

Responses and Interpretation of Teacher Training Accountability Policies in Chile

Respuesta e interpretación a políticas de rendición de cuentas de formación docente en Chile

María Beatriz Fernández Cofré¹, Loreto Fernández Quevedo¹,
Mónica Díaz Navarro², y Patricia Jofré Cáceres²

¹ CIAE, Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Educación, Universidad de Chile

² Universidad Alberto Hurtado

Abstract

Since the 1990s, various countries have created policies aimed at controlling teacher training through regulation and accountability. However, empirical evidence on the effects of these policies is scarce and contradictory. In Chile, accountability and deregulation work in tandem in teacher training. In 2016, the Chilean government approved the policy for the Professional Development System for Teachers, including mandatory accreditation for teacher training programs, a gradual increase in selectivity for prospective teachers, renewal of standards, and implementation of diagnostic tests for student teachers. Through semi-structured interviews, this qualitative exploratory study analyzes how 40 directors of teacher training programs in 10 Chilean universities enact—interpret and respond to—this policy. Using a qualitative content analysis, we identified four groups of interpretations and responses, for which the differences could be understood based on contextual dimensions that modulate conceptions of professionalism, justice, and power relationships expressed by the participants. This study contributes to the understanding of the aspects that influence the enactment of teacher training policies, expanding the scant empirical research in this area, and informing policymakers and teacher trainers.

Keywords: Public policy, teacher education, qualitative research.

Post to:

María Beatriz Fernández
CIAE, Instituto de Estudios Avanzados en Educación, Universidad de Chile.
Periodista José Carrasco Tapia N° 75, Santiago, Chile.
mbeatriz.fernandez@uchile.cl

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Resumen

Diferentes países han generado políticas para controlar la formación docente mediante regulaciones y rendición de cuentas desde los años 90. Sin embargo, existe escasa y contradictoria evidencia sobre los efectos de estas políticas. En Chile, la rendición de cuentas y la desregulación operan simultáneamente en la formación docente. En 2016 se aprobó la política de Sistema de Desarrollo Profesional Docente, que incluye la acreditación obligatoria de programas, el aumento gradual de la selectividad, la renovación de los estándares, y la implementación de pruebas diagnósticas para estudiantes de pedagogía. Este estudio cualitativo exploratorio analiza, a través de entrevistas semiestructuradas, cómo 40 directores de programas de pedagogía de 10 universidades chilenas ponen en práctica —interpretan y responden a— esta política. Utilizando un análisis de contenido cualitativo, se identificaron cuatro grupos de interpretaciones y respuestas, cuyas diferencias pueden entenderse con base en dimensiones contextuales que median las concepciones de profesionalismo, justicia y relaciones de poder expresadas por los participantes. Este estudio contribuye a comprender los elementos que influyen en la puesta en práctica de políticas de formación docente, a expandir la escasa literatura empírica en esta área, y a informar a quienes toman decisiones de política y forman docentes.

Palabras claves: política gubernamental, formación inicial, investigación cualitativa.

This research is intended to analyze how the directors of teaching degree programs in Chile interpret and respond to the recent increase in regulations and accountability in teacher training in the Professional Development System for Teachers (SDPD by the Spanish acronym), an increase that has taken place in the context of an international trend. Since the 1990s, in accordance with the notion of capitalist modernization, there has been a concerted effort to reduce the role of the state, deregulate markets, liberalize trade relations, and privatize public agencies in various countries. The education sector has been considered key in these transformations, based on the argument that developing the skills and knowledge of individuals would increase productivity and enable the insertion of national economies into the new global scenario (Ball, 2001). The quality of education was established as an essential factor for economic competitiveness, with teacher training being identified as essential to improve it (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018).

The neoliberal education model and the principles of the new public administration have guided educational transformations by incorporating policies that allow remote control, using standards, accreditations, and incentives (Anderson & Cohen, 2018; Verger, 2013). These changes are described as second way educational reforms, characterized by greater centralization and standardization of educational objectives by governments (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2012). Similarly, choice, competition, and incentives for results are part of the global educational agenda and the restructuring of educational systems. These changes have been promoted by international organizations, which argue that they exist in countries that produce high performances on international standardized tests (Fernandez, 2018). These reforms are supported by a narrative of lack of confidence in teachers, characterized by interrelated normative claims about how to improve teacher training and teaching itself (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018; Zeichner, 2010).

