

SAINT-JOSEPH UNIVERSITY

TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN THE CONTEXT OF
PROMOTING SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT:
A CASE STUDY OF PRIVATE SCHOOLS IN LEBANON

by

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appreciate life's little gifts and find them everywhere around me...
Your beautiful soul will forever guide my quest to make education
worthy of the miracles it serves...

Abstract

With all the challenges that formal education is facing nowadays, teachers and school principals are increasingly required to rethink their role as educators and instructional leaders. Various reform efforts in the last four decades recommend promoting ‘teacher leadership’ and allowing teachers to collectively contribute to the school leadership within a distributed framework as the mechanism towards achieving sustainable educational reform and meeting the needs, challenges and complexities related to student learning and teacher practice, as it has shown to be a key component for the success of any school improvement initiative. However, teachers need to understand what their new identity as teacher leaders means and how it impacts their professional lives. Most teachers believe that they are not equipped to actively participate and be involved in supporting their schools beyond their direct teaching duties inside the classroom. In addition, the formal school leadership is often unable to frame teacher leadership outside the main teaching role and functions restricted to what happens inside the classroom and the school organizational structures rarely support any kind of shared leadership between the principal and the teachers.

The educational system in Lebanon does not seem to particularly support or even conceive of teacher leadership as an essential component of the educational framework that allows schools to face the increasing challenges and more complex demands that puts constraints on providing quality education to all students. From all the improvement initiatives that have been made available in the educational sector over the past few years, very few specifically target involving teachers in leadership roles or invite them to be active participants in the school improvement process from the beginning. There is a gap in the literature regarding how teacher leadership is supported, developed and practiced in schools in the Arab context in general and the Lebanese context in particular, although there are indications of a growing understanding among practitioners that sharing leadership between teachers and principals affects positively student achievement, especially when coupled with a supportive leadership structure that encourages collaboration and sharing practice.

The current study is based on the constructivist paradigm and interpretive epistemology and follows a qualitative exploratory multiple case study research design. It investigates the conception and practice of teacher leadership of teachers and school principals in four private schools in the Greater Beirut area that were actively engaged in school improvement initiatives. The main goal of the research is to provide empirical data on the landscape of distributed leadership and explain the variables that influence teacher leadership. Data were collected from surveys, focus groups with teachers and interviews with the principals in the four case schools. Data were analyzed following the grounded theory methodology, whereby a constant comparative, interpretational and reflective approach to data analysis was used.

The study generated results that described how teachers and school principals understand teacher leadership and perceive its role in improving student learning and sustaining the school improvement initiatives instigated by the school leadership. It also clarified how teacher leadership is shaped by the different organizational and leadership structures in these private schools. Results show that, despite having teachers engage in some leadership functions, teacher leadership is not yet established in Lebanese schools as it is still done unconsciously, unintentionally and hence inconsistently. The contextual

conditions, especially the academic program adopted, the organizational structure, the principal's supervisory approach, and positioning of teacher leadership at school greatly influence its establishment and development. In conclusion, findings show that supporting sustainable school improvement requires a paradigm shift, with teachers adopting a new identity as teacher leaders and schools modifying their organizational structures to enable the development of teacher leadership capacity. Therefore, it is recommended to gradually introduce teacher leadership allowing for distributed decision-making and broad-based, participatory leadership at all levels of the organization. In addition, the organizational structure needs to support this change at the systemic level with a clear process that includes continuous teacher training and capacity building, principal training, which will lead to a change in conceptions about teacher leadership, a paradigm shift, and a strong belief of self-efficacy and collective efficacy.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With all the challenges that formal education is facing these days, from increasingly diverse students' needs, to rising performance expectations from students, to demands for continuously improving academic achievements, to coping with the quickly evolving educational landscape due to the widening access to information technology in the classroom and beyond it, teachers and school principals are increasingly being challenged to rethink their role as educators and instructional leaders (Bowman, 2004; Danielson, 2007; Demir, 2015; Durias, 2010; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Rutherford, 2006). It is broadly recognized that leadership directly influences the effectiveness of education and student achievement in schools (Daresch, 2001; Durias, 2010; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) and that in order to implement educational improvement and sustain it, schools must have efficient leaders (Fullan, 2002). However, there is increasing awareness that dealing with the ever more complex issues at schools is no longer possible by the school leaders alone (Danielson, 2007; Demir, 2015; DuFour, Eaker & DuFour, 2005; Durias, 2010; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Spillane & Diamond, 2007). In that context, there is wide agreement that teachers need to be involved alongside the principal to develop new ways to confront all these issues, especially that they are the ones in constant contact with students and directly influence them (Demir, 2015; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 1996, 2001 & 2009).

What is Teacher Leadership?

Various reform efforts in the last 4 decades recommend promoting 'teacher leadership' towards achieving sustainable educational reform (Danielson, 2007; Durias, 2010; Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009), as it has shown to be a key component for the success of any school improvement initiative (Katzenmeyer & Moller,

2009; Sergiovanni & Starratt, 1998; Smylie, 1995; Wasley, 1991). Researchers have noted accomplishments include increasing student learning and achievement, improving educational practices, creating networks between teachers across different schools and districts, and ensuring sustainable school success (Danielson, 2007; Durias, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Rutherford, 2006). Moreover, the assumption that every teacher is capable of leadership if given the opportunity and support is becoming more widely accepted (Barth, 2001). In fact, recent studies have shown that school improvement is actually dependent upon building internal capacities for change and development of all stakeholders at school (Fullan 2001; Muijs & Harris, 2006). In addition, building leadership capacity is found to be essential for improving overall performance of schools in terms of instructional quality and student learning (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008; Newmann, King, & Young, 2000), and the more it is “broad-based” (Lambert, 2012), meaning it involves the majority of stakeholders at the school, from the principal, to the teachers, to parents and students, the higher the impact on student performance and achievement (Durias, 2010; Lambert, 2012; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

Promoting individual and social capacity for teacher leadership is also viewed as a way to decentralize decision-making at school (Struyve, Meredith & Gielen, 2014), thus opening up the way for teachers to be more involved in school-wide issues that go beyond the limits of their classroom (Danielson, 2007; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Consequently, it allows teachers to be more actively engaged in decisions thus more likely to enhance their professional efficacy and overcome their resistance to change since they will be part of any decisions affecting their work and the school life (Fullan, 1993; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Teacher leadership is also considered a solution to the stagnation and lack of advancement often associated with teaching as a profession. (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006;

Struyve et al., 2014). This solution is promising in that it keeps talented teachers in the profession while fulfilling their need to grow, develop and move up the professional ladder with more diversification, opportunities and less stagnation. (Harris & Muijs, 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lieberman & Miller, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2007; Struyve et al., 2014; Sykes, 1990). Consequently, with the prospects of advancement that teacher leadership offers, it becomes a vehicle for making the choice of teaching as a career more appealing as it can serve as a motivator for career growth for the new generation of teachers (Margolis & Deuel, 2009). In fact, new teachers are found to need to function in a supportive school environment where they have opportunities to work and learn with other adults beyond the daily routine of the classroom (York-Barr & Duke, 2004), grow professionally and personally, develop their leadership potential to have promising career prospects, earn a satisfactory pay for their work in order to remain in the profession (Cochran-Smith, 2004), and further develop their capacity to influence others (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001 & 2009; Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

Defining Teacher Leadership

Different descriptions of teacher leadership are found in the literature, varying from very narrow to broad, depending on the conception of what teacher leadership means and entails to those attempting to define it. Hence, there is no widespread shared understanding of what teacher leadership actually is or what is expected of teacher leaders (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Teacher leadership is broadly defined as a model that allows for giving teachers opportunities to be involved in various forms of leadership within the school, while providing them with the needed professional development so they can put their talents and expertise to use for their students and their colleagues (Demir, 2015; Harris and Muijs, 2004). It is also conceptualized to reflect the actions that teachers carry out outside their

own classrooms and that target achieving change in others and in the school community (Durias, 2010). Consequently, any form of enactment of change by teachers no matter how small it may be, can be considered a form of leadership (Durias, 2010). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) define teacher leadership by the main functions that teacher leaders are engaged with, and that are to lead both within and beyond their classroom, to actively contribute and identify with a community of learners and leaders, to influence others to improve practice, to accept the responsibility to achieve outcomes while persistently and patiently working towards the goals set.

Teacher leadership can exist in formal as well as informal forms in schools. Therefore, teacher leaders can be assigned formal titles such as department head, coordinator, or head of division, or they can emerge as informal leaders and take on functions to support their colleagues without being assigned any officially recognized position (Angelle & Teague, 2014). Teacher leadership is manifested in actions such as supporting other colleagues, providing professional development to peers, mentoring new teachers, taking responsibility to advocate for change that directly and indirectly affects the quality of education at school, influencing their overall community, networking nationally and internationally to develop professional expertise and leadership skills, building alliances to get their work done, and affecting educational policies (Danielson, 2007; Durias, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Smylie, Conley & Marks, 2002).

Researchers found that teacher leadership varies depending on the context teachers and teacher leaders function within (Li, 2015). In some contexts, teacher leaders emerge as experts in their subject, show reflective practice and a sense of collaboration, thus are recognized by their peers as leaders (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 2011; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Leithwood, Seashore, Anderson, & Wahlstrom, 2004). In others, teacher leaders are found to be those who know how to function in the school system, get their

power from how others perceive their expertise and are influenced by them (Acker-Hocevar & Touchton, 2011; Antonakis, Avolio & Sivasubramaniam, 2003; Lieberman, Saxl & Miles, 2000). In another context, teacher leadership is found to have been shaped by the teacher leaders and the school principal working collaboratively and developing a shared understanding of the teacher leader role (Bogler, 2001; Hart, 1994). Other factors also influence how teacher leadership is shaped and conceived, such as the school size, location, and student body (Kruger, Witziers & Slegers, 2007).

However, and despite the increase in interest in teacher leadership research over the past few years, most research studies still focus on the role of the principal when investigating the role of leadership in school success as an institution (Rutherford, 2006), without necessarily acknowledging the role of teacher leadership (Durias, 2010; Rutherford, 2006).

Factors Affecting Teacher Leadership

Even though teacher leadership is being more openly discussed in the literature, there is little or no documented and systematic effort to make it a common practice in educational institutions, as it is still a big idea and is not yet a reality in most schools (Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009). Various factors affect the development of teacher leadership in schools, including the school principals, the school structure that fosters or not the development of professional learning communities (PLCs), and the institutionalization of teacher leadership tasks that would redefine the role and expectations from teachers.

School principals. The formal school leadership is one factor that is associated with teacher leadership. It is found to directly influence the leadership structure and capacity building at school, making it one of the key factors to allow for teacher leadership to exist and thrive or not (Durias, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In a large study

conducted by Barth (cited in Jones, 2007) where 250 school reform studies were investigated, it was concluded that, for sustainable improvement in education, school principals need to involve teachers in the school leadership and promote their participation in decision-making. Such involvement builds teachers' capacity to become more active learners themselves, model leadership and active learning in their classroom, and extend the principals' own capacities at school (Jones, 2007). In addition, there is an agreement that school leaders must support the development of leadership capacity of all educators involved in the school for the improvement initiatives of restructuring to be successful and sustainable (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lambert, 2005).

Professional learning communities as a school structure. Furthermore, studies point that the school's formal leadership also shapes the perception of teachers regarding the institution as a professional learning community (PLC) where they are expected, required and encouraged to work and learn together and from each other (DuFour, 2004; DuFour et al., 2005; Eaker, DuFour & DuFour, 2002; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). In fact, PLCs have been defined in various ways in the literature and they all have certain elements that qualify them as such, namely having: a) supportive strategic leadership, b) shared vision centered on student achievement, c) collaboration as a basis for improvement, and d) continuous, school-based and evidence-based professional development (Cibulka & Nakayama, 2000; DuFour, 2004; DuFour et al., 2005; Fullan, Hill & Crévola, 2006; Haar, 2001; Hord, 1997, 2004; Itani Malas, 2009; Senge, Camron-McCabe, Lucas, Smith, Dutton & Kleiner, 2000). Results also show that fostering PLCs entails developing structures and processes for teacher collaboration and professional learning, which in turn builds confidence and trust in the teachers and between them, and strengthens their relation to the school (Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2006). In such an environment, leadership is found to be distributed in the

community as individuals build their own capacities by continuously working on improving their craft and therefore moving the whole community forward (Barth, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Harris & Lambert, 2003; Woods, Bennett, Harvey, & Wise, 2004).

Institutionalization of Teacher Leadership tasks. Besides the school structure and the willingness of the principal to support teacher leadership, a major documented factor that is considered an obstacle to the widespread of teacher leadership in schools is the teachers themselves. Although studies reflect that teachers have often practiced some form of leadership roles and functions at school, this is still done inconsistently and on an individual basis. In most traditional formal school settings, ‘teachers teach, and leaders lead’ (Chesson, 2010). Study results show that teachers’ role is mostly defined as being exclusively bound to fulfilling classroom functions no matter how long they have been in the profession or what their potential for leadership is (Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010). In addition, researchers have concluded that teachers do not see themselves as contributors in the school outside their classroom and therefore lack individual and collective agency, which reinforces the idea that they are “only teachers” (Chesson, 2010), even though they easily view themselves as leaders in their community outside of school and many of them serve in informal leadership positions without thinking that they can’t or do not have the ability to do so (Helterbran, 2010). Furthermore, in most schools studied, principals as well as teachers themselves expect the teachers’ role to simply be of curriculum implementers and teach under the direct directive of their superiors without making any additions or changes to the previously prescribed curriculum and without taking any self-directed initiative of their actions (Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010).

