different educational phases (e.g., primary and secondary schools), which aim to ensure smoother transitions across these phases, as proposed by Azorin and Muijs (2017), or school networks in which health professionals or social workers collaborate. Moreover, we have developed measures to assess the extent to which staff in education are equipped for IPC. However, further validation of these measures is recommended. Self-reported data provide a broad understanding of how employees perceive their own IPC abilities, but a positive bias may be apparent. It is therefore recommended that future research should also include actual behaviours. Furthermore we recommend taking into account multi-

level issues as suggested by Bos-Nehles et al. (2023), and, based on our findings, the interrelatedness between ability and opportunity. And finally, it would be valuable to consider incorporating outcome variables in future research, to provide insights into whether increased opportunity to perform indeed translates into enhanced IPC.

Conclusion

Through empirical exploration, we aimed to assess the suitability of the AMO framework in explaining barriers to IPC. Our objective was to offer insights that could be used for the development of effective HR practices in education, a context where the acknowledgement of the added value of HR practices is not always evident (Runhaar & Sanders, 2013; Van Beurden et al., 2021). By doing so, we aimed to contribute to the growing body of literature on HRM in education. We conclude that in line with Tuytens et al. (2021), strategic HRM did not seem to be aligned with the strategic goal (here: achieving IPC), given the barriers currently experienced, in particular concerning opportunity to perform. Although previous research (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llusar, 2018; Kellner et al., 2016; Lipsky, 1980; Taylor, 2007; Van Berkel et al., 2022) pointed out the significance of the “opportunity to perform” factor as a crucial element, our analysis of both qualitative and quantitative data revealed that this specific aspect was precisely where most barriers were identified.

In the context of educational management, two primary concerns hold practical relevance: allocating sufficient time for IPC and fostering an inclusive organisational climate, wherein both teachers and childcare workers are equally esteemed and appreciated. Considering the role of line managers in HRM, as suggested by Knies and Leisink (2014), and the substantial number of barriers we found, professional development in strategic HRM is advocated to ensure implementation of aligned HR practices by school and childcare leaders.





CHAPTER

4

Fostering Collaboration through Inclusive Leadership

Exploring the Behaviour of
Childcare and School Leaders in
Dutch Child Centres

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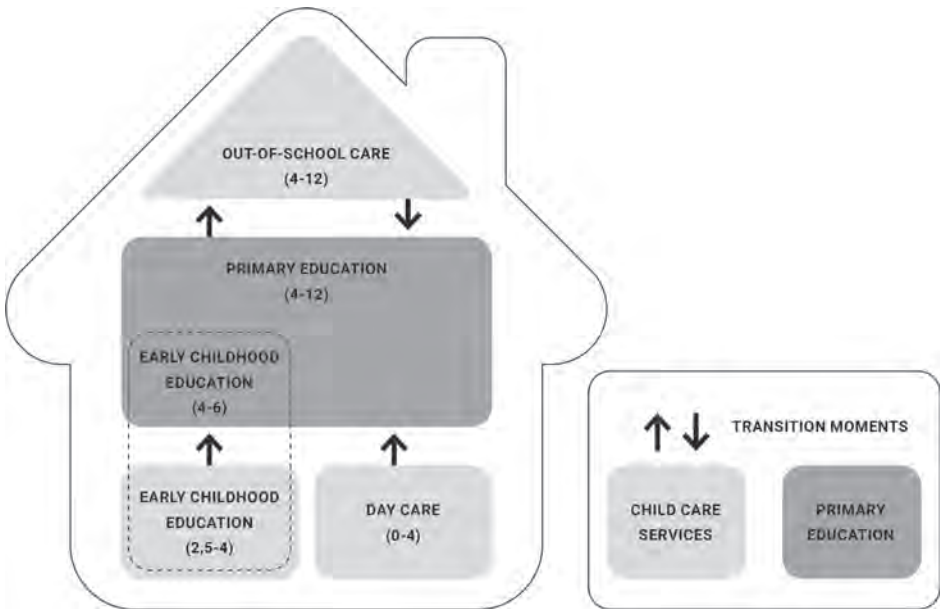
Abstract

More collaboration between primary schools and childcare providers is increasingly considered a crucial factor to optimally support children's development. However, due to disparities between these two sectors, fostering collaboration proves problematic in practice. Inclusive leadership is seen as a promising approach in contexts with strong fault lines, but whether school leaders and childcare leaders apply this leadership approach is not clear. To fill this gap, our qualitative study aimed to explore whether a recent theoretical model for inclusive leadership can be used to identify inclusive leadership behaviours of school and childcare leaders who work together in child centres. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with 12 school leaders and 12 childcare leaders. Our results showed that the theoretical model of inclusive leadership used is suitable for interpreting inclusive leadership behaviours in interprofessional educational settings. Based on the data, adding non-positive behaviours to the model was appropriate, to account for behaviours that may discourage experiences of belongingness and valuing uniqueness. The theoretical contribution of this study lies in refinement of this model and its application in the education sector. We also make practical recommendations based on our findings, and advocate professional development for school and childcare leaders in child centres, not only because of the non-positive behaviours taking place in practice, but also because inclusive leadership behaviours valuing uniqueness appeared to be less common.

4.1 Introduction

More collaboration between primary schools and childcare providers is increasingly seen as a crucial factor to optimally support children’s development in several countries (Fukkink & Van Verseveld, 2019). Consequently, during the past decade, a growing number of what are known as “child centres for education and care” (hereafter, child centres) have been established in the Netherlands. These child centres combine school-based education (ages 4-12) with out-of-school care (OSC) (ages 4-12), provided by child care organisations, coupled with preschool (ages 2.5-4) and day care (ages 0-4) services, provided by organisations from two different sectors, thus offering all-day school and care for children from 0-12 years old. Figure 4.1 depicts a graphic representation of a child centre that offers day care, early childhood education (provided both in preschool settings and within primary schools), primary education and out-of-school care services in a shared building, involving multiple organisations.

FIGURE 4.1
Graphic Representation of a Child Centre that Offers Day Care, Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, and Out-of-School Care Services



In this setting, school and childcare leaders together face the complex task of shaping the high-quality interprofessional collaboration (IPC) that is required

within these child centres. These innovative forms of collaboration may require a wider repertoire of leadership practices than leaders' current practices (De Jong et al., 2022), especially for collaboration between public and private parties regarding school-based extended services, because of different governance mechanisms and interests (Fuller et al., 2013). In spite of high ambitions, attempts to intensify school-to-childcare collaboration proceed slowly and "us and them" distinctions between the collaborating partners seem apparent, which could indicate non-inclusion (Keuning et al., 2022). Keuning et al. (2022) argued that within primary education, there are higher budgets allocated for collaborative learning and that primary school teachers generally possess higher levels of education compared to childcare workers.

Within educational research, the concept of inclusion is usually understood as UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, "ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education", with the aim that, regardless of their background, all pupils are guaranteed high-quality educational opportunities with peers from their neighbourhood (Ganon-Shilon et al., 2022; Oskarsdottir et al., 2020; Vassallo, 2021). Rather than focusing on inclusion of all pupils, our study places emphasis on the comprehensive inclusion of all staff collaboratively engaged in delivering education and care to children. For that reason, in this paper we primarily draw on insights from general management and leadership literature to further understand inclusive leadership.

Inclusive leadership is one of the most important predictors of work group inclusion, and can be viewed as the "gold standard" concerning a high-yield leadership approach (Chung et al., 2020; Shore & Chung, 2021). Inclusive leadership is considered an appropriate leadership approach, particularly in contexts where team members are diverse and status differences (caused by differences, e.g., in age, education and tenure) among team members occur, as found by Nembhard and Edmondson (2006) in the context of health care. Because the professional cultures in health care and education have similarities, for example, with regard to hierarchical status differences that may present barriers to IPC (Edmondson et al., 2016), a setting requiring IPC between schools and childcare services seems a highly relevant context for studying inclusive leadership behaviour (ILB). However, not much is known about how leaders can foster employees' perception of inclusion (Brimhall, 2019; Shore et al., 2021). In a recent theoretical model of inclusive leadership, Randel et al. (2018) proposed several behaviours that may lead to increased experiences of inclusion, but these have not yet been empirically studied in an interprofessional context. Thus, the intended contribution of our research is twofold. We aim to fill this knowledge gap by empirically exploring the identification of inclusive leadership behaviours in the specific context of school and childcare leaders working together in child centres. And, concurrently, by doing so, we study the applicability

of the recent theoretical model of inclusive leadership (Randel et al., 2018) in a new context, in which interprofessional collaboration is a goal. In addition, we also respond to the call made by L. M. Shore et al. (2018) for more empirical research on this topic.

Given those intended contributions, our research question is: *How well can school and childcare leaders' leadership practices be understood on the basis of the proposed model of inclusive leadership?*

4.2 Establishing Interprofessional Collaboration

Interprofessional collaboration is characterised by the fact that people with different professional backgrounds (e.g., differences in expertise and education level) share information, resources, activities and expertise with the aim of achieving a common result (Bryson et al., 2015; Page et al., 2015). This aim is underpinned by the conviction that diversity of expertise provides more knowledge and perspectives, which can thereby enhance performance (Shemla & Wegge, 2019; Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). However, bringing together professionals with diverse expertise does not automatically lead to better performance, due to professional fault lines (Harrison & Klein, 2007; Huq et al., 2017; Mitchell et al., 2015). Employees are more likely to share knowledge with colleagues they consider similar to them and share less knowledge with colleagues who have different backgrounds (Van Knippenberg et al., 2004). Bridging these differences requires an inclusive organisational climate (Nishii & Rich, 2014).

Creating an Inclusive Organisational Climate

An organisational climate can be considered inclusive to the extent that its policies, practices, and procedures demonstrate that all individuals in the organisation perceive themselves to be valued members of the workplace, through experiencing treatment that satisfies their needs for belongingness and uniqueness, without pressure to assimilate in order to be accepted (Shore et al., 2011). Leaders play an important role in creating such an inclusive organisational climate (Ashikali et al., 2021; Roberson & Perry, 2021). As a link between employees' behaviour and the achievement of goals, leaders are in a position to exert considerable influence, as their role includes both direct and indirect mechanisms (Grojean et al., 2004; Homan et al., 2020; Wright & Nishii, 2013). They encourage, reward, or disapprove directly through their actions, but also indirectly by influencing employees' perceptions, with their own everyday behaviours leading to norms for appropriate conduct (Boekhorst, 2015; Mor Barak et al., 2021).

Inclusive Leadership Approaches

Although on the increase, research identifying how leadership facilitates an inclusive climate is still in its infancy (Shore et al., 2018; Shore et al., 2011). Overall, approaches in this field build upon the work of Nembhard and Edmondson (2006), who defined leader inclusiveness as “words and deeds by a leader that indicate an invitation and appreciation for others’ contributions” (p. 947).

The concept of leader inclusiveness has been explored in two ways: an early approach by Carmeli et al. (2010) considered inclusive leadership as a specific form of relational leadership that may foster employee creativity, and more recently, the model by Randel et al. (2018) that considers inclusive leadership as a key approach to enable the functioning of diverse work groups. Whereas Carmeli et al. (2010) focused on leaders’ openness, availability and accessibility to their team in general, Randel et al. (2018) paid particular attention to making low (professional) status team members also feel a sense of belonging and feel valued for their uniqueness. This is reflected in their definition of inclusive leadership behaviour as a “set of positive leader behaviours that collectively facilitate all group members perceiving belongingness in the work group while maintaining their uniqueness within the group as they fully contribute to group processes and outcomes” (Randel et al., 2018; p. 190).

The context of our study, with the potential for hierarchical status differences that need to be addressed when fostering IPC, seems well-suited for investigation of the model that includes consideration of this (Randel et al., 2018), and therefore our study builds on that theoretical model of inclusive leadership.

Theoretical Model of Inclusive Leadership

The comprehensive model used (Randel et al. (2018) has two dimensions: *facilitating belongingness* - the need to develop and maintain robust and stable interpersonal relationships, and *valuing uniqueness* - supporting group members to retain their sense of individuality while contributing to group processes and outcomes. This is an extension of earlier work by L. M. Shore et al. (2011), who in their turn elaborated on Brewer’s optimal distinctiveness theory. Instead of the assumed balance between belongingness and uniqueness proposed in optimal distinctiveness theory, L. M. Shore et al. (2011) stated that uniqueness and belongingness are both necessary to create inclusion. Following up on that idea, Randel et al. (2018) assumed that leaders will probably give less attention to valuing uniqueness, since they are usually more focused on the collective, for example, realising collective goals. In their model, they described several aspects of inclusive leadership behaviour that are likely to facilitate belongingness and value uniqueness, which will be explained below.

Facilitating Belongingness. Rather than treating group membership as a privilege, belongingness means that all group members are connected and accepted (Ferdman, 2013). This premise has three aspects in terms of inclusive leadership behaviour (Randel et al., 2018). Firstly, perceived equal status must be guaranteed (Huq et al., 2017; Nishii & Rich, 2014). Inclusive leaders can ensure justice and equity by indicating respect for all individual group members, by considering all group members' backgrounds in their decisions, and by explicitly describing the boundaries and rules for suitable behaviour (Ferdman, 2017; Gallegos, 2014; Shore et al., 2011). Secondly, leaders should focus on supporting individuals as group members and creating a sense of community, as people need to have frequent and positive interactions to feel accepted in a group (Chung et al., 2020; Shore et al., 2011). This is important, since L. M. Shore and Chung (2021) described that the absence of positive interactions can be considered as a form of ostracism; the situation where an action that would be socially appropriate to do is omitted, which can make group members feel excluded from the group. Thirdly, fostering team members to contribute to decision-making and gain access to information is important, since these are considered critical organisational processes, and being included in these processes enhances a sense of belonging (Minehart et al., 2020; Mor Barak, 2000; Randel et al., 2016).

Valuing Uniqueness. Uniqueness is in general defined as maintaining a distinct and differentiated sense of self (Shore et al., 2011). Leadership behaviours focusing on valuing uniqueness aim to acknowledge employees' belief that they can be safe, heard, engaged and fully present without leaving valuable parts of themselves outside as a condition for membership (Ferdman, 2017). Two aspects of valuing uniqueness can be distinguished: empowering individual members to fully contribute to the work group and encouraging diverse contributions (Randel et al., 2018). Helping employees to fully contribute may imply strengthening employees who are lower in the status hierarchy and avoiding the domination of discussions by people with higher status (Huq et al., 2017; Randel et al., 2018). In general, people with higher status perceive lesser interpersonal risks than those with lower status (Edmondson et al., 2016). Thus, people from lower status professions are more likely to withhold their contributions, as they are concerned that their remarks might harm themselves (Mitchell & Boyle, 2020; Nemphard & Edmondson, 2006). A leader can encourage diverse contributions by inviting diverse input and encouraging dialogue and integration of various perspectives within a group's discussion (Roberson & Perry, 2021).

Role Modelling. Although serving as a role model was not present as a separate aspect in the theoretical model used (Randel et al., 2018), attention was drawn to the importance of leading by example. The importance of being a role model has also been endorsed by

other researchers (Booyesen, 2014; Buengeler et al., 2018; Mitchell & Boyle, 2020). Nishii and Rich (2014) even stated that the greater the discrepancy between what leaders claim and what employees actually experience, the worse the outcomes. If leaders do not practice what they preach, they are implicitly communicating to employees that their messages are merely symbolic (Nishii & Paluch, 2018). Words and deeds should thus be consistent and similar. For this reason, we have included being a role model in the theoretical model as a distinct aspect of both belongingness and uniqueness. From the literature discussed above, it may be concluded that inclusive leadership is a distinct leadership approach that responds to group members' needs for belongingness and uniqueness. This is particularly important when interprofessional teams are diverse and status differences are present, as in health care and educational organisations (Edmondson et al., 2016).

Table 4.1 provides an overview of the key aspects of the two dimensions of ILB in the theoretical model used here, as fitted to the context of fostering IPC in child centres.

TABLE 4.1
Operationalising Inclusive Leadership in Interprofessional Collaboration: Aspects and Definitions, Building on the Inclusive Leadership Framework by Randel et al. (2018)

Dimensions	Aspects and definition
1. Facilitating belongingness	A. Supports individuals as group members: Strengthens team cohesion and creates a sense of community through which school and childcare staff feel connected and feel pride in being members of the child centre team.
	B. Ensures justice and equity: Makes sure that all employees from both sectors, independent of their (professional) background, are treated with equal respect by distributing and recognizing justice and equity.
	C. Organises participation and information sharing: Organises joint responsibility and decision-making processes based on knowledge and information sharing.
	D. Is a role model for belongingness: Is a true role model by setting high standards for themselves through the establishment of robust and stable relationships with both childcare and school staff.
2. Indicating value of uniqueness	A. Encourages diverse contributions: Supports perspectives and orientations from staff from both sectors that may contribute to performance, even when those perspectives differ from mainstream views, by creating an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences.
	B. Helps staff to fully contribute: Makes sure that group members do not hold back or encounter obstacles in contributing to the group.
	C. Is a role model for valuing uniqueness: Shows high standards for themselves in their own approach to employees from the other sector that shows appreciation for the professional uniqueness of these employees.

4.3 Method

Design

Based on our research questions, a multiple case study design was adopted, as this type of qualitative research offers the possibility of collecting rich data on the research topic (Bernard, 2013). Data were gathered through in-depth interviews with 24 school and childcare leaders in 12 child centres from two different regions located in the southern part of the Netherlands. Research by Guest et al. (2006) revealed that data saturation typically occurs after six to 12 interviews, so 12 interviews per leader type seemed adequate.

Sample

The first phase of the sampling involved convenience sampling based on the geographic location of the child centres, followed by purposeful variation sampling aiming to achieve deeper understanding (Robinson, 2014), for example, by seeking variety in the size of the child centres. To take this heterogeneity into account, as proposed by Hill et al. (2005), we decided to include 12 child centres in all, where interviews were conducted with both the leader in charge of the school and the leader in charge of childcare. Participation was voluntary: participants joined because they wished to intensify collaboration between the childcare and education staff within their own child centre.

At each participating child centre, individual interviews took place with both the leader in charge of the school and the leader in charge of childcare. The 12 school leaders' average age was 52.3 years ($SD = 7.8$) and six were female. The 12 childcare leaders' average age was 44.8 years ($SD = 5.8$) and all 12 were female. The average tenure in the profession was 14.8 years for school leaders ($SD = 11.1$) and 8.2 years for childcare leaders ($SD = 5.7$). On average, school leaders worked 35.7 hours ($SD = 3.9$) per week, in which they were responsible for one school, while childcare leaders had on average 16.0 ($SD = 7.0$) hours per week available for this childcare centre and – in the case of small child centres – often combined this with managing another child centre. Table 4.2 shows an overview of the characteristics of both samples.

TABLE 4.2
Sample Characteristics

		School leaders	Childcare leaders
Age range (years)	26-35	-	1
	36-45	4	6
	46-55	3	5
	> 56	6	-
Degree	Bachelor's	-	6
	Post-bachelor's	6	4
	Master's	6	2
Work hours at the participating child centre (per week)	≤ 12	-	3
	13-23	-	6
	24-34	6	3
	≥ 35	6	-
Leadership experience (in years)	≤ 1	1	3
	2-5	2	1
	6-10	2	2
	11-15	1	6
	16-20	3	-
	≥ 21	3	-

Procedure

Interview guidelines were developed in which leaders were asked to describe their actual behaviour aiming to enhance IPC between employees from both sectors and to give examples of these leadership behaviours. Key questions were pre-planned, but the interviews were also conversational, which means that topics were discussed in various orders. Two strategies were used to reduce the influence of social desirability, which is the tendency to respond in a way that participants think will make them look good according to prevailing standards (Bernard, 2013). Instead of questioning participants directly about ILB, we asked them to tell us about how they act in order to enhance IPC and asked for specific examples. The other strategy was to provide leaders with only a brief overview of the interview topics, since this helps avoid priming participants to answer in particular socially acceptable ways (Bernard, 2013). Therefore, participants were informed that “leadership” and “enhancing interprofessional collaboration” were interview topics, but inclusive leadership and the underpinning constructs of belongingness and uniqueness were not mentioned. These were addressed through

further questions during the interview. During the interview, the researcher regularly recapitulated the interviewee's answers and inquired whether these recapitulations were correct. The interviews were conducted in Dutch and each interview lasted for 45-60 minutes. Interviews were recorded using a voice recorder and were fully transcribed afterwards. Quotes used in this article were translated into English.

Analysis

Qualitative content analysis was conducted, divided into inductive and deductive approaches as described by Elo and Kyngäs (2008). In the deductive approach, codes were theory-driven, based on the version of the theoretical model (Randel et al., 2018) shown in Table 4.1. All fragments from the 24 transcripts referring to ILB, mostly comprising one or two sentences, were selected as being meaningful and subsequently coded using Atlas.ti. Whenever a new issue was touched upon, a new fragment was started. This deductive approach was then accompanied by an inductive analysis aiming to further refine and operationalise the model based on the empirical data. Thus, during the process of coding, analytical memos were added, and based on these, the following adjustments were made at the level of aspects. The theory-driven aspect "Organises participation and information sharing" in the original theoretical model (Randel et al., 2018) was split into two aspects, because some leaders described behaviours that enabled participation, while others tended to focus more on information sharing only. Table 4.3 shows an example from our codebook, which illustrates aspects, sub-aspects and indicators grounded in our qualitative content analysis.

TABLE 4.3.
Codebook for Inclusive Leadership Behaviours (example, translated from Dutch)

Facilitating belongingness, aspect C: Organising joint responsibility and decision-making processes based on knowledge and information sharing		
Sub-aspect and definition	Indicators	
C-SHAREINF: Organise experience by employees from both sectors of joint responsibility in which (operational) knowledge and information is shared.	o	Enables OSC staff and teachers to share information about individual children: for example, involves OSC staff in special needs consultations when children with special educational needs are discussed.
	o	Advises employees to meet with their other-sector colleague about an individual child about whom there are concerns.
	o	Finds regular interprofessional consultation moments to share operational knowledge and information.
C-PARTIC: Organise participation opportunities among employees from both sectors.	o	Distributes ownership and decision-making authority for specific activities among employees from both sectors.
	o	Establishes a joint project group for child centre-wide implementation of substantive projects: for example, promoting a healthy lifestyle throughout the child centre.
	o	Organises joint study days or joint training around child centre-wide tasks such as First Aid and Emergency Response

In the original model (Randel et al. (2018), inclusive leadership was explicitly defined as positive leadership behaviours; however, our data revealed that leaders also described behaviours that showed being a negative role model or described behaviours that could not be considered positive in terms of ILB. Therefore, this distinction was included in the codebook, and fragments were scored as indicating either positive behaviour (+) or non-positive behaviour (-). For instance, the following text fragment was coded *Justice and equity, positive behaviour*:

A day care worker wondered how we could have come up with this time [for a joint meeting], because at that time all the young children are put to bed. I had chosen the time because it seemed convenient for the teaching colleagues. But for them only, so now I have reversed it so everyone can participate. (School leader 2)

And the following text fragment was likewise coded *Justice and equity*, but indicated non-positive behaviour:

I have organised project group structures in our child centre, with quite a few meetings throughout the year. These meetings are usually scheduled outside of school hours - between a quarter past 3 and a quarter past 5 - but as a result, the ladies from [name of childcare organisation] cannot participate because they are responsible for OSC. (School leader 11)

To establish interrater reliability, 25 text fragments covering all of the codes were independently coded by a fellow researcher. To determine the agreement between the two raters, Cohen's kappa was calculated, which is an appropriate measure of interrater reliability for categorical variables. The resulting kappa of .819 indicated very good agreement between the raters (Bernard, 2013).

To answer our first research question, we used multiple-label classification (Hill et al., 2005) based on data from eight participants and up, with the categories general, typical, variant and rare. We adopted these categories with minor adjustments so that they better reflected our research. This meant that we changed the label "variant" to "occasional" to avoid connotations that may arise when using the word "variant". We also specifically identified the number of participants per category to make it meaningful for the 12 interviews per sample in our context. This led to a classification of "general" for behaviours identified by 11 or 12 participants, "typical" for those mentioned by 6 to 10 participants, "occasional" for 3 to 5 participants, and the label "rare" for behaviours mentioned by only one or two participants. When a specific behaviour was not mentioned by any participant, a dash was used.

4.4 Results

Before presenting our results in detail, our first finding is that the theoretical model appeared to be appropriate for interpreting inclusive leadership behaviours of school leaders and childcare leaders and that all aspects of ILB were noted. Presentation of the results is organised by our research questions, aiming to understand how school and childcare leaders describe their leadership behaviours in terms of ILB as captured by the model.

Research Question 1: Inclusive Leadership Behaviours

In total, 368 text fragments were coded, 303 indicating facilitating belongingness and 65 indicating valuing uniqueness. When grouped into positive and non-positive behaviours, 278 fragments were coded as positive and 90 fragments were coded as non-positive. Table 4.4 shows the frequency counts for inclusive leadership behaviours by aspect and sector.

In the remainder of this section, results for ILB will be presented using the four frequency categories: generally, typical, occasional, and rarely found among our participants.

General Occurrences of ILB. Of all ILB in our model, only positive ILB related to *being a positive role model for belongingness* was mentioned by all participants, both school and childcare leaders. The data for this aspect illustrated how school and childcare leaders showed interest in employees from the other sector, for example, by greeting them at the beginning and end of the workday and having brief informal conversations. Sometimes participants adjusted their lunch breaks to meet staff from the other sector. School leader 2 shared: “What I always do, is spend at least 15 minutes of lunch time in the shared break room. That’s where you meet.” Additionally, positive ILB regarding *supporting individuals as group member* occurred generally among school leaders. This involved creating opportunities for education and childcare staff to meet informally or taking opportunities to have joint activities so that a sense of community might begin to emerge. School leader 7 described: “The past year I have invested a lot of time in getting to know each other, so I invested mainly in creating informal moments together.”

TABLE 4.4.**Frequency Categories (Counts) per Aspect of Inclusive Leadership Behaviour**

	Frequency - School leaders (n = 12)		Frequency – Childcare leaders (n = 12)	
	Positive	Non-positive	Positive	Non-positive
1. Belongingness				
A. Supports individuals as group members	general (12)	occasional (5)	typical (8)	rare (2)
B. Ensures justice and equity	typical (7)	typical (7)	typical (8)	typical (6)
B. Recognises justice and equity.	occasional (5)	rare (1)	occasional (5)	rare (1)
C. Organises participation	typical (9)	typical (6)	typical (10)	rare (1)
C. Organises information sharing	occasional (4)	- (0)	typical (9)	- (0)
D. Is a role model for belongingness	general (12)	typical (7)	general (12)	occasional (5)
2. Uniqueness				
A. Encourages diverse contributions	occasional (4)	rare (1)	- (0)	rare (1)
A. Creates a safe environment	rare (2)	- (0)	rare (2)	- (0)
B. Helps staff to fully contribute	rare (1)	- (0)	occasional (3)	- (0)
C. Is a role model for valuing uniqueness	occasional (5)	occasional (5)	typical (9)	occasional (4)

Note. The frequency label of “general” indicates that the aspect was mentioned by all or all but one of the participants. “Typical” indicates that the aspect was mentioned by at least half of the participants. “Occasional” indicates that the aspect was mentioned by fewer than half of the participants, and “rare” indicates that the aspect was mentioned by 1-2 participants.

Typical Occurrences of ILB. As Table 4.4 shows, typically occurring ILB was observed for 6 types of behaviours among childcare leaders and for 5 types of behaviour among school leaders. Worth mentioning is the fact that both positive and non-positive behaviours regarding *ensuring justice and equity* were mentioned on a typical basis among both school and childcare leaders. *Positive ILB regarding organising participation* was also mentioned on a typical basis among school and childcare leaders, for instance, in relation to establishing joint project groups or joint study days. However, among school leaders *non-positive ILB regarding organising participation* was also categorised as typical. In some cases, school leaders seemed to miss opportunities for organising

participation, due to a lack of awareness regarding the inclusion of staff from the other sector, as evident from the quotation provided by School leader 11:

We've got the study afternoon on pedagogical practices scheduled for June. In the afternoon, when it's just for us, we'll set the rules for the child centre, and in the evening, when the childcare workers join us, we'll take a look at how these rules can actually be put into practice.

In other cases participants deliberately ignored such opportunities, as was the case with School leader 4: "It was spontaneously suggested to add a childcare worker to the Language Development working group, but I didn't think that was necessary. We already do three things together, that's more than enough." Enacting *non-positive ILB regarding being a role model for belongingness* was categorised as typical among school leaders. These non-positive role-model behaviours could be both intentional and unintentional. For instance, School leader 3 deliberately chose to give less attention to IPC within the child centre: "Sometimes you must focus on developments within the school itself and consequently less attention is paid to the child centre."

Positive behaviours categorised as typical only among childcare leaders were *supporting individuals as group members, organising information sharing and being a role model for valuing uniqueness*. That last finding is particularly of interest, given that it was the only aspect of valuing uniqueness that occurred on a typical basis. Positive role-model behaviour valuing uniqueness was apparent, for example, when leaders acquainted themselves with the unique characteristics of the other sector, as mentioned by Childcare leader 8: "Seen from the child care sector viewpoint, we focus on the well-being of children, whereas at school, people are much more working in a result-oriented way. We could learn something from that."

Occasional Occurrences of ILB. Occasional mentions of ILB occurred for 6 types of ILB behaviour among school leaders and for 4 types among childcare leaders. In particular, being a role model for valuing uniqueness stands out here: in its non-positive sense, both childcare leaders and school leaders mentioned this behaviour on an occasional level, while school leaders also mentioned its positive sense on an occasional level. Non-positive behaviour related to being a role model, for instance, could include an implicit assumption about childcare workers, as this quote shows:

I told the teachers not to worry when childcare workers pass on copy for the information bulletin for parents. I said: "They can write as many mistakes in it as they want because I will revise their text." (School leader 8)

The aspect *recognising justice and equity* in a positive sense was categorised as occurring occasionally for both school leaders and childcare leaders. This could involve clarifying that speaking in negative stereotypes about colleagues from the other sector was unacceptable behaviour, but it also involved fostering understanding for the ways employees from the other sector act, as explained by School leader 2:

When my employees notice that childcare workers do things differently, they don't always understand it. The only thing I can do as a school leader, is to always explain why they do as they do, that it has to do with stricter regulations in childcare.

Other behaviours categorised as occasionally mentioned in interviews with school leaders were *supporting individuals as group members*, and both positive and non-positive *information sharing*. Among childcare leaders, behaviours categorised as mentioned occasionally concerned non-positive behaviours related to *being a role model for belongingness* and in a positive sense, *helping staff to fully contribute* when aiming to value uniqueness. An example of the latter type of behaviour was given by Childcare leader 2:

I have noticed that my staff sometimes find it difficult to engage in a consultation with a teacher. My approach then is to practice such a conversation with them and help them with how to bring up their message.

