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Responsibility in the School Context – Development and Validation of a Heuristic Framework

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Abstract

Existing research has identified feelings of responsibility as having major motivational implications for a person's actions. A person identifying as being responsible for a certain task will perceive themselves as self-determined and thus invest considerable effort in the task. Despite being conceptualised as an individual's sense of internal obligation, responsibility in everyday contexts is often attributed by and to other people. Different perspectives on responsibility may, however, not always overlap, especially in the school context where tasks and liabilities often remain ill-defined. This paper thus presents a framework of responsibility in the school context which assumes teachers, students and parents to share a certain number of microsystems which may (indirectly) influence one another. In order to test the usefulness of the proposed framework, a series of studies were conducted collecting data on teachers', students' and parents' views of their own and one another's responsibility in the school context. 4339 statements were assigned to categories representing different parts of the framework and reveal its usefulness for describing the complexity of responsibility attributions and its influences in the school context. Findings show the framework will be helpful to embrace existing research and develop questions for further research that address central educational issues such as student and teacher motivation, teacher burnout as well as prerequisites for students' high or low achievement.

Keywords: Teacher Responsibility; Student Responsibility; Parent Responsibility; School Context

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In the last decade the extension of demands on schools led to an extensive discussion on the particular competencies and responsibilities of stakeholders in the school context. The challenge is that for most specific responsibilities, due to the complexity and the fact that tasks and liabilities in schools are often ill-defined (Fischman, DiBara, & Gardner, 2006), can often not clearly be attributed to one specific person or group of people. To further complicate this, there is an absence of an agreed-upon definition of the term responsibility that can lead to conflicts between stakeholders perceiving their own and others' responsibility differently (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011). Conflicts are especially likely to occur between teachers, students and parents, all emphasizing different goals and judging their own and others' responsibility against the background of their own sphere of experience. A review of the empirical work on responsibility in the school context underlines the complexity of the concept responsibility (Author/s). It shows that when teachers, parents and students talk about students' learning and achievement they assign the same responsibility differently to each other. It furthermore shows that the context or the cultural setting in which this responsibility attribution takes place plays a significant role. The interplay between the stakeholders' attributions of responsibility is still underresearched. Thus, this paper aims to examine how teachers, students and parents attribute responsibility to themselves and one another, to disentangle these often implicit and confused responsibility attributions, and represent them in a heuristic framework.

1. Responsibility

Despite being used in a multitude of contexts and sometimes being considered a "core concept of social life" (Hamilton, 1978 p. 326), the term responsibility remains unclear (Del Schalock, 1998; Fischman et al., 2006; Maulbetsch, 2010). The multitude of perspectives from which responsibility has generally been studied indicates the fluid nature of the concept (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011), with perspectives ranging from conceptualising responsibility as a relatively stable disposition of a person (Bierhoff, 2000) to the interrelation between personal sense of responsibility and locus of control (Guskey, 1981, 1982; Rose & Medway, 1981a, 1981b).

Due to this diversity of theoretical perspectives, responsibility in the literature is often conceptualised as a multirelational construct of at least three components, which in each context are engaged differently: Somebody is responsible for something under supervision or judgment of some kind of sanctioning instance (Auhagen, 1999; Auhagen & Bierhoff, 2001; Bayertz, 1995; Grotlüschen, 2008; Höffe, 2008; Schleißheimer, 1984). This judging instance can take many forms ranging between a court and the internal conscience. One of the most elaborated constructs of responsibility is Lenk's (Lenk, 1992; Lenk & Maring, 1993) six-component model asking: Who (subject of responsibility) is attributed responsibility for what (object of responsibility), in view of whom (addressee) by whom (judging instance) in relation to what (normative) criteria and in what realm (of responsibility or action)?

This construct of responsibility was taken up by Lauermann and Karabenick (2011) who studied the components and theoretical status of teacher responsibility in order to tease out the complexity of its different meanings. One basic aspect of their work was the distinction of responsibility from accountability, with the latter being an explicit, formal attribution of tasks. Responsibility was defined as "a sense of internal obligation and commitment to produce or prevent designated outcomes or that these outcomes should have been produced or prevented" (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011, p. 135). This definition accommodates the two perspectives implied in responsibility attributions: the retrospective (that something should have happened), which is often linked to questions of fault or guilt (Weiner, 1995), and the prospective view (that something should happen), denoting a subject's obligations for certain people, things or states (Werner, 2006).

These prospective responsibilities can furthermore emerge in two different ways. Despite some researchers assuming feelings of responsibility to only be the result of a personal disposition (Bierhoff, 1995, 2000) or of social attributions (Bayertz, 1995) it is generally assumed that responsibility can either result from attributions by other people or a person's own sense of obligation (Auhagen, 1999; Bacon, 1991; Kammerl, 2008; Kaufmann, 1995). These two perspectives very often overlap, especially when it comes to

rather ill-defined tasks like the teaching profession (Fischman et al., 2006). The extensive discussion of teachers' professional behaviour and ethics shows this lack of conventional means for defining teacher responsibility. Often, teachers only face a broad description of the field of activity and are (sometimes even contractually) attributed the paramount responsibility to define their specific tasks and what they feel responsible for (Werner, 2006). Based on self-determination theory, this could be considered positive, as it can be assumed that an internal sense of responsibility evokes more positive motivational responses as this person perceives themselves as self-determined which enhances engagement (Berkowitz & Daniels, 1963; Ryan & Deci, 2000) and work satisfaction (Müller, 2009), whereas people only being attributed responsibility from external instances would have to be controlled for compliance (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011). Assuming much responsibility in response to broad or non-existing guidelines for action has, however, been hypothesised to cause burnout (Fischman et al., 2006).

2. Responsibility in school

The above indicates the relevance of discussing responsibility in relation to teaching and learning in schools today. By acting as a teacher, a person is, as in any other job, attributed a specific task responsibility whose nature is determined by the specific role this person incorporates (Leithwood, Edge, & Jantzi, 1999). Due to teachers' tasks and liabilities being rather ill-defined (Feiks, 1992; Fischman et al., 2006; Pätzold, 2008; Tenorth, 2004), teachers are left to define what they assume themselves, and others respectively, to be responsible for. Students and their parents, in return, can be assumed to also go through the process of defining their own and others' responsibilities which again influences teachers (Fischman et al., 2006), who according to Feiks (1992) are expected to do more than just fulfilling their explicitly set duties.

Empirical research up to this point, however, seems to have been guided by the role of teachers as the only bearer of responsibility in the classroom (Bastian, 1995; Del Schalock, 1998; Eikenbusch, 2009) and has strongly focused its attention on teacher responsibility, linking this research field to aspects like sources of teacher responsibility, contextual influences on perceptions of responsibility (responsibility as a social, situational phenomenon) and limitations of responsible actions. Students' and parents' responsibility mostly served as confinements of teacher responsibility rather than being studied for their own sake.

Regarding teacher responsibility some studies focused on general objects of teacher responsibility (Bourke, 1990), which they found to be centred around preparation and structuring learning materials, while others specifically studied teachers' sense of personal responsibility for their students' educational outcomes (Bracci, 2009; Halvorsen, Lee, & Andrade, 2009; Matteucci & Gosling, 2004; Potvin & Papillon, 1992). Results showed that teachers were more ready to assume responsibility for their students' success than failure with responsible teachers being better prepared and attending more advanced training units while also experiencing more support and encouragement by school administrators. The direct school setting, its socioeconomic background (Diamond, Randolph, & Spillane, 2004), size (Lee & Loeb, 2000) and perceived family influences (Thrupp, Mansell, Hawksworth, & Harold, 2003) but also more remote factors like the cultural influences on teachers' perception of their professional identity (Barrett, 2005; Karakaya, 2004) were found to affect teachers' perceptions and perceived limitations of their responsibility. Fischman, DiBara and Gardner (2006), however, found that teachers, compared to other professions, were more ready to take responsibility. They generally counteract the missing of clear instructions and norms of behaviour by steadily focusing their sense of responsibility on their students whom they perceive to be primary addressees of their responsibility. Teachers state to meet higher academic, social, emotional and developmental demands of students resulting from problematic environments by expanding their sphere of action and sense of responsibility.

