Assistance or resistance?

How co-workers experience and address
teacher underperformance.

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INTRODUCTION

Introduction

1. Problem statement

Internationally, research has found that two to fifteen per cent of teachers perform below standard (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). These underperforming teachers can impact on students' learning, motivation and well-being. Moreover, team members, principals and schools as a whole can also be affected by this underperformance (Causey, 2010; Menuey, 2007; Page, 2016a). The existing research on underperforming teachers focusses on how principals perceive and address this underperformance. This research suggests that teacher underperformance often causes great concern and stress for principals. Principals experience doubts and face multiple obstacles when confronted with underperformance (e.g., relational difficulties, lack of time/support in dealing with the problem) (Causey, 2010; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Mendez, 2009; Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2011; Page, 2016a; Van Den Ouweland, Vanhoof, & Roofthooft, 2016; Yariv, 2006). Therefore, school leaders are often reluctant to discuss performance issues, and tend to wait a long time to respond (Menuey, 2007; Sinnema, Le Fevre, Robinson, & Pope, 2013; Yariv, 2009a). When they do address the underperformance, they mostly provide support and advice (Yariv & Coleman, 2005). Approaches increase in intensity, formality and confrontation when the performance does not improve, but dismissal is rare (Mendez, 2009; Menuey, 2007; Wragg, Haynes, Phil, Wragg, & Chamberlin, 1999). Moreover, school leaders tend to respond reactively to the situation rather than use a clear, predetermined strategy or plan (Yariv & Coleman, 2005).

In the existing research on teacher underperformance, co-workers' voices, experiences and responses are often ignored. To illustrate why this is an important shortcoming, and to illustrate the importance of gaining more insight into co-workers' experiences with and responses to teacher underperformance, we start by introducing a case that was reported by a respondent in this dissertation.

> *Linda is a teacher in secondary education. She struggles with maintaining discipline, especially in one class. Mary, who also teaches this class, regularly receives student complaints about Linda. Mary explains that Linda attempts to be a very strict teacher, but thereby creates a very negative atmosphere in the class. Students have bad grades and Linda gets angry over nothing, according to Mary. Mary believes that Linda tries to be a type of teacher that she is not, instead of finding her own style to manage classrooms. Her strict, artificial attitude does not suit her students. Mary considers this to be an example of serious underperformance: students are demotivated and complain about Linda. Moreover, Linda has already arranged several meetings with colleagues to discuss the students' bad attitude, blaming the students for their impossible behaviour, which frustrates many other colleagues (who do not have problems with the students and see these meetings as a waste of time). Mary regularly advises Linda about handling specific*

situations with students (e.g., students who did not do their homework), about how to create a more positive atmosphere, more pleasant for students, and to find her own teaching style matching her personality. When the students complain to Mary, she does not say anything bad about Linda, but just tries to explain that every teacher has their own style and personality. According to Mary, the problem has been going on for 10 years, ever since Linda started teaching. During these years, Mary has perceived a little amelioration; Linda tries to follow some of her advice and discusses with her how it turned out. Mary explains that Linda is a perfectionist, who believes that being very strict is the only way to be a good teacher (her parents were very strict teachers as well). Mary empathises with her, sees her as a friend. She does not really consider it her task to respond to underperforming teachers, but often does, because she feels responsible towards students who are affected by the underperformance and has little confidence in her principal. The principal is unaware of Linda's problems and Mary wants to keep it this way: the teachers will sort it out themselves.

In this dissertation, we will study co-workers of underperforming teachers, because, as this case suggests: 1) co-workers may observe or receive complaints about performance problems more than their principals, 2) these co-workers may also be affected by the underperformance, and 3) they may respond to or attempt to remediate the underperformance. Moreover, research suggests that teachers can impact on each other's performance and professional development, and there is research evidence suggesting that co-worker involvement (e.g., peer support, coaching, observation and mentoring mechanisms) can support the remediation of poor teacher performance (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg, & Chamberlin, 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005).

Historically, education has a long tradition of privatized practice, in which teachers taught behind closed classroom doors, independent of oversight (Price, 2012). This is also true for Flanders. However, in today's education, teacher collaboration and the professional community are considered to be vital for teacher development and school effectiveness (Day & Gu, 2007; Goddard, Goddard, & Tschannen-Moran, 2007; Tam, 2015; Vangrieken, Dochy, Raes, & Kyndt, 2015). Due to this increased collaboration, co-workers may become more aware of certain performance problems (Richardson, Wheeless, & Cunningham, 2008), which makes them a prominent party to include in educational research on teacher underperformance. Moreover, because of the professionalism of teachers, and the importance of teamwork for educational quality, accountability could be considered as a task of the educational community (Tuytens & Devos, 2012). In addition, principals often lack time to manage teacher performance and underperformance on their own (managing underperformance can be intense and time-consuming), and may not be able to judge or support all aspects of (under)performance as well as, for example, other teachers teaching the same subject (Darling-Hammond, 2013). By studying co-workers' experiences of and responses to teacher underperformance, we will therefore obtain

a more thorough insight into how this underperformance affects schools, as well as how it is - and can be – addressed in schools. This will inform (Flemish) educational policy and practice.

In addition to this practical importance, studying co-workers is also theoretically important, both for educational research and organisational research more generally. This study will be the first large-scale study on co-worker responses to teacher underperformance. We build on and expand the existing research by developing an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance. Moreover, we will contribute to the existing research by studying real-life cases of teacher underperformance. The few existing educational studies, as well as research in other work contexts, has mostly used vignettes or hypothetical cases to study co-worker responses (e.g., Ferguson, Ormiston, & Moon, 2010; Liden, Wayne, & Kraimer, 2001; Richardson et al., 2008). Therefore, they study co-workers' intentions or attitudes, rather than their actual responses (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Struthers, Miller, Boudens, & Briggs, 2001). While studying real cases of teacher underperformance is challenging, it is vital as intentions about responding and actual responses might differ considerably: for example, while co-workers may perceive that they will always try to respond to teacher underperformance, actually responding will be challenging when they are confronted with the complex social and emotional aspects of teacher underperformance (Painter, 2000).

In sum, the general research aim of this dissertation is twofold:
- identifying how (Flemish) teachers experience and respond to a team member's underperformance;
- building an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance.

How this general research aim is concretised into specific research aims and questions, and how these are studied, will be discussed further. We will first provide a brief overview of what the concepts of work performance and teacher performance entail.

2. Work performance, teacher performance and underperformance

In order to conceptualise teacher underperformance, we build on a more general theoretical framework of work performance, as the term underperformance implies that one's work performance is below a certain standard.

2.1. Work performance

Work performance can be defined as behaviours or actions, as well as their outcomes, which are relevant to the goals of the organisation (Armstrong & Baron, 2014; Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Roe, 1996; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). While performance can be considered on different levels, i.e. individual work performance, team and organisational performance (Kirby, 2004), we focus on individual work performance in this dissertation.

Individual work performance is not black or white, i.e. good or bad, but rather resides on a performance continuum (Doherty, Hilberg, Epaloose, & Tharp, 2002). What is considered to be a level of adequate performance is dependent on judgments and evaluations made on the basis of situational or contextual criteria, indicators and standards (Griffin, Neal, & Parker, 2007; Koopmans et al., 2011; Motowildo, Borman, & Schmit, 1997; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002; Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000). One's performance can also fluctuate over time and throughout one's career with more long-term and more contemporary changes in performance (Alessandri, Borgogni, & Truxillo, 2015; Beal, Weiss, Barros, & MacDermid, 2005; Campbell & Wiernik, 2015).

Work performance is a latent, multidimensional construct, that consists of task performance (TP), organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB) and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Koopmans et al., 2011). Task performance includes 'in-role' behaviours related to the job core or the formal job description of the employee; OCB is contextual, i.e. the 'extra-role' performance (Motowildo et al., 1997; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002), which includes behaviours such as voluntarily helping co-workers and taking on additional tasks (Christ, Van Dick, Wagner, & Stellmacher, 2003); CWB or 'deviance', a term that is mostly used interchangeably with CWB, are "volitional acts by employees that potentially violate the legitimate interests of, or do harm to, an organization or its stakeholders" (Marcus, Taylor, Hastings, Sturm, & Weigelt, 2016, p.204) such as intentionally breaking the rules and interpersonal aggression (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). These three dimensions of work performance are related (e.g., there is a negative correlation between OCB and CWB), but distinct (e.g., one may perform well in both task and contextual performance but exhibit CWB, and the dimensions have partly different antecedents and determinants), contributing uniquely to one's overall work performance (Dalal, 2005; Sackett, Berry, Wiemann, & Laczo, 2006).
Determinants of individual work performance are multiple, and include individual factors such as ability, personality, satisfaction, commitment, motivation, and self-efficacy, as well as task and contextual factors, such as organisational constraints and opportunities, job demands, and work resources and support (Beal et al., 2005; Boselie, Dietz, & Boon, 2005; Griffin et al., 2007; Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001; Kane, 1997; Roe, 1996).

In sum, individual work performance concerns behaviours and outcomes that are relevant to the organisation. Moreover, work performance is evaluative, multidimensional and dynamic, and is influenced by individual, task and contextual factors.

2.2. Teacher performance

The characteristics of work performance also apply to the teaching profession. Teacher work performance concerns all teacher behaviours and actions that are relevant to their schools. Teacher performance is also an evaluative, dynamic, and multidimensional construct. Being a teacher is a comprehensive job (Kelly, Ang, Chong, & Hu, 2008; Yariv, 2004). Teachers have

responsibilities to their principals, co-workers, students, the wider community, and to their profession (Goe, Bell, & Little, 2008; Page, 2016a). Teachers' task performance includes both teaching and non-teaching performance. Student-related roles include, among others, instructional preparation and delivery, student assessment, and class management (Stronge, Ward, & Grant, 2011). Other roles go beyond teaching such as collaborating with co-workers, working with parents, and dealing with curriculum changes and innovations (Cheng & Tsui, 1999). Therefore, scholars have suggested that teacher quality is more than teaching quality (Yariv, 2004). Examples of teachers' organisational citizenship behaviours include helping out co-workers, suggesting improvements and voluntarily taking on additional school tasks (Oplatka, 2009). Teachers' CWB include misbehaviours such as verbal aggression towards co-workers or pupils, having inappropriate relationships with pupils, and intentionally violating testing protocols (Page, 2016a; Richardson et al., 2008).

Dynamics in professional, personal and workplace conditions cause fluctuations in teachers' effectiveness throughout their careers (Day & Gu, 2007). In addition, teachers' work is subject to evolving requirements and expectations, for example, evolutions towards co-teaching and changing curricula (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009). Controversy remains regarding the nature and objectives of teaching (Harris & Rutledge, 2010). In this regard, researchers suggest that in today's education, teachers face increasing workload pressures and demands, that educational goals seem more uncertain and complex with new (diverse) expectations challenging existing notions of professionalism, and that teachers' autonomy and privacy are diminishing (Day, Stobart, Sammons, & Kington, 2006; Grayson & Alvarez, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2009). Moreover, different stakeholders all have their own views on what constitutes good teaching (Cheng & Tsui, 1999; Moreland, 2009; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg, et al., 1999). This means that principals and teachers are confronted with diverse and sometimes contradictory expectations (Ehren, Perryman, & Shackleton, 2015; Ingle, Rutledge, & Bishop, 2011).

2.3. Teacher underperformance

Underperformance means that one's work performance is below a certain standard. In education, researchers and policy makers have established teacher standards and frameworks based on learning theories and educational research (e.g., Danielson, 1996; Doherty et al., 2002), with performance domains, criteria, and indicators, which can be used to label someone as underperforming. In education, these judgments on teacher performance are mostly made by principals, who often use diverse sources such as classroom observation, study of artefacts such as lesson preparation, student and peer ratings, parent complaints and student test scores (Bridges, 1992; Hinchey, 2010; Stronge, 2006; Yariv, 2009a). In Flanders, the government provides attainment targets for pupils, which define what pupils are expected to learn at different stages during compulsory education (Vanhoof, Vanlommel, Thijs, & Vanderlocht, 2013). Moreover, the government obliges schools to have job descriptions (since 2005) and performance

evaluations for teachers (since 2007), but schools have the autonomy to define the meaning of 'educational quality' and to create evaluation criteria (OECD, 2014; Penninckx, Vanhoof, & Van Petegem, 2011; Zapata, 2014). However, as a guideline for teacher education and schools, the government has introduced a general teacher job profile with teacher role domains and related competences. This job profile includes ten work domains, which includes the teacher as facilitator of learning and development processes, content expert, innovator/researcher, member of the school team and member of the educational community. This profile is intended as a frame of reference (it describes the responsibilities of teachers), which can guide the construction of teacher job profiles in schools (Aelterman, Meysman, Troch, Vanlaer, & Verkens, 2008).

In educational research, the performance standard is often left open for study respondents to fill in. Definitions of underperformance are mostly broad or a summing-up of work domains that need to be considered when studying teacher underperformance. In addition, different terms and definitions of underperformance, each with their own emphasis, are used; for example, while the term 'ineffective teacher' (Nixon, Packard, & Dam, 2013) focusses on performance outcomes for student learning, the term 'poorly performing teacher' focusses on teacher behaviours (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2009a). The term 'incompetent teacher' (Cheng, 2014) focusses on one specific cause of underperformance, i.e. a lack of knowledge or skills, while 'challenging teacher' (Yariv, 2004; Yariv & Coleman, 2005) puts the focus on the impact of the underperformance on the principal. Other conceptualisations refer to the depth or severity of underperformance; for example; 'marginal teachers' are seen as teachers who are on the border between competence and incompetence (Menuey, 2007). For this study, we adopt the term 'underperformance', since it indicates that one performs below the standard, without a priori adjudicating on the severity, impact, cause or type of underperformance. With these different terms, different definitions have also been used in the existing research (or no definition at all). Bridges (1992), for example, defines teacher incompetence as a persistent failure in one or more of the following domains: failure to maintain discipline, failure to treat students properly, failure to impart subject matter effectively, failure to accept teaching advice from superiors, failure to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter being taught, and failure to produce the intended or desired results in the classroom (p.15). Yariv and Kass (2017) use the term 'struggling teacher', which they define as "veteran staff members who have worked for more than five years and still face substantial and ongoing difficulties at work; teachers whose performance, according to the principal is below the expected norm" (p.2). Yariv (2004) also uses the term 'challenging teachers', to refer to who pose a particular challenge to the principal and how to manage them. He further explains that "such a broad definition leaves sufficient room to explore teachers' wider performance and competence, not just within the classroom, as in most studies" (p.151).

Moreover, while some studies focus on task underperformance, other studies focus on CWB or misbehaviours (Kearney, Plax, Hays, & Ivey, 1991; Page, 2016a; Richardson et al., 2008). Previous research found that common types of underperformance were problematic classroom management, planning and preparation, low expectations towards students, failure to capture

students' interests, limited student learning progress, and difficult communication with parents (Bridges, 1992; Yariv, 2009a). Often, underperforming teachers present a cluster of difficulties, not just a single one (Wragg, Haynes, Phil, et al., 1999). Moreover, research indicates that there can be multiple reasons why teachers perform below the standard. Causes of teacher underperformance are multi-faceted and a combination of individual and job-related factors: improper management and poor supervision, team factors, demands inherent to the teacher's assignment (e.g., task allocation, challenging students), inadequate organisational resources for the teacher to meet these demands, shortcomings of the teacher (e.g., lack of knowledge, skills or motivation), and limited personal resources (e.g., limited psychological strength or resilience) (Bridges, 1992; Monteiro, Wilson, & Beyer, 2013; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2011). Often, the causes of poor performance are interwoven, and neither the teacher nor the principals are aware of what exactly has led to deterioration (Yariv, 2011).

In sum, teacher underperformance implies that the teacher performs below a certain standard. In addition, underperformance is dynamic, it can be student and/or non-student related, and include task underperformance and/or counterproductive work behaviours.

3. This dissertation: research aims, studies and methodology

An overview of the five chapters in this dissertation is provided in Figure 1.
The first research aim in this dissertation is to build a definition of teacher underperformance based on the work performance literature, that fits our research aims and educational context. In this regard, research suggests that perceptions of teacher effectiveness are influenced by educational contexts, practices, policies, standards, and values (Liu, Xu, & Stronge, 2016; Meier, Andersen, O'Toole Jr, Favero, & Winter, 2015; Meng & Munoz, 2016). Therefore, in **chapter one**, we present a study on performance expectations in Flemish secondary schools. Since underperformance implies that one performs below a certain standard, this study provides more insight into the expectations held by teachers and principals in schools. As such, it asks the following questions: What is expected of teachers? Is there a clear standard in schools? Can a definition of underperformance be derived? More specifically, this study addresses the following research questions:

- What are principals' and teachers' expectations for teacher performance?
- Are principals' expectations clear to teachers?

To obtain an in-depth understanding of these expectations, this study incorporates interviews with secondary principals and teachers. The interviews focus on performance expectations in two domains of the Flemish teacher's job profile: the teacher as facilitator of learning and development, and the teacher as member of the school team. We chose these domains because a study on performance evaluations in Flemish secondary schools found that these domains were generally considered the most important in schools (Devos, Van Petegem, Vanhoof, Delvaux, &

Vekeman, 2013). This first chapter provides an insight into how certain expectations differ within and/or between schools, to what this is related, and how issues related to defining and clarifying expectations for teachers are present in schools. Based on this study, we also build a definition of teacher underperformance that is used throughout the remainder of this dissertation.

In the **second chapter**, we turn to our main research aim, i.e. identifying how Flemish teachers experience and respond to teacher underperformance in their schools, as well as building an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses. Since the existing educational research on co-workers is very limited, the study presented in chapter two is an exploratory, qualitative study, incorporating research evidence from other work contexts, which aims to obtain an in-depth picture of co-workers' experiences with and responses to teacher underperformance as well as their reasons for responding in a certain way. More specifically, this chapter addresses the following research questions:

- How are co-workers affected by teacher underperformance?
- How do co-workers respond to underperforming teachers and why do they respond in a certain way?

The study builds on interviews with secondary teachers with whom we discuss incidents of teacher underperformance in their teams. In these interviews, we use the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), which yields in-depth, contextualised accounts of real-life incidents and allows respondents to discuss cases of their own choosing that are important to them (Butterfield, Borgen, Amundson, & Maglio, 2005; FitzGerald, Seale, Kerins, & McElvaney, 2008; Gremler, 2004). In this study, we discuss which types of teacher underperformance co-workers are confronted with, how co-workers can be affected by and respond to the underperformance, as well as how they explain these responses. Based on these explanations, we identify groups of variables and related considerations influencing co-workers' responses.

Since the study presented in chapter two is an exploratory, qualitative study in a small sample, we are not able to generalise the obtained insights into teacher experiences and responses to Flemish education. Moreover, the found explanations for and related influences on co-worker responses require further testing and refinement in a larger sample of teachers. Therefore, chapter three and four concern a large-scale survey study in Flemish primary and secondary education. Again, the CIT is used in this study, to study real-life examples of teacher underperformance, and how co-workers are affected by and respond to them. In the survey, we also address different situational, individual and contextual factors that are identified as influencing factors in chapter two, as well as related considerations that can explain co-worker responses. In **chapter three,** we present a descriptive analysis of the survey results, to answer the following research questions:

- What are teachers' experiences with, and perceptions of the incidence and nature of teacher underperformance in Flanders?

- What are teachers' views on responding to underperforming co-workers, as well as their actual responses to this underperformance?

As a first large-scale study on co-workers in Flanders, this study informs Flemish educational policy and practice about which types of underperformance Flemish teachers are confronted with and how teachers perceive the incidence of specific types of underperformance in their schools. It also provides insight into how teachers view their roles in dealing with teacher underperformance, how they tend to respond (or not respond) to this underperformance, and how they perceive the responses of their principals and other team members, which opens the discussion about the responsibilities of co-workers in dealing with teacher underperformance.

In **chapter four**, which builds on the same data collection as chapter three, the explanations for co-worker responses identified in chapter two, are statistically tested and combined into an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses. More specifically, based on the study in chapter two, the following research questions are put forward:

- How are co-workers' responses influenced by their considerations about the necessity to respond, their responsibility and authority to respond, and the use of responding?
- How do different underperformance, underperformer, co-worker, leadership and team characteristics influence these considerations?

This study results in an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses, which identifies influencing factors and considerations that explain specific types of co-worker responses. Therefore, this study has theoretical relevance as it adds to our understanding of why co-workers respond in certain ways. It also has practical relevance because it identifies which relational, team and leadership factors can hinder or facilitate co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance.

Finally, **chapter five** is a conclusion and discussion chapter that discusses the most prominent overall conclusions. Based on the strengths and limitations of this dissertation, it provides recommendations for future research, as well as implications and recommendations for (Flemish) educational policy and practice.
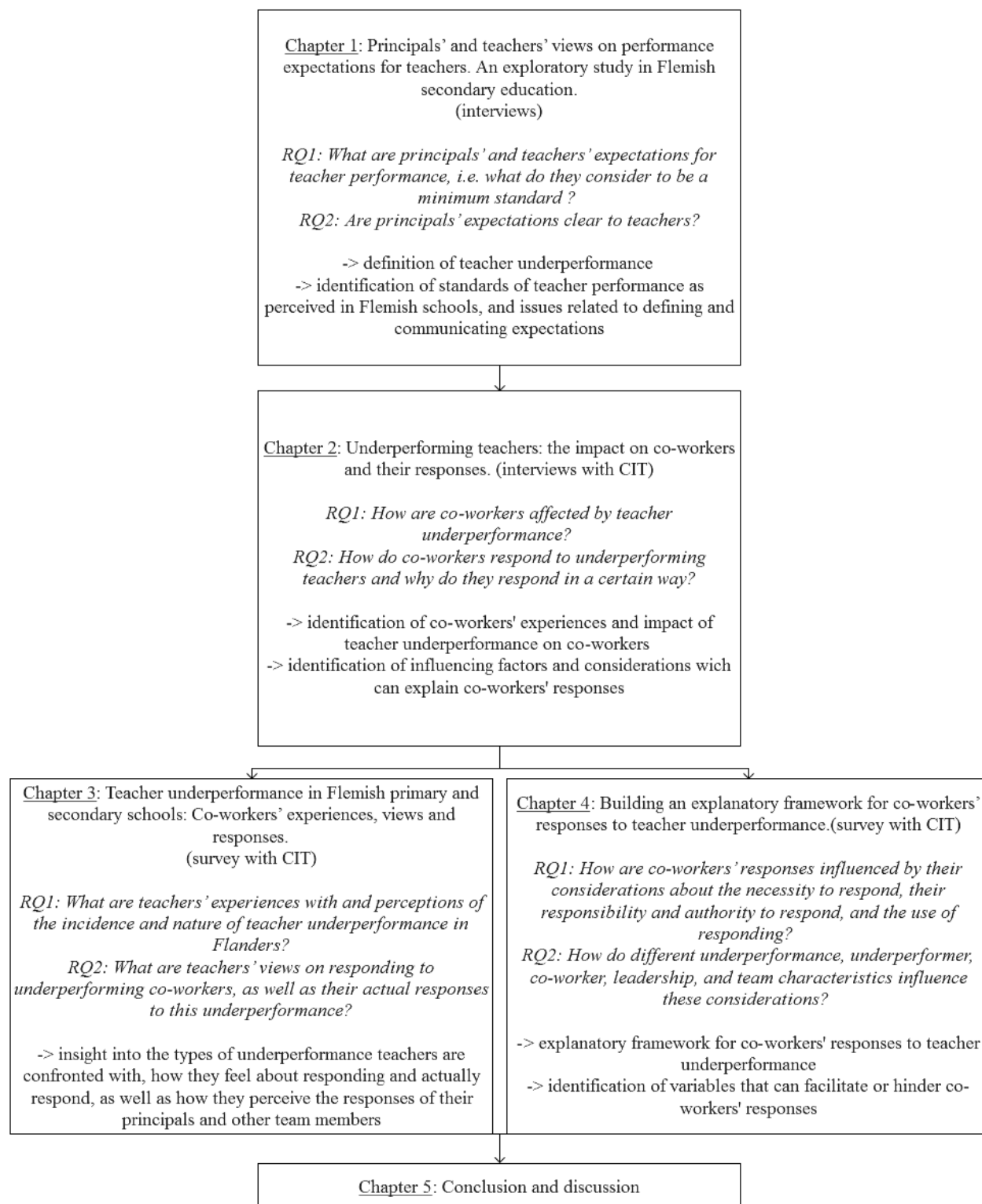
Figure 1: Overview of chapters and studies in this dissertation.

CHAPTER 1

Principals' and teachers' views on performance expectations for teachers. An exploratory study in Flemish secondary education.

Chapter 1

Principals' and teachers' views on performance expectations for teachers. An exploratory study in Flemish secondary education.

Abstract

Research indicates that defining performance expectations for teachers has substantial benefits for schools. While scholars and policy makers set frameworks and/or standards for teachers, research on performance expectations held by principals and teachers themselves is scarce. Therefore, the aim of this study is to explore which expectations principals and teachers hold of teacher performance, and whether principals' expectations are clear to teachers. The findings of our interviews with principals and teachers in four secondary schools in Flanders indicate that expectations are context-dependent and subjective. Moreover, certain expectations of principals remain unclear to teachers, especially to more experienced teachers. In general, expectations regarding teaching are similar for all teachers, while expectations of school team performance are more teacher-dependent, debatable and diverse. Finally, teachers themselves also influence expectations in their schools. We discuss related concerns regarding the management of performance expectations, as well as implications for educational policy, research and practice.

1. Introduction

Direction setting, i.e. creating a clear vision, shared goals and high performance expectations for teachers, is an important task of school leaders (Kelchtermans & Piot, 2010; Leithwood, Harris, & Hopkins, 2008; Sun & Leithwood, 2015). Extensive research indicates that it benefits student learning (Hallinger, 2011; Robinson, Lloyd, & Rowe, 2008). Leo and Roberts (2015, p.468) state that: "Schools are more effective when collective expectations are important to everyone, and the organisation does not just consist of a collection of individuals". Clear expectations provide teachers with a sense of direction (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003). Research further shows that goal consensus and shared expectations enhance important teacher characteristics, including their job satisfaction, commitment, self-efficacy, organisational citizenship behaviours, and the principal-teacher relationship (Price, 2012; Sun & Leithwood, 2015).

Scholars and policy makers set frameworks and/or standards for teaching, based on learning theories and educational research (e.g., Danielson, 1996; Doherty et al., 2002). The limited available research suggests that principals translate these standards to their specific school contexts and student populations, framed by their beliefs, histories, and agendas (Ehren et al., 2015; Ingle et al., 2011), but research on performance expectations held by principals is scarce. Moreover, teachers' own expectations have mostly been neglected in research (Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007). This is surprising, since teachers possibly have different views on performance than other educational stakeholders (Liden et al., 2001). Therefore, our aim is to study principals' and teachers' expectations of teacher performance in depth, as well as the clarity of principals' expectations for teachers, to better understand the situation in individual schools.

2. Conceptual framework

Since our study focusses on the expectations that principals and teachers hold of teacher performance, we start by introducing the concept of 'performance expectations', followed by an overview of the research on performance expectations for teachers. Next, we briefly discuss Flemish secondary education and educational policy, since our study should be viewed in light of this context.

2.1. <u>Performance expectations</u>

'Job performance' is a multi-dimensional concept, since jobs entail diverse tasks and roles (Spain, Miner, Kroonenberg, & Drasgow, 2010). Performance includes both task and contextual job components: task performance is 'in-role' behaviour (i.e. the core job or formal job description), while contextual performance is 'extra-role' (i.e. organisational citizenship behaviour; social and non-technical contributions) (Motowildo et al., 1997). Moreover, performance expectations are dynamic, since the labour market is changing constantly (e.g., technologies, globalisation) (Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). Performance expectations are also subjective and context-dependent; they depend upon how 'good performance' is perceived (Goodhew, Cammock, & Hamilton, 2008; Kirby, 2004). Every discipline has its own view on the reality of work, has its particular norms, and defines good performance in its own way (Roe, 1996). In addition, employees' and managers' performance expectations are influenced by their personal beliefs, experiences, and self-images (Earley & Erez, 1991; Gibbons & Weingart, 2001). Performance expectations for workers can be explicated as such. They are also reflected in (the difficulty of) organisational goals, which represent what is achievable and desirable (Gibbons & Weingart, 2001; Martin & Manning, 1995). On a more implicit level, expectations are present in organisational processes, practices (e.g., work patterns, sanctions) and policies (e.g., work rules, professional development opportunities) (Hora & Anderson, 2012; Sandlund, Olin-Scheller, Nyroos, Jakobsen, & Nahnfeldt, 2011). Social processes are substantial for generating and sharing norms and expectations as well, through informal talks and social comparisons (what

others do, which behaviour is disapproved of) (Morris, Hong, Chiu, & Liu, 2015; Rennesund & Saksvik, 2010).

These characteristics of work performance also apply to the teaching profession. Being a teacher is a comprehensive job (Kelly et al., 2008; Yariv, 2004). Student-related roles include, among others, instructional preparation and delivery, student assessment, and class management (Stronge et al., 2011). Other roles go beyond teaching, such as working with parents, and dealing with curriculum changes and innovations (Cheng & Tsui, 1999). In this way, teachers not only impact on student-related outcomes, but also colleagues, classrooms, and the school as a whole (Goe et al., 2008). In addition, some models of teacher performance focus on achieving goals, such as learning outcomes, while others focus on teaching processes (Cheng & Tsui, 1999). Moreover, teachers' work is subject to evolving requirements and expectations, e.g., evolutions towards co-teaching and changing curricula (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Day & Gu, 2007), and controversy remains regarding the nature and objectives of teaching (Harris & Rutledge, 2010). Defining 'teacher quality' is far from straightforward (Moreland, 2009). Previous studies have suggested that 'teacher performance' is a social, context-dependent construct, and that principals, teachers, parents, pupils, scholars and governments all have their own views on good teaching (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2003; Wragg et al., 1999; Yariv, 2004), making it challenging to define performance expectations for teachers. Therefore, principals play a key mediating role, functioning as a 'buffer' between teachers' own expectations and external standards (Ehren et al., 2015; Ingle et al., 2011; Leithwood, Patten, & Jantzi, 2010).

2.2. Functions of performance expectations

The performance management literature emphasises the importance of defining and communicating performance expectations for workers (Buchner, 2007; Kinicki, Jacobson, Peterson, & Prussia, 2013). Aguinis and Pierce (2008, p.139) define performance management as "a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organisation". Defining goals and clarifying expectations is an important step in this process. Specific, high goals are considered to enhance performance (Beal et al., 2005; Martin & Manning, 1995). They provide a foundation for human resource management practices, and personal and organisational development (Aguinis, Joo, & Gottfredson, 2011). In case of underperformance, clear expectations foster the process of identifying and agreeing upon the performance problem (Armstrong & Baron, 2014; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). Setting expectations is not necessarily a unilateral process, i.e. imposed by managers on workers: dialogue and negotiation benefit performance management (Aguinis & Pierce, 2008).

In educational literature, controversy exists regarding who defines performance expectations (and imposes performance management practices on schools), as well as how strictly and narrowly they should be defined (Fullan & Watson, 2000). This is related to the accountability discussion in education (Forrester, 2011; Futernick, 2010). Critics of performance management and

performance standards argue that external, bureaucratic control and accountability are in tension with teachers' autonomy, professionalism and individual responsibility, and detrimental to their intrinsic motivation and job satisfaction (Fitzgerald, Youngs, & Grootenboer, 2003; Gleeson & Husbands, 2003; Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002). These critics state that unitary scales and decontextualised, depersonalised standards do not grasp the quality of teachers and argue that the discussion about 'being a good teacher' should be ongoing (Ceulemans, 2014). To the contrary, proponents advocate that performance standards help teachers to focus on the needs of learners and support teacher quality, when they are underpinned by ethical leadership and good management (Eyal & Roth, 2011; Page, 2016b), when teacher standards are flexible, debatable and/or generic (Ben-Peretz, 2012; Sachs, 2003), focused on generating useful feedback and professional development (Firestone, 2014; Middlewood & Cardno, 2001), and constructed in dialogue with teachers (Decramer, Smolders, & Vanderstraeten, 2013; Hughes & Pate, 2012). Others state that performance expectations should be individualised and personally meaningful (Hardre & Kollmann, 2012). Finally, it appears crucial that performance expectations are aligned with HR practices (Heneman & Milanowski, 2004). If these conditions are met, clear performance expectations are a prerequisite for reliable performance appraisals (Doherty et al., 2002; Ingvarson & Rowe, 2008), foster identification of and consensus on performance problems and stimulate professional development (Middlewood & Cardno, 2001; Sachs & Mockler, 2011), and support the remediation or removal of teacher underperformance, without harming the autonomy and professionalism of good teachers (Firestone, 2014; Page, 2016b). Thereby, teachers' acceptance of performance expectations is enhanced, as well as their job satisfaction, motivation and satisfaction with the appraisal system (Heneman & Milanowski, 2003; Kelly et al., 2008).

In sum, 'teacher performance' is a multifaceted, subjective, and complex construct. Moreover, both the performance management literature and educational literature indicate the potential benefits of defining performance expectations for workers. Therefore, we will explore principals' and teachers' expectations of teacher performance, as well as the clarity of principals' expectations, to obtain a better understanding of the situation in individual schools, and related implications for educational policy, research and practice.

2.3. <u>Research context</u>

In Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium, deregulation and decentralisation are important features of educational policy. The government provides attainment targets for pupils, which define what pupils are expected to learn at different stages during compulsory education (Vanhoof et al., 2013). There are no mandated central exams or national tests. School boards largely decentralise HRM-responsibilities to individual schools. Principals play a key role in HR management and managing teacher performance, since other management levels are absent (Vekeman, Devos, & Valcke, 2016). The government obliges schools to have job descriptions and performance evaluations for teachers, but schools have the autonomy to define the meaning

of 'educational quality' and to create evaluation criteria (OECD, 2014; Penninckx et al., 2011; Zapata, 2014). However, as a guideline for teacher education and schools, the government has introduced a general teacher job profile with teacher roles and related competences. This job profile includes the following domains: the teacher as facilitator of learning and development processes, the teacher as educator, the teacher as content expert, the teacher as organiser, the teacher as innovator/researcher, the teacher as partner of parents and care givers, the teacher as member of the school team, the teacher as partner of external parties, the teacher as member of the educational community, and the teacher as cultural participant (Aelterman et al., 2008). This profile is intended as a frame of reference, which can guide the construction of teacher job profiles in schools (Aelterman et al., 2008). As will be discussed in the next section, we studied principals' and teachers' expectations of teacher performance in two domains of this job profile.

Our study was performed in secondary education, which teaches students between 12 and 18 years old. It is part of compulsory education, situated in between primary education (6-12 year olds) and higher education. Secondary education consists of denominational schools, community schools and city/provincial schools, which each have their own curricula, but work towards the same student attainment targets imposed by the government. Students choose between general secondary studies (preparatory for higher education), technical studies (preparatory for work life or higher education), vocational studies (preparatory for work life), and art studies (preparatory for work life or higher education).

3. Methodology

3.1. Participants

Since this is a first exploratory study of performance expectations of principals and teachers, we opted for qualitative research with semi-structured interviews (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011) and purposive sampling to compose a diverse sample of four secondary schools: two denominational and two community schools, of which two schools are located in a rural area and two schools in an urban area. The schools offer diverse study programs and qualifications, i.e. general, arts, vocational or technical studies (or a combination). School sizes vary from 306 to 1590 students, and 50 to 205 teaching staff. This sample reflects the diversity of schools in Flanders (without claiming it to be a completely representative sample), which can give us an explorative picture of performance expectations in schools. In each school, we interviewed one principal and two language teachers. We opted for teachers from the same discipline, teaching similar age groups (16-18 year olds) to make answers more comparable, and we chose language teachers since these teachers are present in all schools, in each educational program, and form a considerably large group, which facilitated finding respondents. Since performance expectations can be influenced by work experience (Earley & Erez, 1991; Gibbons & Weingart, 2001), we selected teachers with diverse years of experience (1-25 years), in consultation with their

principals. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, and participants signed an informed consent stating the purpose and method of the study, as well as participant rights. The study was approved by the ethics committee of the University of Antwerp.

3.2. <u>Method</u>

Each interview lasted forty-five to seventy minutes. First, we asked about respondents' expectations towards teachers in general, to obtain an insight into which tasks/roles they prioritised. After that, we focused on expectations in two domains of the job profile (Table 1): 'the teacher as facilitator of learning and development processes' and 'the teacher as member of the school team', to facilitate the comparison of respondents' answers for these distinct roles. While the first role contains core teaching tasks, the second role refers to non-teaching aspects such as collaboration with other teachers, and tasks at the school level. Previous research on performance evaluations in Flemish secondary schools has shown that these domains are generally considered the most important in schools (Devos et al., 2013). For each domain, we discussed what respondents considered to be a minimum expectation for teacher performance, what respondents perceived to be the origins of their expectations, and whether they thought that other teachers in their schools shared their expectations. In addition, we asked teachers about the clarity of their principals' expectations in these domains.

Table 1
Two domains of the teachers' job profile

Domain 1: The teacher as facilitator of learning and developmental processes:
- Determining the initial situation of the learner and the group.
- Selecting the learning content and learning experiences.
- Determining an appropriate methical approach or grouping formation.
- Creating an adequate learning environment with emphasis on the heterogeneity within groups of learners.
- Observing and evaluating the learning process and outcome.
Domain 2: The teacher as member of the school team:
- Participating in the development of the school strategy/plan.
- Participating in collaborative structures.
- Consulting within the team about and complying with the work organisation.
- Discussing one's pedagogical and didactic role and approach within the team.

Note. Taken from: Aelterman et al. (2008)

All interviews were voice-recorded and transcribed verbatim. The software package Nvivo10 was used for analysis. The coding process was partly deductive and partly inductive, following the guidelines of the thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006). In the first step, the data were carefully examined, in a search for meanings and patterns, by which first ideas for the

coding arose. In the second phase, the initial code tree was constructed. In the third phase, themes and sub-themes were constructed by sorting and combining codes. In the fourth step, these themes were reviewed and refined, by re-reading the coded extracts. A final code tree was constructed, which represented the data as a whole. These codes can be found in Table 2. In the fifth phase, each theme was thoroughly analysed and four overarching themes were identified. These are used in the next session to present our findings. To promote a reflexive and thorough analysis, a methodological report (audit trail) was kept with first impressions of the interviews, reflections on the interview questions and evolving interpretations, as well as remarks on the analysis. Tentative codes and complex interview fragments were thoroughly discussed in the research team, thereby increasing the quality and credibility of the findings (King, 2004; Mortelmans, 2007).

Table 2
Code tree

Codes	Sources	References
Content of expectations		
- facilitator of learning and development	12	72
- member of the school team	12	52
- innovator/researcher	10	16
- content expert	9	9
- educator	7	13
- partner of parents and care givers	1	1
Applicability of expectations		
- absolute	9	19
- relative	12	34
Influences on expectations		
- curriculum, learning goals	9	18
- personal vision, personality	8	9
- experiences with students	7	10
- school context, student population	6	7
- colleagues	5	6
- experiences as a student	3	5
- teacher education	2	2
- parents as role models	1	1
- other work experiences	1	1
- limits of personal situation	1	1
Communication of principals' expectations		
- HR practices	12	38
- policies, practices, structures	9	43
Clarity of principals' expectations		
- clear	5	7
- unclear	8	14
Perceived agreement in school		
- agreement	10	21

- disagreement	12	48

Note. Sources = number of interviews coded per item, references = number of interview
     fragments coded per item.

