ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE PROCESSES IN SCHOOLS DURING COVID-19 DISTANCE EDUCATION

Erika Kopp (PhD), Csilla Pesti (PhD), Ei Phyu Chaw

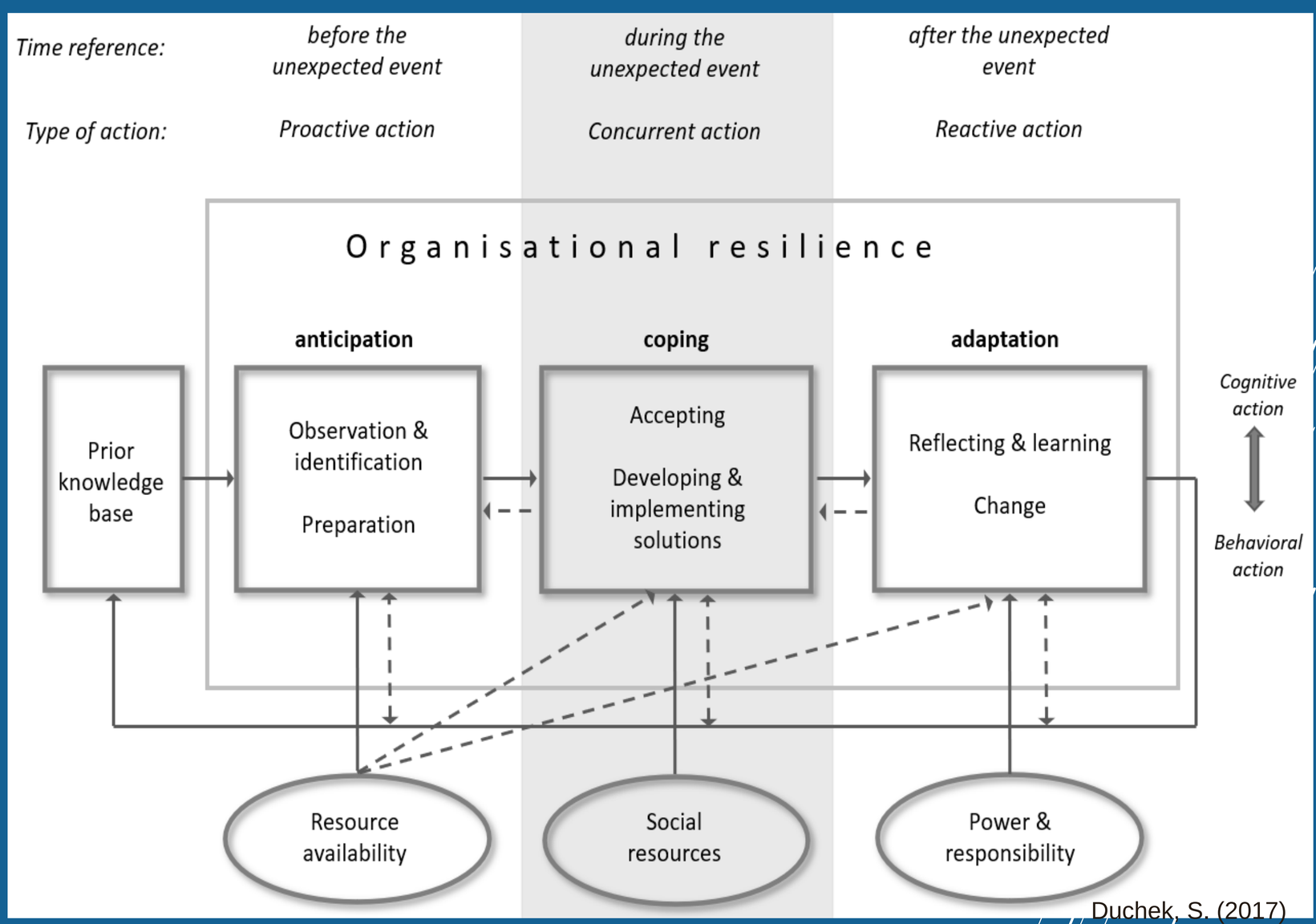
Eotvos Lorand University, Karoli Gaspar University, Eotvos Lorand University

Context

- The introduction of distance education as a response to the pandemic situation has been a huge challenge for schools, teachers and students.
- They had to develop new processes and skills (Reimers & Schleicher, 2020).
- Some schools and some teachers were not prepared for distance education (either technically or methodologically).
- Low level of students' and teachers' digital competences is common in Hungary (Kopp, 2020).
- The lack of capacity in these areas had to be remedied promptly and schools relied on their own institutional resources.
- The Hungarian education system is characterized by significant centralization processes.
- Little professional autonomy is observed in both school and teachers (Hüse, 2018).
- Teachers mostly prefer individual, formal ways of learning regarding their professional development activities.
- Teachers have little routine in supporting each other, neither have they much experience with learning from each other.
- Individual learning is a common characteristic of teachers in Hungary (Vámos, 2016).