This behaviour could be assumed to deprive students and parents of their responsibilities, which to some might be considered a positive development. Research has shown that student responsibility is widely understood to be limited to cooperative and social behaviour in the classroom (Lewis, 2001), meeting expectations and learning goals (Bryan & McLaughlin, 2005) and basically "doing the work" and "obeying the rules" (Bacon, 1993). The students in Bacon's study, being asked about what they thought they were

responsible for, indicated to mostly feel to be held responsible rather than have feelings of personal responsibility which based on Ryan and Deci (2000) can be assumed to deter students from developing feelings of self-determination. In contrast to these findings, Zimmerman and Kitsantas (2005) found students in self-regulated learning settings to generally rate their abilities higher and attribute more responsibility to learners than teachers. These students did not limit their responsibility to classroom learning, as was done in other studies, but also felt responsible for contextual factors outside the classroom that might indirectly influence their learning.

One major factor in this respect, acknowledged by all three, teachers, students and parents, is how central a student's parents are with supporting their child's school work (Ballard & Bates, 2008). Despite emphasising the importance of parent involvement, only few teachers state to feel responsible for establishing connections with parents but rather hold them responsible for getting engaged in school matters (Ramirez, 1999). Such views have, however, been found to also be context-specific as in China (Katyal & Evers, 2007) as well as Turkey (Korkmaz, 2007) parents are expected to provide a loving and supportive home in which the child is well cared for and thereby equipped for school, but leave educational matters to professional educators such as teachers. Thus, parent involvement in school is neither supported nor expected. Up to today, to our knowledge, only one New Zealand study has studied all three, teachers', students' and parents' perception of their own and others' (retrospective) responsibility. Peterson, Rubie-Davies, Elley-Brown, Widdowson, Dixon and Irving (2011) found students to view themselves as most responsible for their learning outcomes. Students, however, indicate influences by (for example more or less sympathetic) teachers and their parents' responsibility for supporting them and providing a stimulating learning environment. While interviewed parents shared this view, teachers emphasised students' responsibility for their motivation and success as well as contextual matters of school facilities and resources that might influence learning – and enable teachers to deny their responsibilities and attribute them to others.

In sum, a review of the empirical literature regarding teacher, student and parent responsibility showed that these three central agents in schools assume or are attributed specific prospective responsibilities, some of which only become apparent in retrospect (Helker & Wosnitza, 2014). This entails potential for conflict as it is the nature of things that people can only be made accountable for issues they knew about being responsible for beforehand – what you do not know, you cannot take or be attributed responsibility for (Lenk, 1992, p. 10). Prior research revealed that most of these three major agents in schools direct their behaviour to those things they personally feel responsible for. Own responsibilities are outlined by attributing all remaining tasks to other agents. The perception of one's own and others' prospective and retrospective responsibility is a highly individual matter (Gärtner, 2010) which is influenced by the subjective perception of the importance of specific tasks and of situational factors. As these views seldom are openly addressed and negotiated, different perspectives are likely to not always overlap, which might generate conflicts when conflicting goals are emphasized (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011).

Furthermore, empirical research suggests the importance of the role of context and interactions between agents, as findings show perceptions of own and others' responsibility to strongly vary with the (national, economic, social etc.) setting (e.g., Katyal & Evers, 2007; Korkmaz, 2007). The following section will present existing models of context which have in the past been applied to (the analysis of) schools' working and learning processes and appear relevant for describing responsibility in school.

3. Relevance of context for describing responsibility in school

A number of models of context have been put forward in existing literature focusing on the multiple aspects of context (see Wosnitza & Beltman, 2012 for an overview). Wosnitza and Beltman (2012), who developed a model for analysing context of specific situations with regard to the level of interaction, perspective (subjective/objective) and content (social/physical/formal). The aspect of level of interaction in this model is, as in most other work relating to context, conceptualised closely along the lines of Bronfenbrenner's model of the ecological environment. Despite covering the aspect of differing perspectives

people may hold on various levels of context, the model focuses on explaining the context of a specific situation rather than describing interrelations between different agents.

Gurtner, Monnard and Genoud (2001) applied a model of the school context to explore its impact on students' motivation. Drawing on the model's notion of indirect as well as bidirectional influence between the person and their environment, these authors highlighted that "two students placed in an apparently identical situation may react to it differently since the context in which each one will embed that situation might be quite different." (p. 191).

Representing the nature of partnerships and relationships between schools, families and communities, Joyce L. Epstein's (2011) framework of overlapping spheres of influence has become widely acknowledged and applied especially to discussions of questions regarding parental involvement in schools (e.g., Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Katyal & Evers, 2007; Lawson, 2003). Based on prior research that parents can influence student educational outcomes and achievement (e.g., Leichter, 1974; Lightfoot, 1978; Marjoribanks, 1979), Epstein (2011) developed a model of school, family and community partnerships which she applied to the development of research questions as well as strategies for action in improving those partnerships. In this model, school, family and community are represented as three spheres of context which overlap to a certain degree which is determined by external forces and internal actions (e.g., time, backgrounds, actions taken in families and schools). These spheres can have unique and also combined influences on children through the interactions of parents, teachers, students and community partners. Taking action for bringing together the different partners and thus enlarging the overlap between these spheres is considered to help identify shared responsibilities of home, school, and community and to increase positive influences on children. Also, the degree of overlap obscures boundaries between school and family, so that the influence of one sphere can still be at work while the student is involved in the other (Epstein, 2011). In proposing this framework, Epstein called for the recognition of shared goals and responsibilities for the socialisation and education of the child (Epstein, 2011, p. 26) and for researchers to recognise schools', homes' and communities' simultaneous and cumulative effects on student development and learning (Epstein & Sheldon, 2006).

While Epstein strongly focused on what strategies could be applied by schools and educators to establish functioning and reliable partnerships with their students' families and communities, other researchers have emphasised the influences between these spheres. Christenson (2004) pointed out that different antecedents may result in the same outcome (equifinality) while similar initial conditions may still lead to dissimilar results (multifinality). Applying Bronfenbrenner's model of the ecological environment (1979), she denied the possibility of developing "uniform prescriptions" for involving parents to improve students' school performance, as interfaces of home and school may be variably overlapping (p. 87).

To sum up, existing models can partially account for attributions of responsibility and how responsible or irresponsible actions of teachers, students and parents influence what happens in the specific or related contexts. Nevertheless, to the best of our knowledge, no work has been published which developed a theoretical background for research presenting the different agents in the school context and as context for schools and one another. Up to now, the different research perspectives appear isolated, incommensurate and thereby impeding a broad understanding of the phenomenon of responsibility in the school context.

Thus, in the following, a heuristic framework shall be presented which draws on the models of context already presented in order to comprehensively describing and structure responsibility in the school context. In order to validate this framework, empirical data will be applied to support its different components.

4. Towards a framework of responsibility in the school context

Based on the above, we propose a heuristic framework for representing the origins and impacts of responsibility attributions in school context. Teachers, students and parents attribute responsibility to themselves and the other agents in the school context to prevent or produce certain outcomes (prospective)

based on their perception of the respective (professional) roles, context and individual spheres of action. Responsibility attributed from external sources does not automatically imply an internal sense of responsibility, because often no comparisons are made between different perspectives which can evoke differences in (the possibility of) retrospective attributions of responsibility. Furthermore, attributed responsibilities may not overlap due to different perspectives on the context and the settings in which a specific person is involved.

Regarding the individual spheres of actions, applying Bronfenbrenner's (1979) model of the ecological environment to responsibility attributions in the school context, we propose that teachers, students and parents engage in several subcontexts, i.e. microsystems, which sum up to constitute this person's mesosystem. When it comes to their school-related activities, teacher, students and parents share a specific number of the microsystems in which they are involved, i.e. interfaces of their mesosystems (general sphere of action). A mathematics teacher, for example shares the microsystem 'math lesson' with their students while he or she might not be involved in the microsystem 'English lesson', the students share with somebody else. While teachers' and parents' mesosystems overlap on parents' days, parents, just like any other of the named agents, are involved in many other, not school-related microsystems, none of the other agents is part of as for example home, work or free-time activities.

