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**Teachers' Subjective Theories about Time:
Negative Emotional Meaning, Action Maintaining and
Orientation to the Past**

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Abstract

Time in education has been identified as a relevant dimension for the construction and interpretation of teachers' work, being perceived as either a limitation or an opportunity. The aim of this study was to understand teachers' explanatory beliefs (subjective theories) about time. A case study was conducted using a qualitative methodology. Seven teachers took part in the study. This process yielded 209 subjective theories grouped into 9 emergent categories, including "time poverty" and "future orientation." Most of the teachers' subjective theories had a negative emotional meaning, were subordinated to other theories, and were action-preserving. In consequence, their subjective theories configure external and uncontrollable explanations about time that generate time management challenges by limiting teacher agency. Also, the participants generated a variety of distinctions about time, reflecting a connection between this abstract dimension and their professional and personal life.

Public Interest Statement

Understanding how teachers explain school time can help improve their work performance and satisfaction. This is relevant due to a problem observed in Chile: Teachers' lack of time in the context of excessive course workloads (Sánchez, 2018).

It was observed that teachers see the influence of the time dimension in several areas of their work, confirming that educational time is scarce. This generates a number of difficulties, especially for novice teachers. It was also found that their explanations about time were attributed to external factors, tended to be marked by negative emotions, and aimed to justify their personal practices. All these elements might reduce teachers' self-perceived ability to act effectively.

These data can help examine public policies in the field of education aimed at regulating the time that teachers devote to planning and executing their lessons.

Introduction

It has been asserted that school time appears to be metronomic (Corbin, Blake, Stronach, & McNally, 2010) and uniform (Husti, 1992) by nature, that is, structured by rigid schedules and marked by signals (bells, buzzers, opening and

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closing doors, rites, greetings, weeks of study) that cause its organization to appear industrialized. However, time in education seems to have a larger impact on the construction and interpretation of teacher work (Rodríguez, 2007; Hargreaves, 1994), as teachers perceive it as a limitation and as a scarce resource (e.g., Collinson & Cook, 2001) or as an opportunity to improve their management and, consequently, the instruction that they provide (Strasser, Lissi, & Silva, 2009).

Studies on teachers' and students' perceptions have revealed the importance of the temporal dimension, but authors have yet to study this finding in depth (e.g., Barbera, Gros, & Kirschner, 2015; Castro, Agüero, Barraza, Escobar, & Jorquera, 2012; Collinson & Cook, 2001; Hargreaves, 1994; Mitton-Kükner, 2015). In the field of education sciences, most studies on time and learning have included the objective dimension of time (Martinic, Huepe, & Vergara, 2011), while in psychology the subjective dimension of time has been mostly been linked to social or clinical implications (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2009). Objectivist studies show the phenomenon only partially and do not make it possible to gain an in-depth understanding of the relationships between time as experienced by teachers and the school context.

Given these arguments, it is necessary to generate a subjectivist approach to school time that considers the particularities of its context, including factors such as the socioeconomic differences among the students who they teach and the differences among teachers in terms of their professional development or years of experience.

This study was guided by the following questions:

1. How can we characterize the subjective theories about time that novice and experienced teachers develop?
2. What particularities do these theories have according to the socioeconomic group of the students taught?

To answer these questions, we reconstruct the subjective theories about time held by novice and experienced teachers¹ from the region of Coquimbo, Chile, who teach high- or low-SES students.

The specific aims of this study were:

1. To characterize subjective theories according to their structure and content.
2. To understand and contrast the subjective theories about time held by novice and experienced teachers.

¹ In this study, novice teachers are defined as those with fewer than 3 years of experience, while experienced teachers are those with more than 3 years of experience, following the criteria advanced by Fantilli and McDougall (2009).

3. To contrast the subjective theories about time held by teachers of high- and low-SES students.

Theoretical Considerations

Teachers' Subjective Theories

The research program focused on teachers' professional knowledge presumes that teachers are reflective professionals (Catalán, 2011; Shulman, 2001) and that what they believe or think is linked to their teaching practices. This is exemplified by the meaning that they ascribe to the curriculum, their relationships with students, and the way in which they deal with innovation (Martínez et al., 2001). For Clark and Peterson (1990), subjective theories belong to research on teacher thinking, which focuses on the examination of teachers' beliefs and theories. The latter are defined as people's hypotheses about themselves and the world, generated in everyday life (Flick, 2014). They have a cause-effect linguistic argumentative structure, and they can be implicit or explicit (Catalán, 2016), and also have a function similar to that of scientific theories in as much as they make it possible to predict phenomena (Grotjahn, 1991). The principles in which this research current is grounded are (Flick, 2014): (a) people, in their everyday life, develop theories that enable them to explain their behavior and the way in which the world works; (b) these subjective theories are applied in everyday life and, if necessary, are tested and reviewed; (c) these theories have an argumentative structure similar to that of scientific theories and comprise assumptions that are interdependently organized.