Accountability policies have shown contradictory effects in the places where they have been implemented and there is no conclusive evidence regarding their impact on learning outcomes, teacher autonomy, and institutional processes (Parcerisa & Verger, 2016). Although regulation and accountability have both increased in teacher training in the last two decades, there is sparse empirical information about the implementation of these policies and their consequences (Bartlett, Otis-Wilborn, & Peters, 2017; Hasbun & Rudolph, 2016; Ledwell & Oyler, 2016; Peck, Gallucci, & Sloan, 2010). Some authors contend that the definition of standards and external assessment systems for pedagogy programs and teachers will improve teaching skills and raise the status of the profession (Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012; Hickok, 1998). However, they warn that, for the expected effects to take place, they have to be implemented on a large scale, as well as being used to guide teacher learning, in addition to having a body of legitimate common knowledge, skills, and attitudes for the profession. Sotomayor and Gysling (2011) contend that standards-based policies are not synonymous with standardization of education, and they promote quality improvements when they are supported by broad political agreement and are part of an agenda for action.

Other researchers argue that accountability policies that promote standardization devalue the professional ethical dimension in teacher training (Butin, 2005). Weakening this dimension entails the risk of having effective, but unfair and undemocratic classrooms (Escudero, 2011). Fullan (2013) identifies punitive accountability as one of the wrong drivers of reforms. He points out that this element may be present, but should not play a central role in large-scale reforms. The right drivers focus on capacity building, teamwork, pedagogy, and systemic policies. Other authors are critical that context, diversity, and culture have been reduced or omitted by instrumentalist views of teaching and learning in these policies. They question the fact that notions of equity supported by external accountability mechanisms are limited to reducing gaps in academic achievement, without addressing complex issues of social justice (Fernández, 2018).

However, several researchers have warned that educational policies are not implemented in a linear way in local spaces and their success depends on the knowledge, attitudes, and perceptions of the actors (Bolívar, Gallego, León, & Pérez, 2005) and how they are translated, recreated, and re-signified (Ball, Maguire, & Braun, 2012). The history and situation of teacher training in Chile means that it is important to examine how accountability policies are experienced in different contexts.

The Chilean application of the neoliberal model has been one of the most far-reaching in the world, being implemented in all areas, including education since the 1970s. The regulations introduced into teacher training since the mid-2000s have attempted to influence a highly deregulated and privatized system (Fernández, 2018). In the last decade, these policies have moved from indirect regulation with low consequences and focused incentives to regulation with high consequences through measures contained in the SDPD, which was approved in 2016 (Fernández & Madrid, 2020). This policy includes the mandatory accreditation of teacher training programs, the progressive increase in the entry requirements for these programs, the implementation of two diagnostic tests for student teachers, and the renewal of standards for teacher training (BCN, 2016). In this policy, there is a tension between the consolidation of a standards-based education paradigm, with pressure for performance via incentives, and an effort towards professionalization and the generation of professional competencies (Ruffinelli, 2016).

This means it is important to study the interpretations of and responses to the SDPD on the part of program directors working in different types of universities. This study analyzes these interpretations and the changes in curricular decisions and admissions in their programs in response to the policy from their perspectives. The results of this research will help improve understanding of the contextual elements that influence the implementation of teacher training policies and identify issues that mediate teacher trainers' interpretation of and response to those policies: concepts of professionalization, social justice, and power relations. These findings will bolster the sparse empirical literature in this area and may be useful for those who make decisions and train teachers.

Teacher training policies in Chile

Law 20,903 (BCN, 2016) gave rise to the SDPD policy and its objective is to “dignify the teaching profession, support its exercise, and increase its valuation” (CPEIP, 2017, p. 8), in order to contribute to student learning. This policy created a system that regulates and consolidates initial teacher training (ITT), entry to teaching, and the development of a professional career in a single body of law.

The policy is intended to respond to the problems that have affected the teaching profession in Chile since the 1970s as a consequence of the neoliberal shock, which, in addition to other measures, deregulated the supply of teacher training programs. The 1981 decree allowed the creation of new higher education institutions and permitted non-university organizations to offer teacher training programs. As a result, teacher training was largely transferred to professional institutes, which in 1985 accounted for around half of total enrollment in these programs (Elacqua, Hincapie, Vegas, & Alfonso, 2018).

