

Global Competences for Principals: Enabling Change for Sustainable Education

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Abstract

This article examines the fundamental global competences that are essential for school principals to manage sustainable educational change in the context of complex global challenges. A critical review methodology was employed in order to synthesize existing literature from 2000 to 2024, with a particular focus on the attributes of school principals who are able to drive effective global transformations in education. The findings indicate that principals who have developed global competences, including intercultural awareness, adaptability, and inclusivity, are better equipped to create learning environments that simultaneously enhance educational quality and sustainability. The implementation of empowering leadership practices, which encompass shared decision-making, autonomy support, and professional development, has been demonstrated to enhance teacher effectiveness and engagement, thereby contributing to overall school success. The study emphasizes the increasing importance of educational policies that prioritize the development of global competences among school leaders, enabling them to respond effectively to demographic shifts, technological advancements and diverse cultural contexts. The recommendations highlight the necessity for further research to investigate the impact of global competences in educational settings with limited resources. The findings emphasize the crucial role of globally competent principals as agents of change, facilitating sustainable education practices that adapt to the demands of a rapidly evolving global landscape.

Keywords: Empowering leadership, global competences, organizational change, school principals, sustainable education.

Introduction

The changing world and accelerating technological progress oblige us to think more broadly than we were used to. Classic educational methods are becoming less and less applicable, as information technology expands the possibilities of applicability, so it becomes important to know the tools, learn to work with them in order to effectively integrate them for the purposes of educational quality. It is important to emphasize that technological progress does not lead to local but global changes, such as mass learning using social media (Pires et al., 2022). Most ICT tools are becoming more sustainable than those normally used in education, this was justified by the pandemic period of Covid-19, when all learners had no other opportunity to learn in classes and the educational process took place virtually (Makrakis, 2017). It is believed that the global evolution of educational technologies has changed the learning landscape: the Internet, interactive

whiteboards, mobile devices, adaptive learning technologies, distance learning tools have enriched education. By using new tools, it is possible to personalize educational content more, to respond more to various educational needs, to develop not only content knowledge, but also critical thinking and digital literacy (Kokkinos, 2024), thus also contributing to the sustainability of education and increasing the opportunities for sustainable education. Education in a global context can be carried out in a more flexible manner than it was possible to do in the past – it is possible to study independently of a specific schedule and physical location (Camilleri & Camilleri, 2017). Thus, ICT integration is a global change that needs to be managed at educational institutions.

The need for global competences increases especially due to the context of inclusion – over the past fifty years, the concept of education of children with special needs has changed significantly in the world, moving from segregation to inclusion (Taylor & Sailor, 2024). Globally, inclusion is a priority and hopefully will become a sub-system of the education system (Anastasiou et al., 2024; Anastasiou et al., 2018). This aspiration leads to the need to be interested in the ways of solving inclusion in other countries, to learn from other cultures, politics, and administration and to implement all of these aspirations in the process of education in search of the best solutions. The future of an inclusive school is linked by mutual structural, social and emotional connections (Nikula et al., 2024), so inclusion is seen as a process (Azorín & Ainscow, 2020) that can ensure the quality of learning for all children (Messiou, 2016). It is also emphasized that teachers, when educating children with special needs, must also be able to manage various tools, instruments and knowledge, how to create suitable conditions, spaces to ensure inclusion (Page et al., 2021; Olechowska, 2022).

The need for global competences in education is strengthened by mass migration – the arrival of immigrants and the return of re-emigrants. Global migration, whether due to persecution, violence, human rights abuses, climate disasters or political strife, is a global responsibility, and it will require diverse groups in society to prepare for this kind of change. The changing demography of countries, which introduces a diversity of cultural differences and increases its population, obliges teachers, leaders and politicians to strengthen competences that would condition the quality education of immigrants (Akin-Sabuncu et al., 2024). In 2015, The United Nations' "Education 2030: Incheon Declaration" envisages global citizenship education as one of the components of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A similar context is emphasized by other important documents (UNESCO, 2016) and studies included by the OECD in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), emphasizing the role of global citizenship in developing the attitude and competence of students as global citizens (Choi, 2024).

