

Qualified and Unqualified Staff in German All-day Schools. An Exploratory Overview

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Abstract: In Germany, three groups can be identified who work in all-day schools and take on pedagogical tasks in extended education: Teachers, pedagogical staff, and staff without a pedagogical qualification (lay pedagogues). While the professionalisation debate on teachers and pedagogical staff already exists, there is a lack of knowledge on lay staff. In this article we consider the group of lay pedagogues. Findings from existing studies explore in more detail the expertise that personnel bring into all-day education.

Keywords: professionalisation, extended education, lay pedagogues

Introduction

Similar to many other countries, the field of extended education – especially in the context of after-school care¹ – is growing in Germany since the beginning of the 21st century (Bae, 2019; Stecher, Maschke, & Preis, 2018). Extended education in Germany is organised through child and youth services and/or schools. The children and youth service institutions could be public or independent (e.g. church, local institutions or clubs). While in the eastern part of Germany, the children and youth services are in most cases responsible for offering and organising extended education, respectively in the form of after-school care, it is in the western part the schools. However, even mixed forms with shared responsibilities and collaborative programs with partners outside school exist and in practice the different institutions cooperate with each other (Autorengruppe Bildungsberichterstattung, 2020; Eßer, Graßhoff, Krinninger, & Schröder, 2022). Furthermore, the attendance extended education could be compulsory or voluntary for the students (Schuepbach & Lilla, 2020). Even within one school several organisations of extended education could be observed. Beyond schools and children and youth services, the local (sports) clubs and other out of school institutions are involved in the care of school children in the community (Schuepbach & Lilla, 2020; StEG-Konsortium, 2019), like football clubs, music schools, the local gardening club.

The discourse about extended education care for school children is closely related to the expansion of (so-called) all-day schools (Fischer & Klieme, 2013; Fischer, Theis, & Züchner, 2014; Steinmann, Strietholt, & Caro, 2018). In the recent twenty years, a large body of

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1 We use the terms after-school care and out of school care synonymously to extended education. However, extended education describes more a context which also includes extracurricular activities as a part of after school care. Along with Bae (2019) we use extended education as an “umbrella term”.

research concerning all-day schools and extended education emerged and even some of the research conducted in Germany is available in English. Most of the research concern effects on students' performance and the reduction of inequalities (Fischer et al., 2014; Steinmann et al., 2018) or social behaviour (Sauerwein, Theis, & Fischer, 2016) and the cooperation between teacher and staff offering extended education (Böhm-Kasper, Dizinger, & Gausling, 2016). However, little is known about the qualifications and the professionalisation of staff offering extracurricular activities. Furthermore, there is a lack of knowledge about the numbers of staff who are involved in extended education. This is of great importance because from 2026 there will be a legal entitlement for after-school care (Graßhoff & Sauerwein, 2021). This is linked to a further expansion of the infrastructure of extended education as well as to an increased need for personnel, which can hardly be covered by staff with a pedagogical qualification alone (Graßhoff & Sauerwein, 2022; Rauschenbach, Meiner-Teubner, Böwing-Schmalenbrock, & Olszenka, 2021). Recent estimates suggest a need for an additional 50,000 to 100,000 professionals, depending on the take-up of the legal entitlement for after-school care (Bock-Famulla, Girndt, Vetter, & Kriechel, 2022). The goal of this paper is to provide a focus on lay pedagogues, unqualified staff. First, it should be noted that in the literature on existing approaches to professionalisation, there are hardly any formulated requirements for the group of lays. Second, it can be seen that the employees at all-day schools are qualified in different ways. This diversification is particularly evident among lay staff. In a further step, the article deals with two studies in more detail in order to be able to make first statements about the relation between qualifications and the pedagogical orientations of the lay persons and the knowledge about quality.