Groeben and Scheele (2000) regard them as forms of complex cognition; thus, they could well form the basis of teachers' reflective processes and professional knowledge development (Catalán, 2011). In brief, some authors consider that teachers' subjective theories play a key role in how they represent the educational domain in a situated manner (Catalán, 2016), which Janssens and Kelchtermans (1997) labeled *teachers' subjective educational theory*. Currently, general studies have provided evidence for its influence on teaching practice (Catalán, 2010); teacher education (Cuadra & Catalán, 2016); reflection processes (Castro, Barraza, Escobar, & Jorquera, 2012), and also change processes linked to continuing education (Castro, 2008; Castro & Cárcamo, 2012; Castro, Krause, & Frisanch, 2015). That influence extends further to initial education (Seebauer, 2009); and teaching and learning (Castro, 2008; Cuadra, 2009); in addition, other studies have addressed specific topics or educational fields (Bar & Storni, 2006; Castro et al., 2012; Gastager, Patry, & Wiedemair, 2010; Rivera & Volante, 2015; Makuc, 2011; Limón, 2002; Von Reininghaus, Castro, & Frisanch, 2013).

Some studies on teachers' subjective theories (STs) have revealed the low complexity of these representations (Cuadra, 2009): they are simple explanations of complex educational phenomena, tend to be few in number, and are generally pre-theoretical, all of which could hinder teachers' professional performance and highlights the need to promote more well developed and focused thought. Authors

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have also found evidence for teachers' limited perceived control over the factors influencing teaching and learning processes. This chiefly reflects an external attribution of control, which appears to be linked to lower agentivity (Castro, 2008; Castro & Cárcamo, 2012; Castro & Cárcamo, 2012).

The above approaches suggest that teachers' reflections on their own thoughts --in this case, on their *STs*-- are a major driver of change: as teachers identify their own implicit or explicit representations of education, they become able to reflect on them and then to act on them. Thee ideas presented above justify the selection of our approach to study how teachers understand and explain school time.

Teachers' Time Perspective and Cognitive Representation of Time

Time has attracted scholarly attention throughout the history of philosophy and science, with several theories emerging which led to objectivist currents (related to physical, measurable time) and subjective currents (devoted to how time is experienced). Research on time perception comprises studies on time orientation and estimation as well as studies on psychogenesis or the development of a sense of time. However, evidence for the interconnection between these areas has made it necessary to develop a theoretical construction that encompasses both (Oyanadel & Buela-Casal, 2014).

For Zimbardo (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2009), time perspective can be defined as a person's stable attitude toward time dimensions or zones: past, present, and future. This attitude can be either balanced or negative for the person. As early as 1976, Cottle had already advanced the concept of temporal orientation as a person's preference for a certain time dimension; that is, this author suggested that people can have a preference for the present, past, or future, with this dominance influencing their decisions and behaviors.

As has been the case in the study of time in general, most researchers have focused on the objective or quantifiable dimension, which has also been labeled *organization of school time* (Vázquez, 2007) or *disciplinary* or *structured time* (Rodríguez, 2009), that is, the way in which time is distributed during the school day in order to achieve the learning goals set. However, this approach barely represents one component of time; therefore, research on the subjective aspect of time aims to examine, from a qualitative perspective, how educational agents subjectively experience and feel time. Vázquez (2007) has called this *time in the school organization*, reflecting the subjectivity of time and how this subjectivity can enable teachers to give meaning to education, prompting the emergence of a multidimensional, pluri-temporal, flexible, and dynamic perspective that must be adapted to students' needs.

The relevance of studying people's perspective and cognitive representation of time rests on the association between people's way of orienting themselves temporally and the level of their well-being, health, and quality of life indicators (Güell, Orchard, Yopo, & Jiménez-Molina, 2015).

In education, time perspective has been studied by considering people's view of the future as a motivational variable and examining how it grounds the way they perceive and organize time. However, research has focused on classifying and correlating variables connected to the educational context and exploring how the absence or presence of future orientation influences performance (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2009), but few studies have paid attention to how teachers represent school time (although some authors have examined how it is used). Espinosa (2012) identifies school as an excellent place for the construction of the subjective meaning of time, based on structured school time. Thus, every experience of school time acquires meaning through subjectivity, to the extent that teaching can be regarded as a way of managing one's temporality, with school being a shared space where one lives for extended periods. Nevertheless, spaces are experienced subjectively and simultaneously, generating multiple other spaces (C. Calvo, personal communication, 2016), along with several other possible types of time: school, educational, personal, instructional, and work-related, among others.

In the same vein, Kaplan and García (2006) stress the importance of school time for the promotion of students' social inclusion or exclusion. In this regard, these authors consider that school mediates the cultural transmission of the use and meaning of time in a neoliberal society characterized by dynamism, immediacy, and the uncertainty of the future. In consequence, the subjective position adopted by teachers regarding time can spell the difference between social inclusion or exclusion in as much as it represents the hopes for the future conveyed to students. This may also entail a disconnect between present and future leading to major contradictions for teachers, since they must transmit knowledge that society demands them to, but which students regard as unimportant for their future.

A study conducted by Rodríguez (2007), using a sample of Spanish teachers, revealed that teachers manage their educational practices following a traditional notion of time; that is, one that is rigid and excessively fragmented due to scheduling in order to achieve educational targets, which results in a uniform teaching that fails to meet students' demands. Our assertion is that teachers must learn to understand the pedagogical assumptions connected to the use of time.