Actions that are not located in one of the shared microsystems (exosystems) these interfaces comprise (e.g., events outside school), might, however, have an indirect, yet considerable effect on what happens there. A parent-teacher talk might be a microsystem, the teacher and a student's parents share, in which the student is not involved but will certainly be affected by. It thus represents an exosystem for the student. While this example is quite obvious, it could be assumed that many other exosystems influence school microsystems which the agents sharing this microsystem are not aware of. All of the above described levels of context are embedded in the macrocontext that could be the cultural setting or the socioeconomic background of the school or family.

In sum, the above assumptions allow for the following conclusions. The school context is understood as consisting of a multitude of microsystems which are determined by the agents involved. Due to their bidirectional influence with the environment, in the school context, multiple actors function as the context for one another. Thus, certain educational outcomes like students' success and failure in school cannot be traced back to one specific incident but result from the interplay of the many microsystems a student is involved in as well as the indirect influences of different exosystems.

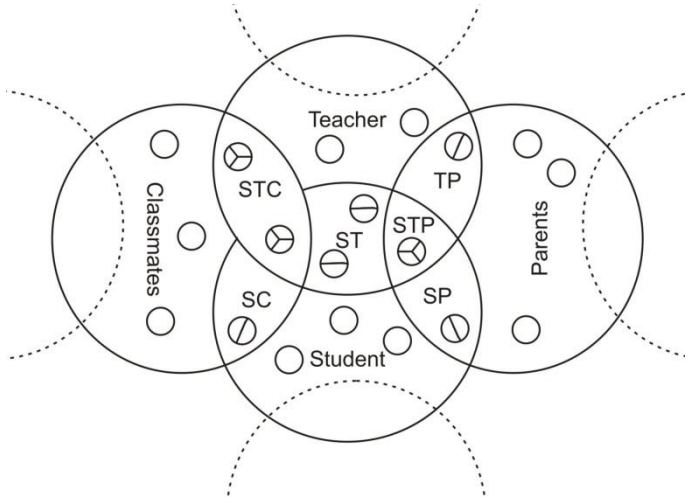
In conclusion, we assume that when it comes to their responsibility, teachers, students and parents can be and are often attributed not only specific responsibilities but also a general responsibility for certain outcomes which is not directly related to what happens in one specific microsystem but rather all of the microsystems, i.e. the mesosystem, this person, representing this specific role, is involved in (e.g., for a student home, school, meetings with friends etc.). The macrosystem in which all the other systems are embedded may influence the nature of the mesosystem as well as the attributed responsibilities (e.g., Karakaya, 2004). Parents from a different cultural background may thus assume teachers to be involved in microsystems or responsible for objects that they are not in this culture and would thus deny.

The nature of the individual's mesosystem and thereby the microsystems and interfaces a person is involved in (i.e. who else is involved in this setting, physical and material nature of the setting), determines the objects this person feels or is held responsible for. Drawing on Lenk's (1992) argument that a person can only be held responsible for such things they are aware of, following Duff (1998) we furthermore suggest the view that a person can only be attributed responsibilities which could be fulfilled in microsystems they are part of (e.g., teachers cannot be held responsible for what happens in the student's home as they are not involved in this microsystem and to not have control over events). Although teachers may indirectly influence these events by their actions at school, they do not have a direct control over the events in a student's home. Thus, the attribution of prospective responsibility requires a profound understanding of what microsystems an individual's sphere of action (mesosystem) comprises and which issues they have the capacity to act on. In addition, retrospective judgments of whether and how attributed responsibilities have been fulfilled are only valid if the respective person knew about and at that time was able to act on them.

4.1 The heuristic framework and its structural elements

The proposed heuristic framework of responsibility in the school context brings together the above considerations. As illustrated in Figure 1, the framework most importantly comprises teachers, students and parents as the three central subjects, i.e. bearers, of responsibility in the school context who share specific microsystems which determine to what degree their mesosystems overlap.

Figure 1. Heuristic framework for structuring responsibility in the school context.



As illustrated in Figure 1, on a conceptual level, the following subjects, i.e. bearers, of responsibility, can be identified: the teacher (T), the particular student (S), his/her parent(s) (P) and his/her classmates (C).

The mesosystem of a teacher, illustrated by the circle at the top, comprises a multitude of microsystems in which they take responsibility, some of them shared with other people, others not shared with anyone. Furthermore, this mesosystem is partly embedded in the macrocontext (i.e. all microsystems in which the person is involved). Besides this, the teacher also shares a number of microsystems with people outside school (indicated by the dotted line) which are part of the wider community in which he or she lives, and thus takes responsibility these contexts. These microsystems can also serve as exosystems to what happens in school microsystems, with the influence and thus indirect responsibility being mediated by the teacher.

Interface ST (Student-Teacher) comprises all the microsystems in which a specific student interacts with his or her teacher and both may feel or be held responsible. Within the macrocontext of school, however, these are not the only microsystems the student and his/her teacher share. As the model focuses its representation on one specific student, another conceptual component of the model are the classmates of the respective student, who as a collective can also be attributed certain responsibilities which have to be differentiated from those attributed to the respective student. Thus, in this model, microsystems, which the student and teacher share with the student's classmates (e.g., a lesson), are located in interface STC (Students-Teacher-Classmates). The microsystems located here are not only classroom settings but also any incident in which these three actors are involved and can thus be held responsible. Correspondingly, microsystems located in interface ST may be set in the classroom because teachers might only interact with one student although being in the classroom with the whole group.

As these groups of students can exist without the respective student being part of them and thus has to be conceptually differentiated from them, interface SC (Student-Classmates) comprises those microsystems shared by the student in focus and his or her classmates. This interface does not necessarily have to be embedded in the school context, as students are often friends and meet outside school. Also, just

like in the teacher's case, the student's mesosystem involves microsystems he or she does not share with anyone or with people outside school like in a sports club, which can also be assumed to have an impact on what happens in other microsystems this student is involved in. Thus, he or she might feel or be held responsible for objects located there. Classmates were not explicitly attributed responsibilities, as they represent the students as a group.

Besides teachers and students, parents were identified to constitute the third agent in the school context. Parents can be assumed to mainly be involved in the context of school when they share microsystems with either their child or their child's teacher. Thus, interface SP (Student-Parents) subsumes those microsystems in which the student interacts with his or her parents, e.g. if parents help their child with their homework or ask about school over dinner. There are also microsystems, in which parents, their child and their child's teacher interact (interface STP, Student-Teacher-Parents) and thus feel or are held responsible, this area being most strongly addressed by current research on parent involvement. Furthermore, there are also microsystems, which parents only share with their child's teacher (e.g., parents' evenings), which are located in interface TP (Teacher-Parents).

Of course, one could argue that parents might also participate in microsystems which their child, his/her teacher and the classmates participate in and thus an interface was missing from this model. We propose, however, that if parents participate in their child's classroom (and also as attendants on field trips etc.) there is a change of roles by which parents assume the role of a teacher. These microsystems should thus also be located in the interfaces ST and STC.

This consideration indicates that responsibilities attributed to teachers, students and parents in the school context can be assumed to result from the specific roles a person is incorporating which invites the attribution of certain tasks and liabilities. Furthermore, we hypothesise that the perception of what microsystems a person is involved or not involved in strongly affects what responsibilities are attributed to him or her.

5. Validation of the framework suggested for structuring responsibility in the school context

Empirical studies into the issue of responsibility as were presented above have produced results that can be linked to further explicate some aspects of this framework of responsibility in the school context. No studies, however, have, to our knowledge, yet addressed the issue in its full complexity. Therefore, the proposed framework shall be examined along data from several empirical studies in order to examine whether the model is useful to account for questions regarding the issue of responsibility attributions between teachers, students and parents.