Staff in Extended Education

As far as we know, in Germany there is no systematic and comprehensive inventory of the personnel involved in all-day education. For the primary school sector based on analysis of available official data, it is estimated that around 96,000 people work in allday programmes (schools and/or institutions belonging to children and youth service) (Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer, 2021). However, staff employed through cooperation partners is not recorded as well as the staff involved in institutions that are not directly cooperating with schools. At primary schools, 85 % of the pedagogical staff can be classified as professional. They have a degree from a vocational training, university or other qualification. This group consists mostly of early childhood teachers with a vocational training degree (70 %). The remaining 15 % of the qualified staff have an academic degree from a university or a university of applied sciences. Around 14 % of staff who work in extended education are without a recognised pedagogical qualification (Autorengruppe Fachkräftebarometer, 2021). Similar the child and youth service statistics show that 87 % of the professionals working in all-day care have a relevant university or vocational degree (Autorengruppe Kinder- und Jugendhilfestatistik, 2021). For North Rhine-Westphala (the most populous federal state in Germany) there are more detailed statistics available. The staff without relevant pedagogical vocational training provides the largest number of hours (94 hours at primary schools), followed by educators with 75 hours. Social workers provide only 37 hours and teachers only 13 hours (Altermann et al., 2018). Taken this together, it seems possible that qualified staff (teachers, early childhood teachers, social workers) is involved in extended education offered

in schools and are the largest group. However, the professionals do not spend the whole working time in pedagogical interactions with children. They also have to attend team meetings, organise the after-school care etc. Probably, therefore, the children have significantly more contact with unqualified staff.

Professionalisation in Extended Education

This raises the question of what kind of skills, competence or more general what profession is required in high quality extended education. There are no administrative or political requirements in this respect. After school care and/or extended education in Germany belongs to the youth welfare system and/or the education system (school). The responsibilities between both systems often overlap, especially in the case of after school care and/or extended education. The youth welfare system (e.g. Böllert 2018) covers a wide range of services: From kindergarten and youth clubs/centres to residential care. While a qualification (social work or early childhood teacher) is necessary for this work, there are no corresponding requirements for the field of extended education. Also, when extended education is organised by schools, teachers are only partial involved, and other staff work here. The question of the necessary competencies can therefore initially only be approached from a theoretical perspective. Following Shulman (1986) in competence-theoretical approaches, a distinction is made between general pedagogical knowledge, (school) subject knowledge, subject didactic knowledge and knowledge about the subject curriculum (Baumert & Kunter, 2006). Ideas of extended education can hardly be found in (political) descriptions of competences for teachers. The focus here is clearly on teaching and references to extended education are faded out. However, the statement of the Conference of Ministers of Education in Germany (Sekretariat der Kultusministerkonferenz, 2019) lists competences that are not exclusively assigned to teaching. These are for example perceiving barriers and impairments of students and influencing their individual development, as well as cooperating with parents (and other professions) for this purpose. The teaching of values and norms is also mentioned, as well as support in conflict resolution.

Schuepbach and Lilla (2020) also refer to five domains of professionalism from a teacher's perspective on how to go beyond teaching. "The domains consist of complex sets of capabilities, skills and attitudes that are interconnected and partly overlapping" (Schuepbach & Lilla, 2020, p. 65). These domains are reflectivity and discourse, professional awareness, collaboration and collegiality, diversity management and personal mastery.

Teachers are involved in offering extracurricular activities. Early childhood teachers (which isn't an academic qualification in Germany), social workers (social pedagogies) and staff without an educational training or studies make up by far the majority of the occupational groups involved in extended education. In the German-speaking literature concerning social work, in particular, competence theory approaches with the underlying idea of standardising knowledge and skills, as well as the idea of evidence-based practice, are viewed critically (Otto, Polutta, & Ziegler, 2009). It is argued that standardised knowledge can hardly be used in complex and multi-layered practice situations. Accordingly, ideas of social technological control in the sense of direct instructions for practitioners are rejected (Dewe & Otto, 2010). These ideas display similarities with the work of Schön (1988) (who is certainly better known

in an international context). Schön also argues that the complexities and uncertainties of practice “escape the canons of technical rationality” (Schön, 1988, p. 6).

There are hardly any concrete formulated criteria in the literature on the pedagogical requirements for extended education. At best, transfers can be made here, based on theoretical and conceptual assumptions. Referring to Shulman (1986) there must be some general pedagogical knowledge of high-quality extended education offers. Furthermore, going along with Schön (1988) reflecting skills and orientations can be outlined as significant. To what extent these criteria can be observed in practice is unknown. In view of the high number of unqualified staff in extended education (in Germany), it is necessary to find out whether they have knowledge about the quality of all-day offers and whether they have reflective skills. Considering that some are probably working in after school care/ extended education for several years, it can also be argued that, in addition to an academic or vocational education, professional practice can also contribute to qualification (e. g. Steiner 2013).