4. Findings

The interview data provided an in-depth, nuanced understanding of performance expectations in
schools. Our findings are presented along four main themes that emerged from the interviews:
- The content and origins of performance expectations
- The clarity and communication of performance expectations
- Teaching versus non-teaching expectations
- Teachers' influence on performance expectations

4.1. The content and origins of performance expectations

When discussing domain 1, student learning was considered a main goal by all respondents (see
Table 3). Related performance expectations to achieve this goal differed, however. For instance,
in one school both the principal and teachers reported an academic, cognitive emphasis in their
expectations. In another school, both the principal's and teachers' expectations focused on
differentiated instruction and remediation of students who were lagging behind. Moreover, they
put more emphasis on providing socio-emotional support for students, and teaching students to
comply with rules and social conventions. Related to this, the interviews also revealed differences
in how high certain expectations were, such as the extent to which teachers were expected to
differentiate in teaching methods and content materials. In one school, both the teachers and the
principal expected that teachers offered extensive individual remedial exercises and support if
needed, while this was not a minimum expectation in the other schools. Similarly, while the use
of a good textbook was regarded as sufficient in two schools, respondents in the two other
schools expected teachers to thoroughly adapt the learning content to individual students and
classes:

   *"A textbook can be the basic teaching material of the course… but I find it absolutely wrong
to just stick to the textbook. Teachers must be inventive to add extra materials, to adapt the
textbook to the needs of the students and spend more or less time on certain topics." (Respondent
8, teacher, school 3)*

In contrast to domain 1, our respondents expressed diverse goals of non-teaching performance,
i.e. knowledge exchange, collegial discussion, making arrangements and sharing workload with
other teachers, and teacher involvement in school policy and innovations. Related expectations
also differed. For instance, the principals of two schools expected all teachers to participate in
one or two (temporary) working groups or school projects, while in the two other schools this

participation was voluntary. Only teachers' presence in departmental meetings, and a certain degree of collegiality and cooperation were expected of all teachers by all respondents.

Both principals and teachers primarily referred to the curriculum and student learning goals as origins of their expectations in domain 1. In addition, principals explicitly stated that their expectations were school-dependent, i.e. determined by the school context and student population, and that teachers should therefore 'fit' their schools:

"The student diversity in this school makes a great need for differentiation, and I'm extremely alert that this does not lead to a quality reduction, so it is not lowering expectations, but rather the contrary ... but it does take a differentiated approach... Teachers must be aware that their students do not necessarily understand the course material, understand all the questions… or can talk about it with each other. So it actually is a necessity." (Respondent 4, principal, school 3)

Principals mentioned that their expectations were also influenced by their personal vision on teaching quality, their professional training, or their own experiences as students. Teachers related their expectations in domain 1 to a great extent to their own personal visions on education, their personalities (e.g., being a perfectionist), collegial influences (e.g., arrangements made in departmental meetings) and teaching experiences. Expectations in domain 2 were mostly related to respondents' opinions on teachers' non-teaching responsibilities, and principals' experiences with managing non-teaching expectations. Differences in expectations were found both among teachers in schools, and between teachers and the principal. For instance, in one school, one teacher had high expectations for collegial consultation, compared to the principal and the other teacher, based on her vision on teachers' professional development.

Table 3
Overview of respondents' performance expectations

	Domain 1: Teaching performance	Domain 2: School team performance
School 1: urban community arts school, 184 teachers, 779 students		
Teacher 1	Achieving student learning goals by: - Conveying enthusiasm - Activating students by adapting learning content to students' interests - Differentiation and remediation - Diverse teaching methods	- Giving and receiving feedback from colleagues - Creating uniformity in what is offered to students and how students are approached - Handling problems together - Respecting consensus - Collegiality - Departmental work
Teacher 2	Achieving student learning goals by: - Conveying enthusiasm - Adapting learning content and teaching methods to class groups - Accurate student evaluation	- Creating uniformity in what is offered to students and how students are approached - Collaborative decision making - Discussing ideas with colleagues - Departmental work

	- Suitable didactics	
Principal	Achieving student learning goals by: - Developing students' talents - Engaging students by adapting learning content and teaching methods to students - Goal-oriented, systematic approach of evaluating students and monitoring student development	- Sharing knowledge with colleagues, shared professional development - Team reflection - Collaboratively formulating goals and developing teaching methods - Supporting co-workers - Departmental work - Taking part in one working group or project work - Knowing and supporting school policy (but: no need to make school policy)
School 2: urban community school, general and technical education, 402 students, 56 teachers		
Teacher 1	Achieving student learning goals by: - Differentiation and remediation - Clarifying expectations to students - Motivating students by contextualising learning content	- Inspiring colleagues - Aligning the approach and evaluation of students - Collegiality - Departmental work and grade meetings, but also informal talks to tackle problems together - Efforts for non-classroom activities of one's own students
Teacher 2	Achieving student learning goals by: - Positive teacher attitude, building students' self-confidence - Motivating students by showing enthusiasm and clarifying the learning content's value - Adapting learning content and teaching methods to the needs and nature of the class group and individual students - Activating students by presenting learning content in an authentic context - Providing structure	- Learning from each other - Making arrangements - Collegiality - Departmental work, but mostly also informal discussions - Contribution to non-classroom student activities - taking part in 1-2 work groups
Principal	Achieving student learning goals by: - Individualisation, differentiation - Thorough evaluation and feedback - Raising students' interest	- Learning from colleagues - Evaluating and ameliorating one's own work and the team's work - Reflection, working out ideas together - Departmental work (but should not

	- through authentic and concrete learning content, creating context - Appropriate teaching methods	- be overestimated) and grade meetings - 2-3 work groups
School 3: rural denominational school, general and arts education, 799 students, 112 teachers		
Teacher 1	Achieving student learning goals by: - Creating learning opportunities for all students - Adapting learning content to the level of the class - Differentiation and remediation (also at the individual level) - Keeping appropriate professional distance - Adequate class management - Focus on product and process of learning	- Observing colleagues - Giving and receiving feedback - Working out methods and implementing curricula with colleagues - Collegiality - Departmental work - Project work
Teacher 2	Achieving student learning goals by: - Creating learning opportunities and challenging students - Differentiation in learning content and teaching methods - Adapting learning content to the level and interests of the class - Remediation and individual guidance when possible - Positive attitude and attention for all students, involving all students	- Collegiality - Departmental work - Taking part in one work group
Principal	Achieving student learning goals by: - Getting the most out of each student - Creating maximum learning opportunities - Getting to know new students' situation and needs - Preparing students for higher education - Developing one's own teaching style	- Observing colleagues - Following professional development courses together with colleagues - Sharing knowledge and materials - Allocating tasks in the team - Planning together - Obtaining uniformity for, and broad support from parents - Departmental work - Taking part in one work group - Reflecting on school policy and strategy

School 4: rural denominational school, general, technical and vocational education, 1496 students, 330 teachers		
Teacher 1	Achieving student learning goals by: - Providing structure, clarity and boundaries - Remediation (without lowering expectations) - Differentiation (while keeping the bigger picture in mind) - Developing one's own teaching style	- Being open to feedback from colleagues - Collegiality - Departmental work - Working on the school vision together
Teacher 2	Achieving student learning goals by: - Observing students - Conveying enthusiasm - Differentiation - Ensuring that students respect school rules	- Learning from colleagues - Creating consensus/uniformity for students - Making arrangements in the team - Collaboration to make more individualisation for students possible - Departmental work
Principal	Achieving student learning goals by: - Conveying enthusiasm - Taking into account students' learning styles and motivation - Focus on process and product of learning - Remediation and differentiation, also for gifted students - Appropriate, creative teaching methods - Developing one's own teaching style	- Creating consensus regarding expectations towards students - Organising extra, challenging school activities for students - Departmental work - Voice in school policy

4.2. The clarity and communication of performance expectations

Principals indicated that they explicated performance expectations in human resource practices such as performance appraisals, and ad hoc talks with teachers (in which principals attempted to motivate teachers or give feedback). Expectations were also translated in school policies, practices, rules and agreements. For example, one principal mentioned that remedial classes that were designed to support the work of teachers created high expectations for remediation at the same time. In another school, the policy of attending courses in teacher duo's reinforced expectations of cooperation and discussion among teachers.

However, some of their principals' expectations remained quite unclear to teachers, in domain 1 and/or 2 (with differences between schools). The explicit communication of expectations through HR-practices was mostly mentioned by younger teachers. School expectations were clarified to them in selection interviews, performance appraisals and the initiation program. More experienced teachers indicated that their performance was rarely evaluated and if their principals clarified expectations, this happened more 'ad hoc', whilst providing feedback about specific incidents or events. The most experienced teacher in our sample stated that performance expectations were quite unclear:

"What our principal wants exactly, I do not know so well... But maybe it's me and I have not read certain documents. I don't know... Because we did receive a job description, that, we do have. But what is expected, is… it is not very detailed, really." (Respondent 2, teacher, school 1)

In addition, two of the more experienced teachers indicated that the performance of experienced, tenured teachers received little attention from their principals. Similarly, principals stated that they focused on the performance of beginning, pre-tenured teachers to make sure that only good teachers would receive tenure, and 3 principals mentioned that they were short of time to monitor the performance of all teachers.

More in general, principals indicated that they struggled with the idea of explicating expectations. For instance, is it advisable to make performance expectations very specific? Principals sometimes deliberately chose not to explicate performance expectations too much, based on the conviction that this could work counterproductively and teachers' intrinsic motivation was essential, because they considered it to be impossible (e.g., to explicate 'collaboration' expectations), or unnecessary since some expectations were 'obvious' to them (e.g., taking on non-teaching school tasks). In addition, principals stated that they were convinced that imposing strict rules on teachers was nearly impossible (especially with tenured teachers) or did not result in better performance.

Some teachers did not consider it to be a problem that expectations were rather vague, saying that they appreciated the autonomy of their work. Others wished for clearer expectations: one teacher explained that clear expectations would make her feel more confident about her performance, and 3 other teachers explained that clear expectations would benefit the detection of underperformance. However, some teachers struggled with explicating expectations as well (both teaching and non-teaching expectations), largely related to the feasibility of these expectations, as well as the subjective nature of 'good teaching'. What is a realistic, achievable expectation, given the workload of teachers? This teacher struggled with explicating her expectations regarding student differentiation:

"That is a question that has been bothering me for some time now and I still haven't found the answer. Sometimes I think no, I should not do that [differentiate in learning goals], I should... do

what I intended for this class, what I wanted to achieve. But, sometimes, when the students sit before me, and I see that they are really trying... I think, isn't it more important to lower expectations a bit and focus on what they are able to achieve? That way, they are more involved, and... When they make a test... they enjoy it when they actually succeed. Maybe that's better, more motivating... but I consider this an eternal dilemma." (Respondent 3, teacher, school 1)

4.3. <u>Teaching versus non-teaching expectations</u>

In general, teaching expectations appeared to be focused on one clear goal: student learning. Moreover, principals and teachers agreed on the fact that expectations regarding teaching should be absolute (i.e. similar for all teachers): they strongly emphasised that teachers should perform well for their students, no matter what (e.g., despite high workload or personal problems). The only reasons why these expectations could differ in their opinion, were student-related: for instance, some groups need more differentiation than others, and certain subjects require particular teaching methods. Only one respondent, a principal, indicated that her expectations regarding differentiation depended upon the capacities of the teacher.

On the other hand, expectations regarding non-teaching tasks were more diverse, debatable and teacher-dependent. Only teachers' presence in departmental meetings, and a certain vague degree of collegiality and collaboration were expected of all teachers by all respondents. Moreover, opinions differed about the extent to which certain school team tasks were a teacher's responsibility. Must teachers also participate in working groups for example? Should teachers be involved in school policy issues? Most respondents considered these to be 'extra-role', voluntary tasks. Except for two principals and two teachers who expected teachers to participate in one or two working groups, our respondents indicated that all other expectations in this domain should be relative (i.e. teacher-dependent), dependent on a teacher's enthusiasm, talents and capacities (e.g., in coping with a certain workload). For this reason, principals sometimes chose not to make expectations absolute:

"We no longer have mandatory working groups. We had those once... we put up a list of all work groups and teachers signed up for one or two. But their actual effort in the group, that was a different story. So paper members are of no use, or even counterproductive. Nowadays, we have working groups where people are engaged in... with enthusiasm, with passion. Which does not prevent that there are some who never engage themselves and just limit themselves to their teaching jobs." (Respondent 10, principal, school 4)

In addition, in two schools, principals did not expect beginning teachers to participate in working groups and school projects, allowing them to focus on their work with students.
All teachers agreed that it was best to have relative non-teaching expectations, based on individual competences and motivation. Moreover, teachers felt that they were not paid for non-teaching tasks. This teacher talks about 'voluntary work':

"That's something I find important, but I'm glad that I can choose myself. For example, I've chosen to organise the London-trip because it is something that suits me. Such a commitment must be close to the heart, because ultimately that's voluntary work." (Respondent 12, teacher, school 4)

At the same time, both teachers and principals felt that non-teaching performance was essential for their schools' functioning. Therefore, 2 principals expected all teachers to participate in one or two working groups, and a third principal stated that he attempted to maintain a balance of effort between teachers by expecting a minimum (unspecified) amount of non-teaching, extra-classroom performance of all teachers. Some teachers also wished for clear minimum expectations for all teachers in this domain, to make teachers' performance more balanced and less dependent on teachers' goodwill.

4.4. Teachers' influences on performance expectations

Although principals' expectations were not always clear to teachers, teachers indicated that expectations arose from within the team. Six teachers explained that their performance expectations were influenced by their colleagues, e.g., through collegial discussions, agreements made in departmental meetings, the collegial atmosphere among teachers, and other teachers' special efforts for students:

"When I think of our school, that's something every one of us does actually, realizing that… for example, searching for teaching methods, using varied methods, to ensure that children who need more attention receive extra support." (Respondent 9, teacher, school 3)

Both principals and teachers talked about expectations that 'existed' within the school team. For instance, one principal indicated that it was obvious for his teachers that meetings were planned outside school hours:

"Expectations are very high here. We hold meetings from 5 until 9.30pm. When I mention this to other principals, they say: "when I want to organise a class meeting, nowadays I have to keep the students at home for the day to have the meeting during daytime. Otherwise, they don't show up."…. So the commitment here is high… and a culture of… you should go for it and work hard." (Respondent 1, principal, school 1)

Another principal stated that all teachers in her school were driven 'to get the most out of students'. A third principal indicated that his teaching team considered it an obvious task of all teachers to work with 'the child behind the student' and his or her personal context. Moreover, one principal linked expectations to the school vision and talked about the involvement of teachers in the creation of this vision. Another principal mentioned that he trusted his teachers to discuss expectations in departmental meetings, since they were the teaching experts.

At the same time, respondents expressed their doubts about whether all teachers in their schools agreed with their expectations. They all supposed that some teachers had different or lower expectations, since they did not meet these expectations. This concerned various issues in both domains, e.g., not attending departmental meetings and insufficiently preparing classes. Moreover, some respondents (both teachers and principals) explained that they did not really know whether their expectations were shared, because the work of teachers was too invisible to them. One teacher indicated that teachers in her school did not often talk about their performance.

In sum, our findings indicate that performance expectations in schools are context-dependent and subjective. Moreover, certain expectations of principals remain unclear to teachers, especially to more experienced teachers. In general, expectations regarding teaching are similar for all teachers in schools, while expectations of school team performance are more teacher-dependent, discussable and diverse. Finally, our findings indicate that teachers themselves also influence expectations in their schools.

5. Conclusion and discussion

In Flanders, the government does not impose performance management practices or performance standards on schools. Therefore, the accountability discussion is less prevailing at the macro level than for example in Anglo-Saxon countries (Forrester, 2011; Thrupp, 2006). However, we found that similar concerns about defining performance expectations are present at the micro level in Flanders, i.e. in individual schools. Firstly, these concerns are related to the difficulty of translating teacher performance into clear expectations, because of the complexity, context-relatedness and subjectivity of good teaching. Principals emphasised the importance of the fit between the teacher and the school (Ehren et al., 2015; Ingle et al., 2011), and both teachers' and principals' expectations were influenced by their personal visions and experiences (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2004). Secondly, principals were concerned that strict, absolute expectations would be counterproductive for teachers' motivation (Pelletier et al., 2002), and teachers liked the autonomy of their work. But at the same time, respondents acknowledged important benefits of clear expectations: how they can increase one's self-confidence about one's performance, enable the detection of underperformance, or create a balance of effort between teachers (Hardre & Kollmann, 2012; Middlewood & Cardno, 2001; Sachs & Mockler, 2011).

Our findings suggest that certain expectations of principals remain unclear to teachers, especially to more experienced teachers. Principals also stated that they focused on clarifying expectations to beginning, non-tenured teachers. While this suggests a differentiated approach, and principals possibly recognise the professionalism of experienced teachers, expectations evolve throughout a teacher's career, and a teacher's roles and performance can also fluctuate (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Day & Gu, 2009; Meng & Munoz, 2016). This suggests that the performance of more experienced teachers also deserves attention and support, and that (changes in) expectations

should be clarified to them, to stimulate professional development throughout their careers (Firestone, 2014; Middlewood & Cardno, 2001).

Moreover, none of the interviewed teachers referred to the school vision, goals, or formal expectations at the school level when discussing the origins of their expectations, which suggests that directing-setting in the form of explicit communication of expectations is rather limited in these schools. Previous research on teacher appraisal in Flanders also found that it is not always transparent to teachers what 'performing well' on appraisal criteria means (Devos et al., 2013). Therefore, a minimum of 'direction setting' appears to be desirable, i.e. to clearly define a minimum of generic performance expectations (e.g., based on the teacher job profile), flexible enough to allow teachers to adjust their performance to the needs of their specific students and schools (Jackson, 2013; Leo & Roberts, 2015).

Defining expectations for non-teaching performance appears to be extra challenging. This is related to what is considered the teacher's in-role task and what is considered extra-role behavior, and possibly stems from the teacher's job assignment in Flanders: working hours only include teaching hours (Aelterman, 2007). However, the teacher job profile suggests that being a teacher is more than teaching alone. This could be regarded as a lack of alignment between expectations and work conditions (Heneman and Milanowski, 2004). Therefore, it is not surprising that principals are struggling with formulating expectations in this domain and teachers feel they are not paid for this. However, it appears that principals' vague or relative expectations of collaboration and collegiality are not that obvious for all teachers, leading to an inbalance in teachers' efforts. Therefore, schools might benefit from setting a minimum (in-role) expectation for teacher performance in this domain as well, while allowing further expectations to be voluntary (and clarifying the motives behind this choice), and as our respondents suggested, dependent on a teacher's motivation and competences. Similarly, research indicates that performance is enhanced when expectations are based on workers' capacities or interests, making them individually meaningful (Bobko & Colella, 1994; Hardre & Kollmann, 2012), and that it is beneficial not to hold the same standard towards novice and experienced teachers (Roegman, Goodwin, Reed, & Scott-McLaughlin, 2016). In this regard, two principals did not expect beginning teachers to participate in working groups or school projects, to enable them to focus on their teaching.

Even when principals' expectations are unclear to teachers, our findings suggest that performance expectations emerge from and exist within the teaching team. Teachers' expectations were derived from conversations with and observations of other teachers. This is in line with studies that point out the role of social processes in establishing, disseminating and reproducing performance norms and expectations (Gibbons & Weingart, 2001; Stewart, Courtright, & Barrick, 2012). Braxton (2010) indicates that these norms offer moral boundaries and a collective conscience, which is especially important given the autonomy and ambiguity of teachers' work. However, both principals and teachers were unsure if all teachers shared their expectations, and

teachers also struggled with formulating performance expectations, because of the subjectivity of 'good teaching' and the feasibility of applying certain expectations in practice due to teachers' heavy workload. Combined with findings from previous research indicating that teachers' involvement in the construction of performance expectations creates goal congruence, shows teachers that the principal believes in their capacities, and enhances their acceptance of these expectations (Hughes & Pate, 2012; Leithwood, Steinbach, & Jantzi, 2002), our findings suggests the need to create opportunities for discussion about performance expectations and related doubts and concerns. Two ways to start, which are already used in schools according to our findings, is by asking teachers to specify certain expectations in departmental meetings, or by encouraging teachers to cooperate in the creation of the school vision. Moreover, the involvement of teachers acknowledges their professionalism, as well as the complexity of being a 'good teacher', and meets principals' fear that too explicit (or strict) expectations would decrease the motivation of teachers. As Page (2016b) suggests, managing teachers' performance is inherently dialectic, balancing teacher accountability and professional autonomy.

Concerning implications for education policy and research on performance expectations, our findings indicate that it is crucial not to ignore the national context (Meier et al., 2015). Perceptions of teacher effectiveness and teacher evaluation measures are influenced by educational contexts, practices, policies, standards, and values (Liu et al., 2016; Meng & Munoz, 2016). For example, the fact that we do not have high-stake testing or national performance standards for teachers, might explain why principals did not put more emphasis on students' learning outcomes than teachers, in contract to findings of Day et al. (2006), and why principals' 'buffering' function between governments' and teachers' expectations (e.g., Ingle et al., 2011) was not mentioned in our interviews either. Moreover, our findings indicate that educational policy and practice should take a broad perspective on teacher performance: i.e. being a teaching is not only teaching students, since, as our respondents suggested, non-teaching efforts are essential for schools as well (Runhaar, Konermann, & Sanders, 2013). Finally, as Ingle et al. (2011) state: "while principals can certainly learn from existing research on teacher quality, researchers and policymakers can also learn from principals, expanding their scope of what is considered quality and how it is constructed in schools" (p.603). This includes recognition of the complexity of everyday school life and needs at the micro level. In Flemish education, principals have a substantial workload, and are largely on their own when it comes to managing performance expectations (Devos, Bouckenooghe, Engels, Hotton, & Aelterman, 2007). Similarly, previous research on teacher underperformance in Flanders found that principals experienced unclear performance standards and a lack of support when dealing with underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). This suggests the need for educational policy to create opportunities for principals to meet and share insights on how to define and manage performance expectations for teachers, and to include performance management in principal training courses.

Our study is not without its limitations. First, interviewing only language teachers might have created a potential bias, since teachers mostly communicate and collaborate with teachers from their own departments, forming subcultures within schools (Bidwell & Yasumoto, 1999). Other subcultures might have different views on teacher performance. In addition, exploratory qualitative research does not have the intention to generalise findings across contexts, and our sample was selected to represent the diversity of schools in Flanders, without claiming it to be completely representative. Moreover, because of the exploratory nature of our research, differences in expectations between and within schools cannot be fully explained. Finally, we did not study the impact of principals' and teachers' performance expectations on performance management practices and the actual performance of teachers. This would be an interesting direction for further research.

CHAPTER 2

Underperforming teachers: the impact on co-workers
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Abstract

Research indicates that underperforming teachers have a profound impact on students and on principals who struggle to deal with the underperformance. However, the impact on and responses of other teachers (i.e., co-workers) is rarely studied, in spite of the importance of teacher collaboration in contemporary education. Therefore, we interviewed co-workers about incidents of teacher underperformance, using the Critical Incident Technique. Our respondents reported various types of underperformance, including student-related and team-related underperformance, as well as task underperformance and counterproductive work behaviours. Dependent on the specific incident, co-workers were more directly or indirectly affected by the underperformance. They expressed frustrations, concerns and feelings of injustice, not only about the underperformance itself, but also about a lack of response by the school principal. Moreover, we found that co-workers' responses depended on how they perceived the necessity, appropriateness and utility of responding, as well as their responsibility to respond. This was influenced by characteristics of the underperformance, underperformer and co-worker, principals' responses and team factors. Implications for educational research, policy and practice are discussed.

1. Introduction

International research indicates that three to fifteen per cent of teachers perform below standard (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). These underperforming teachers[1] have a profound impact on students' learning outcomes (Marzano, 2012; Range, Duncan, Scherz, & Haines, 2012). The cumulative effects of ineffective teachers on students' exam results are traceable for at least four years (Haycock, 1998; Rivers & Sanders, 2002). Underperforming teachers also affect students' well-being and motivation (Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007). They often cause great concern among principals (Causey, 2010; Page, 2016a), who find it hard to address the underperformance, whilst experiencing numerous difficulties and barriers (e.g., juridical constraints for dismissal, the emotional strain of confronting underperformers, a perceived lack of time and support) (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016).

In-depth research on the impact of underperformance on and responses of other teachers in the school is scarce. However, teacher collaboration, teachers' professional community (i.e., peer feedback, deprivatised practice, shared responsibility, and shared norms) and collaborative professional learning are considered to be vital for teacher development, educational quality, school effectiveness and school improvement in contemporary education (Goddard et al., 2007; Tam, 2015; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Because of this heightened importance of teamwork, it is reasonable to believe that teachers will also be confronted with underperforming team members. Therefore, we argue that, in order to have a more complete view of how teacher underperformance affects and is dealt with in schools, co-workers should be included in studies on teacher underperformance.

Therefore, we set out the following research questions:

- How are co-workers affected by teacher underperformance?
- How do co-workers respond to underperforming teachers and why do they respond in a certain way?

We set out to study these research questions in secondary education in Flanders. In what follows, we start by conceptualising 'work underperformance'. Since studies on co-workers in education are scarce, we will provide an overview of the existing organisational literature on the co-workers

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[1] Researchers use different terms to indicate that a teacher is not performing according to an acceptable standard: incompetent teacher (e.g., Cheng, 2014), marginal teacher (e.g., Kaye, 2004), ineffective teacher (e.g., Nixon et al., 2013), challenging teacher (e.g., Yariv, 2004), poor performing and underperforming teacher (e.g., Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003). We adopt the term 'underperformance', since it indicates that one performs below standard, without a priori adjudicating on the severity, cause or type of underperformance.

of underperformers in other disciplines and work sectors. This literature overview will form a conceptual basis for our study design and the analysis of our findings.

1.1. Work performance and underperformance

Work performance is a multidimensional concept. It consists of task performance, organisational citizenship behaviours (OCB) and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Koopmans et al., 2011). Task performance is 'in-role' behaviour, and OCB is contextual, 'extra-role' performance (Motowildo et al., 1997; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002). While task performance refers to the job core or the formal job description of the employee, contextual performance includes behaviour such as helping and taking on additional tasks (Christ et al., 2003). Task performance includes both performance outcomes (the achievement of goals) and the process of effectively using one's competencies to achieve these outcomes (Roe, 1996). CWB or 'deviance', a term that is mostly used interchangeably with CWB, are "volitional acts by employees that potentially violate the legitimate interests of, or do harm to, an organisation or its stakeholders" (Marcus et al., 2016, p.204), such as intentionally breaking the rules and interpersonal aggression (Robinson & Bennett, 1995). These three dimensions of work performance are related (e.g., there is a negative correlation between OCB and CWB), but distinct (e.g., one may perform well in both task and contextual performance but exhibit CWB and the dimensions have partly different antecedents and determinants), contributing uniquely to the overall work performance (Dalal, 2005; Sackett et al., 2006). When discussing underperformance in this article, we refer to all three dimensions: task underperformance, lack of organisational citizenship behaviour and/or counterproductive work behaviour.

We will study teacher performance and co-worker responses at the individual level, i.e., how a teacher experiences and responds to an underperforming teacher in his/her school. This does not mean that teacher performance is considered to be a solely individual phenomenon. Instead, it is dependent on the team, school and the wider educational system in which the teacher works (Darling-Hammond & Rothman, 2011, Hanushek, Kain, O'Brien, & Rivkin, 2005).

1.2. The impact on and responses of co-workers

While research on co-workers of underperformance teachers is scarce, research on co-workers has been conducted in a variety of other disciplines and work sectors such as healthcare (e.g., Henriksen & Dayton, 2006), engineering (e.g., Morrison, Wheeler-Smith & Kamdar, 2011), technology (e.g., Vakola & Bouradas, 2005), government agencies (e.g., Bradfield & Aquino, 1999), finances (e.g., Struthers et al., 2001; Briggs, 2001), and a wide variety of positions such as physicians (e.g., Schwappach & Gehring, 2014), managers (e.g., Gruys, Stewart, & Bowling, 2010), and technical staff (e.g., Gruys et al., 2010). Some studies were performed in multiple sectors (e.g., Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Neff, 2009).

This research is grouped together into three research strands. An overview is provided in Table 1. First are the Attribution Theory studies, which are rooted in social psychology and focus on the causes that co-workers attribute to a colleague's underperformance (which is mostly task underperformance, but also CWB) and how this impacts on their responses. Second, is research on peer reporting of CWB and deviance, which studies co-workers' motives for and influences on whether or not to report this misbehaviour to one's supervisor. Third, voice and silence research focuses on why and when workers approach their supervisors and/or co-workers or remain silent about workplace issues and perceived injustices - including performance problems.

Table 1
Literature review: three research strands on co-workers' responses to underperformers

	Types of underperformance studied	Types of co-workers' responses studied	Types of influencing factors on co-workers' responses
Attribution theory studies	Mostly task underperformance, but also other perceived injustices, CWB, or unspecified.	Responses towards the underperformer (e.g., helping, motivating, rejecting, compensating).	Causal attributions affecting co-worker emotions (e.g., anger or compassion), cognitions (e.g., perceived changeability), and behaviours (e.g., helping or punishing) towards underperformers.
Studies on peer reporting of CWB	CWB, deviance (e.g., unethical behaviour).	Peer reporting to supervisor.	Diverse influences including the severity of CWB, co-worker characteristics, team factors, leadership factors and related motives.
Voice and silence studies	Workplace issues, concerns, suggestions, opinions and perceived injustices, including co-workers' underperformance.	Speaking up or remaining silent, mostly to supervisors, but also to co-workers.	Diverse influences including co-worker characteristics, team factors, organisational and leadership factors, and relational characteristics, leading up to a cost-benefit analysis of appropriate responses.

This research suggests that underperforming workers affect their co-workers' emotions, cognitions, attitudes and behaviour (Neff, 2009; Robinson, Wang, & Kiewitz, 2014). Co-workers can be the direct target of the behaviour, observe the behaviour or learn about the behaviour from

others (Robinson et al., 2014). Explanations of the impact of a worker's underperformance on co-workers are mostly based on organisational justice theory (Greenberg, 1990) and equity theory (Adams, 1963); co-workers perceive the underperformance to be unjust and unfair towards themselves and other well-performing, hardworking co-workers. Underperformance breaks norms of collegial reciprocity and social responsibility (Neff, 2009; Simon, Taggar, & Neubert, 2004). In addition, underperforming workers may damage a co-worker's trust, leading to feelings of anger, anxiety, stress and retaliation. They can also affect the co-workers' work attitudes and performance, as well as group dynamics, for example, by acting as negative role models (Felps, Mitchell, & Byington, 2006; Hung, Chi, & Lu, 2009; Robinson et al., 2014; Taggar & Neubert, 2004). Attribution Theory (Weiner, 1985) proposes that co-workers' emotions can be more or less favourable, i.e., by being angry versus feeling empathy towards the underperformer, which are dependent on the perceived causes of the underperformance (e.g., lack of ability versus demotivation) and the perceived possibility of change (Lepine & van Dyne, 2001; Weiner, 2010). Moreover, Edwards, Ashkanasy, and Gardner (2009) indicated that co-workers also experience concerns about their past and future responses to the underperformance.

Concerning the impact of teacher underperformance on co-workers, a study by Page (2016a) on serious teacher misbehaviour found that it eroded the will and energy of other teachers, and caused both frustration and despair. Co-workers felt let down by the underperformer and considered the misbehaviour to be a betrayal towards both students and schools. Research by Kaye (2004) on 'marginal teaching' found that the impact on co-workers depended on the nature of the performance problem and the underperformer's willingness to accept help and to acknowledge these problems.

Co-workers may respond to underperforming workers in different ways. Attribution studies make a distinction between compensating for the underperformance (e.g., taking on some of the underperformer's tasks), training (e.g., advising the underperformer), motivating (e.g., pointing out consequences of poor performance) and rejecting the underperformer (e.g., avoiding further interactions) (Ferguson et al., 2010; Jackson & LePine, 2003; LePine & van Dyne, 2001). Other authors have distinguished between helping and punishing, prosocial (e.g., advising) and antisocial reactions (e.g., silent treatment) (Struthers et al., 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004, 2008). Studies on peer reporting of CWB and voice & silence studies include responses directed towards third parties, i.e., speaking up or remaining silent to one's supervisor and/or other co-workers (Morrison, 2014; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). Voice and silence studies have argued that co-workers make a cost-benefit analysis before choosing a response (Bisel & Arterburn, 2012; Morrison, 2011): they may fear the negative consequences of raising the issue (e.g., retaliation), keep silent out of prosocial considerations (e.g., not wanting to harm the underperformer) or find it futile to respond (e.g., they believe that speaking up will not make a difference) (Knoll & van Dick, 2013b; Van Dyne, Ang, & Botero, 2003).

These studies discern different types of influences on co-workers' responses: characteristics of the underperformance and the underperformer, individual characteristics, leadership factors,

organisational factors and team factors. Concerning **characteristics of the underperformance and the underperformer**, attribution studies focus on the performance history and perceived causes (e.g., ability, effort, task difficulty, bad luck) of the underperformance and whether co-workers consider these causes to be internal or external to the underperformer, controllable or uncontrollable, and stable or unstable. This will determine how co-workers perceive the possibility of change and the expected consequences of actions, i.e., whether a co-worker feels able to impact on the underperformance (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Weiner, 2010). While the perceived causes of the underperformance are considered to be the main explanation for co-workers' responses, additional influences were found, among others, of emotions expressed by the underperformer (anger or sadness) and the likableness of the underperformer (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; Ferguson et al., 2010). Peer report studies and voice and silence studies indicate that reporting the underperformance to one's supervisor depends upon the seriousness and impact of the misbehaviour (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Neff, 2009), and speaking up to a co-worker appears to be easier when one knows this co-worker well (Schwappach & Gehring, 2014). However, voice and silence research has found that co-workers' underperformance is one of the issues that is hardest to voice (Brinsfield, 2009; Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Milliken, Morrison, & Hewlin, 2003). **Individual factors** also play a role in co-workers' responses: peer report and voice partly depend on the co-worker's age and work experience (e.g., older, more experienced co-workers tend to voice more), his/her position in the team, personality, self-esteem, organisational attitudes, performance and interpersonal skills (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Gruys et al., 2010; Morrison, 2011). The tendency to speak up or report the underperformance was found to depend upon **team characteristics** as well, i.e., the team's cohesion and trust and the group's consensus on the performance problem (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; King & Hermodson, 2000). Moreover, attribution studies found that co-workers influence each other's responses by sharing emotions, judgments and beliefs and constructing shared attributions (Harvey, Madison, Martinko, Crook, & Crook, 2014; Taggar & Neubert, 2004). Voice and silence studies indicate that the decision to speak up or remain silent also depends on **organisational factors**, including communication opportunities, work climate (e.g., justice vs. distrust) and voice climate (e.g., collective norms of voice or silence) (Edwards et al., 2009; Morrison et al., 2011; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Finally, **leadership factors**, i.e., leadership style, support, and receptivity were found to influence whether workers spoke up to their supervisors (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison, 2014; Mowbray, Wilkinson, & Tse, 2015).

In education, little is known of co-workers' responses. A study by Richardson and colleagues (2008) on teachers violating the testing protocol found that the reporting of co-workers to the principal was influenced by co-workers' communication competence and policy attitude, supervisor receptivity, and participatory school culture. To our knowledge, more research on how and why co-workers respond to underperforming teachers is lacking.

In summary, our literature overview indicates that underperforming workers can have a profound impact on co-workers. Co-workers may respond in very different ways, such as rejecting the

underperformer, motivating him/her, compensating for the underperformance, helping or advising the underperformer, keeping silent about the underperformance to the underperformer and/or others, and speaking up about the underperformance to supervisors and other co-workers (i.e., reporting). These responses depend on a range of factors, including characteristics of the co-worker, the underperformance and the underperformer, organisational characteristics, team factors, and leadership factors. As we learn more about the importance of collaboration for effective teaching, it is important to study how these insights apply to education, i.e., to understand how teachers are impacted by this underperformance, and how and why they decide to respond to this underperformance.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research context and sample

Our study was executed in Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. Deregulation and decentralisation are important features of Flemish educational policy, and self-regulation of schools is expected. The government provides a curriculum with attainment targets for students, which define what students are expected to know and be able to do at different stages during compulsory education (Vanhoof et al., 2013). There are no mandated central exams or national student tests, and schools can choose their instructional methods (Vekeman, Devos, Valcke, & Rosseel, 2017). Moreover, schools have the autonomy to create job descriptions and evaluation criteria for teachers (OECD, 2014; Penninckx et al., 2011). School boards largely decentralise HRM responsibilities to individual schools, and principals play a central role in HR and performance management, since other management levels are absent in Flemish education (Vekeman et al., 2016).

Our study was performed in the secondary education sector, which teaches students between 12 and 18 years old. It is part of compulsory education, situated in between primary education and higher education. Although official numbers are lacking, a recent study in secondary education found that principals considered 12% of their teachers to underperform in one or more job domains, especially student-tailored teaching and student evaluation, implementing innovations, dealing with problematic student behaviour and motivating students, and/or having a too narrow view of their duties (Plas & Vanhoof, 2016). In addition, international comparative research indicates that Flemish secondary education scores low on professional community characteristics, such as peer feedback, deprivatised practices, and joint teaching (Lomos, 2017; OECD, 2014).

To obtain a diverse sample of teachers, the call for respondents was sent to all 210 secondary schools in the Flemish province of Antwerp. Twenty teachers volunteered to participate. Since the first interview was a try-out interview (to explore the clarity and comprehensiveness of the questions and the required time frame for discussing an incident) and resulted in adaptations of

research questions, we will report the findings of interviews with 19 teachers, with whom we discussed 53 incidents. The sample was a heterogeneous sample, consisting of ten women and nine men, aged 26 to 59 (mean age 39). Two respondents taught in general education, two in vocational schools, two in technical schools and two in art schools. The remaining teachers worked in schools with two or more educational levels. Their subjects included humanities, ancient and modern languages, arts, economics, technical and vocational subjects, religion and history. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, and participants signed an informed consent stating the purpose and method of the study, as well as participant rights. The Ethics Committee of the University of Antwerp also approved the study.

2.2. Method

We opted for interviews to obtain a nuanced understanding of the impact of teacher underperformance on co-workers, as well as co-workers' responses (Cohen et al., 2011). The existing studies on co-workers (in other work sectors, as well as the few studies in education) are mostly experiments or survey studies with vignettes, using hypothetical cases (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2010; Liden et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 2008). Therefore, they studied co-workers' intentions or attitudes, rather than their actual responses (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Struthers et al., 2001). Our aim was to study real incidents in which our respondents had been confronted with an underperforming teacher, therefore, we chose the Critical Interview Technique. This is "a qualitative interview procedure, which facilitates the investigation of significant occurrences (events, incidents, process or issues), identified by the respondent, the way they are managed, and the outcomes in terms of perceived effects. The objective is to gain an understanding of the incident from the perspective of the individual, taking into account cognitive, affective and behavioural elements" (Chell, 2004, p.48). It is based on the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), developed by Flanagan (1954). It can yield in-depth, contextualised accounts of real-life incidents (Hughes, Williamson, & Lloyd, 2007), and allows respondents to discuss cases of their own choosing that are important to them (Gremler, 2004).