Rare Occurrences of ILB. An ILB was mentioned at the rare level of frequency 9 times in Table 4.4, mostly within the dimension of valuing uniqueness, indicating that these behaviours were mentioned very little among our participants. Among both school and childcare leaders, these behaviours concerned *creating a safe environment*, and only among school leaders they were related to *helping their staff to fully contribute*. Non-positive ILB that was categorised as rare among both school and childcare leaders was related to *encouraging diverse contributions* and to *recognising justice and equity* within the belongingness dimension. A final non-positive behaviour mentioned rarely by childcare leaders concerned *supporting individuals as group members*.

4.5 Discussion

This study aimed to operationalise a recent theoretical model of inclusive leadership (Randel et al. (2018) in the context of interprofessional collaboration, to explore the extent to which this model can be useful to interpret leadership behaviours of school and childcare leaders striving to enhance IPC. A qualitative approach offered us rich data about how 24 leaders in child centres fulfil their leadership roles related to IPC. Based on the results, four conclusions can be drawn.

Firstly, we operationalised the theoretical model of inclusive leadership and applied it successfully to interpreting leadership behaviours of school and childcare leaders striving to enhance IPC.

Secondly, our study revealed that in our sample, more leaders described inclusive leadership behaviours facilitating belongingness, such as role-model behaviour and organising participation, than leadership behaviours valuing uniqueness. This confirms the assumption that behaviours valuing uniqueness are less evident and require more effort (Randel et al., 2018). Creating a psychologically safe environment, an aspect of ILB valuing uniqueness, was mentioned only rarely by our participants. And this may be problematic, given the instances of professional hierarchy found in previous research (Basford, 2019; Keuning et al., 2022). Psychological safety is a necessary requirement for inclusion, especially for employees with lower (professional) status, as is generally applicable to childcare workers in their collaboration with primary school teachers.

Thirdly, we found that non-positive behaviours were mentioned concerning nearly all aspects for both dimensions, including role-model behaviour, although with varying frequencies. Showing both positive and non-positive inclusive behaviours is dysfunctional, because leaders disrupt an unambiguous message to employees about norms and expectations regarding what behaviour is expected of them (Boekhorst, 2015; Nishii & Paluch, 2018; Ostroff & Bowen, 2016). In our study, 19 of 24 leaders sent such conflicting messages to their employees. It is also salient that such positive and non-positive behaviours related to *ensuring justice and equity* were found to be mentioned typically by both childcare and school leaders. Taken into consideration that justice and equity are required in the first place in diverse teams (Nishii & Rich, 2014), non-positive behaviours will undermine positive behaviours within this aspect.

While we did not investigate antecedents of behaving like a role model, leaders' personal beliefs could be influential. In our sample, school leaders were all male, were on average older, more often held a master's degree, had longer job tenure and worked more hours a week. Therefore, it could be that school leaders perceived

themselves to have higher status compared with their collaborating childcare partner. As a consequence, school leaders could perceive greater psychological safety when speaking up and could show less consideration toward colleagues with a different professional background compared to childcare leaders.

In conclusion, our study shows that the theoretical model of inclusive leadership investigated (Randel et al., 2018) is appropriate for interpreting inclusive leadership behaviours in interprofessional educational settings. Apart from the empirical findings of our study, the study also makes theoretical contributions to the literature on inclusive leadership by operationalising and refining that theoretical model. We added role-model behaviour explicitly as a separate aspect to the theoretical model. Furthermore, we added non-positive behaviours to account for leaders' descriptions indicating that they were missing opportunities in situations where ILB would be essential, by not showing any expressions of ILB, or (possibly unintentionally) showing negative expressions of ILB.

Implications for Further Research and Practice

Despite the limitations, such as the fact that the data came from a small sample of child centres and that, due to practical limitations, data were collected via self-reported behaviours (interviews), whereas in an ideal situation, one would also want to study behaviour through observations and by adding the employee perspective, the results have the following implications.

Based on our findings, it appears that ILB is a promising and complementary approach for leaders who are striving for an inclusive climate and aim to achieve high-quality IPC. We gained knowledge of specific behaviours that may be helpful to intensify IPC between primary schools and childcare services, thus supporting the current tendency in which collaboration between schools and their partners is a crucial component.

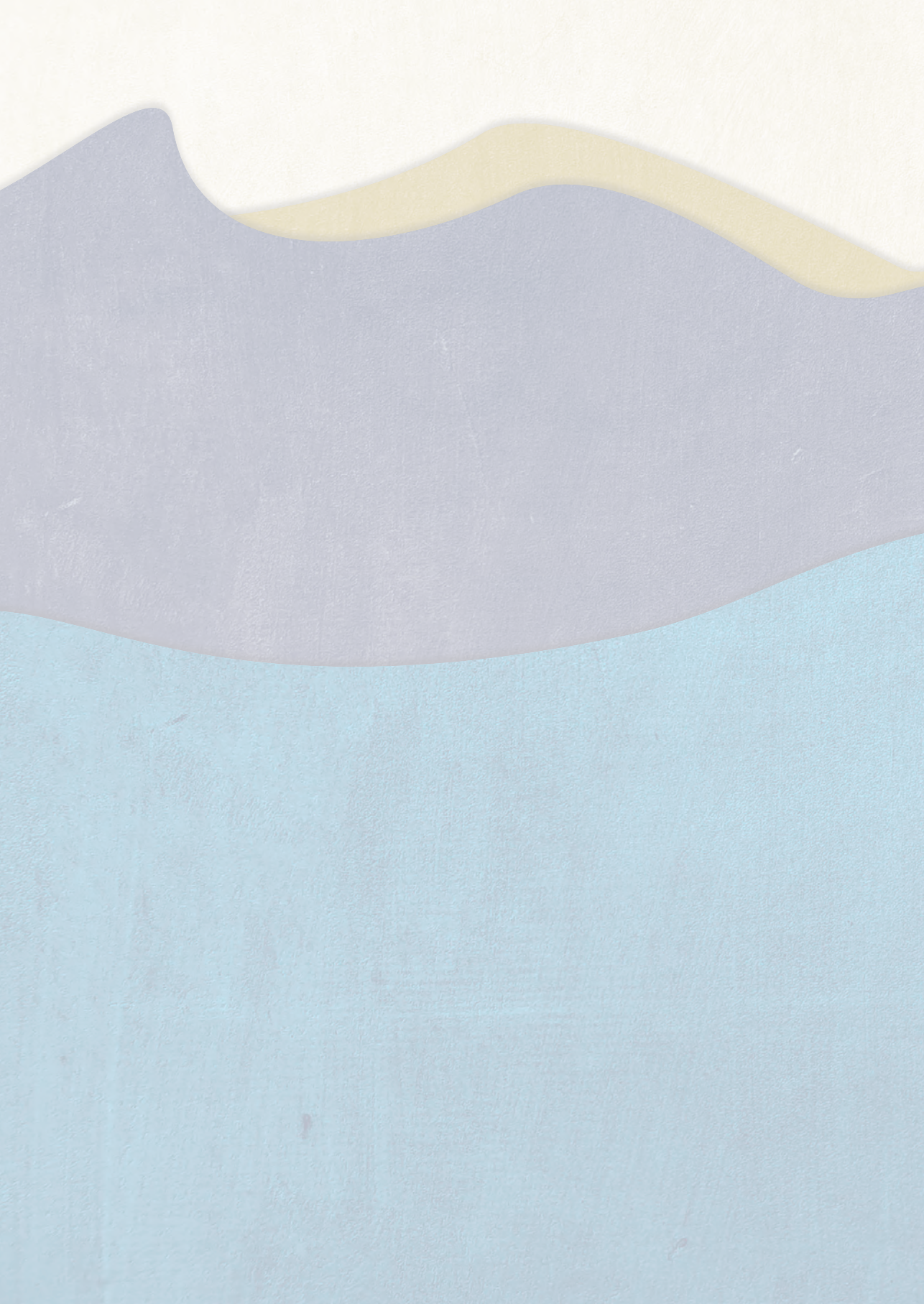
We also gained insight into non-positive behaviours that are unhelpful in creating an inclusive organisational climate, and could rather be categorised as what L. M. Shore and Chung (2021) considered "leadership emphasising exclusion" (p. 16). In the same vein, it is also notable that ILB valuing uniqueness was still far from common in our sample. As a result, leaders may (unintentionally) foster an organisational climate for assimilation (Shore & Chung, 2021), where acceptance takes place "conditionally", by adaptation to the dominant party. This is not problematic for employees who identify with the "dominant" party, (in our research: the education sector) but for other employees, non-inclusion then remains.

Our study also provides focal points for further research. For instance, we would suggest a validation study of the operationalisation of this model. It could also be relevant to conduct similar research in contexts where primary schools collaborate with other partners, such as youth care or health. And finally, longitudinal research could be relevant to gain insight into how ILB develops over time and what effects of ILB on IPC can be studied. Additionally, within the context of strategic HRM, research into how inclusive leadership behaviours can contribute to outcomes at the individual level (such as perceived feelings of inclusion), the organisational level (for instance, more IPC), and societal level (e.g., children's learning and wellbeing) would contribute to this emerging research field.

Practical recommendations based on our findings focus in particular on more attention to using ILB valuing uniqueness and to avoiding non-positive ILB. Both policymakers and management could use our operationalisation of the theoretical model of inclusive leadership to pay attention to this issue. Professional development for school and childcare leaders in child centres is also advocated; not only because of the non-positive behaviours we found, but also because ILB valuing uniqueness was still far from common. From a practical as well as a scientific perspective, this would provide fruitful knowledge about how such a professional development program could contribute to the improvement of inclusive leadership behaviour and, ultimately, achieve the benefits of high-quality interprofessional collaboration in educational contexts. It is time for educational research to broaden the concept of inclusion, as formulated in the UN Sustainable Development Goal 4, which strives for “ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education”. It should encompass the importance of inclusivity among all staff who are involved in providing education and care to children, as reflected in this study. To achieve this, it is paramount to recognise the value of diverse perspectives and emphasise the contribution these perspectives make to achieving inclusive and equitable quality education. Inclusive leadership has the potential to make a greater contribution to improving educational outcomes that benefit children and, more broadly, the community, than is currently the case.



Developing Inclusive Leadership





CHAPTER

5

Strengthening Inclusive Leadership

Insights from a Professional
Development Programme for
School and Childcare Leaders

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Abstract

This study aims to answer the following research question: What were participants' perceptions of how their engagement in a professional development programme contributed to their advancement in inclusive leadership behaviour? To this end, we followed 17 school and childcare leaders collaborating in Dutch child centres for education and childcare, who participated in a dedicated professional development programme on inclusive leadership. The programme, which consisted of four sessions spread over 5 months, was tailored to develop inclusive leadership, and built upon six design criteria derived from the literature. Data analysis was conducted by triangulating qualitative and quantitative data from interviews and pre- and post-programme self-evaluations. The main finding suggests that participants' involvement in the professional development programme resulted in an augmented awareness of their role in creating an organisational climate through inclusive leadership, which was manifested through increased use of inclusive leadership behaviours. Organising collective learning was considered a crucial element, recognising that the role of a school leader is sometimes perceived as isolated. Self-regulated learning via learning logs and reflective interviews provided opportunities for learning through reflection and showed that participants follow their own unique learning paths, tailored to their individual needs and contextual factors that they deem important.

5.1 Introduction

With the increasing complexity of the school leader's role (Beusaert et al., 2023; Brauckmann et al., 2023), leadership development as a research topic has become more urgent. Hence, investing in the professional development of principals is a crucial factor in elevating the quality of teaching and education (Lynch et al., 2024; Rodriguez-Gomez et al., 2020). However, there is limited research on the professional learning of these leaders (Lovett et al., 2015). Moreover, the notion of effective professional development of school leaders lacks clarity (Daniels et al., 2019), comprehensive research addressing the reciprocity between professional development activities and school leaders' daily activities in practice is lacking (Brauckmann et al., 2023; Daniels et al., 2019) and research focusing on how informal learning opportunities enhance formal professional learning opportunities for self-regulated learning for school leaders is desirable (Zepeda et al., 2014). This calls for research into shaping the professional development of school leaders, where formal and informal learning in daily practice mutually reinforce each other.

This research gap pertains to the professional development of school leaders in general, but finds specific resonance within professional development oriented towards new roles and leadership approaches. One of these new applications concerns inclusive leadership, a recent approach both within and beyond the educational sector. Inclusive leadership behaviour (ILB) is defined as a “set of positive leader behaviours that collectively facilitate all group members perceiving belongingness in the work group while maintaining their uniqueness within the group as they fully contribute to group processes and outcomes” (Randel et al., 2018; p. 190). This approach emerges as a strong strategy for schools aspiring to realise inclusion in education (Oskarsdottir et al., 2020), as it simultaneously demands a dedicated focus on fostering inclusivity among all staff (Verheijen-Tiemstra et al., 2024b). Based on their empirical findings, Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b) advocated for tailored professional development initiatives for school leaders in the area of ILB. This study focuses on leadership in child centres, where school leaders – responsible for primary education – and leaders who are responsible for early childhood and education and care (ECEC) and out-of-school (OSC) care (hereafter childcare leaders) are required to work together, while they are appointed from their own sector. This study aims to contribute to the existing literature on designing and implementing professional development programmes for school leaders with a specific focus on ILB. Therefore, the following research question arises: *What were participants' perceptions of how their engagement in a professional development programme contributed to their advancement in inclusive leadership behaviour (ILB)?*

1. What outcomes did participants experience as a result of their engagement in the PDP concerning their ILB?
2. Which design criteria of the PDP were perceived by the participants as essential in shaping professional development in ILB?

5.2 Theoretical Background

In this section, we discuss professional development and explore current insights on school leaders' learning to establish criteria for the PDP, focusing on enhancing inclusive leadership. For practical reasons, no distinction is made between the learning of school leaders and that of childcare leaders, as we consider both types of leaders professional learners in a pedagogical-educational context. Additionally, we will briefly examine inclusive leadership within the context of our PDP.

School Leaders' Professional Development

In spite of the limited research on design criteria for professional development programmes for school leaders, compared with the extensive studies on teachers' professional development, for instance, see Cirkony et al. (2024) for a recent overview, several studies have provided direction to make informed choices regarding effective design criteria. These will be presented in Table 5.1 and further elaborated upon in this section. The criteria were derived from three comprehensive studies on leadership development (Daniels et al., 2019; Fluckiger et al., 2014; Lacerenza et al., 2017) serving as primary foundations, supplemented by insights from other relevant studies. Through the synthesis of criteria, six distinct criteria were identified, encompassing aspects related to preparation (1 and 2) and execution (3 through 6) of the PDP.

Firstly, Fluckiger et al. (2014) investigated how to best meet the professional learning needs of school leaders. They proposed a set of criteria for such programmes, distilled from the literature and applied to five leadership learning programmes around the world. Learning programmes should be informed by the weight of research evidence, time-rich, practice-centred, purpose-designed, peer-supported, context-sensitive, partnership-powered and committed to evaluating the effects on leaders as well as the school practices to which their learning applies.

Secondly, Lacerenza et al. (2017) identified, in their meta-analysis on the design and effectiveness of leadership programmes, elements that promote the

effectiveness of a PDP, such as conducting a needs analysis, using multiple methods, providing feedback, using a face-to-face setting, voluntary participation and holding multiple sessions.

Thirdly, according to Daniels et al. (2019), PDPs should be spread over time, carefully designed and sequenced, taking into account a priori learning and considering the individual needs of the principal. Furthermore, PDPs should reflect the context and participants' own practice to facilitate the transfer of knowledge, skills and attitudes and offer networking and collegial consulting opportunities.

Supplementary insights from Salamon et al. (2021) underscored the motivational benefits of voluntary participation in PDPs, advocating conditions that foster the highest autonomy level. S. Clarke and Dempster (2020) proposed flexible leadership learning approaches that emphasise the influence of local contexts and advocate personal ownership and commitment to collaborative learning. Zepeda et al. (2014) asserted that professional development for principals must consistently align with the principles of adult learning theory, particularly highlighting the importance of integrating self-regulated learning. This requires developing reflective skills to foster awareness of their actions and facilitate a deeper understanding of what school leaders are doing and learning from it, as suggested by Clarke and Dempster (2020). In addition, Aas and Blom (2018) stressed the benefits of collaborative learning and knowledge sharing among school leaders. They highly value networking and interaction with their colleagues, which is seen as the most effective, beneficial and relevant form of professional learning (Lazenby et al., 2022). As learners autonomously determine how they shape their utilisation of learning resources (Poell et al., 2018), the study by Jerdborg (2023) demonstrated that actively engaged principals in a PDP were prompted to reflect on their educational and practical experiences, whereas passive participants struggled to immerse themselves in the content.

TABLE 5.1**Design Criteria from the Literature**

Design criterion	Description	Sources
1. Voluntary participation	Participating voluntarily in this programme, as this has positive results on, for example, learner engagement.	Lacerenza et al. (2017), Salamon et al. (2021)
2. Based on a needs analysis prior to the program	Identifying professional development needs and alignment of the PDP with these needs	Daniels et al. (2019), Earley (2020), Fluckiger et al. (2014), Lacerenza et al. (2017), Salas et al. (2012)
3. Use of multiple methods: evidence-informed, theoretically-grounded and practice-oriented	Informed by the weight of research evidence and practice oriented	C. Brown et al. (2016), Daniels et al. (2019), Fluckiger et al. (2014), Lacerenza et al. (2017)
4. Collective participation and collective learning	Learning in interaction with peers, allowing ample opportunities for exchange	Aas and Vennebo (2021), Daniels et al. (2019), Fluckiger et al. (2014), Huber (2011), Lazenby et al. (2022),
5. Spread over multiple sessions, time-rich	Sessions to be spaced over an extended period, acknowledging that learning occurs in practice and during meetings, with an emphasis on their mutual reinforcement	S. Clarke and Wildy (2013), Daniels et al. (2019), Fluckiger et al. (2014), Lacerenza et al. (2017)
6. Promoting self-regulated learning, integrating the PDP sessions into participants' own learning	Participants bringing their own practical learning experiences, reflecting on those experiences and engaging in guided reflection, thus making use of reflection tools as measurement and intervention instruments	Daniels et al. (2019), Fluckiger et al. (2014), Lazenby et al. (2022); Lourenco and Ferreira (2019), Panadero et al. (2016), Poell et al. (2018), Salas et al. (2012)

Inclusive Leadership Behaviour

Interprofessional teams, comprising individuals with diverse educational backgrounds and expertise, collaborating towards specific goals, embody a dynamic that can enhance outcomes through the integration of varied perspectives and goals (Bryson et al., 2015). However, this diversity also introduces the potential for conflict (Dwertmann et al., 2016; Mitchell et al., 2015).

In response to this pressure, the promotion of an inclusive organisational climate has been advocated (Ashikali et al., 2021). This climate is characterised by policies, practices and procedures that convey a sense of value to individuals within the workplace, attending to their needs for belongingness and uniqueness without imposing pressure to assimilate (Shore & Chung, 2021). Employing both direct and indirect mechanisms, leaders influence inclusivity by either encouraging or discouraging specific actions (Perry et al., 2021) and shaping team members' perceptions through their own day-to-day behaviours (Boekhorst, 2015).

In proposing a theoretical model for inclusive leadership, Randel et al. (2018) introduced two dimensions: facilitating belongingness and valuing uniqueness. Building upon the earlier work of L. M. Shore et al. (2011), who argued for the complementary nature of uniqueness and belongingness in creating inclusion, Randel et al. (2018) asserted that both dimensions must be addressed to achieve true inclusion, although leaders might inadvertently prioritise belongingness, accustomed to emphasising collective goals over valuing uniqueness. Recent research by Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b) substantiated this observation, revealing that behaviours related to uniqueness were particularly infrequent and that leaders did not consistently apply inclusive leadership in practice. In addition, leaders showed non-positive behaviours, such as failing to intervene when an employee behaved disrespectfully towards a colleague from another sector, or failing to acknowledge their own implicit assumptions.

Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b) operationalised the ILB framework in the context of interprofessional collaboration (IPC) between school leaders and childcare leaders in child centres (comprehensive facilities integrating early childhood education, primary education, childcare and OSC). This framework is detailed in Table 5.2, which provides an overview of the two dimensions of ILB, their main aspects and their definitions.

TABLE 5.2
Framework for Inclusive Leadership to Enhance IPC: Aspects and Definitions, Building on the Inclusive Leadership Framework by Randel et al. (2018)

Dimension	Aspect and definition
1. Facilitating belongingness	A. Supports individuals as group members: Strengthens team cohesion and creates a sense of community through which school and childcare staff feel connected and feel pride in being members of the child centre team.
	B. Ensures justice and equity: Makes sure that all employees from both sectors, independent of their (professional) background, are treated with equal respect by distributing <i>and</i> recognising justice and equity.
	C. Organises participation and information sharing: Organises joint responsibility and decision-making processes based on knowledge <i>and</i> information sharing.
	D. Is a role model for belongingness: Is a true role model by setting high standards for themselves through the establishment of robust and stable relationships with both childcare and school staff.
2. Valuing uniqueness	A. Encourages diverse contributions in a safe environment: Supports perspectives and orientations from staff from both sectors that may contribute to performance, even when those perspectives differ from mainstream views, by creating an environment that acknowledges, welcomes and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives and experiences.
	B. Helps staff to fully contribute: Makes sure that group members do not hold back or encounter obstacles in contributing to the group.
	C. Is a role model for valuing uniqueness: Shows high standards for themselves in their own approach to employees from the other sector that shows appreciation for the professional uniqueness of these employees.

Source: Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b).

5.3 Methodology

The research context pertains to a PDP developed by the authors with the aim of enhancing the ILB of school and childcare leaders. In this context, the study employed qualitative data from individual interviews and quantitative data in the form of a self-evaluation conducted before and after the implementation of the PDP. The objective of the PDP was for participants to gain insights into the key aspects of ILB and apply them in their own context.

Content of the PDP

The content of the PDP was based on earlier research (Verheijen-Tiemstra et al., 2024a, 2024b) on fostering IPC between childcare and education staff within the context of child centres, and aligned with the participants' needs as identified during the intake interviews. The programme consisted of four sessions, spread over 5 months. Each session lasted 3 hours. These sessions were led by the primary author, who, as recommended by Aas and Vennebo (2021), assumed the roles of researcher/supervisor and leadership coach through critical questioning and providing reflection (Fluckiger et al., 2014). In this capacity, the first author possessed specific contextual knowledge, expertise in group dynamics and proficiency in reflective dialogue. Following Panadero et al. (2016), participants' learning experiences were monitored via learning logs and reflective interviews between the four sessions, thus combining intervention and measurement. Based on the literature on designing PDPs for leaders and content on ILB and IPC, design criteria were operationalised for this specific PDP, as described in Table 5.3.

Implementation of the Design Criteria

Coenen and Schelfhout (2023) proposed supplementing perception data on professional development with third-party observations. This approach allows for an evaluation of whether the design criteria have been implemented as intended. In this study, Criteria 1 and 2 were prerequisites that were met in advance. To determine whether Criteria 3 to 6 were applied as intended, throughout each session, a fellow researcher not involved in the project observed the extent to which the design criteria were applied. A pre-developed observation form was used in this regard, which consisted of a binary yes/no scoring system, accompanied by a column in which the observer provided an open commentary on their observations. The completed observation forms clearly indicated that design Criteria 3 to 6 were implemented in all four sessions, except for Criterion 5 during the first session.

TABLE 5.3
Design Criteria Operationalisation for the PDP

Criterion	Operationalisation
1. Voluntary participation	Participation in this programme was voluntary and there was no recruitment through board members. The sole requirement was that participants registered as a pair, comprising a school leader and a childcare leader working together in a child centre.
2. Based on a needs analysis prior to the program	Intake interviews were conducted with all potential participants.
3. Use of multiple methods: evidence-informed, theoretically-grounded and practice-oriented	Scientific insights on IPC within child centres and inclusive leadership were linked to the participants' daily practice. Scientific models were incorporated into practical exercises, featuring realistic scenarios where a fictional character "Lisa" was introduced and an IPC card game used to depict the current and desired situation collaboratively.
4. Collective participation and collective learning	Compulsory participation in pairs (see 1), thus gathering insights from both perspectives, fostering reciprocal learning during and between sessions within the participants' own child centre. Furthermore, during the sessions ample time for exchange was scheduled.
5. Spread over multiple sessions, time-rich	The programme comprised four sessions over 5 months, emphasising that learning occurs in both the workplace and sessions, reinforcing each other. Participants were asked to document workplace learning experiences in logs and discuss them in reflective interviews (see 6).
6. Promoting self-regulated learning, integrating the PDP sessions into participants' own learning	Participants were encouraged in self-regulated learning, taking ownership of their learning paths without mandatory assignments. Following Panadero et al. (2016), learning experiences were tracked through logs and interviews.. Participants self-evaluated twice, using the results as input for their learning process.

Sampling

The participants involved in the PDP and the subsequent data collection comprised school leaders and childcare leaders engaged in collaboration across eight child centres, which are facilities designed to provide comprehensive primary education, combined with OSC, pre-school (ages 2-4) and day care (ages 0-4) in the Netherlands (Fukkink & Lalihatu, 2020). Recruitment for the study began with a newsletter announcement inviting pairs of leaders to participate in a study focused on leadership within child

centres. Leaders from a total of eight child centres expressed their interest and were subsequently provided with additional details regarding the study's objectives, approach and participation prerequisites. In total, 17 participants participated in the PDP, from seven child centres with a dual leadership structure and one child centre where the leadership responsibilities were distributed among three leaders. Ethical approval was granted by the Institutional Ethical Board on May 25th, 2021 and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were briefed on the study's objectives and data collection procedures. Participants ranged in age between 25 and 62 years ($M = 43.6$, $SD = 9.3$) and had between 0 and 25 years of leadership experience ($M = 10.6$, $SD = 9.4$); there were two novice leaders among them, both in the education sector. All participants had at least a bachelor's degree and three of them held a master's degree.

Data Collection

Semi-structured Reflective Interview. Reflective interviews were conducted between sessions. During the last interview, 6 weeks post-PDP, a semi-structured interview was conducted. These interviews lasted about 45-60 minutes. Participants were asked about their perceived professional development in ILB, followed by a subsequent question addressing elements of the PDP that had contributed to it. As the term "design criteria" can be considered technical jargon, the wording "elements of the PDP" was used. Participants were also asked to identify elements of the PDP that should be retained for future instances, aiming to identify essential design criteria spontaneously mentioned by participants. Finally, we prompted the participants to respond to any unaddressed design criteria, focusing on Criteria 3 to 6.

Self-evaluation. As part of Criterion 6, participants completed a self-evaluation questionnaire for ILB. Following Yan and Carless (2022), the questionnaire held triple functionality as a measurement instrument, awareness tool and change instrument, making it crucial for self-regulated learning. Participants conducted a self-evaluation of their ILB before and after the PDP (see Appendix C). The questionnaire was anchored in the ILB framework developed by Randel et al. (2018), and adapted to the specific context by Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b). The questionnaire was previously tested among 87 part-time students working in a child centre, yielding Cronbach's α values between .84 and .91 for all scales. The questionnaire measured the use of both dimensions of ILB. An example item from the questionnaire measuring facilitating belongingness is as follows: "I provide opportunities for childcare and education staff

to meet informally” and for valuing uniqueness “I highlight the talents of employees from the other sector”. Questions were answered on a 6-point scale, using the following classification: 1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = occasionally 4 = regularly 5 = very often, 6 = always, 9 = not applicable / prefer not to answer this question.

Data Analysis

Qualitative Analysis. Atlas.ti 23 software was used to code and analyse the data. To answer Research Question 1, the reflective interviews were coded in multiple coding cycles. During the initial coding cycle, the code “potential benefits” was used to capture participants’ mentions of perceived positive outcomes of engaging in the PDP, employing structural coding, based on the research question (Saldaña, 2021). The next step was content analysis, guided by the ILB framework (see table 5.2), to indicate which aspect of ILB the positive outcome related to.

To answer Research Question 2, we also used multiple coding cycles, starting from the interview question of what elements participants perceived to be helpful in shaping professional development in ILB and guided by the six design criteria. The process involved a two-step coding approach, differentiating between the design criteria that were spontaneously stated and those that were prompted. These coded fragments were studied in depth, which in several situations resulted in a division into sub-criteria. Criterion 6, for instance, was subdivided into the following sub-criteria: “*learning logs*”, “*reflective interviews*” and “*self-regulated learning*”. Finally, spontaneously mentioned elements that were not included in the codebook as design criteria were open-coded. These concern the codes “safe learning environment” and “on-site visits”.

Quantitative Analysis. To answer Research Question 1, quantitative analysis was performed using SPSS, version 29. Analysis was conducted only for participants who completed the self-evaluation both before and after the PDP, 14 participants in total. Three participants were unable to complete the concluding questionnaire due to illness, maternity leave and accepting a new job. Changes in responses to the subscales of ILB were measured using the non-parametric Wilcoxon matched-pair signed-ranks test for two related variables.

5.4 Results

RQ1: What outcomes do participants experience as a result of their participation in the PDP?

This research question was addressed using both quantitative and qualitative data. The non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank test was employed for quantitative data analysis to investigate significant pre- and post-test differences. As shown in Table 5.4, the findings indicated notable post-test improvements in three of the five measured aspects of ILB compared with the pre-test rankings. In the belongingness dimension, specifically *C. Organises participation and information sharing*, participants demonstrated a significant increase after the PDP ($z = 2.80$), rejecting the null hypothesis ($p = .005$). In the valuing uniqueness dimension, both *A. Encourages diverse contributions in a safe environment* ($z = 2.62$) and *B. Helps staff to fully contribute* showed a significant increase after the PDP, rejecting the null hypothesis ($p = .044$ and $p = .009$, respectively).

TABLE 5.4
Summary of Pretest and Post-test Scores, Wilcoxon Signed-rank Test, and p-value per Aspect of ILB.

Variable	Pretest (mean)	Posttest (mean)	Wilcoxon signed-rank test	p-value
Facilitating belongingness, A. Supports individuals as group members	3.80	4.16	1.30	.194
Facilitating belongingness, B. Ensures justice and equity	4.35	4.73	1.41	.157
Facilitating belongingness, C. Organises participation and information sharing	4.01	4.65	2.80**	.005
Valuing uniqueness, A. Encourages diverse contributions in a safe environment	4.45	4.87	2.01*	.044
Valuing uniqueness, B. Helps staff to fully contribute	4.33	4.88	2.62**	.009

* indicates significance at the $p < .05$ level, ** indicates significance at the $p < .01$ level. Using the following classification: 1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = occasionally 4 = regularly 5 = very often, 6 = always, 9 = not applicable / prefer not to answer this question.