The subsequent democratic governments made changes, but continued the neoliberal model (Inzunza, Assaél, & Scherping, 2011). With the aim of monitoring quality and improving the regulation of teacher training, since 2008 a graduation test has been applied to student teachers (the INICIA Test). However, this initiative has come under criticism because it focused on control and accountability (Montecinos, 2014). Its legitimacy was questioned because the results were used to rank institutions and were not representative, given the voluntary nature of the test (García-Huidobro, 2011).

According to the Higher Education Division (DIVESUP), the offer of ITT programs increased by around 200% between 2000 and 2009 to more than 1500 training programs and over 120,000 students. This upward trend began to slow in 2013, due to the introduction of regulations and incentives such as standards and the graduation test (Ruffinelli, 2016).

The significant expansion in pedagogy programs was accompanied by low selectivity. In 2015, there were pedagogy programs both with and without selectivity processes; more than 90,000 students were spread between 70 higher education institutions and 863 programs, with almost 28% of these not being accredited. In 2016, some 47% of students entered private universities without taking the University Selection Test (PSU). The students who took the PSU achieved an average score close to the 50th percentile (Elacqua et al., 2018).

It was in this scenario that the SDPD was approved in 2016, after intense political debate. It is a policy that regulates the offer and assurance of teacher training in universities. In order to resolve the deregulation of the offer, the policy states that pedagogy programs must be accredited to receive new students. It establishes that the sole accrediting institution is the National Accreditation Commission (Comisión Nacional de Acreditación) (Ruffinelli, 2016). The policy also regulates the selection criteria for universities and makes it mandatory to take the PSU, in addition to obtaining minimum scores on the test, or being placed within a given percentile in the ranking of high school graduation. These requirements are being applied gradually in selection processes, increasing every three years from 2017 to 2023. As an alternative entry pathway, quotas are permitted for students of inclusive access programs that are taught by universities and recognized by the Ministry of Education.

The policy also regulates the quality of student teachers through the application of two census diagnostic assessments, one at the beginning of training, which is the responsibility of the universities, and another one year before the process is completed (replacing the INICIA Test), applied by the Ministry of Education and guided by the pedagogical and disciplinary standards that this institution defines (BCN, 2016). This measure is intended to make teacher training institutions accountable, obliging them to implement remedial plans for their students depending on the results of the second assessment (Ruffinelli, 2016).

Theoretical Framework

The traditional perspectives of policy analysis center on how it is planned, implemented, or assessed, assuming there are linear relationships (Diem, Young, Welton, Cumings Mansfield, & Lee, 2014; Stone, 2012). From the critical sociological perspective, on which this study is based, policies are understood as the result of complex processes of negotiation and are subject to changes in local contexts (Ball, 1993). Educational policies can be studied as a cycle in which three contexts are identified (Bowe, Ball, & Gold, 1992): 1) context of influence: the discourses and groups that affect their construction; 2) context of production of the text: the official discourse of the policy and the context in which it is created; and 3) context of practice: the local context in which the policy is interpreted, translated, and changed.

Policy enactment in local contexts or in practice involves the active interpretation and translation of policies by local subjects (Ball et al., 2012). Interpretation is associated with the process of decoding or making sense of a policy, while translation is associated with the process of recoding or converting the policy into practices, concepts, materials, and procedures in the local context (Ball, Maguire, Braun, & Hoskins, 2011). Those who take policy decisions cannot control the meanings and effects of policies in local contexts. Individuals and organizations have histories, interests, and values that mediate the interpretation and response to policies (Ball, 1993; Ball et al., 2012). Meanwhile, the knowledge, attitudes and perceptions of actors influence the enactment and success of reforms (Bolivar et al., 2005). Four contextual dimensions influence policy implementation in schools: professional culture (values and beliefs), external context (external incentives or pressures), situated context (characteristics of the place and the student profile), and material context (available resources) (Ball et al., 2012).

Most of the empirical studies using the perspective of policy enactment focus on the school system. Internationally, empirical studies that examine the process of implementing a reform, policy, or assessment in teacher training at the national, state, or local level analyze the experiences and responses of teacher trainers and student teachers for: 1) assessments for student teachers (Bartlett et al., 2017; Ledwell & Oyler, 2016; Peck et al., 2010); 2) guidelines, assessments, or accreditation of pedagogy programs (Hasbun & Rudolph, 2016; Petrelli, 2014); or 3) more extensive national reforms, including changes in teacher training (Mitchell & Romero, 2010).