Global Competence (GC) is related to glocalization and interculturality, also,

“encompasses a set of skills and attitudes developed over a lifetime, leading to morally acceptable solutions to a wide range of globalized problems in the pursuit of global sustainability and well-being <...> activities, attitudes and values that are realized when the subject is knowledgeable about global issues, positive about migration, self-reliant, respectful, culturally sensitive, globally minded, interacts with a wide range of people, and builds a global wellbeing based on sustainability” (Bilbokaitė et al., 2024, p. 213). Although the role of school managers and other educational organizations is practically clear, its significance in achieving sustainability in education, especially when actualizing and looking for links with the managers’ direct functions and impact on the institution and its actors, activities and results, is little researched. In the context of global changes, it is worth paying more attention to the power of the heads of schools and other educational organizations to make changes through the prism of global competences, which will especially affect the education of sustainability and the sustainability of education. Based on this, it is believed that global competences are necessary in education, and their development can be ensured by school principals, who are the most important catalysts, supervisors and adjusters of change, so this article aims to analyze the scientific literature on the need for global competences of school principals in relation to the aspect of enabling change.

Research Methodology

Constructing the Dataset

The goal of the research was to explore attributes of school principals who empower global changes. We conducted a critical review using systematic methods (Nieminen et al., 2023). Critical reviews provide a synthesis of the research field and spot gaps in the existing literature. Their aim is not to describe or summarize a set of research articles, nor is it to find an answer to a research question or identify weaknesses in previous research, but – through critical synthesis – to develop a conceptual basis for new research (Grant & Booth, 2009).

We decided to limit our search to the period of 2000–2024 to allow for a thorough analysis of school principal empowerment. This is a common practice in critical literature reviews (e.g., Ashwin, 2012). It allows the subject of the research to be observed in its current state.

Identification of all relevant studies from the point of view of the subject of the research was carried out by searching using such keywords as “school principal empowerment”, “school leadership empowerment” in databases such as Web of Science and Scopus.

Criteria for Inclusion and Exclusion of Scientific Articles

Not every article containing keywords was suitable for the analysis. All electronically retrieved publications were further verified against the following criteria:

- (a) language of publication: articles published in English, available in full version, were included, and articles published in other languages were excluded;
- (b) studies not referring to school principal empowerment were excluded;
- (c) consideration of scientific standards: empirical scientific studies were included; popular science or review texts were excluded.

Consensus on included and excluded articles was established through iterative research meetings. At the outset, the authors found 67 article abstracts, of which only 35 were excluded at this stage. After reading the full texts of the publications, the remaining 32 articles were analyzed in detail individually. During online meetings conducted systematically by the research team, further five articles were excluded through joint discussion. This procedure allowed for the creation of a dataset consisting of 27 articles, which were then subjected to further analysis (Nieminen et al., 2023).

Coding Procedure

Articles that met the criteria were then coded using a coding sheet developed for the study.

- 1) First, general information about the study was described, such as author(s), year of publication and country.
- 2) Each article was analyzed based on a sample size of the target group.
- 3) All studies were divided on the basis of the keywords.
- 4) A key part of the self-study was to take a reflective look at the analyses and interpretations presented and illustrate the conclusions drawn in diagrams.

Analysis

The critical review was performed using a case study meta-analysis approach and relying on the critical narrative synthesis described by Petticrew and Roberts (2006).

Attributes of Empowering Principals for Global Change

Researchers (Ahearne et al., 2005; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2014; Sharma & Kirkman, 2015; Sims et al., 2009, as cited in Cheong et al., 2019) define enabling leadership as sharing power, autonomy and distributing responsibility to followers, teams, or collectives, applying a specific set of leadership behaviors to employees to enhance intrinsic motivation and achieve success at work, focusing on positivity and yielding beneficial, virtuous, humane returns (Chen et al., 2011; Vecchio et al., 2010, cited Cheong et al., 2019). It is believed that

it is precisely because of the effectiveness of organizational performance that promotes researchers' growing interest in enabling leadership (Cheong et al., 2019).

