Editorial: Leadership, learning, well-being, and justice in educational organizations

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Editorial on the Research Topic
Leadership, learning, well-being, and justice in educational organizations

School leaders are responsible for shaping a collective vision for inclusion and fostering a school culture centered on social justice and wellbeing, ensuring every student feels valued and supported in their educational journey. Accordingly, the leadership's role is to mobilize and inspire purposeful, interdependent action through a shared vision that favors climates of innovation and inclusion and enhances teachers' agency and learning cultures within educational organizations. Hence, the Research Topic "*Leadership, learning, well-being, and justice in educational organizations*" aims to address existing research gaps by urging the reflection on leadership practices that effectively enhance wellbeing across multiple dimensions—personal, professional, organizational, and social—while contributing to a deeper understanding of their transformative potential within educational settings. Understanding how leaders' practices can be optimized and investigating educational leadership's demands, drivers, and challenges may enhance quality teaching and inclusive learning. Regarding these tenets, the following narrative encapsulates the main ideas on educational leadership evoked in the nine articles related to the present Research Topic.

The article "*Harmonizing success: unraveling the interplay of principal entrepreneurial leadership, teacher efficacy, and organizational effectiveness in English training institutions of China*" highlights the existence of an important influential loop between teachers and principals (Jinke et al.). Principals' entrepreneurial leadership positively impacts teacher efficacy, enhanced teacher efficacy improves organizational effectiveness, and the resulting organizational improvements can motivate and inform principals to continue effective leadership practices, reinforcing the cycle. This dynamic emphasizes the interdependence of principals and teachers in fostering a thriving educational environment characterized by organizational effectiveness.

Leadership that fosters and preserves the values and cultures in educational institutions is assembled in the article "*The role of transformational leadership in enhancing school culture and teaching performance in Yemeni public schools*" (Alzoraiki et al.). This study shed light on the mechanisms to improve school culture and educational leadership to implement policies for better student outcomes. Fostering and preserving values and

cultures can be ensured through leaders who adopt idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and deep concern for ethical considerations and the social environment. Evidence supports the existence of loops in which transformational leadership directly affects teachers' performance and enhances their understanding of school culture, which, in turn, reinforces transformational leaders' capabilities.

School cultures of improvement foster a shared commitment to continuous learning, creating an environment where students, teachers, and leaders strive for excellence. The article "*Examining the status of school improvement program implementation in primary schools: a case study in South Ethiopia region*" provides evidence that quality improvement packages designed to enhance the schools' management capacity, improvement, decision-making, and sustain a learning environment are unevenly developed in different schools (Shanko and Kabtyimer). However, connections between program execution and educational outcomes shed light on systemic challenges inhibiting school effectiveness. Overall, the study supports a reflection on the complexities regarding implementing large-scale educational reforms and the importance of attending to local contexts and capacity-building needs when rolling out system-wide initiatives.

The ethical dimension of principals' leadership is the object of analysis in the article "*The relationship between ethical leadership, teacher motivation, and commitment in public schools in Portugal*" (Neves). The study addresses an important dimension of wellbeing in educational organizations, focusing on the leadership style. In opposition to despotic leadership, ethical leadership can foster intrinsic motivation and organizational commitment, ensuring a healthy and productive work environment for teachers.

Despite the diversity of leadership styles, understanding their effects is pivotal, especially given the pressing need to construct new, inclusive educational environments. "*Challenges posed to leadership: systematic review based on the relationships between curricular autonomy and teachers' well-being*" is an article that systematizes demands, drivers, and challenges leaders face in promoting a school culture in a context of innovation and inclusion (Lima et al.). Taking the Portuguese context as a starting point, it can be inferred that fostering an inclusive and innovative school culture requires leaders to adopt policies that value teacher wellbeing and promote opportunities for ongoing training. On the other hand, promoting an inclusive and innovative school culture presents multifaceted challenges for leaders, whose actions must focus on managing change, and inspiring and mobilizing all those involved. Loops between the macro-level and school levels can guarantee time and space for pedagogical reflection, and provide tools to help overcome bureaucratic barriers and promote a culture of constructive evaluation.

The previous articles express the importance of an educational environment for students learning and improving teachers' practices mobilized by attentive leaders. In this regard, the article "*Fostering a productive educational environment: the roles of leadership, management practices, and teacher motivation*" adds that a principal's Leadership significantly enhances both teacher motivation and teacher performance, underscoring the critical

role of effective leadership in inspiring and improving teacher performance (Sariakin et al.). In contrast, school management practices were found to impact teacher performance significantly, but did not significantly affect teacher motivation, suggesting that management practices alone may be insufficient to boost motivation levels among teachers. The research provides valuable insights and guidance for educators and administrators aiming to foster a productive educational environment, with teacher motivation as a key driver of teacher performance and strong leadership, effective management practices, and targeted strategies to enhance teacher motivation and performance.

The features regarding teachers' motivation and the complexity surrounding school cultures discussed above *also pertain* to the articles "*Teacher mobilizers: the power of leading learning and mobilizing teacher communities*" and "*The role of leaders in shaping school culture*" that explore the matters of driving environments for school learning (Prasetia et al.; Plaku and Leka). The former study explored the role of mobilizer teachers in leading learning and driving learning communities and their impact on student learning, finding that instructional leadership effectively leads learning and community in the school. In the later study, regarding leaders' roles in shaping school culture over time, the focus rests on cultivating a benevolent and productive environment and fostering satisfaction among staff. Otherwise, regarding schools with negative cultures, indifference, organizational fragmentation, interpersonal conflicts, and a lack of job satisfaction appear, making changes difficult.

Finally, the article "*Blurred boundaries: exploring the influence of work-life and life-work conflicts on university teachers' health, work results, and willingness to telework*" retrospectively examines the extreme conditions of teleworking during the COVID-19 lockdown (Sobral et al.). The study gathered evidence that work-life and life-work conflicts affect burnout and perceived performance differently, with life-work conflict negatively impacting performance. This highlights the critical role of leadership in mitigating these conflicts, as leaders' actions directly shape work design, individual and team goals, and the overall organizational climate, thereby influencing employee well-being and performance outcomes.

The findings regarding the nine papers in the Research Topic contributed to expanding knowledge regarding educational leadership practices, wellbeing, and school culture from the perspectives of leadership styles, teacher motivation, organizational effectiveness, and the interplay between innovation and inclusion. The Research Topic provides new comprehension for government educational departments, principals, and teachers regarding the organizational effectiveness of schools. The knowledge derived from the nine papers provides educational stakeholders with a comprehensive roadmap for effectively addressing social challenges through leadership by offering insights regarding the key factors that enhance leadership, learning, wellbeing, and justice within educational organizations.

Although the nine articles included in this Research Topic provide valuable insights, they do not represent the

final word on the subject. Expanding understanding of leadership dynamics and the interplay between wellbeing and organizational effectiveness can further enrich the knowledge regarding educational organizations. Justice-oriented leadership, wellbeing and resilience among school leaders, and emotional intelligence in school leadership are still open research domains, demanding inquiry on how they may promote better performance, school effectiveness, inclusion, and equity in schools.

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JA: Writing – review & editing. MT: Writing – review & editing. LS: Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing.

Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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