To meet this goal, the aim of this paper is to examine whether the proposed framework is useful and adequate for structuring responsibility attributions in the school context. Furthermore, the study will look at the nature of the interfaces of teachers', students' and parents' mesosystems and examine what responsibilities these agents attribute to themselves and each other.

5.1 Method

The data presented in the following to support the above presented framework for structuring responsibility in the school context result from a series of studies each exploring the matter of teacher, student and parent responsibility in German secondary education.

Included studies and specific foci:

(1) online survey with students about teacher responsibility, including Lauermann & Karabenick's (2013) Teacher Responsibility Scale

(2) online survey with students about student responsibility, including a newly-developed Student Responsibility Scale along the lines of Lauermann & Karabenick (2013)
(3) online survey with parents about teacher responsibility, including Lauermann & Karabenick's (2013) Teacher Responsibility Scale
(4) pen and paper survey with parents of one local school (highest educational track) on shared and individual responsibility of teachers, students and parents
(5) pen and paper survey of teachers of the highest educational track on shared and individual responsibility of teachers, students and parents
(6) pen and paper survey of teachers of all educational tracks on shared and individual responsibility of teachers, students and parents
(7) pen and paper survey of students of the highest educational track on shared and individual responsibility of teachers, students and parents.

Although every one of these studies had a different focus, they all contained at least one open-ended question each asking participants about their understanding of responsible teacher's, student's or parent's behavior (e.g., "What behavior characterizes a responsible teacher?"). Some of the questionnaires contained three questions about all three agents, some of the studies only focused on student responsibility and thus only asked participants to characterize responsible students' behavior. The phrasing of the question aimed at catching broad descriptions of perceived teachers', students' and parents' responsibility. Participants could name as many responsibilities as they liked for each agent. Each of these mentioned responsibilities was later coded and counted separately.

Statements from all studies were organized into nine groups regarding the perspective (e.g., if respondents were teachers) and focus (e.g., statement about student responsibility) of the statement. Table 1 provides an overview of the characteristics of these so-combined groups, characteristics of the sample and the number of statements in the perspective indicated (e.g., first cell: 68 teachers of which 58.8% were female and 42.2% were younger than or 40 years old provided 177 statements about teacher responsibility.). Also, total numbers of statements per respondent group and subjects of responsibility are presented.

Table 1

Overview of samples regarding perspective

	Teachers' view of…	Students' view of…	Parents' view of…	Total # of statements
Teacher responsibility	N=68; ♀ 58.8%; Age: 42.4% ≤ 40years	N=610; ♀ 60.3%: Age: M=14.6 SD=2.4	N=162; ♀ 88.9%; Child: ♀ 54.9%; age: M=12.8 SD=2.1	
	Statements: 177	*Statements: 1475*	*Statements: 535*	*2187*
Student responsibility	N=68; ♀ 58.8%; Age: 42.4% ≤ 40years	N=279; ♀ 59.3%: Age: M=15.1 SD=2.6	N=106; ♀ 85.8%; Child: ♀ 57.5%; age: M=12.6 SD=0.8	
	Statements: 161	*Statements: 763*	*Statements: 364*	*1288*
Parent responsibility	N=68; ♀ 58.8%; Age: 42.4% ≤ 40years	N=164; ♀ 58.9%: Age: M=15.1 SD=3.0	N=106; ♀ 85.8%; Child: ♀ 57.5%; age: M=12.6 SD=0.8	
	Statements: 143	*Statements: 405*	*Statements: 316*	*864*
Total # of statements	*481*	*2643*	*1215*	***4339***

All 4339 statements regarding teachers', students' and parents' responsibility were analysed using NVivo10 software for qualitative data analysis. All data were coded by a second coder and intercoder agreement was 74.1%.

Data were coded into categories representing the six interfaces (see Fig.1: ST, STC, SC, SP, STP, TP) of these agents' mesosystems (i.e. what these people are feeling or being held responsible for in these specific microsystems.). During the coding process it became obvious that teachers, students and parents are often attributed general responsibilities that they are responsible to fulfill in all microsystems they are involved in (e.g. for being honest and trustworthy) that could not be coded into one specific interface. While these statements could have been coded into each of the above categories, as the specific person is stated to always be responsible for this object, the coders decided to code them separately in order to adequately test the framework. Thus, general responsibilities being attributed to a person to be fulfilled in all the microsystems in which they are involved, were categorized into three groups representing teachers', students' and parents' mesosystems (i.e., sum of their microsystems). These main categories also included data on the respective person's responsibility for interactions with people not included in the framework for reasons of complexity (like colleagues, other parents, friends outside school etc.)

In order to learn more about the responsibilities of each of the nine main categories, data in these were in a second step further categorized into sub-categories representing the different objects of responsibility in order to empirically describe the main categories. In some of these main categories, a further sub-division of statement was not necessary, due to the data varying regarding their levels of differentiation and depth.

Statements regarding the influences between different microsystems and also clear-cut distinctions between different areas of involvement were double-coded in an additional category for further analyses.

6. Results

Of the overall 4339 statements about teacher, student and parent responsibility, 3993 statements could clearly be attributed to one of nine main categories suggested by the proposed framework. The remaining 346 could not be coded for reasons of ambiguity, incomprehensibility or lack of relevance regarding the research topic.

The three categories covering students', teachers', and parents' general responsibility include those statements concerning what the specific agent is responsible for in all the microsystems they are involved in. Furthermore, six main categories represent responsibilities resulting from the agents' shared microsystems, i.e. the interfaces of their mesosystems (see Fig 1).

Results showed that no person was attributed responsibility in contexts in which they were not involved (e.g., parents were not attributed responsibilities that could be categorised in interface STC) and with few exceptions, all people involved were, however, attributed responsibility in the contexts in which they are involved. These exceptions concern interfaces STP and TP, in which students do not attribute any responsibility whatsoever to teachers.

Comparing the number of statements in the nine main categories, representing mesosystems and interfaces of these, and emphasis of a group's statements, with 35.2% of statements by students, the most prominent theme in the students' statements was the interface STC, the interaction of the teacher with their students. For the statements by teachers, the main emphasis lies on four categories, namely, students' (23.1% of teachers' statements) and teachers' (19.5%) general responsibilities, interface STC (18.2%) and SP (19.7%). Statements by parents focused on students' general responsibility (20.1%) as well as interfaces STC (25.0%) and SP (19.3%). Just focusing on the interfaces, STC and SP show to be the most frequently mentioned.

In a second step, data attributed to these categories were analysed further for emergent themes. This section will start out by describing teachers', students' and parents' general responsibilities, i.e. those things, these three agents feel or are held responsible for in all the school-related microsystems they are involved in. Furthermore, microsystems which these agents do not share with others or with people beyond the focus of this approach will be indicated. Describing these three main categories will provide an overview of teachers', students' and parents' responsibilities which do not result from their being involved in a specific

microsystem they share with one of the other agents but from their generally being involved in the school context.

These results will be followed by the presentation of the objects of responsibility arising from the shared microsystems of teachers, students and parents. The six categories representing the interfaces of teachers', students' and parents' mesosystems all contain responsibilities. The people involved are attributed these responsibilities because they interact with the other person(s) in this context.

6.1 Teacher Responsibility

Regarding teachers' general responsibility they feel or are expected by others to fulfill in all microsystems they are involved in, 16 categories were identified in the teachers', students' and parents' data. Table 2 provides an overview of the categories as well as total numbers of categorized statements and percentages of each respondents' (teachers, students and parents) group.

Table 2

Categories, frequencies and percentages of teachers' general responsibility.