We asked our respondents to describe incidents in which they perceived a co-worker was underperforming, i.e., performing below the expectations, in one or more aspects of the job. In line with recommendations in CIT-research, we asked them to discuss recent incidents (during the current school year), since retrospection and memory can distort or lead to reinterpretations of events (FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). Incidents were discussed in-depth. For each incident, we asked about the respondents' perceptions of the underperformance (the nature, severity, duration, detection, causes) and of the underperformer (e.g., age, relationship with the underperformer). Next, we discussed the impact it had had on them (e.g., emotions and cognitions when discovering the underperformance, the impact on their performance and relationship with the underperformer), as well as their responses and why they had responded in a certain way. The duration of the interviews was one hour on average. In each interview, we aimed to discuss three incidents. However, in three interviews, only two cases were discussed:

two respondents had only had two experiences with underperforming co-workers in the past school year, and in one interview time ran out after discussing two incidents. Moreover, from one interview, one case was dropped during analysis, since the underperforming co-worker in the case was an administrative staff member.

2.3. Analysis

The interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded with NVivo. The initial code tree was based on our theoretical framework (e.g., the categorisation of responses and influencing factors). During the coding process, the code tree was adapted and extra codes and subcodes were added inductively. A second researcher was trained for coding and inter-rater agreements were calculated for seven interviews (20 cases). For certain codes, the coders obtained a moderate to high intercoder agreement from the start (Cohen's Kappa >0.6) (Landis & Koch, 1977), while other codes appeared to be more ambiguous and complex. These tentative codes and differences in interpretation were critically discussed, and codes and subcodes were more clearly defined, until sufficient agreement was reached (Butterfield et al., 2005). This process resulted in the construction of the final code tree (see Table 2), which represented the data as a whole. During the entire coding process, continuous discussions took place about unclear or complex interview fragments, and the researchers checked each other's coding (Campbell, Quincy, Osserman, & Pedersen, 2013).

We first analysed each code separately. For example, the subcode 'speaking up' was analysed to explore the range of responses that were coded under that category. Following the thematic analysis approach by Braun and Clarke (2006), themes and subthemes were then constructed by sorting and combining codes and re-reading the coded extracts. We made a schematic overview of the codes per case and searched for co-occurrences of codes, as these represented possible patterns in the data. For example, we examined patterns in explanations that were given for each type of response. In the final phase, the 'overall story' was constructed. To promote a reflexive and thorough analysis, the head researcher kept a methodological report (audit trail) throughout the data collection and analysis process, with first impressions of the interviews, reflections on the interview questions and evolving interpretations, as well as remarks on the coding and analysis. These were regularly and thoroughly discussed by the research team (i.e., the authors), thereby increasing the quality and credibility of our findings (King, 2004; Mortelmans, 2007).

Table 2
Overview of code tree and coding of the presented cases

Codes	Case 1	Case 2	Case 3
Underperformance			
Type			
Team-related			x
Student-related	x	x	x

Duration			
One-time incident			
Less than one school year		x	
More than one school year	x		x
Relationship with underperformer			
Commonality			
Common students	x	x	
Common department			x
Common work group/project			
Professional relationship			
Good			
Bad			
Ambiguous	x	x	
Limited			x
Friendship			
Detection			
Oneself			x
Student(s)			
Underperformer	x	x	
Co-worker	x		x
Principal			
Parent			
Causes			
Internal			
Knowledge/skills	x		
Resilience			
Motivation/attitude			x
Views on teaching/education		x	
Bad character/personality			
External			
School			x
Tasks	x		
Students			
Private			
Do not know		x	
Impact	x	x	x
Responses			
Support/advice	x		
Moderate	x		
Speak up		x	
Compensate	x		
Silence	x	x	x
Distance		x	
Report to principal			

Report to co-workers	x		
Influencing factors			
Individual			x
Underperformance	x	x	
Underperformer			
Relational	x		x
Leadership		x	
Team		x	
View on co-workers' responsibility			
My task			
Not my task		x	
It depends	x		x
Principal's view on co-workers' responsibility			
My task			
Not my task			
It depends/unclear	x	x	x
Comments on HR, PM in the school	x	x	x
Comments on school team, culture, underperforming teachers		x	x
Other co-workers' responses			
Yes	x		x
No		x	
Principal's responses			
Yes			
No	x	x	
Unaware			
Do not know			x

3. Results

First, we describe the incidents that were reported by our respondents. Subsequently, we present our results concerning the impact of teacher performance on co-workers, as well as the co-workers' responses.

3.1. Incidents of underperformance

Fifty-three incidents of underperformance were discussed in our interviews; 28 underperformers were women and 25 were men, aged 23 to 62 (mean age 45), who taught a diverse range of subjects. The incidents (N=53) included a wide range of types of underperformance, including task underperformance and counterproductive work behaviour, student-related and team-related underperformance (see Table 3). Some cases included a combination of task underperformance and CWB. Others included both student-related and team-related underperformance (e.g.,

inappropriate behaviour towards both students and co-workers). In a few cases, respondents reported a lack of OCB, but only in combination with task underperformance or CWB. The detection of the underperformance, its perceived duration, severity and causes differed among cases, as well as the nature and quality of the relationship with the underperformer. However, in the majority of cases, this underperformance had been going on longer than one school year, according to our respondents (N=30). Respondents had mostly observed the underperformance themselves (N=30), or had received reports from students (N=20). The perceived causes of the underperformance were mostly internal. Next to a lack of motivation (N=27) and difficult personality (N=21), a faulty view on teaching or on being a teacher was mentioned in multiple cases (N=13). Frequently reported external reasons included a lack of or inadequate performance management or human resource practices in the school (N=21). Respondents and underperformers mostly worked in the same departments (N=24) or taught common students (N=28). Cooperation was often limited (N=21) or difficult (N=25), according to our respondents.

We illustrate our findings by elaborating on three of the 53 incidents throughout the findings section. We chose this approach over using single quotations, to provide a more extensive, contextualised description of these cases. These three cases were not the most extreme or outstanding cases, but rather they were selected for their diversity in the types and perceived causes of the underperformance, as well as in the nature of co-workers' responses and factors influencing these responses. In Table 2, an overview of the coding of these three cases is provided. We report the incidents through the eyes of our respondents, without making any judgments or interpretations ourselves.

Case 1. Respondent: Dave, 39, teaches religion. Co-worker: Nora, 34, teaches technical subjects.

In a teacher meeting, Nora started crying, saying that she could not handle the students of a certain class, especially during the last hours of the school days, blaming the students for their impossible behaviour. Dave sympathised with her, believing her side of the story. Later, he started receiving signals from other teachers that Nora also had problems with class management in 'easier' classes and that she explained the teaching content in the wrong way, which had led some students to ask other teachers for help. Dave then felt that Nora lacked competences in terms of teaching and in class management and believed that the problem had been going on for three years, since she started working in the school, and that the students were in fact the victims: she got 'difficult students' expelled, because she could not handle them, and they misbehaved because of her lack of teaching competences and subject knowledge.

Case 2. Respondent: Annie, 58, French teacher. Co-worker: Marc, 36, music teacher.

In a teachers' meeting, Marc disclosed that he had been tutoring a struggling student in his free time, at his house, and during school breaks, having regular contact with his parents. He did this tutoring for all the subjects the student was struggling with, including French, Annie's subject. Annie considered his behaviour was wrong, and that he was crossing a line by inviting the

student to his house and favouring this particular student over other struggling students. Annie describes Marc as a hardworking, committed, and friendly teacher. She supposes that he had good intentions towards the student, and that he favours the student over other students since he is a very good musician (music is Marc's subject).

Case 3. Respondent: Amy, 28, English teacher. Co-worker: Margret, 57, English teacher.

Amy and Margret teach English at the same grade. When Margret was on sick leave, Amy temporarily took over one of her classes (in May). She discovered that since September, the students had not had any tests from Margret. Later, when the students complained that Amy's lessons and tests were too difficult, she discovered that Margret had set the bar much too low. She also discovered that too often, Margret had let students study on their own in class, being too lazy to teach, according to Amy. Amy explains that Margret is mostly friendly to other teachers and tries to keep up her image by volunteering to lead departmental meetings, while, at the same time, never following up on agreements made with other language teachers (e.g., she refuses to use the new handbook). Amy sees her as an overall underperformer, who is bitter, demotivated and not in touch with today's students. Rumour has it that she applied for the principal position years ago, but did not get it, causing her to become even bitterer. Moreover, Amy has her doubts about Margret's sick leave, since she has been on sick leave every year for at least one month.

Table 3
Reported types of underperformance (N = 53)

	Student-related (N = 36)	**Team-related (N = 28)**
Task underperformance (N = 35)	- Inadequate teaching (i.e., teaching content, class management, student evaluation, didactics, teaching methods). - Inadequate student administration and reporting.	- No or limited participation in meetings and contributions to team work. - Not following up on school/team procedures, arrangements or agreements with co-workers.
CWB (N = 35)	- Unethical, rude behaviour, or personal attacks towards students (e.g., belittling students). - Intentionally minimising teaching effort (e.g., by showing movies in class).	- Unethical, rude behaviour, or personal attacks towards co-workers. - Intentionally withholding effort for team tasks or taking advantage of the work of others (social loafing). - Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements, thereby undermining co-workers' work. - Questioning co-workers, principals or procedures in

		counterproductive ways (e.g., passive resistance, criticising co-workers in the presence of others). - Illegitimate absences or sick leaves.
Lack of OCB (N = 5)	- Never doing anything extra/ minimum effort.	- Never doing anything extra/ minimum effort.

Note: N=number of incidents.

3.2. <u>The impact of teacher underperformance on co-workers</u>

When discussing the impact of the incidents, our respondents mentioned both the impact of the underperformance itself, as well as the additional impact of and related concerns about their principals' responses.

3.2.1. Impact of the underperformance

Dependent on the type of incident, our respondents were affected by the underperformance in different ways. In some incidents of team-related underperformance, the respondent was the direct target of the underperformance (e.g., of the underperformer's rudeness). In other incidents, the entire team was affected (e.g., by the underperformer's lack of effort). In cases of student-related underperformance, the impact on our respondents was more indirect, e.g., perceiving that one's authority is undermined because the underperformer allows students to break the rules. Some respondents received student complaints, or had to take over certain student-related tasks. In a few cases, the underperformer requested help or advice from the respondent. In other cases, respondents merely witnessed the underperformance, without it affecting their work or taking up their time. However, regardless of the specific nature of the underperformance, all respondents expressed feelings of frustration, anger, incomprehension, shock, disappointment, disillusion or sadness. They felt that the underperformance was unfair to the victims of the underperformance, as well as to other hard-working teachers. For example:

CASE 2: Annie was very surprised by the home tutoring, convinced that Marc had crossed a line by inviting the student to his place, and that there were other, more appropriate ways of helping struggling students. She also considered that it was unfair towards the other struggling students, who could feel disadvantaged by Marc.

CASE 3: Amy explained that Margret's underperformance upset her a lot. She felt angry, bewildered by Margret's behaviour, stating that it was unfair towards hardworking teachers, such as herself. She also felt powerless to change the situation, frustrated with Margret's attempts to keep up appearance, and empathised with Margret's students, who were disadvantaged for having Margret as their teacher.

Our respondents related the strength of their emotions to the severity of the underperformance, perceived causes (e.g., lack of motivation led to strong negative emotions), how widespread and long-term the underperformance was, who the victim was, or how badly the students were affected. Moreover, five respondents expressed regrets regarding their initial reactions to the underperformance, or were mad with themselves for not detecting the underperformance sooner. One respondent admitted that his frustrations about the illegitimate absences of his colleague (a form of CWB) made him exhibit similar misbehaviour on an open school day.

Next to negative emotions, which were reported in all incidents, respondents also mentioned more positive feelings in four cases, i.e., feelings of sympathy or compassion towards the underperformer:

CASE 1: Dave sympathised with Nora, since she was a very nice and friendly woman and did not receive adequate support when she started teaching in the school.

3.2.2. The additional impact of the principal's actions

Seventeen respondents expressed how their principal's responses to the incidents and/or handling of teacher underperformance in general reinforced their negative feelings and made them pessimistic about change. Respondents reported principals who were unaware of performance issues, or aware but passive and tolerant of the underperformance:

CASE 1: Dave also expressed frustrations about the school, since Nora did not receive any support when she started teaching; her predecessor had not left any teaching materials for her and her performance had never been evaluated. He considered this to be especially problematic since she was trained as a maths teacher, and not for technical subjects. In the past decennium, the school had had multiple principals, none of them had properly handled personnel management, according to Dave, and none of them were aware of Nora's underperformance.

CASE 2: In the teacher's meeting, neither the other teachers, nor the Vice-Principal, reacted when Marc told about the home-tutoring. When Annie carefully expressed that she felt that the home-tutoring went too far, everyone remained silent. She was very surprised and upset by this.

Our respondents considered this lack of response to be unfair towards hard-working teachers, such as themselves, which made them feel underappreciated. They reported cases in which principals did not respond because they were friends with the underperformer, did not dare to confront (e.g., a young principal vs. an experienced underperformer), felt unable to change the situation, expected co-workers to respond themselves, lacked the necessary skills, or had just started their job and had other priorities. Certain respondents also perceived that their principals only responded in cases of student-related underperformance following complaints from students and parents.

In four cases, respondents spoke more positively about their principals' handling of the underperformance, e.g., mentoring or confronting the underperformer, or acting on the respondent's report of the underperformance. In addition, three respondents empathised with their principal's difficult task of dealing with underperformers, acknowledging that teacher tenure contracts limited their abilities to tackle underperformance:

CASE 3: Amy assumed that her principal was aware of some of the problems, since she had hinted to Amy that she questioned Margret's absences. Amy believed that the principal was powerless to handle Margret's underperformance, because of her tenure and position as a union representative.

Some respondents also expressed more general concerns and frustrations about inadequate performance monitoring and evaluation in the school, a lack of mentoring and coaching, too much professional freedom for teachers and 'soft' management.

In summary, our findings indicate that, dependent on the incident, our respondents were more directly or indirectly affected by the underperformance. Regardless of the incident, however, all incidents provoked negative emotions with respondents, which were often reinforced by concerns about a lack of responses by the principal, to the specific incident or more in general.

3.3. Co-workers' responses to the incidents

Here, we will discuss how co-workers responded to the incidents and how they explained their responses. In Figure 1, we provide an overview of our findings.

3.3.1. Speaking up towards the underperformer or principal

In 31 incidents, respondents spoke up to the underperformer. Almost all respondents explained that they did this carefully; for example, by carefully asking questions about certain behaviour without criticizing, expressing their own opinions without demanding the underperformer to change his/her behaviour, or explaining the impact of the underperformance on themselves. Most respondents also said that they spoke up in a positive and motivating manner, sometimes through humour, sometimes anonymously (e.g., "some teachers are late with their reports"), instead of explicitly or directly confronting the underperformer. Many respondents mentioned that they were not in a position to reprimand or judge co-workers or demand better performance, but could only mention their own opinions and concerns. Some respondents only spoke up about one aspect of the underperformance.

CASE 2: In the teacher's meeting, Annie carefully mentioned that she thought that Marc had gone too far in inviting the student to his home.

Some respondents spoke up out of necessity (sometimes without considering it to be their job to respond in general) because they were personally affected by the underperformance (e.g., by underperformer's rudeness), or because students, or a common project or team were affected. In the latter cases, some respondents felt responsible to respond since they were the coordinator of the mutual project or chairperson of the department that was harmed by the underperformance. Other respondents spoke up because their principal or a co-worker advised them to. Respondents also explained that they felt more authorised to speak up if they witnessed the underperformance themselves, or perceived that the underperformance had been caused by a faulty view on teaching or education. Having a good relationship with the underperformer made it easier to speak up, according to some respondents (while others indicated that it made it harder, out of fear of harming the relationship). Other respondents explained that the collegial, open atmosphere in their department or team facilitated speaking up. Finally, some respondents related their decision to speak up to their personalities, i.e., because they were blunt, or their belief that one should always provide honest feedback to co-workers. In 18 cases, respondents spoke to the principal about the incidents, because of the severity of the underperformance (cf., need for disciplinary actions), since they were confident that the principal would take action (based on past experiences), or convinced that it was the principal's responsibility to respond. In some cases, other co-workers advised the respondent to report the underperformance to the principal. Additionally, in 20 incidents, respondents talked about the underperformance with co-workers, mostly to express their frustrations, for emotional support, or to complain about the underperformer.

3.3.2. Silence towards the underperformer and/or the principal

Our respondents decided to remain silent towards the underperformer in 22 incidents. In 15 cases, the respondent never talked about the underperformance with the underperformer, nor reported the underperformance to his/her principal.

Some respondents said that it was unnecessary to respond, since they expected their principals to deal with the problem. Others expected the problem to be resolved on its own (e.g., the underperformer will leave in the next school year). Some respondents explained that they did not consider themselves to have the mandate, authority or competences to question or react to a co-worker's underperformance ("Who am I to question my co-worker's teaching?"). Others considered it 'not done', or said that it made them feel uncomfortable, especially when the underperformer was a more experienced, older teacher; when their cooperation with the underperformer was very limited; in cases of student-related performance in another subject (making it difficult to judge their teaching); or when the underperformance was signalled by students (were their reports to be trusted?):

CASE 1: Dave kept silent to Nora about his doubts about her competences, since he did not consider himself trained to evaluate her lessons or competences. Moreover, he explained that

confronting co-workers takes courage and he found it difficult to speak up since he had no direct involvement in the incidents.

Some respondents did not consider it their responsibility to deal with underperforming colleagues and considered it the principal's job, in this specific case, or in general. The latter were mostly older, more experienced teachers, such as Annie (age 58):

> *Case 2: In general, Annie did not consider it her task to give feedback to co-workers, nor to report them to the principal. Moreover, she considered this to be tattling on co-workers. She saw herself as part of the 'old generation of teachers', who are less open to observe and appraise others' teaching, since they were not trained to do this.*

Moreover, most respondents were unsure about whether their principal considered it their responsibility to respond to underperforming teachers.

Other respondents feared that speaking up would harm their relationship with the underperformer and, therefore, decided to remain silent. Respondents related these fears to their personalities and tendency to avoid conflict, or to the difficult personality of the underperformer. Others feared for counterproductive consequences, for example, an increase in the underperformance, or the underperformer going on sick leave when confronted with his/her underperformance. Some non-tenured teachers feared that speaking up would harm their chances to obtain tenure:

> *CASE 3: Amy informed some co-workers about Margret's underperformance, and some advised her to report it to the principal. She did not do that, however, since she did not consider it her task and she did not dare to, because she did not want to compromise her chances to obtain tenure (and considered Margret to be higher in rank). However, if her principal would ask her about her cooperation with Margret, she thought she would dare to mention some problems.*

Moreover, some respondents felt unable to speak up because of a lack of openness to observe and discuss each other's performance:

> *CASE 2: After the meeting, Annie decided that it was best to keep silent, since no one had reacted to her concerns about the home-tutoring. Moreover, she felt there was no openness in the team to talk about others' performance, because of too much gossip and 'bad apples' ruining the team's atmosphere.*

Others explained that responding would be pointless or futile; they felt that they would not be heard or able to affect the performance. Some felt that the principal would not act on their report (e.g., the principal was aware but unresponsive, or there was a lack of performance management in the school in general). Others were discouraged by co-workers to speak up to the underperformer and/or the principal. Some respondents felt that it was impossible to change the

underperformer. In some cases, this was preceded by unsuccessful attempts to impact on the underperformance. For example, Annie felt that she had no impact on Marc's home tutoring:

CASE 2: At the time of the interview, Marc was still tutoring the student, regularly asking Annie about the student's progress in French. Although she still felt frustrated, she did not mention her opinion on the tutoring any more, and responded briefly but in a friendly way to his questions, telling him what he needed to know.

3.3.3. Other responses

When asked about their responses, our respondents mostly talked about voice and silence towards the underperformer and/or the principal. To a lesser extent, they mentioned additional responses.

In eight cases, respondents decided to distance themselves from the underperformer, limiting their cooperation to the minimum, sometimes after perceiving that their responses did not have the desired effect. Two respondents decided to resign their position as head of the department that was affected by the underperformance, to avoid further incidents with the underperformer.

In five cases, respondents offered help, advice (e.g., about class management) or emotional support to the underperformer, since the underperformer had asked for help, the respondent had a good relationship with the underperformer and/or the underperformance was caused by psychological or non-work-related problems:

CASE 1: Dave emotionally supported Nora every time she talked to him about difficult students, since she was a nice woman and colleague. He also supported her in the teacher's meetings, blaming the students for their lack of discipline. (At the time of the interview, he had partly lost his empathy, since by then, he thought that she was part of the problem.)

In nine incidents, respondents compensated for the underperformance, for example, by helping out their students, by taking over certain team tasks, or by giving the underperformer the least important team tasks:

CASE 1: The team decided to change working hours for Nora, so that Nora would not have the most difficult students at the end of the school day.

Some principals involved co-workers in compensating actions, i.e., requiring co-workers to monitor the underperformer, or to double-check their tests and teaching content. In cases in which students reported the underperformance, our respondents tried to carefully respond to their complaints and/or to gently signal students' complaints to the underperformer, without taking sides or judging their co-worker:

CASE 3: Amy compensated for Margret's underperformance by preparing additional tests and making up for gaps in the teaching content, since she felt that the students deserved this. She remained diplomatic towards the students, not saying anything negative about Margret. When the students later complained that Amy's tests and teaching were too difficult, she remained diplomatic as well, not mentioning that Margret set the bar much too low.

Two respondents, however, advised students to file a complaint to the school administration, since they felt that this was the only way to impact on the underperformance and stimulate principal's action.
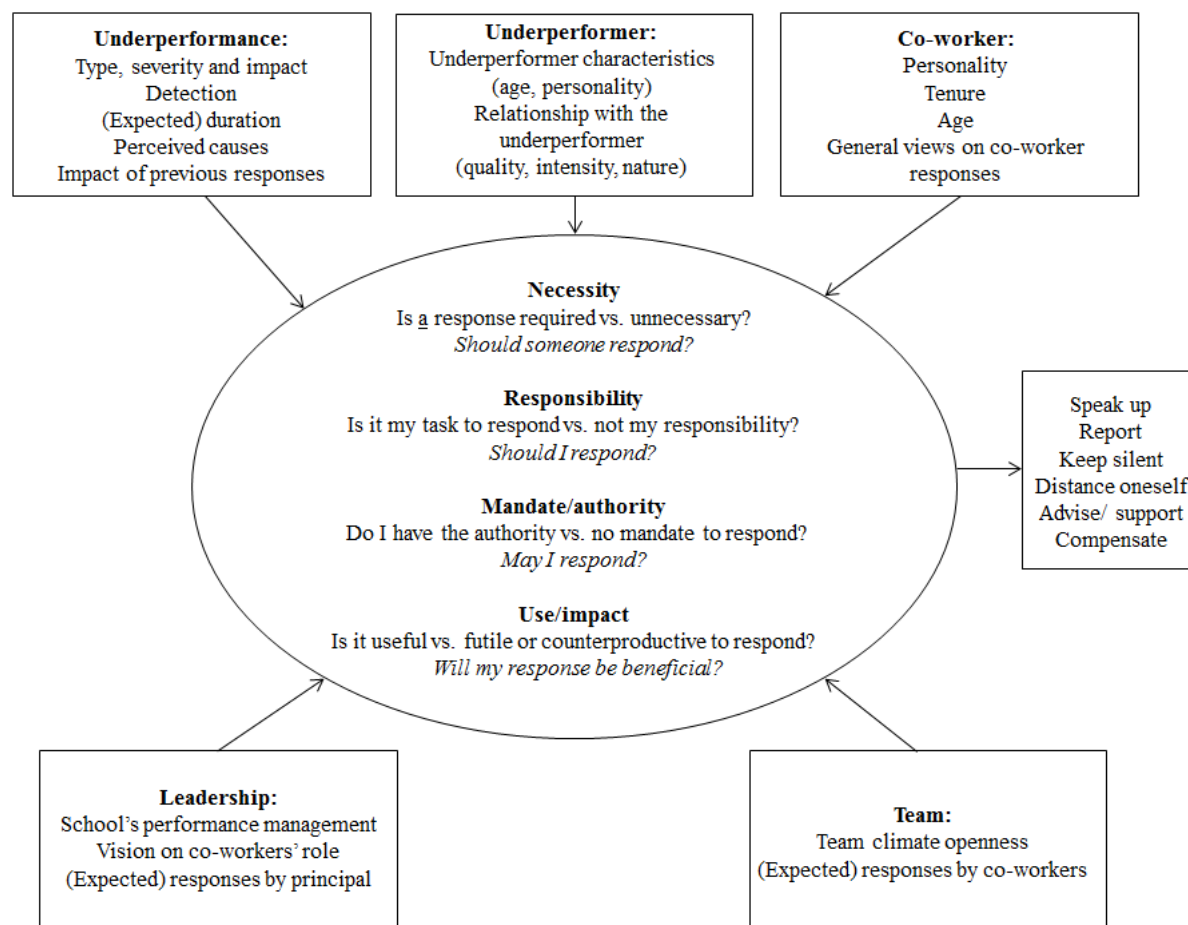
Figure 1: Reported co-worker responses, influencing factors and related considerations.

In summary, our respondents responded to the incidents in different ways, i.e., by remaining silent or speaking to the underperformer and/or the principal, distancing themselves from the underperformer, providing support or advice, or compensating for the underperformance. Respondents' explanations for these responses entailed four main themes: how they perceived the necessity to respond, their responsibility to respond, their authority to respond, and what impact they expected from a response (upon the underperformer, themselves, or their relationship). This

was related to characteristics of the underperformance and (their relationship with) the underperformer, leadership and team factors, and individual factors (see Figure 1).

4. Conclusion and discussion

With this study, we aimed to obtain a better understanding of the impact of teacher underperformance on co-workers, as well as co-workers' responses to this underperformance.

We found that all of our respondents knew at least two teachers who had been underperforming during the course of the school year (according to their perceptions). Respondents had mostly observed or experienced the underperformance at first hand. This suggests that, during teacher collaboration and teamwork, co-workers may learn about teachers' underperformance. Similar to studies in other work contexts (e.g., Neff, 2009; Robinson et al., 2014; Taggar & Neubert, 2004), our findings demonstrate that teacher underperformance can have a substantial emotional impact on co-workers. This is not only the case when they are directly affected by the underperformance, but is also true in cases of student-related underperformance. Presumably, this type of underperformance creates strong feelings of injustice, since it is related to the ethical nature of teaching, i.e., the caring for students and their right to the best education possible (Hoy & Tarter, 2004).

Despite these concerns, not all respondents spoke up to the underperforming teacher and/or the principal. Next to the nature, severity and impact of the underperformance, there were several other factors that contributed to their decisions of how to respond, such as their relationship with the underperformer, responses by the principal and other co-workers, and other leadership and team factors (see Figure 1). Our findings suggest that, together, these influences explain whether co-workers considered a (certain) response to be required, whether they considered themselves to have a responsibility and mandate to respond, and how they considered the use of responding.

School factors, i.e., team and leadership factors, appeared to play an important role in these considerations. Concerning team factors, our findings suggest that the team climate can influence co-worker responses. Some respondents experienced a lack of openness in the team to discuss each other's performance. Moreover, it appears that related norms of teacher autonomy, collegiality and seniority in these schools withheld co-workers from speaking up: some teachers generally did not consider it to be their responsibility, found it inappropriate to speak up to or judge co-workers, or feared that speaking up would have negative effects on themselves or their relationship with the underperformer. These norms have also been used to explain why teachers sometimes collaborate on a more superficial level, are reluctant to discuss their own and others' performance, and oppose teacher leadership (Hargreaves, 2001; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Little, 1990; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Limited cooperation with the underperformer also made it more difficult for respondents to speak up, while having a good professional relationship with the underperformer appeared to make it easier (at least for some respondents) to speak up or provide

support or advice (cf. Schwappach & Gehring, 2014). Together, these findings suggests that a stronger professional community in Flemish schools, i.e., intense collaboration, an open feedback climate and sense of shared responsibility, could stimulate co-worker responses and 'normalise' talking about others' performance. In contrast to research in other disciplines, which has suggested that more experienced workers are more inclined to respond to or report underperformance (e.g., Gruys et al., 2010), we found that mostly older teachers in our sample did not consider it their task to speak up. This could indicate that privacy norms are changing in these schools and an evolution to more collective responsibility is taking place. On the other hand, it could also mean that negative experiences with speaking up cause teachers to become more reluctant to speak up in the future. Moreover, even if younger teachers consider it their task to respond, other considerations may prevent an actual response, e.g., confronting an experienced co-worker takes courage and may go against implicit norms of seniority in some schools (Johnson & Donaldson, 2007). In this regard, some respondents mentioned that even their principals tended to keep silent to older underperformers. This may also explain some non-tenured respondents' fears that responding would harm their chances of obtaining tenure, since they felt that it was 'not done' to judge more experienced co-workers.

A second overarching theme that emerged from our findings is the importance of school leadership. First, some respondents complained of limited performance monitoring, coaching and development in their schools, which reinforced their feelings of injustice and unfairness, and made them feel unappreciated for their hard work. Previous research also found that teachers' morale and job satisfaction are affected when they perceive inadequate principal responses to teacher underperformance (Cheng, 2014; Menuey, 2007). In addition, it made these respondents become pessimistic about principals' responses to specific incidents of teacher underperformance, and pessimistic about the use of responding themselves. Although few respondents reported an immediate impact on their own performance, research warrants that injustice perceptions can affect one's work performance over time, and provoke silent behaviour (Hung et al., 2009; Tremblay, Cloutier, Simard, Chênevert, & Vandenberghe, 2010). Of course, teachers may not always be aware of principals' responses. As Page (2016a) found in his study on teacher misbehaviour, confidentiality means that teachers do not always know how principals handle the situation, and teachers' morale may be affected as such. Second, while most of our respondents were prepared to follow their principal's advice or views on how to respond in these incidents, they rarely knew their principals' views on the subject. Therefore, postulating a clear vision of the co-worker's role in dealing with teacher underperformance, could reduce these teachers' uncertainties about their responsibility and mandate to respond.

When co-workers perceived it would be futile to respond, and/or they did not feel responsible or authorised to speak up, they remained silent, to the underperforming teacher and/or the principal. This may be detrimental for the school on different levels (cf., Morrison, 2014): when co-workers keep silent, or even distance themselves from the underperforming teacher, they may possibly sustain or even worsen the underperformance, which may not also cause further harm to everyone

affected by the underperformance, but also to the underperforming teacher him/herself. This teacher may be unaware that others perceive him/her to be underperforming, and discussing the underperformance could have been a learning opportunity for the teacher. Moreover, our findings suggest that teacher underperformance is not always black-and-white (e.g., in case 2), and perceptions of underperformance may be caused by different views on education or the teacher's job (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003). Therefore, speaking up could be an opportunity to create a shared vision, which may also foster teachers' collaboration (Vangrieken et al., 2015). In addition, research suggests that silence may be harmful for the one who remains silent: self-suppression can affect a worker's wellbeing, job attitudes and performance, and can even cause turnover (Knoll & van Dick, 2013b; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013). Silence may also be detrimental to the team's climate, reinforcing existing climates of silence (Edwards et al., 2009). Moreover, while discussing the underperformance with other co-workers helped some respondents to cope with the situation and make sense of the underperformance (Felps et al., 2006), Detert, Burris, Harrison, and Martin (2013) argued that peer discussions can also take up considerable work time and spread negative feelings in the team, thus affecting the work climate and team performance over time. In addition, our findings suggest that peer reporting appears to be limited to the most serious cases of underperformance (cf., Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Neff, 2009). However, in schools, principals often depend on peer report (Richardson et al., 2008). Especially team-related underperformance may be less visible to principals. Together, these dangers of co-worker silence suggest that, on different levels, schools could benefit when co-workers speak up to teacher underperformance. However, when respondents chose not to speak up, some respondents compensated for the underperformance by taking on some of the underperformers' tasks, or dealt with student complaints in a discreet manner. Moreover, some respondents only kept silent after attempting to speak up.

Our findings raise important questions about the nature of teacher performance and related responsibilities. First, they argue for a broad view on teacher performance: our findings suggest that teacher performance not only impacts on students, but also team members and the school as whole. However, in educational research, there is a strong focus on teachers' effects on student learning outcomes (Huber & Skedsmo, 2016), and other responsibilities and outcomes are often disregarded. Combined with the knowledge that teacher collaboration and teamwork or important for education quality, our findings suggest that true attention should be paid (in research, policy and practice) to teachers' non-teaching performance and its impact on the school, e.g., by making teachers' team performance an inherent part of teacher appraisals and job descriptions. Second, our findings pose the question of whether teachers have a responsibility to other team members, students, and their schools, when it comes to responding to incidents of perceived co-worker underperformance. At the same time, individual teachers should not be held accountable for how they respond to another teacher's underperformance. Similar to scholars who suggest that contextual aspects influence teacher quality, and should therefore be considered when fairly judging teachers' performance (Hallinger, Heck, & Murphy, 2014; Huber & Skedsmo, 2017; Stronge, 2013), we found that school factors, especially team and leadership factors, may hinder

or enable teachers' responses to a co-worker's underperformance. Educational system factors should not be disregarded either. Applied to our educational context, previous research has found that Flemish principals experienced numerous difficulties when dealing with underperforming teachers, including a high workload (e.g., no middle management in schools), and a lack of the necessary support and training to address teacher underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). In addition, Flemish secondary education does not have a long tradition of teacher evaluation (mandated teacher evaluation was introduced by the Government in 2007) (Tuytens & Devos, 2007), and there are no formal programs or systems of peer evaluation, assistance or monitoring. These factors may also help to explain how Flemish teachers and principals respond to teacher underperformance. Therefore, our findings should be viewed in light of this educational context.

This brings us to the limitations of our study. First, since our research findings are linked to the Flemish educational context and given the qualitative nature of the study, our findings cannot be generalised across schools and educational systems. Large scale follow-up research on co-worker responses is needed to test our hypotheses about factors influencing co-worker responses, and to build explanatory models for different types of responses. Moreover, our study relied on our respondents' memories and reports of the incidents, which may be distorted or incomplete (FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). Longitudinal case study research would allow us to study cases in real time and could also provide more insight into the dynamics of underperformance and collegial responses, including the impact of peer responses on underperformance. Moreover, while we studied responses at the individual level, individual responses are interwoven with others' responses, which may mutually influence each other. In addition, responses may also influence the underperformance, which may provoke new responses, and so forth. These dynamics could not be captured by our cross-sectional research. In addition, while co-workers' perceptions are key to their responses, we must emphasise that our incidents are not 'objective' reports; others involved could have different perceptions of the underperformance. Moreover, it is possible that our respondents were unaware of their principal's or other co-workers' actions. Therefore, it would be opportune for follow-up research to create triangulation in data sources (e.g., underperformers, co-workers and principals) to shed light on the underperformance and on teachers' and principals' actions from different viewpoints.

In summary, our study indicates that teacher underperformance can have a substantial impact on co-workers. In addition, our findings provide more insight in how and why teachers respond in a certain way, and which factors may enable or hinder their responses. Our findings have important implications for educational research, policy and practice, and they underline the importance of paying attention to co-workers when studying or addressing teacher underperformance.

CHAPTER 3

Teacher underperformance in Flemish primary
and secondary schools: Co-workers' experiences,
views and responses.

Chapter 3

Teacher underperformance in Flemish primary and secondary schools: Co-workers' experiences, views and responses.

Abstract

International research indicates that two to fifteen per cent of teachers perform below the standard. These underperforming teachers can have a profound negative impact on their students and schools. In Flanders, little is known about teacher underperformance and how it is addressed. In this study, we examine teacher underperformance in Flemish primary and secondary education through the eyes of teachers, as they may be more aware of certain problems than their principals, and may also respond to other teachers' underperformance. We study how teachers perceived the incidence and nature of teacher underperformance in their schools. Moreover, we examine their views on, experiences with, and actual responses to underperforming teachers. Our findings indicate that Flemish teachers believe a significant number of their team members underperform. They are confronted with very diverse problems, including student-related and team-related types of underperformance. Often, the underperformance is perceived as severe, long-lasting, and having internal causes. Flemish teachers do not always feel either authorised to respond to the underperformance or convinced that responding would be useful. In general, their responses are rather limited. They also perceive their principals' and other team members' responses to be limited. These findings raise important questions about the role of co-workers in dealing with teacher underperformance, and highlight the need to pay attention to these co-workers when studying or addressing teacher underperformance.

1. Introduction

International research estimates the incidence of teacher underperformance to be between two to fifteen per cent (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). In Flanders, official numbers are lacking, but a recent study in secondary education found that principals considered 12% of their teachers to underperform in one or more job domains. In particular, student-tailored teaching and student evaluation, implementing innovations, dealing with problematic student behaviour and motivating students were considered as frequent areas of underperformance. Moreover, according to principals, underperforming teachers often have a too narrow view of their duties (Plas & Vanhoof, 2016). International research suggests that underperforming teachers have a profound impact on students, principals, co-workers and parents (Goe et al., 2008). While most teachers perform well, underperforming teachers can affect large numbers of students every year (Herman, 1993; Painter, 2000). These teachers can have long-

term effects on the exam results of students, and affect students' well-being and motivation (Haycock, 1998; Kaye, 2004; Rivers & Sanders, 2002; Zhang, 2007). Moreover, teacher underperformance harms teachers' credibility and students' attitudes towards the teacher (Banfield, Richmond, & McCroskey, 2006). In addition to this impact on students, underperforming teachers also cause numerous concerns and difficulties for principals who struggle to address it (Causey, 2010; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Page, 2016a). A study on teacher underperformance in Flemish secondary education found that primary school principals considered tenure contracts and lack of time as the main constraints in dealing with teacher underperformance. In addition, they experienced considerable stress and feared harming the relationship with the underperformer. Principals also felt rather incompetent in dealing with teacher underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). Additionally, teacher underperformance affects the reputation of the school and the school team, and the public trust in the teaching profession as a whole (Herman, 1993; Page, 2016a). Parents often worry and seek transfers for their child to another school (Menuey, 2007).

Next to students and principals, co-workers can also be affected by teacher underperformance. In this regard, organisational research suggests that the impact on co-workers is related to the team's interdependence and the social intensity of the job (Chiaburu & Harrison, 2008; LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004). Historically, education has a long tradition of privatised practice, in which teachers taught behind closed classroom doors, independent of oversight (Price, 2012). However, in contemporary education, teacher collaboration and the professional community are considered vital for teacher development and school effectiveness (Day & Gu, 2007; Goddard et al., 2007; Tam, 2015; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Due to this increased collaboration, co-workers may be more aware of certain performance problems than their principals (Richardson et al., 2008). They may also be more strongly affected by the underperformance. Concerning this impact, an educational study found that co-workers can be more directly (e.g., by problematic collaboration with the underperforming teacher) or more indirectly affected (e.g., by receiving complaints from students) by a team member's underperformance (Van Den Ouweland, Vanhoof, & Van den Bossche, 2019b). In Flemish education, teamwork is also gaining importance. Collaborative cultures, collective responsibility for student learning and reflective team dialogue were found to be present in schools to a certain extent (Grosemans, Boon, Verclairen, Dochy, & Kyndt, 2015; Vanblaere & Devos, 2018). At the same time, international comparative research indicates that Flemish education scores low on professional community characteristics such as peer feedback and joint teaching. It also shows that most teacher collaboration is not focussed on professional development, and that teachers do not collaborate or exchange teaching materials frequently (Lomos, 2017; OECD, 2014; Van Hoof, Van Petegem, & Vanhoof, 2015).