The studies that focus on assessment or accreditation processes for pedagogy programs emphasize the challenges of these processes and point to suggestions such as having a team to lead the process, the creation of a culture of accountability, and mutually beneficial relationships with schools (Hasbun & Rudolph, 2016). The studies also mention tensions reported by teacher trainers regarding the implementation of external assessments for student teachers, due to the scant consideration of contextual aspects and the low participation of teacher trainers in the process to define standards and assessment instruments (Bartlett et al., 2017; Reagan, Schram, McCurdy, Chang, & Evans, 2016). However, the empirical studies do not report teacher trainers' interpretations, responses, and experiences in light of policies as complex as the SDPD, which combines standards and assessments for student teachers, accreditation requirements for teacher training programs, and increased admission requirements.

This study combines the perspective of policy enactment—interpretation and translation in local contexts—with a model of analysis of teacher training policy (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018) that explores the policy rationale (values, purposes, and concepts), the problems and solutions proposed by the policy, and the power relations (control mechanisms, accountability content, and consequences for teaching and the work of teacher trainers). We used these elements to guide our methodological decisions.

Methodology

This research is part of a larger study that seeks to understand teacher trainers' responses to and interpretations of the SDPD. This paper reports the findings of an exploratory qualitative study that uses an interpretive paradigm (Creswell, 2009) to look at how 40 program directors in pedagogy interpret and respond to the SDPD from their own perspective through semi-structured interviews. The sample of participants was selected using purposive sampling (Wood & Smith, 2018) based on two criteria: position and the institution at which they work. We selected directors of pedagogy programs, who are officially responsible for linking national and institutional policies with the faculty, and who occupy a relevant position in the curricular decisions for their programs. The program directors were selected from universities that had simultaneous programs in early childhood education, elementary education, secondary education in language, and secondary education in mathematics, and which represented the diversity of Chilean universities considering seven aspects: geographic location (BCN, 2018); type of administration and ownership regime (public, private members of the Council of Rectors of Chilean Universities, or private institutions); selectivity, PSU entrance scores prior to the implementation of the SDPD requirements (Torres & Zenteno, 2011); quality, years of university accreditation (Muñoz & Blanco, 2013); free admission (MINEDUC, 2018); orientation (religious or secular); and size of university enrollment (Torres & Zenteno, 2011).

The sample includes 40 directors of pedagogy programs (10 in elementary education, 10 in early childhood education, 10 in secondary education in language, and 10 in secondary education in mathematics) at 10 different universities.

Table 1
Sample

Number of interviewees	Role (Program director)	Characteristics of place of work				
		Area	Administration	Selectivity	Accreditation	Size
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -Secondary Language (SL) -Secondary Mathematics (SM)	South	Private CRUCH	Low	Medium	Small
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	Center	Private	High	Moderate	Large
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	Center	Private CRUCH	High	High	Large
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	North	Public	High	Medium	Small
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	South	Public	High	Medium	Small

4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	Center	Private	High	High	Small
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	North	Public	High	Medium	Small
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	Center	Private CRUCH	High	High	Large
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	Center	Private	Low	Medium	Large
4	-Elementary -Early Childhood -SL -SM	Center	Private	No information	Moderate	Small

Source: Prepared by the authors.

The interviews with participants took an average of 90 minutes, with a semi-structured protocol based on the theoretical perspective and subjected to the judgment of two experts and piloted. The protocol focused on the characteristics of the programs and the changes for teacher training included in the SDPD policy. The interviews were analyzed using content analysis (Cáceres, 2003) with the Atlas-ti software. We used a code tree to identify the rationale, construction of problems and solutions, and the power relations and implications of teacher training policies and their implementation (Cochran-Smith et al., 2018), identifying emergent codes based on the information from the interviews. Approximately 15% of the interviews were double coded with an agreement level of more than 75% (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013).

Results

We identified four groups of predominant discourses in the interpretations of and responses to the policy on the part of the pedagogy program directors.