Scholars propose that in order to break out of this stereotypical role, teachers need to make a ‘profound identity shift’ (Bowman, 2004, p.187) to conceptualize what their new identity as teacher leaders means, how it impacts their professional lives and to

assimilate what that really necessitates and involves (Bowman, 2004; Helterbran, 2010). Consequently, teachers need to view themselves as teacher leaders and collaborate together as professional learners with shared goals and not as isolated individuals within the walls of their classrooms (DuFour, 2004; Harris, 2002; Hord, 2004). In this context, there is a growing need to support the institutionalization of teacher leadership by unlocking and sharing the leadership capabilities of all teachers (Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012). This means modifying the roles of teachers within the school to become teacher leaders with a focus on the classroom yet extending to involve school-wide decision-making and activities (Jones, 2007; Reeves, 2004).

Background: The Lebanese Education System

A general overview of the Lebanese education system is necessary to understand the problem addressed in the study as it explains the context within which teachers and school leaders are working. The overall educational policy in Lebanon is based on Article 10 in the Lebanese Constitution, which was issued under the French mandate in 1926, and that states:

Education shall be free insofar as it is not contrary to public order and morals and does not affect the dignity of any of the religions or sects. There shall be no violation of the right of religious communities to have their own schools provided they follow the general rules issued by the state regulating public instruction (Lebanese Republic, 1995).

This article represented an extension of the Ottoman policies that were enforced when Lebanon was under the rule of the Ottoman Empire, and then later on the French policies when Lebanon was under the French Mandate after the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War 1, which allowed religious missionaries, mostly French Jesuits and American Presbyterians, coming from Europe and America to found their own private schools and universities as part of the freedom of education policy (Bahous, Nabhani & Cochran, 2011; Bashshur, 1992). Other local groups of different religions

living in Lebanon were encouraged to do the same by the French policies, thus the surge of private schools in the country, which was mostly done at the expense of the public education sector (Bahous et al., 2011). Since then, and even after Lebanon's independence from the French mandate in 1943, the Lebanese educational system still mostly relied on the private sector and foreign missionaries to provide what is perceived as quality education for its school-aged population. This is mostly because of the different style of education that foreign schools offered students as compared to the traditional schooling system that existed in public schools, and which was welcomed by the families as it was of higher quality (Ragland, 1969).

The Governance of the Educational System

The Ministry of Education in Lebanon has gone through various changes throughout its post-independence era. In 1955, the government established the Ministry of National Education (Legislative Decree No. 26) to supervise all educational matters in the country. As such, the Ministry of National Education comprised: Central Administration, the National Lebanese University, Directorate of Primary and Complementary Education, Directorate of Vocational Education, Secondary Education Department, Teacher Education Department, Physical Education and Scouts Department, Directorate of Archeology, National Music Conservatory, and the National Library.

In 1959, the Ministry of National Education was integrated in what was called the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports (Decree No. 2869). The ministry comprised: Directorate General of National Education and Fine Arts, General Directorate of Youth and Sports, Directorate General for Vocational and Technical Education, and a Joint Administrative Department. It was also associated with the National Lebanese University and the National Music Conservatory. Public schools are directly managed and funded by the government through the Directorate General of National Education and Fine

Arts. The Directorate General sets the internal policies of public schools throughout all the regional districts in the country, controls the recruitment, hiring and transfer of all teachers, principals and staff members, manages and supervises the content of the curriculum, and administers the official examinations held at the secondary level: Brevet in grade nine and Baccalaureate in grade twelve.

On the other hand, private schools had much more freedom and were not as rigidly supervised by the Ministry's Directorates, as they were granted the right for educational freedom by the Constitution provided they abide by the laws and regulations decreed by the government. This freedom encompassed the schools' organizational structure and educational policies. The Ministry's control over private schools was mostly limited to licensing, setting recruitment guidelines, finances and curriculum development. In an effort towards decentralization, the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports established in 1972 a new department for Educational Orientation and Guidance (Direction d'Orientation Pédagogique et Scolaire - DOPS), which is still not officially mandated in the Ministry to date and created Educational Regions in each one of the five Governorates (Mohafazat) in Lebanon (Decree No. 3252).

Another important event happened in December of 1971, which was the establishment of a special unit/office called Educational Center for Research and Development (ECRD), also known as the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) (Decree No. 2356) in the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports. The decree considered CERD as a public institution with a juristic personality that enjoys financial and administrative independence. The same decree also abolished the department for teacher training that was previously responsible for the professional development of teachers in the public sector and centralized all professional development of teachers in the CERD, which remains active until today. The main functions of CERD

are to conduct educational research, publish statistical results, provide recommendations for the Ministry that would guide educational reform and strategic planning of general education, and monitor the implementation of the approved educational plans. In addition, CERD is charged with the planning and administration of the in-service training of teachers (Article 4, Decree No. 2356, 1971). It is also responsible to develop and review the official national curriculum, prepare and publish the national textbooks, as well as set the official national examinations. Part of CERD role in curriculum review is to keep up with the international treaties that Lebanon signs and adheres to regarding educational issues, such as the World Declaration on Education for All held in Jomtien, Thailand in 1990, where a number of objectives and strategies were articulated to be achieved by the year 2000 to promote universal access to education, equity and broadening the scope of basic education (UNESCO, 1990). As such, the CERD modified the national curriculum to include the new subjects of Arts, Drama and Information Technology (IT) at the basic education level.

In 1993, the Ministry of Vocational and Technical Education was established (Law No. 211) and dealt with all issues related to vocational and technical education in both the public and private sectors. At the same time, another new ministry was established, the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education (Law No. 213), which comprised: General Directorate of Culture and Higher Education, General Directorate of Archeology, Directorate of Cinema, Theater and Exhibitions, and it is linked to the National Lebanese University and the National Music Conservatory. It is in August 7, 2000 that all three Ministries were merged into one Ministry, called the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) (Law No. 247). The current structure of the MEHE divides its functions into four main departments, each one supervised by a director general: General Directorate for National Education, General Directorate for Vocational Education, General

Directorate for Higher Education, and the Joint Administrative Directorate. All Directorates report directly to the Minister of Education and Higher Education. The following diagram (Figure 1) shows the main divisions of the MEHE and the different departments that the General Directorate for National Education is responsible for in the K-12 school education. The CERD and the National Lebanese University remain under the direct supervision of the Minister of Education and Higher Education.

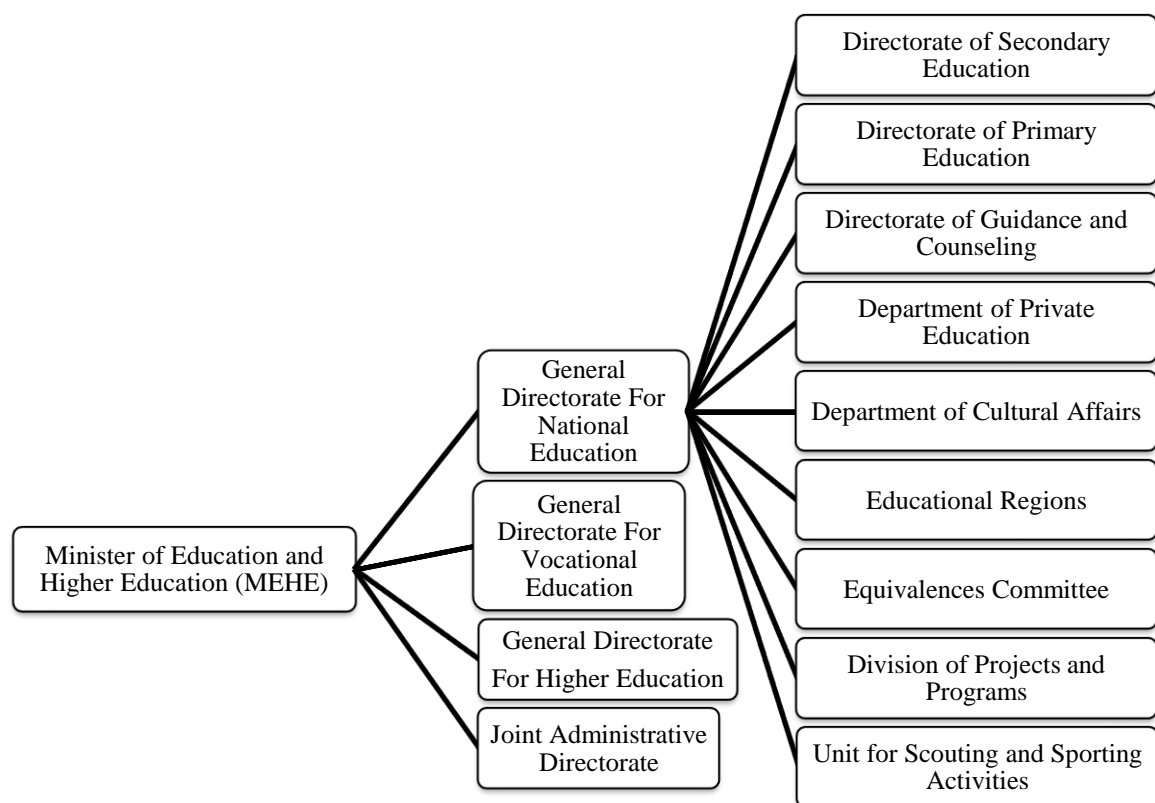


Figure 1. Organizational Structure of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) as of the year 2000. Source: Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), 2010.

Schools in Lebanon

Lebanon is divided into six administrative Governorates: Beirut, Mount Lebanon, North Lebanon, Bekaa, South Lebanon and Nabatiyeh. The urban agglomeration of suburbs around the capital Beirut comprises some municipalities and districts that administratively follow the Mount Lebanon Governorate but that are part of what is called

the Greater Beirut district. This area comprises the largest number of students, 30.4 % of the total student population in the country, with around 74 % of these students (22.4 % of the total student population) attending private schools. The Greater Beirut area also comprises the second largest number of schools after North Lebanon with 24.4 % of the country's schools compared to 25.7 % in the North, and the largest number of private schools (15.2 %) in the country. Unlike other neighboring countries in the region with similar language and culture, education in Lebanon is shared between the public and the private sectors, with the latter catering for 69.7% of the school-age student population as per the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) report for the year 2015-2016. Most schools are co-educational, and students are divided between the four categories of schools that are acknowledged by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), which are: Public schools, Private schools, Free-Private schools and Private UNRWA schools. Table 1.1 shows the distribution of the student population in the different categories of schools for the academic year 2015-2016.

Table 1.1

Distribution of the student population in the various school types for the academic year 2015-2016

School Type	Student Population (%)	Number of Students
Public Schools	30.3 %	314,726
Private Schools	52.6 %	546,214
Free-Private Schools	13.7 %	142,694
Private UNRWA Schools	3.4 %	35,104
Total	100 %	1,038,738

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

School types in Lebanon. There are main differences between each type of schools, in terms of tuition fees, curriculum, language of instruction, ownership and student population served. The following section provides a description of the main aspects of each type of schools.

Public schools. They are state schools run by the MEHE and that are directly supervised by the Governorate they operate within. There are 1260 public schools all over the Lebanese territory, and their buildings are either directly owned by the Ministry or are rented by it. These schools vary in size and in terms of the age range they cater for, as some of them are K-12 schools, while others could offer services for only one, two or three stages (Kindergarten, elementary, intermediate or secondary), which means that students may go to more than one public school during their schooling period and until they graduate. Public schools are the only option for many families in remote villages where some schools operate with as low as 50 students. All public schools are free of charge except for a nominal fee that families pay into a fund for any unexpected expenditures for the school. For the year 2011-2012, the nominal yearly fee was set as \$47 for the primary level, \$60 for the intermediate and \$80 for the secondary level. Prior to the Syrian refugee crisis, families paid an additional nominal fee for tuition and textbooks, but these fees have been covered by a grant from the Saudi government since 2012 for all students attending government schools (War Child Holland report, 2013). The national Lebanese curriculum is taught exclusively in public schools and only the national textbooks published by CERD are used. In addition, only Lebanese teachers are hired to teach in public schools.

Private schools. They are privately owned by local or foreign individuals, companies, secular or religious groups. There are 1156 private schools all over Lebanon (CERD, 2015-2016) and their tuition fees range from \$1,500 to \$15,000 per year (War

Child Holland report, 2013). Tuitions in private schools are not directly controlled by the MEHE; however, they are regulated by guidelines set by the government that somewhat control the yearly increase in tuition, oblige schools to report their finances to the Ministry, and involve parent councils in any decisions about increasing tuition (Law No. 515, 1996). Private schools have to follow the national curriculum guidelines, but they have the freedom to teach it any way they want, add to it or modify it. They can also get permission from the Ministry to teach foreign programs, such as the International Baccalaureate, the American, or the German programs. In addition, private schools are allowed to hire foreign teachers and staff provided they abide by the laws of the Ministry of Labor.