The qualitative analysis revealed an increased awareness of ILB as an approach to achieving enhanced IPC, reflected in new behaviour or increased use of ILB. As

demonstrated in Table 5.2, two dimensions of ILB are distinguished: facilitating belongingness and valuing uniqueness. In addition to being a role model, facilitating belongingness involves three aspects: *supporting individuals as group members*, *ensuring justice and equity*, and *organising participation and information sharing*. Within the dimension of valuing uniqueness, beyond role modelling, it is important to *encourage diverse contributions in a safe environment* and to *support staff in fully contributing*. These aspects are discussed successively.

Firstly, participants emphasised *supporting individuals as group members* and the importance of cultivating cross-sector relationships, asserting that strong relationships contribute to enhanced collaboration, understanding and equality. Participants recognised the importance of *justice and equality* among staff from diverse backgrounds, promoting collaborative equality and respecting differing perspectives. Participants demonstrated quicker responses to IPC issues, by addressing them earlier. For example, Cecilia acknowledged the importance of incorporating various viewpoints, moving beyond an exclusive educational perspective: “I used to speak from an educational perspective. For example, I consistently used the term ‘pupils’ instead of ‘children’” (Cecilia, school leader). Awareness regarding equality, however, may also pertain to matters beyond language or behaviour. Hilda, for instance, stated:

What I’m really aware of, is that inequality often begins in the building itself. Nine out of 10 times, there’s a huge contrast between the size and the location of the offices of the school leader and the childcare leader. And you know, it should not make any difference, but it does affect how others perceive the situation. Like, where are parents received, in a nice office or in a broom closet? (Hilda, childcare leader)

In terms of *being a role model*, participants reported an increased emphasis on behaviour that involved making deliberate choices concerning their own interactions with various staff members. This could lead to an increased interest in delving into the operations of other sector through formal occasions, as Andrew explained after the first session.

In your daily routine, you are mainly focused on your own business, which is school. But the programme also makes you look at the IPC part [with childcare]. That’s why I, for the first time, attended a transition meeting last week, in which the transition from toddler to pre-schooler is discussed. (Andrew, school leader)

During formal and informal moments, participants increasingly engaged with employees from the other sector, showing heightened interest. In addition, exemplary behaviour was evident from setting high standards for themselves through the establishment of robust and stable relationships.

Over the course of the PDP, we [Daphne and I] noticed that we knew how to find each other more on an individual level. Even during that very busy stretch of time, we would sit together every Friday for a while and just say, ‘Wow, it’s tough, right?’ and ‘Yeah, it sure is.’ It was just more personal, you know? I noticed that if you connect with someone on a personal level, it becomes easier to work together on a professional level, too. That was something we really took away from the PDP. (Deborah, childcare leader)

As to valuing uniqueness, participants did not describe examples in which they were *encouraging diverse contributions in a safe environment*. When it came to *helping staff to fully contribute*, participants provided examples of brief conversations they had with individual employees to support them in what employees consider challenging discussions with staff from the other sector. In other instances, it involved empowering their employees, especially when those employees have a low self-perception of their professional identity.

At times, employees may find it daunting to engage in a conversation with someone from the other sector. I support them in this regard, by explaining to them how to ask a question without passing judgement by always thinking from the child’s perspective. Additionally, I schedule a follow-up in my agenda for the following week to check in with the employee and inquire whether they managed to initiate the conversation. (Beatrice, childcare leader)

Role model for valuing uniqueness was not mentioned by many participants. Even when valuing uniqueness was involved, the focus of enactment was often on drawing attention to the professional uniqueness of one’s own sector rather than showing appreciation for the professional uniqueness of employees from the other sector. Charlotte, however, perceived an increased awareness regarding this matter.

I’ve particularly taken away the aspect of diversity within the team and the appreciation for individual uniqueness from the meetings. I’m increasingly applying this in practice. We used to greet each other, but now I also engage in

meaningful conversations and show an interest in their profession. It's about appreciating the uniqueness of their profession or of that particular team member. (Charlotte, childcare leader)

RQ2: Which design criteria of the PDP were essential in shaping professional development in ILB, as indicated by the participants?

In this section, we address the design criteria spontaneously identified by the participants as essential for supporting their professional development in ILB, supplemented by some prompted responses. Table 5.5 shows how many participants spontaneously mentioned specific criteria.

TABLE 5.5
Number of Participants (n) Who Spontaneously Mentioned a Specific Design Criterion

3a. Theoretically grounded	3b. Practice oriented	4a. Collective learning	4b. Participation in pairs	5 Time- rich	6a. Learning logs	6b. Reflective interview	6c. Self- regulated
n 8	5	14	8	2	4	6	8

Below, the key insights resulting from the interviews are described for Criteria 3-6. Criterion 3 is divided into two sub-criteria: *theory-grounded* and *practice-oriented*. Regarding the theoretical approach, participants spontaneously expressed appreciation for “theoretical insights as a framework to apply in practice” (Charlotte, childcare leader) or that they “consider it important to speak from a theoretical framework” (Barbara, school leader). Adeline (childcare leader) indicated she can “indulge in interesting literature”, and several participants mentioned that it is important for literature to contain an “Aha!” experience, for practical application. According to their opinions, that was successfully achieved in this PDP. Participants highly valued the models that were introduced during the sessions, such as the ILB framework and the child centre integration model (CCIM), which they used to assess IPC in their own child centre. A case-description, which introduced a fictional character “Lisa” along with the challenges she faced as a child in a child centre, was also recognised and appreciated by the participants. Some participants introduced “Lisa” into their own child centre to address the problems she experienced.

That slide from the first meeting we had, featuring the discussion about Lisa and all the speech bubbles around her. It made me very aware of the fact that oh, that shouldn't really happen, should it? Ideally, in a child centre, a child should not receive two different responses to the same need throughout the day. So, we've been very consciously addressing that issue. (Ellen, school leader, spontaneous)

In the analysis of Criterion 4, it was deemed relevant to distinguish between *collective learning within the participant group* and collective learning resulting from the *participation in pairs* from the same child centre. School leader Daphne spontaneously recognised the benefit of exchanging ideas with like-minded individuals, fostering peer consultation. Childcare leader Charlotte spontaneously emphasised the value of linking theory to discussions with fellow participants for effective content retention. School leader Felicia appreciated gaining insights into how participants from other child centres approached certain aspects (spontaneous). School leader Emily found discussions valuable because of the infrequent engagement with peers from other child centres in practice. School leader Hanna (spontaneous) highly valued discussions with peers, as they facilitated the connection from literature to practical application.

Enrolling in pairs yielded significant benefits for participants. School leaders Andrew and Barbara spontaneously noted increased communication and more substantive discussions focused on ILB rather than practical matters. Childcare leader Charlotte mentioned that participating in pairs had the advantage of attending sessions together and being engaged with the content together in between (prompted). Childcare leader Deborah spontaneously considered participation in pairs to be the most important criterion, fostering increased knowledge and understanding of each other's contexts, thereby enhancing mutual respect and interest. Childcare leader Francine was convinced of the added value of participation in pairs, but also acknowledged spontaneously that effectiveness is influenced by active engagement at the individual level as well. "If your duo partner does not actively participate, it also hinders your process", she explained.

Criterion 5 – *time-rich* – was spontaneously mentioned by two participants as something that should be retained. Childcare leader Deborah indicated that having only four sessions was somewhat limited; a fifth session would have been welcome to provide more attention to the topic. Childcare leader Esther suggested that an additional session might allow for a more in-depth exploration of the specific context of each child centre.

Criterion 6 was divided into three sub-criteria based on the data: *learning logs*, *reflective interviews* and *self-regulated learning*. Participants who spontaneously mentioned the learning logs found the learning logs beneficial in the learning process “because it required a conscious effort to sit down and fill them in” (Hilda, childcare leader) or found it valuable to “occasionally look back at previously filled-in learning logs, making me more aware” (Andrew, school leader). However, opinions on the learning logs were divided. Among participants who did not spontaneously mention the learning logs, it was particularly noticeable that although in general they found it helpful to reflect on matters, they also perceived they had less time than planned for this due to the demands of daily life (Barbara, school leader; Daphne, school leader), or they faced issues uploading them in the secure environment for research purposes. School leader Cecilia said “I wrote everything in a notebook for myself but often didn’t find the time for the additional step of uploading”. School leader Felicia found written reflection “not her thing”, as she described that she “had to do this too often during her undergraduate studies”. Some participants also expressed the belief that the learning logs were primarily aimed at research instead of capturing their own learning experiences, as evidenced from the following quotes: “If I’d known I was doing this to create awareness within myself, then I think it would have gone differently, but now it felt as an assignment, so I felt less ownership” (Barbara, school leader, prompted) or “It felt like something I just had to give back to you, because I was allowed to participate in this PDP” (Emily, school leader, prompted).

Regarding the *reflective interviews*, all participants, whether they spontaneously mentioned them or not, found them helpful. School leader Felicia found these interviews “valuable for expressing thoughts and zooming in on specific situations” (prompted). Childcare leader Francine appreciated that the interviews helped her “stay sharp and step out of the daily routine” (spontaneous). School leader Gaby considered the interviews a “valuable deepening of the learning logs, as the conversations encouraged extra effort and progress” (spontaneous). For childcare leader Deborah, the discussions brought “many eye-openers about how I feel experiences but hadn’t yet been able to articulate” (spontaneous).

Opinions were divided on *self-regulated learning* in which participants were encouraged to take ownership of their learning paths without mandatory assignments. Some participants found it effective because “The approach of attending sessions, writing some notes and having discussions suited their learning style” (Andrew, school leader, spontaneous). School leader Cecilia spontaneously compared this PDP with previous PDPs and explained that “Other programmes often got stuck in similar types of assignments, where you find yourself writing a mandatory report on

a Sunday afternoon behind your computer again”. She perceived the ownership aspect as particularly strong: “I feel like I’ve had a real say in the whole thing, making me feel the owner of a part of the PDP and my own development. I think that’s important” (spontaneous). However, some other participants found it challenging that there were no mandatory assignments. Childcare leader Adeline, for example, expressed, “If you’re following a PDP alongside a hectic job, then I think more guidance is needed to keep the focus on learning, for instance by setting a mandatory goal” (prompted). In the same vein, school leader Gaby suggested that “Although mandating might be a strong term, encouraging participants to take action by, for example, developing a homework assignment would have been a good option” (spontaneous).

In addition to the theory-driven criteria, participants also mentioned the importance of creating a *safe learning environment* during the PDP, as stated spontaneously by school leader Felicia: “You provided enough space for everyone to contribute to the group. You did that very well, allowing everyone to express themselves and share their own experiences without attaching any judgement. I really experienced a sense of safety”. Furthermore, several participants spontaneously mentioned the importance of context, which sparked suggestions for *on-site visits* to child centres:

What I would like or would find inspiring is if you didn’t just organise the sessions at [name of college]’s location, but at one of the participants’ child centres. To really delve into that practice a little bit with all of us and then have the discussions from there. (Charlotte, childcare leader)

5.5 Discussion

This study aimed to explore how engagement in a dedicated PDP contributed to advancement in ILB, according to the participating school and childcare leaders. Our findings suggest that participants’ involvement in the PDP resulted in an increased awareness of ILB as an approach for achieving enhanced IPC. This was manifested through increased use of inclusive leadership behaviours from both dimensions of ILB. Essential design criteria for this purpose, according to participants, included collective learning, participation in pairs and self-regulated learning through the use of learning logs and reflective interviews, particularly when learning logs and reflective interviews were combined. The combination of being theoretically grounded and practice oriented was also highly appreciated by the participants. Brennan and

Gorman (2023) asserted that learning for inclusion can be achieved over relatively short time frames when the conditions of agency and opportunity for collaborative enquiry in a safe environment are met. Our study supports this assertion for both aspects.

Quantitative findings from our study indicate that perceived professional development indeed occurred for both dimensions of ILB. Participants perceived themselves to show more ILB aimed at facilitating belongingness by *organising participation and information sharing* after the PDP than before the start of the PDP. In addition, participants perceived themselves to show more ILB valuing uniqueness by *encouraging diverse contributions in a safe environment* and by *helping staff to fully contribute* after the PDP than before the start of the PDP. Although the quantitative findings did not show significant professional growth in *supporting individuals as group members* and *ensuring justice and equity*, the qualitative data revealed that participants did experience professional growth in these areas.

The study found that the participants experienced growth in their interactions with staff and other leaders in the child centre, as well as increased awareness of the impact of language and organising participation. However, when it came to valuing uniqueness, the participants provided fewer examples of growth, despite significant professional growth shown in the quantitative data. A possible explanation is that leaders prioritise collective goals, as suggested by Randel et al. (2018), which makes them more likely to think of examples related to facilitating belongingness.

Although this study has contributed original insights into augmenting ILB through a dedicated PDP, the findings are constrained by some limitations. Firstly, this study was conducted within child centres in the Dutch context, where IPC between primary education and childcare providers may exhibit distinctive characteristics guided by national policies. Consequently, the generalisation of our findings to other contexts where, for example, ECEC or OSC providers collaborate with primary schools should be approached with caution. Secondly, a limitation of this study is the small number of participants with whom the research was conducted. In addition, although the implementation of the criteria was measured by third-party observations, research data came from participants' perceptions, either from interviews or self-assessments.

Implications for Research and Practice

On a theoretical level, our study provided empirical data on how participants perceived their professional growth in ILB while engaging in a tailor-made PDP. In doing so, we

have contributed to narrowing the knowledge gap on professional learning of school leaders and how reciprocity occurs between PDP activities and workplace learning, when informal learning opportunities strengthen the organised activities of the PDP (Brauckmann et al., 2023; Daniels et al., 2019; Zepeda et al., 2014). Hence, our study showed that organising collective learning was considered a crucial design criterion for PDPs tailored to school leaders, recognising that the role of a school leader is sometimes perceived as isolated (Service et al., 2018). The integration of learning logs and reflective interviews provided opportunities for learning through reflection, with a focus on learning from one's own context and individual learning path.

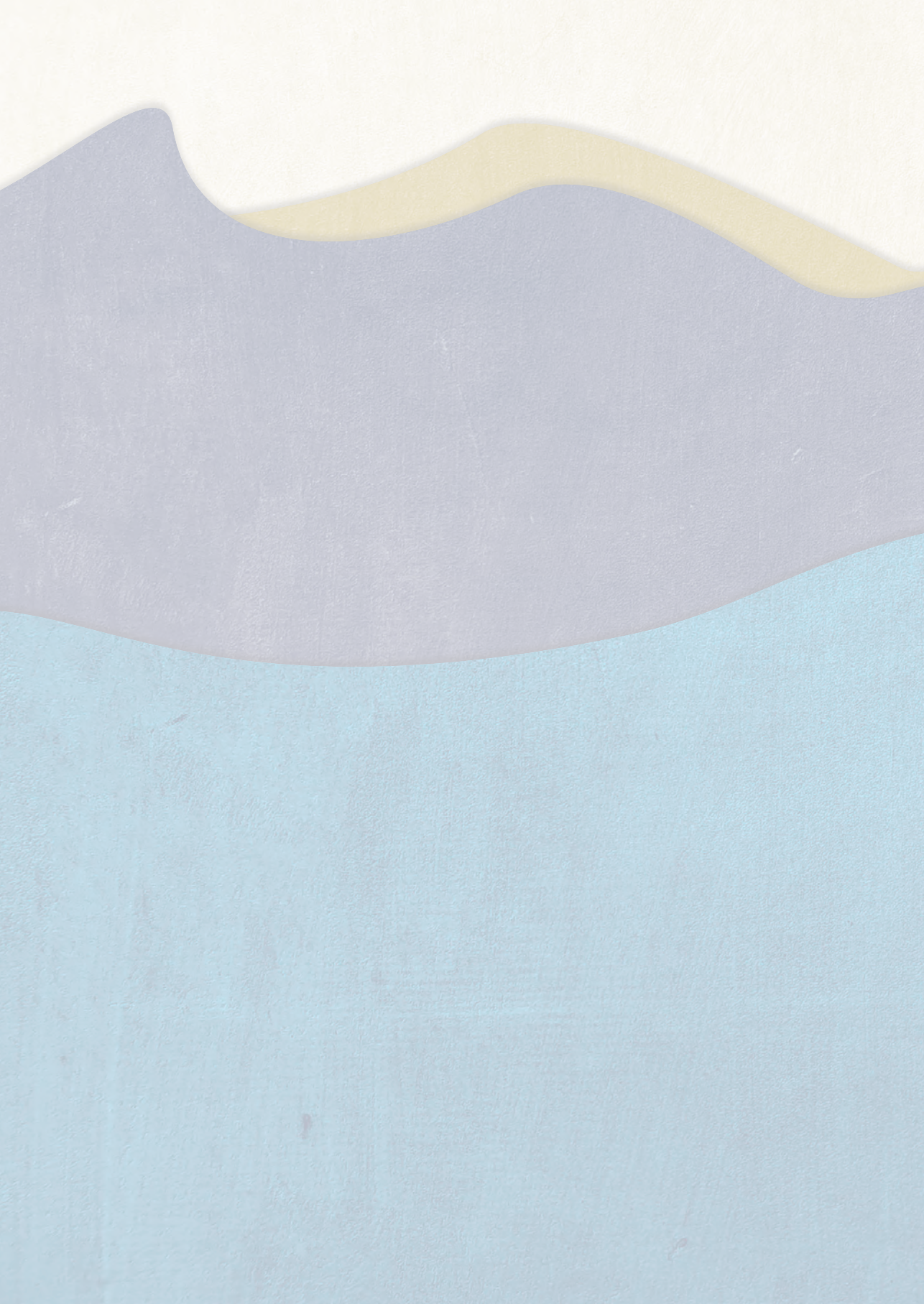
The practical recommendations following from our study focus firstly on applying the design criteria that were highly valued, specifically emphasising the acquisition of knowledge from peer learning and the inclusion of more than one participant per organisation. The latter, notably, generated avenues for learning between sessions, which manifested in collaborative retrospective or prospective reflections on sessions, or learning through feedback-seeking behaviour. These propositions align with the research of Crans et al. (2021), who found that workplace learning predominantly transpires through immediate peer engagement.

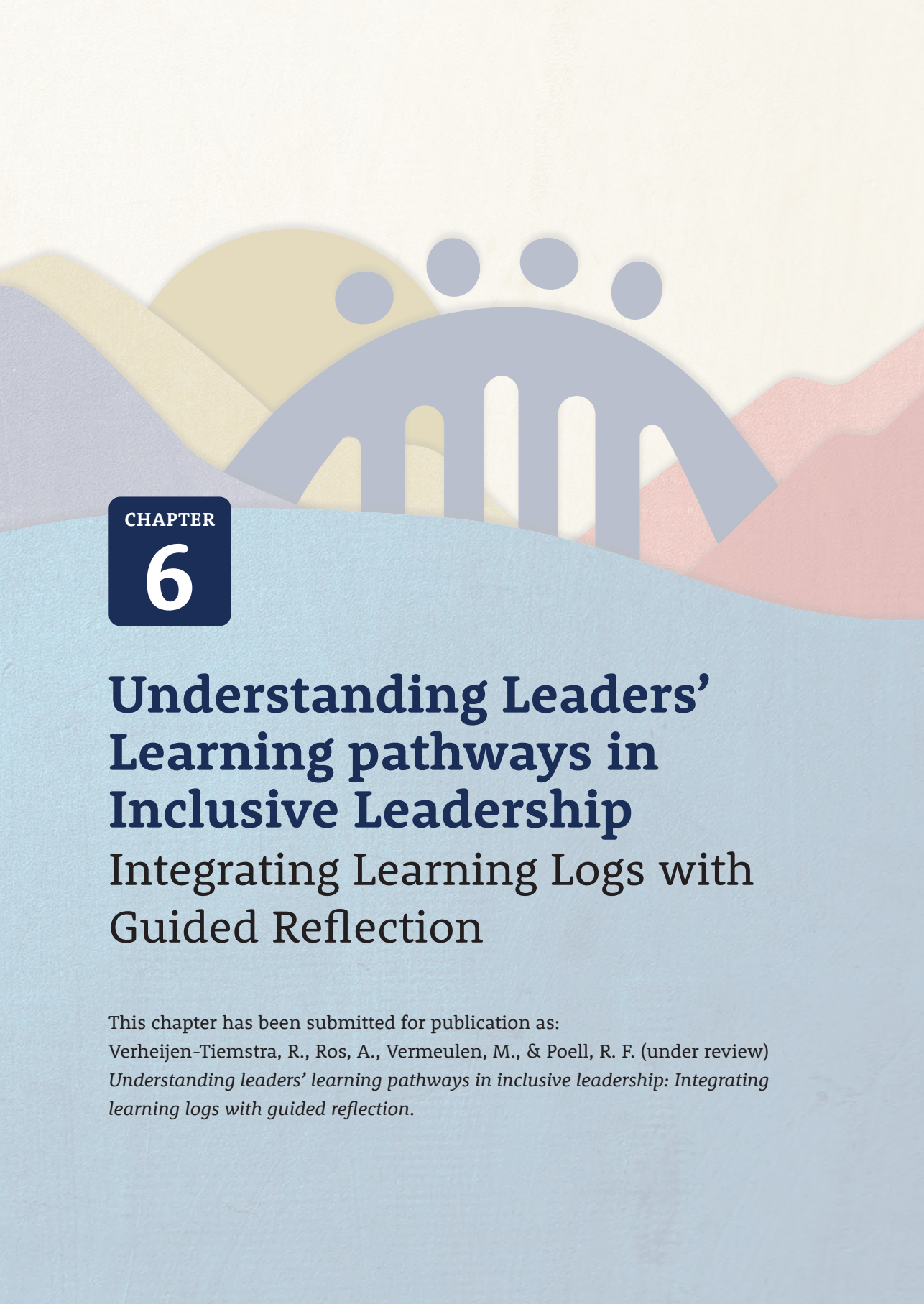
Secondly, we recommend practical solutions to ease the creation of learning logs, such as use of a mobile application. In line with Salamon et al. (2021), we discourage mandatory logs as well as integrating them into compulsory assignments. Instead, we suggest a low-barrier approach coupled with clear explanations, to promote self-regulated learning. However, our study also shows that self-regulated learning is not preferred by every participant and consideration should be given to those who would like more guidance in order to plan learning activities within their busy work schedules.

Reflecting on our findings and discussion, an additional focus of our research design would be to incorporate independent ILB observations to gain insights into whether perceptions of increased ILB are also recognised in daily practice. Consistent with Daniels et al. (2019), future research should involve the perception of multiple stakeholders. Furthermore, based on our findings that some participants expressed a specific need for guidance and assignments as part of the PDP, future research might consider focusing on self-directed learning and how motivation for participation could influence, mediate or moderate the need for guidance among leaders engaged in a PDP. Lastly, we would advocate for more extensive research on ILB, examining and correlating the significance that leaders attach to fostering belongingness and valuing uniqueness with the activities they use across the various facets of ILB.

Moreover, it would be relevant to study the development of ILB in other countries where collaboration occurs between primary education and ECEC, to see how inclusive leadership and an inclusive organisational climate are experienced by staff in their educational systems.

In conclusion, while studying the outcomes of participating in a PDP, our research suggests that designing and implementing a PDP cannot be reduced to a simple calculation. While there is some current consensus on what design criteria may or may not be considered effective, they do not necessarily lead to the same learning outcomes for all participants. As demonstrated by our study, participants follow their own unique learning paths, tailored to their individual needs and contextual factors that they deem important. Therefore, further evidence, aimed at understanding participants' individual learning paths as they develop over the course of a PDP, would be relevant.





CHAPTER

6

Understanding Leaders' Learning pathways in Inclusive Leadership

Integrating Learning Logs with Guided Reflection

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Understanding leaders' learning pathways in inclusive leadership: Integrating learning logs with guided reflection.

Abstract

In the field of human resource development (HRD), inclusive leadership is emerging as an innovative approach to leadership development, reflecting the growing importance of collaboration in the evolving work landscape. This study examines the development of inclusive leadership in an interprofessional education context. A professional development programme consisting of four sessions was conducted, where participants, as part of the programme, kept learning logs and reflective interviews with each participant were held between the sessions. The research question was as follows: How do school and childcare leaders develop their inclusive leadership behaviours in the workplace during a dedicated professional development programme? Analysis of the learning logs revealed that participants primarily engaged in a learning pathway of enactment, indicating direct experimentation in their professional context. The reflective interviews uncovered an extended repertoire of learning pathways that frequently incorporated learning through reflection. Our study shows the effectiveness of integrating learning logs with guided reflection as tools to assess and further encourage professional development. On a theoretical level, the Interconnected Model of Professional Growth (IMPG), which we used for mapping learning pathways, enabled us to effectively analyse learning pathways in achieving perceived professional growth in inclusive leadership.

6.1 Introduction

Recently, inclusive leadership has garnered increased research attention (Roberson & Perry, 2021; Veli Korkmaz et al., 2022). Inclusive leadership is defined as a leadership approach that fosters positive outcomes by creating an inclusive organisational climate that facilitates the incorporation of a broad range of viewpoints and concepts, consequently augmenting the decision-making procedures and elevating the effectiveness of diverse teams (Ashikali et al., 2021). Inclusive leadership advocates diversity, equity, and inclusion through active involvement and engagement of team members, encouragement of their contributions, and recognition of their distinctive perspectives and strengths (Randel et al., 2018). Byrd (2022) stated the importance of inclusive leadership in the field of human resource development (HRD) as a means of exploring innovative approaches to leadership development that are adaptive to the evolving work landscape. In contexts where team members experience strong fault lines, inclusive leadership behaviour (ILB) emerges as a suitable leadership approach, as this approach has a positive impact on employee behaviour, reduces turnover (Nishii & Mayer, 2009), and enhances employees' perceived insider status (Naseer et al., 2023; Shah et al., 2022).

One context where such strong fault lines are perceived is the context of child centres, where primary education is combined with out-of-school care, pre-school (ages 2-4), and day care (ages 0-4) (Fukkink and Lalihtu, 2020). Recent research by (Verheijen-Tiemstra et al., 2024b) has illuminated the need for enhanced inclusive leadership among school and childcare leaders. Their study revealed a focus on fostering belongingness over valuing uniqueness, while both aspects are crucial to achieving inclusion. In addition, it identified leaders' displays of both positive and counterproductive behaviours, hence hindering the full development of an inclusive organisational climate.

Building upon the aforementioned, the current study was devised to establish and simultaneously study a professional development programme (PDP). The primary objective of this programme was to facilitate participants' advancement in their inclusive leadership behaviour, with the overarching goal of promoting interprofessional collaboration (IPC) between employees of both schools and childcare. School leaders' workplace learning is a crucial aspect of their professional development and effectiveness, but little is known about how school leaders learn informally (Ringling et al., 2021). Hulsbos et al. (2015) earlier emphasized the value that school leaders place on informal workplace learning through improvement

and reflection. Ringling et al. (2021) stated that school leaders' informal learning opportunities are just as important as formal ones, and research on school leaders' workplace learning can be extremely beneficial to the field of leadership development. To narrow this gap, it is essential to engage in research that encompasses more formal learning opportunities while concurrently actively monitoring the informal learning experiences of participants within the workplace.

Based on the above, the following research question arises that we aim to address in this research: *How do school and childcare leaders develop their inclusive leadership behaviours in the workplace during a dedicated professional development programme?*

With this research, we aim to achieve several goals. Firstly, we aim to enrich the body of knowledge on the learning processes of school and childcare leaders, a field in which relatively little research has been conducted (Daniels et al., 2023). Secondly, we aim to expand knowledge on inclusive leadership by providing insight into the way leaders develop their inclusive leadership behaviours, a leadership approach that is relevant to HRD research given the transitions in the landscape of work (Byrd, 2022; Simmons & Yawson, 2022). The emergence of child centres and the subsequent need for IPC serves as an example of such a transition in which ILB becomes significant.

6.2 Theoretical Background

In this section, literature on the content of the PDP, specifically inclusive leadership, will be discussed, along with a review of school leaders' learning and the interconnected model of professional growth (IMPG; D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002)), which can act as a model for mapping learning pathways.

Content of the PDP: Inclusive Leadership

Interprofessional teams comprise individuals with diverse educational backgrounds and expertise who collaborate towards specific goals (Bryson et al., 2015). While this diversity can enhance outcomes through the integration of various perspectives, it can also lead to conflicts (Dwertmann et al., 2016; Mitchell et al., 2015; Shemla & Wegge, 2019). Based on this, establishing an inclusive organisational climate is advocated (Ashikali et al., 2021; Boekhorst, 2015; Shemla & Wegge, 2019), where individuals feel they are valued members of the workplace due to policies, practices and procedures that satisfy their needs for belongingness and uniqueness, without being pressured

to assimilate (Shore et al., 2011). Leaders play a crucial role in creating a strongly inclusive organisational climate by prioritising this in their day-to-day work (Ostroff & Bowen, 2016), using both direct and indirect mechanisms, such as encouraging or discouraging actions (Perry et al., 2021) and influencing team members' perceptions through their own behaviours (Boekhorst, 2015).

From the perspective that inclusive leadership facilitates the efficient operation of diverse work groups, addressing aspects inadequately handled by alternative leadership forms, Randel et al. (2018) developed a theoretical model of inclusive leadership comprising two dimensions that facilitate inclusion in groups: facilitating belongingness and valuing uniqueness. This model builds upon the earlier work of (Shore et al., 2011), who argued that uniqueness and belongingness work together to create inclusion. To achieve inclusion, both belongingness and uniqueness need to be addressed. However, leaders may prioritise belongingness, because they are used to emphasising collective goals over valuing uniqueness. This was confirmed by recent research by Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b), which revealed that leaders do not always apply inclusive leadership in practice, with behaviours related to uniqueness being particularly infrequent. Table 6.1 provides an overview of the two dimensions of ILB, their main aspects, and their definitions. It is noteworthy that effective inclusive leadership, rooted in relational leadership theories, transcends mere behavioural expectations, as shown in Table 6.1, necessitating a profound shift in perspective (Boutwell & Smith, 2023). To provide employees with experiences that reflect inclusion in which all individuals feel valued, engaged, and fully integrated into the group, leaders must adopt a mindset that transcends conventional notions of leadership as a social influence process (Nishii & Leroy, 2022; Roberson & Perry, 2021). In their view, it requires signal sensitivity and a profound capacity to discern and respond to the diversity dynamics inherent in relational processes.

Nishii and Leroy (2022) advocated a broader perspective that encompasses not only social inclusion but also informational and task-related inclusion, which is particularly salient within IPC contexts. Inclusive leaders should therefore actively counteract the detrimental influence of stereotype-based status dynamics, which could pressure team members with a lower (professional) status to conform to the dominant majority. Building on relational-cultural theory, Boutwell and Smith (2023) further elucidated that failures in inclusivity often originate from power imbalances, where individuals in dominant positions may unintentionally suppress the voices of others.