Theoretical Background

- Adaptation of schools to environmental challenges
- requires new knowledge in the organization for capacity building through teachers' learning.
- Organizational learning itself is a kind of mapping of the institution's organizational culture (Admiraal et al., 2019)
- The leader is a key player in organizational-level change.
- Teacher characteristics and teacher learning influence the success of adapting to change (Rikkerink et al., 2016).



Duchek, S. (2017)

Aim: **to examine the operational processes of distance education in educational organizations during the first wave of COVID-19 in Hungary (March -June 2020)**

RQ 1. What are those organizational level activities that schools performed immediately before, during and after the emergency situation? What similarities and differences can be identified among schools?
RQ 2. How do the schools' prior knowledge base influence the organizational responses on the emergency situation?
RQ 3. Which areas of organizational functioning were affected during and by distance education?

Process

- a comparative descriptive case study of two schools
- conducted a within case study for each case (analyzing the context, characteristics, resilience, and professional development activities)
- coding the data of the interviews and school documents,
- data was summarized according to the characteristics of analytical framework.
- a questionnaire study conducted in the summer break.

Summary of data sources	Case 1	Case 2
Documents	Preliminary situation analysis (2019) Institution development, Final report on Phase 1 (2020)	Study on institutional innovation (2018)
Public statistical data	Number of students and teachers Competency measurements	Number of students and teachers Competency measurements
Interview	School leader (n=1) Deputy school leader (n=2) Teachers (n=2) Representative of the maintainer (n=1)	School leader (n=1) Deputy school leader (n=2) Teachers (n=3)
Type of Questionnaire	Student questionnaire (2020) Parent questionnaire (2020) RPLI 1. (2019) (n=35) RPLI 2. (COVID-19) (2020) (n=43)	RPLI 1. (2019) RPLI 2. (COVID-19) (2020) (n=23)

Results

- common knowledge-sharing platforms strengthened.
- teachers (not active before) involved in knowledge sharing activities.
- still the lack of social interactions either with students or colleagues
- Case 1, major decisions were made in the first week and the internal trainings for teachers on ICT tools were delivered.
- Case 2, internal trainings fostering teaches' ICT competence development were organized informally over a long time
- both cases reported that adjusting their lifestyle to the new circumstances was the biggest difficulty during distance education

		Before unexpected event		During unexpected event		After unexpected event			
		Proactive action		Concurrent action		Reactive action			
	Prior knowledge base	Observation and identification	Preparation	Accepting	Developing and implementing solutions	Reflection and learning	Change	Cognitive action	Behavioral action
Case 1	Previous project (2019) - focusing on teachers' ICT skills, collaboration	ICT knowledge base missing Lack of tools	ICT training for the faculty Acquiring ICT tools Forming groups (students-teachers)	Not everyone accepted They assumed it won't last long Adjustments to lifestyle	Mentoring system Intensive use of knowledge sharing platforms Trainings on Google Meet and Zoom Monitoring system for students	Not every teacher participated Need for increasing regulations and support There is no school without „presence" Need for competence-based education	Digital school rules Teachers workload planned for digital teaching Teacher training (ICT)	Not every teacher participated Need for increasing regulations and support Nuances of digital education competence development, gamification	Digital school rules Teachers workload planned for digital teaching ICT training competence development
Case 2	School development: students social and learning skills, coaching	ICT knowledge base missing Lack of tools by teachers, students	ICT training for the faculty Acquiring ICT tools	Reinforced importance of soft skills development	Internal trainings for teachers Extra effort to maintain relationship with families Continuous reflection Continuous monitoring of students' well-geing	Digital education has negative effects on teachers and students Digital education shall have more specific regulations and frames There is no education without being present	Development of timetables for two scenarios for next school year More specific institutional regulations on online education Coaching for teachers and students emphasised soft skill development	The level of involvement of teachers varied pay attention to revealing psychological effects strategic elements for future emergency case Strengthening knowledge sharing among staff	Development of different timetables for two scenarios for the next school year Coaching for teachers and students

Conclusion

- Internal, organizational-level processes are the conditions for successful resistance at the organizational level.
- Preliminary ICT knowledge in the two cases had influence only on the speed of transition, and on the level of individuals.
- The school leadership and the teachers became more aware of the various learning processes for positive change.
- The operation of internal knowledge-sharing platforms, the regular team learning activities contributed to the speed of adaptation and the strengthening of organizational resilience.

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