One way for the Ministry to have indirect control over what is being taught in private schools is requiring all Lebanese students to sit for the official exams in both grades nine and twelve. Due to the civil war that forced many families to be displaced and to migrate to other countries, a large number of Lebanese students hold a second nationality, which by law allows them to be exempted from taking the official examinations. This has caused some disparity with the public schools whose majority of students sit for the national examinations. Moreover, because of the French mandate, Lebanon has built special relations with the French government over the years and French missionaries were among the first religious groups to come and build private school in Lebanon. Consequently, many private schools teach the French curriculum, which is as the basis of the Lebanese curriculum, and is the only program whose graduating diploma, the French Baccalaureate, is equivalent to the Lebanese Baccalaureate. This equivalence gives the students that hold it access to local and foreign universities, as well as all syndicates just like the Lebanese Baccalaureate does. However, in recent years, and after the civil war was over, the number of schools offering their programs in English have

increased by popular demand. More schools are also offering their programs in both foreign languages.

Free-private schools. In principle, these schools are not-for-profit and offer free education for the disadvantaged families. However, they do charge tuition that ranges from the equivalent of 135% of the national minimum wage (675,000 L.L. – or \$450) to the equivalent of 160% of the national minimum wage (800,000 L.L. – or \$533) as per the War Child Holland report (2013). In addition to this, they are subsidized by the MEHE, that pays them around 37 - 40 Billion Lebanese Lira – or 24.7 – 26.7 Million US Dollars annually to cover for their operating expenses. There are 371 free-private schools in Lebanon (CERD, 2015-2016). Of these, 289 are run by religious groups and the rest by either NGOs or private individuals (War Child Holland, 2013).

Private UNRWA schools. They are private schools funded and run by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). They only cater for Palestinian refugee community on Lebanese territory since the Arab-Israeli conflict in 1948 forced Palestinian families to flee their country and are the main educational system for Palestinian refugee students in the country (www.unrwa.org). There are 67 private UNRWA schools in Lebanon and they cater for around 38,000 students (UNRWA, 2017). They teach the Lebanese national curriculum as MEHE has allowed their students to sit for the official exams of grade nine (Brevet) and grade twelve (Baccalaureate). These schools are responsible for their own funding, which is mostly done through voluntary contributions and some financial support from the United Nations.

Distribution of students in schools. Although the number of public schools is the largest in comparison to the other types of schools, they only cater for 30.3% of the student population (CERD, 2015-2016), thus delegating the main responsibility for education to the private sector. Table 1.2 provides an overview of the distribution of

schools by type and by Governorate for the academic year 2015-2016 (CERD, 2015-2016). Statistics show that Mount Lebanon hosts the highest number of schools, followed by North Lebanon then Greater Beirut area. However, the main difference is that the majority of schools in Mount Lebanon are private and account for more than double the number of public schools. Similarly, in Greater Beirut, private schools outnumber public schools by more than threefold, whereas in North Lebanon the public schools are around double the number of private schools.

Table 1.2

Distribution of schools by school type and by Governorate for the academic year 2015-2016

Governorate	School Type				Total (%)	Total Number of Schools
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Free-Private (%)	Private UNRWA (%)		
Beirut	2.1	3.5	0.6	0.2	6.4	182
Mount Lebanon (Beirut Suburbs)	3.5	11.7	2.5	0.2	18	513
Greater Beirut	5.6	15.2	3.1	0.4	24.4	695
Mount Lebanon (Besides Beirut suburbs)	6	6.1	1.2	0.1	13.3	380
North Lebanon	14.8	7.4	2.9	0.6	25.7	733
Bekaa	8	5.7	3.3	0.2	17.2	492
South Lebanon	5.2	3.4	1.2	1.1	10.8	309
Nabatiyeh	4.5	2.7	1.4	0	8.6	245
Total	44.1	40.5	13	2.3	100	2,854

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

Table 1.3 provides an overview of the distribution of students by school type, as well as by the Governorate for the academic year 2015-2016. It clearly reflects that the Mount Lebanon Governorate attends to around 34 % of the student population, whereas the Greater Beirut area serves 30.4 % of the students, the absolute majority of which attend private schools.

Table 1.3

Distribution of students by school type and by Governorate for the academic year 2015-2016

Governorate	School Type				Total (%)	Total Number of Students
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Free-Private (%)	Private UNRWA (%)		
Beirut	1.6	5	0.5	0.3	7.5	77,709
Mount Lebanon (Beirut Suburbs)	2.7	17.4	2.6	0.2	22.9	237,831
Greater Beirut	4.3	22.4	3.1	0.5	30.4	315,540
Mount Lebanon (Besides Beirut suburbs)	2.9	7.4	0.9	0.2	11.4	118,847
North Lebanon	10.9	9	3.2	0.9	24	249,660
Bekaa	4.8	6.3	3.5	0.2	14.9	154,355
South Lebanon	4.4	4.6	1.5	1.6	12.1	125,386
Nabatiyeh	2.9	2.9	1.4	0	7.2	74,950
Total	30.3	52.6	13.7	3.4	100	1,038,738

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

Since the Syrian crisis started in 2011, the number of school-aged students of Syrian nationality who have joined the Lebanese schools has increased tremendously.

Such wide access to schooling was made possible by a Saudi grant in 2012 to cover the tuition and book expenses of all students in the public education sector, in addition to other international programs funded by various humanitarian organizations. In addition, there are students of other Arab nationalities (mostly Palestinian and Iraqi) who sought refuge in Lebanon in the past, and students of other foreign nationalities who attend schools in Lebanon. According to the latest statistical report by CERD (2015-2016), 85.2% of all students attending schools in Lebanon are of Lebanese nationality, while the remaining 14.8% are non-Lebanese. Table 1.4 reflects the student distribution by nationality in all school types. Among all non-Lebanese students, 26 % attend private schools while the rest are distributed in public, free-private, and UNRWA schools, with the largest percentage in public schools as shown in table 1.5.

Table 1.4

Distribution of students by nationality for the academic year 2015-2016

Nationality	Percentage of Student Population (%)	Total Number of Students
Lebanese	85.2	131,306
Syrian	8.9	13,716
Palestinian	4.2	6,473
Other Arab Nationalities	0.6	925
Other Nationalities	0.5	770
Undetermined	0.6	925
Total	100	154,115

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

Table 1.5

Distribution of non-Lebanese students by school type for the academic year 2015-2016

School Type	Public (%)	Private (%)	Free-Private (%)	Private UNRWA (%)	Total (%)	Total Number of Students
Non-Lebanese Students	42.8	26	9.4	21.7	100	154,115

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

Table 1.6 below reflects the distribution of students by nationality across the different school types, which shows that access to the diverse school types is relatively open to the various nationalities.

Table 1.6

Distribution of students by school type and by nationality for the academic year 2015-2016

Nationality	School Type				Total Number of Students
	Public	Private	Free-Private	Private UNRWA	
Lebanese	248,805	506,088	128,132	1,598	77,709
Syrian	57,934	22,770	11,209	645	92,558
Palestinian	4,719	7,452	1,963	29,618	43,752
Other Arab Nationalities	1,931	3,040	703	109	5,783
Other Nationalities	271	4,888	141	21	5,321
Undetermined	1,066	1,976	546	3,113	6,701
Total	314,726	546,214	142,694	35,104	1,038,738

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

Language of instruction. Another major particularity of the Lebanese education system is the importance it puts on the acquisition of languages (Bahous, Bacha & Nabhani, 2011). The Lebanese have always put great importance on quality education and a major aspect of that was language proficiency (Al-Amin, 2004), which they attributed as their ability to converse in more than one language. In the Lebanese Constitution, Article 11 states that “Arabic is the official national Language”; however, in practice there are three official languages in the country, the Arabic, considered the mother-tongue, and the two official foreign languages, which are French and English.

In recent years, an increasing number of schools has been choosing to teach both French and English in addition to Arabic. Private schools also offer their students more choices in learning additional languages if they wish, such as Spanish, Chinese, and German. For the Lebanese of Armenian origins, the Armenian language is considered the mother-tongue and is taught as the primary language in their private schools in addition to Arabic, French and/or English. Table 1.7 shows the distribution of students by the first foreign language of instruction in schools and school type. It reflects that French is still more dominant as a first foreign language than English in the overall number of schools, except for the UNRWA schools that have almost the totality of its schools teaching in English.

Table 1.7

Distribution of students by the first foreign language of instruction and school type for the academic year 2015-2016

First Foreign Language of Instruction	Type of School				Total (%)	Total Number of Students
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Free-Private (%)	Private UNRWA (%)		
French	60.4	53.1	52.7	1.4	53.5	555,490
English	39.6	46.9	47.3	98.6	46.5	483,248
Total	100	100	100	100	100	1,038,738

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

This is mostly due to the large number of schools in North of Lebanon that still teach in French as opposed to the rest of the Governorates, as reflected in table 1.8 below. In fact, English as a first language of instruction is gaining ground over French in almost all Governorates except in the North Lebanon and Mount Lebanon Governorates - besides Beirut suburbs (CERD, 2015-2016). This is also the case in the Greater Beirut area as families are favoring teaching their children in English over French because it is perceived as the language of technology, science and business, which is what is prevailing among the youth today.

Table 1.8

Distribution of students by the first foreign language of instruction and Governorates for the academic year 2015-2016

Governorate	First Foreign Language of Instruction		
	French (%)	English (%)	Total (%)
Beirut	3.7	3.8	7.5
Mount Lebanon (Beirut Suburbs)	10.8	12.1	22.9
Greater Beirut	14.5	15.9	30.4
Mount Lebanon (Besides Beirut suburbs)	6.1	5.3	11.4
North Lebanon	21.3	2.7	24
Bekaa	6.7	8.1	14.9
South Lebanon	2.2	9.9	12.1
Nabatiyeh	2.6	4.6	7.2
Total	53.5	46.5	100

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016.

The Reform of National Education

Marking the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, representatives of all the different political parties in Lebanon met in the city of Taef in Saudi Arabia where the National Accord Convention was signed and on which the amendments of the Lebanese Constitution were agreed upon. One major aspect of the Taef agreement was to rebuild the education sector that was heavily damaged during the 15-year civil war. It gave particular attention to the education sector as it was viewed as the main pathway for societal integration and unity and the means to “strengthen national belonging and fusion, spiritual and cultural openness” (Taef Agreement, 1990, Section E.5).

The national educational reform plan. In 1994, CERD prepared a 10-year Educational Reform Plan, which was approved by Cabinet Resolution No. 15/94, and was adopted by the Ministry of National Education, Youth and Sports that set out the guiding framework for its strategic activities and action plans. This new national education reform plan highlighted the fundamental principles on which it built and that were based on the Lebanese Constitution, the National Accord Convention of the Taef, the laws regulating educational issues and that focus on the right to and freedom of education, accessibility and equality in educational opportunities for all, and that were emphasized in the international conventions that Lebanon has endorsed. Among these conventions are the Declaration of Human Rights, signed in 1951 and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, signed by the Lebanese government in 1991 (Permanent Mission of Lebanon in the United Nations, 2006). However, one of the main reproaches of this Educational Reform Plan is that it did not mention the private sector explicitly, thus making it more targeting the public sector (Al-Amin, 1994c). Another important issue raised by Al-Amin (1994c, 2001) is that the plan did not diagnose the actual situation of the educational sector in the country before setting the reform plan, which raises lots of questions as to the relevance of the nine points it targeted as well as the goals it set to achieve. The plan also lacked actual statistics related to the number of teachers to be trained, which categories they belong to and other essential data to make it a solid plan, thus limiting it mostly to an educational expenditure plan (Al-Amin, 1994a).

The 2000-2015 strategic directions for education in Lebanon (SDEL). In the year 2000, the MEHE developed a new and comprehensive national plan that proposed strategic directions to ensure quality education for all children (CERD, 2000). This plan revised the previous Educational Reform Plan of 1994 and attempted to address the various shortcomings that were depicted from evaluating it. The main aim of this national

education plan was to rebuild the credibility of the public education among the Lebanese people by improving the quality of education and by widening access to public education. It was the first time such a wide-scope strategy is developed, documented and publicly announced. Actually, it will remain the main national strategy for educational improvement despite the fact that nine different Ministers of Education were appointed at MEHE between the year 2000 and 2016, under the leadership of seven different Prime Ministers and two Presidents of the Republic (Al-Amin, 2014). This was because the consecutive Ministers of Education belonged to either the same political parties or to those that were allies, thus keeping the same major lines of the strategic plan.

Once more, the SDEL emphasized the particular partnership of the private and public sectors, whereby in section C of the strategy it focused on

“the protection of the private education sector and strengthening of the State monitoring over private schools, in line with the provisions of Article 10 of the Lebanese Constitution and the laws and regulations in force, which serves the process of national reconciliation through the general educational climate and contributes to the process of development and reconstruction of Lebanon (MEHE, 2010).”

In order to instigate the national educational plan, the Lebanese government through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) developed the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) and entrusted MEHE to lead its implementation. Subsequently, and because of lack of specific funding at the Ministry for educational development, MEHE set out to seek financing for the ESDP programs from various external agencies. Among these agencies are the World bank, the European Union (EU), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and many local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that were involved in educational development.