Accountability and alignment

In this group, we categorized the responses of 12 program directors working in the three universities (University 3, 6, and 8) in the sample with the most years of accreditation and with private administration, belonging and not belonging to the CRUCH. These directors interpret that the policy is aimed at resolving the deregulation and low accountability of institutions in teacher training, as well as the low status of the teaching profession. From their perspective, the policy defines teachers as professionals that are capable of responding to the diversity of students and their contexts and to the demands of modern society. This includes making teachers accountable for their

students' learning and professional development. According to them, the policy conceptualizes pedagogy programs as units that must assume responsibility for their quality, responding positively to the increased requirements and aligning their curricula with national standards for student teachers. This is exemplified in the following excerpt:

P: That view of teaching ... is that this teacher should be more professional, should be a researcher, and should have this more prominent role in society, and they are more associated with this role and can be told what to do, unlike those on other courses (Director of Elementary Education, U3).

P: Initial teacher training was governed by a market economy ... education was deregulated. Every one of these elements ... has come in [to] regulate and provide a common minimum base that allows us to meet certain quality standards, which is what is being demanded [What] you cannot compromise is quality training to be able to respond to the needs of the people, the children, and young people who are in the school system It's taking responsibility as a country of the reality that we have at the moment (Director of Early Childhood Education, U8).

This discursive construction of the problem of teacher training and teaching itself is similar to that stated explicitly in the policy documents. They also mention that their practices are generally aligned with the policy guidelines and that they have an influence on these decisions, as shown below:

P: The assessment in the penultimate year, from what the students have told us ... is really similar to the bachelor's degree exam that we do Generally, we ... have been providers, and generally all of our regulations have always been in accordance with the law, and when development processes have been carried out, we've been invited to take part in the preparation of these aspects, so there's always been agreement So, we haven't needed to make changes (Director of Early Childhood Education, U8).

They therefore interpret the proposed policy change as being consistent with their professional culture (Ball et al., 2012), which could be related to their positive assessment of its strategies and objectives. The participants in this group mention that they have not made significant changes in their institutional processes, curricula, and admission processes in response to the national policy. Prior to the approval of the policy, their universities implemented internal assessment accountability processes in all their pedagogy programs. This information has been used to improve and coordinate the practices (emphasized in the national policy) and the teaching area. The previous resources (material context) of the institution to make these changes therefore meant it was prepared to meet the demands of the policy (Ball et al., 2012).

The response of these program directors may also be related to the external context or perceived external pressures (Ball et al., 2012). Their programs were highly selective prior to the approval of the policy, so they reported no changes in the entry profile of their students, and their universities had the highest levels of accreditation. It is therefore understandable that increased selectivity and mandatory accreditation were not interpreted as a threat or challenge, and they did not feel pressured to make curricular changes.

Criticism of the market logic, but commitment to public service

Eight of the pedagogy program directors at two regional public universities (University 4 and 7), with medium accreditation, interpret the national policy as external control of minimum requirements based on a technical approach and a lack of confidence in teacher training. They associate external control with a managerial approach and a market education perspective, which contrasts strongly with their public perspective, their humanistic values, and their conception of justice. Their programs include initial processes to assess student outcomes and ensure the quality of their graduates, but the information had not been used evenly across the programs.

These directors understand that the policy assumes that a good teacher is one who is aligned with national standards and external regulations. They also indicate that the policy considers that a good teacher is connected to the reality of his or her classroom and adapts to society, reproducing the social order. This contrasts with their commitment to the public good and construction of a society with humanistic values. As described by some of the participants:

P: With the marked encroachment of the market into social activity ... education is seen as a measurable, quantifiable entity, as if it were any other, where there is an input behavior and there is a process and there is an output, and there are instances that are properly regulated and objectified, because essentially you operate like a company, where everyone has to have evidence, everyone has to account for certain standards, everyone has to account for certain money, and everything is regulated ... At times even I find it even commercialized We're very clear about the role played by [public] institutions such as ours, and therefore we always plan our teaching work thinking about the benefit of the community ... in which we are inserted (Director of Language Education, U7).

P: The ultimate objective of educating people with more focused development of interculturality has to do with building a more respectful society, a more equitable society, a society whose principles are complementarity rather than competition If we can achieve that, we would advance towards a society different to the one we have ... education ... determines the society we have. When we allow education to be commercialized ... we arrive at the society we're in today (Director of Early Childhood Education, U4).