TABLE 6.1
Framework for Inclusive Leadership in IPC: Aspects and Definitions, Building on the Inclusive Leadership Framework by Randel et al. (2018)

Dimensions	Aspects and definition
1. Facilitating belongingness	A. Supports individuals as group members: Strengthens team cohesion and creates a sense of community through which school and childcare staff feel connected and feel pride in being members of the child centre team.
	B. Ensures justice and equity: Makes sure that all employees from both sectors, independent of their (professional) background, are treated with equal respect by distributing <i>and</i> recognizing justice and equity.
	C. Organises participation and information sharing: Organises joint responsibility and decision-making processes based on knowledge <i>and</i> information sharing.
	D. Is a role model for belongingness: Is a true role model by setting high standards for themselves through the establishment of robust and stable relationships with both childcare and school staff.
2. Indicating value of uniqueness	A. Encourages diverse contributions: Supports perspectives and orientations from staff from both sectors that may contribute to performance, even when those perspectives differ from mainstream views, by creating an environment that acknowledges, welcomes, and accepts different approaches, styles, perspectives, and experiences.
	B. Helps staff to fully contribute: Makes sure that group members do not hold back or encounter obstacles in contributing to the group.
	C. Is a role model for valuing uniqueness: Shows high standards for themselves in their own approach to employees from the other sector that shows appreciation for the professional uniqueness of these employees.

In conclusion, we posit that a comprehensive PDP should extend its focus beyond cultivating behaviours associated with inclusive leadership. It should also devote attention to nurturing a mindset conducive to embracing inclusive leadership. This multifaceted approach underscores the significance of fostering self-reflection on one's own actions, a process that can be undertaken by the learner individually, as well as through collaborative learning with peers and one-on-one reflective interviews.

School Leaders' Learning and the Interconnected Model of Professional Growth

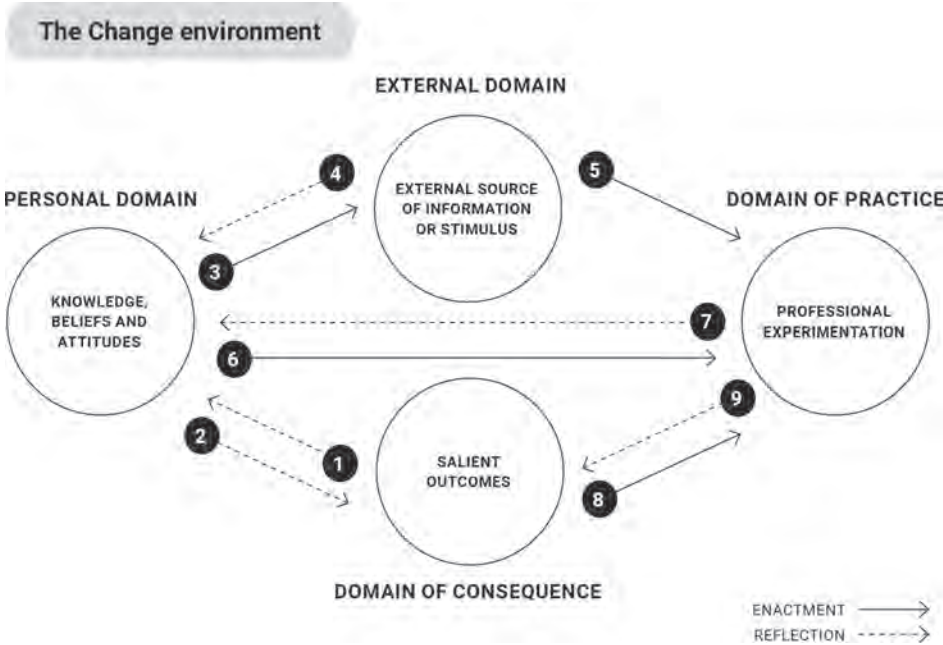
While research on the professional development of school leaders is somewhat limited and research on the professional development of childcare managers is scarce, various insights can be gleaned from the literature. Comprehensive reviews by Daniels et al. (2019) and Hulsbos et al. (2015) underscored the significance of context-specific, collaborative,

and reflective learning. Notably, self-directed reflective learning is highly valued by school leaders, but it is also perceived as challenging (M. B. M. Neeleman, 2019).

Recent research by Greenan (2023) underscored the challenge of immediate reflection, mentioning the perceived time constraints caused by the prioritisation of performance over reflection (Nesbit, 2012). Greenan (2023) therefore recommended supported reflection as a means of promoting deep reflection. In the same vein, Nakamura et al. (2022) advocated incorporating guided reflection approaches to enhance leadership development, based on their research using neuroscience methods that compared neurocognitive mechanisms during individual and guided reflection.

The aforementioned insights indicate that, in studying PDPs, it is imperative to attain an understanding of the combination of learners' perspectives and behaviours, alongside an analysis of the learning pathways they have undertaken. The interconnected model of professional growth (IMPG) proposed by D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) may be deemed a pertinent analytical framework to scrutinise the learning pathways of school leaders, stemming from workplace learning and with a strong focus on reflection-based learning.

FIGURE 6.1
The Interconnected Model of Professional Growth (D. Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 957),
Showing the 9 Learning Pathways



The model shown in Figure 6.1 presents an approach to professional learning that is valuable for theorising, understanding and enhancing teacher professional development and professional growth (Boylan, 2021). The model's concept encompasses four domains where learning can take place: the personal domain (knowledge, beliefs and attitudes), the domain of practice (professional experimentation), the domain of consequences (salient outcomes), and the external domain (sources of information, stimulus or support; (D. Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 950).

Changes in these four domains can be identified through two processes of enactment and reflection, comprising three different learning pathways: a direct pathway from the personal domain to the domain of practice and two indirect pathways from the personal domain via the external domain and the domain of consequences. Learning pathways comprise “two or more domains together, with the reflective or enactive links connecting these domains” (D. Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002, p. 958). According to these authors, not all changes are considered “professional growth”, and brief changes may be experimental and quickly abandoned. According to Justi and Van Driel (2006), change can be considered “professional growth” when more than two domains are involved or when a particular change is sustained over an extended period. Thus, the model surpasses other learning pathway models, such as those proposed by Guskey and Desimone (Boylan et al., 2018), in that it proposes an iterative approach that considers the diverse dynamics that allow for multiple growth pathways between domains, based on the belief that learning is a continuous and complex process (Perry & Boylan, 2018). The IMPG has been extensively cited not only in empirical research on teacher learning in various fields, such as mathematics and Lesson Study (Schipper et al., 2017), but also in research among science museum educators as learners (Piqueras & Achiam, 2019), which indicates the model's wide applicability. This makes it a promising model for studying the learning processes of school and childcare leaders.

6.3 Methodology

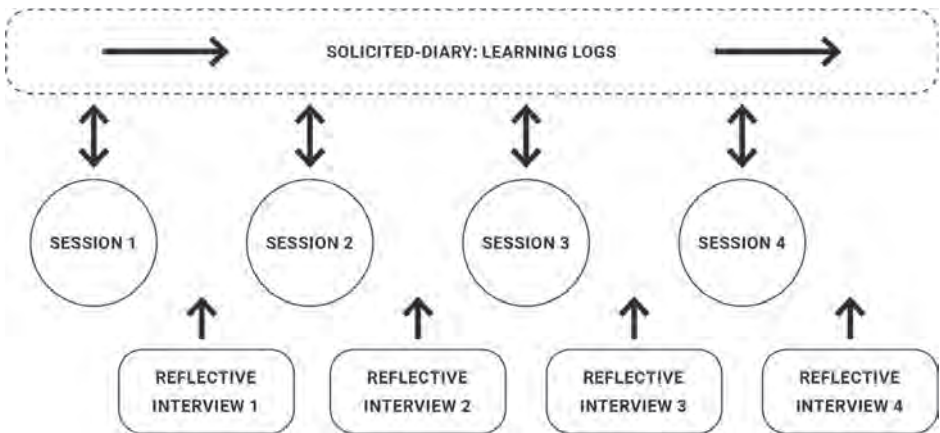
Our study follows a qualitative longitudinal design, as longitudinal studies are especially well suited for capturing processes that unfold over a specified duration (Ritchie et al., 2014), such as learning processes during a PDP. In this context, the purpose of qualitative research is to elucidate various facets of transformation (in this case, professional growth in ILB) and to illuminate the mechanisms through which they manifest. T. Brown et al. (2011) underscored the significance of qualitative research

into PDPs due to the rich insights it offers compared with conventional quantitative methods that rely on closed-ended questions.

Professional Development Programme

As shown in Figure 6.2, the PDP comprised four half-day sessions spanning October 2021 to March 2022, with interspersed reflective interviews serving both as a data collection method and as an intervention. Institutional ethical approval was granted by the Institutional Ethical Board on May 25, 2021, and informed consent was obtained from all participants. Participants were briefed on the study objectives and data collection procedures. The sessions, led by the first author, facilitated discussions on child-centre development, IPC, and inclusive leadership. An elaborate script, aligned with established design criteria and session objectives, was meticulously prepared for each meeting.

FIGURE 6.2
Overview of Data Collection



Participants

Participants in the PDP and data collection were school and childcare leaders who collaborated in eight child centres in the Netherlands. Recruitment was initially organised through a call in a newsletter in which pairs of leaders were invited to participate in a study on leadership within child centres. Leaders of the eight child centres showed interest and received further information on the purpose and approach and the conditions for participation. In total, 17 participants engaged in the entire PDP,

from seven child centres with two leaders responsible and one child centre where responsibility was divided among three leaders.

Data Collection

Considering the qualitative longitudinal design of our study and pursuing triangulation, we draw on learning logs written by the participants in their solicited diary and reflective interviews that occurred after each session.

Research-solicited Diary. This method is well suited for research that extends over a certain period, research that generates real-time data (compared to an interview), and research that may involve sensitive topics (Milligan & Bartlett, 2019). Participants received a semi-open format for a digital reflection diary and were asked to describe a situation they considered a powerful learning experience. Powerful learning experiences (PLEs) are defined as adult learning opportunities that expand and shift leadership perspectives, thus having the potential to enhance leadership capabilities and facilitate profound engagement in leadership roles (Cunningham et al., 2019). In this semi-open format, respondents briefly outlined the PLE and described their actions within that context using keywords. A total of 107 learning logs were completed by 17 participants.

Online Reflective Interviews. A reflective interview is a fundamental and appropriate method in addition to a solicited diary (Filep et al., 2018) from a rigour perspective, because it gives participants the opportunity to interpret their notes. Therefore, in between the sessions, brief online interviews via MS Teams were conducted with each participant, asking reflection questions about a powerful learning experience from the learning log diary that was selected by the participant as their most powerful learning experience, such as ‘What makes this meaningful?’ In the situations where it became clear during a reflective interview that a participant had not completed any learning logs, the participant was invited to describe a relevant learning experience on the spot, and the conversation proceeded from there.

Data Analysis

To code and analyse the data, the software programme Atlas.ti 23 was used for both the learning logs and the reflective interviews. In our analysis, we systematically coded both learning pathways and inclusive leadership behaviours. A codebook was developed to facilitate this analysis. In terms of operationalising the IMPG within the

context of our study, we employed the procedural steps delineated by Justi and van Driel (2006). Each step was discussed within the author team until consensus was reached on the content and implementation of each step.

In Step 1, we operationalised the four domains, as follows:

Personal domain: In our context, we operationalised the personal domain as encompassing knowledge, beliefs and attitudes on the facilitation of IPC between childcare and education.

External domain: The external domain refers to the sources that provide knowledge or practices during the four sessions, consisting of the PDP's content and learning from and with peers during the sessions regarding ILB aiming to enhance IPC.

Domain of practice: The domain of practice refers to situations in which the participants showed intentional action, using their knowledge regarding ILB during the PDP.

Domain of consequences: The domain of consequences refers to the domain where outcomes (here, increased IPC as a consequence of ILB) are interpreted. Compared with the original model, we slightly expanded this domain by including signals that indicate the absence of IPC.

In Step 2, we operationalised the learning pathways in the context of our study. Table 6.2 shows a description of each learning pathway, based on Justi and van Driel (2006) and adjusted for our study. In accordance with D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), we also coded for multiple learning pathways, which consist of a chain of pathways, thus connecting more than two domains.

In Step 3, the first and second authors engaged in coding text fragments from the first five interviews based on the analytical framework established. This was done in two waves, where differences and similarities were discussed and presented to the entire author team after each wave. This resulted in minor adjustments within the external domain regarding collaboration between leaders within the same child centre. When this type of collaboration occurred during the sessions, it was decided to code it in the external domain. After the second wave, a high level of agreement was reached, and the remaining interviews were coded by the first author.

TABLE 6.2**Criteria for Establishment of Learning Pathways in the Four Domains**

Learning pathway	Description, based on Justi and Van Driel (2006) and adjusted for our study
1. CD-PD [from consequences to personal]	When the learner reflects on results of professional action (e.g., exercising ILB), as evidenced by signals such as verbal or nonverbal feedback from employees, and translates that into practical knowledge, assumptions, beliefs or attitudes for the future
2. PD-CD [from personal to consequences]	When a specific aspect of the content knowledge, beliefs and attitudes around IPC, helps the learner reflect on a specific result as a consequence of their action
3. PD-ED [from personal to external]	When a specific aspect of the original knowledge/beliefs/attitudes influences what the learner has said or done during one of the learning activities
4. ED-PD [from external to personal]	When input from sources from the PDP (knowledge and/or peers) leads to expansion/change of own knowledge, beliefs, attitudes or assumptions
5. ED-DP [from external to practice]	When input from sources from the PDP (knowledge and/or peers) leads to the learner behaving differently in their professional practice, for example, by performing different and/or new activities that they carried out after the meeting
6. PD-DP [from personal to practice]	When the learner shows intentional ILB after the sessions, based on practical knowledge, beliefs or attitudes.
7. DP-PD [from practice to personal]	When something the learner did in their professional practice leads to reflection, where their own assumptions, practical knowledge, beliefs or attitudes change
8. CD-DP [from consequences to practice]	When the learner reflects on a specific result (e.g., employees showing more IPC) and this changes their own practical knowledge/assumptions/attitudes/opinions
9. DP-CD [from practice to consequences]	When something that participants did in their ILB practices caused specific outcomes that they recognise

In the next step of the analysis, we employed the multiple-label classification framework proposed by Hill et al. (2005). To avoid an undue emphasis on frequencies or percentages, this model uses labels to categorise level of occurrence. The categories used in this classification to describe the number of cases are general, typical, variant, and rare. To prevent any potential connotations, we replaced the term “variant” with ‘occasional’. Given that the classification framework was derived from insights gathered from a lower number of cases, we determined the number of participants who described a learning pathway within each category. This approach allowed us to

meaningfully classify our sample's learning pathways. Consequently, we categorised learning pathways as "general" if mentioned by 16 or 17 participants, "typical" if mentioned by 8 to 15 participants, "occasional" for 3 to 7 participants, and "rare" for behaviours mentioned by only one or two participants. To identify multiple learning pathways, we conducted a code-occurrence analysis using the AND operator in Atlas.ti on the fragments coded with a learning pathway, followed by a code-document table based on binary data to identify patterns of common (combinations of) learning pathways and prevalent inclusive leadership behaviours. These analyses were subsequently reviewed and discussed by the authors before being presented in the Findings section.

Learning Logs. The analysis of the learning logs proceeded as follows. Each learning log was coded for both the learning pathway and the dimension of ILB (for example, "facilitating belongingness", see Table 6.1.), based on the short description of the learning experience provided by the participant. If the relevant aspect (for example, "strengthening interpersonal relationships") was also described, this subcategory was also coded using the descriptions in Table 6.1.

While participants were encouraged to complete a learning log on a weekly basis or at least once between the sessions, this was not mandatory and resulted in a notable disparity in the number of learning logs submitted. In total, 110 coded fragments were related to inclusive leadership behaviour and 144 coded fragments were related to the IMPG analytical model. This means that in some learning logs, multiple learning pathways were addressed.

Reflective Interviews. Not all participants could participate in the originally planned four interviews because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control. In total, 59 (of 68 planned) reflective interviews were conducted with the participants. The process of data analysis resulted in 889 coded text fragments from these 59 interviews: 203 quotations related to inclusive leadership behaviour and 686 quotations related to the IMPG analytical model. Five coded text fragments indicated non-positive ILB: two fragments related to the absence of ensuring justice and equity, and three coded text fragments concerned not helping staff to fully contribute. Finally, quotes from the participants were translated into English to illustrate the main findings.

6.4 Findings

Learning Logs

A total of 110 learning logs were completed by 17 participants (number of logs per participant: min = 1, max = 17, mode = 5). Out of the 110 learning logs, 92 pertained to the category of facilitating belongingness, 8 pertained to valuing uniqueness, and 10 were coded “other”. Three learning logs indicated non-positive ILB: one learning experience pertained to the absence of role modelling, and two experiences were related to the lack of justice and equity. First, the content of the learning experiences is described within the ILB framework, followed by providing insights into the learning pathways pursued by the participants. Subsequently, examples are provided through quotations that describe (multiple) learning pathways, offering insights into both the discussed content related to ILB and the learning pathways pursued.

Table 6.3 provides an overview of the learning logs per participant concerning the ILB aspects to which their learning experiences are linked. The table illustrates that the dimensions and aspects of ILB did not occur uniformly in the learning logs of the participants. First, relatively few participants described learning experiences related to valuing uniqueness in the learning logs. The learning experiences were concentrated around “role model in belongingness”, “supports individuals as group members” and “ensures justice and equity”, all of which fell into the category “typical”.

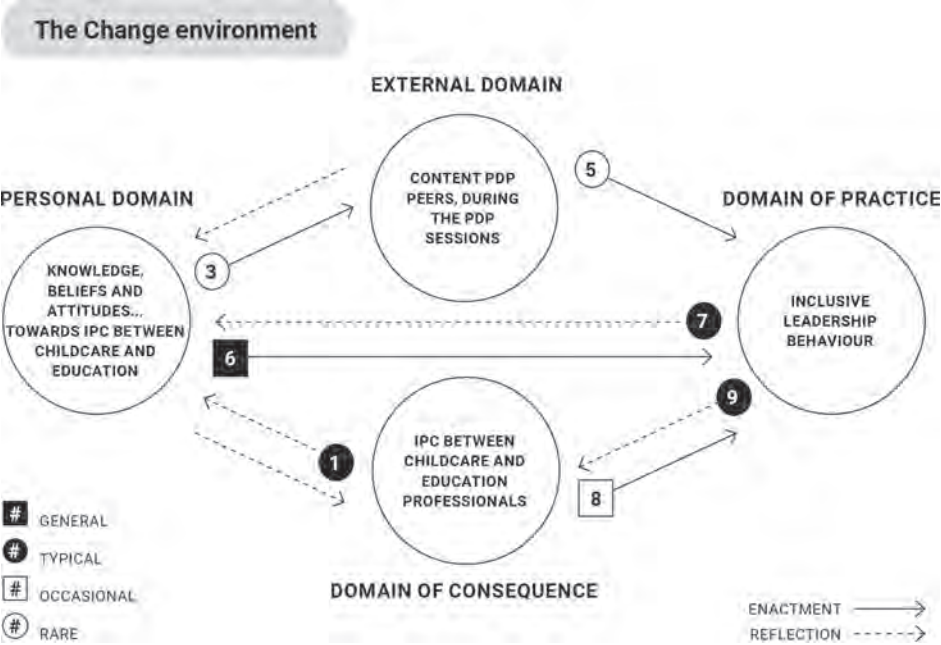
The second analysis concerned learning pathways. Figure 6.3 illustrates that seven out of the nine possible learning pathways were described in the learning logs. Of these, only one learning pathway fell under the classification “general”, namely, Pathway 6, involving direct action in practice based on personal knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes, which, for instance, meant that participants adjusted their actions based on the knowledge they had gained. For example, participants experimented with a new ILB. Three learning pathways could be categorised as “typical”, meaning that more than half of the participants (but not all) followed these learning pathways: Pathway 1 – CD-PD [from consequence to personal], Pathway 7 – DP-PD [from practice to personal] and Pathway 9 – DP-CD [from practice to consequence]. All three are based on reflection. Pathway 8 – CD-DP [from consequence to practice], which involves action based on a practical situation, was “occasional.” Pathway 3 – PD-ED [from personal to external] and Pathway 5 – ED-DP [from external to practice] were “rare”, indicating that only one or two participants followed these learning pathways.

TABLE 6.3**Descriptives and Overview of Learning Logs per Participant Concerning Inclusive Leadership Behaviour**

Name child centre (fictional)	Pseudonym participant	Sector	Number of learning logs	Supports individuals as group members	Ensures justice and equity	Organises participation and information sharing	Role model for belongingness	<i>Helps staff to fully contribute</i>	<i>Encourages diverse contributions</i>	<i>Role model for valuing uniqueness</i>
Aquilegia	Andrew	Education	11	x		x	x		x	
	Adeline	Childcare	8				x			
Begonia	Barbara	Education	8	x		x				
	Beatrice	Childcare	5			x	x			
Camellia	Cecilia	Education	5	x			x			
	Charlotte	Childcare	5	x			x			
Dahlia	Daphne	Education	5		x					x
	Deborah	Childcare	8	x	x		x	x		
Edelweiss	Ellen	Education	4	x	x					
	Emily	Education	9	x	x	x	x			
	Esther	Childcare	8		x	x	x	x		
Freesia	Felicia	Education	1	x						
	Francine	Childcare	5			x	x			
Gerbera	Gaby	Education	8	x		x	x			x
	Gwendolyn	Childcare	1	x						
Hydrangea	Hanna	Education	17	x	x	x	x			
	Hilda	Childcare	2			x	x			
Totals				11	6	9	12	2	3	0

Note. Italics have been used for aspects of 'valuing uniqueness'

FIGURE 6.3
Findings for IMPG Learning Logs, Based on the Classification by Hill et al. (2005)



Note. The depiction of the learning pathway number indicates its classification.

Co-occurrence analysis provided insights into the multiple learning pathways that participants pursued. Eight participants followed a CD-PD-DP pathway, eight participants followed a PD-DP-CD pathway, briefly reflecting on IPC as a salient outcome of ILB, and eight participants followed a PD-DP-PD pathway, reflecting on their professional experimentation.

An example of a multiple learning pathway, CD-PD-DP, related to facilitating belongingness by organising participation and knowledge sharing was demonstrated by school leader Gaby. Teachers complained to her that “OSC children” did not tidy up the play materials properly (CD) [implicitly suggesting that OSC-children did not fall under their purview, and that they also did not feel obliged to express this directly to OSC staff]. Gaby’s personal belief (PD) is that there is no such thing as “OSC children”, but that all children in the child centre are “our” children. She communicated this to the teachers (DP) and encouraged them to directly engage in dialogue with the OSC staff to make joint agreements regarding the tidying up of materials, as they share responsibility for all children.

An example of the PD-DP-CD route, concerning facilitating belongingness by ensuring justice and equity, was illustrated by school leader Barbara, who wrote:

I believe it is important to treat everyone in the child centre equally (PD). That's why I arranged for Santa's visit to also include the toddlers, and all employees – so both teachers and childcare workers – received a small gift (DP). This gesture was highly appreciated by the staff, as I heard back (CD).

Reflective Interviews

This section presents the results for the reflective interviews, beginning with a description of learning experiences within the ILB framework, followed by insights into the (multiple) learning pathways pursued. In addition, examples are provided to illuminate both the content of the learning experience related to ILB and the pathways taken.

To understand the dimensions and aspects that were the subjects of the powerful learning experiences discussed during the reflective interviews, we refer to Table 6.4. The table makes clear that the number of participants describing learning experiences related to valuing uniqueness is notably lower than the number of participants describing experiences related to facilitating belongingness, although the difference between the two dimensions is noticeably smaller than in the case of the learning logs. Five aspects fell under the “typical” category: “supports individuals as group members”, “ensures justice and equity”, “organises participation and information sharing”, “role model in belongingness”, and “helps staff to fully contribute”. It is noteworthy that the latter is an aspect of “valuing uniqueness”. The other two behaviours, both aspects of “valuing uniqueness”, fell under the “occasional” category.

TABLE 6.4

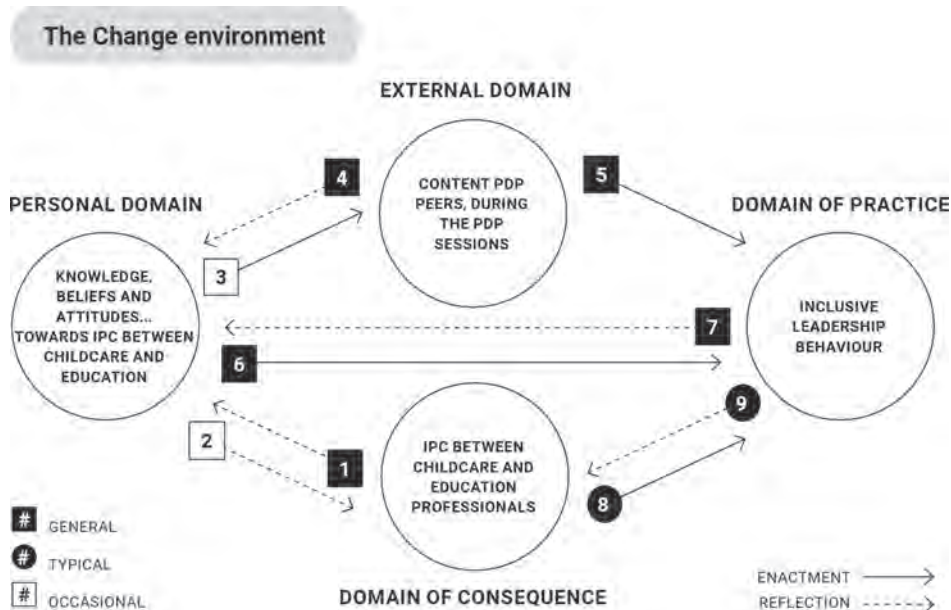
Descriptives and Overview of Reflective Interviews per Participant Concerning Inclusive Leadership Behaviour

Name child centre (fictional)	Pseudonym participant	Sector	Number of reflective interviews	Supports individuals as group members	Ensures justice and equity	Organises participation and information sharing	Role model for belongingness	<i>Helps staff to fully contribute</i>	<i>Encourages diverse contributions</i>	<i>Role model for valuing uniqueness</i>
Aquilegia	Andrew	Education	3		x	x	x			x
	Adeline	Childcare	4	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Begonia	Barbara	Education	3		x	x	x		x	x
	Beatrice	Childcare	2				x	x	x	
Camellia	Cecilia	Education	4	x	x	x	x	x		
	Charlotte	Childcare	4	x	x	x	x	x		x
Dahlia	Daphne	Education	4		x	x	x	x	x	
	Deborah	Childcare	4	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Edelweiss	Ellen	Education	3	x	x	x	x			x
	Emily	Education	4	x	x	x	x	x		x
	Esther	Childcare	4	x	x	x	x	x		
Freesia	Felicia	Education	3	x		x		x	x	
	Francine	Childcare	3	x		x				
Gerbera	Gaby	Education	3	x		x	x			x
	Gwendolyn	Childcare	4	x	x		x	x		x
Hydrangea	Hanna	Education	3	x		x	x			
	Hilda	Childcare	4						x	
Totals				12	11	14	14	10	7	7

Note. Italics have been used for aspects of “valuing uniqueness”.

FIGURE 6.4

Findings for IMPG Reflective Interviews, Based on the Classification by Hill et al. (2005)



Note. The depiction of the learning pathway number indicates its classification.

Figure 6.4 indicates that based on all reflective interviews, five learning pathways were classified as generally occurring among our sample: 1 – CD-PD [from consequence to personal], 4 – ED-PD [from external to personal], 5 – ED-DP [from external to practice], 6 – PD-DP [from personal to practice] and 7 – DP-PD [from practice to personal]. Two learning pathways were classified as typical, 8 – CD-DP [from consequence to practice] and 9 – DP-CD [from practice to consequence], and another two as occasionally occurring: 2 – PD-CD [from personal to consequence] and 3 – PD-ED [from personal to external].

Similar to the learning logs, a co-occurrence analysis yielded insights into the various learning pathways followed by the participants. Based on this, three examples are elaborated below, illustrating these multiple learning pathways while also providing clarity regarding the single learning pathways. In all instances, these single learning pathways represented generally occurring pathways, meaning that at least 16 out of the 17 participants described a powerful learning experience based on these pathways.

CD-PD-DP Path. This multiple learning pathway was described by nine participants. It originates from the domain of consequence, whereby a participant engages in reflection in response to a particular event and subsequently acts on the basis of this introspection. Cecilia's example provides a clear illustration of her understanding of community building as an aspect of facilitating belongingness, which extended to all staff members within the child centre. She shared her professional perspective with colleagues in the management team:

In the management team meeting, I had a bit of a setback when a colleague mentioned that “getting to know each other is not that important for primary teachers in the upper grades” (CD). But, as I have truly reflected on this matter (PD), I spoke up and said: “Actually it is important, because they are also part of our child centre. This requires a certain mindset that all staff should embody. Also, in the upper grades, you have responsibilities in that regard. We all work in a child centre, and that holds significance for every single one of us (DP)”. (Cecilia, Reflective interview 3)

ED-PD-DP Path. This multiple learning pathway was also found among nine participants. Hanna's experience is a practical example of this. In her first interview, Hanna mentioned the green keychain backpack that all participants received during the first session to remind them of the PDP in their daily practice. This, together with the conversation during the session about the importance of strong relationships from a belongingness perspective, initiated a change in the personal domain, which Hanna described as follows:

I have the green backpack keychain you gave us during the session, here on my desk, to remind me (ED). And now I think about the childcare workers more often, it's a bit of awareness (PD). And now I am actively visiting them more often for a little chat. Like, asking how their weekend was or something (DP). (Hanna, Reflective interview 1).

ED-DP-PD-Path. This multiple learning pathway was found among seven participants. In the following example, Hilda explained how she and Hanna engaged in conversation following the PDP session, during which goals of child-centre development were discussed. They planned a meeting to further deliberate on this matter:

Last week, after the session (ED), Hanna and I had a follow-up meeting (DP), primarily to discuss why we want to be a child centre. Are we doing this for

external perception or in the best interest of the child, and what does that entail? I found this discussion precious because it was the first time Hanna and I had talked about the purpose of becoming a child centre. When I truly reflect on it, I believe that facilitating transition moments is particularly beneficial. Making those moments easier for children. On the other hand, I consider it a challenge for a child to spend the entire day in the same place. In my opinion, it is also good for children to have the freedom to spend time in a different setting (PD). (Hilda, Reflective interview 2)

6.5 Discussion and Implications

Our aim in this paper was to enrich the knowledge base concerning the learning processes of school and childcare leaders, specifically within the realm of inclusive leadership. To this end, we addressed the following research question: *How do school and childcare leaders develop their inclusive leadership behaviours in the workplace during a dedicated professional development programme?* We answered this question by analysing the participants' learning logs and conducting reflective interviews, which were part of the PDP. The learning logs and reflections were analysed using an operationalised version of the IMPG framework developed by D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002). Furthermore, the aspects of ILB from Randel et al.'s (2018) framework were employed to provide insights into which ILB aspects the learning experiences encompassed. Both will be discussed here.

