

Overview

This analysis builds on previous work studying research-practice partnerships (Desimone, Wolford, & Hill, 2016; Penuel, Allen, Coburn, & Farrell, 2015) using a conceptual model of policy attributes to understand the change efforts of 12 professional learning partnerships (PLPs). The Policy Attribute theory identifies five key policy attributes:

1. Specificity: degree of detail and clarity
2. Consistency: degree of alignment
3. Authority: buy-in and resources
4. Power: rewards and sanctions
5. Stability: consistency of people, policies, and contextual factors over time

In these results we focus on specificity, consistency, and authority.

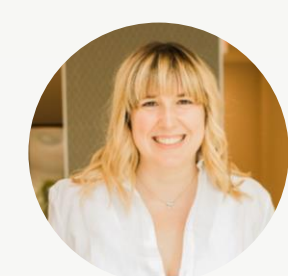
Research Questions

- (1) How do PLPs vary on the policy attributes?
- (2) What predicts PLPs' success?
- (3) Are there defining features of PLPs' that facilitate resilience in the face of extreme challenge, such as those posed by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Data & Analysis

- Spring 2020 survey responses from 68 partnership leaders (district administrators and PL providers) across 12 professional learning partnerships (PLPs) across the country in major urban school districts.
- Descriptive analyses to examine patterns in policy attributes and successes and challenges to implementing professional learning both before and after COVID-19.
- Stepwise linear regression to identify which of the policy attributes were predictors of success prior to COVID and which predicted resilience during COVID.