In the education system, the head of school is considered a connecting link between different levels, and the influence that the head of school can have on their school is determined by law (Szempruch et al., 2023), so this only reinforces the moral authority of the head to act for change, as well as strengthens its powers to achieve sustainability. It is believed that school principals as leaders are visionaries because they directly influence their subordinates to follow the idea, thus cultivating the leadership of others through their actions (Alibabić, 2008, as cited in Dimitrijević, 2023). Principals also influence the stability of the school, affect the reorganization of organizations, use resources appropriately (Elisado, 2022), and construct influence on the environment (Bahadar et al., 2023). Research has revealed that innovative attitudes of principals and teachers create a learning-friendly atmosphere that affects effectiveness (Price, 2012, as cited in Hernandez et al., 2023). A great leader cannot only exert an acceptable influence on their subordinates, but also guide them to achieve higher work results (Lan et al., 2019).

Likewise, the leader's influence on the educational process, its quality and sustainability, is growing and ensuring a certain course of changes by positively affecting the professional growth of teachers (Atasoy & Yalçın, 2023) and their work results (Hernandez et al., 2023; Elisado, 2022), since social exchange takes place and a correspondingly significant interrelationship for change is created. It is believed that the pedagogical and educational success of the school depends on the effective management of the school by the head (Szempruch et al., 2023), the goals pursued and their achievement (Dhamija et al., 2023), the implementation of the mission using various means and people for joint creation role and outcomes (Bahadar et al., 2023).

Principals create a democratic school (Larsen & Mathe, 2023) where free thought characteristics and agreements can lead to beneficial decisions. School principals can create a positive school climate by promoting teamwork among teachers, providing opportunities and support for their professional development, and engaging in teacher monitoring and evaluation (Atasoy & Yalçın, 2023). Educational leadership in an inclusive school tries to abandon the traditional concept of hierarchical and vertical relations and prioritize a collaborative culture, an expression of a dynamic community organization (Traver-Marti et al., 2023). Principals' support and facilitation are critical in delegating leadership to teachers, enabling teacher leadership to emerge (Cheng & Szeto, 2016), enhancing impact for sustainability. It is maintained that exactly managers who, in order to consciously develop the leadership of teachers, have the opportunity to create those opportunities (Afzal & Rizvi, 2021).

Empowering leadership includes the formal behavior of principals (or those leaders who have status and authority in their organizations), such as encouraging subordinates to express their opinions and ideas, joint decision-making, and teamwork (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015). The most emphasis is placed on stimulating employee motivation and active involvement in processes, independent decision-making to act during the implementation of organizational goals. By adopting the definition of enabling leadership as a leader's behavior, it is believed that we highlight the motivational processes that occur between enabling principals and their followers. The benefits of empowering leadership for individuals and teams indicate that it is practically imperative for organizations to understand the factors that lead to principals' engagement in empowering initiatives in their work environments. Based on this assumption, the organization does not always need an enabling leader – if it is customary to work in a directive manner, the enabling leader will not have support, and the employees will lack initiative (Sharma & Kirkman, 2015).

Empowerment of managers is most often analyzed through enabling leadership. Empowering leadership, based on management practice and structural perspective, gives importance to empowering leader behavior (Arnold et al., 2000, as cited in Cheong, et al. 2019) as a core dimension of five (leading by example, participative decision-making, coaching, informing and showing personal concern) or one of the three (Ahearne et al., 2005, as cited in Cheong et al., 2019) – increasing the meaning of work, encouraging participation in decision-making, expressing confidence in high performance and providing autonomy from bureaucratic constraints. Two more dimensions of empowering leadership have been identified (Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015, as cited Cheong et al., 2019) – autonomy support and development support.

According to Cheong et al. (2019), the concepts of empowering leadership and psychological empowerment have been juxtaposed and used synonymously, resulting in confusion and ambiguous results in conceptual and empirical works. There is a consensus that, in essence, enabling leadership is a specific set of leader behaviors that promote psychological empowerment, resulting in better work results.