Of course, co-workers may not only be affected by, but may also respond to a team member's underperformance. In this regard, research suggests that co-workers can influence each other's performance and professional development, and that co-workers' involvement (e.g., peer support,

coaching, observation and mentoring mechanisms) can achieve some success in remediating poor teacher performance (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005). Moreover, accountability could be considered as a task of the educational community because teachers are professionals and their teamwork is vital for educational quality (Tuytens & Devos, 2012). In addition, principals may require co-workers' support to deal with the underperformance, as they lack the time to manage teachers' performance on their own (managing underperformance can be intense and time-consuming), and may not be able to judge, for example, content-related types of (under)performance as well as other subject teachers (Darling-Hammond, 2013). Therefore, co-workers are an important party to consider when studying how teacher underperformance is, and can be, addressed in schools. However, in-depth research on responses by co-workers in education is scarce.

In sum, given the possible impact of teacher underperformance on students, co-workers and schools, it is important that this underperformance is understood and addressed. In Flanders, we know little about the phenomenon or about how it is addressed in schools, except that Flemish principals often find it hard to address. Since co-workers can be important informants about teacher underperformance, we will study teacher underperformance through the eyes of these co-workers. More specifically, the first aim of our study is to gain an insight into teachers' experiences with, and perceptions of the incidence and nature of teacher underperformance in Flanders. Moreover, because of the potential of co-worker responses to impact on the underperformance, the second aim of our study is to identify co-workers' actual responses to the underperformance, as well as how they perceive their role in dealing with it. This was translated into two research questions:

- What are teachers' experiences with, and perceptions of the incidence and nature of teacher underperformance in Flanders?
- What are teachers' views on responding to underperforming co-workers, as well as their actual responses to this underperformance?

2. Literature review

In this section, we will discuss our conceptualisation of teacher underperformance, as well as the existing literature on responses to teacher underperformance in schools.

2.1. Teachers' work performance and underperformance

2.1.1. Teachers' work is multidimensional and dynamic

Being a teacher is a comprehensive job (Kelly et al., 2008; Yariv, 2004). Teachers hold responsibilities to their schools, principals, co-workers, students, the wider community, and to

their profession (Goe et al., 2008; Page, 2016a). Student-related roles include, among others, instructional preparation and delivery, student assessment, and class management (Stronge et al., 2011). Other roles, such as collaborating with co-workers and parents and remaining up-to-date with curriculum changes and innovations go beyond teaching (Cheng & Tsui, 1999). Therefore, scholars have suggested that teacher quality is more than teaching quality (Yariv, 2004). Therefore underperformance may include both teaching and non-teaching underperformance. While teaching is the primary focus in most research, research on teachers' own perceptions of teacher underperformance found that teachers rated 'difficulty working as part of a team' to be the second most important factor, after classroom behaviours (Menuey, 2007). Principals also judge teachers by their team performance, such as working in a team, collegiality and contributing to the school and the school community (Harris, Ingle, & Rutledge, 2014; Yariv, 2009a). In addition, work performance is not static: during one's career, there can be more long-term and more contemporary changes in performance, and potential periods of underperformance (Alessandri et al., 2015; Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Day & Gu, 2007).

2.1.2. 'Underperformance' implies a certain value-laden standard

The term 'underperformance' implies that a teacher performs below a certain standard. Researchers and policy makers have established teacher standards and frameworks based on learning theories and educational research (e.g., Danielson, 1996; Doherty et al., 2002). These standards include performance domains, criteria and indicators that can be used to label someone as underperforming. In education, judgments about teacher performance are mostly made by principals who often use different sources such as classroom observation, study of artefacts (e.g., lesson preparation), student or peer ratings, parent complaints and student test scores (Bridges, 1992; Hinchey, 2010; Stronge, 2006; Yariv, 2009a). In Flanders, the government obliges schools to have job descriptions (since 2005) and performance evaluations for teachers (since 2007), but schools have the autonomy to define the meaning of 'educational quality' and to create evaluation criteria (OECD, 2014; Penninckx et al., 2011; Zapata, 2014). However, as a guideline for teacher education and schools, the government has introduced a general teacher job profile with teacher roles and related competences. This job profile includes ten work domains including the teacher as a facilitator of learning and development processes, content expert, innovator/researcher, member of the school team and member of the educational community (Aelterman et al., 2008). However, in spite of the existence of these frameworks or standards, teacher performance remains an evaluative, value-laden and dynamic concept, and controversy remains regarding the nature and objectives of teaching (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Day & Gu, 2007; Harris & Rutledge, 2010). Different stakeholders, such as principals, parents, and governments, all have their own views on good teaching (Cheng & Tsui, 1999; Moreland, 2009; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Phil et al., 1999). Therefore, principals and teachers are confronted with diverse, sometimes contradictory, and constantly evolving demands and expectations (Ehren et al., 2015; Ingle et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 2010; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019a). According to many, teachers' jobs are becoming increasingly complex and demanding. Expectations from the public are more diverse, and public accountability is sought

more than ever before (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Cheng & Tsui, 1999). 'Performativity' pressures and reforms challenge existing notions of teacher professionalism and autonomy, and existing teaching practices (Day & Gu, 2007; Day et al., 2006).

2.1.3. Types and causes of teacher underperformance

Teacher underperformance includes task underperformance, i.e. performing one's tasks/roles (such as stated in the job description) below the standard, and counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) or misbehaviours, which are "volitional acts by employees that potentially violate the legitimate interests of, or do harm to, an organisation or its stakeholders" (Marcus et al., 2016, p.204). Teachers' CWB include misbehaviours such as verbal aggression towards co-workers, inappropriate behaviour towards students, and an intentional lack of effort (Kearney et al., 1991; Page, 2016a; Richardson et al., 2008). Previous research found that common types of underperformance were problematic classroom management, planning and preparation, low expectations of students, failure to capture students' interests, limited student learning progress, and difficult communication with parents (Bridges, 1992; Yariv, 2009a). Typically, underperforming teachers present a cluster of difficulties, not just a single one (Wragg, Haynes, Phil, et al., 1999). Teacher underperformance can have multiple, individual and job-related causes. These include inadequate management or supervision, team-related factors, demands and organisational resources inherent to teachers' jobs, individual shortcomings and personal resources (Bridges, 1992; Monteiro et al., 2013; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003). Kaye (2004) for example, discerned three types of underperforming teachers, with different underlying causes: 1) teachers who lack the necessary skills such as beginning teachers. These teachers are motivated and so the underperformance is temporary; 2) teachers who are unable to keep up with educational changes and evolutions in their jobs, and have lost their courage and motivation; and 3) teachers who lack sufficient work ethic, underperform for long periods of time, and have little connections to their jobs, students, and co-workers. Often, however, the causes of poor performance are interwoven and unravelling them seems somewhat arbitrary, and neither the teachers nor the principals are aware of what exactly has led to deterioration (Yariv, 2011).

2.1.4. Definitions of teacher underperformance

Different terms are used to indicate that a teacher performs below the standard with each focusing on a specific aspect of teacher underperformance; for example, 'ineffective teacher' (Nixon et al., 2013) focusses on performance outcomes for student learning; 'poorly performing teacher' focusses on teacher behaviours (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2009a); 'incompetent teacher' (Cheng, 2014) focusses on one specific cause of underperformance, i.e. a lack of knowledge or skills; and 'challenging teacher' (Yariv, 2004; Yariv & Coleman, 2005) focusses on the impact of the underperformance on the principal. Other conceptualisations refer to the depth or severity of underperformance, for example, 'marginal teachers' are those who are on the border between competence and incompetence (Menuey, 2007). Together with this diverse terminology, broad definitions of teacher underperformance are used in educational studies. Often, they include a list of work domains which need to be considered when studying teacher underperformance, but

without a clear performance standard. Bridges (1992), for example, defines teacher incompetence as "a persistent failure in one or more of the following domains: failure to maintain discipline, failure to treat students properly, failure to impart subject matter effectively, failure to accept teaching advice from superiors; failure to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter being taught; and failure to produce the intended or desired results in the classroom" (p.15). Yariv and Kass (2017) talk about 'struggling teachers' who are "veteran staff members who have worked for more than five years and still face substantial and ongoing difficulties at work; teachers whose performance, according to the principal, is below the expected norm" (p.2).

For this study, with a focus on co-workers, we adopt the term 'underperformance' because it indicates that one performs below the standard, without a priori adjudicating on the severity, impact, cause or type of underperformance. More specifically, the following definition was chosen: an underperforming teacher is one who: performs below the standard; in one or more teaching and/or non-teaching work domains; at one or more moments. This underperformance may concern task underperformance and/or CWB. With this definition, we acknowledge that teacher underperformance is a subjective, multidimensional and dynamic concept that includes short and long-term episodes of underperformance. In this study, we focus on underperformance as it is perceived by co-workers, i.e. cases of underperformance which are relevant for them. This means that other parties involved could have different opinions about the underperformance.

2.2. <u>How co-workers are affected by and respond to teacher underperformance</u>

In this section, we provide an overview of the literature on co-workers of underperforming teachers. Since the available educational research on co-worker responses is limited, we also include studies from other work sectors.

2.2.1. The possible impact of underperformance on co-workers

Underperforming teachers cause frustration, concern and despair among co-workers, who's morale and energy can be eroded by the underperformance, the co-worker's negativity, the difficult collaboration with the underperformer, and receiving parent and student complains (Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007; Page, 2016a). Similar results were found in a recent small-scale study with co-workers of underperforming secondary teachers in Flanders. In this study, all co-workers expressed clear negative emotions, such as frustration, anger, and disappointment towards the underperforming teacher (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Moreover, research indicates that co-workers' morale and perceptions of fairness are affected when they perceive that their principal ignores or tolerates the underperformance, or does not recognise the impact of the underperformance on co-workers (Cheng, 2014; Kaye, 2004). Menuey (2007), for example, found that teachers felt tension towards principals who did not take their complaints about incompetent teachers seriously and they increased co-workers' workloads to compensate for the underperformance. A study in Flanders also found that most teachers perceived principals' responses to teacher underperformance to be limited (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). They

considered this to be unfair and lacking appreciation for hard-working teachers. The existing research on principal's responses suggests that co-workers' concerns may be justified. Some studies have found that teacher underperformance often causes great concern among principals who find it hard to address (Causey, 2010; Page, 2016a). Therefore, research suggests that school leaders are reluctant to discuss performance issues, and wait a long time to respond (Menuey, 2007; Sinnema et al., 2013; Yariv, 2009a). When they do address the underperformance, they often provide support and advice (Yariv & Coleman, 2005). Approaches increase in intensity, formality and confrontation when the performance does not approve, but dismissal is rare (Mendez, 2009; Menuey, 2007; Wragg, Haynes, Phil, et al., 1999). Similar principal responses were found in Flemish studies with primary and secondary principals (Plas & Vanhoof, 2016; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). While some teachers acknowledged their principals' difficult task of dealing with underperforming teachers, they did not recognise all the barriers faced by principals (Menuey, 2007). Kaye (2004) found that, in general, teachers preferred supportive measures and believed in mentorship or peer coaching. However, in some cases, they perceived that compensatory or disciplinary strategies were necessary.

2.2.2. Co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance

While research on teachers' responses in education is scarce, research in other work sectors has studied different types of co-worker responses. This research is grouped together into three research strands: attribution theory studies, research on peer reports of CWB and deviance, and voice and silence research. Attribution studies make a distinction between helping and punishing, and prosocial (e.g., advising) and antisocial reactions (e.g., silent treatment) (Struthers et al., 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004; Taggar & Neubert, 2008). The following categorisation of responses is often used: compensating for the underperformance (e.g., taking on some of the underperformer's tasks), training the underperformer (e.g., advising the underperformer), motivating/confronting the underperformer (e.g., pointing out the consequences of the poor performance), and rejecting the underperformer (e.g., avoiding further interactions) (Ferguson et al., 2010; Jackson & LePine, 2003; LePine & van Dyne, 2001). While attribution theory studies focus on those responses that are directed towards the underperformer, studies on peer reporting of CWB and voice and silence studies include responses directed towards third parties, i.e. speaking up or remaining silent to one's supervisor and/or other co-workers (Morrison, 2014; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). While peer reporting focuses on the reporting of underperformance, voice and silence research has a broader focus. It studies why and when workers speak up or remain silent with their supervisors and/or co-workers about workplace issues and perceived injustices more in general, including performance problems. This research has found that co-workers' underperformance is one of the issues that is hardest for workers to voice (Brinsfield, 2009; Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Milliken et al., 2003). To obtain a broad view on co-worker responses in Flanders, we combine the responses found in the existing literature and study six co-worker responses: confronting the underperformer, reporting the underperformance to the principal, reporting the underperformance other co-workers, distancing oneself from the

underperformer, providing the underperformer with support or advice, and compensating for the underperformance.

Research suggests that co-workers' responses are influenced by their views on responding. First, co-workers consider the possible consequences of responding. In this regard, voice and silence studies have argued that co-workers make a cost-benefit analysis before choosing a response (Bisel & Arterburn, 2012; Morrison, 2011). They may fear the negative consequences of raising the issue (e.g., retaliation), keep silent out of prosocial considerations (e.g., not wanting to harm the underperformer), or find it futile to respond (e.g., they believe that speaking up will not make a difference) (Knoll & van Dick, 2013a; Van Dyne et al., 2003). Attribution theory suggests that co-workers' perceptions of the causes of the underperformance will influence their emotions towards the underperformer and views on the possibility of change and possible consequences of responding (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Struthers et al., 2001; Weiner, 2010). In peer report and voice and silence studies, these considerations have been linked to expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964). As such, co-workers consider which outcome is expected of a response: for example, will the supervisor be receptive to the peer report and aim to ameliorate the situation, or will speaking up reduce one's career chances (Morrison, 2014; Morrison et al., 2011). Second, co-workers may feel responsible to voice certain problems out of a feeling of obligation towards the organisation. This can be explained by social exchange theory (Blau, 1964); that is, by voicing problems, co-workers 'give back to' their organisation (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Morrison, 2001). Social exchange theory may also help to explain why some co-workers either help underperforming teachers or distance themselves from teachers who act counterproductively towards the co-worker and/or the organisation (Neff, 2009; Taggar & Neubert, 2004). Voicing and helping behaviours have also been regarded as a form of organisational citizenship behaviour, and an expression of an employee's commitment or personality (Jackson & LePine, 2003; Lee, Diefendorff, Kim, & Bian, 2014; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005). Moreover, Van Dyne, Kamdar, and Joireman (2008) found that supervisors rated employees who perceived voice to be part of their jobs as engaging in more voice behaviour than employees who perceived it to be an extra-role. On the contrary, co-workers may remain silent out of conformity because speaking up can be seen as disruptive (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Milliken et al., 2003). Co-workers may also feel more or less authorised or comfortable responding to it. In this regard, a recent small-scale study in Flanders found that some teachers doubted their authority to respond; that is, they felt that it would be inappropriate for them, as co-workers, to judge or respond to a fellow teacher's underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b).

In line with this research evidence, we will study co-workers' views on the use of responding to a team member's underperformance, as well as how they perceive their responsibility and authority to respond.

3. Methodology

Here, we will discuss our research sample, instrument and analysis.

3.1. Sample

Our study was executed in Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. To reach a large sample of Flemish teachers, we used a survey methodology. The study was performed in primary and secondary schools, which target children between 3 and 18 years old. From all secondary and primary schools in Flanders (with at least 10 teachers in the team), a random sample of schools was selected to participate in our study. Of the 306 primary and secondary schools contacted, 38 schools were willing to participate. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, and participants were informed about the purpose and method of the study, as well as participants' rights. The Ethics Committee of the University of Antwerp also approved the study. In all these schools combined, 833 teachers returned the survey. Since some questionnaires had too many missing data, 708 questionnaires were analysed, from 16 primary schools, and 22 secondary schools. In the primary schools, 7 to 29 teachers participated. In the secondary schools, 12 to 67 teachers participated. Further, 29% of respondents were male and 71% were female. Thirty-two per cent worked in primary education and 68% in secondary education. Their mean age was 42, with 17 years of experience as a teacher, and 14 years of experience in their current schools. Twenty-two per cent was non-tenured (with a fixed-term contract or permanent contract) and 78% was tenured.

3.2. Method and instrument

An overview of survey items and measures is presented in the Appendix. Participants were requested to: "*think of a recent example of an underperforming co-worker, i.e. a co-worker who performed below the expectations, in one or more domains, according to your perception. The underperformance may concern task performance (working with students, team work and/or school tasks), or the behaviour of the co-worker*". This is an example of the Critical Incident Technique (CIT) developed by Flanagan (1954), which aims to yield in-depth, contextualised accounts of real-life experiences that are selected by the respondents themselves and are important to them (Gremler, 2004; Hughes et al., 2007).We chose this technique of focusing on real examples of teacher underperformance because most existing studies (in other work sectors, as well as the few studies in education) used vignettes or hypothetical cases to study co-worker responses (Ferguson et al., 2010; Liden et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 2008). Therefore, they studied co-workers' intentions or attitudes rather than their actual responses (Struthers et al., 2001). For our research topic, these might differ considerably; for example, while co-workers may perceive that they will always try to respond to a team member's underperformance, actually

responding will be more challenging when they are confronted with the complex social and emotional conditions that characterise teacher underperformance (Painter, 2000).

Sixty-nine per cent of our respondents indicated that they knew a recent example of an underperforming teacher. In order to obtain a clear picture of the nature of the incidents that co-workers are confronted with in Flemish education, we asked respondents to indicate the type(s), cause(s), severity and impact of the underperformance. We also asked how they detected the underperformance; for example, did they observe the underperformance themselves, or were they informed by others? The categorisation of types of underperformance was based on the Flemish teacher job profile and findings from a previous study (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). The categorisation of causes, detection and impact were also based on this previous study. To obtain more insight into the working relationships Flemish teachers have with underperforming co-workers, our respondents were also requested to indicate the nature (e.g., working in the same department, teaching common students), and intensity and quality of their working relationship with the underperforming teacher. In addition, to get a broader picture of others' responses in the school, we also asked how their principals and other team members responded to the underperformance. These items were based on previous studies on principal and co-worker responses (Bridges, 1992; Kaye, 2004; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016; Yariv & Coleman, 2005). As these situational characteristics were quite straightforward items, it was decided to study them with one item-questions.

To study both co-workers' views on and actual responses to the cases, the survey included items on how respondents perceived the necessity to respond, their responsibility and authority to respond, and the use of responding. As existing measures were not available, and these were more complex constructs, we developed a scale based on our literature review and a previous study (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Respondents' actual responses to the underperformance were measured with items based on a validated peer response measure by Jackson and LePine (2003), which was adapted for our research aims. CFA showed good fit indices for these scales (see Appendix). To understand our respondents' general views on responding, independent of the specific cases, the survey also included items on how they generally felt about responding to underperforming team members, as well as on their past experiences with responding. Since their principals might also have specific views on this, we also asked our respondents how they perceived their principals' vision on co-workers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers. These items were also based on findings from a previous study on the co-workers of underperforming teachers (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b).

Finally, respondents received a list of specific types of underperformance (the same list as was used for the cases). For each type, they were requested to indicate the percentage of teachers in their schools they perceived to be underperforming.

3.3. <u>Analysis</u>

Because of the descriptive nature of our research aims, descriptive statistics were calculated. However, because of the nested nature of our data (teachers nested in schools), and the fact that the numbers of teachers differed between schools, we also checked our findings for school effects. Therefore, we calculated both the general mean of the responses of all 708 teachers (see 'teacher mean' in Tables 1-5), as well as the mean of all 38 schools (by first calculating means per school and then calculating a general mean for all schools) (see 'school mean' in Tables 1-5). Only small differences between these means were found, with a maximum difference of 0.19 (on a scale of 1 to 5). We also calculated Intra Class Correlations (ICC) for each variable as well as the variances between and within schools. The largest ICC was 0.20. Variances between schools were small, and variances within schools were significantly larger. Together, these analyses suggest that school effects were small. Therefore, the report of our findings is based on analyses at the teacher level, and not at the school level.

4. Results

4.1. <u>Incidence of teacher underperformance in schools</u>

Respondents were asked to indicate how many teachers in their schools they perceived to be underperforming at the time of the study. The results are presented in Table 1. As shown, of the 708 respondents, a number of respondents left his question open. The results were skewed to the left. Therefore, the median and the distribution of answers is also presented in the table. Task underperformance domains (including both teaching- and non-teaching domains) received median scores between 15 and 20%: respondents perceived 15 to 20% of their team members to underperform in areas including classroom management and instruction, collaboration with colleagues and parents, and administrative work. In addition, our respondents considered 6 to 10% of their co-workers to exhibit CWB such as intentional lack of effort and inappropriate or negative behaviours towards students or colleagues.

Table 1

Incidence of teacher underperformance in Flemish schools, according to respondents

Description	N	Teacher mean	Teacher median	School mean	0	1-5%	6-10%	11-20%	21-30%	31-40%	41-50%	>50%
Handling diversity in the classroom/differentiation	372	31.9	20	30.5	7.5%	12.9%	14.2%	16.4%	11.0%	6.7%	4.8%	26.3%
Contributing to working groups, projects or other school tasks	420	31.3	20	31.4	6.4%	12.4%	13.6%	18.8%	11.4%	6.4%	7.6%	23.3%
Fulfilling administrative tasks	399	31.0	20	28.7	6.0%	11.8%	17.3%	18.0%	12.0%	4.3%	6.0%	24.6%
Following up on agreements and task allocations	420	29.9	20	27.8	4.8%	14.0%	16.7%	19.0%	11.9%	5.9%	4.3%	23.3%
Consulting and collaborating with colleagues	410	30.0	19	29.3	6.3%	15.6%	15.9%	20.0%	9.3%	6.8%	1.7%	24.4%
Quality of instruction/didactics	371	29.1	18	26.6	6.2%	15.4%	16.2%	22.1%	8.6%	4.0%	3.2%	24.3%
Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development	384	29.6	17	28.8	5.5%	13.8%	20.1%	19.8%	6.8%	6.5%	3.9%	23.7%
Quality of teaching content	353	29.1	17	27.4	6.2%	16.7%	16.1%	20.1%	9.1%	6.5%	1.7%	23.5%
Classroom management, creating a favorable learning climate	393	28.1	17	26.3	6.1%	14.2%	18.8%	20.9%	9.9%	2.8%	5.9%	21.3%
Cooperation with parents or others	345	28.5	15	26.9	8.1%	15.4%	18.0%	16.8%	10.1%	3.8%	3.5%	24.3%
Intentional lack of effort	357	18.5	10	17.0	9.5%	20.7%	21.3%	20.2%	10.0%	5.9%	3.6%	8.7%
Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements	342	16.1	10	15.1	13.7%	24.6%	20.5%	17.3%	8.5%	4.1%	3.5%	7.9%
Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers	348	14.5	8	13.6	14.4%	28.2%	22.4%	16.7%	5.2%	4.0%	1.1%	8.0%
Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards students	324	13.2	7	12.4	18.2%	28.1%	18.0%	16.7%	7.4%	4.6%	1.5%	5.6%
Illegitimate absences	286	14.5	6	12.9	20.3%	28.3%	17.1%	11.9%	10.9%	14.0%	1.0%	9.1%

Note: N=number of respondents, columns with % represent the distribution of answers.

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4.2. Reported examples of co-worker underperformance

Respondents were requested to think of a recent example of a co-worker who they perceived to be underperforming. Sixty-nine per cent of our respondents indicated an example. The mean age of these underperforming teachers was 44. Most respondents worked in the same project or work groups as the underperforming teacher (M=3.46) or taught common students (M=3.38). The quality of the collaboration with the underperformer was considered to be rather negative to neutral (M=2.74), and the collaboration was not that intense (M=2.47).

The most reported types of underperformance concerned the cooperation with or consultation of co-workers (M=4.09); contributing to work groups, projects or other school tasks (M=4.08); intentional lack of effort (M=4.00); and following up on agreements and task allocations (M=3.92). Student-related types of underperformance also received high scores, especially evaluating and monitoring students' learning progress (M=3.81) and the quality of instruction or didactics (M=3.81). The least reported types of underperformance were inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers (M=2.74) and students (M=2.63), and illegitimate absences (M=2.38). The other types of underperformance had means scores between 3.04 and 3.76 (see Table 2).

Our respondents perceived that in these cases, the underperformance was quite severe, with a mean score of 3.94. Seventy-seven per cent of the cases were still going on at the time of completing the survey. Of the other cases, 83% were long-lasting (one school year or longer), 15% lasted less than one school year, and 3% concerned one-time incidents. In 92% of the cases, respondents witnessed the underperformance themselves. Respondents were also informed by co-workers (55%), students (42%), parents (22%), the principal (12%), and/or by the underperforming teacher him/herself (11%).

Our respondents perceived the underperformance to be caused mostly by internal causes: bad character/personality (M=4.27), demotivation (M=3.72) and having a faulty vision of education or the teacher's job (M=3.48). These were followed by a lack of resilience (M=3.21) and lacking (up-to-date) knowledge and skills (M=3.14). The least reported causes concerned task allocation (M=2.08) and students (M=1.73). The underperformance mostly caused concerns and frustrations with respondents (M=3.96), harmed the team (teamwork or atmosphere) (M=3.90) and burdened the respondent's workload (M=3.69). Respondents rather did not perceive that their own performance was compromised by their co-worker's underperformance (M=2.18) (see Table 3).

Table 2
Underperformance and underperformer characteristics in the reported cases (1)

Variable	Item	Min	Max	Teacher mean	School mean	Variance between schools	Variance within schools	Total variance	ICC
KNOW INCIDENT	Knowing a recent example of an underperforming co-worker	0	1	0.69	0.66	0.02	0.20	0.21	0.08
AGE UNDERPERFORMER	Age of the underperformer	22	62	44.31	44.60	10.44	81.32	91.77	0.11
RELATIONSHIP	Intense collaboration/working relationship	1	5	2.47	2.53	0.00	1.67	1.67	0.00
RELATIONSHIP QUALITY	Good collaboration/working relationship	1	5	2.74	2.73	0.04	1.39	1.43	0.03
RELATIONSHIP TYPE	Working in the same department	1	5	3.30	3.25	0.10	2.93	3.02	0.03
RELATIONSHIP TYPE	Working on the same school project or in the same working group	1	5	3.46	3.35	0.01	2.31	2.33	0.01
RELATIONSHIP TYPE	Meeting each other outside school/ private relationship	1	5	1.66	1.71	0.06	1.32	1.37	0.04
RELATIONSHIP TYPE	Teaching common students	1	5	3.38	3.28	0.26	2.38	2.64	0.10
TYPE	Quality of teaching content	1	5	3.73	3.68	0.19	1.30	1.48	0.13
TYPE	Quality of instruction/didactics	1	5	3.81	3.76	0.19	1.25	1.45	0.13
TYPE	Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development	1	5	3.81	3.80	0.03	1.34	1.38	0.02
TYPE	Raising students	1	5	3.66	3.60	0.25	1.21	1.46	0.17
TYPE	Handling diversity in the classroom/differentiation	1	5	3.59	3.59	0.07	1.37	1.44	0.05
TYPE	Classroom management, creating a favourable learning climate	1	5	3.74	3.72	0.18	1.28	1.46	0.12
TYPE	Consulting and collaborating with colleagues	1	5	4.09	4.00	0.01	1.04	1.04	0.01
TYPE	Following up on agreements and task allocations	1	5	3.92	3.78	0.12	1.33	1.45	0.08
TYPE	Contributing to working groups, projects or other school tasks	1	5	4.08	4.02	0.05	1.23	1.28	0.04
TYPE	Fulfilling administrative tasks	1	5	3.76	3.64	0.03	1.53	1.55	0.02
TYPE	Cooperation with parents or others	1	5	3.38	3.38	0.01	1.40	1.41	0.01
TYPE	Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards students	1	5	2.63	2.69	0.36	1.55	1.92	0.19
TYPE	Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers	1	5	2.74	2.74	0.25	1.91	2.16	0.12
TYPE	Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements	1	5	3.04	2.99	0.30	1.59	1.89	0.16
TYPE	Intentional lack of effort	1	5	4.00	3.90	0.09	1.18	1.28	0.07
TYPE	Illegitimate absences	1	5	2.38	2.30	0.18	1.90	2.08	0.09

Table 3
Underperformance characteristics in the reported cases (2)

Variable	Item	Min	Max	Teacher mean	School mean	Variance between schools	Variance within schools	Total variance	ICC
SEVERITY	Severity of the underperformance	1	5	3.94	3.93	0.07	0.51	0.58	0.12
DURATION	One-time incident	0	1	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.01	0.01	0.00
DURATION	Less than one school year	0	1	0.04	0.05	0.00	0.04	0.04	0.03
DURATION	More than one school year	0	1	0.24	0.22	0.00	0.19	0.19	0.00
DURATION	Ongoing	0	1	0.77	0.77	0.00	0.18	0.18	0.00
DETECTION	Self-observed	0	1	0.92	0.91	0.00	0.08	0.08	0.01
DETECTION	Informed by underperformer	0	1	0.11	0.13	0.00	0.10	0.10	0.00
DETECTION	Informed by other co-worker(s)	0	1	0.55	0.54	0.00	0.25	0.25	0.00
DETECTION	Informed by principal	0	1	0.12	0.15	0.01	0.09	0.10	0.07
DETECTION	Informed by student(s)	0	1	0.42	0.39	0.04	0.21	0.25	0.17
DETECTION	Informed by parent(s)	0	1	0.22	0.24	0.00	0.17	0.17	0.01
CAUSE	Lack of (up-to-date) knowledge or skills	1	5	3.14	3.17	0.10	1.83	1.93	0.05
CAUSE	Demotivation	1	5	3.72	3.64	0.13	1.28	1.41	0.09
CAUSE	Faulty vision on education or the teacher's job	1	5	3.48	3.45	0.18	1.20	1.38	0.13
CAUSE	Limited psychological strength/resilience	1	5	3.21	3.22	0.03	1.67	1.69	0.01
CAUSE	Bad character or personality	1	5	4.27	4.24	0.03	0.65	0.68	0.04
CAUSE	Private circumstances	1	5	2.78	2.78	0.16	1.74	1.90	0.08
CAUSE	Students	1	5	1.73	1.75	0.04	0.85	0.89	0.04
CAUSE	Task allocation	1	5	2.08	2.14	0.06	1.34	1.40	0.04
CAUSE	Principal or school policy	1	5	2.63	2.54	0.04	1.69	1.72	0.02
IMPACT	Causing frustrations/concerns	1	5	3.96	3.93	0.03	1.22	1.24	0.02
IMPACT	Burdening one's workload	1	5	3.69	3.67	0.06	1.65	1.71	0.03
IMPACT	Negative impact on one's performance	1	5	2.18	2.12	0.02	1.51	1.53	0.01
IMPACT	Harming the team (team work or atmosphere)	1	5	3.90	3.80	0.12	1.12	1.23	0.09

In sum, our respondents selected diverse examples of team and/or student-related underperformance. Most cases were perceived as severe and long-lasting, and were observed or experienced by our respondents themselves. Respondents perceived that the underperformance was often caused by internal causes. The underperformance mostly caused concerns and frustrations with respondents and impacted on the team.

4.3. Co-workers' and principals' responses to the underperformance

When our respondents learned about the underperformance, they considered it necessary for someone to respond (M=4.37) to the reported cases. However, they were only slightly positive about it being their own task/responsibility to respond (M=3.26), and slightly negative about having the authority to respond (M=2.82). Respondents on average were also rather negative about the perceived use of responding (M=2.50). Concerning their actual responses to the underperformance, our respondents mostly discussed the underperformance with other co-workers (M=3.62) or compensated for the underperformance (M=3.39). Reporting/speaking up to one's principal (M= 3.18) and distancing oneself from the underperformer (M=3.01) received neutral mean scores. Our respondents responded the least by providing support/advice (M= 2.57) or confronting the underperformer (M=2.57).

We also asked our respondents how their principals and other team members responded to the underperformance. Respondents perceived that their principals were mostly aware of the underperformance (M=2.00), but tolerated or ignored it (M=3.32). There were no principal responses that received mean scores above 3.06 (which was the mean score for confronting the underperformer), indicating that overall, principal responses were rather limited, according to our respondents. The lowest scores were given to report to third parties (M=1.87) and dismissal (M=1.17). Respondents perceived that other team members were also mostly aware of the underperformance (M=1.78). These team members mostly reported the underperformance to the principal (M=3.50), distanced themselves from the underperformer (M=3.49), ignored/tolerated the underperformance (M=3.48) or compensated for the underperformance (M=3.42). Similar to their own responses, respondents perceived that their team members responded the least by confronting (M=2.99) and supporting the underperforming teacher (M=2.71) (see Table 4).

In sum, our respondents were not convinced they had the responsibility and authority to respond to their co-workers' underperformance, and that responding would be useful. Confronting the underperforming teacher, and providing this teacher with support or advice, were the least common co-worker responses. The same was true for other team members. In addition, our respondents perceived their principals' responses to be rather limited.

Table 4

Co-workers' views on responding and co-workers', principals' and other team members' responses to the reported cases

Variable	Item	Min	Max	Teacher mean	School mean	Variance between schools	Variance within schools	Total variance	ICC
VIEW	Necessity for someone to respond	1	5	4.37	4.32	0.01	0.41	0.43	0.03
VIEW	My task/responsibility to respond	1	5	3.26	3.19	0.02	1.11	1.13	0.02
VIEW	My mandate/authority to respond	1	5	2.82	2.85	0.02	1.21	1.23	0.02
VIEW	Perceived use of responding	1	5	2.50	2.61	0.04	0.92	0.96	0.04
RESPONSE	Confront/speak up to the underperformer	1	5	2.57	2.62	0.09	1.44	1.52	0.06
RESPONSE	Report to/discuss with principal	1	5	3.18	3.20	0.19	1.98	2.17	0.09
RESPONSE	Distance oneself from the underperformer	1	5	3.01	2.91	0.00	1.37	1.37	0.00
RESPONSE	Compensate for the underperformance	1	5	3.39	3.36	0.00	1.38	1.38	0.00
RESPONSE	Support/advise the underperformer	1	5	2.57	2.67	0.08	1.00	1.08	0.08
RESPONSE	Report to/discuss with other colleagues	1	5	3.62	3.51	0.07	0.94	1.00	0.06
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Unaware	1	5	2.00	1.96	0.11	1.68	1.79	0.06
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Ignore/tolerate	1	5	3.32	3.21	0.09	1.65	1.74	0.05
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Confront	1	5	3.06	3.20	0.31	1.91	2.22	0.14
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Formal warning, sanction or negative evaluation	1	5	2.05	2.16	0.15	1.58	1.72	0.08
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Coaching or support	1	5	2.37	2.50	0.23	1.50	1.72	0.13
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Dismissal	1	5	1.17	1.17	0.05	0.44	0.49	0.09
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Compensating measures (e.g., limiting responsibilities)	1	5	2.36	2.44	0.07	1.94	2.01	0.04
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Report to third parties (e.g., governing body)	1	5	1.87	2.05	0.30	1.31	1.61	0.19
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Asking teachers for help	1	5	2.34	2.53	0.22	1.61	1.83	0.12
PRINCIPALS' RESPONSES	Close monitoring	1	5	2.53	2.70	0.33	1.48	1.81	0.18
TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSES	Unaware	1	5	1.78	1.80	0.10	0.91	1.00	0.10
TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSES	Ignore/tolerate	1	5	3.48	3.41	0.07	1.31	1.38	0.05
TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSES	Confront	1	5	2.99	2.99	0.07	1.54	1.62	0.05
TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSES	Distance	1	5	3.49	3.44	0.09	1.41	1.50	0.06
TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSES	Advise or support	1	5	2.71	2.87	0.02	1.53	1.54	0.01
TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSES	Compensate	1	5	3.42	3.38	0.01	1.54	1.55	0.00
TEAM MEMBERS' RESPONSES	Report to principal	1	5	3.50	3.49	0.18	1.62	1.79	0.10

Table 5

Co-workers' and principals' general views on, and co-workers' experiences with, responding to underperforming teachers

Variable	Item	Min	Max	Teacher mean	School mean	Variance between schools	Variance within schools	Total variance	ICC
GENERAL VIEWS	My responsibility to take action when a co-worker underperforms	1	5	3.04	3.08	0.04	1.09	1.14	0.04
GENERAL VIEWS	Appropriate to respond in my position	1	5	2.78	2.77	0.06	1.33	1.39	0.04
GENERAL VIEWS	Okay for co-workers to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	3.77	3.76	0.03	0.93	0.96	0.03
GENERAL VIEWS	Feel comfortable to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	1.96	2.03	0.02	1.01	1.03	0.02
GENERAL VIEWS	In my nature/personality to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	2.67	2.66	0.07	1.42	1.49	0.05
EXPERIENCES	Previous positive experiences with responding to underperforming co-workers	1	5	2.91	2.83	0.00	1.65	1.65	0.00
EXPERIENCES	Know from experience how (not) to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	3.06	3.08	0.02	1.35	1.37	0.01
PRINCIPALS' VIEWS	It is a teacher's job to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	3.29	3.32	0.14	1.00	1.14	0.12
PRINCIPALS' VIEWS	Teachers should report underperformance to principal	1	5	3.19	3.23	0.10	1.28	1.38	0.07
PRINCIPALS' VIEWS	Principal has a clear view on co-workers' role	1	5	2.78	2.84	0.30	1.18	1.48	0.20

4.4. General views on and experiences with responding to underperforming co-workers

Regardless of the reported examples of teacher underperformance, we also asked about our respondents' general views on, and experiences with, responding to underperforming co-workers. On average, our respondents answered neutrally about it being their responsibility to respond (M=3.04) when a co-worker underperforms. While our respondents answered slightly positively when asked whether it is okay for co-workers to respond to a teacher's underperformance (M=3.77), they answered slightly negatively about it being appropriate for themselves to respond (M=2.78). They also reported that reacting to underperforming co-workers made them feel rather uncomfortable (M =1.96), and respondents felt that it was rather not in their nature to respond (M=2.67). In addition, they responded neutrally to questions about knowing from experience how to respond (M = 3.06) and having had positive experiences with responding in the past (M=2.91).

Concerning their principals' views on co-workers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers, and more specifically whether their principals expected co-workers to respond to or report teacher underperformance, mean responses were slightly positive (M= 3.29 and 3.19, respectively). When questioned whether their principals had a clear view on the co-worker's role, their mean answer was slightly negative (M=2.78) (see Table 5).

In sum, our respondents answered neutrally when asked whether they have a responsibility to respond, and felt rather uncomfortable with responding themselves. Principals do not have an outspoken view on teachers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers according to our respondents.

5. Discussion

Research indicates that 2 to 15% of teachers perform below the standard (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). These underperforming teachers can have a profound impact on students and schools. Therefore, it is important that the phenomenon of teacher underperformance is understood and addressed. However, in Flanders, we know little about teacher underperformance and how it is addressed in schools. Since co-workers can be important informants about teacher underperformance, we studied teacher underperformance through the eyes of these co-workers. More specifically, the first aim of our study was to study teachers' experiences with, and perceptions of the incidence and nature of teacher underperformance in Flanders. Moreover, because of the potential of co-worker responses to impact on the underperformance, the second aim of our study was to study teachers' actual responses to the underperformance as well as how they perceive their roles in dealing with teacher underperformance.