One of the most prominent projects and the first one to be undertaken for the implementation of the EDSP was the Education Development Project (EDP1), which was developed collaboratively between the ministry of Education and the World Bank. The EDP1 extended from the year 2000 to 2009 and was allocated a budget of US\$70.93 million, with US\$56.57 million financed as a loan from the World Bank and US\$14.36 million funded by the Lebanese government (World Bank, 2017).

The EDP1 was reported to have had a positive impact on developing policy, planning and information management at the level of MEHE, and upgrading the infrastructure and providing equipment in a number of public schools across the six Governorates. It also played a significant role in strengthening school leadership, through creating Leadership Development Programs (LDP) in collaboration with the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese University. The LDP provided intensive professional development for school principals on modern leadership practices. In addition, the project targeted building pedagogical capacity of teachers and enhancing the assessment of academic achievement (ESDS, 2013). However, there are no published studies or comprehensive reports examining or evaluating the impact of these interventions on improving the public school system or enhancing the quality of education inside the classrooms. In addition, the results of the EDP1 did not reflect any increase in student enrollment in public schools.

The 2010-2015 education sector development plan. Despite the positive impact of the EDP1, the needs of the public education sector were still much bigger. Consequently, in 2010, the MEHE published a revised document of the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) depicting an updated 5-year plan entitled Quality Education for Growth 2010-2015. This plan came as a response to an alarming decrease in enrollment in public schools of around 21.5 % between 2001 and 2011 (Al-Amin, 2014; CERD, 2011-

2012), while the private education sector witnessed an increase of 16 % over the same period of time (Al-Amin, 2014). The main reason for such a decrease in enrollment was that families started to lose faith in the public school again as the quality of education declined. Again, the loosened regulations for hiring teaching and administrative staff as well as the soaring in hiring contractual teachers in public schools were the main reasons for such a decline in quality (Al-Amin, 2014). It also created an unprofessional atmosphere in schools as contracted teachers had no rights, had to work in more than one school, and felt the need to keep pleasing their political leader to secure a yearly job contract (Al-Amin, 2014).

Consequently, MEHE partnered with the World Bank once more to develop the (Education Development Project II) EDP2, which built on EDP1. Although planning for it started in 2010, the project effectively took off in 2012 with an allocated total budget of US\$42.6 million, of which US\$40 million are financed as a loan from the World Bank and US\$2.6 million funded by the Lebanese government, and it is expected to be completed by December 2017 (World Bank, 2017). One of the main targets of EDP2 was to improve the quality of teaching through school-based teacher professional development in addition to improving the learning environment and strengthening the public education system. The ESDS was responsible for managing all the components of the EDP2 (ESDS, 2013).

The EDP2 had a few related programs that supported its implementation, such as the Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teachers Improvement (DRASATI) and the Quality Instruction towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI), which were both funded by the USAID and for which a second part was developed that further built on the first ones. The DRASATI project, through its various subcomponents, provided training in leadership development for all the serving public school principals who did not get trained under the EDP1. In addition, DRASATI

piloted a new project called the School Improvement Program (SIP), which aimed at building the capacity of public schools to develop and implement school improvement plans based on their particular needs (ESDS, 2013). The design of the SIP was informed by TAMAM, a collaborative school-based educational reform project funded by the Arab Thought Foundation (ATF) in collaboration with the American university of Beirut (AUB) that started in 2007 and which involves both public and private schools in seven Arab countries including Lebanon (TAMAM, 2012, tamamproject.org).

In summary, all the development projects that aimed for capacity building in schools centered the leadership development on school principals and administrative staff exclusively (MEHE, 2010). Teacher development projects mostly revolved around capacity building inside the classroom, developing teachers' educational and professional skills in their specific subjects, and using information technology in education. Moreover, the long-awaited request by scholars, educators and teachers' syndicates to consider teachers as professionals and qualified partners and involve them more in the development of the general national education (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009), was still far from being resolved. However, it can be noted that at least, there was in the TAMAM and D-RASATI SIP projects, a documented precedence whereby public school teachers succeeded in making an impact in their schools as part of a leadership team.

The educational emergency plan. The year 2011 marked a turning point in Lebanon's recent history as well as the whole region as the civil war in Syria erupted. With Lebanon sharing borders with Syria, a large number of Syrian refugees fled their country and came to settle in Lebanon. In 2017, almost seven years after the outbreak of the crisis, the number of Syrian refugees in Lebanon is massive.

For a country of 4.4 million inhabitants, the number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon reached an alarming figure of 1.011 million refugees, more than 75% of which

are children and women. Compounded with the Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, the numbers soared to around 1.5 million, although there were more unregistered refugees that were not accounted for. Consequently, this made Lebanon the country with “the highest per capita concentration of refugees, where one person out of four is a refugee (European Commission Report, March 2017).

Several international conferences were held in support of the Syrians and their hosting communities in the various neighboring countries. The first one was the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria, that was held in Kuwait City in 2013, then again in 2014 and 2015. More conferences took place in Berlin, London, Geneva, Istanbul and New York between 2014 and 2016 (UNHCR, 2017). In addition, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) partnered with various international humanitarian associations and launched the Regional Response Plan (RRP) in 2012, and then the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), that presented a yearly plan of action since 2014 to support the host countries to which the Syrian refugees fled. The latest plan developed for the year 2017-2018 calls for US\$4.3 billion to support 4.3 million Syrian refugees and another 4 million people in the communities hosting them (UNHCR, 2017). Among the pressing needs addressed in these plans was the issue of providing access to educational services to displaced Syrian children, who have been out of school since the crisis started in 2011. Consequently, funding from the international community and humanitarian organizations to Lebanon focused on Education for Emergency. In Lebanon, the response to the educational needs of the refugees was done through the public education sector.

The Status of Teachers in Lebanon

Decision-making for principals and teachers in the public sector is widely limited (Al-Amin, 1997a, 2003a, 2004). Most decisions pertaining to the functioning of the school

need to be signed by the head of the provincial directorate, the Director of General Education and the Minister of Education before they are implemented by the principal (Karami-Akkary, 1997). Although the principal status is the highest administrative position at the public school level, the job description of principals depicts that their main role is to execute the decisions and policies issued by the Ministry (Al-Amin, 1997a; Karami-Akkary, 1997). In fact, the Ministry of Education is the one responsible for recruiting, appointing and transferring teachers in public schools, setting the curricula, changing the textbooks, providing any supporting materials, developing the official examinations, and deciding on school building renovations, expansions, or relocation (Al-Amin, 1997b, 2009; Karami-Akkary, 1997). In addition, the Ministry decides on the teaching methodologies to be implemented by teachers and the General Directorate of Guidance and Counseling coaches them in their practice, while the General Educational Inspectorate monitors and evaluates the performance of teachers, then shares the outcome with them (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009).

As for professional development, CERD is responsible for training teachers through the continuing training program that they can enroll in. However, no mechanism is put in place to collect their professional learning needs nor to follow up on how and if their learning is transferred in their practice (Nabhani & Bahous, 2010). The Ministry also sets the parameters for the relationship of the school with the parents and the parent councils. The school principal's involvement in decision-making is limited to providing suggestions at the end of each academic year with regard to the school's needs for any supplementary resources (Karami-Akkary, 1997).

According to Al-Amin and Kawas (2009), such high level of control and centralized decision-making from the Ministry over the public school has become a double-edged sword. On one hand, it creates frustration for both the principals and

teachers who want to be more involved and take a wider part in the decision-making process especially with regard to setting the curricula, the teaching methods and the textbooks. On the other hand, a continued lack of involvement creates a feeling of detachment and powerlessness at the level of the individual principals and teachers who tend to just do their job without any feeling of ownership or agency.

The only two initiatives that attempted, for the first time, to actively engage teachers and principals in the public schools to collaborate together to support school improvement were the TAMAM project (2007) and the School Improvement Program (SIP) under D-RASATI (2012). The TAMAM project focuses on developing core competencies of the lead teams at each school so they can initiate and lead school-based improvement efforts. These core competencies include inquiry, evidence-based decision making, reflective practice, collaboration, planning, and documentation. Since 2007, the TAMAM project in Lebanon has worked with 9 public and 4 private schools and continues to support them throughout their improvement journey (TAMAM, 2012, tamamproject.org).

As for the SIP, it was a 2-year project implemented in 200 public schools that also aimed to build the capacity of a core team within each school to conduct a school self-assessment and develop school improvement plans (ESDS, 2013). Each core team was composed of the school principal and a group of teachers selected by the principal. Although the implementation of the SIP varied a lot and teachers' involvement differed tremendously between the 200 schools where it was implemented, this project marked an important milestone in teacher development and empowerment in public education. This is because it was the first time that teachers in the public education sector were actually given the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity and to be involved in any form of school improvement project that extended beyond their own classroom. The

expectations from the SIP were to engage teachers along with the school leaders to develop a school improvement plan that addresses a problem that they collectively select and work on together as a leadership team, as opposed to having the principal deal with all the school-wide problems alone, while keeping teachers confined to issues only related to the teaching and learning inside the classroom (DRASATI, 2012).

The situation is different and more complex in the private sector. Private schools have the freedom to set their own administrative structure and educational policies, which impact lots of decisions regarding the recruitment and hiring of teachers, the choice of textbooks and teaching methodologies, as well as how and to what extent to implement the national curricula (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009). Furthermore, private schools have the autonomy to decide on the number of teaching hours, the length of the school day, the grade level and subject to be taught by teachers, and other administrative issues that are decided upon internally and that do not necessarily follow the Ministry's guidelines. In addition, parents have a much more prominent role in private schools, through their continuous involvement in their children's education, the frequent meetings they have with teachers, and through the active Parent Councils.

As such, school leaders and teachers in the private sector have a much wider scope of decision-making than in the public schools, and consequently tend to have a more participative role in their schools, and a higher sense of involvement. Furthermore, teachers particularly in large and renowned schools, usually have the opportunity to have a more comprehensive role than just curriculum implementers, as they actually are responsible, in varying degrees depending on the school, to choose the textbooks, the teaching strategies, and supporting materials (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009). However, oftentimes teachers are either not willing or not aware of their leadership capacity even when put in situations where they are practicing leadership and actively participating in

whole school improvement (Itani-Malas, 2009). This is not the case in small schools that operate mostly like the public schools but are privately owned.

Contracting teachers. After the educational reform of 1994, there was a growing need to increase the teaching workforce in the public schools to cater for the growing student population and to implement the new curriculum. Consequently, the Ministry of Education loosened the academic conditions of hiring teachers at all levels (LAES, 2006). For example, at the secondary level, teachers who were required to have a 5-year education degree in secondary education prior to being appointed in the public sector, were only asked to attend a one-year training course in secondary education in order to be hired (LAES, 2006). More problems surfaced with regards to the quality of education as massive hiring took place at all levels, from the preschool to secondary stages, to staff the public schools with teachers.

Additionally, a new practice was put in place, by which teachers were contracted on a yearly basis and paid by the hour without any further benefits instead of tenured, cutting down on the cost of hiring for the government (Al-Amin, 2013). Consequently, this opened up the opportunity for anyone holding a university degree to become a teacher even without having licensed pedagogic training (LAES, 2006). The contracted teachers at the elementary level are paid between LL11,000 and LL14,000 (US\$7.5 to US\$9.25) per hour that they teach depending on their qualifications, while secondary teachers were paid LL28,000 (US\$19) per hour, without any additional benefits, transportation or health insurance. Moreover, they did not have any paid holidays even when schools closed for emergency situations. Also, they were not paid on a monthly basis, but rather at the end of the trimester, at the end of the school year or sometimes even at the beginning of the following academic year (Al-Amin, 2013). In fact, this practice fostered the personal connections and political affiliations that the new candidate teachers knew they needed to

use in order to get hired, in the hopes that they would join the tenured cohort someday (Al-Amin, 2013). This also created a lot of frustrations among those teachers that would keep asking for their rights to tenure, an increase in their salary scale and more demands through the labor syndicates and teachers syndicates until today.

The policies and procedures that were followed later resulted in further lowering the standards with regard to teacher qualifications (Al-Amin, 2004, 2014). Results of the LAES study in 2006 show that the number of contracted teachers in public schools rose from 6,000 teachers in the year 1993-1994 to 11,000 teachers in the year 2004-2005, which represents an increase from 21% to 27% of the teaching staff. Alternatively, the number of tenured teachers who held no degree attained 9,000 representing over 30% of tenured teachers. Table 1.9 below reflects the significant change in the teachers' employment status between the academic year 2004-2005 and 2015-2016. So, for a total increase of 12,286 teachers over the last eleven years, 2,575 teachers (what makes around 20%) were tenured while 9,877 (80% of the total increase) were contracted.

Table 1.9

Comparison of the employment status of teachers in both the private and public education sectors between the academic year 2004-2005 and 2015-2016

Employment Status of Teachers	2004-2005		2015-2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Tenured	55,291	64.17 %	57,866	58.8 %
Contractual	29,021	33.68 %	38,898	39.5 %
Volunteer	1,856	2.15 %	1,605	1.6 %
Undetermined	0	0 %	85	0.1 %
Total	86,168	100 %	98,454	100 %

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2004-2005 and 2015-2016.