Collinson and Cook (2001) studied teachers' interpretations of time in a technological education project implemented in a secondary school. Their findings reveal that teachers' representations of time are complex, dynamic, and greatly hinder change processes. Also, the authors warn of the poor results of the educational policies aimed at giving teachers more time to fulfill their duties, concluding that it is essential to gain a deeper understanding of the subjective meaning of the lack of time mentioned by teachers. Tudor-Craig (2002), as part of a study on teachers' attitudes toward their profession, revealed that they regard time as a scarce resource due to the overburdening associated with lengthy work days, which –among other negative effects– limits their continuing education

opportunities and reduces their motivation. In this context, this author suggests organizing school time more flexibly, which would enable teachers to use it better.

Chile is one of the Latin American countries where teachers have the longest classroom teaching hours, a situation that began with the implementation of the full-school-day program. This policy was an attempt to address problems such as the lack of time for student learning (Martinic & Vergara, 2007). However, it has been reported that the way in which schools manage or organize time has suffered no major changes (DESUC, 2005) and that the problems associated with time availability or insufficiency remained present in teachers' narratives. To revert this situation in Chile, the recently passed Law no. 20.903, which regulates the teaching profession (2016), increases the number of non-classroom hours as a way of improving teachers' working conditions.

Studies in the field of education have revealed the presence of subjective theories that single out time as the cause of the limited educational effectiveness of low-performing schools (Cuadra, 2009; Rivera & Volante, 2015) or as an obstacle to the teaching and learning of values (Castro & Cárcamo, 2012), systematic collective reflection (Castro, Agüero, Barraza, Escobar, & Jorquera, 2012), and teacher education (Catalán & Castro, 2016; Cuadra & Catalán, 2016); also, other *STs* indicate that more effective time management promotes teachers' workplace health (Cuadra, Jorquera, & Pérez, 2015) and that a larger time supply is a resource that could facilitate teaching (*Universidad Alberto Hurtado*, 2012).

Several studies (Calderhead, 1988; Castro & Cárcamo, 2012; Fullan, 2002) have reported that teachers recurrently argue that insufficient time is a barrier to the improvement of teaching practices and the implementation of reflective processes.

The above considerations outline the relevance of time in teachers' work.

Method

Design

This is an exploratory study of a qualitative nature and a descriptive-interpretative intent, conducted by examining teachers' *STs* about time. The cases studied were selected with *a priori* sampling (Stake, 1995; Flick, 2014, 2011). This has been described as one of the most suitable designs to understand social phenomena due to its capacity for generating theories about them in their natural context (Creswell, 1998).

Participants

The inclusion criteria set were the participants' years of teaching experience and the socioeconomic status of the students taught (high and low according to the classification issued by Chile's Ministry of Education). This resulted in a sample of 7 teachers ($n=7$) distributed as shown in Table 1.

Although other differentiating characteristics might have an impact on the construction of *STs* about time, these two were selected for the following reasons:

1) We took into account the SES of the students attending a school given the multiple studies conducted in Chile and abroad which reveal a strong association between sociocultural aspects of students' families and their academic performance, which is especially clear in a highly segregated school system as that of Chile. Socioeconomic group* is not the same as sociocultural level; however, we know that, unfortunately, they are closely tied in societies marked by high inequality in access to cultural capital. This enabled us to examine whether students' material and cultural living conditions are related to the *STs* that teachers construct about time.

2) The link between a teacher's years of experience and their performance has been extensively studied. Several authors have described stages in teachers' professional development (Eros, 2011). In this study, novice teachers are defined as those with fewer than 3 years of experience, while experienced teachers are those with more than 3 years of experience, following the criteria advanced by Fantilli and McDougall (2009).

Table 1. *Participants' Characteristics*

Socioeconomic status	Teaching experience	No. of subjects
High	Experienced	1
High	Novice	1
Low	Experienced	1
Low	Novice	2
High	Experienced	1
High	Novice	1
Total		7

The following codes were used to identify the participants: Teacher (T), teaching experience (Novice= N; Experienced= E), and SES (High=H; Low=L). For instance, a subjective theory held by a novice teacher of high-SES students is coded as N_T_H.

Data Collection

Data were collected through episodic interviews conducted from October to November 2017. All interviewees signed informed consent forms to manifest their agreement to participate in the study.

Data Analysis

The analysis comprised four parts: 1) We reconstructed the teachers' *STs* through the open coding procedure of grounded theory, summarizing verbatim quotes by the interviewees and adapting them to the structure of a hypothesis ("If... then..."). 2) We characterized these *STs* according to their structure and

contents, adopting the model advanced by Catalán (2016), which includes the following categories: emotional meaning, relationship with other theories, explanatory orientation, and action orientation. This characterization has been used in prior studies, where its usefulness has been demonstrated (Cuadra & Catalán, 2016; Gahona & Catalán, 2015; Von Keyserlingk, Castro, & Carrasco, 2013). 3) We characterized the *STs* whose contents were linked with the time perspective according to time orientation (Zimbardo & Boyd, 2009). 4) We classified the full number of *STs*, according to their content, into 9 categories and 33 emergent subcategories, thus generating a thematic structure (Flick, 2011).