Our results suggest that, according to teachers, a significant number of teachers in their schools underperform. Compared to numbers from previous research (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004), we found rather high numbers, with median scores between 5 and 20%, depending on the type of underperformance. More specifically, we found that Flemish teachers consider 17 to 20% of their co-workers to underperform in terms of student-related task underperformance (e.g., classroom management, teaching content and instruction, student evaluation, handling student diversity), and team-related task underperformance (e.g., collaboration, contributing to school tasks, following up on agreements). Misbehaviours towards students and co-workers (e.g., inappropriate behaviour towards students and co-workers, intentional lack of effort and intentionally breaking rules) rated up to 10%. These high numbers may suggest that teachers hold high standards towards co-workers' performance. Of course, we asked about underperformance in specific domains. If we had asked about overall underperformers, the reported numbers might have been different. It may also be that teachers are more aware of their co-workers' underperformance than principals, who are mostly questioned in research on teacher underperformance. However, as it is hardly possible for teachers to know how all their co-workers perform (which probably explains why a number of respondents left this question blank), we are not of the basis on which respondents chose a response. For example, they may have wanted to make a certain statement when filling in this question. The relative proportion of each specific type of underperformance (when compared to the other types of underperformance) in the reported cases was more or less in line with the general percentages of teacher underperformance. However, intentional lack of effort, and handling student diversity, were respectively more and less prominent in the cases than in the percentages. Possibly, intentional lack of effort was more prominent because cases were chosen that had the most impact and/or caused the most frustration. It is possible that handling student diversity is considered to be less frustrating. It is also possible that this type of underperformance is less visible for co-workers and was therefore less present in the cases.

Our findings suggest that co-workers often observe or experience teacher underperformance themselves and are impacted by the underperformance in several ways: they often experience concerns, frustrations, and an increased workload due to the underperformance. Moreover, the teamwork and team atmosphere can also be affected by the underperformance. Similar findings about the negative impact on co-workers were found in previous research (Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007; Page, 2016a). Our results indicate that even when co-workers in Flemish schools perceive that someone has to respond to an underperforming teacher, they are not convinced that it is their task to respond or that it is appropriate for them to respond, nor are they convinced that they are able to impact on the underperformance. Also, in general, teachers appear to feel rather uncomfortable responding to underperformance, and are not convinced that it is appropriate for them to do so. While this could be linked to our respondents' personalities (Lee et al., 2014), these findings may also be indicative for our educational system. Flemish education has a long tradition of individual teaching and autonomy, which may explain why it is not obvious for teachers to judge or speak up to co-workers. Earlier research has also suggested that existing

norms of privacy and autonomy in education, along with accountability, might explain why teachers often collaborate on a relatively superficial level and are reluctant to discuss their performance, to question team members' work or to provide performance feedback to other teachers (Hargreaves, 2001; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Little, 1990; Manouchehri, 2001; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Moreover, our findings indicate that Flemish teachers are unsure about how their principals perceive the role of co-workers when confronted with an underperforming teacher. This may make teachers extra doubtful about how to respond when a team member underperforms. In a previous study in Flanders, it was also found that teachers were only aware of their principals' vision after having experienced concrete problems with a co-worker (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Together, these findings can explain why speaking up to and supporting the underperformer were the least common responses of co-workers in our study. Confrontation and support also received the lowest scores in the report of other team members' responses to the underperformance. Compared to the other studied responses, however, these are the two most active, direct responses that have immediate potential to impact on the underperformance. This suggests that the potential of co-worker involvement in remediating underperformance (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg, et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005) is not fully used in Flemish education.

Our findings further indicate that Flemish teachers believe their principals usually ignore or tolerate underperformance rather than confronting or supporting the underperforming teacher. While international research also found that principals' responses were rather limited (Menuey, 2007; Sinnema et al., 2013; Yariv, 2009a), our findings are surprising because Flemish primary and secondary principals stated in previous studies that they most often supported, advised and coached underperforming teachers. In these studies, principals also indicated that if these measures did not work, their responses increased in intensity and formality (Plas & Vanhoof, 2016; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). However, according to our respondents, most cases were long-lasting and their principals did not take formal measures or give formal sanctions to the underperformer. Close monitoring was also limited, according to our respondents. Of course, our respondents might not have been aware of their principals' responses. As Page (2016a) found in his study on teacher misbehaviours, because of confidentiality reasons, teachers do not always know how principals address the situation. It could also be that principals were not entirely honest about their responses. Methodological differences could also play a part: in the previous studies, principals were asked about their responses in general (independent of a specific case), which could have made them report their good intentions instead of their actual behaviours (Painter, 2000; Struthers et al., 2001).

Regardless of the exact reality of principal responses, our findings, however, indicate that principal responses are limited in the eyes of Flemish teachers. This is worrying as previous research found that teachers considered a lack of response by principals to be unfair towards hard-working teachers and made them feel unappreciated (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). In addition, co-workers' morale and perceptions of fairness may also be affected when they perceive

that their principal ignores or tolerates the underperformance (Cheng, 2014; Kaye, 2004; Menuey, 2007). Although our findings suggest that most teachers do not perceive that teacher underperformance has an immediate impact on their own performance, research warrants that injustice perceptions can affect one's work performance over time and provoke future silence about workplace issues and concerns (Hung et al., 2009; Krings & Bollmann, 2011; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013; Yang, 2008). Cheng (2014) found that when teachers were satisfied with how teaching incompetence was dealt with, and perceived the allocation of workload amongst teachers to be fair, this had a positive effect on their morale and teaching quality. Possibly, our respondents perceived a limited use of responding because they believed principals' responses were limited. Of course, our respondents' perceptions of the underperformance could also play a role in this: most examples were long-lasting and severe, and caused by bad character or low motivation. These are types of underperformance that may seem rather unchangeable (Jackson & LePine, 2003; Weiner, 2010). However, the causality between the development of the underperformance and co-workers' and principals' responses is unclear: limited responses could also lead to long-lasting underperformance.

Our findings have important implications for educational research and practice. First, they suggest that co-workers are an important party to include in research on teacher underperformance because they often observe or experience underperformance first hand. For principals, our research indicates that they should pay attention to the impact that teacher underperformance can have on team members. Moreover, since our findings suggest that teacher responses are limited (especially responses directed towards the underperformer), we could say that the potential of teacher involvement in remediating underperformance is not used in Flemish schools. When teachers remain silent, they may possibly sustain or even worsen the underperformance, which may also cause further harm to everyone affected by the underperformance. Moreover, research suggests that co-workers' silence can even be harmful to these co-workers themselves: self-suppression can affect their well-being, job attitudes and performance, and can even cause staff turnover (Knoll & van Dick, 2013b; Milliken & Morrison, 2003; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013). Therefore, it is important that schools facilitate co-workers' responses.

Of course, co-workers' visions and responses are also influenced by the wider educational system. The Flemish education system does not have a long tradition of teacher evaluation (mandated teacher evaluation was introduced by the government in 2007) or deprivatised practices (such as co-teaching). What is more, there are no formal programmes or systems of peer evaluation, assistance or monitoring. There are also few formal structures for co-workers to provide feedback. Therefore, teachers may not feel responsible or authorised to discuss each other's performance. In this regard, research on peer assistance, teacher leadership and collaboration has found that the structural, micro political and cultural work environment influences both the success of peer feedback and coaching, and the depth of teacher collaboration (Goldstein, 2003; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Kelchtermans, 2006). When the school and wider

educational system do not support responses, responding may carry extra costs for the emotional well-being and workload of the co-worker, and possibly even for their relationship with the underperformer or position in the team (Crockett, 2013; Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Morrison et al., 2011). Some co-workers may also be more competent in providing feedback or coaching underperforming co-workers. Our findings also indicate that when teachers decide not to respond to the underperforming teacher directly, they sometimes either report the underperformance to the principal or compensate for the underperformance (e.g., by taking over certain tasks, or attempting to minimise the harm done by the underperformance). For these reasons, we do not want to put the blame on individual teachers or to hold them individually accountable for their limited responses (Painter, 2000), but we should open the debate about co-workers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers. Can we expect them to speak up or to take action? Do we tolerate teachers remaining silent? What support and school environment is needed for teachers to respond to teacher underperformance? Therefore, we recommend future research should focus on identifying which factors may hinder or stimulate co-workers' responses in schools. Therefore, it would be interesting to study schools that have succeeded in facilitating peer responses, for example, in case study research.

Our study is not without its limitations. While schools were randomly selected, only a portion of the staff filled in our survey in most participating schools. It is also unclear which teachers participated, and which did not. In addition, it is unclear why our respondents chose these specific examples, and not others, thus creating potential bias. Moreover, our study relied on our respondents' memories and reports of the studied examples of teacher underperformance, which may be distorted or incomplete (FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). However, for this reason, we asked for recent examples. Longitudinal case study research would allow us to study cases in real time and could also provide more insight into the dynamics and impact of peer responses on underperformance. These dynamics could not be captured in our cross-sectional research. In addition, we must emphasise that others involved could have different perceptions of the underperformance. Moreover, it is possible that our respondents were unaware of their principal's or other co-workers' actions. Therefore, it would be opportune for follow-up research to create triangulation in data sources (e.g., underperformers, co-workers and principals) to shed light on the underperformance and on teachers' and principals' actions from different viewpoints. Despite these limitations, our findings provide more insight into how teachers in Flanders perceive the nature and incidence of teacher underperformance in their schools. Moreover, they delineate teachers' experiences of, views on and responses to this underperformance. These findings raise important questions about the role of co-workers in dealing with teacher underperformance, and highlight the need to pay attention to co-workers when studying or handling teacher underperformance.

Appendix: Overview of survey items

Measures	Example items	Scale Cronbach's Alpha	Scale Fit Indices
cases of teacher underperformance: 16 types of underperformance, 9 causes, 6 manners of detection, 4 types of duration, 4 types of impact, severity, age of underperformer, relationship with underperformer (type, intensity, quality) *(5-point Likert scale: totally disagree, rather disagree, agree nor disagree, rather agree, totally agree)*	type: My colleague behaved counterproductively or negatively, or misbehaved, in terms of intentionally breaking rules or agreements. cause: My colleague lacks the necessary (up-to-date) skills or knowledge. detection: I was informed about the underperformance by students. duration: The underperformance concerned a one-time incident. impact: The underperformance increased my workload. severity: How severe was the underperformance in your perception? relationship type: We worked in the same department. relationship intensity: We collaborated intensely. relationship quality: Our collaboration was difficult.		
co-workers' responses to the underperformance: confrontation, report to principal, distance, support, compensation, report to co-workers *(5-point Likert scale: totally disagree, rather disagree, agree nor disagree, rather agree, totally agree)*	confront: I requested my colleague to do something about his/her underperformance. report to principal: I asked my principal to take action. distance: I distanced myself from my collegue (during the time of the underperformance). support: I emotionally supported my colleague during the time of the underperformance. compensate: I took over one or more responsibilities of my colleague. report to co-workers: I told other colleagues about the underperformance.	6 scales measured with 3-4 items: confrontation 0.9 report to principal 0.94 distance 0.88 support 0.78 compensation 0.83 report to co-workers 0.76	RMSEA = 0.041 CFI = 0.967 TLI = 0.961
co-workers' views on responding to the underperformance: necessity, responsibility, mandate/authority, use *(5-point Likert scale: totally disagree, rather disagree, agree nor disagree, rather agree, totally agree)*	necessity: I thought that someone needed to respond to the underperformance. responsibility: I found it my responsibility to respond to the underperformance. mandate/authority: I thought that I had the right to take action. use: I thought that my response would positively impact the underperformance.	4 scales measured with 3 items: responsibility 0.78 necessity 0.7 mandate 0.83 use 0.72	RMSEA = 0.043 CFI = 0.974 TLI = 0.964
co-workers' general views on and experiences with responding to teacher underperformance (7 items) *(5-point Likert scale: totally disagree, rather disagree, agree nor disagree, rather agree, totally agree)*	general views: I find it inappropriate to respond to an underperforming co-worker in my position. experiences: Previous experiences have discouraged me to respond to an underperforming co-worker.		
principals' responses to the cases and views on co-workers' roles: principals' responses (PR) to the cases principals' vision (PV) on co-workers' role in dealing with teacher underperformance *(5-point Likert scale: totally disagree, rather disagree, agree nor disagree, rather agree, totally agree)*	PR: My principal confronted my colleague about the underperformance. PV: My principal has a clear vision on co-workers' responsibilities in dealing with teacher underperformance.		
other team members' responses to the cases (CR) *(5-point Likert scale: totally disagree, rather disagree, agree nor disagree, rather agree, totally agree)*	CR: My other team members distanced themselves from the underperformer.		

CHAPTER 4

Building an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance.

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Abstract

Underperforming teachers can have a profound negative impact on their students and schools. Due to the increased importance of teacher collaboration in education, co-workers may also be affected by and have the potential to impact on teacher underperformance. Since little is known about how and why co-workers respond, we study different co-worker responses and build an explanatory framework for these responses. Our results indicate that co-workers' responses can partly be explained by how they consider their responsibility and authority to respond, as well as the use of responding. We found that underperformance, underperformer, co-worker, school leadership and school team characteristics influenced these considerations. We discuss the role of co-workers in dealing with underperforming teachers, as well as how leadership, and relational and team factors can facilitate co-workers' responses.

1. Introduction

International research indicates that 2 to 15% of teachers perform below the standard (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). These underperforming teachers have a profound impact on students, principals, co-workers and schools as a whole. Concerning the impact on students, findings from over four decades of school effectiveness research have shown that the quality of teachers outperforms school features and classroom features (such as social composition) in explaining variation in pupils' learning outcomes (Hanushek, 2008; Marzano, 2012; Range et al., 2012; Wright, Horn, & Sanders, 1997). The cumulative effects of ineffective teachers on the exam results of students are traceable for at least four years (Haycock, 1998; Rivers & Sanders, 2002). Underperforming teachers also impact on students' well-being and motivation (Bridges, 1992; Haycock, 1998; Kaye, 2004; Zhang, 2007). Moreover, when teachers underperform, this affects teachers' credibility and students' attitudes to their teachers (Banfield et al., 2006). Next to their impact on students, underperforming teachers also cause concerns among principals who experience numerous difficulties and barriers when attempting to address the underperformance (e.g., juridical constraints for dismissal, the emotional strain of confronting underperformers, a perceived lack of time and support) (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Page, 2016a; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). Principals are emotionally involved and stressed when confronted with an underperforming teacher. They feel personally responsible for their students and teachers (Causey, 2010; Mendez, 2009; Nixon et al., 2011).

Moreover, teacher underperformance affects the reputation of the school, the rest of the staff, and the public's trust in the teaching profession (Herman, 1993; Page, 2016a).

A third party that can be affected by teacher underperformance are co-workers. In education, teacher collaboration and team work are gaining importance. They are considered to be vital for teacher development and school effectiveness (Day & Gu, 2007; Goddard et al., 2007; Tam, 2015; Vangrieken et al., 2015). While historically, teachers taught behind closed doors, autonomous and independent of oversight, teachers are now more interdependent and, as Price (2012) suggests, positioned to enforce normative standards among colleagues. With increased collaboration, co-workers may also be more aware of certain performance problems than their principals (Richardson et al., 2008), and may be more impacted upon by teacher underperformance (Felps et al., 2006; LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004). Concerning this impact, the available research suggests that in education, co-workers can either experience direct impact from teacher underperformance (e.g., problematic collaboration with the underperforming teacher) or be more indirectly affected (e.g., by receiving complaints from students) (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Underperforming teachers can erode the morale and energy of co-workers, and cause frustration, concern and despair through their negativity and poor collegial relations (Menuey, 2007; Page, 2016a). Moreover, when co-workers receive complaints from parents about an underperforming teacher, this can put an emotional strain on them (Kaye, 2004). It is reasonable to believe that co-workers who are affected by teacher underperformance, will also respond to it. In this regard, organisational research suggests that co-workers may for example confront or support the underperformer, or report the underperformance to a supervisor (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Jackson & LePine, 2003). Educational research has also shown that co-workers' involvement (, peer support, coaching, observation and mentoring mechanisms) can yield some success in remediating poor teacher performance (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005). Moreover, because of the professionalism of teachers and the importance of teamwork for educational quality, accountability could be considered to be a task of the educational community (Tuytens & Devos, 2012). In addition, principals often lack time to manage teacher performance and underperformance on their own. They may also not be able to judge all aspects of the (under)performance as well as, for example, other teachers teaching the same subject (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Despite the potential of co-worker responses to teacher underperformance, these responses are mostly disregarded in research with research focussing largely on principals' responses, and it is unclear why co-workers respond in certain ways. Therefore, in this study, we aim to identify explanations for different co-worker responses to teacher underperformance: for example, when do co-workers confront the underperforming teacher? Why do they provide support? Which co-workers distance themselves from the underperformer? This will give us more insight into which factors stimulate responses, or, in turn, prevent co-workers from responding in a certain way. Therefore, we will learn more about how teacher responses can be facilitated in schools.

To study explanations for co-workers' responses, we will build and test an explanatory framework based on the existing research on co-workers' responses to underperformance. The existing research will be discussed in the next section. First however, we start by discussing our conceptualisation of teacher underperformance.

2. Literature overview

2.1. Teachers' work performance and underperformance

Teachers have comprehensive jobs (Kelly et al., 2008; Yariv, 2004). They hold responsibilities to their schools, the wider community and to their profession (Goe et al., 2008; Page, 2016a). While student learning is teachers' primary responsibility, teachers have both teaching and non-teaching responsibilities (Cheng & Tsui, 1999; Yariv, 2004). Student-related roles include, for example, student assessment and instruction (Stronge et al., 2011). Non-teaching roles include collaborating with co-workers and parents, and dealing with curriculum changes and innovations (Cheng & Tsui, 1999). Therefore, types of underperformance may include teaching and/or non-teaching types of underperformance. Moreover, some studies focus on task underperformance, i.e. performing one's tasks/roles (as stated in the job description) below standard such as difficulties with classroom management, or inadequate teaching content. Other studies focus on counterproductive work behaviours (CWB) or misbehaviours, which are "volitional acts by employees that potentially violate the legitimate interests of, or do harm to, an organization or its stakeholders" (Marcus et al., 2016, p.204). These include aggression towards co-workers, inappropriate behaviour towards students, and intentionally violating school rules (Kearney et al., 1991; Page, 2016a; Richardson et al., 2008). Teacher performance is also a dynamic construct: individual work performance changes over time and throughout one's career, with more long-term and more contemporary changes in performance, and potential periods of underperformance (Alessandri et al., 2015; Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Day & Gu, 2007). Causes of teacher underperformance are multi-faceted and involve a combination of individual and job-related factors: these include improper management and poor supervision, team factors, demands inherent to the teacher's assignment (e.g., task allocation, challenging students), organisational resources for the teacher to meet these demands, shortcomings of the teacher (e.g., lack of knowledge, skills or motivation) and teachers' personal resources (e.g., limited psychological strength or resilience) (Bridges, 1992; Monteiro et al., 2013; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2011). Often, the exact causes are interwoven and hard to discern (Yariv, 2011).

The term 'underperformance' implies that a teacher performs below a certain standard. Based on learning theories and educational research, researchers and policy makers have developed teacher standards and frameworks with performance domains, criteria, and indicators that can be used to judge a teacher as underperforming (e.g., Danielson, 1996; Doherty et al., 2002). To make these judgments, principals can rely on different sources of performance information such as

observations, peer and student ratings, parents' complaints and student test scores (Bridges, 1992; Hinchey, 2010; Stronge, 2006; Yariv, 2009a). Despite these standards, teacher (under)performance remains a value-laden concept that is subject to evolving requirements and expectations (e.g., evolutions towards co-teaching and ever-changing curricula), and controversy remains regarding the nature and objectives of teaching (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Day & Gu, 2007; Harris & Rutledge, 2010). Research suggests that principals, teachers, parents, students, scholars and governments all have their own views on good teaching (Cheng & Tsui, 1999; Moreland, 2009; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Phil et al., 1999). Moreover, principals and teachers are confronted with diverse, sometimes contradictory, expectations and demands (Ehren et al., 2015; Ingle et al., 2011; Leithwood et al., 2010; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019a).

In research on teacher underperformance, the performance standard is often left open for study respondents to fill in. Definitions of underperformance are mostly broad or a summing-up of work domains that need to be considered when studying teacher underperformance. In addition, different terms have also been used to indicate that a teacher performs below the standard; for example, 'ineffective teacher' (Nixon et al., 2013), 'poorly performing teacher' (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Yariv, 2009a), 'incompetent teacher' (Cheng, 2014), 'challenging teacher' (Yariv, 2004), and 'marginal teacher' (Menuey, 2007), each with its own emphasis. Bridges (1992) for example, defines incompetence as "a persistent failure in one or more of the following domains: failure to maintain discipline, failure to treat students properly, failure to impart subject matter effectively, failure to accept teaching advice from superiors, failure to demonstrate mastery of the subject matter being taught, and failure to produce the intended or desired results in the classroom" (p.15). Yariv (2004) talks about 'challenging teachers' to refer to those who pose a particular challenge to the principal in terms of how to manage them. He argues that "such a broad definition leaves sufficient room to explore teachers' wider performance and competence, not just within the classroom, as in most studies" (p.151).

For this study, we chose the term 'teacher underperformance' because it indicates that one performs below the standard, without a priori adjudicating on the severity, impact, cause or type of the underperformance. We define an underperforming teacher as one who: performs below the standard; in one or more teaching and/or non-teaching work domains; at one or more moments. This underperformance may include task underperformance and/or CWB. This definition incorporates the multidimensional and dynamic nature of teacher underperformance. Moreover, we focus on underperformance through the eyes of co-workers.

2.2. Responses of co-workers to teacher underperformance

While research on co-worker responses to teacher underperformance is scarce, organisational studies in other work sectors provide important insight into co-worker responses. This research includes attribution theory studies, studies on peer report of CWBs and deviance, and voice and

silence research. While attribution theory studies (e.g., Jackson & LePine, 2003; Taggar & Neubert, 2008) and peer report studies (e.g., Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Gruys et al., 2010) focus specifically on co-worker underperformance, voice and silence research (e.g., Morrison, 2014; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005) has a broader focus: it studies voice or silence about workplace problems and perceived injustices more generally. This research has found that concerns about a co-worker's underperformance are the hardest for workers to voice (Brinsfield, 2009; Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Milliken et al., 2003).

In the following paragraphs, we will discuss the existing research on co-worker responses, as well as on explanations for these responses and related influencing factors, and how these come together in the research model built for this study (see Figure 1).

2.2.1. Types of co-worker responses

Attribution studies differentiate between helping and punishing, and prosocial (e.g., advising) and antisocial responses (e.g., silent treatment) (Struthers et al., 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004; Taggar & Neubert, 2008). They often make a distinction between compensation (e.g., taking on some of the underperformer's tasks), training (e.g., advising the underperformer) and confrontation/motivation (e.g., pointing out consequences of poor performance), and a rejection of the underperformer (e.g., avoiding further interactions) (Ferguson et al., 2010; Jackson & LePine, 2003; LePine & van Dyne, 2001). Studies on both peer reporting of CWB and voice and silence studies focus on responses directed towards third parties, i.e. speaking up or remaining silent to one's supervisor and/or other co-workers (Morrison, 2014; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

As this is one of the first studies on co-workers' responses in education, we wish to obtain an exhaustive view of the subject. Based on attribution studies, we include four co-worker responses: confronting or speaking up to the underperformer, distancing oneself from the underperformer, providing the underperformer with support or advice, and compensating for the underperformance. In line with peer report and voice and silence research, we add two extra co-worker responses: reporting the underperformance to the principal and/or to other co-workers. Therefore, we will study both direct and indirect responses: responses which are directed towards the underperformer (confrontation, support, distance) and more indirect responses (reporting to principal and other co-workers, compensating actions).

2.2.2. Co-workers' considerations about responding as explanations for their responses

In a previous small-scale study in education, it was found that when co-workers perceived that it was necessary for someone to respond to an incident of teacher underperformance, they considered the use of responding, and their responsibility and authority to respond (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Concerning the use of responding, this study found that co-workers considered both their ability to impact on the underperformance and the impact that responding would have on themselves. For example, some non-tenured teachers feared that speaking up would diminish their chances of gaining tenure, and therefore decided to remain silent (Van Den

Ouweland et al., 2019b). The existing organisational literature has provided similar explanations about how co-workers consider the use of responding. In this regard, attribution studies focus on the perceived causes of the underperformance, and how these determine how co-workers perceive the possibility of change and the expected consequences of actions (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Struthers et al., 2001; Weiner, 2010). For example, when co-workers perceive that the underperformer has the ability to perform well but is simply not motivated, this will provoke feelings of anger because the underperformer is to blame. When this has been going on for a long time, co-workers can consider it a lost cause and distance themselves from the underperformer. On the contrary, when the underperformer's private circumstances temporarily restrict their performance, co-workers may feel sympathy and offer help or support (Struthers et al., 2001). Voice and silence studies look at the consequences of responding for both the underperformance and the co-worker. These studies have argued that co-workers make a cost-benefit analysis before choosing a response (Bisel & Arterburn, 2012; Morrison, 2011): they may fear possible negative consequences of speaking up (e.g., retaliation), or find it futile to respond (e.g., they believe that speaking up will not make a difference) (Knoll & van Dick, 2013a; Van Dyne et al., 2003). The theoretical basis for these explanations can be found in expectancy theory (Vroom, 1964), i.e. co-workers consider the expected outcome of a response; for example, will the supervisor be receptive to peer reports and aim to ameliorate the situation, or will they ignore these signals (Morrison, 2014; Morrison et al., 2011). When co-workers remain silent because they fear the negative consequences of speaking up, this is referred to as defensive silence. When a co-worker perceives that speaking up will have no impact, this can lead to resignation, or 'disengaged silence' as it is called in the voice and silence literature (Van Dyne et. al, 2003).

Next to the perceived use of responding, a second type of explanations for co-workers' responses relates to their perceived responsibility and authority to respond. In this regard, in a previous educational study, teachers explained that they felt responsible for the school, students and other affected team members, and therefore decided to respond to the underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Similar explanations have been proposed in other studies. Peer report of workplace problems, for example, can be done out of a feeling of obligation towards the organisation, to 'give back' to the organisation (Bowling & Lyons, 2015), and can therefore be explained with social exchange theory (Blau, 1964). On the other hand, speaking up can be disruptive; therefore, co-workers may remain silent about workplace problems out of conformity (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006). The feeling of obligation to respond can also be directed towards the underperforming teacher. In this regard, attribution studies consider helping as a form of organisational citizenship behaviour (Jackson & LePine, 2003; Taggar & Neubert, 2008). Voice and silence studies speak about prosocial voice or silence: co-workers may, for example, support the underperforming teacher to help them improve, or they may remain silent out of prosocial considerations, for example, not wanting to harm the underperformer (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Van Dyne et al., 2003). Concerning this prosocial silence, a study in education found that co-workers decided to remain silent when they considered that it was inappropriate for them to

judge or respond to the underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). This means that co-workers may feel more or less authorised to, or comfortable with, responding.

The existing research suggests that these considerations about responding can be influenced by a number of contextual, situational, and individual factors. These factors are discussed in the next section.

2.2.3. Influences on co-workers' considerations about responding

Attribution studies, peer report studies, and voice and silence studies, discerns different types of situational, individual, and organisational influences on co-workers' responses (Gruys et al., 2010; Morrison, 2014). As these form an exhaustive list of possible influencing factors, we will build primarily on the findings from a previous qualitative study in education, in which different influencing factors were distilled from teacher reports about how and why they responded to different incidents of team members' underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). These include situational influences (influences related to the underperformance and the underperformer), individual co-worker factors, and contextual factors (related to school leadership and team work).

Situational factors: the underperformance and (relationship with) the underperformer
In a previous educational study, it was found that the nature of the underperformance, and the way in which co-workers detected or were informed about it, impacted their attitudes to responding (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). For example, co-workers found it easier to judge certain aspects of teaching than others; they also felt less authorised to respond when they did not witness the underperformance themselves, and felt more authorised when the underperforming teacher admitted the underperformance and asked for help. The influence of situational factors was also found in organisational studies: attribution studies have found that co-workers' emotions, perceptions of, and responses to the underperformance, were related to the perceived causes of the underperformance (e.g., ability, effort, task difficulty, bad luck) (Jackson & LePine, 2003; Taggar & Neubert, 2008). For example, co-workers feel more empathy for the underperformer when the underperformance is caused by bad luck; in this situation, therefore, they respond in more supportive ways. Peer report studies and voice and silence studies found that reporting the underperformance to one's supervisor depends upon the seriousness and impact of the misbehaviour (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Neff, 2009).

Next to these underperformance characteristics, previous educational research found that relationship factors also played a role (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b); for example, while having a good relationship with the underperformer made it easier for some co-workers to speak up, others indicated that it made it harder because they did not want to harm the relationship. Next to the intensity and quality of the relationship, the nature of the relationship also appeared to matter: for example, teaching the same subject as the underperforming teacher, made it easier to respond to problems related to teaching content. Finally, the age of the underperforming teacher

appeared to influence responses: teachers found it difficult or less useful to speak up to a more experienced, older teacher. Influences of relational factors were also found in other research. For example, Schwappach and Gehring (2014) found that speaking up to a co-worker is easier when one knows this co-worker well. Further, attribution studies suggest that emotions and related responses can also be influenced by the likableness of the underperformer (Bradfield & Aquino, 1999; Ferguson et al., 2010).

Individual factors: the co-worker

In an educational study, co-workers' general views on and experiences with responding to underperforming co-workers were also found to play a role in their responses (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). For example, while some teachers were convinced that it was their responsibility to respond to teacher underperformance, others perceived it to be the principal's responsibility. While the discussed considerations are situation-specific, these views concern a more general attitude about one's role in responding to a co-worker's underperformance. The same study also found that non-tenured teachers were often more insecure about speaking up, and older teachers often felt that they, as co-workers, had little authority to respond (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Individual co-worker influences were also found in organisational research: for example, Gruys et al. (2010) found that older, more experienced workers were more likely to report CWB. Moreover, Van Dyne et al. (2008) found that employees who perceived voice to be part of their jobs were rated by their supervisors as engaging in more voice behaviour than employees who perceived voice to be an extra-role.

Contextual factors: leadership and team

Concerning team factors, a study in education found that teachers felt that a collegial, open atmosphere in the team facilitated speaking up to the underperforming teacher. On the contrary, others felt that there was no openness because of too much gossip or 'bad apples' ruining the team's atmosphere. Some co-workers were also explicitly advised by other team members about how to respond (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Team influences were also found in other studies: the tendency to speak up or to report the underperformance was found to depend on the team's cohesion and safety/trust, the work climate (e.g., justice vs. distrust), voice climate (e.g., collective norms of voice or silence), and the team's consensus on the performance problem (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; Edwards et al., 2009; King & Hermodson, 2000; Morrison et al., 2011; Tangirala & Ramanujam, 2008). Moreover, attribution studies found that co-workers influence each other's responses by sharing emotions, judgments and beliefs, and by constructing shared attributions about responding (Harvey et al., 2014; LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Taggar & Neubert, 2004).

Next to these team factors, leadership factors may also influence co-worker responses. An educational study found that teachers tended to remain silent when they perceived that there was no performance management (PM) in the school and/or limited principal responses to teacher underperformance; they either felt that it was their principal's responsibility or that it would be

futile to respond when the principal remained silent. In addition, most teachers were willing to follow their principal's advice or views on how they should respond to the underperformance. For example, when principals asked co-workers to speak up to the underperforming teacher, they attempted to do this (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). In other studies, leadership factors, i.e. leadership style, support and receptivity, were found to influence whether workers spoke up to their supervisors (Bisel & Arterburn, 2012; Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison, 2014; Mowbray et al., 2015; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005).

2.3. Research model

In the current study, we build on this literature review to develop a research model for our study (see Figure 1).

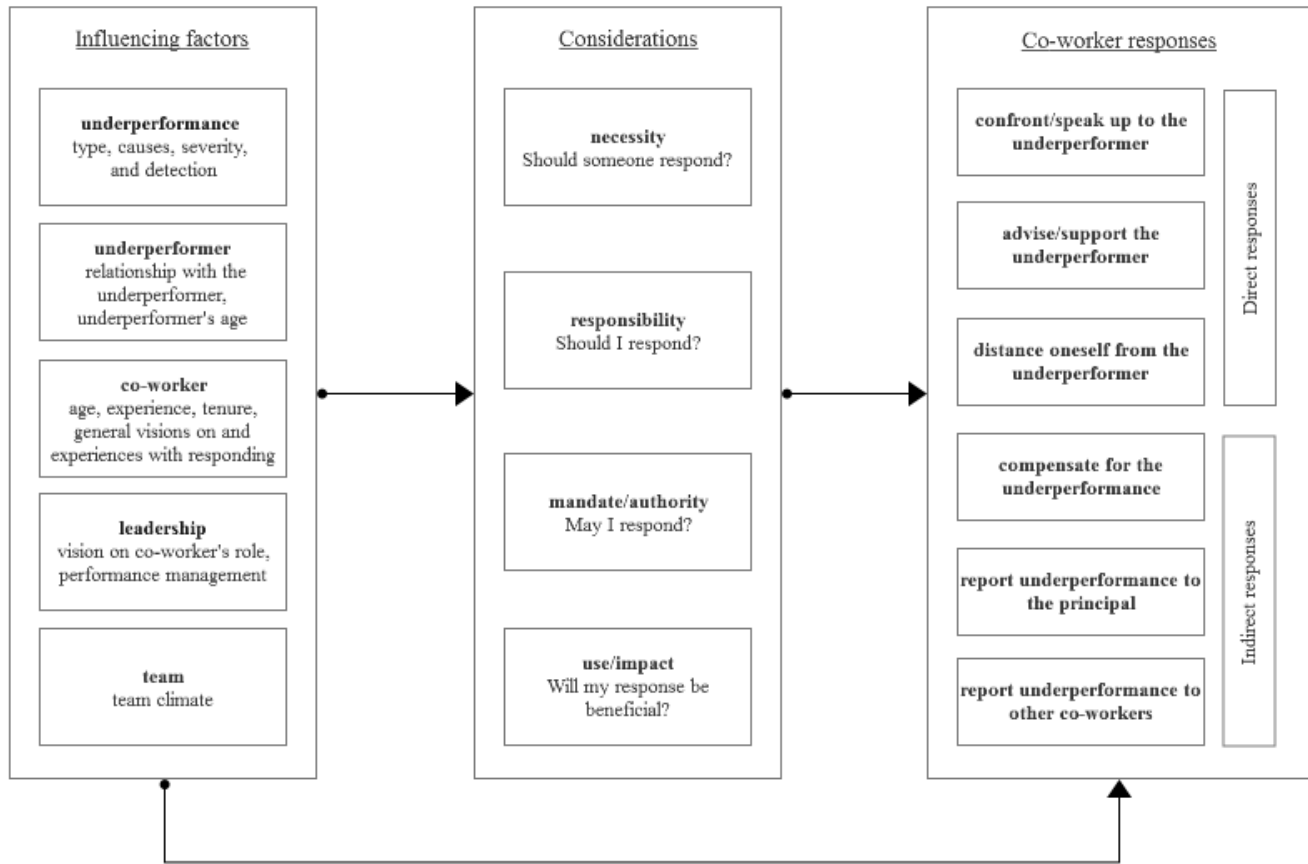*Figure 1:* Research model with possible explanations for co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance.

As discussed, as this is one of the first large scale studies in education, we plan an exhaustive study of both direct and indirect co-worker responses, and of different related considerations and influencing factors, to build an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses in education.

Based on a previous educational study, we include four explanations in our study: how co-workers consider the necessity and use of responding, as well as their responsibility and authority to respond. Moreover, we will study how these four considerations are, in turn, influenced by different situational (related to the underperformance and the underperformer), individual (related to the co-worker) and contextual factors (team and leadership factors). This means that we will study the considerations as mediating factors between influencing factors and responses.

We therefore set out the following research questions:
- How are co-workers' responses influenced by their considerations about the necessity to respond, their responsibility and authority to respond, and the use of responding?
- How do different underperformance, underperformer, co-worker, leadership, and team characteristics influence these considerations?

3. Methodology

3.1. <u>Research context</u>

Our study was executed in Flanders, the Dutch speaking part of Belgium. Flemish educational policy is characterised by deregulation and decentralisation. While there is a Flemish educational curriculum with attainment targets for students, which define what students are expected to know and be able to do at different stages during compulsory education (Vanhoof et al., 2013), there are no mandated central exams or national student tests. Moreover, schools can choose their instructional methods (Vekeman et al., 2017). Principals play a central role in human resources (HR) and PM because school boards largely decentralise these responsibilities to individual schools. Moreover, other management levels are absent in Flemish education (Vekeman et al., 2016). The government obliges schools to have job descriptions (since 2005) and performance evaluations for teachers (since 2007), but schools have the autonomy to create evaluation criteria for teachers (OECD, 2014; Penninckx et al., 2011; Zapata, 2014). However, as a guideline for teacher education and schools, the government has introduced a general teacher job profile outlining teachers' roles and related competences. This job profile includes the 10 work domains including the teacher as facilitator of learning and development processes, content expert, innovator/researcher, member of the school team, and member of the educational community (Aelterman et al., 2008).

Our study was performed in primary and secondary education, for children aged 3 to 18. Although official numbers are lacking, a recent study in secondary education found that principals considered 12% of their teachers to underperform in one or more job domains. The most common types of underperformance included student-tailored teaching and student evaluation, implementing innovations, dealing with problematic student behaviour and motivating students. Moreover, principals considered underperforming teachers to have a too

narrow view of their duties (Plas & Vanhoof, 2016). In addition, in Flemish education, teamwork is gaining importance and collaborative cultures, collective responsibility for student learning and reflective dialogue are present in schools to a certain extent (Grosemans et al., 2015; Vanblaere & Devos, 2018). At the same time, international comparative research indicates that Flemish education scores low on professional community characteristics such as peer feedback and joint teaching. Most teacher collaboration is not focussed on professional development, and teachers do not collaborate or exchange teaching materials frequently (Lomos, 2017; OECD, 2014; Van Hoof et al., 2015).

3.2. Sample

To reach a large sample of teachers, we used a survey methodology. From across all primary and secondary schools in Flanders (with at least 10 teachers in the team), a random sample of schools was selected to participate in our study. Of the 306 schools contacted, 38 schools were willing to participate. 833 teachers returned the survey. As some questionnaires had many missing data, 708 questionnaires were analysed, from 16 primary schools, and 22 secondary schools. In the primary schools, 7 to 29 teachers participated, who represented 50 to 100% of their teams. In the secondary schools, 12 to 67 teachers participated, who represented 15 to 75% of their teams. Twenty-nine per cent of respondents were male and 71% were female. Thirty-two per cent worked in primary education and 68% in secondary education. Their mean age was 42, with 17 years of experience as a teacher, and 14 years of experience in their current schools. Twenty-two per cent was non-tenured (with a fixed-term contract or permanent contract) and 78% was tenured. Participation was anonymous and voluntary, and respondents were informed about the purpose and method of the study, as well as respondents' rights. The Ethics Committee of the University of Antwerp also approved the study.