Categories **Teachers are generally responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' statements**	**Parents' statements**
…being attentive, empathic, caring and compassionate.	116 (19.66%)	**32.94%**	15.78%	**22.14%**
…appearing nice and friendly in their interactions with others.	109 (18.47%)	2.35%	**25.67%**	8.40%
...being honest, reliable and trustworthy.	69 (11.69%)	12.94%	10.70%	13.74%
…having pedagogical, methodological and content knowledge (showing teaching competence).	58 (9.83%)	11.76%	8.56%	12.21%
…being ready, motivated, willing and trying hard to teach their students.	57 (9.66%)	11.76%	7.75%	13.74%
…preparing lessons.	36 (6.10%)	10.59%	5.35%	5.34%
…their relations with students, parents and other teachers in general.	32 (5.42%)	4.71%	5.35%	6.11%
…being helpful.	31 (5.25%)	-	8.02%	0.76%
…their self-reflection.	18 (3.05%)	3.53%	2.41%	4.58%
…being patient.	17 (2.88%)	1.18%	2.94%	3.82%
…doing their job and fulfilling their duties.	11 (1.86%)	3.53%	1.34%	2.29%
…being well-organised.	10 (1.69%)	-	2.41%	0.76%
…being open.	8 (1.36%)	3.35%	0.53%	2.29%
…sticking to the given rules.	8 (1.36%)	-	2.14%	-
… their cooperation and relations with other teachers.	5 (0.85%)	-	0.80%	1.53%
…getting advanced training.	5 (0.85%)	1.18%	0.27%	2.29%
TOTAL	**590**	**85 (100%)**	**374 (100%)**	**131 (100%)**

Teachers were on this general level attributed responsibilities connected to their fulfilling of their job and its requirements or were attributed responsibility for their relations with other agents (students, parents, colleagues) in the school context and for partially personal qualities. Thus, teachers were attributed the responsibility for being attentive, empathic, caring and compassionate (e.g., "showing interest in every student and getting this across to the students" (T#13TR1)), which was the main category in teachers' and

[1] Abbreviation "T#13TR" means "Teacher No. 13 about teacher responsibility".

parents' numbers of statements regarding general teacher responsibility. In the students' statements, the teacher responsibility for appearing nice and friendly in their interaction with others was identified as the main theme. Further responsibilities regarding their social interactions, were teachers' responsibility for being honest, reliable and trustworthy and for being helpful and also being patient in their interactions with others (e.g., "being patient with every student (even if it's hard)" (S#141TR))

Regarding teachers' responsibility for objects more related to their job, teachers were attributed the responsibility for doing their job and fulfilling their duties, having distinctive pedagogical, methodological and content knowledge (e.g., "high social and pedagogical competence" (P#114TR); "ability to teach us a lot" (S#2TR)), sticking to the given rules (e.g., "a responsible teacher has to also meet the rules set for the students (no mobile phone, chewing gum, etc.)" (S#113TR)) and being well-organized (e.g., "not being sloppy/ forgetful" (S#514TR)). Furthermore, teachers' responsibility for being ready, motivated, willing and trying hard to teach their students (e.g., "love children and his job" (P#111TR)) was identified in the data. Independently of others, teachers are also involved in microcontexts they do not share with the named agents, but in which they are attributed the responsibility for preparing lessons and getting advanced training (e.g., "be ready and motivated to get advanced training regarding contents and pedagogical matters" (T#36TR)). The data suggested another microsystem, i.e. teachers' cooperation and relations with other teachers (e.g., "cooperate with colleagues" (S#105TR); "not insulting other teachers" (S#512TR)).

6.2 Student Responsibility

Altogether, 17 general responsibilities of students were identified. These are represented in Table 3 including the numbers of statements overall as well as per group of respondents. These general responsibilities, i.e., objects of student responsibility in all microsystems they are involved in, could be subdivided into 17 sub-categories.

Table 3

Categories, frequencies and percentages of students' general responsibility.

Categories **Students are generally responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' statements**	**Parents' statements**
…being ready, motivated, willing and trying their best to learn and be successful.	157 (22.14%)	**21.51%**	**19.60%**	**27.06%**
…monitoring and adapting their own learning progress and study.	89 (12.55%)	9.68%	**15.58%**	8.26%
…having positive relations with other people.	86 (12.13%)	8.60%	11.06%	15.60%
…doing their homework.	74 (10.44%)	8.60%	**13.07%**	6.42%
…doing their work and fulfilling their duties.	62 (8.74%)	11.83%	8.04%	8.72%
…being honest and reliable.	35 (4.94%)	7.53%	3.52%	6.42%
…school matters in general.	30 (4.23%)	3.23%	2.76%	7.34%
…being self-reliant and take responsibility.	29 (4.09%)	5.38%	4.27%	3.21%
…turning to others when needing help and accepting help given.	26 (3.67%)	4.30%	2.76%	5.05%
…sticking to the rules.	22 (3.10%)	4.30%	3.27%	2.29%
…their self-reflection.	21 (2.96%)	4.30%	2.51%	3.21%
…preparing exams.	19 (2.68%)	1.08%	4.27%	0.46%
…accuracy and order.	16 (2.26%)	2.15%	2.26%	2.29%
…preparing lessons and revise contents taught.	16 (2.26%)	1.08%	3.52%	0.46%
…getting good grades.	11 (1.55%)	1.08%	2.51%	0.00%
…being open.	10 (1.41%)	2.15%	0.25%	3.21%
…students are responsible to engage in sports	6 (0.85%)	3.23%	0.75%	0.00%

or social clubs outside school.				
TOTAL	**709**	**93(100%)**	**398 (100%)**	**218 (100%)**

All three respondent groups, teachers, students and parents, mentioned students' responsibility for being ready, motivated, willing and trying their best to learn and be successful (e.g., "being ambitious to achieve the best possible result" (P#69SR)) most often. Students also frequently mentioned their own responsibility to monitor and adapt their learning progress and study (e.g., "revise contents" (S#206SR)) as well as doing their homework.

Students were attributed the responsibility for doing their work and fulfilling their duties (e.g., "fulfilling even displeasing tasks" (T#1SR)), sticking to the rules, being self-reliant (e.g., "being self-reliant" (S#109SR)) and school matters in general (e.g., "attending school on a regular basis" P#43SR)). Furthermore, students are held responsible for having positive relations with other people (e.g., "having a pronounced social behavior" (T#43SR)) and being honest and reliable (e.g., "keeping agreed dates (e.g. for projects)" (S#152SR)). Regarding specifically students' school work, the responsibility for getting good grades but also for turning to others when needing help and accepting help given appear in the data (e.g., "notifying parents and teachers about problems and accepting help" (S#128SR)).

Independently of others, students alone are responsible for working and studying at home, which includes completing tasks and preparing for exams, but also monitoring their own learning success and study accordingly (e.g., "recognizing when more has to be done for school" (T#7SR)). Apart from school matters, some data suggested students' responsibility to further engage in sports or social clubs outside school (e.g., "[a responsible student] shows social commitment in his free time (youth fire fighters, sports club)" (T#44SR)).

6.3 Parent Responsibility

Just like all other microsystems parents are involved in, the number of statements attributed to this category was comparatively low with 5.3% of teachers', 0.7% of students' and 14.5% of parents' statements. However, five categories of parents' responsibility could be identified as well as differences regarding how strongly these categories were emphasized by each respondent group.

Table 4

Categories, frequencies and percentages of parents' general responsibility.

Categories **Parents are generally responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' Statements**	**Parents' Statements**
…getting involved and engage in school matters.	31 (44.29%)	**70.83%**	23.53%	**34.48%**
…being interested.	23 (32.86%)	16.67%	**64.71%**	**27.59%**
…being objective, diplomatic and able to conciliate.	10 (14.29%)	12.50%	11.76%	17.24%
…having a positive attitude towards school.	3 (4.29%)	0.00%	0.00%	10.34%
…their interactions with other parents.	3 (4.29%)	0.00%	0.00%	10.34%
TOTAL	**70**	**24 (100%)**	**17 (100%)**	**29 (100%)**

The data suggested that parents' general responsibilities were for getting involved and engage in school (e.g., "cooperation with the school" (T#27PR); "participating in school life" (T#53PR)). This responsibility for getting involved in school was the most dominant one in teachers' statements (70.83%) and also strongly emphasized by parents themselves (34.48%) who also stressed parents' being responsible for being interested (27.59%), a responsibility being particularly stressed in the students' statements (64.71%).