The study by Kilag et al. (2023) investigated the extent of leadership empowerment of school principals and its significant impact on teacher and school effectiveness. The study revealed that school principals exhibit different levels of managerial authority, which are influenced by administrative structures, politics and external pressures. Transformational leadership behaviors exhibited by empowering school principals positively affect teachers' job satisfaction, commitment, and efficacy. Empowering leaders have been found to strategically align school goals with district or regional educational goals, resulting in targeted and consistent school improvement. A school culture fostered by the

empowerment of leaders significantly contributes to greater organizational commitment and better academic achievement; the participation of stakeholders in decision-making processes increases the overall effectiveness of the school by promoting a sense of responsibility and support for school initiatives. The study highlights the importance of empowering principals in educational leadership and urges policy makers to create enabling structures and policies that give school principals more autonomy.

Leadership empowerment in educational leadership refers to the level of autonomy and authority given to school leaders in making decisions related to various aspects of school management. School leaders are free to implement innovative practices and effectively respond to the unique needs of their school communities, support and empower teachers to succeed in their roles, facilitate teacher professional development, encourage collaboration, and provide the necessary resources to create a positive learning environment (Kilag et al., 2023). Liu et al. (2021) found that teacher effectiveness is positively influenced by leadership practices that emphasize shared decision-making and a supportive school culture. When school principals involve teachers in decision-making processes and value their input, teachers feel more valued and motivated to do their best to improve student learning (Kilag et al., 2023). Empowering school principals can create a culture of high expectations for teacher performance. Such principals provide continuous feedback and support to teachers, fostering a mindset that encourages teachers to continually improve their teaching practices. As a result, teacher effectiveness increases, which leads to better student achievement (Gülşen & Çelik, 2021, as cited in Kilag et al., 2023).

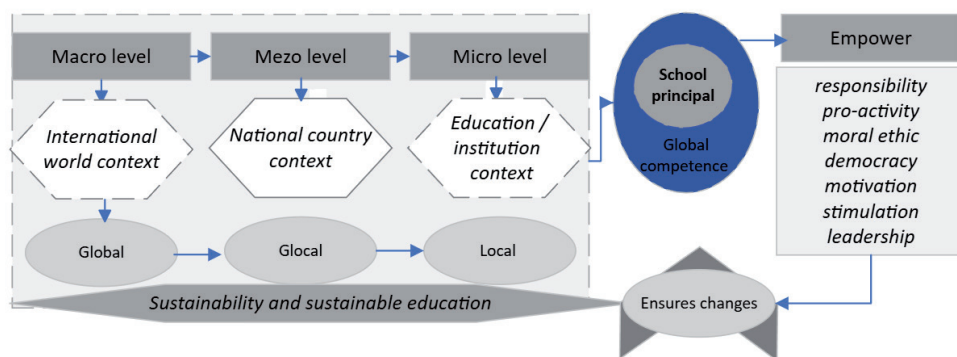
External pressures from higher levels of administration and governance are also thought to influence the degree of empowerment of principals: in school systems that prioritize compliance and standardization, school principals may face constraints on decision-making freedom (Kilag et al. 2023), and this is especially evident in the case of enabling global competences, as most decisions are decided by the state. Thus, understanding the factors that influence the empowerment of principals is crucial for educational policy makers and administrators seeking to develop effective leadership practices and promote positive change in schools. Thanks to empowering school principals, educational institutions can create an environment that promotes continuous improvement and ultimately increases the effectiveness of teachers and schools (Kilag et al., 2023). Research conducted by Archibald et al. (2011, as cited in Kilag et al., 2023) shows that when school principals are empowering to strategically allocate resources independently, they can invest in professional development opportunities tailored to the specific needs of teachers. Such a targeted approach improves teachers' pedagogical knowledge and skills, so they can conduct lessons in the classroom more effectively and interestingly.