The professional culture of the participants (Ball et al., 2012), their beliefs and values, are considered contradictory to the logic, values, and conceptions promoted by the policy. They highlight their emphasis on training student teachers with an ethical commitment and being capable of responding to the diversity of students and their contexts, educating based on a holistic perspective, considering attitudinal and cultural aspects. This discrepancy is also evident when mentioning the commitment to their students, their situated context (Ball et al., 2012). The directors state that they serve students who enter the program with low basic competencies (reading, writing, and mathematics) and poor study habits, pointing to their high commitment to equity when serving this group. They suggest the importance of offering academic and socioemotional support in teacher training, and the need to improve the didactic and disciplinary courses in their programs. Program directors in this group also criticize the reductionism of the PSU as an entry mechanism for student teachers, because it omits attitudinal aspects. In this group, two programs were unable to enroll students in 2018 as a result of increased selectivity or accreditation requirements.

Despite these criticisms, these directors say that they have made changes to their curriculum in response to the policy, in order to bring it into line with the current standards for student teachers, as exemplified below:

P: ... As a consequence of this, an updating of the subjects ... For example, we had a generic, very traditional, graduate profile written in novelistic way, versus a graduate profile with standards that has a totally different composition In the generic one there's free will, or there's also academic, pedagogical, and approach freedom; however, now, with the standards, things are different. It's completely guided, it's totally marked what has to be done, defined, so there's no room for this free will; instead, it has to be much more focused on what's stated (Director of Elementary Education, U7).

Nevertheless, they appreciate that these modifications have been developed through democratic processes that, in their opinion, are the regular way in which decisions are taken and changes in their programs are implemented. However, they express concern about the lack of resources to address the requirements of the policy. Unlike the first group, the resources (material context) available to their programs had a negative influence on their interpretations of the policy requirements (Ball et al., 2012).

Tension between the policy and hallmark of the program

As in the case of the second group, the 12 program directors of three universities (1, 5, and 10) are critical of the policy, considering that it is external control over teacher training. These programs are located in regional universities that are far from the capital, with low or medium accreditation. They state that they are committed to serving students from their communities who normally achieve low scores on the PSU and enter the program with low basic competencies and study habits. The directors in this group underline their commitment to provide an education that is relevant to their context, with a local, regional, or religious emphasis. In contrast, they suggest that national policy emphasizes standardization, defining a good teacher as one that is aligned with national standards for student teachers, conceptualizing teachers as executors of external policies. They therefore display tensions between their professional culture (Ball et al., 2012) and the policy, like the previous group.

These participants also direct strong criticism at the increased selectivity under the policy. They indicate that this test does not assess attitudinal aspects, such as vocation or commitment to teaching, and mention that students with higher scores on national admission tests are usually concentrated in universities located in the capital, so the national-based score puts their students at a disadvantage and does not recognize the regional context, as described by one of the participants:

P: There is no understanding of the population, of the localities Any region in Chile has certain characteristics that have to be included in the educational diagnosis ... 550 points is the cutoff point on the PSU. It's a standard measure that speaks volumes about a lack of understanding and ignorance of the territory as well. That's what I mean; to me, all of the policies should be localized, understanding the complexity of where educational interventions take place (Director of Secondary Language Education, U5).

They believe that the policy does not respond to the profile of their students and their context; that is, the situated context of these directors influences their criticisms of the policy (Ball et al., 2012). The participants acknowledge that the policy allows for inclusive admission pathways, but they state that they cannot admit all of their students through these pathways and report a drop in their enrollments subsequent to the approval of the policy.

These programs have implemented changes in their curricula, aligning them with national standards and the national diagnostic test of the Ministry of Education. Unlike the previous group, they state that they have made these changes without neglecting their institutional hallmark, which is exemplified below:

P: We're going to have to, at the universities, design ways to respond to these expectations or this standard or this external thing considering our own characteristics and that's what we're doing We're seeking strategies, ways, trying to systematize, innovating on some other things, like I was explaining to you about the practices (Director of Early Childhood Education, U1).

They also mention that they are in constant tension to maintain the emphasis of their training, due to the large number of national standards for training and the pressure of external assessment through diagnostic tests and accreditation.

Adaptation to survive the market

We identified a fourth trend among eight directors of pedagogy programs at two private universities (2 and 9) with medium or low accreditation. These programs have several campuses in different regions of the country. The participants believe that the national policy responds to the high heterogeneity in quality and the low selectivity of the pedagogy programs. They mention that the policy conceives of teachers as people capable of

reducing the learning gap, responding to diversity, and working in disadvantaged contexts. In their opinion, the policy promotes teacher training that is aligned with national regulations and standards, establishing minimum requirements as a means of improvement and self-regulation, as exemplified below:

P: I believe that it's to regulate it. I think that today any entity that wants to become a trainer of trainers has to comply with a minimum standard, has to select its students, and has to comply with certain minimum conditions, and over that it has to form and apply its hallmark. I believe that this law helps level the playing field It's clearly an advance, it's indisputable (Director of Mathematics Education, U2).

