

Title: Exploring Leadership and Entrepreneurship in Polish Supplementary Schools in England: A Pilot Study

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There is an extensive network of supplementary schools in the UK, yet the nuances related to the way they operate, are led and bring benefits to related communities and the public has not been well researched. There are between 3000 and 5000 supplementary schools in Britain (Ives and Wyvil, 2008) of which around 140 are Polish supplementary schools (PSS) (Pedrak, 2022). The Centre for the Development of Polish Education Abroad runs a database where PSS can register themselves to apply for support from the Polish government. Currently, 1129 PSS are registered worldwide; 20% are based in the UK (ORPEG, 2023). In England, Polish (1.1%, 591,000) was found to be the most common main language for those who did not speak English as a main language (ONS, 2021).

PSS are largely set up by ethnic minority communities and offer educational programmes (mostly on Saturdays) focused on language and bilingual development, culture, history and traditions of the minority. The oldest PSS date back to the post WW II forced migration, for example St Joseph's PSS, established in 1947 in Amersham (ORPEG, 2023) 1950 (PSPO, 2022).

Our interest in these schools stems from devoting the last 15 years of leading and teaching in two PSS – one set up by post WW II migration and the other after 2004 Poland's accession to EU – as well as supporting the wider PSS' networks, influencing curricula and working with Polish and British national exam bodies. We would like to gain deeper insight into this unique entrepreneurial ecosystem with a view of bringing deeper understanding about how they are led, establish closer collaborations with mainstream schools and influence relevant governmental policies.

This paper explores leadership and entrepreneurship within PSS in England, employing semi-structured interviews and entrepreneurial auto reflection in a pilot study. Focusing on legal forms, leadership styles, and various challenges and opportunities, our research provides insights into the dynamic landscape of well-established minority-language supplementary education. It analyses leadership styles and legal structures that reveal diverse approaches and motivations with implications for organisational effectiveness and adaptability. The study also addresses challenges these schools face, exploring how leadership strategies have evolved pre- and post- COVID-19. This research contributes to understanding leadership and entrepreneurial practices in the context of supplementary education for the Polish diaspora, exploring nuanced strategies that drive innovation and sustainability. Preliminary research findings are expected to reveal additional themes for future studies and assist policymakers and school leaders and enhance leadership and entrepreneurial capacities within multicultural communities.

References.

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