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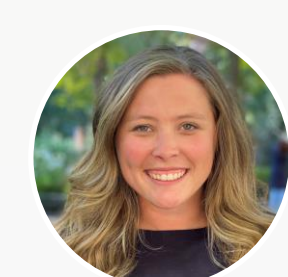
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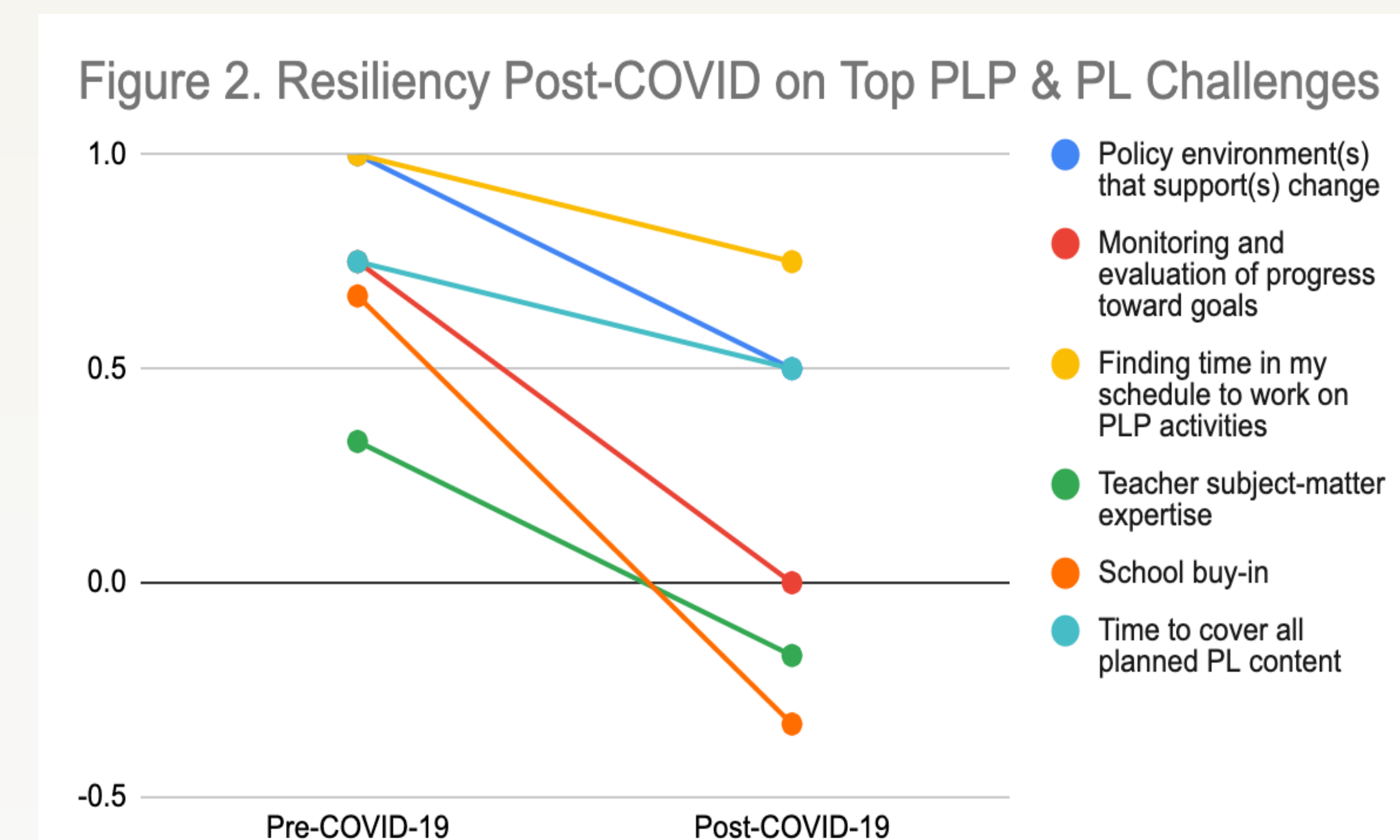
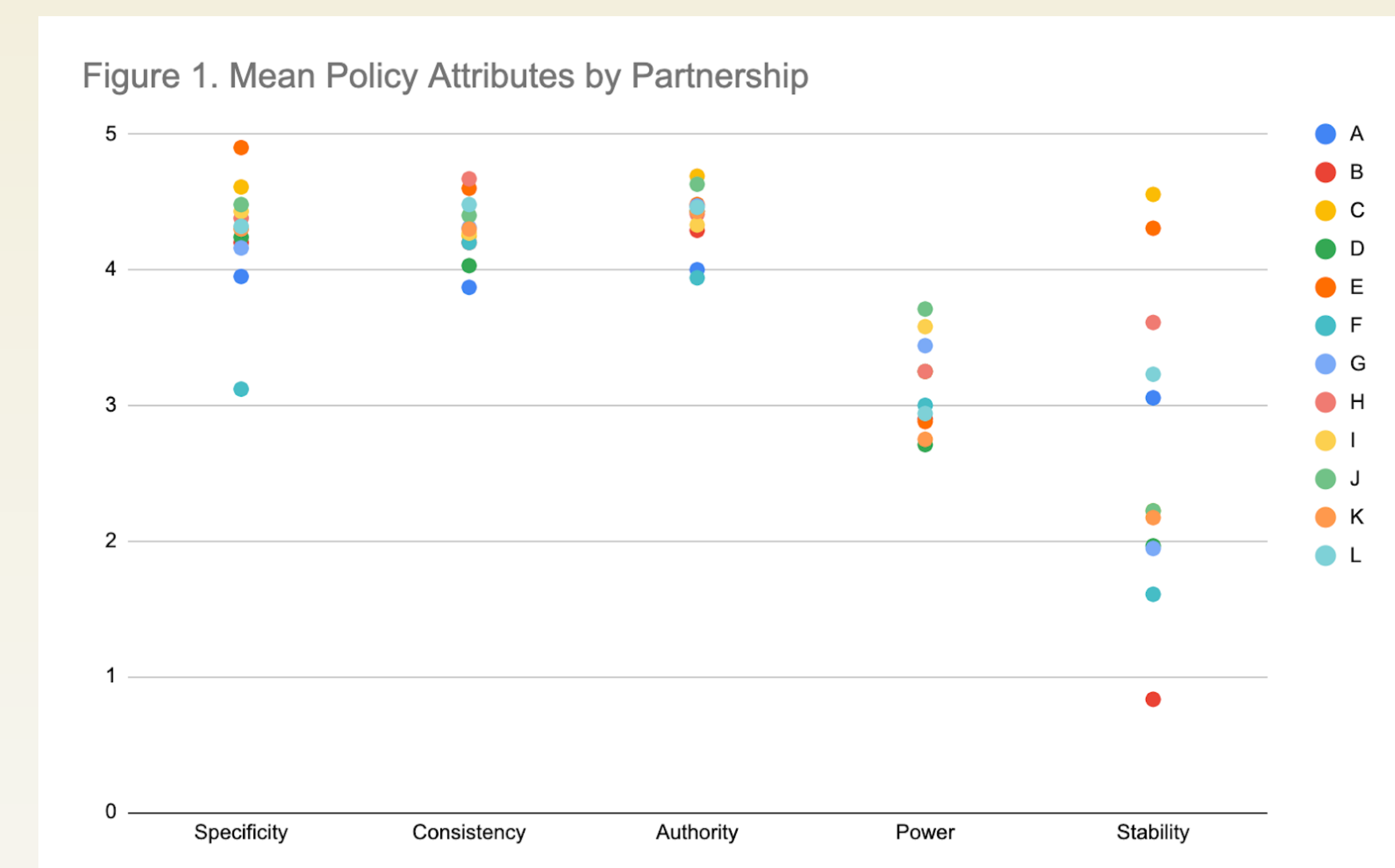
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Results

Finding 1: There was variation across PLPs in mean leader views of the attributes (Figure 1) and additionally there was considerable variation within PLPs, suggesting that even within PLPs, leaders had differing perspectives on these attributes.

Finding 2: Regression analysis revealed that PLP specificity and authority were significant predictors of organizational successes prior to COVID-19 ($p = 0.008$; $p = 0.015$, respectively), meaning that PLPs who scored higher on specificity and authority were more likely to report successes on a variety of organizational functions (e.g., leadership, scheduling, communication, evaluation). With regards to implementation of PL, only authority was a significant predictor of success.

Finding 3: For partnership-level work, specificity was a significant predictor of resilience ($p = 0.00$) and for implementation of the PL, consistency was a significant predictor of resilience ($p = 0.003$). For an example of what resilience looks like for a PLP on what were the top three PLP-organizational challenges and PL-implementation challenges pre-COVID-19, see Figure 2.



Conclusion

PLPs scoring higher on specificity and consistency were better able to protect their work from the effects of the pandemic.

With the shifts necessary to productively work during the pandemic, having shared, clear understandings of roles, responsibilities, and objectives (high specificity) would understandably facilitate more nimble adaptation of PLP activities.

Furthermore, in thinking about challenges associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, we hypothesize that tight alignment of PLP and district initiatives (high consistency) enabled PLPs to more effectively adapt to the evolving nature of schooling during the pandemic.