P: They oblige us to improve the learning process ... because, of course, we have to work according to the standards. That is, that a teacher knows how to teach, a teacher knows their own discipline, a teacher knows about policies and regulations, they know how to communicate, to be reflective That's a benefit, because it helps us [to] have a clear line on where to aim the learning. The difficulty is that we've had to adjust our programs (Director of Early Childhood Education Program, U9).

Like the participants in group one, these directors express a positive view of the policy, emphasizing its potential to improve teacher training and equity in the education system.

These participants report major curricular changes. They state that their programs have adapted to the demands of the SDPD, moving from a focus on theoretical and disciplinary knowledge to the articulation of theory and practice. This change led them to create academic initiatives to level out the competencies of students on entry. They explain that, in addition to the changes required by the policy, they have special courses to improve specific content for the national diagnostic assessment. Unlike the participants in groups two and three, these directors do not criticize the changes or show tension because of them. The professional culture of their institutions may be related to this response (Ball et al., 2012). In these programs, there were internal monitoring mechanisms prior to the policy and a centralized curriculum to ensure similar training that was independent of the location and region. This could be linked related to the absence of criticism of a national policy that establishes centralized curricular guidelines.

These participants are also those who report the most changes in the profile of their student teachers as a result of the approval of the SDPD. The average PSU admission score has increased and the number of students from subsidized schools has also risen. They express concern about the consequences of increased selectivity on the enrollment of students from disadvantaged backgrounds and for the economic sustainability of their programs. The gradual increase in selection scores at national level for the SDPD student teachers raises doubts among the interviewees about the competitiveness of their programs within the university and their ability to enroll enough students to ensure profitability. The external context (Ball et al., 2012), the pressure from the national policy for accreditation, and the institutional pressure to demonstrate economic viability is relevant to understand the changes made in their programs.

Discussion

This study helps to understand the factors that mediate pedagogy program directors' interpretation of and response (translation) to a national policy that increases standardization and accountability. Based on the analysis, we identify two contextual dimensions that influence policy enactment among all of the groups: professional culture, and external context or external pressures (Ball et al., 2012). In addition, the material context, or resources related to the policy enactment, are relevant aspects in understanding the responses of the directors in

groups one and two, who have had the resources to make changes, or who have limited resources, respectively. A fourth dimension, the situated context, is highlighted only by the participants whose programs are located outside the central part of the country.

The interpretations and responses of the directors of the pedagogy programs, affected by the contextual dimensions, can be understood in terms of three central themes: professionalism, justice, and power relations.

The analysis shows how the participants' notions of professionalism are subjected to strain or confirmed by a policy that increases accountability. Evetts (2009) argues that accountability policies promote organizational professionalism, focused on external control over results, hierarchical decision-making, standardization of processes, and authority based on legal or rational criteria, among other characteristics. However, Hardy & Melville (2019) show how notions of professionalism of policy are reinterpreted and translated in local contexts, depending on the professional teaching cultures. In the context of teacher training, this study finds that the professional culture of program directors has a strong influence on their interpretations of and responses to the policy. The participants in groups one and four do not express major differences, disagreements, or criticisms with regard to the policy, valuing greater national control of training quality. Coincidentally, there were already mechanisms in place for internal monitoring of the pedagogy programs in their institutions. On the other hand, the directors in the second and third groups criticized the accountability assumptions of the SDPD, pointing out that they are associated with managerial and hierarchical practices, which contrast with the professional relations of their programs. These principals demonstrate notions of occupational professionalism (Evetts, 2009), in which good teacher education is associated with local and collective decisions, trust, and professional judgment of the work. Professional cultures, based on different notions of professionalism, enable us to understand the acceptance or criticism of policy, and the alignment with or resistance to that policy.