State of Research

The impact of extended education is closely related to their quality (Fischer & Theis, 2014). There is a broad consensus that pedagogical staff should recognise children’s needs, stimulate autonomy, and organise the after-school care program which should include several activities for children of different ages (Fukkink & Boogaard, 2020). As well the social and cognitive development of children is addressed (for Germany see: Fischer, Elvstrand, & Stahl, 2022; Fischer & Klieme, 2013; Sauerwein et al., 2016). In the recent years a growing interest in children’s perspective of after-school care could also be observed (Lehto & Eskelinen, 2020; Loureiro, Grecu, Moll, & Hadjar, 2019). Fischer et al. (2022) claim that “Quality of extended education should foster children’s well-being and development; therefore, it is necessary to investigate and take into consideration their needs and experiences” (Fischer et al., 2022, p. 285). However, as mentioned before, in all-day schools staff without a pedagogical qualification are often employed (Fischer et al., 2020). Stecher et al. (2018) similarly describe “[t]he quality of pedagogical interaction is ensured based on a profession for which a degree in education is required” (Stecher et al., 2018, p. 76). On the contrary, Steiner (2013) mentions that expertise is also acquired through professional experience. Staff without a pedagogical qualification – lay pedagogues – is a heterogeneous category. Some of them attend trainings; some have been working in the field of extended education for several years while others are novices. Politically and conceptually – discussed under the label “Educational landscapes” (German: “Bildungslandschaften”) – it is also unclear whether extended education should only be provided by professionals. Opening up to the social space means that lay pedagogues should also bring their expertise into the school, be it as a football coach, a baker or a collective of artists (Coelen et al., 2022; Spies & Wolter, 2018).

Be that as it may, the issue of qualification of the staff is discussed in the context of extended education but empirical knowledge is rare. The few studies at hand taking staff qualifications into account show positive correlations between academic education and positive social behaviour (Gottfredson, Cross, & Soulé, 2007) or the quality of extracurricular activities perceived by children (Cross, Gottfredson, Wilson, Rorie, & Connell, 2010). Accordingly, “staff members who were highly educated, well trained, and employed long-term appeared to observers to be more skilled in providing youth services” (Cross et al., 2010,

p. 378). Staff turnover, which is attributed to poor pay and part-time positions, is discussed as a problem. Affrunti, Mehta, Rusch, and Frazier (2018) discuss the issue of job stress for staff and point out the need for resources to reduce stress and increase the quality of extended education. There are also positive correlations between the quality perceived by the young people and the relationship work (assessed by staff) as well as teamwork (cooperation) and efficiency (Kuperminc et al., 2019).

Research Questions

The qualification of the staff seems to be significant for the quality of extracurricular services. Conversely, there are also arguments that can be used to justify the use of non-pedagogically qualified staff, so-called lay pedagogues, at least in part. The extent to which qualified educators differ from lay pedagogues is largely unclear. Likewise, the dichotomy of qualified – not qualified does not seem to catch up with the complexity of practice. However, there is a lack of concepts that propose an alternative differentiation.

Hence, in the following section, we will answer two research questions. First, we are interested if the qualification can explain differences in the pedagogical orientation and the knowledge about quality of extracurricular offers. Second, we will develop an alternative approach, which considers the heterogeneity of staff in extended education and explore in more detail the expertise that the staff brings to all-day education.

To answer these two questions, we will refer to two research projects, the LAKTAT² and JenUs³ study. To answer the question concerning differences between professional and lay pedagogues we use data collected in a pre-test of a project which aims to collect the pedagogical orientations of staff involved in extended education (LAKTAT – <https://gepris.dfg.de/gepris/projekt/454196803>). Here we follow a quantitative approach.

Looking for a deeper understanding of the expertise that the staff brings into extended education from outside school, we refer to data from the JenUs Project, an ethnographic study which was conducted in four secondary schools in Germany with different school tracks types (High School/Gymnasium and Middle Schools/Realschule).