Furthermore, parents were stated to have the general responsibility for having a positive attitude towards school (e.g., "have a positive attitude towards school and lessons" (P#10PR)), being objective and diplomatic regarding school matters (e.g., "being objective towards teachers" (P#50PR)) and A specific microsystem that emerged from the data was parents' interactions with other parents' for which they are also stated to be responsible (e.g., "cooperation and communication with other parents" (P#62PR)).

6.4 Interface ST – Student-Teacher

To this main category, all statements were assigned which concerned the respective student's interactions with their teacher independent of other people. While every teacher has a large number of students, this category represents those responsibilities attributed to teachers in every context they interact with an individual student. This interface is different from interface STC in that it only includes responsibilities that derive from a specific student interacting with a specific teacher. These dyadic interactions may, in fact, be also set in the classroom but do exist irrespective of co-students being involved (as is the case for responsibilities coded in interface STC). Thus, one could hypothetically assume these responsibilities to also derive from microsystems that students share with their teachers and classmates (STC) because teachers might only interact with one student although being in the classroom with the whole group. The two categories are, however, conceptually different and thus treated separately here. Table 5 provides an overview of teachers' responsibilities in their interactions with their students.

Table 5

Categories, frequencies and percentages of teachers' responsibility in their interactions with their students.

Categories **Teachers are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' statements**	**Parents' statements**
…developing a positive, caring, interested personal relationship with every student.	136 (32.69%)	16.67%	**32.25%**	**37.07%**
…listening to, helping, counselling students when they have problems in- or outside school.	117 (28.13%)	8.33%	**30.80%**	25.86%
…enhancing every single student's learning.	87 (20.91%)	**33.33%**	19.20%	22.41%
…treating students with respect.	42 (10.10%)	12.50%	9.78%	10.34%
…being a role model.	22 (5.29%)	16.67%	5.43%	2.59%
…developing student's personality.	8 (1.92%)	12.50%	1.09%	1.72%
…the individual student's grades.	4 (0.96%)	0.00%	1.45%	0.00%
TOTAL	**416**	**24 (100%)**	**276 (100%)**	**116 (100%)**

Teachers are described by in students' and parents' statements as most responsible for developing a positive, caring, interested, personal relationship with every student. Students furthermore emphasizing teachers' responsibility to listen to, help and counsel their student whenever he/she turns to them with problems in- or outside school (e.g., "To be responsive to students' problems in and outside school." (T#61TR)). Regarding school outcomes, teachers' responsibility to enhance every single student's learning (e.g., "adapt to different types of learners and try for all of them to have the same chances." (S#114TR)) lies in the center of teachers' statements about their own responsibility. Teachers are furthermore described as responsible for being a role model for this student (e.g., "A responsible teacher exemplifies positive behavior (meet deadlines, being organized, on time, fair…)" (T#26TR)) and treating the student with respect. Other responsibilities attributed to the main category of teachers' general responsibilities were the ones for the student's grades (only mentioned by students) and the development of their personality (e.g., "Co-education, e.g. what's good or not for a student at the moment and in the future" (P#39TR)). Of the mentioned, the personal relationship lies more in the center of students' statements than do educational matters.

Regarding students' responsibility in their interaction with the teacher, four categories could be identified in the data. Table 6 provides an overview.

Table 6

Categories, frequencies and percentages of students' responsibility in their interactions with their teacher.

Categories **Students are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' statements**	**Parents' statements**
…treating teacher with respect, accept their authority.	30 (73.17%)	**100.00%**	**65.22%**	**81.25%**
…contacting teacher with problems and questions.	6 (14.63%)	-	17.39%	12.50%
…not provoking the teacher.	4 (9.76%)	-	17.39%	-
…trusting the teacher.	1 (2.44%)	-	-	6.25%
TOTAL	**41**	**2 (100%)**	**23 (100%)**	**16 (100%)**

Most statements in all three groups of respondents' statements concern students' being responsible to treat their teacher with respect and accept his/her authority (e.g., "respect the teacher, even if they haven't earned it" (S#105SR)). This may include the sub-category of not provoking teachers, which was only mentioned by students. Furthermore, students were held responsible for contacting the teacher with their problems and questions (e.g., "if you have a problem, dare to ask the teachers" (S#47SR)).

6.5 Interface STC – Teacher-All Students

Interface B, comprising all those microsystems in which the teacher interacts with all students, holds all those statements regarding teaching the specific lesson. Within the data categorized into this main category, 14 teacher (Table 7) and 7 student responsibilities (Table 8) were identified.

Table 7

Categories, frequencies and percentages of teachers' responsibility in their interactions with all their students.

Categories **Teachers are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' statements**	**Parents' Statements**
…teaching good, interesting lessons adapted to their students.	262 (27.29%)	21.57%	28.02%	26.29%
…showing authority and be strict – consequent classroom management.	200 (20.83%)	9.80%	22.70%	17.37%
…being fair.	129 (13.44%)	15.69%	11.78%	18.31%
…contributing to a positive learning atmosphere.	61 (6.35%)	13.73%	6.47%	4.23%
…coming to class on time and prepared.	52 (5.42%)	7.84%	5.89%	3.29%
…keeping calm and continue lessons.	50 (5.21%)	1.96%	5.60%	4.69%
…intervening in students' conflicts and work for group's team spirit.	43 (4.48%)	0.00%	4.02%	7.04%
…motivating their students.	42 (4.38%)	11.76%	2.01%	10.33%
…(objective) assessment.	31 (3.23%)	3.92%	3.88%	0.94%
…involving all students in lessons.	26 (2.71%)	3.92%	2.30%	3.76%
…supervising their students.	24 (2.50%)	3.92%	2.87%	0.94%
…caring for the group and being their	17 (1.77%)	1.96%	2.16%	0.47%

students' advocate.				
…teaching the contents required, follow the curriculum.	12 (1.25%)	3.92%	0.86%	1.88%
…appropriately using homework.	11 (1.15%)	0.00%	1.44%	0.47%
TOTAL	**960**	**51(100 %)**	**696 (100%)**	**213 (100%)**

Table 8

Categories, frequencies and percentages of students' responsibility in their interactions with their teacher and other students.

Categories **Students are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' statements**	**Parents' statements**
…participating in lessons and pay attention.	143 (48.81%)	**35.48%**	**52.13%**	**45.95%**
…coming to class on time and prepared.	47 (16.04%)	22.58%	15.96%	13.51%
…contributing to a positive working atmosphere.	38 (12.97%)	0.00%	14.36%	14.86%
…respectful relations with classmates and teachers in class.	36 (12.29%)	29.03%	7.45%	17.57%
…being interested in the contents taught.	18 (6.14%)	3.23%	5.85%	8.11%
…trying to understand and learn the contents taught.	8 (2.73%)	9.68%	2.66%	0.00%
…trying to meet the expectations the teacher sets for the class.	3 (1.02%)	0.00%	1.60%	0.00%
TOTAL	**293**	**31 (100%)**	**188 (100%)**	**74 (100%)**

While both teachers and students are attributed the responsibility in this area to come to class on time and prepared (e.g., "being well-prepared" (T#38TR)) and to create/contribute to a positive working atmosphere in class (e.g., "to try not to disturb the lessons in order not to ruin others learning success" (S#250SR)), other responsibilities differ.

Regarding teacher responsibility, the category most of all three groups of respondents' statements could be assigned to, however, was the responsibility for teaching good and interesting lessons that are adapted to the students (e.g., "adapting lessons to students" (T#7TR)). Also, especially by their students, teachers are attributed responsibilities that can be linked to issues of classroom management (showing authority and being strict (e.g., "clear instructions and strict implementation" (T#57TR)). Further objects of teacher responsibility were supervising the students, intervene in students' conflicts and establish the group's team spirit, keeping calm and continuing lessons no matter what happens (e.g., "sometimes just turning a blind eye" (T#43TR))). Further personal relations between the teacher and their class like caring for the group and being their students' advocate (e.g., "A responsible teacher backs their students" (S#378TR)) as well as being fair. The latter is by some statements linked to teachers' responsibility to include all students in lessons (e.g., "a responsible teacher tries to get quiet students out of their shell" (S#145TR)) and (objective) assessment (e.g., "clear, transparent and explained grading" (S#113TR)). Regarding these teaching aspects, teachers were also attributed the responsibility to teach the contents required (follow the curriculum) and appropriately setting homework and motivate the students (e.g., "get children excited about learning" (P#103TR)).