Results

Reconstruction and Characterization of Subjective Theories

The analysis, which consisted in the reconstruction of the *STs* found in the teachers' transcribed interviews, yielded a total of 234 *STs*, 209 of which were characterized considering their structure and contents, emotional meaning, connection with other *STs*, explanatory orientation, and action orientation. The results of this analysis are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. *Frequency of subjective theories contained in each axis*

Axis of analysis	Variant according to axis	Frequency
Emotional meaning	Positive	41%
	Negative	55%
Relationship with other theories	Supraordinate	24%
	Subordinate	70%
Explanatory orientation	Regressive	43%
	Progressive	25%
	Progressive-Regressive	28%
Action orientation	Action-maintaining	79%
	Action-inhibiting	3%
	Action-initiating	15%

Three analysis categories display a rate over 50%. These are: (i) emotional meaning, with 55% of *STs* displaying a negative meaning; (ii) relationship with other theories, with 70% of *STs* being subordinated to others; and (iii) action orientation, with 79% of *STs* being action-maintaining, that is, providing support for an action to continue being performed. This configures a triad that characterizes teachers' *STs* about time as charged with a negative emotional meaning and marked by an action-maintaining orientation.

Time Perspective Analysis

Regarding the teachers' time perspective, there was a difference between less experienced teachers, who oriented themselves toward the present, and more experienced teachers, who oriented themselves toward the future. The latter category does not represent a cluster of *STs* as such; rather, it reflects the presence of a number of verbatim expressions with a marked future orientation, expressed via thoughts or actions. The above may occur because teachers join highly planned and structured environments and must produce lesson-by-lesson and yearly plans, all of which eventually becomes a habit and affects the way in which time is experienced by the more experienced teachers. This perspective is characterized by a marked future orientation, with the present being experienced as a constant movement toward the future, where the center of gravity of conversations and actions tends to be what will be done and how.

Thematic Structure of *STs*

A subsequent analysis focused on the content of the 209 *STs* originated the categories described in Table 3.

Table 3. *Categories and subcategories of subjective theories*

Central category	Subcategories	ST	ST example
Relationship between perception of time and the activities performed	Ways in which the speed of time is experienced	12	Because one is so busy during the school year, time goes by faster. When I started working, time felt never-ending because I could not control students' misbehavior in the classroom.
	Existence of a connection between perception of time and the activities performed	3	The quantity and quality of the things one is doing determines how the passage of time is perceived

Lack of time (general)/ time poverty	Causes identified	16	Teachers lack time because they are under a lot of pressure resulting from the fact that they are blamed for everything
			If you don't have enough time, it's often because you are disorganized.
	Solutions proposed	8	If teachers' time were better distributed, the problem of their lack of time would be solved.
	Recognition of the problem	1	The main problem that teachers must deal with is their lack of time.
	Strategies used to deal with teachers' lack of time	4	It is necessary for colleagues to support each other because some teachers get more fatigued due to their lack of time. Since my work obligations took up so much of my personal time, I chose not to take work home anymore.
	Functional meaning/functional use	1	Not wanting to take up more responsibilities causes teachers to say they have no time.
	Lack of personal time	2	Since leisure time is scarce, teachers and students are kept from enjoying recreational activities.

	Associated consequences	16	If I must spend most of my time working, my family and myself will be negatively affected. If I lose personal time due to work, then I will experience unhappiness, stress, and anguish.
Influence of teaching experience	On time management	7	Less experienced teachers have less time because they have yet to develop strategies to alleviate this problem.
	On motivation to teach	2	Some teachers tend to lose their motivation for the profession because they have been working for so many years. I have a more optimistic view of the teaching profession because I have fewer years of experience.
Time management in the work context	In planning	9	Private schools give you more freedom when planning because they have no requirements associated with State subsidization.
	Influence of student characteristics	13	It is much easier to work with students who learn more quickly because one needs less time and supervision. Since there is great student diversity and a variety of learning styles, it is hard to manage time in the classroom.

	In the classroom	19	The rhythm of the class must be adapted to students so they can learn well. To make good use of classroom time, discipline and good school climate are relevant factors.
	Influence of personal characteristics (dispositional aspects, personality styles, situational elements)	10	If a teacher is organized, he/she will use his/her time efficiently, but if he/she is disorganized, he/she will not have enough time. As a teacher, I demand a lot from myself, that is why I try to use my time in the best way possible. If one has the right attitude, one can find time to implement new initiatives.
	Profitable use of time (free time)	3	I never waste time because I always do things that benefit me.
	Outside of the classroom (with colleagues)	4	Interdisciplinary support facilitates the management of instructional time because it provides additional knowledge and strategies.
Impact of working conditions	Excessive workload	3	Even if I manage my time well to avoid taking work home, I end up doing so anyway because there is a lot of work to do.
	On personal life (negative effects one's personal, free time)	8	If I want to meet my work obligations, then I need to postpone personal activities.