The impact of leadership empowerment on school effectiveness is manifested through strategic alignment of school goals, fostering a positive school culture, and involving stakeholders in decision-making processes. Empowering school principals are better able to develop a focused and coherent approach to school improvement, ensuring that efforts are focused on specific goals that align with district or regional educational priorities. Stakeholder participation in decision-making promotes ownership and support for school initiatives, which ultimately contributes to overall school effectiveness (Hughes & Pickeral, 2013).

Empowerment means weakening one's beliefs in personal weakness or strengthening one's beliefs in personal abilities. Organizational empowerment can be defined as increasing subordinates' empowerment beliefs about their effectiveness not only in increasing work productivity (Dağlı & Kalkan, 2021). Managers who involve a variety of stakeholders in decision-making provide greater job satisfaction and manage to generate better results. School principals who hold teachers responsible for student achievement and attribute appropriate educational processes to them; by empowering teachers to make decisions and helping them do so by providing information, encouraging, emphasizing innovation, supporting professional growth – can be called empowering. This will have outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, etc. (Dağlı & Kalkan, 2021).

Figure 1

The Importance of Empowerment of School Principals' Competence for Changes
(Source: Developed by the authors based on the analysis)



As it can be seen in Figure 1, global challenges (migration, pandemic, technology, economy, war, etc.) are formed on a global scale, characterized at the macro level, they also resonate at the mezzo level – they affect each state and its national context, and the latter is cascaded to each educational institution. Therefore, global challenges are diffusely expressed at the micro level as well. This creates unforeseen and new risk factors, as challenges need

to be addressed, which require various competences. Global competences can assist in more effectively overcoming globalized challenges in the pursuit of educational sustainability and sustainable education. Figure 1 demonstrates that the principals of educational institutions can best manage changes, so they need to improve their global competences to be able to assess the situation of the globalized challenge accordingly and strategically foresee and ensure its solution in their community so that education is sustainable.

Characteristics of the Effectiveness of Change Management in the Application of Global Competences in Education to Ensure Sustainability

Change management in educational organizations is one of the most important strategic tasks, especially strengthened after the global change – mass education, development of higher education, economic and IT progress, opportunities to measure student achievements on a global scale (e.g., PISA studies). As a result, change and development efforts within individual schools and wider school systems were perceived as key management practices for improving student outcomes, and key leadership was identified as a component of these change interventions to achieve positive educational outcomes. The enormous value created in education makes sense of change as a key part of influencing improvement: improving student outcomes by overcoming global and local demographic, technological, political and economic factors (Beycioglu & Kondakci, 2014).

It is emphasized that educational changes must be aimed at better student results, rather than focusing on the change process itself, especially this is important due to the intercultural global process – migration (Beycioglu & Kondakci, 2014). The intercultural perspective of changes in education, which emerged due to mass international migration, economic dependence, is particularly important due to the diversity of the system. Although educational systems vary greatly around the world, researchers use similar theoretical frameworks to explain change, and practitioners use similar practices to implement change, so it is argued that educational change theories have been developed for decentralized education systems (Beycioglu & Kondakci, 2014) and can be implemented locally, although they are acceptable globally.

It is also noticeable that successful changes are influenced by distributed and enabling leadership, as broad participatory management practices, knowledge sharing and increased interdependence of system units eliminate the risk of losing such individualized, informal and small-scale changes without recognition. In particular, collective capabilities and distributed leadership are critical to increasing an organization's ability to sustain small-scale and incremental change and make it part of normal organizational practice. Principal leadership and change management have been found to influence school culture and teacher engagement (Atasoy, 2020). In the scientific discourse, a great deal of attention

is paid to the research of the interrelationship between the leadership of educational managers and changes in education (Beycioglu & Kondakci, 2014).

School principals play an important role in school change, setting direction, creating strategies, promoting change and staff professional growth, and implementing organizational change – this is the essence of school leadership. As change agents, school principals are at the center of the change process and play an important role in the school change strategies, plans and day-to-day management practices. It is believed that when implementing large or small changes, it is important for school principals to maintain a positive microclimate and provide support to staff. Change can only be implemented and sustained if school principals are emotionally and intellectually engaged in leadership. Research into the impact of school principals and teachers on teaching and learning, and, ultimately, high-quality outcomes remains critical in the school system (Hussain et al., 2016).