A number of studies look more deeply at practices of resistance by analyzing the implications of policy implementation in curricular, pedagogical, and political terms (Henning, Dover, Dotson, & Agarwal-Rangnath, 2018). The critiques of and responses to the national policy on the part of the program directors in the second and third groups show nuances, which can be categorized according to different notions of resistance. In the second group, program directors aim strong criticism at the policy and emphasize their commitment to public education; however, they acknowledge having made changes to their curriculum to ensure that they cover the content established in the national standards and assessed by the national diagnostic test. This form of covert resistance or subversion (Henning et al., 2018) may be mobilized by the tension between institutional ethical commitments, which they believe are absent from the policy, and their position as public servants, whose duty is to align themselves with national guidelines. In contrast, the program directors in the third group display overt resistance, even though they acknowledge making changes in the curriculum based on the demands of the policy (Henning et al., 2018). This resistance is expressed not only in discourse, but also in curricular decisions that are aimed at maintaining the competencies of the graduate profile and courses associated with the institutional hallmark (religious, local, or regional), despite the constant pressure towards the priorities established by the policy (standards and diagnostic test contents). Therefore, the resistance of the participants to the policies can be interpreted as a way of safeguarding their professional identity (Bolívar et al., 2005).

The notions of social justice that underlie the discourses of the program directors also provide us with insight on the different interpretations of and responses to the policy. The participants from programs located in regions that are far from the central zone (groups 2 and 3) believe that external assessments (national diagnostic test and accreditation) ignore the contextual aspects of their programs, which has been reported in international studies on accountability policies in teacher training (Bartlett et al, 2017; Reagan et al., 2016). The increased selectivity of student teachers is another of the tensions highlighted by the participants, due to the difficulties in achieving the PSU scores required in their regions. These tensions are associated with the notions of justice that underlie the participants' criticisms, which are focused on the absence of distributive justice in the policy (Fraser

& Honneth, 2003); in their view, the policy hinders equal access to teacher training programs for students from regions. The measures that increase selectivity are seen as a threat to the institutional project, which emphasizes service, assistance, and support for the needs of their students despite their low entrance scores. On the other hand, the positive assessment of the policy on the part of the program directors in groups 1 and 4 can be associated with the understanding of distributive justice as the possibility of the policy to promote quality teaching for all classroom students, improving equal opportunities. Meanwhile, the criticisms made of the policy by the program directors in groups 2 and 3 are related to the difficulties they interpret to achieve justice of recognition (Fraser & Honneth, 2003). They mention that the policy does not consider the local context and the needs to which their hallmarks respond, making it difficult to maintain a curriculum that responds to the culture of their students. These efforts are related to ethical dilemmas of the teaching profession and its responsibility for the education promoted (Escudero, 2011).

Another relevant theme in order to understand the differences between the participants is connected to power relations in the face of external pressures (external context) (Ball et al., 2012). Similar to the harmful effects of accountability policies reported in the school system (Stobart, 2008), the fourth group of directors point to changes in the curriculum to prioritize the content promoted by the national policy and the review of content prior to the national diagnostic test. The increase in selectivity and accreditation requirements create great challenges for the sustainability of their programs and their possibility of surviving under the new rules, given that they had high enrollment but low selectivity, and low or medium accreditation prior to approval of the SDPD. The perception of little power to question the changes and greater pressure to implement them may help us to understand why this group reports more curricular modifications. The first group, comprised of directors of highly selective programs in universities with high accreditation, report having greater external resources to make curricular innovations, and report greater participation in the construction of the policy. Their greater influence on policy decisions allows them to anticipate the requirements for changes or orientations, giving us an insight as to why they report making few curricular adjustments for the SDPD. Development of policies is a disputed process in which the institutions that are best positioned are able to influence an educational system in which they share views and interests (Levinson, Sutton, & Winstead, 2009). By contrast, the directors of regional programs report having little participation in the development of the policy and they assume a critical stance towards it.

These findings help to provide us with an insight into the agreements and tensions of program directors regarding a national policy that seeks to increase the selectivity and accountability of pedagogy programs. Specifically, they allow us to understand how the requirements of the policy may strain teacher trainers' conceptions of professionalization and their training proposals, questioning their professional identity, how the consequences of these policies can may contradict practices that promote distributive justice or recognition in the programs, and the importance of democratizing the participation and power of those who enact the policies. The study also helps expand the sparse literature on the implementation of accountability policies in the field of teacher training, a context in which they have become more common. Our findings are based on interviews with program directors, so it is necessary to conduct research that includes more sources of information and a larger variety of actors in teacher training in order to go into greater detail on these results considering local contexts.

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