Generating scores for each aspect of policy for teaching and SLE and its dimensions: Analysis of policy documents

At the first stage we developed a profile for each country by studying all the regulations and guidelines that are sent to the schools by the ministries of education/ states, including the educational law that exist in each country/state. When we studied the regulations, we looked for aspects that were related to each factor of the dynamic model. The aspects that were covered per factor are shown in Table 1.

More specifically one table for each aspect of each system level factor had to be developed. The format of the table is shown below. As you can see we had to put down each suggestion that was relevant to the factor as it was stated in the document. Each suggestion was accompanied by specific information. Specifically, we had to put down whether the suggestion was found on a document that provided guideline to schools or was stated in the law (i.e., it had a compulsory status). In the third column we had to record the phase of education (e.g., primary education, secondary education or specific age group) that was addressed. Then we had to state which stakeholders were involved in implementing this policy recommendation. Additionally the researcher had to rate the suggestion by considering whether the suggestion was in line with the literature (i.e., the theoretical background upon which the dynamic model was based) or not. In case that there was any aspect of differentiation, it was mentioned in the sixth column. Finally we had to write down the exact period that this suggestion was introduced. Table 2 provides an example and the format of the table that was used in the case of teacher absenteeism. The same format was used for every aspect of each factor. In this way we developed a profile for each country, where somebody could find information about the suggestions that are included in the policy documents for each aspect of the system level factors that are stated in Table 1.

Table 1. Aspects of each system level factor concerned with policy for improving teaching and SLE examined in analysing policy documents

System level factors of educational effectiveness	Aspects of each factor
National/State policy for improving teaching	
1. Quantity of teaching	Teacher absenteeism
	Student absenteeism
	Long term planning of the teachers
	Dropout
	Management of time at classroom and/or school level
2. Quality of teaching	Quality of instruction
3. Provision of learning opportunities	Extracurricular activities
	Support/further opportunities provided to student with special needs
National/State policy for improving school learning environment	
1.Student behaviour outside the classroom	Student behaviour outside the classroom
2. Teacher collaboration	Team teaching – staff support
	Exchange of visits – Observation of teaching
	Mentoring system
	Promoting school networking
3. Providing resources	Teacher training
	Teaching aids and resources
	School library
	Advisory bodies
4. Partnership	Reporting assessment results to the parents
	Organising learning activities for parents
	Active participation of parents
	Using facilities available in the community for teaching
	Use of expertise within the community to support teaching

Table 2. An example of a suggestion on how to deal with teacher absenteeism and codes emerged by analysing the content of this suggestion

Suggestion	Guideline (optional) or law (compulsory)	For primary/ secondary education	Groups/persons that are involved	In line with the model/ literature Impact	Differentiation according to the age/group of teachers	Period of establishment / change of suggestion
In cases of short periods of absence, school head teachers can allocate and reassign teachers by giving them an additional workload or extra teaching hours. Not more than 5 hours per week.	Law	Primary secondary	Teachers Head teachers	In line with the model	-	1995

To generate scales for measuring each factor and its dimensions, we had to go through the profiles of the countries and list all the suggestions/types of actions which were included under each aspect of factor. The first column of Table 3 presents the types of actions related with teacher absenteeism that were found in the six participating countries. We can observe that the first three types of actions attempt to reduce the phenomenon whereas the others are concerned with actions that schools can take to replace the lost teaching time. Then we had to look at the profile of each country and measure how many suggestions were included in the profile for each type of action concerned with teacher absenteeism. When there was no suggestion related to a specific type of action number 0 was written in the second column (i.e., **no policy)**. When a number of suggestions were identified, each one was evaluated by taking into account whether it was clear or not. If a certain number of suggestions were unclear then this number was put down in the third column (i.e., "**no clear policy")**. Those suggestions which were clear and encouraged schools to undertake specific actions were recorded in the fourth column (i.e., **encouragement**). If the schools were not only encouraged but also required to implement a specific type of action, the suggestion(s) was/were recorded in the fifth column (i.e., **requirement**). If there was a mechanism within the system that examines whether the required

national/state policy was implemented, the number was put in the last column (i.e., **accountability**) which implies that schools are not only required to implement this action but also are accountable for it. Then for each suggestion we had to record some extra information. Next to the number of the suggestions there was a parenthesis that included the number of the suggestions that indicated the existence of differentiation. Additionally in a second parenthesis, the number of the suggestions that were specific was completed.

Table 3 gives an example to help the readers understand how the analysis of policy documents helped us to generate the scores for each dimension. Specifically, this table presents the results of a country where eight suggestions on how to deal with teacher absenteeism were found in its profile. None of them was related with action types A or D. (As a consequence, the number 0 was recorded in the second column of the relevant rows). There was a suggestion which was in line with type B and schools were only encouraged to take this action. For this reason, this suggestion was recorded in the fourth column of the row concerned with action B. The first parenthesis next to number 1 (i.e., 0) indicates that this suggestion is not too specific so the number 0 is given. The second parenthesis indicates that there is no differentiation and for this reason number is 0 is given. Similarly in this country we found four relevant suggestions in line with type C action. Two of them were reported in the fourth column (i.e., under encouragement) whereas the other two were put down in the fifth column (requirements). By looking at the figures given in column 4, one can see that one of them was too specific (i.e., for this reason we put (1) after the number 2) and none of them encouraged differentiation (i.e., number 0 was given in the second parenthesis).

The figures for each aspect of system level factors put down in Table 3 were entered in an SPSS data file. In the SPSS sheet we had as many columns as types of actions to measure the frequency dimension. For instance in the case of teacher absenteeism we had six columns. Then we had to count out how many suggestions per type were included. In the case of the country presented in Table 3, number zero was recorded under the first column. For the second column, we put down the number 1 whereas for the third column the number 4 etc. In this way, we could estimate the frequency dimension of each type of action. Then, we had to complete six columns for the differentiation dimension (i.e., one column per type of action). The average number was recorded and indicated how many suggestions out of the total number of suggestions asked for differentiation. For instance in the case of this country, the differentiation is 0 for types A, B, D and E of teacher absenteeism. For type C, one out of four suggestions includes differentiation, so differentiation score is 0.25. Type F has two suggestions, one requirement and one encouragement. One out of the two includes aspects of differentiation, so the score for differentiation is 0.5. To fill in the focus column of each type of action, we followed the same procedure. For type C, one out of four suggestions are specific so the focus score for this type of action was 0.25

Table 3. Scores on how to deal with teacher absenteeism per type of action emerged from analysing the suggestions included in the policy documents

STATE/NATIONAL POLICY ON QUANTITY OF TEACHING					
Type of actions	**No policy**	**No clear policy**	**Encouragement**	**Requirement**	**Accountability**
a. Schools should *keep records* on teacher absenteeism	0				
b. *Punishment – Discouragement of teacher absenteeism*: Schools can fire teachers who are absent for an unacceptable reason			1(0)(0)		
c. Teachers who are absent should *inform* the headteacher on time for their absence (e.g., some days before)			2(1)(0)	2(0)(1)	
d. Students of a teacher who is absent are *kept busy* but the lost teaching time is not replaced (e.g., students are split in the other classes, they are asked to work in the school library)	0				
e. Part of the lost teaching time is replaced				1(0)(1)	
f. All lost teaching *time is replaced* (e.g., teachers are obliged to substitute for a colleague who is absent, substitute teachers are employed)			1(0)(0)	1(1)(1)	