Study I – Differences Between Qualified and Not-Qualified Staff

The questionnaire was sent out online in the first quarter of 2022 via E-mail to those interested in further training in the field of extended education (Danner & Sauerwein, i.E.). In sum 124 staff, who are involved in all-day schools, answered the pre-test questionnaire for the LAKTAT project. 54 % of the respondents have a vocational or university pedagogical degree (early childhood teacher, social work); 46 % have no formal pedagogical qualification.

2 The project is conducted by the University of Oldenburg, University of Hildesheim and TU Dortmund. It started in 2021 and is funded by the DFG (German Research Foundation), Project number: 454196803.

3 The project is conducted by the University of Bremen and the University of Hildesheim and was funded from 2016 to 2020 by the DFG, Project number: 315317689.

Independent Variables

Beyond the pedagogical qualification, we asked the staff how many years they worked in the field of extended education/ all-day school ($M = 7.78$ $SD = 5.48$) to consider the experience the staff gather in practice (see Steiner, 2013). To control for a potential influence of different understandings and/or traditions in education between cultures (e.g. Heisig et al., 2020; Hagemann & Jarausch 2014) we control for migration background. 17 percentage of the staff have a migration background (born abroad themselves or to one of their parents). Similar parenting styles differ between generations (e.g. Gracia 2020) and therefore we control for age. The age ranges from 20 to 66 years ($M = 48$ $SD = 8.69$). Especially in the case of non-qualified staff, culture and generation could have an influence on the pedagogical orientation, because no qualification change the pedagogical orientations. Therefore we control for both. To avoid computation errors, gender could not be considered in the later regression analysis, because 92 per cent of the participants claimed to be female.

Dependent Variables

The pedagogical orientation was measured by an analogue scale. The participants were presented with opposing statements about their day at the all-day school. They had to use a slider to decide whether they were “child-oriented” or “school-oriented” (0= particularly child-oriented | 10= particularly school-oriented) (see Table 1). In other words, low values represent a child-orientated, high values a school-oriented attitude of the respondents.

Table 1. *Child-orientation/ School-orientation*

	Mean	SD	N	α
child-orientation	4,18	1,39	107	school-orientation
The extended education should be connected to the interests of the children.	3,65	1,81	107	Extended education is intended to compensate for school deficits.
In extended education children should have fun.	3,60	1,93	107	In extended education the subject matter is to be deepened.
I see children as independent actors.	4,72	1,91	107	Children need adults to guide them.
I think it is good that children attend all-day programs.	4,76	1,96	107	Parents should rather take care of their children themselves.
Scale	4,18	1,39	107	,708

SD= standard deviation, N= participants

Additional computed information is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Fit Values School-orientation*

Scale	α	chi- square	SRMR	TLI	CFI	RMSE A
School- orientation	0,708	0.07	0,03	0,86	0,92	0.12

SRMR = Standardized Root Mean Square Residual; TLI= Tucker-Lewis Index; CFI= Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation

The knowledge about the quality of extracurricular activities was recorded via an open question. Therefore, the participants were asked to: “Please describe what you consider important in the concrete implementation of an offer in a few key points. Please name 6 central quality dimensions”.

These answers were evaluated with the TM package in R (Feinerer & Hornik, 2018). One point could be scored for each named quality dimension. In line with the literature (Fischer et al., 2022; Fischer & Theis, 2014; Sauerwein & Fischer, 2020), we defined structure, (cognitive) activation, autonomy support, participation, everyday orientation and recognition as central quality dimensions. Related terms were also coded as correct. For example, it was sufficient if the participants named independence, voluntariness, experience of competence, and self-worth to reach the “point” for autonomy support. Only 97 participants answered this open question. The score ranged between 0 and 4 (Mean .95 SD .67).

Results

The results in Table 3 must be read in two directions because participants were forced to choose between school or child orientation (see also Table 1). Negative regression coefficients mean a child orientation, while positive regression coefficients indicate a school orientation. Results of the regression analysis show that qualified staff is more child than school orientated ($b = .660$ $p < .05$). The work experience, age or migration background has no significant influence on the pedagogical orientation. However, the model explains only a low proportion of variance ($R^2 .058$).