On education quality		15	If more time is devoted to contents, deeper learning is achieved. If we want to improve education quality, teachers need to be well rested and have smaller classes.
Association of time with SES and type of funding	High SES	6	High-SES people are more aware of the importance of education, that is why students use class time better. Since high-SES schools have the resources to hire more teachers, their work load is more evenly distributed.
	Low SES	3	Since low-SES children develop in a vulnerable environment, class time is used to teach values rather than contents.
	Private schools	7	Due to the more favorable working conditions of private schools, teachers who work there are privileged.
Negative perception (cost) of special needs students/resistance to working with them		3	Working with special needs children is more time-consuming because one needs to take special care of them.

Meanings attributed	Subjective experience of time (perspective, positive orientation toward the present, among others)	8	If one checks performance retrospectively, one can improve. Time is a valuable thing, so it should not be wasted.
	To the characteristics of the teaching profession	3	Since the teaching profession is so demanding, it is quite hard to strike a balance between work and personal time.
	To one's teaching style	2	I do not give students homework because they already spend too much time doing school-related activities.
	To one's time orientation (time perspective)	4	Since I am inexperienced, I must focus on the present to do a good job. I orient myself toward the future to take the right measures and attain certain goals.
	To forms of organization	5	I set short-term aims since they enable me to gain a more immediate feeling of satisfaction and keep me motivated to tackle future tasks. Since I no longer take work home, I have achieved a rather positive balance between my job and my personal time.
	To relationships with students outside the classroom	2	Interactions with students during breaks are different from those during the class

		because they are much more informal.
To time outside the classroom	1	Time outside the classroom is important because it enables one to interact with other teachers.
To insufficient experience	5	Since I am inexperienced, I must prove to others and myself that I can be a good teacher.
To administrative work (planning)	2	I find it very boring to spend a lot of time doing administrative work because I am a physical education teacher. I prefer to use my planning hours doing other pedagogical work because I do not think planning is so important.
To the time students spend at school	2	Remedial classes are very tiring for students because they need to spend even more time at school.
Total	209	

Source: own work

Based on the information presented in table 2, the time poverty category can be identified as having the largest number of associated STs. The interviewees regard it as an all-encompassing aspect that is sadly inherent to the teaching profession:

I've seen this in colleagues in my same situation, fresh from university, they spend 44 hours at school, 38 or 40 of those 44 in the classroom, and they also have homeroom duties, receive parents, and plan their lessons. And most of them had work-related stress at the end of the year. So I think that assumption is true. It's true that there's no time. (Novice Teacher who teaches at a High socioeconomic level -N T_H-)

All the people who plan the future of education do not see the reality, the realities they see are completely... it's not the context I experience every day (...) that's why I was interested in this survey, since the problem is time, nobody (takes) that into account, so I'm pessimistic in that regard because I don't think it will be improved, they aren't going to fix the real problem that teachers face. (Experienced Teacher who teaches at a High socioeconomic level -E_T_H-)

The participants attribute this lack of time to multiple causes that can be grouped into: demands of the teaching profession, poor personal time management, workplace conditions, number of perceived responsibilities, and excessive workload. These causes relate to each other in configurations marked by the external-internal opposition, depending on teachers' perceived level of control over them. External attribution predominates over internal attribution; for instance, in their theories about workplace conditions, teachers allude to the socioeconomic status of the school where they work. In this respect, it should be noted that teachers who work in high-SES schools tend to overestimate the time poverty experienced by their colleagues who work in other contexts, defining it as qualitatively and quantitatively greater than their own.

The reality of a subsidized private school or a public school... I've been closer to that reality because I attended a subsidized private school and many of my friends work in schools of this type, or even at public schools, so I've seen that they really don't have enough time, even though they're single and have no children. (N_T_H)

For the interviewees, working in a high-SES environment is regarded as a privilege that strengthens their teaching performance due to the better working conditions of these schools, the ability to organize their time at school freely, and the presence of families who are more involved in children's education and students who are more aware of the importance of learning.

The consequences associated with this time poverty include a negative impact on teacher performance, which is reflected by statements such as “for instance, if I think I have little time to do something, I feel I can't perform as well as I could (Novice Teacher who teaches at a Low socioeconomic level -N_T_L-)”. This leads to the premise that, in order to perform well as a teacher, it is necessary to have enough time, as illustrated by the following quote:

But if you really want children to learn or achieve meaningful learning, you make a bigger effort, I mean, you use your talents better, you need to do things better. I think that's why the issue of not having enough time is so pervasive here, because you try to do something good, not just a quick fix, but something that really works. (N_T_H)

Like teaching performance, the participants' personal and interpersonal domains are affected by this time poverty, which results in a lack of time for

family and recreational activities, as well as in difficulties for establishing interpersonal relationships outside the school. All of this leads to feelings of unhappiness, stress, and anguish, as the following quote shows:

I don't know, it makes me feel a little less happy. I like to enjoy the time I spend doing things just because, okay? Riding my bicycle or just lying in bed to read a book or watch a series, cooking a tasty meal... I like that and enjoy it a lot. So it's annoying to lose that time doing things I should be able to do in the right place, which is school. So, it's like... it's more stressful, I mean, I get anxious about it, it limits my free time. (Experienced Teacher who teaches at a Low socioeconomic level -E_T_L-)

In response to this situation, teachers devise several strategies to tackle their lack of time, such as reducing the level of complexity of classroom activities and the planning required, using part of their personal time to perform administrative tasks, and asking colleagues for help. The participants also suggest measures aimed at tackling this time poverty which focus on external factors, for instance, a change in their working conditions in terms of the classroom hours – non classroom hours ratio. Other measures focus on internal factors such as personal time management, although this is influenced by external factors, mainly student characteristics, especially those of low-SES students, who are regarded as children affected by deficiencies and vulnerability. In this context, teachers say that they need to supplement their affective deficits and teach values instead of using class time to work on the contents laid out in the curriculum.