3.3. Instrument

An overview of the survey items is presented in Appendix 1. In order to study co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance, respondents were requested to "*think of a recent example of an underperforming co-worker, i.e. a co-worker who performed below the expectations, in one or more domains, according to your perception. The underperformance may concern task performance (working with students, team work and/or school tasks) or the behaviour of the co-worker*". This method is based on the Critical Incident Technique (CIT), developed by Flanagan (1954), which aims to provide in-depth, contextualised accounts of real-life incidents (Hughes et al., 2007), and allows respondents to discuss cases of their own choosing that are important to them (Gremler, 2004). We chose this technique of focussing on specific, real examples of teacher underperformance, in order to study real co-worker responses. Most existing studies (in other work sectors, as well as the few studies in education) use vignettes or hypothetical cases to study co-worker responses (Ferguson et al., 2010; Liden et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 2008), therefore

studying co-workers' intentions or attitudes rather than their actual responses (Struthers et al., 2001).

Teachers who indicated that they knew of an underperforming teacher (69% of respondents), were asked to indicate the type, causes, manner of detection and the severity of the underperformance (i.e., performance characteristics). The categorisation of types of underperformance was based on the Flemish teacher job profile and findings from a study on teacher underperformance in education (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). The categorisation of types and manners of detection were also based on the latter study. Afterwards, respondents were requested to indicate the age of the underperforming teacher as well as the nature, intensity and quality of their working relationship (underperformer characteristics). Since these situational characteristics were quite straightforward items, it was decided to study them with one item-questions. The survey also included items on respondents' considerations about the necessity and use of responding, and their mandate and responsibility to respond to the underperformance. Since existing measures were not available, and these were more complex constructs, we developed a scale based on the findings of a previous study in education (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Responses to the underperformance were measured with items based on a validated peer response measure by Jackson and LePine (2003) and further adapted for our research aims (items on reporting the underperformance were added to the scale). In the next section of the survey, leadership factors were studied. These included questions about the principal's views on co-workers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers and items on the PM in the school. Performance management was measured with an instrument developed and validated by Kinicki et al. (2013). Concerning team factors, we chose to study team characteristics with an instrument developed and validated by Wahlstrom and Louis (2008). We studied three professional community characteristics: reflective dialogue, collective responsibility and deprivatised practice (three of the four scales of the original instrument). Finally, co-worker characteristics were also included in the survey: respondents were requested to fill in their age, work experience, and work contract (tenure). They also filled in several items about their experiences and views on responding to underperforming co-workers (independent of the selected examples). These items were based on a previous study in education (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Control variables included respondents' gender, educational level and working hours.

3.4. Analysis

For the analysis, we built a path model with the four considerations as mediators between influencing factors and responses, as shown in our research model (see Figure 1). All responses were included in this model, instead of building a separate model for each response, as responses could be related to each other. Moreover, as the importance of each influencing factor and each consideration for each type of response still had to be examined, no clear sequence to introduce variables could be determined; hence, hierarchical data entry was not possible (Field, 2017). Consequently, we used a backward stepwise technique: we started with a complete model, with

all the explaining variables, considerations and responses. Backward is preferable to the forward method because of the suppressor effects or Type II-errors with the forward method (Field, 2017). With backward deletion, all non-significant variables were removed one-by-one: in each step, the predictor with the highest p-value was removed until all p-values were less than the critical alpha (p<0.05). The fit of the final model was: RMSEA = 0.014, CFI = 0.975, TLI = 0.971 (when incorporating the covariance between the perceived responsibility and mandate to respond). Explained variances of the considerations were between 35% and 46%, and explained variances for the responses were as follows: 28% for report to co-workers, 33% for distance, 35% for compensation, 41% for report to principal, 44% for support, and 47% for confrontation. We also allowed for direct effects of influencing factors on responses. This was because our study was one of the first large scale studies in education, and we predicted that the four studied considerations would not fully mediate the effects and would only be part of the explanation, because of the complexity of our research topic. We used MPlus software for the analysis and controlled for clustered data (teachers clustered in schools). Because of the risk of overfitting and producing Type1-errors in our backward stepwise method with numerous parameters, we performed a final correction on our results, using the Holm-Bonferroni method, which corrects for the inflation on the alpha level (Abdi, 2010; Aickin & Gensler, 1996; Holm, 1979). This correction means that we lowered the critical alpha with the Holm-Bonferroni calculation for all significant relationships found (i.e., with alpha <0.05). As a result, a number of significant relationships became non-significant and were removed.

4. Findings

In this section, we present all significant effects found in the final statistical model, after correction with the Holm-Bonferroni method. First, we discuss the significant influences of the studied considerations on the responses. Second, we discuss the significant indirect effects of the influencing factors on responses, with considerations as a mediator. We also present the most prominent direct effects on responses. Descriptive statistics can be found in Appendix 2.

4.1. Influences of considerations on responses

We found significant effects of the studied considerations on co-workers' responses (see Figure 2). More specifically, we found that the studied indirect responses, i.e. reporting to the principal (B=0.389, p<0.01) and to other co-workers (B=0.261, p<0.01), and compensating for the underperformance (B=0.221, p<0.01), depended on whether co-workers felt responsible to respond to the underperformance. These three responses were unrelated to feeling mandated to respond, and perceiving that it would be useful to respond.

Two direct responses, distancing oneself from the underperformer or providing them with support and advice, depended on whether co-workers perceived that responding would be useful (respectively B=-0.242, p<0.01 and B=0.366, p<0.01). The relationship with distance was

negative, i.e. when the co-worker perceived less use of responding, the co-worker more often distanced him/herself from the underperforming teacher. These responses were unrelated to feeling responsible or mandated to respond.
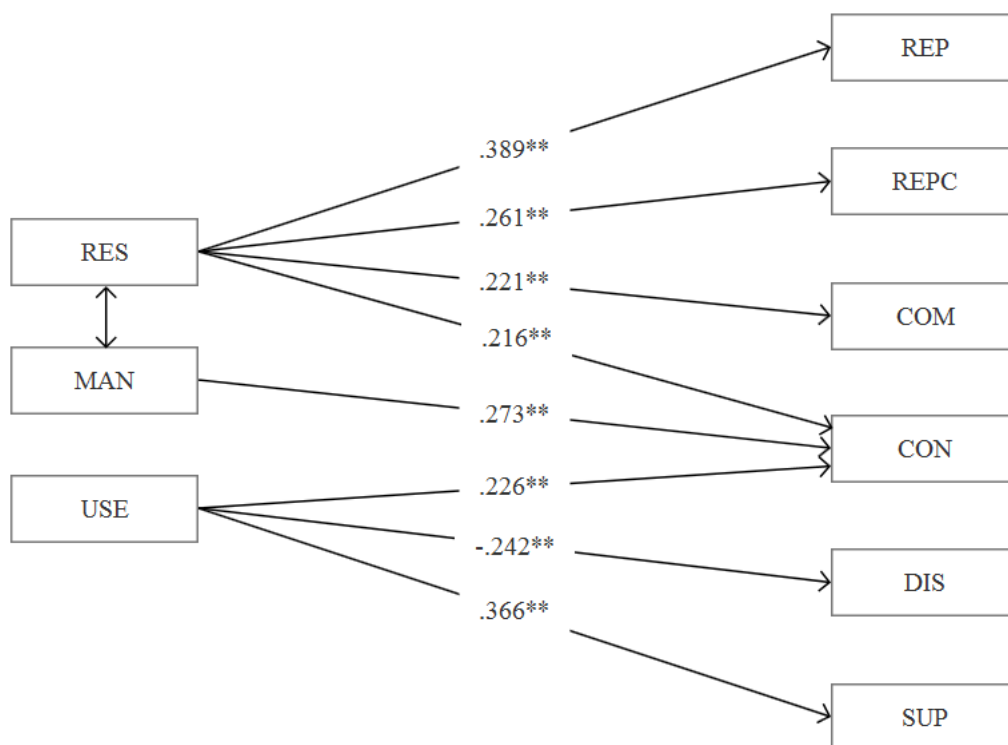
Figure 2: Statistically significant influences of considerations on co-workers' responses (**=p<0.01) (RES=responsibility, MAN=mandate, USE=use, REP=reporting to principal, REPC=reporting to other co-workers, COM=compensation, CON=confrontation, DIS=distance, SUP=support/advice).

Finally, the third direct response, confronting the underperforming teacher, was influenced by three considerations: co-workers more often confronted the underperforming teacher, when they felt responsible (B=0.216, p<0.01) and mandated to respond (B=0.273, p<0.01), and perceived that responding would be useful (B=0.226, p<0.01).
We found no significant influences of the perceived necessity to respond on co-workers' responses.

4.2. Considerations as a mediator between influencing factors and responses

Feeling responsible and mandated to respond, and perceiving that it would be useful to respond, were, in turn, affected by different influencing factors in our research model. Here we present these significant effects with, respectively, responsibility, mandate and use as mediating factors. An overview is provided in Table 1.

Table 1

Significant influences on how co-workers perceived their responsibility and mandate to respond, and the use of responding to the reported cases

	RES	MAN	USE
Underperformance characteristics			
TYPE_3: Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development		-.166**	
TYPE_4: Raising students			-.174**
TYPE_6: Classroom management, creating a favourable learning climate			.125**
TYPE_12: Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards students			-.208**
CAUS_1: Lack of (up-to-date) knowledge or skills		.125**	
CAUS_4: Limited psychological strength/resilience			.114**
CAUS_7: Students		-.116**	
DE_4: Informed by principal	.097**		
DE_6: Informed by parent(s)		.093**	
Underperformer characteristics			
RELA_1: Intense collaboration	.125**		
AGE_UP: Age of the underperformer			-.136**
Co-worker characteristics			
VISI_1: My responsibility to take action when a co-worker underperforms	.393**	.226**	
VISI_2: Appropriate to respond to underperforming co-worker in my position	.335**	.370**	.341**
Leadership factors			
COMM: Having an approachable communication style		.126**	
FB: Providing timely, specific and honest feedback to teachers			-.239**
PV_3: Principal has a clear vision on co-workers' role			.185**
Team factors			
DIAL: Reflective dialogue		.102*	
DEPR: Deprivatised practice			.196**
RESP: Collective responsibility		-.114**	

Note: RES=responsibility, MAN=mandate, USE=use, **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

4.2.1. Responsibility as mediator

We found that the co-workers more often felt responsible for responding when they were informed about the underperformance by the principal (B=0.097, p<0.01). In addition, co-workers who collaborated more intensely with the underperforming teacher also felt more responsibility to respond (B=0.125, p<0.01). Co-worker characteristics also appeared to play a role: respondents who generally perceived that they had a responsibility and mandate to respond to teacher underperformance, felt more responsibility to do so (B=0.393, p<0.01, and B=0.335, p<0.01 respectively) to the reported cases of teacher underperformance.

4.2.2. Mandate as mediator

Our findings indicate that respondents felt less mandated to respond when the underperformance concerned evaluating students (B=-0.166, p<0.01). Respondents felt more mandated to respond if

they perceived that a lack of knowledge or skills had caused the underperformance (B=0.125, p<0.01); in cases where students caused the underperformance, respondents felt less mandated (B=-0.116, p<0.01). When informed about the underperformance by parents, respondents felt more authorised to respond (B=0.093, p<0.01). Next to these underperformance characteristics, co-workers' views also appeared to be important: respondents who generally perceived that they had a responsibility and mandate to respond to teacher underperformance, also felt more mandated to respond (B=0.226, p<0.01, and B=0.370, p<0.01). Team and leadership factors also showed significant effects: when there was more reflective dialogue in the team, respondents felt more mandated to respond (B=0.102, p<0.05). Collective responsibility in the team had a negative effect (B=-0.114, p<0.01). Finally, when teachers perceived that their principal had a more approachable communication style (one of the PM-domains), they felt more mandated to respond (B=0.126, p<0.01).

4.2.3. Use as mediator

We found that the perceived use of responding partly depended on characteristics of the underperformance; co-workers felt that it would be less useful to respond when the underperformance concerned inappropriate behaviour towards students (B=-0.208, p<0.01) or problems with raising students (B=-0.174, p<0.01). The opposite was true for problems related to classroom management, which led to more perceived use. Additionally, we found that our respondents perceived more use of responding when the underperformance was caused by the underperformer's lack of psychological resilience. The underperformer's age also appeared to influence the perceived use of responding: teachers perceived that it was less useful to respond to older teachers' underperformance (B=-0.136, p<0.01). Moreover, respondents who generally felt authorised to respond to teacher underperformance, perceived more use of responding in the reported cases of underperformance (B=0.341, p<0.01). Team and leadership factors also showed significant effects: when the team was characterised by deprivatised practice, teachers perceived more use of responding (B=0.196, p<0.01). Moreover, respondents who perceived that their principal had a clear vision on teachers' responsibilities in dealing with underperforming co-workers, felt that it would be more useful to respond (B=0.185, p<0.01). The opposite was found for performance feedback by the principal (one of the PM-domains), which resulted in less perceived use (B=-0.239, p<0.01).

Next to these results, other influencing factors in our research model did not yield significant effects. Surprisingly, the perceived severity of the underperformance did not influence the perceived responsibility, mandate or use of responding. Moreover, no significant influences were found of the quality and nature of the relationship with the underperformer, or of the co-worker's age, work experience and tenure.

4.3. Direct influences on responses

Since we hypothesised that these considerations would only partly mediate responses, i.e. were only part of the explanation, we also studied direct effects of the influencing factors on responses. The significant effects are presented in Table 2.

4.3.1. Underperformance characteristics

We found one or more direct effects of the type of underperformance on all responses. Respondents more often distanced themselves from the underperformer when the underperformance concerned collaboration with co-workers (B=0.251, p<0.01). More confrontation took place in case of inappropriate behaviour towards co-workers (B=0.128, p<0.01) or not following up on agreements made (B=0.109, p<0.01), while co-workers reported less confrontation in cases of problematic teaching content (B=-0.130, p<0.01). Problems with the quality of instruction also led to more distance (B=0.194, p<0.01), reporting to the principal (B=0.145, p<0.01) and other co-workers (B=0.194, p<0.01), and to less support (B=-0.137, p<0.01). Co-workers provided more support in case of problems with classroom management (B=0.129, p<0.05). Inappropriate behaviour towards students (B=0.159, p<0.01) and intentional lack of effort were more often reported to the principal (B=0.092, p<0.05). Lack of effort also led to less support (B=-0.128, p<0.01). Administrative work problems were more often compensated for by our respondents (B=0.124, p<0.01).

Perceived causes had the most direct effects on supporting the underperformer: when respondents perceived that private circumstances (B=0.219, p<0.01), inadequate knowledge or skills (B=0.103, p<0.05), limited resilience (B=0.102, p<0.01) or students (B=0.083, p<0.01) caused the underperformance, they more often supported the underperformer. Moreover, while underperformance caused by bad character led to more discussion with co-workers (B=0.092, p<0.05), the opposite was true when the underperformance was caused by a lack of resilience (B=-0.169, p<0.01). When school policy or the principal caused the underperformance, the underperformance was more often reported to the principal (B=0.171, p<0.01).

Finally, the manner of detection had significant direct effects on support: when respondents were informed about the underperformance by other co-workers, they provided less support to the underperformer (B=-0.118, p<0.01); if they were when informed by students, co-workers provided more support (B=0.077, p<0.01).

4.3.2. Underperformer characteristics

Direct effects of relationship factors on responses were also found. We found direct positive effects of the intensity of the collaboration with the underperforming teacher on compensation (B=0.182, p<0.01), confrontation (B=0.113, p<0.01) and support (B=0.194, p<0.01). The nature of the relationship also showed some significant direct effects: working in the same department as the underperformer was found to enhance compensation (B=0.179, p<0.01) and reporting (B=0.202, p<0.01). While respondents discussed underperformance with colleagues more often when the co-worker worked on the same school project (B=0.170, p<0.01), they did so less often

when they had a private relationship with the underperformer (B=-0.170, p<0.01). Finally, they compensated for the underperformance more, when the underperformer taught common students (B=0.168, p<0.01).

4.3.3. Co-worker characteristics

Respondents who generally felt that it was appropriate for teachers to respond to a team member's underperformance, reported the underperformance to the principal less (B=-0.148, p<0.01). Respondents who indicated knowing from experience how to respond, confronted (B=0.128, p<0.01) and supported (B=0.093, p<0.01) the underperforming teacher more. We also found a significant direct effect of age: younger teachers discussed the underperformance less with other co-workers (B=-0.226, p<0.01), and more experienced teachers reported doing this more (B=0.158, p<0.05). Non-tenured teachers reported the underperformance to their principals less often (B=-0.116, p<0.05). Finally, teachers working in primary education confronted the underperforming teacher less (B=-0.116, p<0.01).

4.3.4. Leadership and team factors

We found direct effects of leadership factors on confrontation, support and report. First, we found that when the principal had a clear vision on teachers' responsibilities in responding to underperforming co-workers, respondents confronted (B=0.210, p<0.01) and supported (B=0.190, p<0.01) the underperformer more. Teachers who perceived that their principal expected them to report teacher underperformance, also reported doing this more often (B=0.214, p<0.01). In addition, two PM scales also showed significant effects: when the principal provided consequences (e.g., recognition) for teacher performance (one of the PM-domains), co-workers supported the underperformer less (B=-0.098, p<0.05). A more approachable communication style from the principal led to less confrontation (B=-0.140, p<0.01). Finally, we found a direct effect of deprivatised practice on compensation (B=0.139, p<0.01).

Since these direct effects suggest that the studied considerations only partly explain co-workers' responses, we will discuss some alternative explanations in the recommendations for future research below.

Table 2

Significant direct effects of influencing factors on co-workers' responses to the reported cases

	COM	CON	SUP	DIS	REPC	REP
Underperformance characteristics						
TYPE_1: Quality of teaching content		-.130**				
TYPE_2: Quality of instruction/didactics			-.137**	.194**	.194**	.145**
TYPE_6: Classroom management, creating a favourable learning climate			.129*			
TYPE_7: Consulting and collaborating with colleagues				.251**		
TYPE_8: Following up on agreements and task allocations		.109**				
TYPE_10: Fulfilling administrative tasks	.124**					
TYPE_12: Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards students						.159**
TYPE_13: Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers		.128**				
TYPE_15: Intentional lack of effort			-.128**		.170**	.092*
CAUS_1: Lacking (up-to-date) knowledge or skills			.103*			
CAUS_4: Limited psychological strength/resilience			.102**		-.169**	
CAUS_5: Bad character or personality					.092*	
CAUS_6: Private circumstances			.219**			
CAUS_7: Students			.083*			
CAUS_9: Principal or school policy						.171**
DE_3: Informed by other co-worker(s)			-.118**			
DE_4: Informed by principal						.101**
DE_5: Informed by student(s)			.077**			
Underperformer characteristics						
RELA_1: Intense collaboration	.182**	.113**	.194**			
RELA_3: Working in the same department	.179**					.202**
RELA_4: Working on the same school project or in the same working group					.170**	
RELA_5: Meeting each other outside school/private relationship					-.170**	
RELA_6: Teaching common students	.168**					
Co-worker characteristics						
VISI_3: Okay for co-workers to respond to underperforming co-workers						-.148**
VISI_7: Know from experience how (not) to respond to underperforming co-workers		.128**	.093**			
AGE: Age					-.226**	
EX_S: Experience as teacher in the school of study					.158*	
N-TE1: Non-tenured with fixed-term contract						-.116*
PE: Working in primary education		-.116**				
Leadership factors						
COMM: Having an approachable communication style			-.140**			
CONS: Providing consequences (e.g., recognition/rewards) for teacher performance		-.098*				
PV_2: Principal vision: Teachers should report underperformance to principal						.214**
PV_3: Principal has a clear vision on co-workers' role		.210**	.190**			
Team factors						
DEPR: Deprivatised practice	.139**					

Note: COM=compensation, CON=confrontation, SUP=support/advice, DIS=distance, REPC=reporting to other co-workers, REP=reporting to principal, **p<0.01, *p<0.05.

5. Conclusion

Summarising the found effects, we transformed our research model into an explanatory framework for co-worker responses (see Figure 3). In general, it appears that co-worker responses are determined by different relational, situational, co-worker, team and leadership factors, which explain whether co-workers consider themselves to be responsible and authorised to respond to the underperformance, and/or consider that responding would be useful.

More specifically, our findings suggest that indirect co-worker responses (compensation and report) can be explained by co-workers feeling they have the responsibility to respond. In previous research, the felt responsibility has been linked to social exchange theory (Bowling & Lyons, 2015). Applied to our findings, this means that teachers report or compensate for the underperformance when they feel an obligation to respond towards the school (e.g., students, co-workers and/or the principal). On the contrary, concerning direct responses, providing support/advice to the underperforming teacher can be explained by the co-workers' perception that their response will be useful. In this regard, expectancy theory has been used to explain why co-workers consider the possible consequences of responding before choosing a response (Morrison, 2014; Morrison et al., 2011). For our study, this means that teachers support or advise the underperforming teacher when they perceive that this will have a beneficial effect on the underperformance, possibly because this type of response also carries a certain 'cost' for the co-worker: supporting or advising the underperforming teachers demands time and effort. When co-workers feel that responding is useless, they distance themselves from the underperforming teacher. Finally, our findings indicate that confronting the underperforming teacher not only depends on whether co-workers feel responsible to respond and feel that responding would be useful, but also on whether the co-workers feel mandated to respond. Confrontation is potentially the most 'dangerous' or 'disruptive' response of the different studied responses. Therefore, co-workers may feel that it is inappropriate to respond. In this regard, research suggests that speaking up may disrupt the order in the team, and that respondents may remain silent out of conformity or prosocial considerations (Henriksen & Dayton, 2006; Van Dyne et al., 2003).

Figure 3 shows that the considerations of responsibility, mandate and use can, in turn, be explained by different individual, situational and contextual factors. More specifically, the co-workers' general visions on their role in dealing with teacher underperformance appear to influence all three considerations and, therefore, both direct and indirect responses; that is, when teachers feel responsible and/or mandated to respond to teacher underperformance in general, they will more often respond in specific cases of teacher underperformance. This means that teachers have a certain general attitude towards the topic, which influences their responses independent of the specific situation of the underperformance. Next to these individual factors, we found that co-workers also felt more responsible to respond (and thereby confronted the underperformer, compensated for or reported the underperformance) when they collaborated

more intensely with the underperforming teacher and when the principal informed them about the underperformance.
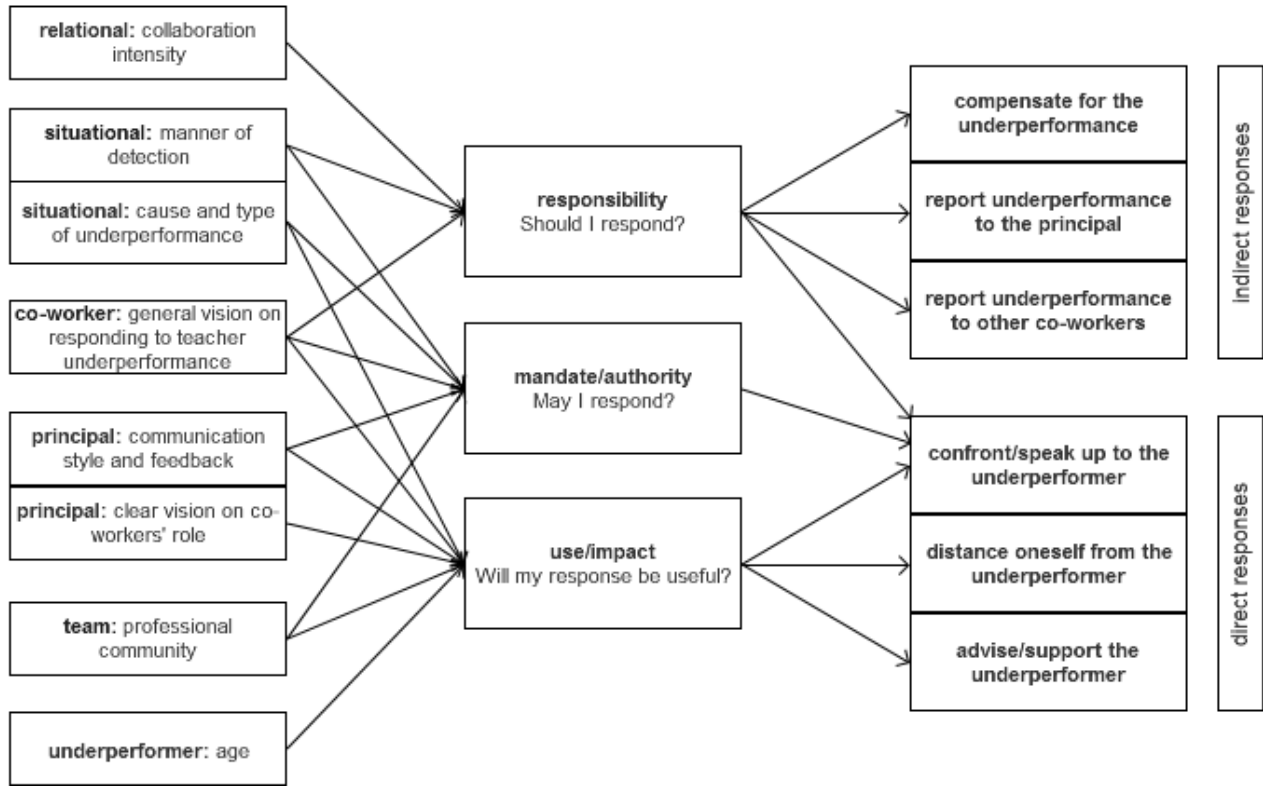

Figure 3: Explanatory framework for co-workers' responses to incidents of teacher underperformance.

Whether co-workers feel mandated to respond and feel that it would be useful to respond (which enhances direct responses) appears to depend partly on the specific situation, i.e. the specific nature and cause of the underperformance. For example, respondents felt that it would be more useful to respond when the underperformance concerned classroom management, and felt more mandated to respond when they perceived that lack of knowledge or skills caused the underperformance. In addition, co-workers perceive that responding is more useful when the underperformer is younger. In this situation they use more support and confrontation, and distance themselves less. Moreover, co-workers feel more mandated to respond, and therefore confront the underperformer more, when they are informed by parents. Team and leadership factors also appear to influence how teachers perceive their mandate and the use of responding: teachers feel more mandated when there is more dialogue in the team and when the principal has an approachable communication style, and less mandated when there is more collective responsibility in the team. Teachers feel that responding is more useful when the team is characterised by deprivatised practice, and when their principal has a clear vision on teachers' responsibilities in dealing with underperforming co-workers, and less useful when the principal provides performance feedback to teachers. Together, these findings provide important insights

into how specific co-worker responses can be explained, and how they can be enabled or hindered. These will be discussed further.

6. Discussion

Underperforming teachers can have a profound impact on students, principals, co-workers, and schools as a whole. Therefore, it is important that this underperformance is understood and addressed. While educational research mostly focusses on how principals deal with teacher underperformance, we know little about co-worker responses. However, since teacher collaboration is gaining importance in education (Goddard et al., 2007; Tam, 2015; Vangrieken et al., 2015), co-workers may be more aware of certain problems than their principals, and so may be able to impact on the underperformance. In this study, we therefore aimed to identify explanations for co-worker responses to teacher underperformance so as to obtain more insight into which factors may stimulate or hinder certain responses. Based on a literature review, we built and tested an explanatory framework for co-worker responses, which includes response-specific explanations and distinguishes different influencing factors (related to the underperformance, the underperformer, the co-worker, the teamwork in the school and school leadership) for each specific response.

As expected, based on previous research (LePine & van Dyne, 2001; Weiner, 2010), underperformance characteristics, i.e. the specific type and cause of the underperformance, appear to play an important role in this. More specifically, our findings indicate co-workers feel more mandated, and/or feel that it would be more useful to respond to specific types and causes of underperformance, and therefore will respond more directly to the underperforming teacher. For example, we found that respondents perceive that it is more appropriate to speak up when a lack of knowledge or skills caused the underperformance. Possibly, teachers feel 'safer' or more confident discussing these kinds of problems, because they, as teachers, are used to giving this kind of feedback in their jobs. Co-workers felt that it would be less useful to respond when the underperformance concerned either inappropriate behaviour towards students, or problems with raising students. The opposite was true for problems related to classroom management. Probably, the latter is easier to influence with support or advice. Our study revealed another influencing factor, i.e. how co-workers detect the underperformance: when co-workers are informed by the principal, they feel more responsibility to respond, which stimulates indirect responses. When informed by parents, respondents feel more mandated to respond, and therefore use more confrontation. Possibly, this is because there is a general perception that it is important to take parents' complaints seriously. Co-workers, therefore, feel that these complaints give them a mandate to respond. Surprisingly, the perceived severity of the underperformance did not impact on responses in our research, contrary to findings of previous research (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Neff, 2009). Our findings further suggest that co-workers perceive it to be less useful to respond to older underperforming teachers. In this regard, a previous study found that teachers perceived

that remediation had little effect with older teachers, who had been underperforming for a longer time, or perceived that older teachers were less able to change or less open to discussing their underperformance with co-workers (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). This implies that older underperforming teachers receive less advice and support; they are also confronted less often and ignored more often by their co-workers. In sum, these situational findings suggest that co-workers feel more mandate and perceive more use of responding with specific types of underperformance. They perceive that it is less useful to respond to older underperformers, and feel more responsible and mandated to respond, respectively, when the principal and parents informed them about the underperformance.

Next to these situational factors, our findings indicate that co-workers' responses are also influenced by co-worker characteristics: it appears that a teacher's general opinion on how to respond to underperforming teachers will determine how they feel about responding in specific cases of teacher underperformance, which will influence both direct and indirect responses. Some teachers generally perceive that responding is not their task, for example, or feel that it is inappropriate to judge the underperformance of co-workers; in this situation they refrain from responding to teacher underperformance (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). These findings could be linked to the nature of the Flemish educational sector. Due to the long tradition of individuality and autonomy of teachers' work (at least in Flanders), it might not be obvious for teachers to judge or speak up to co-workers who work at the same hierarchical level. In this regard, research has shown that in education, norms of collegiality and collaboration are counterbalanced by norms of privacy and autonomy, individual teaching and individual accountability. These norms have been used to explain why teachers often collaborate on a superficial level, and are reluctant to discuss their performance, to question team members' work or to provide performance feedback to other teachers (Hargreaves, 2001; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Little, 1990; Manouchehri, 2001; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Flemish education does not have a long tradition of deprivatised practices (such as co-teaching) and teacher collaboration is still rather limited compared to other countries (Lomos, 2017; OECD, 2014; Van Hoof et al., 2015). Moreover, there are no formal programmes or systems of peer evaluation, assistance or feedback. In this regard, Morrison (2011) suggests that voice is more present in self-managing groups with more egalitarian practices such as peer evaluations; they make it easier and less intimidating to voice, and increase feelings of voice efficacy. In addition, research on peer assistance, teacher leadership and teacher collaboration has found that structural, micro political and cultural work aspects influence the success of peer feedback and coaching, as well as the depth of teacher collaboration (Goldstein, 2003; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Kelchtermans, 2006). This could explain some Flemish teachers perceive that it is not their responsibility or that it is inappropriate for them to respond to a team member's underperformance.

Therefore, it is important to consider how co-worker responses can be facilitated. Our findings suggest that school leadership, team and relational factors can make a difference. When teachers feel that their principal has a clear vision on teachers' roles in responding to a team member's

underperformance, they expect responding to be useful and more often respond directly to the underperforming teacher. When co-workers think that their principal wants to be informed about the underperformance, they will report the underperformance more. Teachers who perceive that their principal has a more approachable communication style, feel more mandated to respond, and therefore confront the underperforming teacher more. In addition, when the principal informs the co-worker about the underperformer, they feel more responsibility to respond. In these cases, teachers may feel more obliged to respond because the principal confides in them to discuss the underperformance (Bowling & Lyons, 2015). Together, these leadership influences suggest that teachers need to feel 'backed-up' by their principals to perceive more use, more responsibility and more mandate to respond. In this regard, previous research also found that most teachers were willing to follow their principals' wishes or advice in dealing with underperforming co-workers (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b) and that leadership style, support and receptivity influence co-workers' voice (Milliken et al., 2003; Morrison, 2014; Mowbray et al., 2015). However, while a previous study found that a lack of PM in the school (e.g., performance monitoring, coaching, reward) can discourage co-workers to respond themselves (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b), we did not find evidence for this. We even found that more feedback from the principal decreased co-workers' responses because teachers felt that it would be less useful to respond. We also found direct negative effects of PM-practices on responses. Possibly, more PM in schools can make teachers feel that it is redundant to respond themselves. Performance management may also be more important for preventing the development of teacher underperformance in schools than for co-worker responses.

Team and relational factors also appear to be able to facilitate co-worker responses: our findings suggest that when co-workers collaborate more intensely with the underperforming teacher, they feel more responsible to respond, which enhances confrontation, compensation and report. We also found direct positive effects of collaboration intensity on confrontation and support. Possibly, this collaboration intensity can be linked to the interdependence among team members: more shared goals can create a sense of shared responsibility among co-workers to discuss each other's performance (Van den Bossche, Gijselaers, Segers, & Kirschner, 2006). Attribution studies also suggest that there needs to be a certain interdependence among co-workers for them to respond (LePine & van Dyne, 2001). Further, Schwappach and Gehring (2014) found that speaking up to a co-worker is easier when one knows this co-worker well. However, we did not find the quality of the relationship to have significant effects on responses. Team factors also appear to be important: when there is more reflective dialogue among team members, teachers feel more mandated to respond. Possibly, this dialogue creates a certain psychological safety or trust among co-workers to discuss each other's performance (Edmondson, 1999; Van den Bossche et al., 2006). Similar team influences were also found in previous research: team cohesion and trust were found to promote voice and report (Bowen & Blackmon, 2003; King & Hermodson, 2000). In addition, our findings suggest that when teachers open up their class doors to other teachers (i.e., deprivatised practices), they feel that it is more useful to respond, which leads to more direct responses towards the underperforming teacher. Possibly, in these cases,

underperforming teachers feel more obliged to change because there is more visibility and, therefore, more social control among team members. We also found that collective responsibility in the team prevents teachers from distancing themselves from the underperforming teacher. At the same time, this collective responsibility decreases co-workers' perceived mandate to respond, possibly because co-workers feel partly responsible for the underperformance in these cases. As such, they may feel that it would be less appropriate to judge the underperformance, which is a form of prosocial silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003). In sum, these relational and team influences suggest that co-workers feel more responsible when they work more closely together. In addition, greater professional community can enhance a climate where teachers feel safe to discuss each other's performance (but can also enhance prosocial silence), and where there is more social control to influence each other's performance. Together, these findings suggest the importance of enhancing teacher collaboration and professional community in (Flemish) schools.

In sum, concerning implications of our study for educational policy and practice, our findings suggest that creating a clear vision in schools on teachers' roles in responding to perceived underperformance, discussing the underperformance with co-workers, having an approachable communication style and enhancing teamwork and professional community in schools can facilitate co-workers' felt responsibility and authority to respond, as well as the perceived use of responding. This way, co-workers may respond and be able to impact on the underperformance, rather than tolerating it or distancing themselves from the underperformer, which may sustain or even worsen the underperformance. As such, schools can facilitate more indirect (report, compensation) and/or more direct (confrontation, support) co-worker responses to teacher underperformance, and therefore make use of the potential of co-workers to support the remediation of this underperformance.

Our study has a number of theoretical implications, and we would like to make some recommendations for future research. While our study built an explanatory framework for co-worker responses, it was one of the first large scale studies in education, thus the framework needs further testing and refinement. Looking at the number of direct effects found, it appears that the perceptions of having a responsibility and mandate to respond and perceptions about the use of responding only partly influence co-workers' responses. Other explanations may be identified in follow-up research. For example, in certain cases, the responses of distancing, reporting and confronting may be explained by a form of self-defence or punishment (cf. social exchange theory) (Neff, 2009); that is, our respondents reported more confrontation in cases of inappropriate behaviour towards co-workers, more reporting in cases of intentional lack of effort, and more distancing in cases of problematic collaboration. Second, we found that intense collaboration directly facilitated confrontation and support: an explanation here may be that in cases of intense collaboration, there are either more opportunities to respond, or not responding simply is impossible if the work is to be done. Third, we must also emphasise that we based our framework on a study in which co-workers were requested to explain their responses (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2019b). Therefore, our framework is based on explanations of which co-workers

are aware, i.e. well-considered, rational considerations. Previous research has however shown that emotions, personality factors and more automatic, nonconscious processes also play a role in their responses (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Edwards et al., 2009; Morrison, 2014). In this regard, emotions could for example explain why we found that limited instructional quality provokes many responses: possibly, it provokes strong emotions because it touches the core of the teaching profession. This implies that emotions may not only be related to specific causes of teacher underperformance (cf. attribution theory), but also to specific types of underperformance.

Certain limitations of our study also require future research. We could not study how co-workers' responses were influenced by other teachers' and principals' responses because of unclear causality in cross-sectional research. Possibly, these responses influence both each other and the underperformance, which provokes new responses and so on. These emerging dynamics could not by studied with our research design. Moreover, we depended on co-workers' reports of teacher underperformance, but their memories of the events can be distorted. To counter this, we did ask them to select recent examples (FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). In addition, we studied responses as an individual phenomenon, but underperformance is often discussed with co-workers and shared perceptions and responses may be formed (Harvey et al., 2014; Taggar & Neubert, 2004). Therefore, it would be interesting for follow-up research to study school and team level responses in longitudinal case studies. Moreover, our study cannot provide evidence of the impact of co-worker responses. Interestingly, we did find that teachers who indicated knowing from experience how to respond, more often used confrontation and support as responses. This might suggest that when teachers do try to respond, they have positive experiences. Therefore, it would be interesting to identify successful examples of how principals and co-workers address teacher underperformance in future studies.

Despite these limitations, our study provides an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses, which broadens our understanding of how and why co-workers respond in certain ways to underperforming teachers. We found that each of these responses is influenced by different situational, individual and contextual factors. How these influences unfold, can be partly explained by how co-workers perceive their responsibility and authority to respond, as well as the use of responding. Therefore, this study provides important insights into how leadership, relational and team factors can facilitate co-workers' responses.