The findings concerning the learning logs revealed predominant engagement among participants in a learning pathway where the personal domain interconnected with the domain of practice through enactment, involving direct experimentation in professional contexts. The subsequent inclusion of reflective interviews expanded our understanding, exposing more extensive learning pathways that incorporated reflective practices as a general occurrence. While school leaders typically favour learning through reflection (Hulsbos et al., 2015), this can be challenging in practice (A. Neeleman, 2019). The broader repertoire of reflective learning pathways identified through reflective interviews serves as an indication of this challenge.

The multiple pathways encompassed all domains, potentially indicating sustainable professional growth in alignment with D. Clarke and Hollingsworth's framework. Our study highlights the efficacy of integrating learning logs with guided reflection as an intervention, as advocated by Greenan (2023). The fact that someone (in our study, the first author as a researcher and facilitator of the four sessions) posed

questions aimed at eliciting deeper introspection, enabling participants to examine and articulate their learning experiences, adds value compared to independent (written) reflection on learning experiences. This aligns with the findings of Schipper et al. (2017), who highlighted the benefits of an external facilitator in the PDP process. In addition, our findings resonate with qualitative research benefits in leadership learning, as previously advocated by T. Brown et al. (2011).

Participants predominantly focused on fostering belongingness in their learning logs. Although this aligns with expectations set forth by Randel et al. (2018) and recent empirical findings by Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b), an inclusive organisational climate requires both a sense of belongingness and valuing uniqueness. Reflective interviews revealed additional awareness of developing ILB by valuing uniqueness, suggesting that guided reflection instigated the exploration of valuing uniqueness to a larger extent than did the learning logs.

Our study suggests heightened participant awareness in consciously capitalising on ILB opportunities, as indicated by the scarcity of non-positive ILB we found in our study. Verheijen-Tiemstra et al. (2024b) suggested that non-positive behaviours may result from unconscious actions, causing leaders to unintentionally miss opportunities to exhibit ILB. The current findings suggest that professional growth within the personal domain had occurred, leading to heightened awareness of inclusive leadership, which is critical for enhancing collaboration and cohesion (Simmons & Yawson, 2022).

A strength of our study lies in its longitudinal and triangulated data collection approach. Specifically, the study incorporated four interview sessions with each participant, and the learning logs were documented over a period of 5 months. This approach enabled us to demonstrate that participants exhibited varying learning pathways over time, ultimately expanding their professional repertoire throughout the duration of the PDP. Our findings align with D. Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) conceptualisation of professional growth, which suggests that the occurrence of change is more than momentary and that changes in knowledge or beliefs are necessary to realise professional growth. Our findings suggest that a combination of offering thoughtfully selected content and employing both learning logs and reflective interviews affords numerous learning opportunities, thereby contributing to perceived professional growth.

Our study also has some limitations. A constraint of our study pertains to the methodological limitation that we, based on practical considerations, exclusively relied on data gathered through interviews and learning logs, without supplementing

our data with observational data of actual behaviours. A second limitation lies in the overlap between the learning experiences described in the learning logs and reflective interviews. On one hand, not every participant identified one or more learning experiences for each interview, while on the other hand, some participants had described several learning experiences in the learning logs, which required a choice to be made during the interview regarding which experience the participant considered most valuable to discuss. While some overlaps may have occurred, the benefits of applying triangulation prevailed.

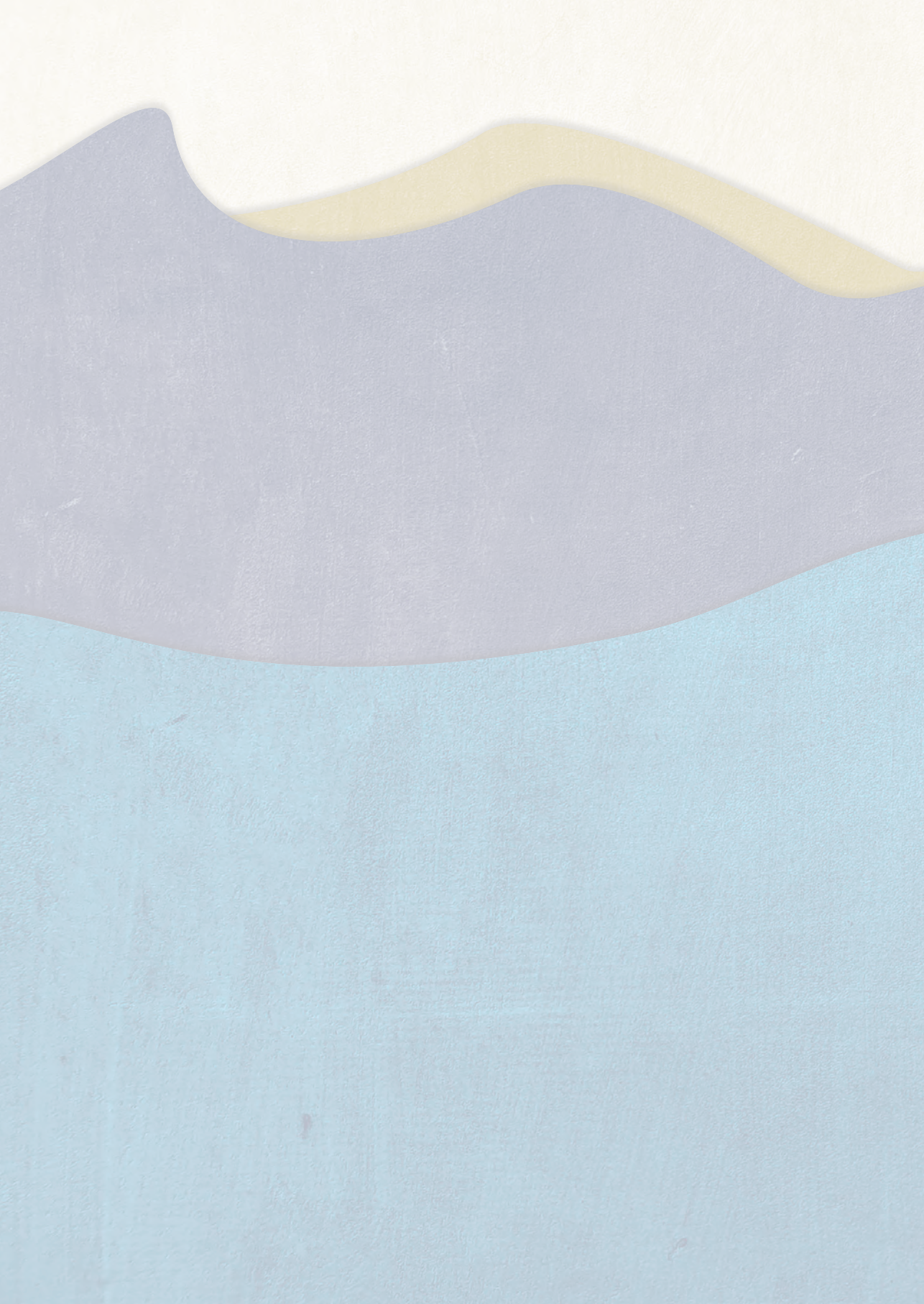
Implications for Theory and Practice

On a theoretical level, the IMPG enabled us to effectively analyse participants' learning pathways in attaining perceived professional growth in inclusive leadership. Our research suggests that the model may also be useful as an analytical tool in other contexts where the professional development of leaders is involved. However, further research is needed to ascertain whether this is indeed the case.

Furthermore, the combination of a PDP with learning logs and reflective interviews revealed a more comprehensive range of learning pathways, emphasising the benefits of triangulation as both a research methodology and an intervention and acknowledging the role of an external facilitator in professional development processes.

A suggestion for future HRD research regarding the use of the IMPG would be to conduct an in-depth case study to delve into the process of reflection in workplace learning in greater detail, to study whether different forms of reflection occur in different domains and learning pathways. D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) did not offer a detailed operationalisation of the concept of "reflection", and Justice et al. (2020) advocated for more research aiming to operationalise reflection as an activity embedded in workplace practices.

Regarding implications for practice, HRD professionals could focus on organising and supporting learning activities based on this PDP around inclusive leadership in contexts where IPC is considered increasingly important. We recommend making sufficient time and space available for such learning activities for facilitating guided reflection besides written reflections as part of the PDP, aiming at awareness of relational processes among employees with diverse backgrounds.



CHAPTER
7

General Discussion

7.1 Introduction

In this dissertation, the focus was on the complex field of leadership and interprofessional, cross-sector collaboration, a field relatively underexplored in terms of research. The aim of this dissertation was to gain a more profound understanding of effective strategies for fostering interprofessional collaboration (IPC) to enhance child centre development. In this dissertation, IPC is defined as “the process in which organisations interact in sharing information, sources, activities and expertise, aimed at achieving common goals” (J. M. Bryson et al., 2015; Page et al., 2015; Thomson & Perry, 2006; Willumsen, 2006).

Acknowledging the key contribution of leadership in driving development processes, an attempt was made to clarify the contribution of leadership within this context, and more specifically, inclusive leadership behaviour (ILB). ILB is defined as a set of positive leader behaviours that collectively facilitate all group members to perceive belongingness in the work group, while maintaining their uniqueness within the group as they fully contribute to group processes and outcomes (Randel et al., 2018, p. 190). In environments where professional hierarchies exist, inclusive leadership is believed to be beneficial because of its emphasis on incorporating the viewpoints and opinions of individuals who might otherwise be overlooked (Roberson & Perry, 2021).

The problem this dissertation addresses is complex because of its intractable nature, in which issues interact with other issues, thus becoming part of a system of interrelated problems. As noted by Head and Alford (2015), problem complexity is commonly characterised by the presence of diverse interests and values among stakeholders. Therefore, single perspectives often fail to capture the complex dynamics at play (Alford & Head, 2017).

The significance of this dissertation study is heightened by the intricate nature of the specific context it addresses, namely, the collaboration between childcare providers and primary schools within child centres. These two entities differ markedly from each other, and despite the positive attributes often associated with child centres, such as providing continuity in learning paths and maintaining a consistent pedagogical environment, these centres grapple with substantial challenges regarding practical integration (Taskforce *saamenwerking onderwijs en kinderopvang*, 2017). According to this Taskforce (2017) the level of collaboration that is needed, has not been achieved, and even more, IPC between both sectors appears to be stagnating. The role of leaders from both education and childcare is crucial in this process, as leadership

is considered to make a positive contribution to organisational effectiveness and improvement (Harris, 2020).

The added value of IPC between childcare and education for children has been minimally explored in the scientific literature. There is widespread agreement that high-quality early childhood education and care (ECEC) has proven benefits for children (Plantenga & Remery, 2017; Siraj et al., 2023). However, Keuning et al. (2022) stated that in the Netherlands, a suboptimal split system applies. This split is evident in the absence of prescribed core objectives for ECEC offered for children up to the age of 4 years, and the difference in the required level of education for ECEC professionals for children up to the age of 4 years (provided by childcare organisations) and ECEC professionals for children in the first 2 years of primary school. A high level of qualification is only required for the second part of ECEC, which is provided by schools (Eurydice, 2023). Institutional splits, and within childcare the split into commercial and non-commercial childcare providers, may be considered as a hindering factor for smooth transitions from childcare to education. Although IPC does not resolve the split systems, it can contribute to a smoother transition and thus may have positive effects on children's development. Longitudinal research to delve deeper into this matter is currently taking place in the Netherlands (Regieorgaan SIA, 2024).

This is also the case with transitions from school to OSC, as Dockett and Perry (2016) emphasised the critical role played by collaboration between schools and OSC in promoting positive experiences for children. The challenges arising from the absence of communication underscore the imperative for professionals in both sectors to appreciate the significance of effective communication in facilitating the transition between school and ECEC and OSC services. Dockett and Perry (2016) stated that neglecting such communication could result in failure to realise the potential benefits that childcare can offer for children's learning and overall well-being. They considered leadership within both the school and the child care provider to be an integral element in addressing these challenges.

Thus, in this dissertation the following main research question was addressed:

How can school and childcare leaders strengthen their leadership to foster interprofessional collaboration in child centres?

This research question was addressed in two parts. In Part 1 of this dissertation, titled "Mapping Interprofessional Collaboration in Child Centres", the extent and dimensions

of IPC between childcare and primary education were explored. Concurrently, obstacles were identified that could explain the stagnation of IPC and the role that leadership can play in resolving these obstacles. In this regard, the following sub-questions were posed:

1. What is the nature of IPC between childcare and primary education, how is it perceived by staff members and leaders across the two sectors, and what bottlenecks arise in this IPC?
2. To what extent do teachers and childcare workers at child centres perceive themselves to have the abilities, motivation and opportunities (AMO) to engage in IPC and to what extent can barriers to engaging in IPC identified by these professionals be classified using the AMO framework?
3. How well can school and childcare leaders' leadership practices be understood on the basis of the proposed model of inclusive leadership?

Based on the three chapters encompassing the first part, it became evident that leadership is crucial to address the obstacles to IPC that were found. The outcomes of these three studies led to recommendations aimed at augmenting the professional development of leaders within the domains of primary education and childcare, with a specific emphasis on inclusive leadership, as this leadership approach was assumed to hold promising potential for fostering IPC in the context of this dissertation. To this end, an intervention study was conducted, the outcomes of which constitute the second part of this dissertation, titled "Developing Inclusive Leadership". The following sub-questions were answered in this second part of the dissertation:

1. What were participants' perceptions of how their engagement in a professional development programme contributed to their advancement in inclusive leadership behaviour?
2. How did school leaders and childcare leaders develop their inclusive leadership behaviours in the workplace during a dedicated professional development programme?

7.2. Summary of the Main Findings and Conclusions

In this section, a thorough summary of the principal findings per chapter is provided, followed by a comprehensive conclusion that addresses the main research question.

Worlds Apart: Interprofessional Collaboration in Child Centres (Chapter 2)

Chapter 2 presents the research on dimensions and levels of intensity of interprofessional collaboration between primary schools and childcare services, based on an analytical model developed for this study and grounded on the validated rainbow model of integrated care (Valentijn, 2015). This model distinguishes the following dimensions where IPC may take place: child-centred dimension, professional dimension, organisational dimension, functional dimension, and normative dimension, supplemented by the systemic dimension at the macro level. The findings revealed that IPC occurs simultaneously with different levels of intensity. The correlations found between the IPC subdimensions were predominantly low to intermediate. On this basis, it can be concluded that IPC is a multidimensional construct: IPC occurs simultaneously within the distinguished dimensions with varying intensities. This offers a possible explanation for the fact that in previous research (Kieft et al., 2016; Van der Grinten et al., 2019) using unidimensional models, 20–25% of the participating child centres could not be classified. In general, the present study revealed that the IPC across all dimensions exhibited low to moderately low intensity. Seven of the 12 subdimensions were on the level of cooperation, which is considered the base level of IPC between parties (Keast et al., 2007). Within this, aspects of coordination were already visible within some subdimensions, such as smooth transition moments. The lowest level of intensity of IPC was found within the normative dimension, where the level of cooperation was not yet achieved. Analysis of the barriers perceived by leaders and staff demonstrated considerable disparities between school staff and childcare staff, thereby impeding the intensification of IPC. Most barriers were found in the normative dimension, often related to status differences based on differences in education level, expertise, dissimilar values and job perceptions, followed by the professional dimension, where inequality of collaborative learning was considered the major barrier.

Barriers to IPC between School Teachers and Childcare Workers (Chapter 3)

The mixed-methods study presented in Chapter 3 aimed to gain insights into the barriers to IPC between teachers and childcare workers, as well as the implications of these barriers for HRM and leadership. Based on the premise that much attention is paid to transition moments during the ECEC phase, childcare workers, teachers in Grades 1–3 and teachers in Grade 4 and above were divided into three respondent

groups when analysing the data. The data provided strong evidence that teachers in Grades 1-3 play a pivotal role in IPC within child centres. These teachers demonstrated the highest ability for IPC, as shown in their self-assessment and their ability to identify barriers arising from insufficient IPC by others, as shown in the qualitative data. Moreover, this group exhibited the most favourable motivation profile, characterised by elevated levels of autonomous motivation coupled with low levels of controlled motivation and amotivation (lack of motivation). Opportunity to perform was found to be the most important barrier to IPC, based on both the qualitative and quantitative data, and for all three respondent groups: childcare workers, teachers in Grades 1-3 and teachers in Grade 4 and above. Leaders have a pivotal role in enhancing the “opportunity to perform” by establishing prerequisites such as organising sufficient available time to spend on IPC, promoting an inclusive organisational climate, and demonstrating supportive leadership behaviour.

Fostering Collaboration through Inclusive Leadership (Chapter 4)

In this study, the inclusive leadership behaviour of childcare and school leaders was explored. To this end, a theoretical framework for inclusive leadership was used, developed by Randel et al. (2018), to explore whether this framework was useful for identifying inclusive leadership behaviours of school and childcare leaders who work together in child centres. The study revealed that in the study’s sample, more leaders described inclusive leadership behaviours facilitating belongingness, such as role-model behaviour and organising participation, than leadership behaviours valuing uniqueness.

Secondly, only positive ILB related to being a positive role model for belongingness was mentioned by all participants. For instance, this could involve showing interest in employees from the other sector, as by greeting them at the beginning and end of the workday and having brief informal conversations. Positive ILB regarding supporting individuals as group members was observed generally among school leaders only. This involved creating opportunities for education and childcare staff to meet informally or engage in joint activities to foster a sense of community.

Thirdly, non-positive behaviours – (un)intentional behaviours that could not be considered positive in terms of ILB – were mentioned concerning nearly all aspects for both dimensions, including role-model behaviour, although with varying frequencies. This is considered dysfunctional, as it disrupts the clarity of the message regarding the norms and behaviour expected from the employees (Boekhorst, 2015; Nishii & Paluch,

2018; Ostroff & Bowen, 2016). In our study, 19 of 24 leaders sent conflicting messages to their employees by displaying both positive and negative behaviours.

Strengthening Inclusive Leadership: Insights from a PDP (Chapter 5)

In Chapter 5, the objective was to explore how engagement in a dedicated PDP by school and childcare leaders contributed to their self-perceived advancement in ILB. To achieve this, we followed 17 school and childcare leaders working together in Dutch child centres. They were participants in a dedicated professional development programme (PDP) focused on inclusive leadership. The programme, which consisted of four sessions spread over 5 months, was built upon six design criteria derived from the literature, which served as the foundational framework for a dedicated programme tailored to develop inclusive leadership. The main finding suggests that participants' involvement in the professional development programme resulted in augmented awareness of their role in creating an inclusive organisational climate through inclusive leadership, which was manifested through increased use of inclusive leadership behaviours. Quantitative data revealed that within the belongingness dimension, *“organises participation and information sharing”* demonstrated a significant increase after the PDP and within the valuing uniqueness dimension, both *“encourages diverse contributions in a safe environment”* and *“helps staff to fully contribute”* showed a significant increase after the PDP.

Organising collective learning was considered a crucial design criterion, both during and between sessions. Participation in pairs generated avenues for learning between sessions, which manifested itself through collaborative retrospective or prospective reflections on sessions. Self-regulated learning via learning logs and reflective interviews provided opportunities for learning through reflection and showed that participants followed their own unique learning pathways, tailored to their individual needs and contextual factors that they deemed important.

Understanding Leaders' Learning Pathways in Inclusive Leadership (Chapter 6)

In Chapter 6, the aim was to gain an understanding of child centre leaders' professional development in inclusive leadership by considering leaders' learning pathways during a dedicated professional development programme. This inquiry was addressed through the analysis of learning logs and reflective interviews that were conducted in

between the four sessions of the professional development programme. These data sources were analysed using an operationalised version of the interconnected model of professional growth (IMPG) by D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002), specifically tailored for this research. The IMPG was found to be effective in supporting the professional development of both school and childcare leaders. It demonstrated its importance as a valuable analytical framework, enabling a thorough analysis of how participants progressed in achieving perceived improvements in inclusive leadership. The growth network concept of the IMPG model underscores the interplay of the four domains, where progress in one domain can influence the others. All participants demonstrated learning by connecting the PDP (external domain) with enactment of ILB (the domain of practice) and knowledge, attitude, and beliefs (personal domain), as well as making connections between the domain of practice and the personal domain. This highlights a significant shift in the personal domain, emphasising the importance of evolving perspectives on inclusive leadership, which is considered the foundation for sustainable professional growth through new or more intensive enactment in the field of ILB. The study also revealed that combining a PDP with learning logs and reflective interviews provided a more extensive range of learning pathways compared to a PDP using only learning logs. This suggests that guided reflection may prompt awareness of a broader range of aspects within ILB or may prompt more in-depth reflection. While in Part I of this dissertation, the findings indicated that school and childcare leaders displayed both positive and non-positive ILB, this study revealed a noteworthy absence of non-positive ILB in the learning logs and reflective interviews. This observation suggests substantial professional growth in the personal domain, resulting in increased awareness of inclusive leadership.

Answering the Main Research Question

Drawing from the five chapters that detail the empirical studies, it is now possible to address this dissertation's central question: *How can school and childcare leaders strengthen their leadership to foster interprofessional collaboration in child centres?*

This dissertation affirms that structural IPC between professionals in education and childcare does not occur spontaneously. IPC is a multidimensional construct, with various dimensions manifesting concurrently at various intensities. Overall, IPC often remains at a relatively low level, primarily characterised by cooperation, indicating low intensity of the relationship between parties, characterised by a high degree of non-committal IPC (see Appendix B) rather than structured or aligned

IPC. As indicated in the first study, child centre development encounters a hurdle before attaining the necessary, more structured level of IPC (Taskforce samenwerking onderwijs en kinderopvang, 2017; VVD et al., 2021). The outcomes of the analysis, based on the Child Centre Integration Model (CCIM), underscore this challenge. The subsequent study, described in the third chapter, delved into various reasons for this that are predominantly linked to insufficient opportunity to perform IPC.

A notable barrier arises from the absence of inclusivity, where status disparities, competing institutional logics, and organisational culture appear to play a role. The absence of inclusivity extends beyond cultural factors, encompassing differences in autonomy, budgets, and role conceptions. The role of leaders in promoting IPC is pivotal, as they serve as role models and actively lead towards an inclusive organisational climate through inclusive leadership. Inclusive leadership proves beneficial in contexts characterised by strong fault lines, as is the case for IPC between school and childcare staff, especially when childcare and education are divided (Gromada & Richardson, 2021; O'Connor et al., 2015). Although the effect of ILB on IPC has not been investigated in an experimental context, the perceptions of participants in the empirical studies do provide an indication that ILB may be a suitable means to enhance IPC.

However, effective ILB requires a dual emphasis on fostering a sense of belongingness while also valuing professional uniqueness. The ILB framework (Shore et al., 2011) illustrates that focusing solely on belongingness leads to assimilation instead of inclusion. In an assimilation scenario, employees are perceived as insiders only when they conform to the norms and values of the dominant partner in the collaboration, thus minimising their own professional uniqueness. Leaders in child centres in the sample of this study allocated more attention to fostering a sense of belonging than to appreciating professional uniqueness. Leaders with an assimilation orientation are often viewed as “well-intentioned,” as their core belief is that equality and fair treatment are moral obligations (Shore et al., 2021). Acting in this manner, however, imposes two norms on their employees, namely, to suppress any existing differences and to conform to the dominant culture within the organisation (Nishii & Paluch, 2018). As a result, appreciation for other professions is compromised, which is not effective when aiming to foster interprofessional collaboration. Furthermore, leadership that effectively fosters IPC requires consistent ILB rather than conflicting signals exhibiting both positive and non-positive ILB. This study demonstrated that a PDP can contribute to heightened awareness, resulting in congruently positive ILB.

In the realm of educational leadership, it has been well-documented that personal beliefs emerge as robust predictors of daily leadership practices (Kurland, 2019; Leithwood & Sun, 2012; Vekeman et al., 2019). When personal beliefs are not entirely congruent with the mission and vision of transitioning towards becoming a child centre, a mis-alignment between the person and the environment emerges, which can manifest as incongruent behaviour. The IMPG posits sustainable professional growth when a change occurs in the personal domain, specifically when there is a shift in personal attitudes or beliefs. The findings suggest that the PDP contributed to a change in the personal domain regarding these leaders' professional beliefs about IPC and child centre development. Because of their joint participation, participants gained a deeper understanding of each other as professionals, individuals and representatives of their sector. It could be that this heightened awareness contributed to the low number of expressions of non-positive ILB during the PDP.

7.3 Discussion

The following section provides a detailed analysis of certain themes based on the findings presented in this dissertation and explores possible explanations for the lack of high-level IPC.

Theme 1: Route to Inclusive Leadership

According to Nishii and Leroy (2022), inclusive leadership goes beyond mere behavioural manifestations, as it requires signal sensitivity. Hence, it is important to raise awareness when developing inclusive leadership, for example, by organising (guided) reflection. The findings of Part I of the present study hint at a possible sequence in inclusive leadership, considering facilitating “belongingness” as a prerequisite, and thus crucial in progressing towards “valuing uniqueness”. This presents an avenue for future research, suggesting that, based on L. M. Shore et al.'s (2011) 4-quadrant framework of inclusion, the route to inclusion (high belongingness, high value for uniqueness) occurs through assimilation (high belongingness, low value for uniqueness). Leaders who (unconsciously) pursue assimilation tend to exhibit a preference for the dominant culture in their behaviour. They often act under the belief that it is beneficial to provide opportunities for other employees to develop in this direction as well (Shore et al., 2021). Consequently, there is a risk that the professional insights of employees from the non-dominant group may be suppressed and left unspoken. This offers a possible explanation for the stagnation of IPC, as

valuing uniqueness in an environment where lower professional status hinders making contributions is crucial (Nembhard & Edmondson, 2006). The combination of positive and non-positive ILB, as outlined in Chapter 4, showed that in the sample in this study there was indeed a willingness to exhibit ILB, but translated into day-to-day behaviour, this did not automatically reflect the desired behaviour. This study identified non-positive behaviours that could be categorised as missed opportunities to deploy ILB or deliberate decisions not to deploy ILB. However, as implemented within the PDP and discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, raising awareness and developing greater sensitivity to signals in situations requiring ILB decreased these non-positive behaviours.

Theme 2: Inequality within IPC at the Child Centre Level

The Child Centre Integration Model constructed in Chapter 2, which was based on the Rainbow Model of Integrated Care (Valentijn, 2015), underscores the importance of having appropriate preconditions to foster child-centre development at the micro and meso levels by organising and ensuring equity within all dimensions of the CCIM. Valentijn (2015) argued that achieving increased integration requires addressing both the normative and functional dimensions, which represent the soft and hard preconditions, respectively. The study described in Chapter 2 supports this statement by revealing the lowest scores for IPC in the normative dimension. Despite the findings revealing notably low scores on soft preconditions, there are indications suggesting a need for improvement in hard preconditions as well, as indicated by the following statement from a childcare leader in a situation where the local government invested heavily in developing new buildings for child centres (see also Chapter 5):

What I am really aware of, is that inequality often begins in the building itself. Nine out of 10 times, there's a huge contrast between the size and the location of the offices of the school leader and the childcare leader. And you know, it should not make any difference, but it does affect how others perceive the situation. Like, where are parents received, in a nice office or in a broom closet?

This policy, in which the municipality is responsible for housing and invests in new buildings to serve as child centres, yet fails to contribute to the desired inclusion, highlights a problem that extends beyond inclusive leadership and the role of school and childcare leaders. Local authorities are only required to facilitate suitable accommodation for primary education, while childcare organisations are responsible

for providing their own accommodation. Notably, childcare organisations renting educational spaces generally do not have rental protection. This means that childcare organisations can be required to vacate these spaces at short notice if the school wishes to use them (Van Gennip & Wiersma, 2023). This is an instance where inequality at the child centre level arises due to disparities at the systemic level.

Theme 3, Divergent Institutional Logics

The findings indicate that within the study's sample, there was often a lack of awareness regarding interdependency, wherein staff from both sectors failed to recognise their mutual need to achieve common goals. This deficiency could contribute to the observed low intensities of IPC. Despite working in close proximity within the same building and acknowledging a vision that places “the child at the centre of the child centre”, this vision's significance was not always consistently internalised. In practice, prioritising the goals of their respective organisations appeared to supersede achieving shared objectives. Consequently, an “us-versus-them” mentality emerged, manifest in normative barriers and very low levels of IPC, even below mere cooperation, evident in interactions lacking mutual respect. Respondents frequently cited organisational culture as the primary driver of perceived barriers.

However, the concept of institutional logics offers promise for explaining these results, surpassing the scope of organisational culture. Institutional logics are typically conceptualised as overarching belief systems operating at the macro level, comprising norms, values, and standards resonating within respective organisations (Ricciardi et al., 2021; Thornton & Klyver, 2019). These belief systems play a pivotal role in guiding the behaviour of both organisational entities and individual actors, effectively determining which issues gain attention and which solutions are deemed legitimate (Raaijmakers, 2013). Institutional logics thus serve as a source of legitimation of practices, norms, or behaviours within organisations from a societal context (Hinings, 2012). Freidson (2007) identified three ideal types of institutional logics: the logic of bureaucracy, the logic of the market, and the logic of professionalism.

The logic of bureaucracy is characterised by traits such as transparency, stability, standardisation, and control. It is frequently linked with the public sector and upholds public values, such as ensuring equal access to services for all. On the other hand, the market logic prioritises competition, flexibility, and customer satisfaction. In this logic, customers (e.g., parents) evaluate the value and performance of providers, and providers must compete to meet the needs of these customers (Liljenberg, 2022). The third ideal type, professionalism logic, assumes that workers have control over their work through

professional autonomy and trust. Decisions made by professionals are considered legitimate due to their extensive training, competence, and personal expertise.

The education sector is traditionally positioned in professional logic, but is also influenced by bureaucratic logic, acknowledging the rules of hierarchy and seniority formally and informally established (Diehl, 2019; Dulude & Milley, 2021). Childcare in the Netherlands has long been primarily driven by a market logic, aiming to influence the employment of mothers with young children by providing childcare as a commercial service, enabling them to work while their children are cared for (Portegijs et al., 2018). In this logic, parents are considered customers of childcare services. However, the reality is more complex as despite privatisation, the sector also holds public value, for instance, through providing ECEC.

7.4 Limitations

The research described in this dissertation also has certain limitations. Notably, the sample was regionally oriented. While the sample for the various sub-studies conducted within this region in the southern Netherlands was diverse, the population of the Randstad [conurbation in the Western part of the Netherlands] was not included. This is worth mentioning, because challenges prevalent in metropolitan areas may indeed necessitate greater emphasis on IPC in the context of child centre development.