The participants explicitly assert that administrative tasks have a multidimensional impact on their teaching and on the use and management of their time, which has negative effects on teaching quality, interpersonal relationships, and personal development. These tasks are experienced as tedious and unimportant, being singled out as one of the most time-consuming institutional demands:

It's a drag to spend so much time sitting down at the computer because, actually, one... well, in my case I'm like very hyperactive, so I find it hard to sit down to do something. That's why I think, for me, the best solution is to go home because that way I can make some progress, I can stand up and do something else... after a while I can go back and continue. (N_T_H)

[regarding the time spent planning] no time at all actually, because I have not developed the habit of working at school on that aspect of planning (...) I have a music workshop so I focus on that because music is learned through practice, to teach children that they must practice constantly, all the time... since it's a workshop, the school demands presentations, they ask me to organize presentations in the children's group. (N_T_L)

For instance, in the category that refers to the influence of teaching experience, the participants highlight the amount of time that less experienced teachers devote to these practices (up to four hours to plan a lesson):

These recent times have been educational for me, I've devoted a lot of time to planning, not only the formal or bureaucratic aspects, but lesson organization... start, development, and end... it's taken me nearly four hours, four hours to plan one lesson. (N_T_L)

However, the interviewees note that this situation would revert as they gain years of experience because these tasks become internalized and can be executed more efficiently; also, in the process, teachers generate a supply of pedagogical materials that they can reuse to plan their lessons. In this same category, we find the idea –shared alike by novice and experienced teachers– that younger teachers devote more time to work and are more focused on learning:

Because that's happened to me too, I mean, I've seen teachers who already feel like "look at these children..." so, if they're already thinking that it's because they're bored, so maybe, so much time spent thinking about school, so much time spent here, there comes a time when teachers get sick of it. Maybe if they have no vocation, because doing this requires a strong vocation, it's unrealistic to expect them to enjoy working with children... thankfully I still feel that enjoyment and hope to keep that feeling for a long time. (N_T_H)

Regarding the link between how teachers experience time and how their professional development proceeds, the participants constantly mention the idea that time flows or "goes away". In this context, the passage of time is perceived according to the activities conducted: there is a continuum from a fast rate, linked to a large number of activities to perform, enjoyable work environments, and a lack of awareness of the passage of time, and a slow rate, associated with few activities to conduct, work environments experienced as unpleasant, and an inability to teach due to a lack of control over the students.

The interviewees establish a clear difference between teaching and other professions, noting that:

Of course, [I wish] we were like other workers who take very little work home, and if they do, it's because they didn't perform well during the day, but here you need to perform, perform, and perform... and I don't even work in a system with discipline problems, I have small classes. (E_T_H)

In addition, the participants highlight how hard it is to strike a balance between work and their personal life:

When I have too much work at school, I feel I have lots of things left to do, and of course, trying to balance that with your life duties, I mean, your personal duties so to speak, there's this sort of... trying to do everything

weighs you down. Well, I'm also a mom, so worrying about my work, my life, I mean, my friends... I don't know, saving some time for myself and for my son, my family. There's a sort of clash between all those things, time-wise. (N_T_L)

That's why I also entered the education field a bit later, because I knew it was very demanding and I had a baby... I couldn't do it with the baby, it was either the baby or my teaching job, so I prioritized my job... my job as a mom I mean. (N_T_L)

When the participants fail to find this balance, they tend to prioritize their work and its associated responsibilities to the detriment of their personal and family time:

There are multiple times in my view, first the time for work and personal fulfillment, the latter would include time for family, friends, and leisure, that's how I see time... the way I described it shows the priority I see, I mean, you spend most of your time working, that's the truth whether I like it or not. (E_T_H)

This is interpreted by the teachers as the consequence of working conditions that transform overwork into the normal state of the profession. They single out the full-school-day- program [*Jornada escolar completa, JEC*] as the root of a significant increase in their workload, which negatively affected both teachers and students without leading to a significant improvement in the quality of education outcomes :

The quality of the time children spend here, under this full school day system, has not changed at all, they don't learn more than we learned in our day, in fact, they know much less about life than my generation knew, they know nothing about life, they share nothing with their moms, dads, anyone, among themselves, they can't... I mean, what can they learn? (E_T_H)

For the interviewees, this causes students to develop a negative attitude toward school due to the long time they spend there:

It's true that not all of them go home to study, but it's also true that they spend too long at school. And especially at the more vulnerable schools, at least at the school where I'm working, there's an artistic area where children choose music, dance, theater, folklore, and they have a longer school day. We don't finish school at one on Fridays, for the same reason, because they have a longer day, they also have to cover the common curriculum. And even though it's defined as a strategy to keep them off the streets, where they could do other things, so it's best for them to stay at school, but... what are they actually doing at school? In the end it's just more of the same, so they go home feeling exhausted and I think it's worse, yes, it's worse. (N_T_L)

In response to this workload, which they deem excessive, the interviewees highlight interaction and support among colleagues as coping strategies, since they provide valuable help –in the form of knowledge and methods– for dealing with various situations derived from their different teaching experiences.