Table 3. *Regression School-orientation*

	b	SD	Beta	p	Confidence interval 95 %	
					lower	upper
Qualified Staff	-.660	.296	-.235	.029	-1.249	-.071
work experience	-.004	.030	-.014	.906	-.063	.056
Age	.003	.018	.020	.861	-.033	.040
Migration Background	.076	.374	.022	.839	-.667	.819
N	91					
R ²	.058					

Concerning the knowledge about the quality of extracurricular activities, it first must be mentioned that we have only 61 cases left. The regression analysis shows a positive connection between qualified staff and the knowledge about the quality of extracurricular activities; however, the results are not significant ($b = .408$ $p > .05$). The work experience does not influence the knowledge about quality as well as age and migration background. Furthermore, the model explains only a low proportion of variance ($R^2 .059$).

Table 4. *Knowledge about the Quality of Extracurricular Activities*

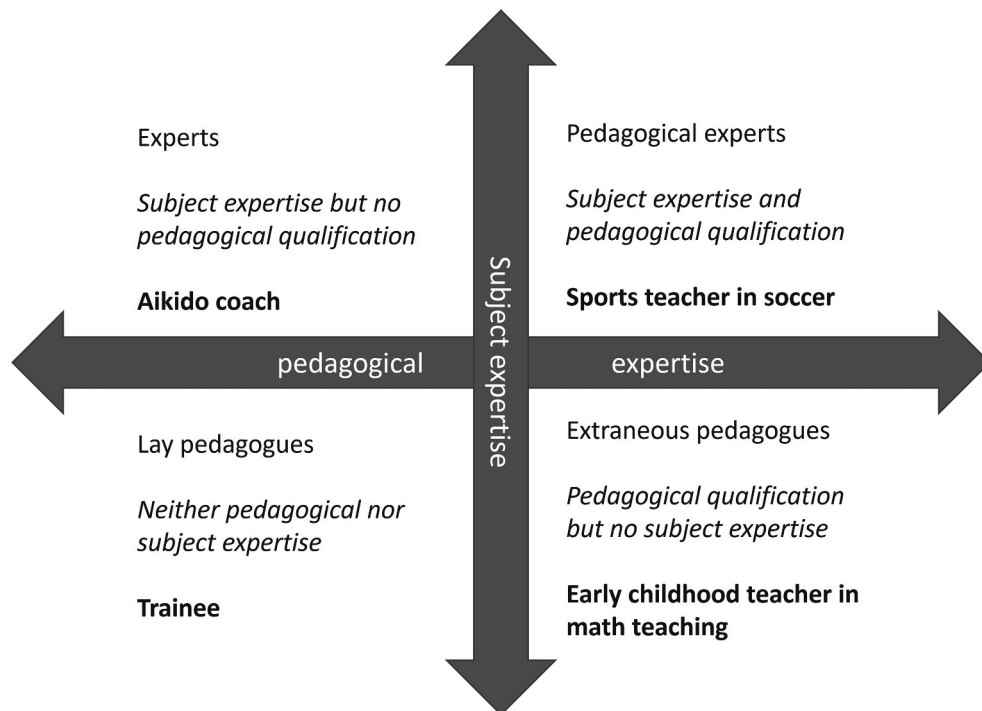
	b	SD	Beta	p	Confidence interval 95 %	
					lower	upper
Qualified Staff	.408	.303	.174	.183	-.198	1.015
work experience	-.007	.038	-.026	.846	-.084	.069
Age	.026	.019	-.185	.176	-.012	.064
Migration Background	-.033	.373	-.012	.929	-.779	.713
N	61					
R ²	.059					

Study II – Ethnographic Perspectives

In the JenUs project, different methods were combined to obtain a multi-perspective view of the all-day programs and an intensive look at extracurricular activities. Semi-structured interviews with school leaders and all-day school coordinators took place and an explorative ethnography was carried out in all extracurricular programs. Based on this data, four programs were finally selected for in-depth participant observation over a period of several weeks. Observations within the four secondary schools took place within one school term; the data was analysed in coding procedures using the grounded-theory-method (Charmaz, 2014).

The long-term participant observation was used to capture the interaction between the students and lay pedagogical staff. In addition to the observations, interviews were also conducted with these lay educators. The results of the study indicate that the heterogeneous personnel are classified in terms of their qualification and subject expertise (Graßhoff, Haude, Bebek, Schütz, & Idel, 2019; Graßhoff, Haude, Idel, Bebek, & Schütz, 2019).