Furthermore, this dissertation relied heavily on qualitative research, in which perceptions were elicited through primarily qualitative data collection. This is an appropriate research methodology for situations where there has been limited exploration and understanding. Responding to the new context made it necessary to develop specific measures, tailored to this new context. To ensure reliability in this qualitative research, realistic vignettes were used, along with multiple data sources such as self-assessments, logbooks, observations, and interviews. Member-check procedures, measuring inter-rater reliability, ethical approval, and “thick descriptions” were also employed, as suggested by Anderson (2017). However, further insights could be gained through additional data collection methods, such as observing IPC and ILB, in future research. The foundation of these measures was built upon validated research models and instruments, which were operationalised and applied in a new context for the purpose of this dissertation. Quantitative validation of these contextualised instruments remains a task for future research.

Thirdly, a potential limitation in the intervention study could be the absence of a control group to measure the effects of this PDP. However, this intervention study was not intended to be an effect study, because professional development is highly contextual, depending on a variety of environmental and personal factors and considering the learner as an active participant (Baldwin et al., 2017). In response to Baldwin et al.'s (2017) call for more qualitative, learner-centred research, a qualitative account of participants' perceptions of their learning pathways during the PDP and the elements they considered important was chosen.

Lastly, it remains unclear whether participation in the PDP actually led to more IPC in the participating child centres. Based on the extensive literature regarding IPC in contexts with strong fault lines and its relationship with ILB, it was assumed that this relationship was also applicable in the context of this dissertation, but future research explicitly examining this relationship is recommended.

7.5 Theoretical Contribution

In detailing the key findings in Section 7.2, the focus lay predominantly on the empirical findings. In this section, the principal theoretical contributions of this dissertation are summarised. As little research has been conducted on IPC in this context, this study often used models and concepts from other disciplines that were then adapted and/or operationalised for the present study.

In Part I, several theoretical contributions were made that stemmed from the lack of research on IPC in the context of this dissertation and that formed an input for Part II of this dissertation. An analytical model was presented in Chapter 2, grounded in a validated measure from integrated care, the rainbow model of integrated care (RMIC) developed by Valentijn (2015). The model was operationalised for the context of this study and then combined with the 3C typology (Mandell et al., 2017) to define IPC between childcare and primary education more precisely. The child centre integration model (CCIM) distinguishes five dimensions at the micro and meso levels where IPC can occur. These dimensions are linked with the five levels of intensity of IPC, thus creating a matrix that allows for a fine-grained analysis of where and with what intensity IPC occurs.

The study described in Chapter 3 shows how a widely used model, the AMO model (Appelbaum et al., 2000), can be used to provide insight into how school and childcare

leaders as educational managers might enhance collaboration between teachers and childcare workers. Derived from the literature (Carmack & Harville, 2020; Knickel et al., 2019; Suter et al., 2009), IPC abilities were measured in a self-constructed scale, combined with the Work Motivation Scale (Gagné et al., 2015) and opportunity to perform (Bos-Nehles et al., 2017; Bos-Nehles et al., 2013; Boselie & Veld, 2012).

Refinement of the theoretical model of inclusive leadership developed by Randel et al. (2018) and its application in the education sector is the theoretical contribution presented in Chapter 4. Role-model behaviour was added explicitly as a separate aspect to the theoretical model, as well as non-positive behaviours to account for leaders' descriptions indicating that they were missing opportunities in situations where ILB would be essential, by not showing any expressions of ILB, or (possibly unintentionally) showing negative expressions of ILB.

Part II of this dissertation focused on the professional development of school and childcare leaders, building upon one of the conclusions drawn in Part I, which suggested that such development could contribute to improved IPC. The findings presented in Chapter 5 added to the relatively limited research on professional development of school leaders in general and on the content of ILB in particular. The use and appreciation by participants of design criteria that are considered effective for school leaders' professional development were empirically studied. Thus, this study responded to the call by Potter and Chitpin (2021), who stated that there has been little research regarding the kinds of professional development interventions school leaders desire in order to support their learning and development.

The application of D. Clarke and Hollingsworth's (2002) interconnected model of professional growth (IMPG), adapted to the context of inclusive leadership, was another theoretical contribution, presented in Chapter 6. The IMPG model, originally developed to measure teachers' professional growth, was operationalised for a novel target audience, namely, leaders. This operationalisation was found to be effective for gaining insight into the professional development of both school and childcare leaders. It demonstrated its importance as a valuable analytical framework, enabling a thorough analysis of how participants progress in achieving perceived advancements in inclusive leadership. Table 7.1 provides a concise overview of these theoretical contributions and the literature upon which they were built.

TABLE 7.1**Theoretical Contributions: Measures and Models**

Chapter	Theoretical model/ measure	Contributions, adaptations, and operationalisation
2	RMIC, rainbow model of integrated care (Valentijn, 2015) 3C typology (Mandell et al., 2017)	RMIC dimensions were rewritten for the specific context, tested, and combined with the 3C typology and two extremes for absence of, and maximal integration in a 5x5 matrix, yielding the child centre integration model (CCIM), suitable as an analytical framework and measure.
3	AMO framework (Appelbaum et al., 2000) Work motivation for IPC (Gagné et al., 2015)	The AMO framework was applied to assess employees' perspectives. In doing so, scales were devised based on the literature to measure IPC abilities, along with the opportunity to perform in IPC. Rather than employing scales commonly used to measure commitment or financial rewards to evaluate motivation, the Work Motivation Scale was used to gain insight into the nature of motivation for IPC.
4.	Inclusive leadership behaviour (Randel et al., 2018)	Inclusive leadership behaviours, as outlined by Randel et al. (2018), were operationalised in the context of this dissertation. Furthermore, they were augmented with role model behaviours as a distinct category, along with non-positive behaviours to encompass (un)intentional behaviours that do not foster inclusion.
5	Inclusive leadership behaviour (Randel et al., 2018) and Chapter 4 of this dissertation	Building upon the operationalised ILB framework in interprofessional contexts presented in Chapter 4, a self-assessment tool was developed to measure the scales of perceived inclusion and perceived ILB.
6.	IMPG, Interconnected model of professional growth (D. Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002)	The IMPG was originally developed to measure the professional growth of teachers. In this dissertation, we have expanded its use to encompass school and childcare leaders. Additionally, the model has been operationalised to track and analyse professional growth concerning ILB.

7.6 Implications for Practice and Policy

This dissertation has several implications for practice. Above all, at the child centre level, the models, measures and the professional development programme that were developed, as shown in Table 7.1, are suitable for use in policy and practice. Firstly, the CCIM presented in Chapter 2 can be used by schools and childcare organisations seeking to collaborate in a child centre, enabling them to determine their level of ambition based on this framework. Additionally, operationalisation within the CCIM

provides tangible guidelines for achieving more intensive IPC, thereby serving as a practical tool. Secondly, leaders within child centres can assess the preparedness of their employees for IPC within their organisation using the newly developed “AMO for IPC” questionnaire, which was presented in Chapter 3, so that they can support staff in further shaping IPC within the child centre through their leadership behaviour and HRM. Thirdly, leaders can engage in self-evaluation by completing the “ILB in Child Centres” measure, which was presented in Chapter 5, and subsequently establish ambitions and objectives. And lastly, the entire PDP, which was central to Part II of this dissertation, comprising manuals and other materials, is a valuable outcome that can be applied to the professional development of school and childcare leaders collaborating in child centres. When implementing these models in practice, interventions span across governance and employee levels, requiring alignment. School and childcare leaders who have developed professionally in ILB and recognise its importance for IPC may be more advanced than their governing bodies. To facilitate alignment, it is recommended that professional development should also be organised for school and childcare administrators.

At the systemic level, this dissertation also provides recommendations for policy and practice. When considering childcare as having a pedagogical purpose and aiming to promote the development of all children, rather than solely as a “convenience service for working parents”, it is advisable to explore ways to align financing and policy more closely with these objectives. For example, differences in financing, such as providing sufficient time for organising smooth transition moments or joint learning, pose a challenge in this respect. As child centres concentrate on children’s development, the childcare sector as a partner is increasingly held accountable for pedagogical goals. Nevertheless, they are expected to achieve these objectives within the constraints and opportunities of the market sector. Childcare workers have a total of 50 hours per year allocated for non-group-related tasks, including formal meetings, parent meetings, interprofessional meetings about children with special educational needs, writing observation reports, and preparing activities or themes. While the situation is obviously not entirely comparable, primary school teachers have a total of 700 hours per year for non-teaching tasks, which is a substantial difference (Overleg Arbeidsvoorwaarden Kinderopvang [Council Terms of Employment Childcare Sector], 2021; PO-Raad [Primary Education Council], 2024).

In line with this, the notion of that the current hybrid system in ECEC has advantages but also major disadvantages is highly endorsed. According to Van der Werf et al. (2020), the benefits of the current hybrid system include a more customer-

oriented mindset and entrepreneurialism, which challenges the system to be more agile and innovative. However, the disadvantages are considerable. According to Van Eijkel et al. (2023), commercial childcare providers are more likely to offer their services in affluent neighbourhoods where there is high demand for regular day care and where higher hourly rates are typically charged. This may result in a dichotomy between these areas, where higher profit is realised, and childcare facilities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, where it is more difficult to establish a profitable base. From a commercial perspective, there is little incentive to pursue enhanced accessibility of childcare and ECEC for children raised in disadvantaged circumstances, leading to segregation between children from affluent and less affluent neighbourhoods at a very young age.

7.7 Future Research

Some points for attention mentioned in the limitation section constitute relevant recommendations for future research.

Building on the suggestion in Chapter 4, where a connection was made between inclusive education and an inclusive organisational climate, it would be relevant to study whether increased ILB also contributes to more inclusive and equitable education. It is possible that within child centres, an inclusive organisational climate is important not only for IPC between primary education and childcare professionals, but also for IPC with other professionals from child welfare, and healthcare. A first direction for further research would focus on including these professional groups, especially in child centres that have ambitions to develop themselves as inclusive child centres, offering specialised education alongside regular education. Such research is relevant in the context of the ambition to offer inclusive education by 2035 and to build and share knowledge on this theme (Wiersma, 2023).

A second direction for future research following up on this dissertation is to differentiate between the various logics identified by Romijn et al. (2023). Romijn et al. (2023) used institutional theory to differentiate ECEC providers, identifying three distinct groups: commercial service-oriented enterprises, engaged professional organisations, and traditional bureaucratic organisations. The first group, comprising about 40% of providers, prioritises market-driven strategies targeting parents as clients and focusing on business efficiency. The second group, around 27.5% of providers, emphasises pedagogical quality, reinvesting profits for quality enhancement and staff development. The third group, representing a third

of providers, operates in a traditional bureaucratic manner. It is relevant to study whether IPC develops differently among schools and childcare providers based on these three logics, and if child centre development between schools and childcare providers progresses faster when the childcare provider is considered an engaged professional organisation instead of commercial service-oriented enterprise. Building upon this, understanding the perceptions of teachers in lower and upper primary levels regarding distinct childcare facilities (day care, ECEC, OSC) through the lens of the three distinct logics would also be relevant to investigate, because this knowledge could contribute to an explanation of the key role that teachers from Grades 1-3 occupy in relation to IPC. It is plausible that teachers from upper levels could associate a different logic with OSC compared to ECEC, although both are offered by the same childcare provider.

A third potential area concerns follow up research on the professional development of school and childcare leaders. At a time when the role of school leaders is becoming increasingly complex and there is a quantitative and qualitative shortage of school leaders (Onderwijsraad [Education Council], 2018), the relevance of research into the learning process of these leaders is increasing, from a societal perspective. This necessity is reinforced as primary education and childcare become more closely intertwined, extending to the professional development of childcare leaders. This dissertation provides points of departure for further research into self-regulated learning and the various factors influencing it, to gain insight into divergent preferences for self-direction, as found in this study.

A fourth area for further research concerns current shortages in both the primary education and childcare sectors. In both childcare and primary education, staff turnover is high, partly due to high workload and insufficient career opportunities (Bakker et al., 2023). Schools with a high percentage of pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds experience even higher staff turnover, which increases the likelihood of inequality (De Witte et al., 2023). IPC could help reduce this workload by implementing role differentiation in interprofessional teams. This could also create opportunities for career advancement that stand-alone schools and childcare organisations cannot provide. In this context, it is relevant to study whether employees working in a child centre where IPC has increased experience increased job satisfaction, increased well-being, and intend to stay longer in the organisation compared with those working in a stand-alone organisation or a child centre with less IPC. Such research would not only contribute to outcomes at the employee level, but also provide insights into outcomes at the societal level, fitting within the research model presented in Chapter 1. Findings could provide insights into retention of education and childcare staff and presenting child centres as an

attractive field to work in. These insights are particularly relevant in times of increasing staff shortages and their potential consequences for educational quality.

7.8. Concluding Remarks

As long as full integration with maximum IPC intensity as described in the CCIM has not yet been achieved, there is a substantial burden on the shoulders of school and childcare leaders to attain the level of integration that they strive for, within the current split and hybrid system. To advance ILB, it is therefore essential to strengthen the role of school and childcare leaders. The PDP presented in Part 2 is only a first, crucial step towards achieving this goal.

Drawing on successful strategies from the Nordic countries, improving the positioning and facilitation of childcare services could foster greater equality in IPC among staff from both sectors. This approach could effectively address the fragmented nature of childcare services and contribute to enhancing equality while reducing fragmentation. As it stands, inclusive leadership could contribute to improved IPC by fostering greater emphasis on facilitating belongingness and valuing uniqueness at the child centre level, but it cannot eliminate differences at the systemic level. Effective IPC requires leaders from both sectors to recognise their pivotal role as boundary spanners. But it is also crucial to acknowledge that some issues extend beyond differences in organisational culture, and are instead embedded in divergent institutional logics and policy implications. Therefore, a nuanced understanding of these complexities is necessary, as well as concerted efforts from different actors to address the systemic issues.

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Summary

Although policymakers, politicians and professionals have for years been committed to the realisation of child centres in which primary education and childcare work together for years (Dekker et al., 2016), in practice it remains difficult to properly organise this collaboration. Better collaboration between both sectors can lead to better quality of education and childcare, makes both sectors more attractive and can better support the development of the child (Van Gennip & Wiersma, 2023). However, the differences in legislation, financing models, qualification requirements and history between the two sectors may hinder this, interprofessional, collaboration.

Despite the relevance of the theme, little scientific research has been conducted on interprofessional collaboration (IPC) between childcare and primary education. IPC is defined in the context of this thesis as “the process by which organisations share information, resources, activities and expertise with the aim of achieving common goals” (based on Bryson et al., 2025, among others). Leadership plays a crucial role in this, as it is considered the most important factor in driving organisational change and improvement (Harris, 2020). This dissertation focuses on the role of leadership in the development of child centres and the professionalisation of school and childcare leaders to effectively fulfil this role.

The overarching research question follows from this:

How can school and childcare leaders promote interprofessional collaboration in child centre development, and how does professional development in leadership affect this?

This dissertation aims to gain deeper insight into how IPC can be promoted in child centres and the contribution of inclusive leadership to this. Interdisciplinary research was used to answer this research question. Insights from the domains of Integrated Care, Educational Science, Educational Management, Human Resource Management, Leadership and Human Resource Development have been combined.

Structure of this dissertation

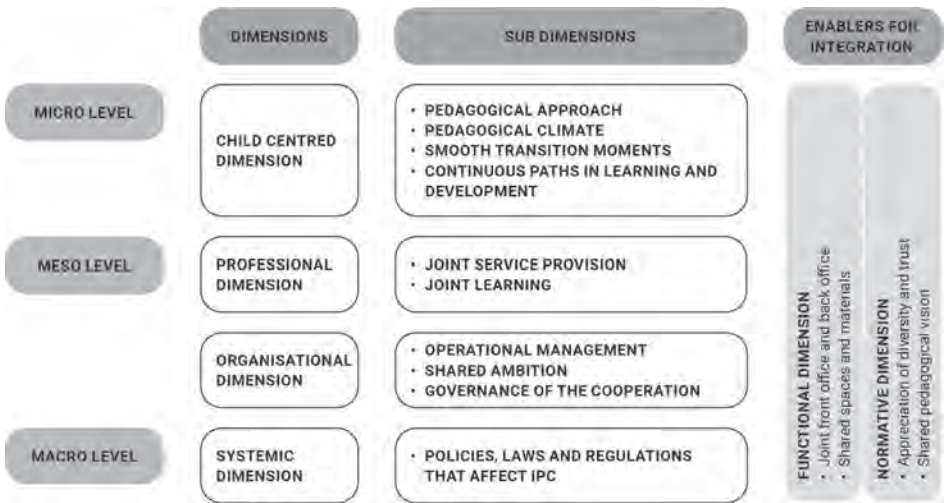
Part I of the dissertation examined the nature and intensity of collaboration between professionals in primary education and childcare, the extent to which employees are equipped for IPC and the question of whether leadership behaviour could be understood from a framework of inclusive leadership. Based on the results of part I, a professional

development programme was developed. Part II then focused on how school and childcare leaders developed professionally in inclusive leadership to shape IPC.

Part I

To investigate the extent to which IPC exists in the 16 child centres of this study, an analysis model was developed in a first sub-study, the Child centre Integration Model (KCIM), building on the Rainbow Model for Integrated Care.(Valentine, 2015). The KCIM identified six dimensions of IPC where there may be IPC between childcare and education. A simplified representation of this is included as Figure 8.1.

FIGURE 8.1
Overview of the dimensions of the Child centre integration model



The study showed that there is no single overarching ‘phase’ or ‘gradation’ of IPC within a child centre and that it is a multi-dimensional construct. It can be concluded that in the child centres examined, IPC was generally still characterised by a low to moderate intensity; On seven of the twelve sub-dimensions examined, the child centres scored the basic level of cooperation, characterised by a high degree of non-binding (Keast et al., 2007). Some child centres achieved a moderate intensity (coordination) of IPC on some sub-dimensions, indicating greater coordination. Among the child centres studied, the lowest level of IPC was found within the normative dimension. According to Valentijn (2015) this dimension encompasses social preconditions, such as shared values and an organisational culture based on mutual respect. On average, the basic

level of IPC (cooperation) was not yet reached at this level. The analysis of bottlenecks identified by employees and leaders revealed inequality in professionalisation, powers, budgets, and prioritisation, which was an obstacle for IPC. Status differences related to differences in professional expertise, task interpretation and education level were also identified as an important barrier.

The second sub-study revealed that both teachers and childcare workers consider themselves able and motivated for IPC. The lack of perceived opportunity for IPC, such as insufficient time, supportive leadership behaviour and an inclusive organisational climate were perceived the main barriers. The scope for these differed between the groups of teachers in Grade 1–3, teachers in Grades 4 and above, and childcare workers. Furthermore, teachers in Grades 1–3 had the most positive IPC profile: they perceived to be most able and combined this with the most favourable motivation profile, characterised by elevated levels of autonomous motivation combined with low levels of controlled motivation.

In sub-study 3 it was investigated whether leadership behaviour could be interpreted based on the framework for Inclusive Leadership Behaviour (ILB) of Randel et al. (2018), as detailed in table 8.1. From the results it could be concluded that among the school and childcare leaders studied, more leaders described ILB that facilitates belongingness, such as role model behaviour and organising participation, than leadership behaviour aimed at valuing uniqueness. All leaders gave examples of exemplary behaviour aimed at connecting employees between both sectors. However, not all leaders exhibited positive ILB. Non-positive ILB, which includes negative behaviour (such as making statements that could be considered stigmatising) or behaviour that cannot be considered positive in terms of ILB (absence of behaviour or missing opportunities for positive ILB) was also observed. In the sample studied, 19 out of 24 leaders described contradictory behaviour, showing both positive and non-positive ILB, which is considered dysfunctional because it prevents staff members from receiving a unified message as to what are the expected norms and behaviours (Boekhorst, 2015; Nishii & Paluch, 2018; Ostroff & Bowen, 2016).

The low score on the normative dimension, the perceived bottlenecks in IPC, the limited attention to valuing uniqueness, and the contradictory behaviours in ILB led to the conclusion that professional development of school and childcare leaders focused on ILB would be required to promote IPC between employees of both sectors. This could help to better realise the benefits of professional diversity.

TABLE 8.1
Model of Inclusive Leadership Behaviour, based on the framework of Randel et al. (2018)

Facilitating belongingness	Valuing uniqueness
Strengthen team cohesion where school and childcare staff feel connected, evidenced by robust mutual relationships between employees from both sectors	Creating a psychologically safe environment, in which diverse contributions from both sectors are welcome and acknowledged
Ensure (recognition of) justice and equality between employees of both sectors	Helps individual employees to contribute fully by making sure that group members do not hold back or encounter obstacles in contributing to the group.
Organising joint participation, and knowledge and information sharing between both sectors	Being a role model for valuing uniqueness by showing high standards in their own approach to employees from the other sector
Being a role model for belongingness by setting high standards for themselves through the establishment of robust and stable relationships with employees from both sectors	

Part II

Based on the results of Part I, a specific professional development programme (PDP) was developed for school and childcare leaders. The programme was based on six design criteria derived from the literature, which served as a basic framework for a tailor-made programme aimed at developing inclusive leadership. For instance, participation in the programme was entirely voluntary, with participants comprising pairs of school and childcare leaders. Also, the programme promoted self-directed learning using learning logs, reflection interviews, and self-assessments, on the premise that learning takes place during and between the sessions.

Thus, the second part of the dissertation focused on how participation in this PDP contributed to the participants’ growth in ILB, which design criteria were perceived essential and which learning paths they followed during and between the sessions.

The results of sub-study four showed that participation in the PDP made school and childcare leaders more aware of the importance of ILB for IPC between both sectors. Participants scored themselves significantly higher on the post-test on the aspect ‘organising participation and knowledge sharing’ within the dimension of facilitating belongingness and on two aspects of the dimension ‘valuing uniqueness’, namely promoting a ‘psychologically safe environment in which diverse perspectives are welcome’ and ‘encouraging employees to contribute fully’, for example by practicing difficult conversations in advance.

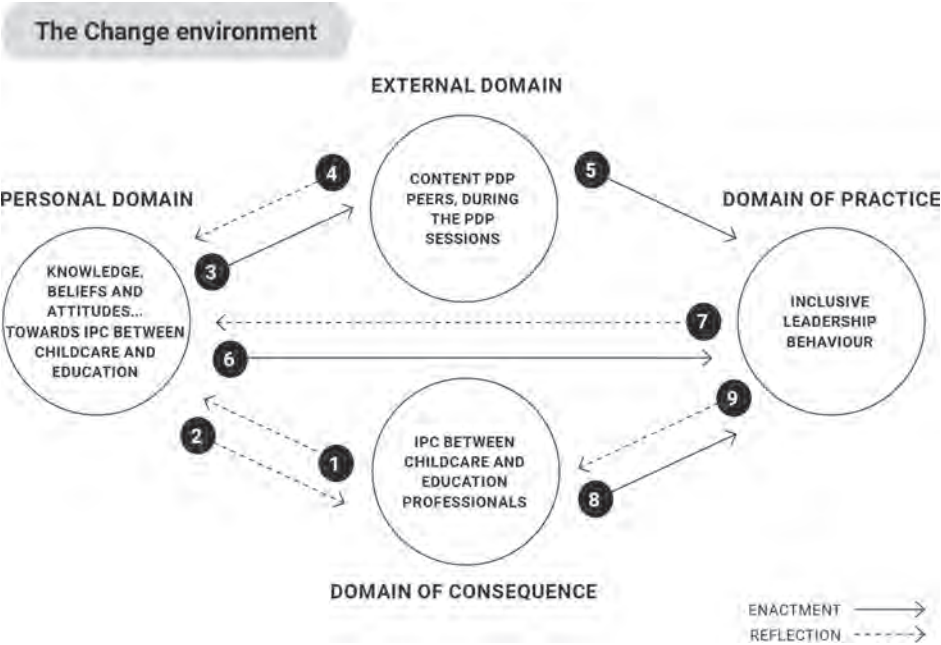


The design criterion of ‘collective learning,’ both during and between sessions, was considered essential by all participants. Working in pairs provided opportunities for learning between sessions, resulting in joint reflections back or forward from the sessions. Frequently mentioned was the practice of collective learning during the meetings, through exchanging experiences and linking them to theory. Participants also appreciated the opportunity for self-directed learning through learning logs and reflective interviews.

The fifth sub-study showed that participants followed unique learning paths, tailored to their needs and contextual factors. For this study, the interconnected model of professional growth of Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002) was used adapted for application in leader learning and used for the analysis of learning logs and reflection interviews (see Figure 8.2).

The results showed that participants learned by connecting the external domain (the PDP) with the domain of practice (application of ILB), as well as connecting the domain of practice with their knowledge, beliefs, and attitude (personal domain). During reflective interviews, participants identified more learning paths than in the logbooks, suggesting that guided reflection leads to deeper reflection. Unlike the third sub-study, non-positive ILB was not described by participants in this study, which may be an indication that growth in the personal domain leads to more conscious application of ILB, resulting in fewer conflicting signals.

FIGURE 8.2
Interconnected model of professional growth in ILB, after Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002)



Conclusion

This dissertation confirms that school and childcare leaders have a key role in promoting IPC between education and childcare professionals. A striking barrier for IPC is the perceived lack of inclusion, with us-them differences between staff from both sectors and where a sense of belonging was not always perceived. Recent research, including the work of Shore and Chung (2021) suggests that inclusive leadership may be a promising approach in work contexts where such differences are at play, such as childcare and primary education (Gromada & Richardson, 2021; O'Connor et al., 2015). And while an inclusive organisational climate does not solve systemic bottlenecks, inclusive leadership has the potential to contribute to a better climate for IPC. Indeed, ILB offers starting points to increase both IPC abilities and the opportunity to perform in IPC. For ILB to be effective, it is important that both dimensions of ILB are demonstrated: facilitating belongingness and valuing uniqueness. Joint participation of school and childcare leaders in a professional development programme led to greater mutual understanding and strengthened the professional ties between both groups. The combination of learning logs and reflective interviews led to more in-depth reflection and a wider range of learning paths than learning logs alone. This provided participants with the opportunity to follow their own unique learning paths, tailored to their individual needs and key contextual factors.

Discussion

In this section three themes will be examined that, based on the empirical findings, may be relevant as potential explanations for the stalling of IPC at lower and moderate levels.

1. *Route to inclusive leadership*: Inclusive leadership requires more from leaders than behavioural expressions. As endorsed by Nishii and Leroy (2022), signal sensitivity and awareness are also essential. The findings of this dissertation suggest a possible sequence in inclusive leadership, in which leaders first focus on facilitating belongingness before they also focus on valuing uniqueness. And this is problematic, because a focus on belongingness without simultaneously paying attention to valuing uniqueness can (unintentionally) lead to leadership focused on assimilation instead of inclusion (Shore & Chung, 2021). Assimilation is that situation in which employees are accepted when they adapt to the (behavioural) norms of the dominant group and minimise their unique characteristics.

2. *Inequality at child centre level*: Two dimensions of the Child centre integration model emphasise the importance of preconditions for IPC: the functional dimension and the normative dimension. Sub-study 1 showed that these preconditions are not always met. Although the child centres in our sample on average scored higher on the functional than on the normative dimension of IPC, visits to the participating child centres revealed that inequality between the two sectors also exists within the functional dimension, especially in the design of the building. This became clear through the differences between the offices of the school leader and the childcare leader, which may have an impact on the collaboration, especially if these design differences reinforce status differences.
3. *Divergent institutional logics*: Findings from this dissertation show that employees from both sectors do not always have sufficient awareness of their interdependence, where they need each other to achieve a common goal. The lens of institutional logics, macro-level belief systems that determine which issues receive attention and which solutions are legitimate (Raaijmakers, 2013; Ricciardi et al., 2021), could possibly play a role in explaining these results. Despite policy attention to child development, childcare in the Netherlands is mainly seen as a commercial service that enables parents to work (Roeters & Bucx, 2018). This indicates divergent institutional logics and as a result may lack a sense of common purpose and mutual dependence.

Theoretical results, implications, and suggestions for further research

In addition to the scientific insights and conclusions described above, the studies in this dissertation also contribute to research themes and the further development of theoretical models from other disciplines in a novel context. Table 8.2 provides an overview of the theoretical contribution per chapter.

Practical implications of the dissertation include the applicability of developed models, measurement instruments and the PDP in policy and practice. Schools and childcare organisations that work together can apply the CCIM to map the current IPC and determine ambition levels for each dimension. School and childcare leaders can use the AMO questionnaire from Chapter 3 to analyse the extent to which teachers and childcare workers are equipped for IPC. School and childcare leaders may apply the self-assessment presented in Chapter 5 as a means of evaluating their ILB and setting subsequent goals. The full PDP from Part II provides valuable materials for the professional development of school and childcare leaders who work together in child centres.

TABLE 8.2
Theoretical contributions: representations of the original models and further development

Chapter	Theoretical model / measure	Contributions, adaptations, and operationalisation
2	RMIC, Rainbow Model of Integrated Care (Valentijn, 2015) 3C-typology (Mandell et al., 2017)	RMIC-dimensions rewritten for specific context, evaluated, and combined with the 3C typology and two extremes for absence of, and maximal integration into a 5x5 matrix: Child Centre Integration Model, suitable as an analytical framework and measure.
3	AMO-framework (Appelbaum et al., 2000) Work motivation for IPC (Gagné et al., 2015)	The AMO framework was applied to assess employees' perspectives. In doing so, scales were devised based on literature to measure IPC Abilities, along with the opportunity to perform in IPC. Rather than employing scales commonly used to measure commitment or financial rewards to evaluate motivation, the Work Motivation Scale was used to gain insight into the nature of motivation for IPC.
4.	Inclusive leadership behaviour (Randel et al., 2018)	The inclusive leadership behaviours, as outlined by Randel et al. (2018), have been operationalised for the context of this dissertation. Furthermore, they have been augmented with role model behaviours as a distinct category, along with non-positive behaviours to encompass (un)intentional behaviours that do not foster inclusion.
5	Inclusive leadership behaviour (Randel et al., 2018) and chapter 4 of this dissertation	Building upon the operationalised ILB framework in interprofessional contexts as presented in Chapter 4, a self-assessment tool has been developed to measure the scales of perceived inclusion and perceived ILB.
6.	IMPG, Interconnected Model of Professional Growth	The IMPG was originally developed to measure the professional growth of teachers. In this dissertation, we have expanded its use to encompass school and childcare leaders. Additionally, the model has been operationalised to track and analyse professional growth concerning ILB.