The gender disparity of teachers also varied in the last decade. Although the number of female teachers outpaced by far that of their male peers, the gap between them grew even bigger in 2015-2016 as reflected in table 1.10. The majority of male teachers work at the middle and secondary levels, whereas kindergarten and elementary are almost exclusively taught by female teachers. The decline in the number of male teachers to around 21 % in the year 2015-2016 could have a lot of indications as to the lack of motivation of young graduates to join the teaching workforce, because of the limited growth path it offers (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009).

Table 1.10

Variation of the distribution of teachers by gender

Gender of Teachers	2004-2005		2015-2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Female	61,986	72 %	77,758	79 %
Male	24,182	28 %	20,696	21 %
Total	86,168	100 %	98,454	100 %

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletins.

Distribution of teachers in schools. Another issue surfaced with the hiring of contractual teachers, which was the inadequate distribution of the teaching workforce in the public sector across the six Governorates coupled with a surplus of teachers (Al-Amin, 1997a; Al-Amin & Kawas 2009). In fact, teachers' excessive hiring came at the expense of having qualified teachers and created a substantial shortage in the number of teachers in specific subjects and in certain regions. As shown in table 1.11, the student-teacher ratio in the public sector was higher than that in the private sector (MEHE, 2010), without necessarily providing an added value to the students (Al-Amin, 1997a; Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009).

Table 1.11

Student-teacher ratio by school type

	Type of School			
	Public	Private	Free-Private	Private UNRWA
Student/Teacher Ratio	7.7	11.5	19.1	NA

Note. Source: Executive Summary, Quality Education for Growth, MEHE (2010)

There were various causes of such poor distribution, among which are the political and sectarian considerations that take precedence over aligning the distribution based on school needs. A parallel hiring system ruled by favoritism, drives teachers to affiliate themselves with political parties or sectarian leaders to get hired in the schools or villages of their choice. This created disruption in many schools as the relocation of teachers could happen anytime during the school year, sometimes leaving a school without a teacher for a certain grade level or subject until another one is secured by the Ministry (Al-Amin, 2013).

Another reason for the inadequate distribution of teachers was the recurring Israeli wars on Lebanon, especially in the South, and political instability in the country that forced many people to leave their cities and villages looking for safety, and thus significantly reduced the number of students in schools there. Furthermore, to make space for contracted teachers to actually work since they were paid by the hour that they spend face-to-face in class with the students, the workload of both contracted and tenured teachers in schools was reduced, thus limiting their physical presence at the school (Al-Amin, 2013, 2014; Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009). This resulted in having teachers take more than one job to fill up their time, work in more than one school (LAES, 2006), and consider the “teaching time” as the only time accounted for in the framework of their practice as educators, which led to an even more weakened public education sector as

there were lots of gaps regarding the needs for qualified teachers in various grade levels and subject matters (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009).

In addition, and contrary to the requirements of the Law #22/85 that specifies the number of teaching hours at all the stages of general education for tenured teachers and gradually decreases them depending on the number of years in service to allow teachers to spend more time on extra-curricular activities, many public schools do not make use of this extra time effectively (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009). Oftentimes, teachers in public schools, both contractual and tenured, work in isolation; they either would not or could not allocate time at school to work on building collegial relations, planning collaboratively with colleagues, or even getting involved in meaningful professional development, as it was all not accounted for monetarily and because teachers had to run from one school to another every day to cover their teaching hours (Al-Amin, & Kawas, 2009). Many of them also work in private schools as part time teachers as well.

In private schools, the administration usually abides by the Ministry's regulations as to the maximum number of teaching hours allowed per week, which is 24 hours (often reduced to class periods varying between 45 to 55 minutes), in addition to 3 hours allocated for coordination and parent meetings (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009). However, teachers working full time are generally required to stay at school until the end of the school day even if they do not have any more teaching hours. There are exceptions depending on the school policies. Such provision opens up time and creates more opportunities for teachers to work individually to plan, correct homework, prepare exams, or participate in extra-curricular activities. In addition, it allows teachers to collaborate with one another, engage with colleagues, plan together for classroom or school events, substitute for absent teachers, and attend coordination meetings as well as general staff meetings. Furthermore, depending on the school policies and the principal's support or

opposition, full-time teachers are generally required to attend professional development sessions inside and/or outside their school even if they take place outside of regular school hours (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009).

Teachers in private schools also have a yearly contract that is renewed every year and they are not allowed to break it to leave the school unless there is a serious medical condition or a grave breach of the school policies, which creates stability for teachers and students during the school year. They are usually eligible for tenure after a two-year probation period that starts at the beginning of their teaching career, and that grants them access to the Indemnity Fund benefits once they are registered in it. The Indemnity Fund for Private School Teachers was established in 1956 as a retirement pension for private school teachers, where they contribute 6% of their monthly salary and so does the school (Article 21, last amended in 2002). Teachers are allowed to collect their pension at retirement or, for female teachers only, when they get married.

Table 1.12 shows the distribution of teachers by school type and Governorate for the academic year 2015-2016. The largest number of teachers is again in the Mount Lebanon Governorate, with over 30.5 % of teachers working in the Greater Beirut area, and almost 75% of them in the private sector. The second largest number of teachers work in the North Lebanon Governorate with two thirds of them working in public schools. Almost the same ratio of teachers exists in the Beirut Governorate, whereas the rest of the Governorates have almost an equal distribution of teachers between public and private schools.

Table 1.12

Distribution of teachers by school type and Governorate for the academic year 2015-2016

Governorate	School Type				Total (%)	Total Number of teachers
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Free-Private (%)	Private UNRWA (%)		
Beirut	2.41	5.95	0.35	0.15	8.85	8,716
Mount Lebanon (Beirut Suburbs)	4.54	15.55	1.45	0.13	21.66	21,327
Greater Beirut	6.94	21.50	1.79	0.28	30.51	30,043
Mount Lebanon (Besides Beirut suburbs)	4.99	7.13	0.64	0.05	12.81	12,609
North Lebanon	14.56	7.50	1.52	0.43	24.01	23,641
Bekaa	7.04	4.64	1.81	0.12	13.61	13,401
South Lebanon	5.52	4.29	0.82	0.74	11.36	11,184
Nabatiyeh	4.31	2.53	0.86	0.00	7.69	7,576
Total	43.36	47.58	7.44	1.62	100	98,454

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletins 2015-2016

It is also important to understand the distribution of teachers in the Greater Beirut area, as explained in table 1.13, as it gives a clear picture of the landscape of the teaching workforce by employment status and by sector. Hence, 61.78 % of teachers are tenured with 42.4% working in private schools and only 14.67 % in public schools. In addition, around 77 % of teachers work in the private sector as opposed to only 22.75 % who work in public schools.

Table 1.13

Employment status of teachers in the Greater Beirut area by school type for the academic year 2015-2016

Employment Status of Teachers	School Type					Total Number of Teachers
	Public (%)	Private (%)	Free-Private (%)	Private UNRWA (%)	Total (%)	
Tenured	14.67	42.40	4.07	0.64	61.78	18,562
Contractual	7.61	27.35	1.70	0.28	36.93	11,096
Volunteer	0.47	0.59	0.09	0.00	1.16	348
Undetermined	0.00	0.11	0.01	0.00	0.12	37
Total	22.75	70.45	5.87	0.92	100	30,043

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletin 2015-2016

In the past decade, there has been an effort to increase the standards for teacher qualifications by requiring teachers newly joining the teaching workforce in the public sector to have university degrees as a way to counterbalance the negative effect of contracting teachers with no or very little educational background and to replace the aging tenured teachers' population. This was reflected in the private sector as well, although in most private schools, adequate teacher qualifications are required in order to be hired as the private schools follow their own administrative regulations.

The statistical reports of CERD show that there has been a significant increase in the number of teachers holding university degrees in the overall education sector in the academic year 2015-2016 as compared to 2004-2005, as reflected in table 1.14. Teachers that are considered non-degree holders decreased from 44.79 % to 28.6 %, whereas teachers holding a bachelor and a teaching diploma increased from 36.05 % to 49.67 %.

Table 1.14

Variation of the distribution of teachers in both public and private education sector by the highest degree earned

Highest Degree Earned	Academic Year			
	2004-2005		2015-2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Doctorate, Graduate Studies or Engineering	3,608	4.58 %	6,242	6.34 %
Masters	1,919	2.44 %	1,743	1.77 %
Bachelor and Teaching Diploma	28,355	36.05 %	48,902	49.67 %
University Diploma	806	1.02 %	5,632	5.72 %
Educational Baccalaureate	8,733	11.10 %	7,788	7.91 %
High School or Less	35,223	44.79 %	28,158	28.60 %
Total	78,644	100 %	98,454	100 %

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletins

The variation is even more accentuated in the statistics for the public sector, as shown in table 1.15, where the number of teachers who are non-degree holders was reduced by almost half, and the percentage of teachers with a bachelor's degree and a teaching diploma consists of more than 50% of the total teaching workforce.

Table 1.15

Variation of the distribution of teachers in the public education sector by the highest degree earned

Highest Degree Earned	Academic Year			
	2004-2005		2015-2016	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Doctorate, Graduate Studies or Engineering	1,404	3.73 %	2,822	6.61 %
Masters	1,678	4.46 %	1,567	3.67 %
Bachelor and Teaching Diploma	13,469	35.80 %	21,582	50.56 %
University Diploma	317	0.84 %	1,413	3.31 %
Educational Baccalaureate	8,455	22.47 %	7,594	17.79 %
High School or Less	12,298	32.69 %	7,705	18.05 %
Total	37,621	100 %	42,686	100 %

Note. Source: Center for Educational Research and Development, Statistical Bulletins

International Programs in Private Schools

The structure of the Lebanese education system previously explained fostered private education and strengthened private schools (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009). Since foreign missionaries and international private education institutions brought a higher quality of education to students and allowed them to develop higher proficiency in foreign languages, families who could afford to send their children to foreign private schools opted for it (Al-Amin, 2004). The idea that following a foreign program would allow for a better career path and would open the way for higher job positions locally and abroad appealed to many Lebanese families. French Jesuits and American Presbyterians were among the first religious groups to open private schools and private universities (Bahous et al., 2011; Bashshur, 1992). French and American schools still stand amid those that

provide the best education. They have a good reputation among families and they usually have a waiting list for accepting students every year.

In recent years, many private schools in Lebanon have started seeking affiliations with international educational institutions and accreditation/certification organizations as a way to stand out as having high quality education that follows “international standards”. In the quasi absence of any follow-up, inspection or policies regulating education in the private sector from the Ministry of Education, international certification has become a trend that more private schools are pursuing primarily to improve their educational services. In addition, it is considered a way for schools to provide their students with an end-of-school degree that is officially recognized beyond the borders of Lebanon, which would appeal to families looking to send their children abroad for higher education or for employment. As a result, international certification has become a vehicle that provides a competitive advantage to accredited schools, thus allowing them to gain recognition, maintain or build a good reputation, attract qualified teachers, and charge higher tuition fees. It has also proven to be attractive for newly established private schools as a way to penetrate the market at a higher rank than if they were not accredited.

In order for schools to get accredited, they usually have to go through a rigorous process of self-evaluation and develop a multi-year improvement plan to meet the requirements of the accrediting organization. Depending on the organization, the certification process takes between three to five years, targets various aspects of the school as an institution, and includes visits to the schools from educational professionals. Some organizations, such as the International Baccalaureate, focuses on the school philosophy, administrative structure, academic curricula and methodology, and teacher professional development (IBO, 2018). Other institutions such as AdvancEd focus on strengthening the

leadership capacity, the learning capacity and the resources capacity at school, and require the school to develop a plan of action towards achieving these standards (advanc-ed.org).

Being internationally certified/accredited brings an advantage to the private schools as they get thorough feedback on their academic and extra-curricular programs, administrative structure, physical and non-physical environment, as well as their overall performance. In addition, schools get support on improving in the areas that do not meet the standards of the accrediting body, which is a support that is almost totally lacking from the local Ministry of Education. Consequently, it allows them to improve their services towards students, teachers, administrative staff, and parents, which results in higher-quality education that follows international standards. However, international recognition comes at a high cost to families as tuition fees in accredited schools increase tremendously compared to other private schools, which makes them affordable only for families in the upper socio-economic status.

Statement of the Problem and Rationale of the Study

The Lebanese educational context previously explained coupled with the rising expectations for student learning and achievement at all levels have brought forth tremendous constraints and added more to the existing challenges facing the education system in Lebanon. School principals are overwhelmed and cannot face all these challenges while single handedly leading the educational institution. Some of them find themselves forced to seek the help of some teachers and assign them certain informal leadership roles at school. Others choose to assign more official leadership roles to teachers, so they are more formally recognized by their peers.

The fact is that teachers around the world wear many hats and engage in a variety of tasks and activities at school. They make decisions continuously with students, colleagues, parents, and administrators, and engage in leadership acts frequently, in formal

ways but more often so in informal ways (Angelle & Teague, 2014, Helterbran, 2010).