Time outside the classroom is important because it enables you to interact with other teachers (N_T_L)

(team work) can be optimize it, because I mean you can share material, for instance, you can plan or divide lesson plans with others. As I've done before, for instance, I don't know... I have colleagues who've already planned eleventh and twelfth grade, and I get to teach eleventh and twelfth grade, so you share. You can optimize your time that way, it's enough to cover all the material you have to cover. (E_T_L)

Something that facilitated our instructional management is... well, the interdisciplinary support we have at school. The other thing is that, in my department, my head of department is pretty up to date regarding new methodologies, the latest research in our field... so in general it's... we get quite a lot of support and there's knowledge about a number of strategies, and as a new teacher I was able to learn several strategies and apply them in the classroom (N_T_H)

Discussion

The main research question aimed to shed light on the STs about time held by novice and experienced teachers from the region of Coquimbo, Chile, who teach high- or low-SES students. This study revealed that teachers produce a large number of STs about school time. This finding can be interpreted as further evidence of the influence of the subjective dimension of time on the teaching profession and on teachers' professional development (Hargreaves, 1999; Rodríguez, 2007). It also shows the relevance of STs, which emerge as subjective representations that allow teachers to explain and predict educational phenomena in a situated manner (Catalán, 2016; Cuadra, Castro, Vystrčilová, & Jancic-Mogliacci, 2017) in this case, those phenomena related to school time. In line with the findings of Collinson and Cook (2001), teachers' STs about school time appear to be complex, given the number of distinctions that teachers establish regarding time in schools. Thus, from the perspective of teachers' subjectivity, school time is an omnipresent phenomenon in nearly all educational dimensions.

The importance and pervasiveness of the topic of school time in the participants' STs is likely to be due to the educational policies adopted by Latin American countries, characterized by a strong focus on educational improvement by extending the school day (Bellei, 2009; Martinic, 2015; Vercellino, 2016). In addition, the impact of these measures on teaching quality, teachers' health, and their overall quality of life (García & Muñoz, 2013; Sánchez & Corte, 2017) constitutes another factor causing STs about school time to have a strong biographical and emotional component. The third relevant factor is the potential

impact of this variable on teaching, since time has been regarded as an essential resource for meeting students' educational needs (Bellei, 2009; Rodríguez, 2007) and contributing to teachers' professional development (Martinic & Villalta, 2009; Strasser, Lissi, & Silva, 2009; Yana & Adco, 2018).

In line with prior research (Collinson & Cook, 2001; Tudor-Craig, 2002), this study also reveals that time poverty (Vickery, 1977) is an all-encompassing aspect that is quasi inherent in the profession, as a result of policies that link school day length with educational improvement. A key aspect is the limited control that teachers think they have over school time, since their subjective theories include variables that are mostly external and outside of teachers' personal control. Multiple studies on *STs* reveal that teachers tend to associate educational outcomes to external factors (Cuadra, Castro, Vystrčilová, & Jancic-Mogliacci, 2017), which ultimately leads to low agentivity when promoting changes (Castro, 2008; Castro & Cárcamo, 2012). This finding could help explain teachers' resistance against the implementation of educational innovations which demand that they modify their time management.

Also, from a social perspective, time poverty may be linked with a sociopolitical and institutional structure which has largely influenced the increase in work rhythm, excessive workloads, and the standardization of school time, causing teachers to feel distress, experience negative health issues, and even to quit their profession (Cezar et al., 2013; Gaete et al., 2017; García et al., 2010). A similar phenomenon has been observed, for instance, in the professional practice of psychologists working in educational contexts, as their agentivity chiefly depends on the political and social structure regulating key educational aspects of student populations affected by social vulnerability (Sandoval, Barriga, Wylie, Cuadra, Palacios, & Storey, 2018).

This causes tension among the need to improve education quality --which appears to be a shared goal for all actors--, the policies implemented to achieve these improvements, teachers' working conditions, and teachers' professional identity. In this context, teachers develop and implement several strategies to address these demands while also protecting their professional identity, which includes aspects such as vocation, the social meaning of their practice (Ávalos & Sotomayor, 2011), and professional self-efficacy. In this study, *STs* appear to preserve a balance (Flick, 1992; Rodrigo, Rodríguez, & Marrero, 1993) between ontological or essential aspects associated with teachers' professional identity and external demands that threaten this system of constructed beliefs, with time seeming to be one of the primary points of contention. These *STs*, from a procedural perspective, orient strategies or solutions which, in this study, include reducing the complexity of lessons, limiting the time spent planning, using personal time, and requesting support from colleagues. They also reflect the constant demand of teachers' unions to improve working conditions in terms of how their working hours are distributed.