In the field of extended education, a content-related expertise (subject expertise) plays a relevant role – beyond the qualification. In the ethnographic observation in the extracurricular offers, the subject expertise appeared sometimes even more relevant than a pedagogical qualification. For example, if children attend a climbing, chess or aikido offer, the abilities of its staff in these activities become relevant. Along with this, a matrix of professionalism and expertise in extracurricular activities could be described (Figure 1). The pedagogical expertise is plotted on the x-axis, the subject expertise on the y-axis. The aikido coach would thus have subject matter expertise but no pedagogical knowledge, the sports teacher or the experiential/outdoor educator would have both subject matter and pedagogical expertise. The early childhood teacher who provides homework support would have pedagogical expertise but no subject expertise, and the trainee would have neither subject expertise nor pedagogical expertise.

Figure 1. *Matrix of Professionalism and Expertise in Extracurricular Activities*

The observation of the activities shows different ways of the staff without pedagogical qualifications. Some try to imitate the role of teachers and are strictly oriented towards the school rules. They are punishing and imposing sanctions on students, sending them out of the room and often to the school leader's office. Others, in contrast, were categorized as a "symbolic distancing" from school. In this case, the staff without vocational qualification refused to take pedagogical responsibility and the role of a teacher or an educator. Students are left to their own devices and educational situations are not structured. However, this is not done for pedagogical reasons, for example, to encourage personal responsibility and initiative. The situations observed in this way can be described as chaotic due to a lack of pedagogical skills.

Discussion and Conclusion

The number of children who attend extended education in the form of after-school care and/or all-day schools is growing. Until 2029 there will be a legal entitlement for after-school care for every child in Germany. However, there is a lack of qualified staff to ensure the after-school care now, and this lack will grow till 2029.

The empirical knowledge about qualifications and professionalisation in extended education is rare. Studies at hand indicate that staffs' qualification is significant for the quality of extracurricular activities (Cross et al., 2010) and quality of extracurricular activities in turn is related to the effects of extracurricular activities (Fischer & Klieme, 2013). Our findings based on the analysis of a pre-study of the LAKTAT confirm differences between staff with qualifications and lay pedagogues in relation to a stronger child orientation. However, we find no difference in knowledge about the quality of extended education with regard to the qualifications of the workforce, however our results show in general a low knowledge about the quality of extended education.

Probably staff, whether qualified or not, work more based on their intuition and subject experience (see. Fig 1). This could be underpinned by the idea of educational landscapes (Coelen et al., 2022). Schools open into the social space and integrate different people based on their content-specific expertise – as football coach, gardener etc. The reconstructions in the JenUs project confirm this hypothesis and show that the subject expertise is more relevant than the pedagogical qualification in the extracurricular offers.

Furthermore, Steiner (2013) also mentioned that expertise could also be acquired through professional experience. But according to our LAKTAT study, only work experience has no influence on child-orientation or the knowledge about the quality of extracurricular activities.

Looking to the future, two issues seem significant. Till 2029 there will not be enough staff for all-day schools. This is certainly also due to the fact, that all-day schools/ extended education have hardly been considered in the training of social workers, early childhood teachers and (elementary school) teachers, although they have been established in Germany for at least 20 years. Pilchowski (2022) shows, for example, that all-day schools are hardly mentioned in the module handbooks in social work degree programs – it is only childhood education that this is done. Probably this also explain that qualification have no impact on knowledge of quality of extracurricular activities. Extended education and/or after school care should be systematically implemented in academic and vocational qualification. Secondly, further training can and should be offered for the not-qualified staff, which is already working in the field of extended education. The consequence will be, to develop special trainings for employees in all-day schools to qualify on-the-job. That allows qualifying the “experts” who have subject knowledge but don't have pedagogical knowledge.

Yet our findings should be interpreted with caution. We only have data from a first pre-study, which could also have a selection bias. Together with the experience in the JenUs project and the further development and expansion of extended education all over the world, we can point out the relevance for more research in the subject of qualification of staff for extended education. This could be a chance for further professionalisation in extended education, but the lack of qualified staff could also drive a de-professionalisation. Our research shows that the question of professionalisation and the expansion of extended education is not a choice between Scylla and Charybdis. Rather, it is about finding a professionally meaningful balance between qualified staff and people who bring their experience from outside the school into the school. The challenge is undoubtedly to counter the replacement of qualified staff with cheaper non-qualified staff.

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