Yet, research studies have shown that many teachers do not perceive themselves as being leaders necessarily, especially if they do not hold a formal leadership position or title (Helterbran, 2010; Itani Malas, 2009). Most teachers believe that they are not equipped to actively participate and be involved in supporting their schools beyond their direct teaching duties inside the classroom (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Durias, 2010; Helterbran, 2010; Patterson, 2000). They also do not consider that they have any influence outside the walls of their classroom (Chesson, 2010; Helterbran, 2010; Itani Malas, 2009), and seem unaware of how they are or could be supporting their institution in these times of turmoil. In addition, the formal school leadership is often unable to frame teacher leadership outside the main teaching role and functions restricted to what happens inside the classroom (Bowman, 2004; Helterbran, 2010; Shamsi, Imtinan & Ahad, 2010), and the school organizational structures rarely support any kind of shared leadership between the principal and the teachers and there is rarely evidence that teacher leadership is tightly linked to student learning as the heart of the educational process and any school improvement effort.

The current educational system in Lebanon does not seem to particularly support or even conceive of teacher leadership as an essential component of the educational framework that allows schools to face the increasing challenges and more complex demands that puts constraints on providing quality education to all students. From all the improvement initiatives that have been made available in the educational sector over the past few years, very few specifically target involving teachers in leadership roles or invite them to be active participants in the school improvement process from the beginning.

However, the widespread agreement among scholars and researchers is that schools developing and operating as learning communities promote high student

achievement and support teacher learning and collaboration is well documented in the literature (Cibulka & Nakayama, 2000; Danielson, 2007; DuFour, 2002, 2004, 2007; DuFour et al., 2008; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour et al., 2005; Eaker et al., 2002; Glickman, Gordon, Stephen, & Ross-Gordon, 2004; Hord, 1997, 2004; Imants, 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Senge et al., 2000; Zepeda, 2004). This model, or more precisely different aspects of this model, started gaining popularity in Lebanon in the last decade as more schools are acknowledging the importance of creating ways for their teachers and educators to keep up to date with all the changes happening in the real and virtual world outside the school and that students have embraced long before the teachers (Itani-Malas, 2009). This is mostly true because of the ease of access to all sorts of information that technology has made possible, which engages students in local and global issues far beyond the reach of their classroom walls and of their prescribed curriculum. Moreover, Lebanese schools are starting to realize that teachers need to engage in continuous professional development that allows them to learn about and put in practice new methodologies and modern pedagogy that supports students' growing needs in a quickly changing world and better fulfill the school's *raison d'être* (Berjaoui, 2013; Ghamrawi, 2013; Itani-Malas, 2009). In addition, more schools are realizing that moving in the direction of developing as professional learning communities holds great potential in providing a fertile ground for all stakeholders involved in the school to work collaboratively to achieve student success and instill a mindset of continuous lifelong learning for both adults and students (Berjaoui, 2013; Ghamrawi, 2013; Harb, 2014; Itani-Malas, 2009).

In addition, empirical literature strongly supports that teachers have a direct impact on improving student learning and achievement (Daresch, 2001; Demir, 2015; Durias, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Lambert, 2003; Leithwood, Day, Sammons,

Harris & Hopkins, 2007; Muijis & Harris, 2003; Rutherford, 2006; Smylie et al., 2002).

Moreover, research shows that any school improvement initiative needs to involve teachers' skillful participation from the planning stage to the implementation and assessment stages for it to be sustainable and successful (Chesson, 2010; Danielson, 2006; Gronn, 2000 & 2002; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Lambert, 1998; Leithwood et al., 2007; Rutherford, 2006; Spillane & Camburn, 2006). Furthermore, there is widespread agreement among educational scholars that the new demands of modern educational environments call for teachers to become self-directed and reflective learners and professionals who are able to influence their own learning as well as that of others outside the walls of their classroom, and are willing to take initiative and become more involved in decision-making at the school level (Chesson, 2010; DuFour, 2004; DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour et al., 2008; Helterbran, 2010; Itani Malas, 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009, Muijis & Harris, 2003; Rutherford, 2006). This reflects how teachers' actions and the decisions they make are critical and with deep potential impact on the overall development of the educational institution (Helterbran, 2010; Leithwood et al., 2007).

Finally, there is still a gap in the literature regarding how teacher leadership is supported, developed and practiced in schools, particularly in the Arab context in general and the Lebanese context in particular, although there are indications of a growing understanding among practitioners that sharing leadership between teachers and principals affects positively student achievement, especially when coupled with a supportive leadership structure that encourages collaboration and sharing practice. Even though there has been literature calling for teacher leadership and showing that it is needed albeit required for school improvement to happen, teachers don't seem to have embraced the idea of them being leaders (Berjaoui, 2013; Ghamrawi, 2013; Harb, 2014; Itani Malas, 2009).

Purpose of the Study

This study will shed light on teacher leadership, as an aspect of teachers' role that is increasingly gaining attention in recent years, in the context of improving student learning and sustaining school improvement initiatives. It will examine the different forms of teacher leadership found in a sample of private school settings in the Greater Beirut area, the capital of Lebanon. It will also attempt to clarify how teachers understand and perceive these leadership acts that they exert themselves or that they see happening around them at school by other colleagues. Finally, this study will investigate what organizational structures are currently put in place to support and develop teacher leadership as well as the different factors that influence and promote teacher leadership in schools.

Consequently, the goals of this study are to:

- a. Explore teacher's own perception of teacher leadership and understand the scope of acts and tasks that teachers undertake and perceive as involving or requiring leadership skills.
- b. Explore school leaders' perceptions of teacher leadership and understand the scope of acts and tasks that they perceive as involving or requiring leadership skills for teachers.
- c. Understand the forms of teacher leadership that are currently being exerted or practiced in schools as perceived by teachers and school leaders.
- d. Compare the perceptions of teachers and school leaders of teacher leadership to see if there is any alignment in their views and investigate the impact such alignment or lack thereof has on how teacher leadership is actually practiced or not at school.
- e. Understand what organizational factors of the school environment promote teacher leadership and support its development.

Significance of the Study

This study aims to identify school practices that are conducive to changing how teachers and school leaders perceive and understand teacher leadership. It also seeks to help teachers and school leaders view teacher leadership as a crucial and essential element to sustain any school improvement initiative, advance teaching and learning of both adults and students, and move the whole school community forward. Furthermore, it aspires to examine the organizational structure of schools and to recommend structures that are supportive of teachers developing and embracing leadership functions and roles in order to help educational institutions move toward a more distributive model that supports continuous and sustainable school improvement. In addition, this study strives to shed light on the different aspects of the school environment that support teacher leadership and the actual choices that schools make to promote it and make it accessible to teachers. Finally, this study will generate results that not only help understand the landscape of distributed leadership in private schools in the Greater Beirut area and clarify the variables that interact and influence teacher leadership, but also provide recommendations for policy makers to seriously consider developing policies that target teacher leadership as an essential pathway to improve the overall existing practice in schools.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This chapter aims to present an overview of the Lebanese educational context, as well as the review of the theoretical and empirical literature about teacher leadership and the conceptual framework that guided the design of the research study and the articulation of the problem. It is therefore divided into three parts. The first part includes an overview of the educational system in Lebanon and is divided into three sections that present the evolution of the strategy for national education, the structure of general national education and the national curriculum. The second part consists of five sections that discuss aspects of teacher leadership depicted from the review of the literature conducted in international settings, namely America and Europe, and in the Arab countries including Lebanon. The third part comprises three sections that discuss each of the big concepts in the conceptual framework that was provisionally adopted and guided the initiation of this study.

Overview of the Educational System in Lebanon

Upon the end of the Lebanese civil war in 1990, the Lebanese Constitution was amended by what is known as the Taef agreement, which took at the National Accord Convention in Saudi Arabia. One major aspect of the Taef agreement was to rebuild the education sector that was heavily damaged during the 15-year civil war. In 1994, the Center for Educational research and Development (CERD) formulated a 10-year plan for educational reform mostly targeting the public education sector, which was adopted by the government and the Ministry of Education, and which focused on the right to and freedom of education, accessibility, and equality in educational opportunities for all. However, this plan did not diagnose the actual situation of the educational sector in the country, nor was

it based on essential data to make it a solid plan, thus limiting it mostly to an educational expenditure plan (Al-Amin, 1994a, 1994c, 2001).

The Evolution of the National Educational Strategy

In the year 2005, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) developed a new national reform plan, the National Strategy for Education for All (NSEA), that would address the various shortcomings of the previous plan of 1994. The purpose of this new national education strategy was to reestablish the credibility of public education among the Lebanese population by improving the quality of education and by increasing access to public education. It was the first time such a wide-scope strategy is developed, documented and publicly endorsed by the government, which developed an Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) to instigate its implementation by the MEHE. In addition, the NSEA highlighted the partnership between the private and public education sectors in achieving national reconciliation through education (MEHE, 2010).

The NSEA set educational and developmental goals that target the various levels of K-12 schooling for general education as well as for vocational education, literacy development, children with special needs, teachers' development, curricula, school environment, and educational administration (MEHE, 2010). The NSEA's guiding principles were very ambitious and focused on improving the overall national education. These principles included, among other things, strengthening the public education sector, increasing the number of public schools all over the Lebanese territory even in remote and rural areas and upgrading the existing ones that were in dire physical condition, reviewing the national curriculum so it allows for the social and cultural unity and equality of the diverse communities, catering for students in early childhood, for gifted students and those with special learning needs, using multiple forms of assessment, providing wider access to technology and making mobile labs available for students, as well as unifying the history

and civics textbooks and requiring all schools to teach them, which effectively only happened for the Civics textbook but was never accomplished for History. It also stressed on the importance of offering more professional development for teachers in both public and private sectors and providing better support to school principals to develop their leadership skills (MEHE, 2010).

In addition, the NSEA identified five pillars as the educational priorities that would lay the grounds for the various educational programs that will be implemented in the following years. These priority pillars are: 1) Education available on the basis of equal opportunity, 2) Quality education that contributes to building a knowledge society, 3) Education that contributes to social integration, 4) Education that contributes to economic development, and 5) Governance of education. In order to instigate the national educational strategy, the Lebanese government through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) developed the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) and entrusted MEHE to lead its implementation.

The Education Sector Development Plan. The ESDP consisted of ten different programs targeting the five priority pillars set by the NSEA. These programs and the corresponding pillar they serve are explained in the following section.

Pillar 1- Education available on the basis of equal opportunity. It was targeted through three programs: Early Childhood Education, Improving Retention and Achievement, and Development of Infrastructure. As drafted, these programs mostly aim at widening educational access to all children and improving student retention and achievement by adding more schools, ensuring an adequate and equitable distribution of school facilities in all regions, creating programs for early childhood that would allow more children between the ages of 3-5 years to enroll in public kindergartens and by

developing the needed infrastructure to make schools accessible to children with special needs.

Pillar 2- Quality education that contributes to building a knowledge society. It was addressed through three programs: Professionalization of the Teaching Workforce, Modernization of School Management, and Achievement Assessment and Curriculum Development. These programs involve developing professional development programs that promote the professionalization of teachers and their adequate distribution in public schools, modernizing the school management systems, and putting in place practices for continuous curriculum review and development as well as for improving learning assessment and achievement.

Pillar 3- Education that contributes to social integration. It was targeted by one program that involves the introduction of citizenship education programs to strengthen students' national identity and civic responsibilities.

Pillar 4- Education that contributes to economic development. It was attended to by two programs: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in Education, and National Qualification Framework, which aim to support and promote the use of ICT in general education schools, as well as to identify the expectations of educational programs outputs and the required qualifications for professions related to the education sector.

Pillar 5- Governance of education. It was addressed by an institutional development program that targets improving the effectiveness of the various units of MEHE through developing a Management Information System to support and maintain the processes of administrative decision-making, budget management, assessment of the sector development projects, as well as the collaboration and coordination between all the departments of the MEHE and all the institutions collaborating with it.

Subsequently, and because of lack of specific governmental funding for education, MEHE sought external financing for the various ESDP programs from international agencies. Among these agencies are the World bank, the European Union (EU), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), and many local and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) that were involved in educational development.

The Education Development Project. The first and one of the most prominent EDSP projects to be implemented was the Education Development Project (EDP1), which was developed collaboratively between the MEHE and the World Bank. The EDP1 continued from the year 2000 to 2009 and was co-funded through a loan and from the government budget. The importance of this project is that it targeted enhancing the capacity of the Ministry of Education through two main components:

- 1) The institutional development of the Ministry of Education, through
 - a. Developing an Education Management Information System (EMIS) to support the national education strategy and enhance responsiveness.
 - b. Establishing a Strategic Planning Unit that would tackle the professional development of teachers, staff and school principals, as well as develop and implement policies measures regarding the distribution of teachers and schools.
 - c. Conducting an operational study and developing an action plan addressing the educational financing.
- 2) The quality enhancement of schools, through
 - a. Upgrading public schools by conducting necessary civil works and providing needed furniture and equipment.

- b. Conducting teacher training, follow-up and inspection to upgrade teachers' skills.
- c. Introducing new educational technologies in the classroom, in order to enhance assessment and evaluation practices, as well as the teaching and learning processes (World bank, 2017).