Schools are believed to be arenas of emotions: emotions do not only arise in individuals, but also they are socially inclusive and act collectively. It is very important that principals understand at the beginning of the change process, when teachers are first introduced to information about changes in the school, that all teachers will have different types and intensities of feelings and emotions about change. Many questions will be asked: whether the change is important and necessary, whether it is easy or difficult to deal with the change, whether the person has the skills and effectiveness to make the change successful, whether the change will benefit the individuals and the organization, whether the school principals support such a particular change, etc. In times of change, teachers feel vulnerable, so emotional fragility can isolate or alienate the teacher from others, thus jeopardizing the results of the change. To effectively manage change conflicts among teachers, school principals need to facilitate teacher consensus by recognizing and managing the emotional aspects inherent in the collaborative process (Hussain et al., 2016).

The best managers who initiate change not only build professional capital, but also invest heavily in building social capital for organizational change. Evidence shows that successful principals who improve organizational fortunes and sustain that improvement has entrepreneurial instincts are relentlessly innovative and, most importantly, build social capital that is not an individual trait of the teacher but is found in the relationships among teachers (Hargreaves et al., 2014, cited Jones & Harris, 2014). Building collective capacity means that people are willing to take advantage of the opportunity to learn collaboratively; it shows that they choose to learn new skills and are willing to co-create effective practice through mutual support, accountability and challenge.

The real task of principals who pursue organizational change is to create conditions that reinforce and reward high-quality and interconnected

professional learning. Therefore, it is necessary to create a culture of trust and respect, in which specialists could make collectively informed decisions regarding the improvement of pedagogy. Ultimately, if school transformation is the goal, the primary job of the principal is to break down the barriers that maintain professional isolation and impede rigorous, authentic, and collaborative learning. To do otherwise is to admit that little can be done to change the school culture of learning and the quality of teaching (Jones & Harris, 2014).

Training educational principals to be effective leaders of change is the most important strategy for improving the quality of a school to become a good school, because the success of schools is greatly influenced by the activities of their leaders, who must be focused on change and its management. The study showed that school principals, as constructivist principals, contributed to organizational change in their schools. These contributions are collected in six categories: learning and teaching, shared leadership, communication and interaction, safe school environment, promotion, and strategic planning. In their role as learning leaders, principals can motivate and guide teachers to perform well in the steps of change (Bafadal, 2017). The contribution of school principals as constructive principals to organizational change in the school is significant as it promotes a better understanding of school leadership (Yildirim & Kaya, 2019).

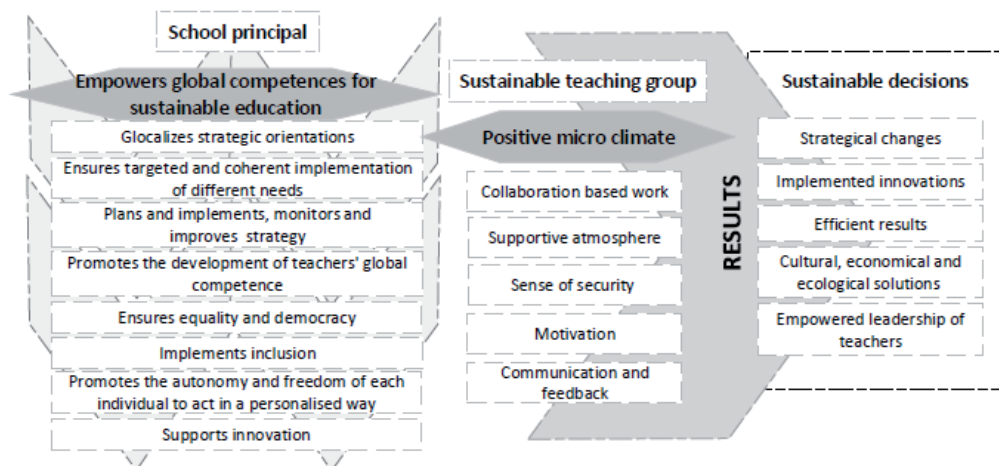
Principals can be leaders in teacher communities based on activity for sustainable development. The climate of the school, after all, depends, among other things, on the relationships the principal builds with the teachers. In a well-functioning collaborative team, members reinforce the quality of everyone's work and focus on the development of each group member. A positive atmosphere based on supporting each other, on kindness and on a sense of security in the community is essential for the implementation of the leader's visionary ideas based on group cooperation. The principal then has the chance to create a "sustainable teaching group" in the organization they lead, which, based on the group's competences, strengthens the social development of the pupils and teaches them to live in harmony and closeness to nature: "Education for sustainable development is based on value-oriented, interdisciplinary and holistic thinking. In order to create support for a culture of sustainability in a school or pre-school, all staff must be on a working team" (Halvorsen, 2015, p. 97).