Responsibilities attributed to students in this respect somewhat complemented the above, with the students' responsibility for participating and paying attention in lessons (e.g., "show interest in the lesson and actively participate" (P#16SR)) being the most emphasized responsibility in all three groups of

respondents' statements. Furthermore, students were stated to be responsible for trying to be interested in the contents (e.g., "interest in the contents and other students' answers" (T#54SR)), understanding and learn the contents (e.g., "truly trying to understand the contents rather than simply marking lesson time" (T#33SR)) and meeting expectations. Statements regarding students' responsibility to treat their classmates and teachers in lessons with respect were also included in this category.

6.6 Interface SC – Student-Classmates

In contrast to the above, this category includes all statements regarding students' responsibility in their interaction with their classmates. This category was conceptually different from STC because, although it can be assumed to address classroom settings in which the teacher is also present, these are responsibilities that derive from students' interactions with their co-students, irrespective of whether the teacher is around. Only one category was evident, namely students' responsibility to have positive, help- and peaceful relations with their classmates (e.g., "not bully or even hurt anyone" (P#59SR); "save others from mean people" (S#46SR)).

Table 9

Categories, frequencies and percentages of students' responsibility in their interactions with their classmates.

Categories **Students are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' Statements**	**Students' Statements**	**Parents' statements**
…their interactions with their classmates.	134 (100.00%)	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
TOTAL	**134**	**17 (100%)**	**88 (100%)**	**29 (100%)**

6.7 Interface SP – Student-Parents

This main category subsumes all those statements regarding those responsibilities resulting from students' interactions with their parents. No statements focused on students' responsibilities in this area. Table 10 provides an overview.

Table 10

Categories, frequencies and percentages of parents' responsibility in their interactions with their child.

Categories **Parents are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' statements**	**Students' statements**	**Parents' statements**
…supporting and helping their child.	177 (26.50%)	**22.47%**	**27.93%**	**25.79%**
…having a positive and caring relationship with their child.	124 (18.56%)	19.10%	17.04%	20.81%
…keeping tabs on their child's learning and school life.	119 (17.81%)	**24.72%**	15.08%	19.46%
…learning with their child.	57 (8.53%)	4.49%	11.73%	4.98%
…educating their child (besides school matters).	52 (7.78%)	14.61%	5.59%	8.60%
…motivating their child.	48 (7.19%)	3.37%	6.98%	9.05%
…providing the prerequisites for student learning.	38 (5.69%)	5.62%	5.31%	6.33%
…giving their child space and freedom.	31 (4.64%)	3.37%	6.42%	2.26%
…physical and structural care for their child.	22 (3.29%)	2.25%	3.91%	2.71%
TOTAL	**668**	**89 (100%)**	**358 (100%)**	**221 (100%)**

Parents in this category were attributed broader responsibilities as for generally supporting and helping them (e.g., "support and encourage" (T#1PR)), a category which about a quarter of each group of respondents statements were assigned to. A quarter of the teachers' statements in this overall area also mentioned parents' responsibility for keeping the tabs on their child's learning and school life (e.g., "say when and how much I have to learn or do my homework" (S#50PR)), which was not equally strongly emphasized by students and parents.

Further general responsibilities assigned to parents were for having a positive and caring relationship with their child (e.g., "take time for their child" (P#3PR); "take notice of me" (S#15PR)) and giving their child space and freedom (e.g., "no pressuring expectations" (S#101PR)).

Further responsibilities mentioned could be subdivided into responsibilities concerning the child's care and education (educating the child (e.g., "Parents have educated their children at home and taught them values and norms." (T#25PR)); providing physical and structural care (e.g., "send children well-prepared (fed, well-rested, low pressure) to school" (P#71PR))) as well as responsibilities related to the child's school work. Thus, parents were stated to be responsible to provide the prerequisites for student learning (materials, working atmosphere at home (e.g., "Parents are responsible for creating the ideal conditions so that the child can show the best performance in school." (P#77PR))), motivating their child and learn with their child (e.g., "learn with the child" (P#88PR)).

While 668 statements could clearly be categorized as regarding parents' responsibility in their interaction with their child, no statement whatsoever could be identified as describing students' responsibility in these microsystems they share with their parents.

6.8 Interface STP – Student-Teacher-Parents

Just as in the above interface, there are also no responsibilities attributed to students in the microcontexts they share with their teachers and parents.

Table 11

Categories, frequencies and percentages of teachers' responsibility in their interactions with the students and their parents.

Categories **Teachers are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' Statements**	**Students' Statements**	**Parents' statements**
…their interactions with students and their parents.	5 (100.00%)	100.00%	-	100.00%
TOTAL	**5**	**1 (100%)**	**-**	**4 (100%)**

Table 12

Categories, frequencies and percentages of parents' responsibility in their interactions with the students and their parents.

Categories **Parents are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers' Statements**	**Students' Statements**	**Parents' statements**
…their interactions with their children and their teachers.	14 (100.00%)	-	100.00%	100.00%
TOTAL	**14**	**-**	**3 (100%)**	**11 (100%)**

At the SP interface, exchange between these participants is found in the data to mostly concern students' learning difficulties or underachievement. Students are not seen to have much responds whereas teachers are stated to be responsible to be "ready to communicate about problems with student and parents"

(P#99TR)) just as parents are (e.g., “in case there is a problem (e.g., underachievement, bullying) search for a solution together with the child and the teacher” (P#81PR)).

6.9 Interface TP – Teacher-Parents

This interface comprises all statements regarding responsibilities resulting from teachers’ and parents’ interaction. Table 13 and 14 provide an overview.

Table 13

Categories, frequencies and percentages of teachers’ responsibility in their interactions with the students’ parents.

Categories **Teachers are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers’ Statements**	**Students’ Statements**	**Parents’ statements**
…their interactions with their students’ parents.	27 (100.00%)	100.00%	-	100.00%
TOTAL	**27**	**2 (100%)**	**-**	**25 (100%)**

Table 14

Categories, frequencies and percentages of parents’ responsibility in their interactions with their child’s teachers and respective numbers of statements.

Categories **Parents are responsible for…**	**Total # of statements**	**Teachers’ Statements**	**Students’ Statements**	**Parents’ statements**
…their interactions with their children’s teachers.	66 (100.00%)	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
TOTAL	**66**	**18 (100%)**	**14 (1000%)**	**34 (100%)**

Regarding the interaction of parents with their child’s teacher, both teachers and parents are attributed the responsibility to communicate and cooperate with the other, contacting one another when there is a problem that needs solving (e.g., “involve parents” (P#5TR); “accessible for parents” (P#95TR); “inform parents at an early stage” (P#62TR); “work with, not against the teachers” (T#5PR); “use parents’ nights” (T#37PR)).

6.10 Exosystems

The framework suggested that a microsystem an agent is involved in, may be influenced by exosystems, i.e. microsystems this person is not part of. The data provided some examples of these indirect influences between microsystems. Especially parents fulfilling their responsibility at home (i.e., interface SP) were often stated to influence other microsystems: “Improve the relations between the teacher and the child by encouraging the child.” (P#12PR); “If their child complains about a teacher or a subject, taking that seriously but not taking the same line but trying to find solutions” (P#70PR). Students were stated to be responsible for sometimes acting as their classmates’ advocate (“Standing up for other students’ needs and issues in the face of teachers and classmates” P#2SR). Regarding teachers’ responsibility, one parent claimed that a teacher was responsible “to not, if they have not managed to get through with their lesson plans, shift the contents as homework to the parents.” (P#159TR). Furthermore, one student described how much their teacher’s interaction with other teachers influenced the microsystems in interface B: “he is responsible for not going into a cover lesson and have other teachers say bad things about the class beforehand but he/she is responsible for judging the group by themselves.” (S#604TR).