This dissertation also has implications for policy practice at the system level. Childcare organisations are increasingly held accountable for pedagogical goals, but must achieve them within market constraints (Das et al., 2023; Van Gennip & Wiersma, 2023). This poses barriers for IPC, for example in time financing, which hinders equal input from both sectors for IPC, such as achieving smooth transitions between education and childcare. The notions but forth by Van der Werf et al. (2020) that the current hybrid system has both advantages and disadvantages is supported by the findings in this dissertation: the advantages in the field of entrepreneurship and innovative power, but also disadvantages that can arise from commercial considerations. In order to



prevent segregation based on socio-economic background, it is important from a policy perspective to pay attention to the accessibility of childcare and pre-school education for children from vulnerable neighbourhoods, as it is generally more difficult to provide a profitable offer in these neighbourhoods.(Van Eijkel et al., 2023).

Suggestions for further research

A first direction for further research concerns research into whether the CCIM can also be used to improve the quality of IPC between educational professionals and professionals from youth welfare and health care. Such research is relevant in the context of the ambition to provide inclusive education by 2035 and the pursuit of building knowledge around this theme (Wiersma, 2023).

In addition, research could be conducted into the question of how IPC develops within child centres that collaborate with childcare organisations and include in this the various logics as used by Romijn et al. (2023) in the context of ECEC. It would be relevant to study whether IPC develops differently depending among schools and childcare providers depending on the respective logics.

A third area of research concerns further research into how the professional development of school and childcare leaders can be further strengthened. Given the increasing complexity of the profession of school leader, and the quantitative and qualitative shortage of school leaders (Education Council, 2018), the relevance of research into the professional development of these leaders is also growing from a societal perspective. Given that primary education and childcare are becoming more closely intertwined, this increasingly also applies to the professional development of childcare leaders. This dissertation offers starting points for research into the way in which these leaders learn and what can be built upon.

A fourth suggestion for further research concerns the relationship between IPC and attractive employment practices, from the perspective of staff shortages in both primary education and childcare. From a starting point in which the inflow is too small to absorb the outflow of personnel, due to high work pressure and limited career opportunities (Bakker et al. 2023), this affects the quality of education and care. IPC may offer opportunities to alleviate work pressure by applying job differentiation in interprofessional teams, potentially resulting in career advancement opportunities for staff that standalone schools and childcare organisations cannot offer. In this context, it would be relevant to investigate whether this is indeed the case and whether employees who work in a child centre where more IPC takes place also experience an increased level of job satisfaction, improved well-being, and the intention to stay longer in the organisation. compared to employees who work in a standalone organisation or in a child centre where less IPC occurs.

Samenvatting (Summary in Dutch)

Hoewel beleidsmakers, politici en professionals zich al jaren inzetten voor de realisatie van kindcentra waarin basisonderwijs en kinderopvang samenwerken (o.a. Dekker et al., 2016), blijft het in de praktijk lastig deze samenwerking goed te organiseren. Betere samenwerking kan leiden tot betere kwaliteit van onderwijs en kinderopvang, maakt beide sectoren aantrekkelijker en kan de ontwikkeling van het kind beter ondersteunen (Van Gennip & Wiersma, 2023). De verschillen in wetgeving, financieringsmodellen, kwalificatie-eisen en geschiedenis tussen beide sectoren bemoeilijken echter de samenwerking.

Ondanks de relevantie van het thema, is er nog weinig wetenschappelijk onderzoek uitgevoerd naar interprofessionele samenwerking (IPS) tussen kinderopvang en basisonderwijs. IPS wordt in de context van dit proefschrift gedefinieerd als het proces waarbij organisaties informatie, bronnen, activiteiten en expertise delen om gemeenschappelijke doelen te bereiken (Bryson *et al.*, 2015). Leiderschap speelt hierbij een cruciale rol, aangezien het als belangrijkste factor wordt beschouwd in het aanjagen van organisatorische verandering en verbetering (Harris, 2020). Dit proefschrift richt zich daarmee op de rol van leiderschap in de ontwikkeling van kindcentra en de professionalisering van leiders uit onderwijs en kinderopvang om deze rol effectief te vervullen.

De overkoepelende onderzoeksvraag die hieruit volgt, luidt:

Hoe bevorderen school- en kinderopvangleiders interprofessionele samenwerking in het kader van kindcentrumontwikkeling, en hoe draagt een professionaliseringsprogramma voor leiders daaraan bij?

Dit proefschrift beoogt dieper inzicht te verkrijgen in hoe IPS kan worden bevorderd in kindcentra en de bijdrage van inclusief leiderschap hieraan. Bij het beantwoorden van deze onderzoeksvraag is gebruik gemaakt van interdisciplinair onderzoek. Hierbij zijn inzichten uit de domeinen Integrale Zorg, Onderwijskunde, Educational Management, Human Resource Management, Leiderschap en Human Resource Development gecombineerd.

Opbouw van dit proefschrift

Deel I van het proefschrift onderzocht de aard en intensiteit van samenwerking tussen professionals in het primair onderwijs en kinderopvang, de mate waarin medewerkers

zijn toegerust voor IPS en de vraag of leiderschapsgedrag kan worden begrepen vanuit een framework van inclusief leiderschap. Op basis van de uitkomsten van deel I werd een professional development programma ontwikkeld. Deel II richtte zich vervolgens op de vraag hoe school- en kinderopvangleiders zich professioneel ontwikkelen in inclusief leiderschap om IPS vorm te geven.

Deel I

Om te onderzoeken in welke mate er sprake is van IPS in de 16 kindcentra van deze studie, is in een eerste deelstudie een analysemodel ontwikkeld, het Kindcentrum-integratiemodel (KCIM), voortbouwend op het Regenboogmodel voor Integrale Zorg (Valentijn, 2015). Het KCIM identificeerde zes dimensies van IPS waar sprake kan zijn van IPS tussen kinderopvang en onderwijs. Een vereenvoudigde weergave hiervan is opgenomen als Figuur 8.3.

FIGUUR 8.3

Overzicht van de dimensies van het Kindcentrum-integratiemodel



De studie toonde aan dat er niet één overkoepelende ‘fase’ of ‘gradatie’ van IPS binnen een kindcentrum bestaat en dat sprake is van een multidimensioneel construct. Daarbij kan geconcludeerd kan worden dat bij de onderzochte kindcentra IPS over het algemeen nog gekenmerkt werd door een lage intensiteit; Op zeven van de twaalf onderzochte subdimensies scoorden de kindcentra het basisniveau van coöperatie, gekenmerkt door grote mate van vrijblijvendheid (Keast *et al.*, 2007). Sommige

kindcentra bereikten op enkele subdimensies een middelmatige intensiteit van IPS, wat duidt op meer afstemming. Op de normatieve dimensie, wat wil zeggen gedeelde waarden en een op wederzijds respect gebaseerde organisatiecultuur, scoorden de onderzochte kindcentra gemiddeld het laagst. Uit de analyse van knelpunten die medewerkers en leiders hebben aangegeven, kwam een ongelijkheid naar voren in professionalisering, bevoegdheden, budgetten en prioritering, wat belemmerend werkte voor IPS. Ook statusverschillen gerelateerd aan verschillen in professionele expertise, taakopvatting en opleidingsniveau werden als belangrijke barrière benoemd.

De tweede deelstudie liet zien dat zowel leerkrachten als pedagogisch professionals zichzelf als bekwaam en gemotiveerd voor IPS beschouwen. Het grootste probleem was het gebrek aan ervaren opportunity voor IPS, zoals onvoldoende tijd, ondersteunend leiderschapsgedrag en een inclusief organisatieklimaat. Dit gold voor alle leerkrachten en pedagogisch professionals, waarbij leerkrachten van groepen 1 t/m 3 zichzelf als meest bekwaam en gemotiveerd voor IPS inschatten.

In deelstudie 3 werd onderzocht of leiderschapsgedrag geduid kon worden op basis van het raamwerk voor Inclusief Leiderschapsgedrag (ILG) van Randel *et al.* (2018), zoals uitgewerkt in tabel 8.3. Uit de resultaten kon geconcludeerd worden dat onder de onderzochte school- en kinderopvangleiders meer leiders ILG beschreven dat verbondenheid faciliteert, zoals voorbeeldgedrag en het organiseren van participatie, dan leiderschapsgedrag gericht op waardering van eigenheid. Alle leiders gaven voorbeelden van voorbeeldgedrag gericht op verbondenheid van medewerkers tussen beide sectoren. Naast ILG gericht op het bevorderen van IPS, gaven de leiders ook voorbeelden van non-positief gedrag: gedrag dat niet bijdraagt aan IPS, bijvoorbeeld door het uitblijven van gedrag (gemiste kansen), of juist negatief bijdraagt (zoals stigmatiserend gedrag). In de onderzochte groep beschreven 19 van de 24 leiders zowel positief als non-positief gedrag, hetgeen als disfunctioneel wordt beschouwd (Boekhorst, 2015; Nishii & Paluch, 2018; Ostroff & Bowen, 2016).

Vanwege de lage score op de normatieve dimensie en de ervaren knelpunten in IPS-ondersteunend leiderschap en het inclusieve organisatieklimaat is de conclusie getrokken dat professionele ontwikkeling van school- en kinderopvangleiders gericht op ILG wenselijk is om IPS tussen medewerkers van beide sectoren te bevorderen. Dit zou kunnen helpen om de voordelen van professionele diversiteit beter te benutten.

TABEL 8.3**Model van Inclusief leiderschapsgedrag, gebaseerd op het raamwerk van Randel et al. (2018)**

Faciliteren verbondenheid	Waarden eigenheid
Versterken van teamcohesie waarbij medewerkers van school en kinderopvang zich verbonden voelen, blijkend uit robuuste onderlinge relaties tussen medewerkers van beide sectoren	Creëren van een psychologisch veilige omgeving, waarin diverse perspectieven vanuit beide sectoren welkom zijn en erkend worden
Zorgen voor (erkenning van) rechtvaardigheid en gelijkwaardigheid tussen beide sectoren	Stimuleren dat individuele medewerkers volledig bijdragen door ervoor te zorgen dat groepsleden zich niet inhouden of belemmeringen ondervinden bij het leveren van een bijdrage aan de groep.
Organiseren van gezamenlijke participatie en delen van kennis en informatie tussen beide sectoren	Eigen voorbeeldgedrag door hoge standaarden te tonen in de eigen benadering van medewerkers uit de andere sector waaruit waardering voor eigenheid spreekt.
Eigen voorbeeldgedrag waaruit realiseren van verbondenheid spreekt.	

Deel II

Op basis van de resultaten van Deel I is een professionaliseringsprogramma (leergang) voor school- en kinderopvangleiders van kindcentra ontwikkeld. Het programma was gebaseerd op zes ontwerpcriteria voor succesvolle professionalisering van school- en kinderopvangleiders, afgeleid uit de literatuur, als basiskader voor een leergang gericht op inclusief leiderschap. Zo was deelname aan het programma vrijwillig en deelnemers namen deel in duo's van school- en kinderopvangleiders. Zelfgereguleerd leren werd bevorderd via logboeken, reflectie-interviews, en zelfevaluaties vanuit het uitgangspunt dat leren plaats vindt tijdens en tussen de bijeenkomsten op de werkplek.

Het tweede deel van het proefschrift richtte zich op de vraag hoe deelname aan deze leergang bijdroeg aan de groei in ILG van de deelnemers, welke ontwerpcriteria zij daarin behulpzaam vonden en welke leerpaden zij volgden tijdens en tussen de bijeenkomsten.

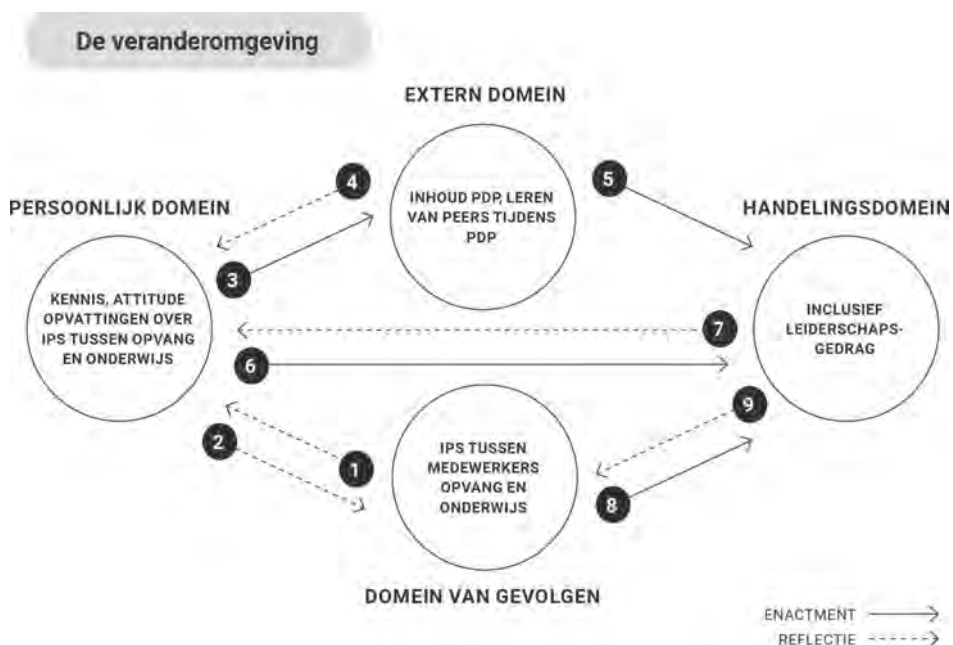
De resultaten van de vierde deelstudie toonden aan dat deelname aan de leergang school- en kinderopvangleiders meer bewust maakte van het belang van ILG voor IPS tussen beide sectoren. Ten opzichte van de voormeting scoorden de participanten

zichzelf significant hoger op de nameting voor het aspect 'organiseren van participatie en kennisdeling' binnen de dimensie 'faciliteren van verbondenheid'. Daarnaast scoorden ze hoger op twee aspecten van de dimensie 'waarderen van eigenheid': het bevorderen van een 'psychologisch veilige omgeving waarin diverse perspectieven welkom zijn' en het 'stimuleren dat medewerkers volledig bijdragen', bijvoorbeeld door moeilijke gesprekken vooraf te oefenen.

Het ontwerpcriterium 'collectief leren', werd door alle deelnemers genoemd als essentieel. Collectief leren vond zowel plaats tijdens de bijeenkomsten, door het uitwisselen van ervaringen naar aanleiding van theoretische input, als tussen de bijeenkomsten in de duo's, die gezamenlijk reflecteerden op hun gedrag. Het ontwerpcriterium 'bevorderen van zelfgereguleerd leren' werd gerealiseerd door het bijhouden van leerlogboeken en door reflectie-interviews, en leidde tot reflectie van deelnemers op hun ILG.

FIGUUR 8.4

Integratief model van professionele groei in ILG, naar Clarke en Hollingsworth (2002)



De vijfde deelstudie toonde aan dat deelnemers unieke leerpaden volgden, afgestemd op hun behoeften en contextuele factoren. Voor deze studie is het integratief model van professionele groei van Clarke en Hollingsworth (2002) aangepast voor de toepassing

bij het leren van leiders en gebruikt voor de analyse van leerlogboeken en reflectie-interviews (zie figuur 8.4). Uit de resultaten bleek dat deelnemers leerden door het externe domein (de leergang) te verbinden met het handelingsdomein (toepassing van ILG) en het persoonlijke domein (kennis, houding en opvattingen over IPS). Tijdens reflectie-interviews benoemden deelnemers meer leerpaden dan in de logboeken, wat suggereert dat begeleide reflectie tot diepgaandere reflectie leidt. Anders dan in de derde deelstudie werd in deze studie geen non-positief ILG genoemd, wat een indicatie is dat groei in het persoonlijke domein leidt tot bewuster toepassen van ILG.

Conclusie

Dit proefschrift bevestigt dat school- en kinderopvangleiders een belangrijke rol hebben in het bevorderen van IPS tussen onderwijs- en kinderopvangprofessionals.

Een opvallende barrière voor IPS is het ervaren gebrek aan inclusie, met wij- zijverschillen en een gebrek aan verbondenheid. In recent onderzoek, waaronder het werk van Shore en Chung (2021), wordt inclusief leiderschap gezien als een veelbelovende aanpak voor werkomgevingen waar dergelijke verschillen aan de orde zijn, zoals kinderopvang en primair onderwijs (Gromada & Richardson, 2021; O'Connor *et al.*, 2015). Hoewel een inclusief organisatieklimaat systemische knelpunten niet oplost, draagt inclusief leiderschap bij aan een beter klimaat voor IPS. ILG biedt immers mogelijkheden om zowel IPS-vaardigheden als de gelegenheid om IPS te tonen te verhogen. Om ILG effectief te laten zijn, is het belangrijk dat beide dimensies van ILG worden getoond: verbondenheid faciliteren en eigenheid waarderen. Gezamenlijke deelname van school- en kinderopvangleiders aan een professioneel development programma leidde tot meer wederzijds begrip en versterkte de professionele banden tussen beide groepen. De combinatie van leerlogboeken en reflectie-interviews leidde tot meer diepgaande reflectie en een breder scala aan leerpaden dan leerlogboeken alleen. Dit bood deelnemers de mogelijkheid hun eigen unieke leerpaden te volgen, afgestemd op hun individuele behoeften en belangrijke contextuele factoren.

Discussie

In deze paragraaf gaan we dieper in op drie thema's die, gebaseerd op de resultaten van de deelstudies, het stokken van IPS op lagere en middelmatige niveaus kunnen verklaren.

1. *Route naar inclusief leiderschap*: Inclusief leiderschap vraagt meer van leiders dan gedragsuitingen. Zoals onderschreven door Nishii en Leroy (2022) is ook signaalgevoeligheid en bewustwording belangrijk. Uit de resultaten van de

deelstudies valt af te leiden dat leiders zich eerst richten op het faciliteren van verbondenheid, voordat zij zich ook richten op het waarderen van eigenheid. En dit is problematisch, want een focus op verbondenheid, zonder gelijktijdig aandacht te geven aan waarderen van eigenheid kan (onbedoeld) leiden tot leiderschap gericht op assimilatie in plaats van inclusie (Shore & Chung, 2021). Assimilatie is die situatie waarin medewerkers worden geaccepteerd wanneer zij zich aanpassen aan de (gedrags-)nomen van de dominante groep en hun unieke kenmerken minimaliseren.

2. *Ongelijkheid op kindcentrumniveau*: Twee dimensies van het Kindcentrum-integratiemodel benadrukken het belang van randvoorwaarden voor IPS: de functionele dimensie en de normatieve dimensie. Uit deelstudie 1 blijkt dat aan deze randvoorwaarden niet altijd wordt voldaan. Hoewel kindcentra gemiddeld hoger scoorden op de functionele dan op de normatieve dimensie van IPS, bleek tijdens bezoeken aan de kindcentra dat ook binnen de functionele dimensie ongelijkheid tussen de twee sectoren bestaat, met name in de inrichting van het gebouw. Dit werd onder meer duidelijk door de verschillen tussen de kantoren van de schoolleider en de kinderopvangleider, wat mogelijk doorwerkt in de samenwerking, vooral als deze inrichtingsverschillen statusverschillen versterken.
3. *Afwijkende institutionele logica's*: Uit bevindingen van dit proefschrift blijkt dat medewerkers van beide sectoren niet altijd voldoende besef hebben van wederzijdse afhankelijkheid, waarbij zij elkaar nodig hebben om een gemeenschappelijk doel te bereiken. Institutionele logica's, overtuigingssystemen op macroniveau die bepalen welke kwesties aandacht krijgen en welke oplossingen legitiem zijn (Raaijmakers, 2013; Ricciardi *et al.*, 2021), die met elkaar in conflict zijn, kunnen dit mogelijk verklaren. Ondanks beleidsmatige aandacht voor de ontwikkeling van kinderen, wordt kinderopvang in Nederland vooral gezien als een commerciële dienst die ouders in staat stelt te werken (Roeters & Bucx, 2018). Hierdoor ontbreekt mogelijk het gevoel van een gemeenschappelijk doel en wederzijdse afhankelijkheid.

Theoretische opbrengsten, implicaties en suggesties voor vervolgonderzoek

De studies in dit proefschrift dragen naaste de hierboven beschreven wetenschappelijke inzichten en conclusies ook bij aan onderzoeksthema's en de doorontwikkeling van theoretische modellen uit andere disciplines. Tabel 8.4 biedt een overzicht van de theoretische opbrengsten per hoofdstuk.

Praktische implicaties van het proefschrift omvatten de toepasbaarheid van ontwikkelde modellen, meetinstrumenten en de leergang in beleid en praktijk.

Scholen en kinderopvangorganisaties die met elkaar samenwerken, kunnen het KCIM toepassen om de huidige IPS te evalueren en ambitieniveaus te bepalen. School- en kinderopvangleiders kunnen de AMO-vragenlijst uit hoofdstuk 3 gebruiken om de mate waarin leerkrachten en pedagogisch professionals toegerust zijn voor IPS te analyseren. School- en kinderopvangleiders kunnen de zelfevaluatie uit hoofdstuk 5 toepassen bij het evalueren van hun ILG en het stellen van doelen. De leergang biedt waardevolle materialen voor de professionele ontwikkeling van school- en kinderopvangleiders die met elkaar samenwerken in kindcentra.

TABEL 8.4

Theoretische opbrengsten aan de hand van de oorspronkelijke theoretische modellen waarop is voortgebouwd

Hoofdstuk	Theoretisch model	Theoretische bijdragen, adaptaties en operationalisatie
2	Regenboogmodel voor Geïntegreerde Zorg (Valentijn, 2015) 3C-typology (Mandell <i>et al.</i> , 2017)	RMIC-dimensies herschreven voor specifieke context, getest en gecombineerd met de 3C typologie en twee uitersten voor afwezigheid en maximale integratie in een 5x5 matrix: Kindcentrum-integratiemodel (KCIM), geschikt als analytisch kader en meetinstrument.
3	AMO-framework (Appelbaum <i>et al.</i> , 2000) Work motivation for IPS (Gagné <i>et al.</i> , 2015)	Het AMO-raamwerk werd toegepast om de perspectieven van medewerkers te beoordelen. Daarbij werden schalen ontwikkeld op basis van literatuur om IPS vaardigheden te meten, samen met de opportunity to perform in IPS. In plaats van schalen te gebruiken die gewoonlijk gebruikt worden om commitment of financiële beloningen te meten om motivatie te evalueren, werd de Multidimensionele Werkmotivatieschaal gebruikt om inzicht te krijgen in de aard van motivatie voor IPS.
4.	Inclusief leiderschap (Randel <i>et al.</i> , 2018)	De inclusieve leiderschapsgedragingen, zoals geschetst door Randel <i>et al.</i> (2018), zijn geoperationaliseerd voor de context van dit proefschrift. Verder zijn ze uitgebreid met voorbeeldgedrag als aparte categorie, samen met niet-positief gedrag om (on)intentioneel gedrag dat inclusie niet bevordert te omvatten.
5	Inclusief leiderschap (Randel <i>et al.</i> , 2018) en hoofdstuk 4 van dit proefschrift	Voortbouwend op het geoperationaliseerde ILG-raamwerk in interprofessionele contexten zoals gepresenteerd in hoofdstuk 4, is een zelfbeoordelingsinstrument ontwikkeld om de schalen van ervaren inclusie en ervaren ILG te meten.
6.	IMPG, Interconnected Model of Professional Growth (Clarke & Hollingsworth, 2002)	Het IMPG werd oorspronkelijk ontwikkeld om de professionele groei van docenten te meten. In dit proefschrift hebben we het gebruik ervan uitgebreid naar school- en kinderopvangleiders. Daarnaast is het model geoperationaliseerd om professionele groei in ILG bij te houden en te analyseren.

Ook op systeemniveau volgen uit dit proefschrift implicaties voor de beleidspraktijk. Kinderopvangorganisaties worden steeds meer verantwoordelijk gehouden voor pedagogische doelen, maar moeten deze realiseren binnen marktbeperkingen (Das *et al.*, 2023; Van Gennip & Wiersma, 2023). Dit leidt tot verschillen, bijvoorbeeld in tijdsfinanciering, waardoor gelijkwaardige inbreng vanuit beide sectoren voor IPS wordt belemmerd, zoals voor het realiseren van soepele overgangen tussen onderwijs en opvang. De door Van der Werf *et al.* (2020) voorgestelde voor- en nadelen van het huidige hybride systeem, worden op basis van dit proefschrift dan ook herkend: zowel de voordelen op het gebied van ondernemendheid en innovatiekracht, als ook de nadelen die kunnen ontstaan uit commerciële afwegingen. Teneinde segregatie op basis van sociaaleconomische achtergrond te voorkomen, is het uit beleidsmatig perspectief belangrijk oog te houden voor de toegankelijkheid van kinderopvang en voorschoolse educatie voor kinderen uit kwetsbare wijken, aangezien het in deze wijken doorgaans lastiger is een rendabel aanbod neer te zetten (Van Eijkel *et al.*, 2023).

Suggesties voor vervolgonderzoek

Een eerste richting voor vervolgonderzoek betreft onderzoek of het KCIM ook bruikbaar is om IPS tussen onderwijsprofessionals en professionals uit jeugdhulp en zorg te onderzoeken. Dergelijk onderzoek is relevant in het kader van de ambitie om in 2035 inclusief onderwijs te bieden en het streven naar opbouwen van kennis rondom dit thema (Wiersma, 2023).

Daarnaast zou onderzoek gedaan kunnen worden naar de vraag hoe IPS tussen kinderopvang en onderwijs zich ontwikkelt en hierin de verschillende logica's zoals die door Romijn *et al.* (2023) worden onderscheiden, te betrekken. Daarbij is het relevant om te bestuderen of IPS zich verschillend ontwikkelt afhankelijk van de logica's die de betreffende kinderopvangorganisaties hanteren.

Een derde onderzoeksgebied betreft vervolgonderzoek naar de wijze waarop de professionele ontwikkeling van school- en kinderopvangleiders verder kan worden versterkt. Gezien de toenemende complexiteit van het beroep van schoolleider, en het kwantitatief en kwalitatief tekort aan schoolleiders (Onderwijsraad, 2018), groeit ook vanuit maatschappelijk oogpunt de relevantie van onderzoek naar de professionele ontwikkeling van deze leiders. Nu primair onderwijs en kinderopvang dichter met elkaar verweven raken, geldt dit in toenemende mate ook voor de professionele ontwikkeling van kinderopvangleiders. Dit proefschrift biedt aanknopingspunten voor onderzoek naar de wijze waarop deze leiders leren, en waarop kan worden voortgebouwd.

Een vierde suggestie voor vervolgonderzoek heeft betrekking op de relatie tussen IPS en aantrekkelijk werkgeverschap, uit het oogpunt van de personeelstekorten binnen zowel primair onderwijs als kinderopvang. De instroom is te klein om de uitstroom van personeel, o.a. door hoge werkdruk en beperkte loopbaanmogelijkheden (Bakker et al. 2023), op te vangen en dit beïnvloedt de kwaliteit van onderwijs en opvang. IPS kan mogelijk werkdruk verlichten door functiedifferentiatie in teams, wat doorgroeimogelijkheden biedt die standalone scholen en kinderopvangorganisaties niet kunnen bieden. In dit kader zou het relevant zijn om te onderzoeken of hiervan inderdaad sprake is en of medewerkers die in een kindcentrum werken waar meer IPS plaats vindt ook een verhoogde mate van werktevredenheid ervaren, verbeterd welzijn en de intentie hebben om langer in de organisatie te blijven ten opzichte van medewerkers die in een standalone organisatie werken of in een kindcentrum waar minder IPS plaats vindt.

Appendix A - Definitions and Abbreviations

Throughout the entire dissertation, the following relevant constructs and abbreviations are encountered. Although these are also elucidated in the various chapters, Table A1 provides an overview of these constructs, abbreviations, and their definitions.

TABLE A1
Overview of Relevant Constructs and Abbreviations Used in this Dissertation and Their Definitions

Construct	Definition
Abilities for IPC	The knowledge, skills and competencies that individual employees possess (Marin-Garcia & Martinez Tomas, 2016) for IPC: understanding and appreciating professional roles and communicating effectively in interprofessional settings IPC (Garvis et al., 2016; Suter et al., 2009)
AMO-framework	A framework that proposes that individuals perform well when they have the ability (A), the motivation (M), and the opportunity (O) to perform (Beltrán-Martín & Bou-Llusar, 2018; Marin-Garcia & Martinez Tomas, 2016)
Belongingness	All group members feeling connected and accepted (Ferdman, 2013)
Child centre	Comprehensive facility designed to provide comprehensive primary education, combined with out-of-school care, pre-school (ages 2-4), and day care (ages 0-4) (authors' own definition)
ECEC	Early childhood education and care; In the Netherlands encompasses day care for children ages 0-4, provided by both for-profit and not-for-profit private childcare providers, as well as publicly funded preschools for children ages 2.5 to 4 years old from disadvantaged backgrounds (authors' own definition, in line with Dutch policy and practice).
Facilitating belongingness	Efforts aimed at meeting the need to develop and maintain robust and stable interpersonal relationships (Randel et al. (2018)
HRD	Human resource development; Research field in which people who learn and who create the contexts in which they and others can learn are studied (Poell, 2022)
HRM	Human resource management; management; Decisions related to policies and practices that together shape the employment relationship, and are aimed at achieving certain goals (Boselie, 2014)
ILB	Inclusive leadership behaviour; Set of positive leader behaviours that collectively facilitate all group members perceiving belongingness in the work group while maintaining their uniqueness within the group as they fully contribute to group processes and outcomes (Randel et al., 2018, p. 190)

Construct	Definition
IMPG	Interconnected model of professional growth (D. Clarke and Hollingsworth (2002); An approach for theorising, understanding and enhancing professional development and professional growth (Boylan, 2021), based on processes of enactment and reflection
Inclusive organisational climate	An organisational climate in which policies, practices, and procedures demonstrate that all individuals in the organisation perceive themselves to be valued members of the workplace, through experiencing treatment that satisfies their needs for belongingness and uniqueness, without pressure to assimilate in order to be accepted (Shore et al., 2011)
IPC	Interprofessional collaboration; The process in which organisations interact in sharing information, sources, activities and expertise, aimed at achieving common goals (Bryson et al., 2015; Page et al., 2015; Thomson & Perry, 2006; Willumsen, 2006)
Learning path	A set of learning activities that are both coherent as a whole and meaningful to the employee (Poell & van der Krogt, 2010, p. 217)
Learning pathway	A set of change sequences, consisting of two or more domains together with the reflective or enactive links connecting these domains, allowing recognition of the idiosyncratic and individual nature of professional growth. (author's own definition, based on D. Clarke and Hollingsworth, 2002).
Opportunity to engage in IPC	A set of environmental or contextual enablers of productive behaviour that are external to the individual (Bos-Nehles et al., 2020).
OSC	Out-of-school care; Includes before-school care, after-school care and vacation care for school-aged children (4-12 years) with supervised and planned activities in a safe environment while their caregivers are working or studying (Cartmel and Hayes, 2016)
PLE	Powerful learning experiences; Adult learning opportunity that expands leadership perspectives, thus having the potential to enhance leadership capabilities and facilitate profound engagement in leadership roles (Cunningham et al., 2019)
RMIC	Rainbow model of integrated care; Distinguishes four dimensions that play inter-connected roles on the macro- (system integration), meso- (organisational, professional) and micro-level (clinical integration) and two more dimensions (functional and normative integration) that enable connectivity between the various levels of integration (Valentijn, 2015)
Uniqueness	Maintaining a distinct and differentiated sense of self (Shore et al., 2011)
Valuing uniqueness	Supporting group members to retain their sense of individuality while contributing to group processes and outcomes Randel et al. (2018)
Work motivation	A set of energetic forces that originate both within and beyond an individual's being, to initiate work-related behaviour and to determine its form, direction, intensity, and duration (Pinder, 1998)

Appendix B - Child Centre Integration Model (CCIM)

The CCIM measures the intensity of interprofessional collaboration (IPC) within the identified dimensions and subdimensions of IPC between two sectors: childcare providers and primary schools in the Netherlands. The childcare sector broadly consists of three sections, including day care for children aged 0–4 years, early childhood education (ECE) at playgroups for children aged 2.5 to 4 years, and out-of-school care (before and after school) for children aged 4–12 years. Thus, within a child centre, four sections can be found: the school section, and day care, ECE playgroups and out-of-school care. For each subdimension and intensity of IPC, one or more brief characteristic descriptions are given. The CCIM aims to gain a clear understanding of the areas where interprofessional collaboration (IPC) occurs between primary schools and childcare providers, as well as the level of intensity of this collaboration within these areas. The model combines five dimensions with five levels of IPC intensity. Below is a brief explanation of the intensity of IPC.