Appendix 1: Overview of survey items

Measures	Example items	Scale Cronbach's Alpha	Scale Fit Indices
Influencing factors: underperformance characteristics: 16 types of underperformance, 9 causes, 6 manners of detection (5-point Likert scale) severity (scale 1-5)	type: *My colleague behaved counterproductively or negatively, or misbehaved, in terms of intentionally breaking rules or agreements.* cause: *My colleague lacks the necessary (up-to-date) skills or knowledge.* detection: *I was informed about the underperformance by students.* severity: *How severe was the underperformance in your perception?*		
Influencing factors: underperformer characteristics: relationship (quality, intensity, 4 types) (5-point Likert scale) underperformer's age	relationship quality: *Our collaboration was easy.* relationship intensity: *We collaborated intensely.* relationship type: *We worked in the same department.*		
Co-workers' considerations: necessity, responsibility, mandate, use	necessity: *I thought that someone needed to respond to the underperformance.* responsibility: *I found it my responsibility to respond to the underperformance.* mandate: *I thought that I had the right to take action.* use: *I thought that my response would positively impact the underperformance.*	4 scales measured with 3 items (5-point Likert scale) necessity 0.7 responsibility 0.78 mandate 0.83 use 0.72	RMSEA = 0.043 CFI = 0.974 TLI = 0.964
Co-workers' responses: confrontation, report to principal, distance, support, compensation, report to other co-workers	confront: *I requested my colleague to do something about his/ her underperformance.* report to principal: *I asked my principal to take action.* distance: *I distanced myself from my collegue (during the time of the underperformance).* support: *I emotionally supported my colleague (during the time of the underperformance).* compensate: *I took over one or more responsibilities of my colleague.* report to co-workers: *I told other colleagues about the underperformance.*	6 scales measured with 3-4 items (5-point Likert scale): confrontation 0.9 report to principal 0.94 distance 0.88 compensation 0.83 support 0.78 report to other co-workers 0.76	RMSEA = 0.041 CFI = 0.967 TLI = 0.961
Influencing factors: leadership characteristics: performance management (PM) (6 subscales: goals, communication, coaching, consequences, expectations, feedback), principal vision (PV) on co-workers' role (3 items) (5-point Likert scale)	PM: goals: *My principal assists teachers in setting specific, measurable performance goals.* communication: *My principal is approachable and available to talk to.* feedback: *My principal gives honest feedback.* coaching: *My principal shows teachers how to complete difficult assignments and tasks.* consequences: *My principal rewards good performance.* expectations: *My principal communicates expectations relating to quality.* PV: *My principal has a clear vision on co-workers' responsibilities in dealing with teacher underperformance.*	PM: 6 scales measures by 3-5 items (5-point Likert scale): goals 0.89 communication: 0.82 feedback 0.90 coaching 0.90 consequences 0.87 expectations 0.87	RMSEA = 0.040 CFI = 0.970 TLI = 0.967
Influencing factors: team characteristics: professional community (3 subscales: team dialogue, shared responsibility, and deprivatised practice)	team dialogue: *I have conversations about class management with my colleagues.* shared responsibility: *In this school, teachers take on responsibilities for the entire school, and not only for their classes.* deprivatised practice: *I visit other classrooms to observe my colleagues' teaching.*	3 scales measured with 3-4 items (5-point Likert scale): dialogue 0.81 shared responsibility 0.74 deprivatised practice 0.78	RMSEA = 0.038 CFI = 0.978 TLI = 0.961
Influencing factors: co-worker characteristics: age, work experience, tenure, general visions on and experiences with teacher underperformance (7 items) (5-point Likert scale)	general visions and experiences: *I find it inappropriate to respond to an underperforming co-worker in my position. Previous experiences have discouraged me to respond to an underperforming co-worker.*		

Appendix 2: Descriptive statistics

	Desciption	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
KNOW	Knowing a recent example of an underperforming co-worker	0	1	0.69	0.46
Underperformance characteristics					
TYPE_1	Quality of teaching content	1	5	3.73	1.22
TYPE_2	Quality of instruction/didactics	1	5	3.81	1.20
TYPE_3	Evaluating and monitoring students' learning and development	1	5	3.81	1.17
TYPE_4	Raising students	1	5	3.66	1.20
TYPE_5	Handling diversity in the classroom/differentiation	1	5	3.59	1.21
TYPE_6	Classroom management, creating a favourable learning climate	1	5	3.74	1.21
TYPE_7	Consulting and collaborating with colleagues	1	5	4.09	1.03
TYPE_8	Following up on agreements and task allocations	1	5	3.92	1.20
TYPE_9	Contributing to working groups, projects or other school tasks	1	5	4.08	1.14
TYPE_10	Fulfilling administrative tasks	1	5	3.76	1.24
TYPE_11	Cooperation with parents or others	1	5	3.38	1.19
TYPE_12	Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards students	1	5	2.63	1.37
TYPE_13	Inappropriate or unethical behaviour towards co-workers	1	5	2.74	1.47
TYPE_14	Intentionally breaking rules or arrangements	1	5	3.04	1.36
TYPE_15	Intentional lack of effort	1	5	4.00	1.14
TYPE_16	Illegitimate absences	1	5	2.38	1.43
SEVER	Severity of the underperformance	2	5	3.94	0.76
DE_1	Self-observed	0	1	0.92	0.28
DE_2	Informed by underperformer	0	1	0.11	0.31
DE_3	Informed by other co-worker(s)	0	1	0.55	0.50
DE_4	Informed by principal	0	1	0.12	0.32
DE_5	Informed by student(s)	0	1	0.42	0.49
DE_6	Informed by parent(s)	0	1	0.22	0.42
CAUS_1	Lack of (up-to-date) knowledge or skills	1	5	3.14	1.39
CAUS_2	Demotivation	1	5	3.72	1.19
CAUS_3	Faulty vision on education or the teacher's job	1	5	3.48	1.17
CAUS_4	Limited psychological strength/resilience	1	5	3.21	1.31
CAUS_5	Bad character or personality	1	5	4.27	0.82
CAUS_6	Private circumstances	1	5	2.78	1.39
CAUS_7	Students	1	5	1.73	0.95
CAUS_8	Task allocation	1	5	2.08	1.18
CAUS_9	Principal or school policy	1	5	2.63	1.32
Underperformer characteristics					
AGE_UP	Age of the underperformer	22	62	44.31	9.63
RELA_1	Intense collaboration	1	5	2.47	1.29
RELA_2	Good collaboration	1	5	2.74	1.19
RELA_3	Working in the same department	1	5	3.30	1.74
RELA_4	Working on the same school project or in the same working group	1	5	3.46	1.53
RELA_5	Meeting each other outside school/private relationship	1	5	1.66	1.17
RELA_6	Teaching common students	1	5	3.38	1.62

Building an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses

	Desciption	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Co-worker characteristics					
PE	Working in primary education	0	1	0.32	0.47
AGE	Age	22	73	41.62	10.35
EX_T	Experience as teacher	0	54	16.59	10.31
EX_S	Experience as teacher in the school of study	0	54	13.91	9.86
N-TE1	Non-tenured with fixed-term contract	0	1	0.13	0.34
N-TE2	Non-tenured with permanent contract	0	1	0.09	0.29
TE	Tenured	0	1	0.78	0.42
PT	Working less than 50%	0	1	0.03	0.18
BT	Working 50-90%	0	1	0.25	0.43
FT	Working more than 90%	0	1	0.72	0.45
VISI_1	My responsibility to take action when a co-worker underperforms	1	5	3.04	1.07
VISI_2	Appropriate to respond to underperforming co-worker in my position	1	5	2.78	1.18
VISI_3	Okay for teachers to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	3.77	0.98
VISI_4	Feel comfortable to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	1.96	1.01
VISI_5	In my nature/personality to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	2.67	1.22
VISI_6	Previous positive experiences with responding to underperforming co-workers	1	5	2.91	1.28
VISI_7	Know from experience how (not) to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	3.06	1.17
Leadership characteristics					
FB	Providing timely, specific and honest feedback to teachers	1	5	3.35	0.93
GOAL	Assisting teachers in setting performance goals	1	5	3.25	0.97
CO	Coaching teachers	1	5	3.33	0.93
COMM	Having an approachable communication style	1	5	3.88	0.98
CON	Providing consequences (e.g., recognition/rewards) for teacher performance	1	5	3.08	1.05
EXP	Establishing/monitoring performance expectations	1	5	3.53	0.91
PV_1	Principal vision: It is a teacher's job to respond to underperforming co-workers	1	5	3.29	1.08
PV_2	Principal vision: Teachers should report underperformance to principal	1	5	3.19	1.18
PV_3	Principal has a clear vision on co-workers' role in responding to underperformance	1	5	2.78	1.20
Team characteristics					
DIAL	Reflective dialogue	1	5	4.33	0.62
DEPR	Deprivatised practice	1	5	2.65	1.11
RESP	Collective responsibility	1	5	3.86	0.78
Considerations about responding to the reported examples of teacher underperformance					
NEC	Necessity for someone to respond	1	5	4.37	0.67
RES	My task/responsibility to respond	1	5	3.26	1.01
MAN	My mandate/authority to respond	1	5	2.82	1.12
USE	Perceived use of a response	1	5	2.50	0.91
Responses to the reported examples of teacher underperformance					
CON	Confront/speak up to the underperformer	1	5	2.57	1.24
REP	Report to/discuss with principal	1	5	3.18	1.49
DIS	Distance oneself from the underperformer	1	5	3.01	1.18
COM	Compensate for the underperformance	1	5	3.39	1.17
SUP	Support the underperformer	1	5	2.57	1.04
REPC	Report to/discuss with other co-workers	1	5	3.62	1.02

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion and discussion

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Conclusion and discussion

This dissertation studied co-workers' experiences with and responses to teacher underperformance by incorporating real-life cases of teacher underperformance. It has substantially broadened our knowledge and understanding of the concept of teacher underperformance and how it is experienced and addressed by co-workers, which has important implications for educational research, policy and practice. It proves the importance of paying attention to co-workers when studying and addressing teacher underperformance.

In this chapter, we resume the rationale and research aims of this dissertation, followed by a discussion of the main conclusions of the included studies. We also address the most important implications for educational policy and practice, the main strengths and limitations of this dissertation, and implications for future research.

1. Rationale and research aims: Why do we need to include co-workers in studies on teacher underperformance?

The work performance of teachers has a substantial impact on students, colleagues and schools as a whole. Unfortunately, not all teachers perform according to an acceptable standard. International research has found that 2 to 15% of teachers underperform (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). In Flanders, little is known about the incidence of teacher underperformance and how it impacts on and is dealt with in schools. International research suggests that dealing with teacher underperformance is a difficult and stressful task for school leaders (Causey, 2010; Mendez, 2009; Nixon et al., 2011). Co-workers' voices, experiences, and responses are often ignored in these studies. This is surprising because co-workers may also be impacted by, and respond to the underperformance. Moreover, they may be more aware of certain types of underperformance than their principals, especially as teacher collaboration is gaining importance in education. Additionally, co-workers may be able to have a positive impact on the underperformance (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005). Therefore, the general aim of this dissertation was twofold. First, we aimed to inform educational policy and practice by identifying how (Flemish) teachers experience teacher underperformance in their schools and how they respond to the underperformance. Second, we aimed to contribute to the theoretical understanding of co-worker responses by building an explanatory framework for co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance, identifying which factors hinder or enable these responses.

2. General conclusions and discussion

2.1. Teacher underperformance: a broad definition.

In chapter one, we investigated principals' and teachers' expectations of teacher performance. We also investigated the clarity of principals' expectations in two domains of the Flemish teachers' job profile; the teacher as facilitator of learning and development, and the teacher as member of the school team. Our findings suggest that performance expectations are school-dependent and subjective. They are based on teachers' and principals' teaching experiences and views on teaching, and also depend on the specific school context; for example, the student population can increase standards for class differentiation and remediation. In general, expectations regarding teaching were found to be similar for all teachers in the participating schools; all teachers were expected to perform well for all students with the one clear goal of maximising student learning. Therefore, our findings suggest that for teaching performance, there is a certain fixed standard in schools, which is, however, not that specific. On the contrary, expectations of school team performance (e.g., participation in school projects and working groups) appear to be more teacher-dependent, debatable and diverse in schools, i.e. to have a more relative standard. In the studied schools, there appeared to be disagreement as to the extent to which non-teaching behaviours were either in-role or a form of voluntary and extra-role performance. Moreover, we found that principals' communication of their expectations to teachers tended to be limited, especially to more experienced teachers, who therefore experienced unclear expectations. Principals focussed on managing the performance of beginning, non-tenured teachers, and feared that too strict expectations might harm teachers' motivation. While some teachers in our study liked this autonomy in their work, others wished for clearer expectations, to make teachers' work performance more balanced and fairer. Finally, our findings suggest that teachers themselves can also influence expectations in their schools. For example, through informal talks with co-workers and common practices, teachers learn about certain expectations that exist in the team (e.g., in one of the participating schools, the teaching team considered it an obvious task for all teachers to work with 'the child behind the student' and his or her personal context).

For the definition of teacher underperformance, these findings suggest that there is not one clear standard that is applied across Flemish schools, or even within schools (especially for non-teaching performance). Because of the context-related, subjective nature of teacher (under)performance, combined with insights from the existing literature on work performance and teacher (under)performance more specifically, we built the following definition of teacher underperformance for this dissertation:

an underperforming teacher is one who: performs below the standard; in one or more teaching or non-teaching work domains; at one or more moments. This underperformance may concern task underperformance and/or counterproductive work behaviours (CWB).

This definition acknowledges that teacher underperformance is an evaluative, multidimensional, context-related and dynamic construct. In addition, it is a broad definition, that leaves room for new insights into how co-workers perceive underperformance (Yariv, 2004). This definition has some important implications for how our results should be understood. First, this dissertation does not only concern teachers who are perceived to be overall and/or long-term underperformers, but it also concerns teachers who underperform in one specific domain and/or for a short time period. Moreover, we allowed the concept to be subjective: in this dissertation, we discussed underperformance through the lens of co-workers' perception. This does not mean that all team members would perceive these teachers to be underperforming nor that, for example, the principal or students would perceive this. However, we studied how co-workers responded when they perceived incidents of teacher underperformance, i.e. when they were confronted with cases of underperformance that were important to them and/or affected them.

2.2. <u>Co-workers are not only affected by the underperformance itself, but also by limited principal responses.</u>

Throughout this dissertation, we obtained more insight into how teachers in Flanders experience teacher underperformance in their schools, as well as how they are impacted by this underperformance. The findings from both our quantitative and qualitative studies indicate that most teachers know recent examples of underperforming co-workers, which they often observed themselves, or learned about from students. These include very diverse examples of both team- and student-related underperformance. Flemish teachers perceive up to 20% of their co-workers to underperform. Further, incidents of underperformance are generally perceived as severe, long-lasting and having individual causes related to the underperforming teacher's personality, motivation, and/or vision on education or the teacher's job. The working relationship with the underperforming teacher is often considered to be rather negative and superficial. Dependent on the nature of the underperformance, co-workers are more directly or indirectly affected by the underperformance. Regardless of the incident, however, we found that these incidents provoke negative emotions, concerns and frustrations with co-workers. The underperformance often harms the team and, in some cases, also burdens co-workers' workload. Most teachers in this dissertation did not perceive that their own performance was affected by the underperformance.

Next to the impact of the underperformance itself, our findings indicate that co-workers may experience an additional impact of their principals' lack of response to the underperformance. Respondents explained how this reinforced their frustrations and concerns, and made them pessimistic about change. They felt that their principals more often tolerated the underperformance than confronted, supported or monitored the underperforming teacher. In chapter 2, our respondents also reported a general lack of performance management (PM) in their schools; little performance monitoring, feedback and coaching, and too much professional freedom for teachers. Our findings indicate that this makes teachers feel unappreciated, and frustrated about the perceived unfairness of tolerating teacher underperformance and the resulting

injustice in teachers' workload. Research suggests that these negative feelings can, in time, undermine their performance (Hung et al., 2009; Krings & Bollmann, 2011; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013; Yang, 2008).

2.3. <u>Co-workers doubt their roles in responding to teacher underperformance and co-workers' responses are careful and limited.</u>

Chapters 2 and 3 indicate that it is far from straightforward for teachers in Flanders to respond to teacher underperformance. Although differences exist between teachers, they often doubt their responsibility to respond, feel that, as co-workers, they are not authorised to respond, and/or perceive that responding would be useless. Reacting to underperforming co-workers makes teachers feel uncomfortable, and many teachers feel that it is not in their nature to respond. Teachers respond to perceived incidents of underperformance in different ways, by speaking up to the underperformer, by discussing the underperformance with the principal or other co-workers, by distancing themselves from the underperformer, by providing support/advice, or by compensating for the underperformance. However, in general, responses are careful and limited. We found that teachers more often use indirect responses (compensation or report) or distance themselves from the underperforming teacher, rather than to directly confront or support/advise them. When they do confront the underperforming teacher, they do so carefully, by, for example, asking questions about certain behaviour without criticising, expressing their own opinions without demanding the underperformer changes their behaviour, and in a positive and motivating manner.

This finding about limited co-worker responses, especially directed towards the underperforming teacher, is worrying because co-workers' silence about teacher underperformance may be detrimental for the school on different levels (Morrison, 2014): when co-workers keep silent, or even distance themselves from the underperforming teacher, they may possibly sustain or even worsen the underperformance, which may cause further harm to everyone affected by the underperformance. Moreover, the underperforming teacher may remain unaware that others perceive them to be underperforming. Our findings suggest that teacher underperformance is not a black-and-white subject as teachers have different views on education or the teacher's job (Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003). Therefore, speaking up can be a learning opportunity and an opportunity to create a shared vision on being a teacher, which may also foster teachers' collaboration (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Moreover, principals do not have the time to address teacher performance all by themselves (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). They also often depend on peer reporting to learn about the underperformance (Richardson et al., 2008). In this regard, we found that teachers often observe incidents of teacher underperformance or receive signals from students. Combined with research evidence suggesting that co-workers can support the remediation of teacher underperformance (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005), our

findings indicate that schools (at least in Flanders) do not fully use the potential of co-worker responses to impact on teacher underperformance.

2.4. <u>Co-workers' responses can be explained by their perceptions about their responsibility, authority and the use of responding, which are in turn influenced by different situational, individual and contextual factors.</u>

Chapter 4 indicates that indirect co-worker responses (compensation and report) can be explained by co-workers feeling that they have the responsibility do to so. On the contrary, providing support/advice to the underperforming teacher can be explained by the co-worker's perception that their response will be useful. On the other hand, when co-workers feel that responding would be useless, they distance themselves from the underperforming teacher. Our findings indicate that confronting the underperformer teacher not only depends on whether co-workers feel responsibility to respond, or feel that responding would be useful, but also on whether co-workers feel mandated to respond.

Figure 1 shows that these considerations of responsibility, mandate and use can be explained by different individual, situational and contextual factors. More specifically, the co-workers' general views on their role in dealing with teacher underperformance appear to influence all three considerations, and therefore both direct and indirect responses; that is, when teachers feel responsible and/or mandated to respond to teacher underperformance in general, they will more often respond in specific cases of teacher underperformance. Next to this more general vision or attitude towards responding, we found that co-workers also felt more responsible for responding when they collaborated more intensely with the underperforming teacher, and when they were informed about the underperformance by the principal. Whether co-workers feel mandated to respond and feel that it would be useful to respond also depends on the specific situation, i.e. the exact nature and cause of the underperformance. For example, respondents felt that it would be more useful to respond when the underperformance concerned classroom management, and felt more mandated to respond when they perceived that a lack of knowledge or skills caused the underperformance. In addition, co-workers perceive that responding is more useful when the underperformer is younger, and feel more mandated to respond when they are informed about the underperformance by parents. Team and leadership factors also appear to influence how teachers perceive their mandate and the use of responding: teachers feel more mandated when there is more reflective dialogue in the team and when the principal has an approachable communication style, but less mandated when there is more collective responsibility in the team. Teachers feel that responding would be more useful when the team is characterised by deprivatised practice, and when their principal has a clear vision on teachers' responsibilities in dealing with underperforming co-workers, but perceive less use when the principal provides more performance feedback to teachers (one of the studied PM-domains).
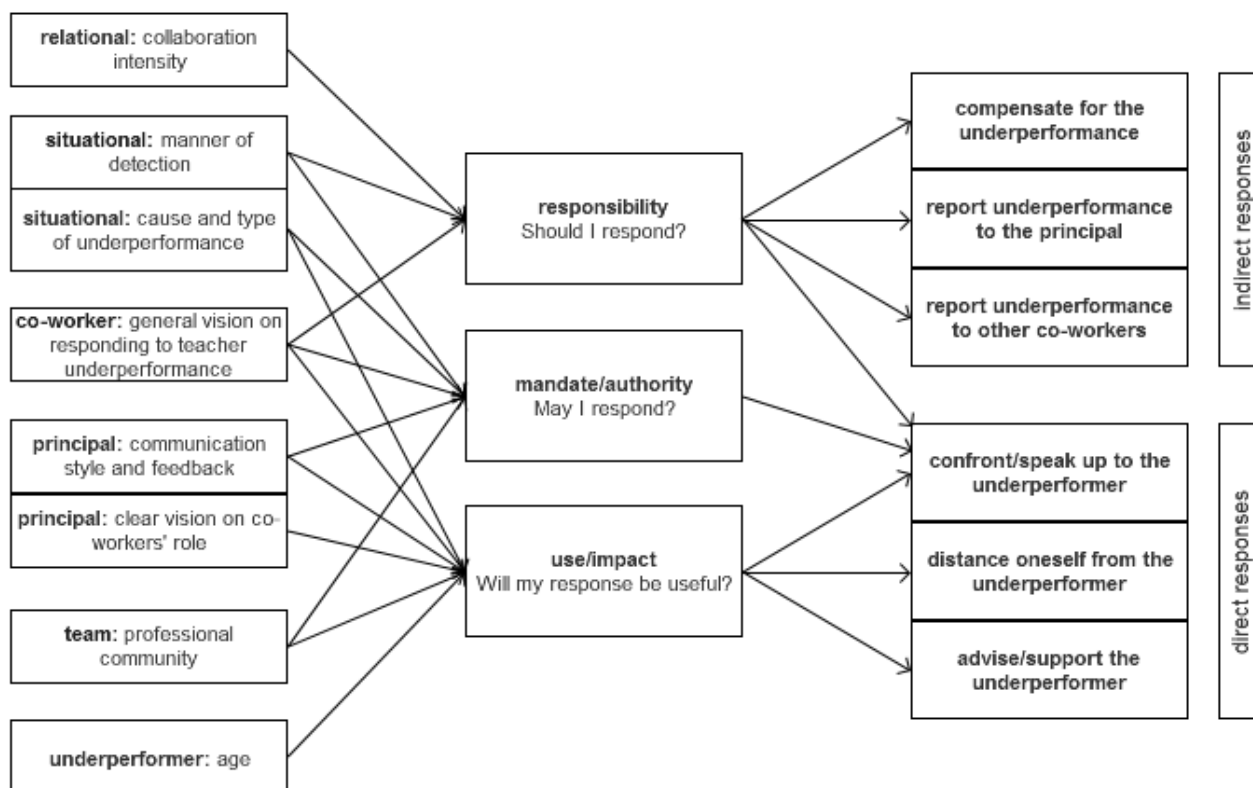
Figure 1: Explanatory framework for co-workers' responses to incidents of teacher underperformance.

Together, these findings suggest that teachers have a certain general attitude towards the topic, which influences their responses, independent of the specific situation. In addition, co-workers feel more mandate and perceive more use with specific types and causes of underperformance. They perceive that it is less useful to respond to older underperformers, and feel more responsible and mandated to respond when, respectively, the principal and parents informed them about the underperformance. Moreover, our results suggest that co-workers feel more responsible when they collaborate more intensely with the underperformer. In addition, the school's professional community can enhance the perceived mandate and use of responding. Finally, principals can also influence the perceived responsibility and mandate to respond, and the perceived use of responding: by creating a clear vision in schools on teachers' roles in responding to underperformers, by discussing the underperformance with co-workers and by having an approachable communication style.

While the perceived responsibility, mandate and use of responding appear to be important explanations for co-workers' responses, our findings suggest that they are only part of the explanation, since we also found many direct significant effects of influencing factors on responses. Some hypotheses about alternative explanations are incorporated in the implications for future research discussed below.

3. Implications for (Flemish) educational policy and practice

The obtained insights into teachers' experiences with and responses to teacher underperformance have important implications for educational policy and practice.

3.1. Acknowledging and limiting the impact of teacher underperformance on co-workers.

Our findings throughout this dissertation indicate that co-workers are confronted with often severe and long-lasting types of underperformance. This underperformance can cause considerable frustrations and concerns, and burden co-workers' workload and teamwork. Therefore, it is important that principals (and others in leadership positions) recognise and acknowledge how teacher underperformance impacts on team members and how their own lack of response (as perceived by co-workers) can strengthen this impact. It appears crucial that co-workers perceive that their principals take action and adequately address the underperformance. Of course, it may be that teachers are unaware of their principals' responses; however, as research on principal responses (including a study in Flanders) suggests, principals often find it hard to address teacher underperformance (Causey, 2010; Mendez, 2009; Nixon et al., 2011; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). Consequently, co-workers' perceptions about limited principal responses may be justified. In this regard, research suggests that the principal's willingness to intervene, an intensive use of various measures and resources in an intervention tailored to the teacher's unique situation and needs (and involving various professionals), a favourable work climate and principal-teacher relationship, and the underperformer's willingness to change are all crucial for the success of interventions (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Donaldson, 2013; Monteiro et al., 2013; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Sinnema et al., 2013; Yariv & Kass, 2017).

In chapter 2, we found that for teachers' morale, it is not only important that principals respond to specific incidents of teacher underperformance, but also that their responses are part of a broader PM-system. Our respondents perceived little performance monitoring and evaluation, mentoring and coaching in their schools. Aguinis and Pierce (2008) define PM as "a continuous process of identifying, measuring and developing the performance of individuals and teams and aligning performance with the strategic goals of the organization" (p.139). It consists of interwoven and aligned PM-practices such as performance coaching and feedback, and performance appraisal. It requires defining and clarifying a performance standard and related individualised performance expectations for teachers, as other practices such as appraisal build upon it. The findings of chapter 1 suggest that because of the complex and debatable nature of teacher performance it is desirable to have more systematic discussion about expectations in schools, and thereby create shared performance standards for both teaching and non-teaching performance. This creates clarity for teachers while at the same time recognising their professionalism, strengthens common goals, and motivates teachers' continuous professional development (Aguinis et al., 2011). When there is more 'performance talk' in schools, when expectations are clear, and teachers receive regular feedback, it is easier to discuss teacher underperformance when it develops (also for co-

workers) and to hold teachers accountable for their actions (e.g., discussing a lack of non-teaching performance is difficult when non-teaching expectations are unclear) (Armstrong & Baron, 2014; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). Moreover, the findings in chapter 1 suggest that principals tend to focus on managing the performance of beginning, non-tenured teachers. However, it is no longer the reality that once one becomes a teacher or receives tenure, one knows how to perform one's job for the rest of one's career (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Day & Gu, 2009; Meng & Munoz, 2016). Therefore, it is important to discuss expectations with all teachers and to stimulate professional development throughout teachers' careers.

Our findings suggest that when principals manage teacher performance and address teacher underperformance, they show teachers that work quality is important, and create a climate of justice and fairness in which hard-working teachers feel acknowledged for their good work. While it is the principal's job to make the final judgment about underperformance, signals of co-workers should not be ignored. Of course, principals should address teacher underperformance confidentially (Page, 2016a), but they can still assure co-workers that action is being taken. In this regard, research suggests that when co-workers feel that supervisors turn a deaf ear to their concerns, this may be harmful for their well-being, job attitudes and performance, and can even cause staff turnover (Knoll & van Dick, 2013b; Milliken & Morrison, 2003; Vakola & Bouradas, 2005; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013).

3.2. Facilitating co-workers' responses to teacher underperformance.

Chapter 4 provides evidence about how certain co-worker responses can be facilitated in schools. This is important as we found that, at least in Flanders, responses of co-workers are rather limited and careful; some teachers do not feel they have responsibility or authority to respond, or they perceive limited use in responding. As discussed, this can be considered as untapped potential to address teacher underperformance in schools because, as we found in chapter one, teachers are sensitive to the performance expectations of team members. What is more, research indicates that teachers are able to impact on each other's performance and support the remediation of underperformance (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005). Our findings suggest that certain relational, team and leadership factors can support co-workers' felt responsibility and authority to respond, as well as the perceived use of responding and, therefore, facilitate co-workers' responses. More specifically, to make teachers feel that it would be appropriate and useful to respond and, therefore, to stimulate confrontation and support of underperforming teachers it appears important to break the tradition of individual teaching (i.e., to facilitate deprivatised practices such as co-teaching) and to create more reflective dialogue in schools. This may foster a safe work environment to discuss each other's performance and create more social control among teachers (Edmondson, 1999; Van den Bossche et al., 2006). At the same time, we found that collective responsibility in the team can decrease co-workers' perceived mandate to respond, possibly because co-workers feel partly responsible for the underperformance in these cases. As

such, they may feel that it would be less appropriate to judge the underperformance, which is a form of prosocial silence (Van Dyne et al., 2003). To stimulate confrontation and support it also appears important that principals express their visions on teachers' roles in dealing with underperforming teachers (since teachers are often willing to follow principals' requests or advice in dealing with teacher underperformance) and are approachable to teachers. In addition, our findings indicate that more intense collaboration between teachers can facilitate their felt responsibility to respond and, therefore, speaking up to the underperformer, reporting teacher underperformance, and compensating actions (such as taking over some of the underperformer's tasks). Moreover, when the principal informs co-workers about the underperformance, these co-workers also feel more responsible to respond. Probably, they feel an obligation towards the principal because the principal confides in them to discuss the underperformance (Bowling & Lyons, 2015).

While we have put the focus on what school principals can do to limit the impact on co-workers and to facilitate co-workers' responses, we believe that it is also co-workers' responsibility to address teacher underperformance, especially when it has a profound impact on students or the school. We cannot put all the responsibility on principals, and teachers may be more aware of, and equipped to deal with, certain cases of teacher underperformance (e.g., to provide specific types of advice and support). Therefore, principals need support from co-workers. Inherently, being a teacher and providing quality education requires a shared responsibility for student learning and for the functioning of the school (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). We cannot accept that teachers ignore teacher underperformance and do not feel responsible for the wider school. Teachers can also help to enhance the collaboration and professional community in the school, for example, by stimulating dialogue among team members, by opening up their classrooms to co-workers and by providing peer feedback. At the same time, however, we must also recognise that teachers can perceive more possible costs than benefits of speaking up (Knoll & van Dick, 2013a; Van Dyne et al., 2003, Bisel & Arterburn, 2012; Morrison, 2011). For example, as our findings suggest, teachers may fear that speaking up will harm their chances of receiving tenure when they do not know the principal's vision on peer report. Teachers may also decide to remain silent when there is no openness in the team, or too much gossip, to give feedback to others. Alternatively, they may remain silent because they believe that speaking up will cause even more deterioration in a co-worker's performance. In this regard, teacher silence may not be a simple toleration of the underperformance, but rather a purposeful decision to protect oneself or others (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Zehir & Erdogan, 2011).

3.3. A shared responsibility between teachers, principals and educational policy.

Schools form an inherent part of the wider educational system. Therefore, to understand our findings, it is crucial not to ignore this wider educational context (Liu et al., 2016; Meier et al., 2015; Meng & Munoz, 2016). The long history of individuality and autonomy of teachers' work in Flanders most probably relates to our finding that it is not obvious for teachers to judge or

speak up to co-workers at the same hierarchical level. In this regard, research has shown that in education, norms of collegiality and collaboration are counterbalanced by norms of privacy and autonomy, and individual accountability. This has been put forward as an explanation for why teachers often collaborate on a superficial level, and are reluctant to discuss their performance, to question team members' work or to provide performance feedback to other teachers (Hargreaves, 2001; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Little, 1990; Manouchehri, 2001; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Moreover, research on peer assistance, teacher leadership and teacher collaboration has found that for these practices to work, they need to be backed-up by the structural, micro political and cultural work environment (Goldstein, 2003; Johnson & Donaldson, 2007; Kelchtermans, 2006). In this regard, Morrison (2011) suggests that workers more often speak up in self-managing work groups with more egalitarian practices such as peer evaluations because they make it easier and less intimidating to voice, and increase feelings of voice efficacy. However, Flemish education does not have a long tradition of deprivatised practices (such as co-teaching), and there are no formal programmes of peer evaluation, peer assistance or monitoring. Moreover, while the teachers' job profile suggests that being a teacher is more than teaching and that teachers also hold non-teaching responsibilities, teachers' official working hours only include teaching hours; no hours allocated for collegial discussion or collaboration. In addition, norms of seniority are also still present in The Flemish educational system: once teachers have received tenure, it is often perceived that they are untouchable, making teachers and principals feel that tenured teachers' underperformance is impossible to address (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016).

Research suggests that principals also face considerable concerns and obstacles when tackling teacher underperformance (Causey, 2010; Mendez, 2009; Nixon et al., 2011; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). In this regard, the Flemish educational system expects a lot of principals, but provides little support. Principals have a substantial workload and are largely on their own when it comes to managing teacher performance. What is more, the quality of human resource (HR) practices largely depends on the individual principal; this is because school boards largely decentralise these responsibilities to individual schools, plus other management levels are absent in Flemish education (Devos et al., 2007; Tuytens & Devos, 2014; Vekeman et al., 2016). This high workload, combined with a lack of adequate support and training to address teacher underperformance, can make principals reluctant to deal with underperforming teachers (Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Menuey, 2007; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016; Yariv, 2009a, 2009b).

This suggests that it would be wrong to hold teachers or principals individually accountable for their responses to teacher underperformance (Painter, 2000). Instead, it takes a system to deal with such a complex issue. This requires a shared responsibility between teachers, principals (and others in leadership positions) and educational policy to tackle teacher underperformance, supported by supportive services for schools, and teacher and principal education, to provide principals and teachers with the know-how and resources to accomplish this.

4. Strengths and limitations of this dissertation and recommendations for future research

This dissertation is one of the first studies on co-workers of underperforming teachers, and the first large-scale study on this topic in Flanders. As such, it provides a broad view on teacher underperformance and its impact, as well as on how teacher performance is dealt with in Flemish schools, by focusing on a stakeholder that is too often ignored in research, i.e. co-workers of underperforming teachers. Our findings indicate that these co-workers should be heard when studying and addressing teacher underperformance because they are aware of teacher underperformance, are affected by this underperformance, and respond to the underperformance. This dissertation also provides important insights into how and why co-workers respond in certain ways, which informs the existing international research on teacher underperformance, as well as organisational research on co-workers more in general. Moreover, it informs educational practice about how co-worker responses may be facilitated. In addition, this dissertation advances the debate about the role of these co-workers when confronted with an underperforming teacher. An important strength is that it used the critical incident technique (CIT); thus, it investigated real cases of teacher underperformance to study both the phenomenon in-depth and the actual behaviours of co-workers rather than relying on vignettes or hypothetical cases, which may be of less value or less recognisable for teachers, and may identify intentions rather than actual behaviours (Struthers et al., 2001).

We built and tested an explanatory framework for different co-worker responses based on the existing literature (mostly from other work sectors). Since our dissertation was one of the first studies in education, we studied diverse types of co-worker responses, along with a number of different influencing factors, to obtain an exhaustive picture of co-worker responses and to test different possible explanations. However, our findings suggest that this framework can only partly explain why co-workers respond in certain ways. Alternative explanations will need to be added to the framework. From the influences we found but could not explain (i.e., the direct effects of influencing factors on responses) new hypotheses for future research can be drawn. For example, in certain cases, responses such as distancing, reporting and confronting may be explained as a form of self-protection or punishment for the underperformance (Neff, 2009); that is, our respondents reported more confrontation in cases of inappropriate behaviour towards co-workers, more reporting in cases of intentional lack of effort, and more distancing in cases of problematic collaboration. As such, it probably not only matters in which domain(s) someone underperforms, but also how this person performs in other domains. For example, a teacher who is collegial or puts a lot of effort into students/the team, and who has a more favourable position in the team, may be treated differently in cases of performance problems. Therefore, for future research, we recommend taking the whole picture of the performance into account, as well as the underperformers' position in the team, for example with social network analysis. Second, we found that intense collaboration with the underperforming teacher facilitates confrontation and

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support: an explanation here may be that in cases of intense collaboration, there are either more opportunities to respond or it is simply impossible not to respond to get the work done and to reach shared goals (Van den Bossche et al., 2006). Third, we found that more PM in schools restricts rather than enables co-workers' responses. Possibly, more PM means that principals more adequately respond to teacher underperformance, thus making co-workers feel that it is unnecessary for them to respond. On the other hand, our qualitative study suggests that a lack of principal response can make co-workers feel reluctant to respond. Therefore, it would be interesting for further research to study principals' responses and to assess if they are complementary or supplementary to teachers' responses. Finally, our framework is based on explanations of which co-workers are aware, i.e. well-considered, rational considerations. Previous research has, however, suggested that emotions, personality factors and more automatic, nonconscious processes also play a role in their responses (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Edwards et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2014; Morrison, 2014). In this regard, emotions could, for example, explain why we found that limited instructional quality provokes many responses (i.e., more distance and reporting, and less support). It is possible that it provokes strong emotions because it touches the core of the teaching profession. This would imply that emotions are not only related to specific causes of teacher underperformance (cf., attribution theory), but also to specific types of underperformance.

Since this dissertation incorporates cross-sectional research, further research would benefit from a more longitudinal research design. Using the CIT, our study relied on our respondents' memories and reports of the studied examples of teacher underperformance, which may be distorted or incomplete (FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). Moreover, teacher underperformance and (non-)responses of principals and co-workers are dynamic. In this regard, our research topic could be considered as an emerging phenomenon (Kozlowski, Chao, Grand, Braun, & Kuljanin, 2013), in which co-workers' responses evolve and are influenced by other teachers' and principals' responses, creating collective responses, and in which responses, in turn, impact on the underperformance, which may provoke new responses, and so on. These dynamics could not be captured in our research design. Longitudinal case study research at the team and school level would allow the study of cases in real time and could also provide more insight into these dynamics. Second, further research would also benefit from triangulation of data sources. While co-workers' perceptions are key to their responses, we must emphasise that the studied cases are not objective reports: others involved could have different perceptions of the underperformance, and teachers might be unaware of their principals' or other team members' responses. Therefore, by including different parties involved, for example, students and their parents, the principal, co-workers, and ideally also the alleged underperforming teacher, we would gain a more complete picture of the underperformance and how it affects and is dealt with by these different parties. Moreover, in follow-up research, attention should be paid to the needs of principals and teachers, as well as wider educational system factors that influence their perceptions and responses, to obtain more insight into how teachers and principals can be supported to tackle the complex problem of teacher underperformance. In addition, we did not

study the impact of co-workers' responses on teacher underperformance. Interestingly, in chapter 4 we did find that teachers who indicated knowing from experience how to respond, more often used confrontation and support as responses. This might suggest that when teachers do try to respond, they have positive experiences. Therefore, we recommend future research to identify successful examples of how principals and co-workers address teacher underperformance (potentially combined with specific interventions) to get more insight into which co-worker and principal responses can make a difference for which underperforming teachers, and which co-workers are more prepared and/or more competent to respond to a teacher's underperformance (e.g., co-workers with certain additional responsibilities such as grade coordinators, student counsellors, and department heads).

Throughout this dissertation, we experienced how challenging it can be to study teacher underperformance. First, it cannot be studied independent of context, since it is entangled with all aspects of school management, the school environment and team functioning, as well as wider system factors (Liu et al., 2016; Meng & Munoz, 2016). Therefore, it is hard to generalise findings to other educational contexts. Moreover, it was challenging to find schools and teachers who were willing to participate in our studies, partly because principals and teachers are reluctant to talk about or admit the existence of teacher underperformance. For ethical reasons, it is impossible for researchers to identify and address underperforming teachers (Yariv & Kass, 2017). Confidentiality and privacy are vital in this research area. Despite these challenges, we recommend studying real cases of teacher underperformance because our study topic is highly emotional, relational, subjective and context-bound, which cannot be captured with vignettes or hypothetical cases.