Working on the reconstruction of an ST that balances aspects which influence the management and use of school time and which are under teachers' control could help reduce resistance to change in education and facilitate the proper development of their professional identity. If the authorities really aim to improve teachers' professional status, this should be done without overlooking the urgent changes needed at the educational policy level. Such a goal requires conducting further research on school time, taking into account the views of its protagonists (Martinic, Huepe, & Vergara, 2011; Vázquez, 2007) to determine which improvements are necessary.

For instance, from the perspective of these participants, one aspect could be addressed to change how teachers experience school time: the amount of administrative tasks that they regard as tedious, highly time-consuming, and unimportant. It is probably necessary for teacher teams to become aware of this, redefine their time management approaches, and develop new competences to administer school time more efficiently across all levels. This could lead not only to better time management in schools, but also to the construction of STs that provide teachers with more agency regarding educational change.

Our second aim was to compare the STs about school time held by teachers with different levels of experience, which revealed that less experienced teachers need more time to plan their lessons. Several authors have noted that novice teachers encounter issues such as large classes, insufficient materials or resources, and a lack of time for planning lessons (Ávalos, Carlson, & Aylwin, 2004; Solís, Núñez, Contreras, Vásquez, & Ritterhausen, 2016). Thus, as teachers gain professional experience, they also achieve more expertise, which appears to enable them to make better use of their time. However, these results suggest that more experienced teachers are less motivated and perform more poorly. Considering teachers' working conditions, which tend to affect their workplace health and lead to fatigue (Díaz & Barra, 2016), it can be presumed that, as they progress in their professional career, the deterioration of their workplace health will also limit the attitudinal elements linked to motivation. The above reflects the difficulties hampering teaching careers and the need to plan and implement professional development policies and micro-policies tailored to each stage of the professional development cycle.

In line with the above, it was also observed that less experienced teachers tend to display a time orientation toward the present, whereas more experienced ones are more future-oriented. Time perspective has been shown to be related to better or worse well-being, health, and quality of life indicators (Güell, Orchard, Yopo, & Jiménez-Molina, 2015). Thus, a positive view of the past, an adequate level of enjoyment of the present, and a moderate orientation toward the future have been found to be linked to better mental health and more subjective well-being (Boniwell, Osin, Linley, & Ivanchenko, 2010; Oyanadel & Buéla-Casal, 2011; Oyanadel & Buéla Casal, 2017). In the educational context, time perspective toward the future has been linked to increased motivation. However,

our findings appear to stand in opposition to this view and suggest that it is necessary to increase research on teachers' time perspective, incorporating the various meanings constructed about these dimensions. Focusing on the future can be unmotivating if it seen as presenting impossible challenges. This approach is necessary because the future time perspective of more experienced teachers -- given the lack of time that teachers report-- may cause them to regard their professional future as stifling and riddled with impossible goals, which could reduce their motivation and performance.

In the same vein, the time variable appears to have a strong influence on teachers' workplace health, such as job stress and burn out. In view of the participants' experience, insufficient school time has a negative impact on teachers' performance, their personal and family life, and their psychological health. This finding lends support to studies that have linked school time with excessive workloads and teachers' workplace health (Cuadra et al., 2015; García & Muñoz, 2013). In this context, teachers' *STs* about their lack of time could be both a cause of and a solution to their health issues.

Lastly, regarding the content and structure of the *STs* found, a triad was identified that largely orients teachers' practices; nevertheless, it has a major limitation given teachers' conceptions of school time: if an *ST* has a strong negative emotional component and a structure marked by external attributions, and also serves to justify teachers' actions, it could inspire ineffective pedagogical practices (Catalán, 2018). In other words, a teacher who experiences negative emotions in connection with school time --a key resource for educational success-- and attributes his/her lack of time or poor time management to external factors could use these views to justify his/her pedagogical practices. Other authors have found *STs* of this type in teachers, connecting them with low agentivity and lack of efficacy (Cuadra et al., 2017).

Conclusion

This study shows that the participating teachers developed markedly emotional *STs* about school time which identify external factors as the cause of their time management problems and which display a strong tendency to justify their current behavior. Our findings highlight the potential relevance of reconstructing subjective representations of this type, posing the challenge of tracing how these *STs* are constructed in order to implement strategies aimed not only at achieving subjective change in teachers, but also --and most importantly-- at planning teacher education processes that enable them to develop greater agentivity (Castro & Cárcamo, 2012; Catalán, 2018), as increased agentivity should allow them to make fuller use of school time and help them engage more fully in wiser reflection. By fulfilling this longed-for aim, teachers can become professionals who reflect on, plan, and manage teaching and learning from a perspective informed by school time.

Limitations

This study considered only two variables for selecting participants: years of teaching experience and student SES. Future studies could explore other dimensions that might be involved in teachers' theorizations, for instance, their self-efficacy as teachers, their students' educational achievements, and the characteristics of schools' time management, among others, thus generating a broader understanding of teachers' conceptual constructions.

Lastly, another way of shedding light on teachers' subjective theories could be to incorporate new forms of inquiry or methodological triangulation methods, such as diaries or discussion groups.

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