Figure 2 shows that in the context of the implementation of global changes, school principals with global competences have a significant impact on the achievement of effective sustainable education and sustainability in education. A large number of significant functions have been identified that are characterized by managers with global competences – from planning changes at a globalized level, determining purposeful and consistent steps, encouraging and motivating employees, ensuring equality, inclusion, autonomy, seeking for joint solutions, promoting assurance, creating a positive microclimate, communication and

support in the implementation of innovations and changes for the entire educational community in order to achieve sustainability and sustainable education. As a result, empowering global competences of managers to manage globalized changes at educational institutions can be strategically thought-out changes, ensured innovation activities, cultural/economic/ecological solutions, empowered teacher leadership that directly affects students' awareness of various sustainability issues, constructs students' awareness of sustainable development, thereby leading to sustainable solutions and attributing meaning to sustainable education.

Figure 2

Characteristics of the Effectiveness of Change Management in the Application of Principals' Global Competences in Education to Ensure Sustainability (Source: Developed by the authors based on the analysis)



Discussion

Describing the global competences of principals in education, we are confronted with the findings of the Future of Jobs Report of the World Economic Forum (Zahidi, 2023). Analytical thinking has been identified as the most vital skill, underscoring the necessity for workers who are able to critically assess information, solve complex problems, and make informed decisions. This specific skill represents approximately 9 % of the core skill set in the data, which highlights the growing importance of analytical reasoning in the modern workplace, where data-driven decision-making is becoming increasingly prevalent (Zahidi, 2023). Subsequently, creative thinking is identified as the second most critical skill. This skill indicates that innovation and original

thinking are becoming increasingly valued in the contemporary workforce, likely due to the accelerated and unpredictable nature of modern markets. In order to maintain a competitive advantage, companies are increasingly reliant on the generation of novel ideas. This, in turn, has led to a corresponding need for creative problem-solving. Skills pertaining to self-efficacy, including resilience, flexibility, and agility, motivation and self-awareness, as well as curiosity and lifelong learning, are ranked just behind those pertaining to cognition. These attributes reflect the importance of adaptability, as employees who are able to maintain motivation and self-awareness in the face of disruptions are more capable of handling rapid changes in the workplace. Furthermore, the self-efficacy skill pertaining to dependability and attention to detail is ranked sixth, which serves to underscore the necessity for reliable workers who can ensure quality in their output. It is noteworthy that technological literacy is ranked just above dependability, which underscores the increasing necessity for workers to possess an understanding of and ability to utilize technology. This indicates that, while technological proficiency is undoubtedly a valuable asset, it is not perceived as being more crucial than cognitive and adaptive capabilities by the majority of employers. Furthermore, interpersonal abilities, particularly empathy, active listening, leadership, and social influence, also feature prominently in the top 10 core skills, underscoring the growing importance of teamwork and influence at the modern workplace. As work environments become increasingly collaborative, the capacity to comprehend others and to effectively lead or influence teams has become a vital competence.

In summary, the analysis provided by the World Economic Forum aligns well with the competences required for educational leaders, suggesting that principals who exhibit a blend of cognitive, adaptive, technological, and interpersonal skills will be best positioned to lead effectively in today's dynamic educational landscape. This skill set not only enables principals to navigate complex challenges but also to foster environments that prepare students and staff for the demands of a rapidly evolving world.