With this dissertation, I hope that educational policy and practice will start paying true attention to the impact of teacher underperformance on co-workers and will start a discussion about the role of co-workers in addressing teacher underperformance. More in general, it is my hope that in these turbulent times of continuous educational reforms, our educational government, policy makers and school leaders will become truly aware of the importance of a systematic HR- and performance management in schools (instead of simply performing performance evaluations) which is based on a clear vision and on educational research. I also hope that schools and school leaders will be equipped with the knowledge and resources needed to accomplish this, without hiding behind the autonomy of schools to let them struggle. Creating and supporting such management is not an easy task, as it should be aligned with all aspects of school organisation, leadership and management. However, if we want to increase educational quality, this is one of the domains that has the most untapped potential and needs true, systematic attention and action. Therefore, in time, we will hopefully lose the idea that in education people management is impossible or purposeless (because of tenure contracts). For educational research, I hope that scholars will collaborate closely with educational policy and practice to address those areas in which educational quality can be raised, while incorporating insights from other research disciplines (e.g., organisational studies) that can inform educational research. In this way, improving educational quality becomes a truly shared effort.

DUTCH SUMMARY

NEDERLANDSTALIGE SAMENVATTING

Dutch summary - Nederlandstalige samenvatting

Bijstand of weerstand?
Ervaringen van collega's en hun reacties op leraaronderpresteren.

1. Probleemstelling en rationale

Internationaal onderzoek toont aan dat 2 tot 15 procent van de leraren beneden de standaard presteert (Lavely, 1992; Menuey, 2007; OFSTED/TTA, 1996; Pugh, 2014; Yariv, 2004). Deze leraren kunnen een aanzienlijke impact hebben op het leren, de motivatie en het welbevinden van leerlingen, alsook op collega's, schooldirecties en de school als geheel (Causey, 2010; Menuey, 2007; Page, 2016a). Het bestaande onderzoek naar onderpresterende leraren focust voornamelijk op wat directeurs als onderpresteren beschouwen en hoe ze dit probleem vervolgens aanpakken. Hierin wordt gesuggereerd dat directeurs vaak ernstige kopzorgen ervaren, alsook diverse twijfels en obstakels wanneer ze het onderpresteren willen aanpakken (o.a. de vaste benoeming, relationele moeilijkheden, gebrek aan steun/tijd) (Causey, 2010; Le Fevre & Robinson, 2014; Mendez, 2009; Nixon et al., 2011; Page, 2016a; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016; Yariv, 2006). Schoolleiders zijn daarom vaak terughoudend om prestatieproblemen aan te pakken en wachten lang alvorens te reageren (Menuey, 2007; Sinnema, Le Fevre, Robinson, & Pope, 2013; Yariv, 2009a). Wanneer ze toch reageren, doen ze dat reactief, eerder dan vanuit een duidelijke strategie en gebruiken ze vooral ondersteunende maatregelen (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016; Yariv & Coleman, 2005).

In het bestaande onderzoek naar onderpresterende leraren wordt de stem van collega's, alsook hun ervaringen en reacties, grotendeels genegeerd. Dit is een belangrijke tekortkoming, aangezien: 1) het onderpresteren zichtbaarder kan zijn voor collega's en zij ook signalen over het onderpresteren kunnen opvangen van leerlingen of ouders, 2) collega's ook geschaad kunnen worden door het onderpresteren en 3) collega's eveneens kunnen reageren op het onderpresteren. Onderzoek toont bovendien aan dat collega's elkaars presteren en professionele ontwikkeling kunnen beïnvloeden en dat de betrokkenheid van leraren kan helpen om onderpresteren te remediëren (o.a. via coaching, observatie en mentorschap) (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg, et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005). Het onderwijs heeft een lange geschiedenis van geprivatiseerde praktijk, waarbij leraren achter gesloten deuren lesgaven, zonder supervisie (Price, 2012). Dit geldt ook voor Vlaanderen. Vandaag worden teamwerk en de professionele schoolgemeenschap echter meer en meer als onmisbaar beschouwd voor de ontwikkeling van leraren en voor schooleffectiviteit (Day & Gu, 2007; Goddard et al., 2007; Tam, 2015; Vangrieken et al., 2015). Omwille van dit toenemende belang van samenwerking zullen leraren zich wellicht ook nog meer bewust worden van prestatieproblemen van collega's (Richardson et al., 2008), waardoor ze een prominente partij

worden om te betrekken in onderwijsonderzoek naar onderpresteren. Gezien de professionaliteit van leraren en het belang van teamwerk voor onderwijskwaliteit, kan de lerarengroep bovendien collectief verantwoordelijk worden geacht voor de geleverde kwaliteit (Tuytens & Devos, 2012). Daarbij komt dat directeurs niet de tijd hebben om het presteren en onderpresteren van alle leraren alleen te managen. Directeurs kunnen mogelijk ook niet alle vormen van onderpresteren evengoed beoordelen of ondersteunen als collega-leraren dat kunnen (Darling-Hammond, 2013).

Om deze redenen wilden we in dit proefschrift de ervaringen van leraren en hun reacties op leraaronderpresteren diepgaand bestuderen. We gingen ook op zoek naar verklaringen voor collega-reacties.

Dit proefschrift had daarom een tweeledig onderzoeksdoel, namelijk:

- Identificeren hoe (Vlaamse) leraren leraaronderpresteren in hun school ervaren, alsook hoe ze erop reageren.
- Een verklarend raamwerk ontwikkelen voor reacties van collega's op onderpresterende leraren.

Hierbij stelden we voorop om echte casussen van onderpresteren te bestuderen. In de geringe onderwijsstudies, alsook in studies van andere sectoren, werden voornamelijk vignetten of hypothetische casussen gebruikt om reacties van collega's te bestuderen (e.g., Ferguson et al., 2010; Liden et al., 2001; Richardson et al., 2008). Deze brengen eerder de attitudes en goede intenties van collega's naar boven dan hun echte reacties (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Struthers, Miller, Boudens, & Briggs, 2001). Hoewel het bestuderen van echte praktijkvoorbeelden een uitdaging vormt voor onderzoekers, is het onontbeerlijk, aangezien intenties sterk kunnen verschillen van effectieve reacties omwille van de sociale en emotionele complexiteit van (reageren op) leraaronderpresteren (Painter, 2000).

2. Studies en hun bevindingen

2.1. Hoofdstuk 1: prestatieverwachtingen in scholen en een definitie van onderpresteren

2.1.1. Prestatieverwachtingen in scholen

Hoofdstuk 1 omvat een eerste studie die zich focust op de verwachtingen die directeurs en leraren in Vlaanderen hebben ten aanzien van leraarprestaties. Aangezien 'onderpresteren' impliceert dat iemand beneden een bepaalde standaard presteert, focust dit hoofdstuk op: Wat wordt van leraren verwacht? Is er een duidelijke standaard? Kan hiervan een definitie van onderpresteren afgeleid worden voor het verdere proefschrift? Volgende onderzoeksvragen werden hierbij vooropgesteld:

- Wat verwachten directeurs en leraren van de prestaties van leraren?

- Zijn de verwachtingen van directeurs helder voor leraren?

Om deze onderzoeksvragen te beantwoorden, werden directeurs en leraren van vier Vlaamse secundaire scholen geïnterviewd. De focus lag op twee domeinen van het beroepsprofiel van leraren, namelijk 1) de leraar als facilitator van leer- en ontwikkelingsprocessen en 2) de leraar als lid van het schoolteam. Deze twee domeinen werden in eerder onderzoek aangeduid als de domeinen die het meest belangrijk geacht worden in het secundair onderwijs (Devos et al., 2013). De bevindingen van deze eerste studie tonen aan dat prestatieverwachtingen contextafhankelijk zijn. Ze zijn ook subjectief, aangezien ze beïnvloed worden door de ervaringen van leraren en directeurs en uit hun visies op goed leraarschap en onderwijs. Over het algemeen waren verwachtingen aangaande lesgeven gelijkaardig voor alle leraren in de deelnemende scholen: van alle leraren werd verwacht dat ze goed presteerden voor alle leerlingen, met één duidelijk doel: het maximaliseren van leren. Dit betekent dat er op dit vlak een zekere algemene standaard bestaat binnen de scholen, maar die is niet heel erg specifiek. Deze standaard is ook afhankelijk van de schoolcontext. De studentenpopulatie kan er bijvoorbeeld voor zorgen dat in bepaalde scholen meer belang wordt gehecht aan differentiatie en remediëring. Verwachtingen betreffende schoolteamprestaties (zoals deelnemen aan projecten en schoolwerkgroepen) waren meer leraarafhankelijk, discutabel en divers in de deelnemende scholen, m.a.w. op dit vlak was de standaard relatiever. Dit komt omdat er in Vlaamse scholen onenigheid lijkt te bestaan over de mate waarin team- en schooltaken tot de verantwoordelijkheden van leraren behoren of eerder vrijwillig zijn en afhankelijk van het enthousiasme en de capaciteiten van leraren. Onze bevindingen tonen eveneens aan dat de directeurs van de onderzochte scholen hun verwachtingen eerder beperkt communiceren naar leraren, in het bijzonder naar meer ervaren leraren. De bevraagde directeurs focusten zich op het managen van de prestaties van beginnende (nog niet benoemde) leraren en vreesden ervoor dat duidelijke, enge standaarden of verwachtingen de motivatie van leraren zouden schaden. Hoewel sommige leraren tevreden waren met de autonomie die ze ervaarden in hun werk, gaven anderen aan dat duidelijkere verwachtingen de prestaties van leraren in het team in balans zouden brengen en daarom 'eerlijker' zouden maken. Tenslotte toont deze studie aan dat leraren zelf ook een invloed kunnen hebben op de prestatieverwachtingen in hun school: er leven ook bepaalde verwachtingen in het team die tot uiting komen in informele gesprekjes met collega's en dagelijkse praktijken die 'normaal' worden geacht in scholen. In één van de deelnemende scholen gaf de directeur bijvoorbeeld aan dat zijn leraren het heel normaal vonden dat er aandacht was voor het 'kind achter de leerling' en diens thuiscontext en dat leraren dat ook van elkaar verwachtten.

2.1.2. Een brede definitie van onderpresteren

Bovenstaande bevindingen tonen aan dat er niet één duidelijke prestatiestandaard geldt over scholen heen, en zelfs niet binnen scholen (m.n. voor niet-lesgebonden taken). In combinatie met de bestaande literatuur, die aangeeft dat 1) onderpresteren een bepaalde waardengeladen standaard inhoudt (Griffin et al., 2007; Koopmans et al., 2011;Viswesvaran & Ones, 2000), 2) verschillende betrokken partijen (o.a. directeurs, ouders, leerlingen, beleidsmakers) diverse, soms

tegenstrijdige verwachtingen van leraren hebben (Ingle et al., 2011; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg, et al., 1999), 3) leraren op één of meerdere leerling- of teamgerelateerde domeinen kunnen onderpresteren (Kelly et al., 2008; Yariv, 2004), 4) onderpresteren dynamisch is (Alessandri et al., 2015; Beal et al., 2005) en 5) geen zwart-wit verhaal, maar eerder op een continuüm beschouwd moet worden (Doherty et al., 2002), en 6) dat onderpresteren zowel kan inhouden dat iemand zijn functie niet goed uitvoert, als contraproductief of negatief gedrag stelt (bijv. verbale agressie) (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Koopmans et al., 2011; Motowildo et al., 1997; Sonnentag & Frese, 2002), werd besloten om in dit proefschrift de volgende, brede definitie te hanteren:

Een onderpresterende leraar is een leraar die beneden de standaard presteert, in één of meerdere lesgebonden of niet-lesgebonden domeinen, op één of meerdere momenten. Het onderpresteren kan zowel contraproductief gedrag omvatten, als het niet adequaat uitvoeren van zijn/haar taakomschrijving.

In dit proefschrift lieten we het oordeel over het onderpresteren over aan collega's. Dit heeft meteen ook een aantal implicaties voor hoe de bevindingen in dit proefschrift geïnterpreteerd moeten worden. Vooreerst handelt dit proefschrift niet enkel over leraren die in zijn algemeenheid en langdurig onderpresteren, maar ook over leraren die onderpresteren in één specifiek domein en/of gedurende een kortere periode. Bovendien is het niet noodzakelijk zo dat andere collega's, de directeur of de leerlingen dezelfde leraar ook als onderpresteerder zouden aanduiden. We hebben ervoor gekozen om incidenten te bestuderen die voor de bevraagde collega's relevant waren.

2.2. Hoofdstuk 2-4: De impact op collega's en hun reacties op onderpresterende leraren

De volgende hoofdstukken behandelen het grotere onderzoeksdoel van dit proefschrift: een duidelijk beeld schetsen van hoe Vlaamse leraren leraaronderpresteren ervaren en hoe ze erop reageren, alsook hoe hun reacties verklaard kunnen worden. Aangezien het bestaande onderwijskundige onderzoek naar dit thema zeer gering is, wordt in **hoofdstuk 2** een exploratieve, kwalitatieve studie gepresenteerd die, gebaseerd op inzichten vanuit andere sectoren en disciplines, mogelijke ervaringen en reacties van collega's in kaart wilde brengen. Meer specifiek behandelt dit hoofdstuk volgende onderzoeksvragen:

- Welke impact ondervinden collega's van onderpresterende leraren?
- Hoe reageren ze op dit onderpresteren en waarom?

Om deze onderzoeksvragen te kunnen beantwoorden, werden interviews afgenomen van leraren in het secundair onderwijs. Hierin werden incidenten besproken van leraaronderpresteren in hun teams. We hanteerden hiervoor de Critical Incident Technique (CIT) of de Kritische Incidentenmethode, die diepgaande, gecontextualiseerde verhaalschetsen van echte

gebeurtenissen naar boven brengt en waarbij respondenten gebeurtenissen uitkiezen die ze zelf belangrijk vinden (Butterfield et al., 2005; FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). We spraken met onze respondenten over de aard van het onderpresteren waarmee ze geconfronteerd werden, alsook welke impact het onderpresteren had en hoe en waarom ze gereageerd hadden op het onderpresteren. Uit hun verhalen identificeerden we verschillende achterliggende afwegingen die bepalend waren voor hun reacties, alsook situationele, individuele en contextuele beïnvloedende factoren.

Omdat deze tweede studie een exploratieve, kwalitatieve studie in een kleine steekproef was, konden we de bevindingen niet generaliseren. De geïdentificeerde verklaringen voor reacties van collega's dienden ook verder getest te worden. Daarom werd een volgende grootschalige studie opgezet bij leraren in het basis en secundair onderwijs. Zij vulden een vragenlijst in waarin enerzijds gepeild werd naar specifieke ervaringen met onderpresterende collega's (opnieuw a.d.h.v. de CIT) en hoe ze daarop hadden gereageerd, anderzijds bevroegen we ook in welke mate leraaronderpresteren voorkwam in hun school. De vragenlijst omvatte ook de afwegingen en de situationele, individuele en contextuele variabelen die in studie 2 geïdentificeerd werden als belangrijke beïnvloedende en verklarende factoren voor reacties van collega's. **In hoofdstuk 3** wordt een descriptieve analyse van de bevindingen gepresenteerd, om volgende onderzoeksvragen te kunnen beantwoorden:

- Wat zijn de ervaringen en percepties van Vlaamse leraren betreffende de aard en het voorkomen van leraaronderpresteren in Vlaanderen?
- Hoe denken Vlaamse leraren over reageren op onderpresterende collega's en hoe reageren ze effectief?

2.2.1. De impact van onderpresterende leraren op collega's

De resultaten van hoofdstuk 3 wijzen erop dat leraren in Vlaanderen percipiëren dat een significant aandeel (tot 20%) van hun collega's beneden de verwachting presteert; vooral taakgericht onderpresteren, maar ook contraproductief gedrag. Veel leraren kennen recente voorbeelden van leraaronderpresteren, die ze vaak zelf hebben geobserveerd, of via leerlingen hebben vernomen. Deze voorbeelden zijn zeer divers en omvatten zowel leerling- als teamgericht onderpresteren. Onze respondenten beschouwden het onderpresteren meestal als ernstig, langdurig en veroorzaakt door de persoonlijkheid, gebrekkige motivatie en/of de foute visie van de onderpresteerder op diens job als leraar. De werkrelatie met de onderpresteerder werd vaak als negatief en oppervlakkig ervaren. Afhankelijk van de aard van het onderpresteren, werden onze respondenten meer rechtstreeks of onrechtstreeks getroffen door het onderpresteren. Ongeacht de aard van het incident veroorzaakte het onderpresteren veel frustraties, kopzorgen en onbegrip, had het teamwerk of de -sfeer vaak te lijden onder het onderpresteren en werd ook de werklast van de collega's verzwaard. De meeste van onze respondenten waren van mening dat hun eigen prestaties niet beïnvloed werden door het onderpresteren. Ze spraken zich ook negatief uit over de beperkte reacties van hun directie: ze meenden dat hun directeurs het onderpresteren vaker

tolereerden of negeerden dan de onderpresteerder aan te spreken, te ondersteunen of op te volgen. Dit versterkte hun frustraties en bezorgheden omtrent het onderpresteren. In hoofdstuk 2 vonden we bovendien dat leraren meenden dat er een beperkt prestatiemanagement (PM) in de school was; met name een gebrek aan opvolging, coaching, feedback en evaluatie van leraren. Dit creëerde gevoelens van oneerlijkheid en onrechtvaardigheid, en maakte dat leraren zich weinig geapprecieerd voelden. Deze bevindingen zijn verontrustend omdat onderzoek aantoont dat dergelijke negatieve gevoelens de prestaties van goede presteerders op termijn kunnen ondermijnen (Hung et al., 2009; Krings & Bollmann, 2011; Whiteside & Barclay, 2013; Yang, 2008).

Bovengenoemde resultaten impliceren dat het noodzakelijk is dat directeurs (en anderen in leiderschapsposities) de impact van onderpresteren én van hun eigen (gebrekkige) reacties op collega's herkennen en erkennen. Uiteraard is het mogelijk dat leraren niet op de hoogte zijn van hoe directeurs reageren, maar gezien eerder onderzoek (inclusief een studie in Vlaanderen) aantoonde dat directeurs het vaak moeilijk vinden om op onderpresteren te reageren (Causey, 2010; Mendez, 2009; Nixon et al., 2011; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016), zouden de bezorgdheden van leraren wel eens terecht kunnen zijn. Op dit vlak wijst onderzoek erop dat succesvolle reacties van directeurs afhankelijk zijn van: 1) de wil van directeurs om te interveniëren, 2) een intensief gebruik van diverse maatregelen en bronnen in een gerichte interventie aangepast aan de unieke situatie en noden van de onderpresteerder (en betrokkenheid van diverse professionals), 3) een gunstig werkklimaat en goede directeur-leraarrelatie, en 4) de bereidheid van de onderpresteerder om te veranderen (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Donaldson, 2013; Monteiro, Wilson, & Beyer, 2013; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Sinnema et al., 2013; Yariv & Kass, 2017).

In hoofdstuk 2 blijkt dat leraren ook bezorgd zijn over een gebrek aan een PM-beleid meer algemeen. Aguinis en Pierce (2008) definiëren dit als "een continu proces van identificeren, meten en ontwikkelen van de prestaties van individuen en teams en het aligneren van performantie met de strategische doelen van de organisatie" (p.139). PM omvat aaneengeschakelde praktijken zoals coaching, feedback en evaluatie, en vraagt duidelijke prestatiestandaarden en geïndividualiseerde verwachtingen voor leraren. Op dit vlak toont hoofdstuk 1 aan dat het belangrijk is dat scholen meer systematische dialoog over verwachtingen faciliteren en meer gedeelde standaarden voor zowel lesgeven als schoolteamtaken ontwikkelen omwille van de complexiteit van het beroep. Dit creëert duidelijkheid voor leraren en erkent tegelijk hun professionaliteit, versterkt gemeenschappelijke doelen en stimuleert blijvende professionele ontwikkeling (Aguinis et al., 2011). Wanneer er meer over prestaties gesproken wordt, wanneer verwachtingen duidelijk zijn en er regelmatig feedback wordt gegeven, wordt het ook makkelijker om onderpresteren te bespreken. Bij gebrek aan duidelijke niet-lesgebonden verwachtingen is het bijvoorbeeld moeilijk om dergelijk onderpresteren aan te kaarten (Armstrong & Baron, 2014; Kirkpatrick & Locke, 1996). Bovendien tonen onze bevindingen aan dat directeurs focussen op de prestaties van beginnende, niet-benoemde leraren. Toch is het niet

langer de realiteit dat eens men leraar is en benoemd wordt, men weet hoe de job goed uit te oefenen voor de rest van zijn/haar carrière (Cagle & Hopkins, 2009; Day & Gu, 2009; Meng & Munoz, 2016). Daarom is het belangrijk om verwachtingen te bespreken met alle leraren en om professionele ontwikkeling te stimuleren doorheen de carrière.

2.2.2. Reacties van collega's op leraaronderpresteren

Hoofdstukken 2 en 3 tonen bovendien aan dat het verre van vanzelfsprekend is voor leraren om op leraaronderpresteren te reageren. Hoewel er verschillen bestaan tussen leraren, twijfelen zij vaak aan hun verantwoordelijkheid of mandaat om te reageren, en/of denken ze dat reageren niets uit zou halen. Velen vinden dat het niet in hun aard ligt om te reageren en voelen zich er oncomfortabel bij. Leraren reageren op diverse manieren, namelijk door de onderpresteerder aan te spreken, het onderpresteren te melden aan/te bespreken met de directie of andere teamleden, door afstand te nemen van de onderpresteerder, door steun/advies te bieden of door het onderpresteren te compenseren (bijv. een aantal taken van de onderpresteerder over te nemen). Over het algemeen reageren ze eerder beperkt en voorzichtig. Ze gebruiken ook vaker indirecte reacties (compenseren of rapporteren) of nemen afstand van de onderpresteerder, dan deze collega aan te spreken of te ondersteunen in de aanpak van het onderpresteren. Als ze de collega toch aanspreken, doen ze dat voorzichtig, bijvoorbeeld door voorzichtig vragen te stellen over bepaalde gedragingen zonder te bekritiseren, of hun eigen mening te geven op een positieve en motiverende wijze zonder de onderpresteerder te vragen om diens gedrag te veranderen.

De beperkte reacties van collega's zijn verontrustend, aangezien het stilzwijgen van collega's nadelig kan zijn voor de school op meerdere vlakken (cf. Morrison, 2014): als collega's zwijgen, of zelfs afstand nemen van de onderpresteerder, kan dit het onderpresteren in stand houden. Ook voor de onderpresteerder zelf is dit een gemiste kans, aangezien deze leraar mogelijk niet weet dat anderen vinden dat hij/zij onderpresteert en zou kunnen leren van collega's die hem/haar aanspreken. Bovendien tonen onze resultaten aan dat goed leraarschap niet zwart-wit is en een gesprek zou kunnen leiden tot een meer gedeelde visie op goed leraarschap, wat de verdere samenwerking tussen leraren ten goede zou komen (Vangrieken et al., 2015). Daarnaast kunnen directies niet helemaal alleen instaan voor het managen van leraarprestaties (Darling-Hammond, 2013; Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). Ze zijn vaak afhankelijk van signalen van andere leraren om het onderpresteren op te sporen en in kaart te brengen (Richardson et al., 2008). Onze resultaten tonen aan dat leraren vaak getuige zijn van leraaronderpresteren of signalen van leerlingen opvangen. Gecombineerd met onderzoeksevidentie omtrent de positieve impact die leraren kunnen hebben op het remediëren van leraaronderpresteren (Cheng, 2014; Flesch, 2005; Rhodes & Beneicke, 2003; Wragg, Haynes, Wragg, et al., 1999; Yariv, 2011; Yariv & Coleman, 2005), tonen onze resultaten aan dat het Vlaamse onderwijs het potentieel van collega-reacties om leraaronderpresteren te beïnvloeden niet ten volle benut.

2.2.3. Een verklarend raamwerk voor reacties van collega's

In hoofdstuk 4 wordt een studie gepresenteerd waarin de verklaringen voor collega-reacties die werden geïdentificeerd in hoofdstuk 2, statistisch getest (o.b.v. dezelfde dataverzameling als hoofdstuk 3) en samengebracht werden in een verklarend raamwerk. Dit hoofdstuk focust zich dan ook op de volgende onderzoeksvragen:

- Hoe worden collega-reacties beïnvloed door hun overwegingen aangaande de noodzaak om te reageren, het nut van reageren en hun verantwoordelijkheid en mandaat om te reageren?
- Hoe worden deze overwegingen beïnvloed door kenmerken van het onderpresteren, de onderpresteerder, de collega, het schoolleiderschap en het teamwerk?

Uit onze resultaten blijkt dat indirecte reacties (compenseren en rapporteren) verklaard kunnen worden door het feit dat de collega zich verantwoordelijk voelt om te reageren. Wat de directe responsen betreft, tonen onze resultaten aan dat het bieden van steun/advies verklaard kan worden door de perceptie van de collega dat het nuttig zou zijn om te reageren. Als collega's menen dat het geen nut heeft, zullen ze dan weer afstand nemen van de onderpresteerder. Het confronteren van de onderpresteerder kan niet enkel verklaard worden doordat de collega de verantwoordelijkheid voelt en het nuttig vindt om te reageren, maar ook doordat de collega het mandaat voelt om te reageren.

Deze percepties van verantwoordelijkheid, mandaat en nut kunnen op hun beurt verklaard worden door diverse individuele, situationele en contextuele factoren. In de eerste plaats blijken de algemene visies die collega's hebben op hun rol in het omgaan met leraaronderpresteren hun reacties op specifieke incidenten te beïnvloeden: wanneer leraren in het algemeen een zekere verantwoordelijkheid en/of mandaat ervaren om te reageren, zullen ze in specifieke gevallen ook vaker gaan reageren. Naast deze meer algemene visie of attitude t.a.v. reageren, vonden we ook dat collega's zich verantwoordelijker voelen en daarom meer compenseren, rapporteren en confronteren als ze intensiever samenwerken met de onderpresteerder en wanneer de directeur hen inlicht over het onderpresteren. Het mandaat dat collega's voelen om te reageren en het nut dat ze hiervan verwachten (en dus confrontatie en steun), bleken ook afhankelijk van de situatie, namelijk het type en de vermeende oorzaak van het onderpresteren. Zo vonden collega's het nuttiger om te reageren op problemen rond klasmanagement dan bijvoorbeeld ongepast gedrag tegenover studenten, en voelden ze meer mandaat wanneer het onderpresteren te wijten was aan een gebrek aan kennis of vaardigheden. Team- en leiderschapsfactoren bleken ook van invloed op het gepercipieerde nut en mandaat om te reageren: collega's voelen meer mandaat wanneer er meer reflectieve dialoog plaatsvindt in het team en wanneer de directeur een meer benaderbare, laagdrempelige communicatiestijl heeft. Ze menen dat het nuttiger is om te reageren wanneer er meer sprake is van geprivatiseerde teampraktijken (bijv. co-teaching, observaties in elkaars klassen) en wanneer de directie een duidelijke visie heeft op de rol van collega's in het omgaan met onderpresteerders. Ze ervaren minder mandaat in geval van meer gedeelde

verantwoordelijkheid in het team en vinden het minder nuttig om te reageren als de directeur meer feedback geeft aan leraren. Bovendien vinden collega's het nuttiger om te reageren op het onderpresteren van jongere collega's en gaan ze deze collega's daarom meer aanspreken en ondersteunen. Tenslotte voelen collega's meer mandaat om te reageren als ouders hen op de hoogte brachten van het onderpresteren en gaan ze daarom meer confronteren.

Deze bevindingen verschaffen ons belangrijke inzichten in hoe specifieke reacties verklaard kunnen worden, alsook hoe ze gefaciliteerd of verhinderd kunnen worden. Onze bevindingen suggereren dat collega's zich in zekere zin geruggesteund moeten voelen door de directie om te reageren. Om reacties te stimuleren, lijkt het belangrijk dat directies een duidelijke visie hebben op de rol van collega's: in hoofdstuk 2 bleek ook dat leraren vaak bereid waren de visie of verzoeken van directeurs hieromtrent te volgen. Het lijkt ook belangrijk dat directeurs een benaderbare communicatiestijl hebben. Wanneer de directeur het onderpresteren bespreekt met de collega, zal deze zich ook meer verplicht voelen om te reageren, mogelijk omdat de directeur het onderpresteren aan de collega toevertrouwt (Bowling & Lyons, 2015). Bovendien blijken het schoolteam en de samenwerking met de onderpresteerder ook een verschil te maken. Om collega's het gevoel te geven dat het gepast en nuttig zou zijn om te reageren en zo confrontatie en steun te stimuleren, lijkt het belangrijk om de traditie van individueel lesgeven te doorbreken (bijv. door co-teaching te stimuleren) en om meer dialoog te creëren in scholen. Dit kan mogelijks een veilige omgeving creëren om elkaars presteren te bespreken, alsook meer sociale controle onder collega's (Edmondson, 1999; Van den Bossche et al., 2006). Tegelijkertijd bleek wel dat meer gedeelde verantwoordelijkheid in het team tot minder mandaat leidde, mogelijk omdat collega's zich in deze gevallen mede verantwoordelijk voelen voor het onderpresteren, en het daarom minder gepast vinden om te reageren (Van Dyne et al., 2003). Een meer intense samenwerking tussen collega's kan er tenslotte toe leiden dat collega's zich verantwoordelijker voelen om te reageren en daarom meer gaan rapporteren, compenseren en confronteren.

Hoewel we hierboven de nadruk hebben gelegd op wat directeurs kunnen doen om de impact op leraren te beperken en collega-reacties te stimuleren, dragen leraren uiteraard mede de verantwoordelijkheid om op leraaronderpresteren te reageren, zeker wanneer dit een ernstige impact heeft op leerlingen of de school. We kunnen niet alle verantwoordelijkheid bij directeurs leggen, omdat leraren meer op de hoogte kunnen zijn en meer geschikt kunnen zijn om te reageren, bijvoorbeeld om op bepaalde vlakken advies of ondersteuning te bieden. Daarom hebben directies de steun van collega's nodig. Leerkracht zijn en kwaliteitsvol onderwijs aanbieden vraagt om een gedeelde verantwoordelijkheid voor het functioneren van de school (Wahlstrom & Louis, 2008). Leraren kunnen bijvoorbeeld bijdragen aan de teamsamenwerking en de schoolgemeenschap door dialoog te stimuleren, hun klassen open te stellen voor en feedback te geven aan collega's. Tegelijkertijd moeten we ook erkennen dat leraren mogelijks aanvoelen dat reageren meer kosten dan baten met zich meebrengt (Knoll & van Dick, 2013a; Van Dyne et al., 2003, Bisel & Arterburn, 2012; Morrison, 2011). Onze resultaten tonen bijvoorbeeld aan dat niet-benoemde leraren bang kunnen zijn om hun kansen op benoeming te

verliezen wanneer ze naar de directeur zouden stappen. Sommige leraren ervaren te weinig openheid en te veel roddels in het team om feedback te geven aan collega's. Collega's kunnen er ook voor kiezen om te zwijgen omdat ze het onderpresteren niet willen verergeren. Stilzwijgen staat dan niet gelijk aan het eenvoudigweg tolereren van het onderpresteren, maar is eender een doelbewuste keuze om zichzelf of anderen te beschermen (Van Dyne et al., 2003; Zehir & Erdogan, 2011). Bovendien oefenen bredere systeemfactoren ook een invloed uit op de reacties van collega's en directeurs (Liu et al., 2016; Meier et al., 2015; Meng & Munoz, 2016). Beperkte collega-reacties houden wellicht verband met de lange traditie van individueel lesgeven in Vlaanderen, met normen van privacy en autonomie in ons onderwijs, met een gebrek aan formele systemen van o.a. peerevaluatie en feedback en tenslotte met het feit dat leraarcontracten enkel lesuren omvatten. Bovendien ervaren directeurs ook diverse obstakels in het omgaan met leraaronderpresteren, zoals een gebrek aan tijd, ondersteuning en competenties (Van Den Ouweland et al., 2016). Dit betekent dat we individuele leraren en directeurs niet verantwoordelijk kunnen stellen voor hun beperkte reacties. Omgaan met de complexiteit van leraaronderpresteren is daarentegen een gedeelde verantwoordelijkheid tussen scholen en het onderwijsbeleid: dit beleid dient scholen te voorzien van de nodige knowhow en middelen, bijgestaan door directie- en lerarenopleidingen en ondersteuningsdiensten.

3. Voornaamste bijdragen van dit proefschrift en implicaties voor vervolgonderzoek

Dit proefschrift verschafte ons inzicht in welke prestatieverwachtingen er heersen in scholen, hoe deze tussen en binnen scholen kunnen verschillen, welke ideeën omtrent het definiëren en verduidelijken van verwachtingen leven in ons onderwijs, alsook wat dit impliceert voor de definitie van onderpresteren. Bovendien geeft het, als 1[e] onderzoek naar collega's van onderpresterende leraren in Vlaanderen, een duidelijk beeld van de aard van leraar-onderpresteren waarmee Vlaamse leraren geconfronteerd worden en de mate waarin leraren menen dat onderpresteren voorkomt in hun scholen, alsook van hun reacties en hoe ze de reacties van hun directies en andere collega's percipiëren. Onze bevindingen tonen aan dat collega's gehoord moeten worden wanneer leraaronderpresteren onderzocht of aangepakt wordt, aangezien collega's op de hoogte zijn van dit onderpresteren, erdoor getroffen worden én erop reageren. Daarnaast identificeert dit proefschrift verklaringen en beïnvloedende factoren voor diverse collega-reacties, en verschaft het inzichten omtrent hoe reacties gestimuleerd of gehinderd (kunnen) worden in scholen. Hiermee opent dit proefschrift de discussie over de rol die leraren spelen in de aanpak van leraaronderpresteren. Een belangrijke sterkte van dit proefschrift is tevens dat het gebaseerd is op echte ervaringen en casussen van onderpresteren en dat we het fenomeen in de diepte bestudeerden en op zoek gingen naar echte reacties van collega's, wat noodzakelijk is gezien de emotionele en relationele geladenheid en de subjectieve en contextgebonden aard van het thema (Painter, 2000).

Wat implicaties voor verder onderzoek betreft, tonen onze resultaten aan dat alternatieve hypotheses voor collega-reacties aan het verklarend raamwerk dienen te worden toegevoegd, aangezien we niet alle effecten van beïnvloedende factoren op responsen konden verklaren. In sommige gevallen zou het bijvoorbeeld kunnen dat reacties als afstand nemen, rapporteren en confronteren verklaard kunnen worden als een vorm van zelfbescherming of bestraffing van de onderpresteerder (Neff, 2009): onze respondenten confronteerden vaker in gevallen van ongepast gedrag t.a.v. collega's, rapporteerden vaker gevallen van een intentioneel gebrek aan inspanning en namen meer afstand in gevallen van problematische samenwerking. Daarbij is het wellicht niet alleen belangrijk op welk(e) domein(en) iemand onderpresteert, maar ook hoe die persoon op andere domeinen presteert. Een leraar die bijvoorbeeld collegiaal is, veel energie in het team/ de leerlingen stopt en een gunstigere positie heeft in het team, zal wellicht anders behandeld worden in geval van onderpresteren. Daarom raden we voor toekomstig onderzoek aan om het hele plaatje van het presteren en de positie van de leraar in acht te nemen, bijvoorbeeld via sociale netwerkanalyse. Daarnaast vonden we dat intense samenwerking confrontatie en steun faciliteert: een verklaring kan zijn dat er in deze gevallen meer mogelijkheden zijn om te reageren of het simpelweg onmogelijk is om niet te reageren, om het werk gedaan te krijgen en de gedeelde doelen te bereiken (Van den Bossche et al., 2006). Bovendien vonden we dat PM reacties eerder beperkt dan faciliteert. Mogelijk betekent meer PM dat directeurs adequater reageren op onderpresteren en is het daarom voor collega's overbodig zelf te reageren. Langs de andere kant toont onze kwalitatieve analyse aan dat een gebrek aan directiereacties kan maken dat collega's ook niet willen reageren. Daarom zou het ook interessant zijn voor vervolgonderzoek om responsen van directeurs te bestuderen en te onderzoeken of deze eerder complementair of supplementair zijn aan collega-reacties. Tenslotte is ons raamwerk gebaseerd op verklaringen waarvan collega's zich bewust zijn, met andere woorden weloverwogen, rationele consideraties. Eerder onderzoek suggereerde echter dat emoties, persoonlijkheidsfactoren en meer automatische, niet-bewuste processen ook een rol kunnen spelen in hun reacties (Bowling & Lyons, 2015; Edwards et al., 2009; Lee et al., 2014; Morrison, 2014). Emoties zouden bijvoorbeeld kunnen verklaren waarom we vonden dat een gebrek aan didactische kwaliteit veel responsen losmaakt (meer afstand nemen en rapporteren, en minder steunen/adviseren): deze vorm van onderpresteren kan sterke emoties teweeg brengen omdat het tot de kern van het beroep behoort, wat zou betekenen dat emoties niet enkel gerelateerd zijn aan specifieke oorzaken van onderpresteren (cf. attributietheorie), maar ook aan specifieke vormen van onderpresteren.

Aangezien dit proefschrift op cross-sectioneel onderzoek berust, zou toekomstig onderzoek gebaat zijn bij een meer longitudinaal onderzoeksdesign. We waren afhankelijk van de herinneringen en verhalen van onze respondenten, maar die kunnen vervormd of onvolledig zijn (FitzGerald et al., 2008; Gremler, 2004). Bovendien zijn leraaronderpresteren en reacties van directeurs en collega's dynamisch. Ons onderzoeksthema kan beschouwd worden als een 'emerging phenomenon' of 'groeiend fenomeen' (Kozlowski et al., 2013): collega-reacties worden beïnvloed door de reacties van anderen om zo meer collectieve reacties worden, deze reacties gaan op hun beurt het onderpresteren beïnvloeden, wat nieuwe reacties uitlokt,

enzovoort. Deze dynamieken konden we met ons onderzoeksdesign niet vastleggen. Longitudinaal casestudieonderzoek zou toelaten om casussen 'live' te bestuderen en een inzicht te krijgen in deze dynamieken. Bovendien zou vervolgonderzoek gebaat zijn bij bronnentriangulatie. Hoewel de percepties van collega's cruciaal zijn voor hun responsen, zijn de bestudeerde cases geen objectieve rapporten: andere betrokkenen kunnen een andere mening hebben over het onderpresteren en leraren zijn mogelijk niet volledig op de hoogte van de reacties van anderen in de school. Daarom zou het betrekken van verschillende belanghebbenden, zoals studenten en hun ouders, de directeur, collega's en idealiter ook de vermeende onderpresteerder een meer compleet beeld geven van het onderpresteren en hoe verschillende partijen erdoor beïnvloed worden en erop reageren. Daarnaast is het voor vervolgonderzoek ook belangrijk om de noden van directeurs en leraren en bredere systeemfactoren in acht te nemen, om meer inzicht te verkrijgen in hoe zij ondersteund kunnen worden om de complexiteit van leraaronderpresteren te hanteren. Bovendien hebben we niet onderzocht of collega-reacties ook effectief een invloed uitoefenen op het onderpresteren. We vonden wel dat leraren die aangaven te weten uit ervaring hoe te reageren, meer confronteerden en ondersteuning boden. Dit suggereert dat als leraren trachten te reageren, ze positieve ervaringen hebben. Daarom zou vervolgonderzoek ook succesverhalen kunnen identificeren, eventueel in combinatie met specifieke interventies, om meer inzicht te bekomen in welke reacties voor welke onderpresteerders een verschil kunnen maken en welke collega's mogelijks meer bereid en/of geschikt zijn om te reageren op leraaronderpresteren (bijv. graadcoördinatoren, zorgleraren en vakgroepvoorzitters).

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