Intensity of IPC

The CCIM assumes five levels, each reflecting a certain intensity of IPC: segregation, cooperation, coordination, collaboration and segregation. In segregation, although collaboration between organisations may take place, it is very incidental in nature and there is no mutual dependency. At the other end of the spectrum we find full integration, meaning that collaboration is fully integrated in a new (legal) entity and focused on the long term. The middle range is described as follows. *Cooperation* is seen as the starting point of IPC. It is a form that focuses exclusively on information sharing. It indicates a low-intensity form of IPC, often focused on the short term and based on personal contacts. There are hardly any risks associated with this non-committal form of collaboration; participating organisations retain full autonomy and work from their own goals. *Coordination* is an instrumental form of collaboration with medium intensity. Within this intensity, not only information exchange takes place, but also some alignment, aimed at realising one's own goals. In doing so, organisations still act according to their own procedures and practices (Mandell, Keast, & Chamberlain, 2017). *Collaboration*, according to Keast et al. (2007), is high-intensity. Collaboration is aimed at achieving new, shared goals. Participating organisations are aware that they need each other to achieve these goals. This form of IPC requires a large investment of time and a high degree of trust.

TABLE B1

Characteristics of Levels of Intensity of IPC per the Dimensions/Subdimensions of IPC between Childcare Providers and Primary Schools in the Netherlands

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
CHILD-CENTRED DIMENSION Pedagogical approach	1.1 Professionals act in accordance with the practices, procedures, and protocols of their own organisation. 1.2 Professionals do not know how colleagues from the other sector establish a pedagogical relationship – such as guiding interactions between children and interactions between children and professionals – or make their own choices in this respect.	2.1 Professionals generally act in accordance with the practices, procedures and protocols of their own organisation. 2.2 There are a few colleagues who, on their own initiative, are concerned with how colleagues from the other sector establish a pedagogical relationship, such as guidance of interactions between children and interactions between children and professionals. These colleagues often work in ECE at playgroups or ECE at primary schools.	3.1 Education and childcare staff generally learn from each other how to act and approach the guidance of interactions between children and interactions between children and professionals. 3.2 Professionals act in accordance with the practices, procedures and protocols of their own organisation. However, attempts are sometimes made to co-ordinate matters in certain areas, often in relation to ECE at playgroups or ECE at primary schools.	4.1 Education and childcare staff have – or are working on – joint agreements to realise an unambiguous pedagogical climate with regard to guiding interactions between children and between children and professionals. 4.2 Education and childcare staff work within a joint working group on common goals regarding the pedagogical approach. 4.3 These agreements apply to all four sections of the child centre.	5.1 There are demonstrable child centre-wide agreements on an unambiguous pedagogical approach and what this means for the pedagogical behaviour of all employees. 5.2 Periodic reviews show that children experience interactions between children and professionals in a similar way throughout the day.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
CHILD-CENTRED DIMENSION Pedagogical climate	1.1 Education and childcare staff do not know how colleagues from the other sector deal with (social) rules, and structure or else make their own choices in this respect. 1.2 Professionals do not know whether children experience the same safe and welcoming environment throughout the day. This is made more difficult by the fact that a child sees many faces during the day and there is a lack of coordination. 1.3 Professionals in education and childcare see the school and out-of-school atmosphere as two different environments that co-exist alongside each other.	2.1 Generally speaking, education and childcare staff do not know each others' rules or else make their own choices in line with their own organisation's practices, procedures and protocols. 2.2 Some colleagues are investigating on their own initiative whether children experience the same safe and welcoming environment throughout the day and how they can contribute to this. These colleagues often work in ECE at playgroups or ECE at primary schools.	3.1 Education and childcare staff are generally aware of how colleagues from the other sector deal with rules (of conduct) and structure. 3.2 Education and childcare staff act in accordance with their own organisation's practices, procedures and protocols. 3.3 Sometimes attempts are made to co-ordinate rules (of conduct) in certain areas. This can take place around ECE at playgroups or ECE at primary schools, or apply to a specific area, such as common playground rules.	4.1 Professionals from the education and childcare sectors have goal-oriented agreements to realise an unambiguous pedagogical climate with regard to rules (of conduct) and a safe environment for all children. 4.2 This is evidenced, for example, by a child centre-wide working group working on shared goals that relate to all parts of the child centre.	5.1 There are demonstrable child centre-wide agreements on rules (of conduct) and how to ensure a safe environment for all children. 5.2 Periodic evaluations show that children experience the same safe environment throughout the day, with childcare and education staff using the same standards.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
CHILD-CENTRED DIMENSION Smooth transition moments	1.1 There is no organised transfer of individual child data between professionals in childcare services and education. This applies to both horizontal (school to out-of-school care) and vertical (playground or day care to primary school) transition moments. 1.2 Children enter school from different childcare providers, or children did not attend day care or ECE 2.2 Information transfer at horizontal transition moments between education and out-of-school care (ages 4-13) is barely an issue, if at all; the timing and/or lack of support makes this virtually impossible.	2.1 During the transition from playgroup or day care to the first grade of primary school, a paper transfer of child data between school and childcare staff occurs. On an ad hoc basis – if one of the professionals involved takes the initiative – this can be expanded upon, but it is not given support in terms of time or space. 2.2 Information transfer at horizontal transition moments between education and out-of-school care (ages 4-13) is barely an issue, if at all; the timing and/or lack of support makes this virtually impossible.	3.1 There is agreement on a face-to-face transfer of child data from the playgroup to the first grade of primary school, supported by a transfer form. 3.2 When a specific situation arises, this form is usually expanded orally (ad hoc). 3.3 Regarding horizontal transition moments, it depends on the individual whether incidents that occur during the day (e.g., accidents, bullying, fights) are passed on to each other by the education and out-of-school care colleagues involved.	4.1 There is a purposeful and structured handover with respect to the transition from pre-school to primary school, at which time and space are provided for professionals from both sectors. In these consultations, the transfer form and other matters relevant to the child's functioning are discussed. 4.2 Regarding horizontal transition moments, it is customary for the education and out-of-school care colleagues involved to report incidents throughout the day (e.g., accidents, bullying, fights) to each other.	5.1 Childcare and education staff work in a fully integrated way and therefore transition moments are the same for all age groups. There is no specific transfer of children's data when attending the first grade of primary school because this is not a special transition moment. Transition moments – both horizontal and vertical – during which information is transferred are self-evident and transparent. 5.2 Periodic evaluations show that there is an integrated approach to the transfer of information at horizontal and vertical transition points.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
CHILD-CENTRED DIMENSION, Continuous paths for learning and development	1.1 There is no continuous path for learning and development. 1.2 Childcare and education staff act according to their own methodologies, practices and methods for their own target groups (ages 0-4, 2.5-4 and 4-13). 2.2 Occasional initiatives to connect with a theme or approach used by the co-operating partner mainly concern ECE at playgroups and ECE at primary schools. 2.3 Childcare staff is invited to join a school activity with their group occasionally, but timing makes this virtually impossible.	2.1 A few colleagues contact colleagues from the partner organisation on their own initiative to see if there is an occasional opportunity to connect on a theme or activity related to this theme. 2.2 Occasional initiatives to connect with a theme or approach used by the co-operating partner mainly concern ECE at playgroups and ECE at primary schools. 2.3 Childcare staff is invited to join a school activity with their group occasionally, but timing makes this virtually impossible.	3.1 There is regular coordination between professionals from childcare and education, especially between staff from ECE at playgroups or ECE at primary schools. 3.2 The curricula of the domains of language and mathematics and socio-emotional developmental areas are – in part – coordinated with each other, for example, by choosing themes that match.	4.1 Education and childcare staff work on a single, continuous programme for 0- to 13-year-olds for the curricula of the domains of language and mathematics and socio-emotional development areas, or there are clear agreements that work on the basis of shared goals and themes. 4.2 Within this programme, there is a specific role for out-of-school care, with a focus on stimulating the broad development of children, including the targeted stimulation of social development.	5.1 Education and childcare staff demonstrably work together using the same methodologies and practices for 0- to 13-year-olds, thus ensuring the continuity of the content. 5.2 Children's development is continuous through formal and informal learning. For example, what happens at out-of-school care is linked to what happens at school and vice versa. 5.3 This integration leads to more opportunities for development of the child than in the separate systems.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
PROFESSIONAL DIMENSION Joint providing of services	1.1 There is no joint providing of services: Childcare and education staff members operate strictly separately from each other. 1.2 Education and childcare have their own, separate care structures.	2.1 There is no joint providing of services: Apart from one exception, childcare and education staff operate separately from each other. 2.2 Education and childcare have their own care structures. Sometimes a colleague will make (informal) contact on their own initiative regarding a specific child about whom there are concerns, for example, when special (educational) needs are suspected.	3.1 It may occasionally happen that a childcare staff member joins the education side or vice versa: for example, co-ordination may take place on joint providing of lessons or activities. 3.2 There is a form of coordination between ECE staff of playgroups and schools concerning early warning, for example, when special (educational) needs are suspected, especially when children turn 4 and start to attend school. The school's special needs officer may have an active role in this. 3.3. Coordination around early signalling when special (educational) needs are suspected is not a given for children from out-of-school care or day care services.	4.1 Education and childcare staff work together on collective goals for education, development, care and recreation for a group of children. 4.2 To this end, the personnel policy is coordinated to the greatest possible extent within the legal possibilities. This leads to the use of combined functions as much as possible so that children see the same faces as much as possible. 4.3 There is structural and purposeful coordination when special (educational) needs are suspected, which is generally aimed at early warning and interventions within all four sections of the child centre.	5.1 There is a single inter-professional team with shared responsibility for education, development, care and recreation for a group of children. 5.2 There is an integrated care structure throughout the child centre, in which all sections are involved.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
PROFESSIONAL DIMENSION Joint learning	1.1 There are no joint courses, learning teams or study days for education and childcare staff.	2.1 Occasionally there are small-scale initiatives for joint learning: For example, a single childcare worker is invited (possibly on their own time) to participate as a representative in a study session or a learning team on a specific subject. Or education and childcare staff visit each other to learn about each other's work; often these colleagues work in ECE at playgroups or ECE at primary schools.	3.1 Coordination takes place on training and education for child centre-wide tasks, such as a joint first aid training. 3.2 Participation in joint study days and learning teams is coordinated, whereby the choice of times and/or giving support makes it possible for pedagogical staff members to participate. 3.3 There is agreement on initiatives whereby staff from childcare and education visit each other on a more regular basis to familiarise themselves with each other's work.	4.1 Joint learning for education and childcare staff is structurally embedded in shared goals. A large number of employees from all sections are involved. 4.2 Every year, joint study days and learning teams take place around the continuous path for learning and development, from within domains or development areas. 4.3 Child centre-wide study days and learning teams are planned and/or given support to ensure the participation of all sections (day care, playgroups, out-of-school care and school).	5.1 There is a demonstrable single programme of joint learning through peer review, child centre-wide study days, training courses, workshops and external meetings for education and childcare staff.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
ORGANISATIONAL DIMENSION					
Operational management	1.1 The operational management is organised separately. 1.2 Managers from both sectors hardly or never speak to each other.	2.1 The operational management is organised separately, but managers from both sectors consult with each other on a regular basis. 2.2 Consultation between managers from both partners mainly relates to the facility or practical issues within the child centre.	3.1 Operational management is organised separately, but there is structured consultation between both sets of managers. 3.2 In this structured consultation, not only practical and facility-related matters are discussed, but also substantive or organisational aspects within the child centre.	4.1 There is a (child centre) management team (MT) in which education and childcare managers have a seat and in which joint decision making takes place. MT members are accountable to their own sector. 4.2 The education manager has no formal powers over care staff and vice versa. 4.3 Operational management is organised centrally, but legal and formal matters are dealt with separately.	5.1 There is a single child centre management that is integrally responsible for both education and childcare.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
ORGANISATIONAL DIMENSION Shared ambition	1.1 There is no shared ambition at the child-centre level. 1.2 Staff from childcare and education are not familiar with each other's mission and/or strategy and what goals they wish to achieve, or else they make their own choices in this respect. 2.1 At the management level, discussions take place about goals that can be achieved through cooperation; these discussions are mainly exploratory and/or non-committal. For example, education and childcare managers do not give the same priority to the child-centre structure. 2.2 Employees are not familiar with these future plans: they mention very different subjects or refer to the management for this.	2.1 At the management level, discussions take place about goals that can be achieved through cooperation; these discussions are mainly exploratory and/or non-committal. For example, education and childcare managers do not give the same priority to the child-centre structure. 2.2 Employees are not familiar with these future plans: they mention very different subjects or refer to the management for this.	3.1 A small group of stakeholders – usually managers from both sectors – discuss what they would like to achieve together in the child centre in the long term and the contours of a shared ambition are clear. 3.2 Staff can name some elements of these contours.	4.1 There is a shared ambition and managers of both sectors are convinced that cooperation helps to realise these goals. 4.2 Employees are able to interpret this shared ambition in broad terms.	5.1 There is a shared ambition at the child centre that is attractive and meaningful to both childcare and education staff. 5.2 Staff members feel that education and childcare want to achieve the same things with the child centre.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
ORGANISATIONAL DIMENSION Governance of the cooperation	1.1 There is no cooperative relationship at the management level.	2.1 There is occasional contact at the management level, also concerning cooperation, but these contacts do not necessarily specifically concern the intensification of the current cooperative relationship between the sectors.	3.1 There is regular contact at the management level during which organisational coordination takes place. 3.2 There is a desire to formalise the cooperative relationship: for example, a steering committee and possibilities for a declaration of intent are being explored.	4.1 There is a cooperation agreement in which partners from education and childcare have relinquished part of their autonomy on a number of specific aspects and have established agreements on objectives, tasks, competences and decision-making within a specific child centre or several child centres, but acting from within their own organisation.	5.1 A new organisational structure has been created in the form of a new legal entity (umbrella legal person or personal union).

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
FUNCTIONAL DIMENSION Joint front office, back office	1.1 No joint front-office or back-office functions are apparent. There is no need for this because education and childcare are separate systems. 1.2 Parents maintain separate contact with staff from both sectors. 1.3 Education and childcare each have their own image and accessibility information (e-mail addresses, telephone numbers).	2.1 The childcare provider and primary school do not manifest themselves as a single organisation to the outside world: parents maintain separate contact with both sectors. 2.2 On a small scale, some education or childcare staff share information from external parties (e.g., parents) on their own initiative (e.g., absence reports). 2.3 ICT systems and forms are not compatible. This is seen by some employees as a hindrance because it is difficult to share information between the two sectors.	3.1 Coordination takes place on specific components of a joint front or back office. For example, coordination can take place regarding specific facility-related matters, use of the same formats or ICT applications. 3.2 The adoption of certain communication messages in one's own communication resources is agreed upon. 3.3 For specific joint activities, it may be decided to set up a communication resource with a shared face (for example, a joint newsletter or Facebook page). 3.4 In addition to these joint communication resources, each section has its own communication resources and channels with its own face and tone of voice.	4.1 There are structural agreements on the use of front-office and back-office functions within the child centre (e.g., facilities, ICT support). 4.2 Joint goals are reflected in the implementation of a joint information system and an overarching image in communications. 4.3 Parents experience a shared (digital) entrance area, through which they can make contact (mail, telephone, face-to-face) in an unambiguous way about registration and enrolment, absence notifications, etc.	5.1 There are joint front-office and back-office functions. A joint information system is used in a demonstrable and unambiguous manner for all sections (day care, ECE playgroups, primary school and out-of-school care) of the child centre. 5.2 There is a common front office with unambiguous accessibility data (e-mail addresses, telephone and website) provided to parents. 5.3 The child centre has a single shared house style in all communications and manifests as a single organisation to the outside world.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION Separate (1)	COOPERATION non-committal (2)	COORDINATION Aligned (3)	COLLABORATION collective goals (4)	INTEGRATION demonstrably integrated (5)
FUNCTIONAL DIMENSION Shared spaces and materials	1.1 All facilities are housed in one building (or within safe walking distance of each other), but both sectors operate alongside each other. 1.2 No spaces are shared between education and childcare. 1.3 Each organisation purchases its own sports and games equipment for its own use. 1.4 No materials (e.g., printers, equipment) are shared.	2.1 All facilities are housed in one building (or within safe walking distance of each other), but sectors generally operate alongside each other. 2.2 The childcare sector rents space in the building, but the lease or use ends when the school needs these spaces for its own use. This sometimes leads to sub-optimal accommodation for childcare services, in particular in out-of-school care. 2.3 There is little or no sharing of sports and games equipment for educational, developmental and recreational purposes. Each organisation uses its own materials.	3.1 All facilities are housed in one building. 3.2 Some non-teaching-specific areas are shared, such as a copy room and/or a team room. 3.3 There is agreement on long-term rental/ use of spaces for education, development and recreation, such as a playroom, workshop, computer room or kitchen. 3.4 Education-specific rooms are sometimes also used as out-of-school care rooms. 3.4. There is agreement on the sports and games materials that may be used by both education and childcare.	4.1 There is a policy plan that states which spaces can be used multifunctionally and for what purpose in the longer term. For example, a classroom may be made available for out-of-school care for young children in combination with another room in which out-of-school care for older children is organised. 4.2 Out-of-school care spaces focus on development and recreation, not education. 4.3 Non-education-specific multifunctional areas – such as outdoor space, kitchen, manager(s) room and team room – are shared, with education and childcare acting as joint tenants. 4.4 There are multi-year agreements on the purchase, sharing of materials use and responsibility for certain sports and games materials.	5.1 Housing is organised integrally, with agreements on the use of space having a sustainable character. 5.2 Support spaces – such as outdoor space, team room, kitchen, meeting room(s), management and staff work rooms – are used by staff from both sectors. 5.3 The design of multifunctional rooms with an educational/ childcare function is in line with the various functions of the room and appropriate to the age group(s) using it. 5.4 There are sustainable agreements on investment in and sharing of materials by both education and childcare.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION <i>Separate (1)</i>	COOPERATION <i>non-committal (2)</i>	COORDINATION <i>Aligned (3)</i>	COLLABORATION <i>collective goals (4)</i>	INTEGRATION <i>demonstrably integrated (5)</i>
NORMATIVE DIMENSION Appreciation of diversity and mutual trust	1.1 Education and childcare staff do not form a single unit. Solidarity relates to one's own colleagues. 1.2 Status and cultural differences are an issue: There is an "us and them" mentality. 1.3 Lack of appreciation for diversity regularly leads to irritation about other colleagues, but these situations are rarely expressed to the people involved. 1.4 Pressure may be felt to conform to one's own group norm.	2.1 Education and childcare staff mainly experience solidarity with their own colleagues. 2.2 Status and cultural differences are discussed to a limited extent as an observation, but also as a source of mutual irritation in which us/ them thinking occurs. 2.3 People feel insecure about expressing themselves directly to the person(s) involved; a few, however, discuss these things with their own manager. 2.4 During informal moments, childcare and education staff members do not seek each other out (they sit separately).	3.1 There is some mutual solidarity or loyalty between colleagues involved in the collaboration. Among these employees, a few dare to stand up for employees with a different background (e.g., expertise or role). 3.2 Any irritations are expressed by these colleagues directly to the person(s) concerned. 3.3 During informal moments (break time and/ or team outings), these colleagues seek each other out spontaneously.	4.1 Childcare and education staff from all sections work based on shared goals and seek to understand each other's practices. 4.2 Status and cultural differences are barely an issue. 4.3 Education and childcare staff dare to express misunderstandings or sources of conflict directly to each other 4.4 Education and childcare staff dare to take a different stance from each other.	5.1 Education and childcare staff form a single unit and – regardless of expertise or level of training – feel appreciated for their contribution to the child centre. 5.2 Mutual loyalty is a given; within this, there is sufficient confidence to maintain one's own position, even if this deviates from the prevailing norm.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION Separate (1)	COOPERATION non-committal (2)	COORDINATION Aligned (3)	COLLABORATION collective goals (4)	INTEGRATION demonstrably integrated (5)
NORMATIVE DIMENSION Appreciation of diversity and mutual trust	1.5 Education and childcare staff generally do not know each other and show no interest in getting to know each other. Greeting each other is not a matter of course. 1.6 On both sides, there is hardly any trust in specific capacities, such as offering good quality care/education or sticking to agreements. 1.7 Willingness to place things in the hands of the other sector is low.	2.5 There is limited confidence in the other sector's specific capacities, such as offering good quality care/education or sticking to agreements. 2.6 Willingness to place matters in the hands of the other sector is limited, with the exception of a few colleagues in whom staff do have this confidence (e.g., ECE staff at both playgrounds and schools).	3.4 Because a (limited) group of education and childcare staff understand each other's working methods and backgrounds, they have mutual trust in their specific qualities. This often occurs between ECE staff in ECE at both playgrounds and school. 3.5 Willingness to place matters in the hands of the other sector is present.	4.5 Because more employees from all sections understand each other's working methods and backgrounds and have had successful experiences while co-operating, trust exists in the other sector's specific qualities. 4.6 There is a willingness to place matters in the hands of the other sector.	5.3 Education and childcare staff generally trust each other's specific capabilities, for example, in sticking to agreements or providing good quality care/education. This applies to all four sections of the child centre. 5.4 Willingness to place matters in the hands of the other sector is high and this leads to demonstrable added value for the child centre.

Level of intensity Dimension	SEGREGATION Separate (1)	COOPERATION non-committal (2)	COORDINATION Aligned (3)	COLLABORATION collective goals (4)	INTEGRATION demonstrably integrated (5)
NORMATIVE DIMENSION Shared pedagogical vision	1.1 Education and childcare staff apply the pedagogical beliefs or vision of their own organisation. 1.2 Educational and childcare workers are generally not familiar with each other's pedagogical vision or values, or else they make their own choices in this respect.	2.1 Generally speaking, childcare and education staff members are not familiar with each other's pedagogical vision or beliefs and act on their own accord. 2.2 There are a few colleagues (especially in the pre-school and early primary school years) who take the initiative to look into the pedagogical vision/beliefs of the partner organisation.	3.1 Incidental initiatives or activities concerning the exploration of each other's pedagogical beliefs are given a more structured character 3.2 Exploratory meetings are held with a number of employees to determine what elements must be included in a shared vision and for what elements their own pedagogical vision should take the lead.	4.1 One pedagogical vision is (soon to be) implemented for the entire child centre and, in addition to the management of the child centre, many employees from all sections (day care, pre-school, out-of-school care, primary education) were involved in the development of the vision. 4.2 The vision is known to a significant proportion of staff in all sections.	5.1 Child centre-wide vision development is a process that demonstrably takes place on an ongoing basis and involves all stakeholders affected by this vision. 5.2 The vision is widely supported and shared pedagogical values and beliefs are recognisable in the daily actions of staff in all sections within the child centre.

Instructions for Use of the CCIM

1. Assessments should be based on the actual situation as observed by yourself or based on transcripts of the various interviews conducted in the child centre. It is explicitly not about future plans or ambitions; however, coding a future ambition is possible, as it indicates what is not there yet.
2. The subdimension “governance of the collaboration” within the organisational dimension is not assessed based on interviews. Use (policy) documents provided for this purpose (annual report, child centre plan, agreements).
3. When coding a quotation (see Table B2 for examples of coding using the CCIM), start by determining the appropriate dimension and subdimension. Once you have determined this, start reading the cell for “segregation”. If this does not apply, continue reading at “cooperation”. Continue this process – if necessary – until the correct assessment of intensity is achieved.
4. If in doubt about what constitutes a correct evaluation, indicate in the “explanation” box why you made this choice: what was distinctive about this evaluation?
5. Examples in the transcripts which differ from those given for the indicators in the CCIM, but which you as assessor consider to be comparable, may be used to arrive at an evaluation. If this is the case, please indicate this in the explanation field.

TABLE B2
Sample Coding Examples Using the CCIM

Quotation ID	Quotation	Code	Explanation
14:40	We had aligned themes, but in September, the school leader decided, and I intentionally say “school”, decided to let go of all the themes and allow each teacher to choose their own themes for their own class according to their own discretion. Well, there goes your continuous learning path, because it no longer aligns. I did have some thoughts about that.	Child-centred dimension, Continuous paths for learning and development 1.1	
43:93	An example of this is that [teacher name] told me that some teachers have the view that all children should shake hands with the teacher upon entering the classroom because this is considered mutually respectful.... And with her it didn't feel uncomfortable to respond to this, by asking what would you want to achieve with this, are toddlers going to grasp this? Take into account their developmental level, they are really young children, how does this fit into their experience?	Normative dimension, shared pedagogical vision, 2.2	
25:8	Every 6 weeks we schedule a coordination meeting, we call it our little ECE-moment. We, with our ECEC partner from childcare. And then we meet with a delegation of ECE professionals from childcare and those of us from education.	Child-centred dimension, continuous paths for learning and development, 3.1	
37:40	When I look at ECE, I think the childcare workers are very good at creating a fine pedagogical climate, that is their strength. I also see that now with [name of childcare worker] who also works as a teaching assistant now, and she really knows how to approach those children very well in a pedagogical way.	Normative dimension, appreciation of diversity, 3.4	

Appendix C - Self-evaluation Inclusive Leadership Behaviour

The following questions explore how you, as a manager, are active in leading interprofessional collaboration. For each statement, please indicate how often you demonstrate this behaviour, using the following classification: 1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = occasionally 4 = regularly 5 = very often, 6 = always, 9 = not applicable / prefer not to answer this question.

Item (translated from Dutch)	Score*
I am committed to strengthening mutual relationships between education and childcare staff.	
I invest in opportunities for informal interaction between education and childcare staff.	
I share good practices resulting from collaboration between education and childcare, such as a successful joint activity.	
I seize opportunities to tackle things together so that we feel more like a child centre team.	
When planning a meeting, I take into account working hours of staff from both sectors, so that as many staff members as possible can participate.	
I actively seek suitable times for a joint training day so that as many staff members as possible can participate.	
I am clear about the behaviour expected in which employees from both sectors are treated with equal respect.	
I engage in conversations with staff who may hold prejudices about (staff from) the other sector.	
I ensure that teachers and OSC staff share relevant information about individual children.	
I encourage staff to discuss concerns about a child who attends OSC with a colleague from the other sector.	
I encourage staff to inform colleagues from the other sector promptly about activities that deviate from the routine.	
I organise joint project groups with input from both sectors for joint themes, such as 'Healthy Eating Programme'.	
I organise joint learning around child centre-wide tasks (first aid, fire safety, etc.).	
I organise joint learning around substantive topics such as pedagogical climate, child centre vision, etc.	
I provide a safe environment where different viewpoints are welcomed.	
I demonstrate that no view about solving a problem is "weird" or inappropriate.	
I intervene when someone is being dismissive about another person's contribution.	
I promote a "mistakes are okay" culture, even when a (previous) contribution was not (immediately) successful.	

Item (translated from Dutch)	Score*
I show appreciation for the diversity of talents that education and care staff bring to our child centre.	
I inquire about perspectives from staff from the other sector during meetings to gather diverse perspectives.	
I draw staff members' attention to the talents of staff members from the other sector.	
I support staff in clarifying and/or articulating their professional beliefs in interprofessional situations.	
I support staff so they can fully contribute in interprofessional situations, for example, by discussing a topic beforehand.	
I encourage an individual staff member who feels inhibited in an interprofessional situation to make a meaningful contribution.	
* 1 = never, 2 = very rarely, 3 = occasionally 4 = regularly 5 = very often, 6 = always, 9 = not applicable / prefer not to answer this question.	

List of publications

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- Verheijen-Tiemstra, M. R. E., Ros, A. A., & Vermeulen, M. J. M. (2020). Werelden van verschil: aard en intensiteit van interprofessionele samenwerking tussen basisonderwijs en kinderopvang [Worlds apart: dimensions and levels of intensity in interprofessional collaboration between primary schools and childcare services]. *Pedagogische Studiën*, 97(1), 59-75.
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- Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M., & Poell, R. F. Understanding leaders' learning pathways in inclusive leadership: Integrating learning logs with guided reflection. [Manuscript under revision].

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- Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M & Poell, R.F. (2024, August 27-30). Building Inclusive Leadership: Insights from a Professional Development Program for School and Childcare Leaders. In Teelken, C. [discussant] *Learning and Development of Educational Professionals: Towards an Ecological Perspective* [symposium, supported by The Netherlands Educational Research Association]. Nicosia, Cyprus.
- Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M & Poell, R.F. (2024, July 10-12) Strengthening Inclusive leadership: insights from a dedicated Professional Development Programme. In Van Wessum, L. [discussant]. *Professional development of leaders in education* [symposium]. Educational Research Days (ORD), Tilburg University, Netherlands.
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- Verheijen-Tiemstra, R., Ros, A., Vermeulen, M. & Poell, R.F. (2022, November 22-25). Developing Inclusive leadership: a solicited diary study of school leaders and childcare leaders [paper presentation]. European Association for Practitioner Research on Improving Learning (EAPRIL), Nijmegen, Netherlands.
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Policymakers, politicians and professionals have expressed considerable interest in the development of child centres that integrate primary education and childcare. This interprofessional collaboration is believed to enhance the quality of education and childcare and to support children's development. However, integration does not occur automatically, and it is assumed that leadership has a significant influence on the process. This dissertation examined how interprofessional collaboration can be enhanced in child centres and what role inclusive leadership may play in this process.

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