The study explores the role of global competences in empowering school principals to manage sustainable educational change, particularly in response to complex global challenges. These competences include interculturality, adaptability, and an understanding of glocalised (global and localized) issues, all of which enable principals to lead effectively in increasingly diverse educational settings.

Key Findings and Contributions

This study finds that empowering leadership among school principals is integral to addressing global educational challenges and fostering sustainable

practices within schools. Principals with developed global competences can enhance educational outcomes by fostering inclusive, adaptable, and culturally aware learning environments. This aligns with findings of research conducted by Kilag et al. (2023), which suggest that empowerment-oriented leadership practices lead to more effective schools by encouraging teacher autonomy and engagement in decision-making processes. Thus, the research underscores the value of principals as catalysts for change, capable of aligning school initiatives with broader educational and sustainability goals.

Prior research indicates that enabling leadership not only improves organizational performance but also enhances employee satisfaction and motivation (Cheong et al., 2019; Amundsen & Martinsen, 2015). Similarly, this study supports the notion that empowered school principals foster an environment where teachers feel motivated and capable of contributing to school objectives. However, this research extends existing literature by highlighting that principals' global competences also enhance their ability to manage globalized educational changes, a concept less emphasized in previous studies. The inclusion of global competences positions principals to lead schools effectively amidst evolving international and local demands, further differentiating this study from prior empowerment research.

Implications for Policy and Practice

This research has several practical implications. First, it suggests that educational policy should support the development of global competences among principals. Such training would better prepare them to handle challenges like migration, cultural diversity, and rapid technological advancements within educational settings. Further, as this study demonstrates, empowering school leadership can improve teacher effectiveness, supporting broader goals for sustainable education. Policymakers may consider creating frameworks that promote autonomy and innovation at the school leadership level, aligning with recommendations from Liu et al. (2021) regarding the positive impact of shared decision-making on teacher motivation.

Limitations of the Research

The research has several limitations. One is the reliance on a limited dataset of articles, which may not capture the full range of factors influencing school leadership empowerment globally. Furthermore, the research focuses on the theoretical aspects of global competences without empirical validation through direct interviews or observations. This limitation suggests that further studies could incorporate primary data to enrich the understanding of how these

competences are applied in diverse educational contexts. Finally, because this research concentrates on developed educational settings, the findings may not be fully generalizable to lower-resource environments where systemic barriers might restrict principal empowerment.

Further Research Implications

Future studies could explore the application of global competences in varying educational contexts, particularly in under-resourced or rural settings where school leadership faces unique challenges. Additionally, longitudinal studies examining the impact of empowered principals on long-term educational outcomes would provide further insights. Investigating the effects of specific global competences, such as intercultural communication or digital literacy, on different types of educational change could also contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the role of school leaders in sustainability education.

Conclusions

Change management in educational organizations is one of the most important strategic tasks, so the role of the principal in managing changes is unquestionable. Global challenges – migration, climate change, IT progress, global improvement of educational outcomes, etc. – obligate managers to ensure the progress of changes in organizations, improve their competences in order to motivate teachers and students to do so, improve the microclimate, and ensure the quality of performance results. Enabling the global competences of educational principals could be an important part of managerial leadership, effectively contributing to the management of organizational change because leaders, being globally competent, would promote changes in teachers' actions related to the pursued globalized strategic tasks.

The research has emphasized that global competences are vital for principals seeking to implement sustainable changes in education. Principals with these competences are well-equipped to address the challenges posed by globalization and technological advancement, ultimately fostering environments where students and teachers alike can thrive. The research findings underscore the importance of promoting these competences within educational leadership development programs, suggesting that well-prepared, globally competent principals can play a pivotal role in achieving sustainable and effective educational practices.

The research, therefore, contributes significantly to the discourse on sustainable educational leadership by linking global competences with practical leadership empowerment, providing a foundation for future policies and practices

aimed at fostering resilient and adaptable educational systems.

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