The EDP1 positively impacted policy development, planning and information management at the level of MEHE, in addition to upgrading the infrastructure and providing equipment in several public schools across Lebanon. Moreover, the EDP1 allowed for the creation of Leadership Development Programs (LDP) in collaboration with the American University of Beirut and the Lebanese University, which significantly impacted the strengthening of school leadership. The LDP provided rigorous and much needed professional development for school principals on modern leadership practices, and on pedagogy and assessment for public school teachers (ESDS, 2013). Despite that, the enrollment in the public schools significantly decreased by around 21.5% between 2001 and 2011, while the private education sector witnessed an increase of 16 % over the same period of time (Al-Amin, 2014; CERD, 20011-2012). The main reason for such a decrease in enrollment was that families started to lose faith in the public school again as the quality of education declined (Al-Amin, 2014). Consequently, the MEHE revised the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) and announced a 5-year plan entitled Quality Education for Growth 2010-2015. Once more, MEHE partnered with the World Bank to develop the Education Development Project II (EDP2), which aimed to improve the quality of teaching through school-based teacher professional development in addition to improving the learning environment and strengthening the public education system.

The ESDS was responsible for managing all the components of the EDP2 (ESDS, 2013), which included several programs to support its implementation, such as the

Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teachers Improvement (DRASATI) and the Quality Instruction towards Access and Basic Education Improvement (QITABI), both funded by the USAID. The DRASATI project provided training in leadership development for all the serving public school principals who did not get trained under the EDP1. Moreover, DRASATI piloted a new project called the School Improvement Program (SIP), which aimed at building the capacity of public schools to develop and implement school improvement plans based on their particular needs (ESDS, 2013). The design of the SIP was informed by TAMAM, a collaborative school-based educational reform project funded by the Arab Thought Foundation (ATF) in collaboration with the American university of Beirut (AUB) that started in 2007 and which involves both public and private schools in seven Arab countries including Lebanon (TAMAM, 2012, tamamproject.org).

The TAMAM project in Lebanon has worked with 9 public and 4 private schools since 2007 and continues to provide support to the lead teams in these schools to develop and build on the core competencies that would allow them to continue their school-based improvement efforts (TAMAM, 2012, tamamproject.org). As for the SIP, it was implemented in 200 schools over around 2 years between 2013 and 2015, and although its implementation varied substantially in terms of teachers' involvement across the various schools, this project marked an important milestone in teacher development and empowerment. This is because it was the first time that teachers in the public education sector were given the opportunity to develop their leadership capacity and to be involved in any form of school improvement project that extended beyond their own classroom (DRASATI, 2012).

The educational emergency plan. The war that erupted in Lebanon's neighboring country Syria in 2011 marked a turning point in Lebanon's recent history as well as the

whole region. Massive numbers of Syrian refugees fled their country and came to settle in Lebanon. The number of registered Syrian refugees in Lebanon reached an alarming figure of 1.011 million refugees, more than 75% of which are children and women. Compounded with the Palestinian and Iraqi refugees, the numbers soared to around 1.5 million, although there were more unregistered refugees that were not accounted for. Being a small country, whose population nears 4.4 million inhabitants, Lebanon became the country with “the highest per capita concentration of refugees, where one person out of four is a refugee (European Commission Report, March 2017).

A few Syrian families had the means to rent or buy homes and settle in Lebanon, while the largest majority were unfortunate to leave everything behind and come with barely the clothes on their back. This put unprecedented pressure on the country’s economy and infrastructure, that were already fragile from trying to recover from the Israeli attacks and from the internal political struggles. All the sectors of the economy suffered, including education, health, housing, and supply of water and electricity. As time went by, more conflicts and frictions arose between the Lebanese host communities and the Syrian refugees as they started competing for limited jobs and depleting resources.

At the beginning of the Syrian crisis, the Lebanese government had almost an open border approach to the influx to displaced people, and it decided that there will be no camps established to host the refugees. This forced the hundreds of thousands of refugees to settle in various areas of the country. In 2015, the government started enforcing stricter regulations and requesting each refugee to be officially registered and issued a residency permit in order to benefit from the humanitarian and educational welfare (European Commission Report, 2017). The Lebanese government also continued to demand support from the United Nations and the international community to help alleviate Lebanon’s burden through providing serious financial aid, taking concerted action, and funding

emergency support programs that would benefit the refugee communities as well as the Lebanese communities hosting them who themselves suffered tremendously from the extended crisis.

Several international conferences were held in support of the Syrians and their hosting communities in the various neighboring countries to instigate the international community to support the humanitarian crisis these countries, including Lebanon, were facing (UNHCR, 2017). These included the International Humanitarian Pledging Conference for Syria held in Kuwait City in 2013, 2014 and 2015, as well as other conferences that took place in Berlin, London, Geneva, Istanbul and New York between 2014 and 2016 (UNHCR, 2017). Furthermore, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) launched the Regional Response Plan (RRP) in partnership with various international humanitarian associations in 2012, and then the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP), which presented a yearly plan of action since 2014 to support the host countries to which the Syrian refugees have fled. Among the pressing concerns addressed in these plans was the need to provide access to educational services to displaced Syrian children, who have been out of school since the crisis started in 2011. Consequently, funding from the international community and humanitarian organizations to Lebanon focused on Education for Emergency mainly through the public education sector.

Reaching All Children with Education. As part of the Regional Response Plan (RRP), the Lebanese government through the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), developed educational emergency plans that would support the provision of educational access to the Syrian youth throughout the network of public schools all over the country. The first program launched in January 2014 was called Reaching All Children with Education in Lebanon (RACE 1). It was allocated a total budget of US\$634 million,

to be spent over 3 years, and that would benefit around 413,000 Syrian refugees and vulnerable Lebanese school-aged children per year (RACE 1, MEHE, 2014). The project targeted bringing emergency and development responses together, by strengthening, sustaining and investing in the public education sector so that it would be able to play its developmental role of providing quality education to the vulnerable youth in the longer term, building resilience for crisis management, and partially mitigate the strain it is facing from the crisis and which is starting to limit its ability to attend to the needs of its own people. Consequently, RACE 1 was designed to make use of the existing public education structure, and to work towards accomplishing as much as possible the Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) that was developed in support of the National Education Strategy in 2010.

The impact of RACE 1 was significant on two levels despite the hurdles faced to implement it and document its successes. First, the enrolment rate of Lebanese children in public schools returned to the level it was at prior to the crisis; second, around one third of refugee children of the compulsory education age received certified education (RACE 2, MEHE 2014). However, the report from the Regional Refugee and Resilience Plan (3RP) of 2017-2018 shows that there are still around two thirds of the registered school-age Syrian refugee children in Lebanon without any access to either formal or non-formal education. Consequently, a second program called RACE 2 was developed for the year 2016-2021 as a continuation of RACE 1 and building on it.

The Structure of General Education

The 1994 Educational Reform Plan also revised the structure of general education in schools, added new subjects such as Information technology and economics, and extended the academic year to 36 weeks. Consequently, some changes were made to the existing structure and to the different stages of formal school education. A new stage for

Kindergarten was added to schools in the public sector, which included two levels for children aged 4 and 5 years old, thus extending the formal public schooling to 14 years. Prior to this reform, children did not have access to preschool education in public schools, although the Kindergarten stage was already existent in private schools and consisted of three levels. It actually gave school access to children aged three years old and extended the private schooling to 15 years. In addition, the primary school stage now spreads over six years and typically serves students aged 6 to 12 years old. It is divided into two cycles, each made up of three years, called first and second cycles, and it legislatively became compulsory after this reform without ever being actually enforced (Al-Amin, 2001).

Middle school, or the intermediate stage in formal education extends over three years, called the third cycle, from grade seven to grade nine, at the end of which students have to sit for the brevet official examination. To be promoted to grade seven, students need to have passed successfully the primary stage and be at least 12 years old. The first three cycles of the formal education make up the so-called basic education. The plan was to have basic education be the frame for compulsory education for Lebanese youth.

The last stage of formal school education is the secondary stage, also with a duration of three years, is accessed by students who are at least 15 years of age and who have successfully passed the Brevet official examinations. In the second year of secondary school, students have to choose a track in one of the following four branches: Arts and Humanities, Sociology and Economics, General Sciences, and Life Sciences. Students are directed to one of these four branches based on their grades in the required subjects in each track. This stage leads to a high school diploma called the Lebanese Baccalaureate, required for students to pursue their university education (CERD, 2016).

There is also the vocational and technical track for students who do not wish or cannot keep up with the requirements of the secondary education. This track is available

for students who have passed the grade nine brevet official examination. It grants students who complete it successfully a Technical Baccalaureate degree that allows them to go back to university if they wish to do so or continue their technical studies and get higher certification.

The National Curriculum

One of the major aspects of the educational reform plan was that it targeted a total revision of the national curriculum, which was first prepared in 1946 (Al-Amin, 2001; Bashshur, 1991). In fact, the national curriculum was revised only once since its original conception that was based on the French curriculum. The revisions took place in 1968 for the secondary stage, in 1970 for the intermediate stage, and in 1971 for the primary stage (Al-Amin, 2001; Bashshur, 1991). This revision started in 1997 and was planned to unfold over a five-year period to gradually encompass all the stages and grade levels of the general education, including the creation and publishing of around 300 national textbooks in all the subjects in addition to the respective teachers' guidebooks and students' workbooks. Moreover, various teaching activities, supporting materials and new methods for assessments were developed.

The plan had as a major component the training of teachers in both the public and private sectors on the new curriculum framework. However, the big load of new materials, the large number of teachers, and the limited time given to the training consisted huge challenges for the proper implementation of the reform plan (Al-Amin, 2001). Furthermore, there was a serious effort to involve the various stakeholders in the curriculum reform effort and therefore, over 400 researchers, university professors and educators representing different educational institutions both public and private, syndicates, and ministries were invited to participate in the curriculum review process. However, there was a flagrant lack of involvement and participation from school

principals and school teachers, who are the people directly concerned with the actual implementation of this reform inside the schools (Al-Amin, 2001). School principals and teachers were not engaged as major stakeholders in the educational reform effort and therefore did not feel ownership of the required changes. In addition, the training on the new curriculum conducted to the school principals and teachers was hastily done, oftentimes by trainers who themselves lacked proper qualifications and enough knowledge of the training material, and without any kind of follow-up on implementation. This resulted in the frustration of the school principals and teachers and having them only partially implement the changes on the ground, which many viewed as quick fixes whose educational and philosophical depths were not really understood and embraced (Al-Amin, 2001).

More issues arose with the new curriculum after the first implementation phase was followed with an evaluation of how effective it was. In a study conducted by the Lebanese Association of Educational Studies (LAES) in 2006 to evaluate the reformed curriculum, results showed lots of discrepancies in the alignment of the curriculum goals, objectives and assessment despite the fact that it represented a “significant qualitative change” (p. 14) compared to the previous curricula, mostly with regard to developing learning objectives for the various subjects, adding new subjects, and using active learning methods. Moreover, a major limitation of the reformed curriculum was that it did not include a system for continuous review and development (LAES, 2006). Another reproach was that, even though developing national textbooks for all educational levels made them available to all students, the quality of these textbooks was relatively poor compared to what was provided in the private schools (LAES, 2006). In addition, there was large room for interpretation of what was in the textbooks, with great variations in the level of

implementation between schools and districts, because of the insufficient training of teachers and the lack of a follow-up mechanism (Al-Amin, 2003a).

Review of Theoretical and Empirical Literature

The main purpose of this literature review is to investigate the research studies conducted on teacher leadership to shed light on what aspects were explored, what problems were examined, and how those studies were designed. The literature review conducted for this study was guided by Hallinger's (2014) "systematic review" guidelines, which aim to attain reliable and diverse results through finding relevant research that would respond to the study's research questions as well as using clear methods to draw inferences and deductions from this research. So, the researcher kept the research questions in mind and endeavored to have a clear articulation of the various aspects that guided this review.

This literature review is mainly "exploratory" rather than "explanatory" because of the nature of the problem which is to understand the kind of relationship between teacher leadership and sustainable school reform, and to look for research that has been done to understand this relationship (Hallinger, 2014). Consequently, the researcher created a road map for the literature review and set clear parameters for conducting it that defines what kind of data to collect and how to interpret findings from various sources. Additionally, the search criteria, such as date range, language, type of sources, search terms, search engines, and databases, were thoroughly documented as they helped to define the set of data collected and therefore to clarify what kind of sample from the literature was selected.

As teacher leadership is a relatively recent concept that has started gaining more popularity in the last two decades (Hallinger, 2014). Therefore, the studies reviewed ranged between the year 2000 and 2016. In addition, the studies were dominated by those

conducted in the United States and Europe because of the extensive research available from these regions as well as the influence they have on the rest of the world.

Furthermore, the studies conducted in the Arab countries and the Middle East were also reviewed because of the importance of the context they share with the current study. As for the types of sources checked for this review, they were mostly books, online research journals, educational journals, and university archives, which were limited to those available in full-text, peer-reviewed and published. The search terms used were: Teacher leadership, Distributed leadership, Professional learning of teachers, Motivating teachers, and Teacher leaders. The search engines used were: EBSCOhost, Sage Journals and Springer Links. The databases researched were: Academic Search Complete, eBook Academic Collection (EBSCOhost), ERIC, and eBook Collection (EBSCOhost). The researcher used combinations of search terms including “teacher leadership and educational reform”, “distributed leadership in schools” and “professional learning of teachers and teacher leadership”, keeping the same limitations. The findings generated kept showing the same results, and consequently, the researcher decided to stop the search and focus on the results found already as there was enough data to understand the landscape of research around teacher leadership.