7. Discussion

Aim of this paper was to study in how far the here developed framework is useful to structure responsibility attributions in the school context. To address this issue, data from a series of studies were coded into the postulated structure of the model in order to learn about the usefulness of the model and the nature of its elements. This analysis has provided the necessary starting point for studies of the complexity of responsibility in the school context based on the here proposed framework.

Overall 84 objects of responsibility in the school context were identified in this study. All of these responsibilities could be allocated to specific spheres of interaction of teachers, students and parents. The results showed that the proposed framework of responsibility in the school context is adequate for structuring responsibilities that teachers, students and parents attribute to themselves and one another in the different microsystems they share in the school context. In accordance with the theoretical considerations, that a person's responsibility is determined by the specific role this person incorporates (Leithwood et al., 1999), the qualitative data showed that all three agents were only attributed responsibility in those contexts, in which they are actively involved. Accordingly, as suggested in the literature (e.g., Duff, 1998) no responsibilities for objects in specific microsystems were attributed to a person who is not involved in this microsystem, i.e., no person was assigned responsibility for objects beyond their reach. Thus, no parent responsibilities were mentioned in the data for goings-on in specific lessons or classroom settings just as teachers were not attributed responsibilities for students' learning at home. This finding may, however, vary between different cultural contexts, school systems and naturally different stages of schooling (e.g., primary vs. high school) and should thus be focused on in further research including more heterogeneous groups in this respect

The data revealed, that in some areas, agents involved are not attributed any responsibility as for example in interface SP, which students share with their parents. With students mentioning significantly less responsibilities that could be categorized into this area than teachers and parents did, it can be hypothesized that students do not perceive this area as one in which they are responsible agents. The fact, that also neither teachers nor parents mentioned any student responsibilities here, supports this area's minor role in student responsibility. It however constitutes the category into which most of all three agents' statements on parents' responsibility were coded.

Regarding parents' responsibilities in interactions with teachers (interfaces STP and TP), the data support Ramirez' (1999) findings that teachers attribute responsibility for parent-teacher interactions more to parents than to themselves. Also, the main focus of the statements categorized into one of the shared microsystems sometimes differed between the three groups of respondents. This was most obvious with regard to interface ST, which comprises teachers' and students' responsibilities resulting from their interaction. While a third of teachers' statements focus on their responsibility to enhance every single student's learning, students and parents emphasise teachers' responsibility to develop a positive, caring and interested personal relationship with the students in about a third of their statements. These examples show how tensions may occur between various actors emphasizing different responsibilities or goals (Lauermann & Karabenick, 2011).

The limits of each of the described interfaces were found to be rather clear-cut which becomes specifically apparent between interfaces SC and SP. Thus, a teacher is attributed the responsibility for settling conflicts between their students when he or she realizes a problem ("keeping an eye on their students, not letting everything go just using the excuse that students should and could 'sort it out by themselves'" (P#129TR)). Students however believe that teachers "should not always intervene. Some things have to be left for the students to settle." (S#262TR). Thus, whether teachers fulfill their responsibility for settling conflicts among students depends on whether they think students are able to do it themselves, i.e. whether this matter is part of the microsystem only the students share, or not. This example also shows that responsibilities are not attributed once for all times.

This interplay between different microsystems is further supported by the close alignment of teacher and student responsibilities in interfaces ST and STC, with teachers being attributed the responsibility for

enhancing every single student's learning in interface ST, which affects their responsibility for involving all students in lessons and teaching lessons that are adapted to the level of all of their students.

The data also reveal the fulfillment of responsibilities in different microsystems to depend on whether responsibilities in others are met. This for example holds true for teachers' and students' responsibility for coming to class prepared, which naturally subsumes these agents' responsibility to work and prepare classes at home, i.e. in another microcontext. In this specific context but also generally, responsibilities identified in this study showed to be far more wide-ranging than was assumed in previous research (e.g., Bourke. 1990; Lewis, 2001).

The finding of data revealing influences between different microsystems is closely connected to these considerations, as the possibility of a person's actions to (in-)directly influence other microsystems despite them not being involved in them, raises their responsibility in those microsystems they actively engage in. Despite these influences having been discussed in a lot of literature on, in the broadest sense, the (social) contexts of school (e.g. Epstein, 2011), the question of shared responsibility has not yet been posed. The data clearly reveal that the general responsibility for advancing student learning, all three agents share, is in fact built up of many different issues different agents are responsible for taking care of in the microsystems they are involved in. Everyone is responsible for doing their share in their sphere of action, i.e. their mesosystem. This also holds true if the different microsystems a person is involved in may influence one another by means of this person's involvement in them, i.e. serve as exosystems to one another. Thus, the data revealed a teacher being held responsible for acting in a specific way (e.g., not letting other teachers influence them regarding their opinion of the students in order to not letting these prejudices influence them in their interactions with these students.) although object and addressee of responsibility are not located in the same microsystem in this case.

In regard to student responsibility, parallels between Bacon's (1993) study of student responsibility and findings in this study can be drawn. Students in Bacon's study mentioned they felt responsible for "doing the job" and "obeying the rules", i.e. being held responsible rather than feeling personally responsible. Being a student thus comes with certain responsibilities which resemble those of an employee: punctuality, having their working material on them, discipline, trying to meet expectations, working diligently and orderly etc. Interestingly, most of these responsibilities are alike for teachers and students. Besides this employee's role, students were also found to have certain responsibilities as a learner, which go beyond the school context and are not closely controlled. As a learner, a student is responsible for showing interest and motivation, trying to understand and learn what is taught in lessons and studying the materials at home. Despite these two roles' potential overlap, they may also become quite contradictory for students being controlled for fulfilling responsibilities by their parents and teachers. In this respect, it seems obvious that parents' responsibility to keep the tabs on students' learning conflicts with their responsibility for giving their child some space and freedom. However, this conflict should also be noted as a limitation of this study, as this study has only looked at data from teachers, students and parents involved in secondary schooling. Responsibility attributions can be assumed to differ in primary school settings with parents sharing a larger part of their children's school lives. Microsystems parents share with teachers may thus become more important and also more extended regarding responsibility attributions.

Comparable influences on responsibility attributions can be expected for the social, cultural and economic context of the school which have been suggested by prior research. After generally studying the usefulness of the framework for structuring responsibility in the school context in this study, these aspects should definitely be addressed in further research in order to identify influences, especially because the analyses presented here only included data from German teachers, students and parents.

This study has provided an overview of what responsibilities are attributed to teachers, students and parents on different levels of the school context and how these can be structured with a theoretical framework. This framework will also allow to more closely analyse responsibility attributions within the school context and the influences these might have on other contexts, i.e. microsystems.

The results of the preliminary study of teacher, student and parent responsibility, especially the multitude of named shared objects of each agent's responsibility, strongly suggest the need for further, also

quantitative research. This research might provide insights into the extent to which teachers, students and parents attribute responsibility for specific objects to themselves and one another. Focusing on family-school mesosystem Christenson (2004) claims that the interface between home and school may be "strong for some families, weak for others, and non-existent for others." (p. 87). Thus, further research will have to focus on different types of teachers, students and parents showing specific levels and constellations of responsibility for student motivation, learning and achievement. Also, the relevance of role-taking has been shown in these preliminary analyses and shall thus be extended with regard to individual roles in a context of other agents as for example suggested by Goffman (1959) or other sociological concepts of interactions (e.g., Weber, 2005). Furthermore, existing literature has suggested studying the role the school setting and other structural factors play with regard to responsibility perception (e.g., Lee & Loeb, 2000; Thrupp et al., 2003). Consequently, future research will have to focus on the interplay of teachers', students' and parents' attributions of responsibility and by specifically linking these three agents exploring patterns of responsibility attributions and their influence on student achievement and motivation.

Keypoints

- A heuristic framework for structuring responsibility in the school context is developed.
- The framework is validated by coding teachers', students' and parents' statements on their own and others' responsibility into the suggested model.
- Results support the usefulness of the framework and reveal the objects of teachers', students' and parents' responsibility in the school context and influences.

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