To keep track of all the data extracted from the reviews, the researcher created a table summarizing the main ideas and research elements found in each source. Research studies were grouped together, research articles together, and books together and they were sequenced by year of publication. Since most of the data available was presented qualitatively, the researcher used narrative explanations of the texts, summaries of the results, and descriptions of the studies conducted. She also color-coded the text in a way to make it manageable to decide what goes into which section of the literature review. The data extracted was analyzed taking into consideration Hallinger’s (2014) questions guiding

the literature review. These focused on ensuring that collected articles are relevant to the research questions in this study, sharing how these studies inform the current study, differentiating what was learned through empirical and theoretical studies, clarifying what still needs to be learned to better inform the research questions, in addition to highlighting how the design and methodology used in these studies inform and provide a rationale to the current research.

Defining Teacher Leadership

Teacher leadership has been defined in various ways in the literature shedding light on the different and complex aspects it encompasses. A major aspect of teacher leadership is for teacher leaders to support their colleagues in the teaching and learning process (Durias, 2010; Harris and Muijs, 2004; Rutherford, 2006). Such support has been described as when teachers “intentionally transfer knowledge that influences one’s ability to meet educational objectives” (Rutherford, 2006, p. 62), and participate in the professional development of their peers and guide them to put in practice what they collectively developed (Harris and Muijs, 2004). This peer support is found to be characterized by “any actions taken by teachers outside their own classroom that involve responsibility to provide support and professional development for their colleagues” (Durias, 2010, p. 5). Others have taken this idea further and have incorporated the social and intellectual aspects of teacher leadership that allow it to build deeper connections within the school community. Therefore, teachers deliberately transfer knowledge through sharing their practice and interacting closely with colleagues to build collective efficacy and peer capacity with the purpose of constructing conceptual understandings and meeting educational learning outcomes (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004; Goddard, 2003; Hord, 1997, 2004; Itani Malas, 2009; Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2005). Such a stance toward teaching as a profession inspires teachers to build self-efficacy and to continuously

seek development and professional growth to be a resource for their colleagues and their students (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; York-Barr & Duke, 2004).

Another aspect of teacher leadership is the impact it has on the overall school environment and culture (Danielson, 2006), as it gives the teachers the agency to impact the whole school and be agents of change (Glickman, 2002). Vernon-Dotson & Floyd (2012) express that teacher leadership influences and shapes the school culture because it promotes the

“...ability of school professionals to forge a sense of community and share a commitment for increasing student achievement by engaging all faculty and staff and enhancing school climate with the overarching goal of building a capacity for change” (p. 40).

Therefore, teacher leaders actively engage in creating a school culture that brings the learning community together to fulfill the school mission and vision, which becomes everyone’s responsibility. This is relevant to what Senge and his colleagues (2000) identified as the conditions required to have “learning organizations”, where people can act with greater autonomy, look for and find their own answers, lead sometimes and follow some other times, take risks and question difficult issues, and look upon failure as building capabilities for future success. Therefore, teacher leaders must be able to build capacity in themselves and others to respond promptly, competently and responsibly to the continuous flows of uncertainty and change (Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson, & Hann, 2002).

The term “leaders” in teacher leadership is defined as “people, particularly teachers, who shape the goals, motivations and actions of others” (Cuban, 1988 as cited in Razik & Swanson, 1995). Furthermore, teacher leadership is viewed as a social influence that is supported by an organizational structure, which allows for purposeful interaction to happen within the institution aimed at improving and sustaining student learning (Crowther et al., 2002; DuFour, 2004; Crowther et al., 2002; Goddard, 2003; Harris, 2004;

Hord, 1997, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2005; Losee, 2000; Louis & Marks, 1996; Spillane, 2006; Talerico, 2005). In fact, social interaction facilitates the development of activities that influence the building, transfer and understanding of new learning, supports the improvement of educational practice, and provides motivation and guidance of individuals and groups within a community of learners (Hord, 2004, Rutherford, 2006). This in turn builds a professional learning community as teachers get the chance to systematically collaborate and learn together. It also allows teacher leaders to contribute to their colleagues' professional development and enhance the collective learning of the whole community (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004; Rutherford, 2006). Therefore, teachers who in fact are leaders "lead within and beyond the classroom, identifying with and contributing to a community of teacher learners and leaders, and they influence others toward improved educational practice" (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, p. 17).

Teacher leadership has also been defined in the literature in relation to having regular teachers perform formally assigned leadership roles in addition to informal roles (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Cooper, Stanulis, Brondyk, Hamilton, Macaluso & Meier, 2016; Muij & Harris, 2006; Struyve, et al., 2014). Formal role means having formal leadership duties and recognized authority, such as being designated as the school coordinator, head teacher, mentor, coach, etc. (Cooper et al., 2016; Struyve et al., 2014), in addition to the regular classroom teaching duties. Sometimes, teacher leaders could be partly relieved from some of their classroom responsibilities to fulfill formal leadership tasks (Struyve et al., 2014). Nevertheless, many teacher leaders who carry out formally assigned administrative duties also take on informal leadership roles due to the influence they personally have on others, which impacts indirectly and directly the overall institutional success (Angelle & Teague, 2014).

Informal roles involve teacher leaders in practices that allows them to influence other teachers' behavior, such as facilitate communication among colleagues, support the development of others, model best practices, share their own experiences without any formalized authority (Struyve et al., 2014). Teacher leadership therefore encompasses informal relationships among individuals and the connections they build within the school (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Such teacher leaders who believe in their ability to lead others, who are ready to share their expertise and their practice with colleagues, and who persistently put all the effort needed to support the school success, are also confident of their teaching abilities and perceive themselves as successful in the classroom (Angelle & Teague, 2014). Their role is particularly important when it comes to supporting colleagues who have recently joined the profession so that the developmental school culture is maintained (Bowman, 2004).

Teacher leaders are found to commit to mentor novice teachers by providing in-class support through classroom observations and giving feedback, as well as out-of-class assistance through regular meeting time and conferencing to engage in professional conversation and professional learning (Bowman, 2004). Mentoring provides new teachers with scaffolding that allows them to be successful in their first years of teaching and sustain their efforts to stay in the field. Such guidance is associated with building strong collegial relationships, improves teaching techniques and creates increased job satisfaction for both parties. It also fosters the idea of professionalism and being influential beyond one's role and without being in a control position (Bowman, 2004). Therefore, building teacher capacity and collective efficacy increases teachers' feeling of empowerment and agency and encourages them to take on leadership roles and become directly and actively involved in the school improvement process (Angelle & Teague, 2014). In addition, such collaboration impacts student learning tremendously as teachers engage continuously with

reflective tasks to review and improve their practice (Cibulka & Nakayama, 2000; DuFour, 2004; Rutherford, 2006).

Teacher leadership has been also associated with distributed leadership, a new conception of leadership challenging the traditional conceptions of having only one leader in an organization and considered to be offering promises for sustainable school improvement. As Gronn (2000) explains it, this aspect of distributed leadership denotes a form of leadership that blurs the distinction between leader and follower. It also allows for a more democratic distribution of the workload within the school and creates opportunities for teachers to lead in various circumstances, thus putting them in a position of authority and giving them collective responsibility for school improvement (Barth, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Harris & Lambert, 2003; Woods, et al., 2004). Rather, teacher leadership finds its source of authority mostly in the expertise of teachers in the classroom, influencing colleagues to develop their potential as teachers as well as leaders, and improving education practice altogether by working collaboratively with others (Harris & Muijs, 2003, Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; DuFour, 2004).

Accordingly, teacher leadership has been explained as reframing the role of teachers from executors to professionals with added roles and responsibilities and who exercise judgment rooted in their expert knowledge. It also emphasizes the importance of collaboration and collegiality, especially with regard to being involved in school wide decision-making (Harris & Muijs, 2003), as well as in relation to improvement of practice. Furthermore, implementing a wider scope of teacher leadership and influencing the learning community depends on the teacher leader's agency to collaborate effectively with the principal, to support colleagues, to build the learning community, and to put in practice the shared school-wide vision for instructional practice (Cooper et al., 2016; Cranston, 2000; Margolis and Huggins, 2012; York-Barr and Duke, 2004), thus impacting the "flow

of influence” (Gronn 2000, p.334) and shaping the process of professional and collegial interaction within the organization.

Forms of Teacher Leadership

The literature portrays that teacher leadership can take multiple forms as teachers play various roles and adopt different leadership acts inside and outside the school context. This section presents the roles and acts that teacher leaders most commonly undertake as described in theoretical research, then narrates the findings from empirical studies about the roles that teacher leaders adopted and the characteristics they developed to support their schools’ improvement efforts.

The forms of teacher leadership presented in the literature categorize the roles of teacher leaders as traditional/formal or emergent/informal (Helterbran, 2010). Traditional/formal roles are hierarchical in nature such as department chair, subject area supervisor, mentor, instructional coach, subject or program coordinator, curriculum leader or event manager (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Cooper et al., 2016; Durias, 2010; Helterbran, 2010; Patterson & Patterson, 2004; Shamsi, et al., 2010; Silva, Gilmore, & Nolan, 2000; Struyve et al., 2014). Formal roles also involve teachers in managerial and academic responsibilities (Muijs & Harris, 2006) in addition to being “re-culture agents” where they work on reforming school goals and norms and advocate for collegiality (Silva et al., 2000). In the last decade, formal teacher leadership roles have increasingly become more diverse and extending outside the classroom, so teacher leaders are no longer only grade level leaders, coordinators or department chairs (Jones, 2007). They are also getting more involved in school-wide activities such as setting school policies and procedures for various aspects of school life, allocating resources, selecting curriculum materials, determining benchmarks and assessment, and developing professional development opportunities for colleagues (Barth, 1999; Jones, 2007; Patterson et al., 2004; Smiley,

1992 & 1994). These formal roles are associated with particular personal attributes such as trust, determination, creativity, persistence, and clarity of mind that teacher leaders must have so they can serve as a link between school leadership and teachers and use knowledge to assist others in changing their practice (Angelle & Teague, 2014).

On another hand, emergent/informal teacher leadership roles are more self-directed and emerge based on a personal and professional need and or initiative (Helterbran, 2010). In addition, they allow for ongoing professional development, learning and innovation, and can take the form of coaching and mentoring new colleagues (Muijs & Harris, 2006). However, to be able to adopt such informal leadership roles, teachers must become aware of their own leadership potential, take charge and responsibility for their own learning and professional growth (Helterbran, 2010), and view themselves as change agents and action researchers (Shamsi et al., 2010). Since informal teacher leaders have no formal authority in their school (Bowman, 2004; Leithwood et al., 2007), they draw their influence from other sources of power, namely by how others see them: as experts, having charismatic personalities, being visible in the community, and having strong connections in the community (Johnson, 2003). Typically, they are informally acknowledged by their peers for their expertise, credibility, or positive interpersonal skills (Patterson, 2000). They are also viewed as having the ability to be system thinkers and challenge the status quo to come up with innovative ideas when needed. These leaders create a development-oriented culture for students and colleagues by building collegial relations in their environment (Bowman, 2004). Furthermore, sharing one's practice and expertise is an essential component of informal teacher leadership because it establishes trust and credibility between peers (Snell and Swanson, 2000) and transforms the school into a learning community for students and adults (Angelle & Teague, 2014; DuFour, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2003).

In an extensive literature review conducted by Durias (2010), the author gathered findings of five major empirical studies about teacher leadership aimed at investigating the roles and functions of teacher leaders both inside and outside the classroom in schools within districts that were undergoing restructuring efforts and progressive reforms, or that were facing some major difficulties such as budget reduction and high staff turnover. Findings from these studies showed that the roles that teacher leaders undertook had a major impact on the positive results of the improvement effort (Merriam, 1988) as well as great influence to keep a culture of resilience and enthusiasm in hard times (Patterson & Patterson, 2004). According to these studies, some of the main characteristics that teacher leaders exhibited included having a strong commitment to their school, viewing their roles as primarily related to helping out colleagues at school and in the classroom, facilitating improvement efforts, generating new ideas, being effective resources, and providing emotional support to peers (Smylie & Denny, 1990). Teacher leaders shared that they found that being in a leadership role required them to team up with colleagues and develop their listening and interpersonal skills (Conley & Muncey, 1999) to nurture relationships, build trust, and mentor others during the change (Merriam, 1988; Patterson & Patterson, 2004). In addition, results showed that the practices conducted by teacher leaders reflected many aspects of transformational leadership, as they were perceived to be visionaries by their colleagues (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1997). Furthermore, teacher leaders disclosed that, for the initiative to be successful, they had to learn to find their way through the structures of the school in order to effectively liaise between the teachers and the principal (Conley & Muncey, 1999; Merriam, 1988) and to develop close working relations with their colleagues and the school principal (Smylie & Denny, 1990). They also found themselves challenging the existing situation by putting students' voice in the forefront and

encouraging professional learning and growth (Merriam, 1988) while keeping the focus on high expectations for student learning (Patterson & Patterson, 2004).

Conditions Promoting Teacher Leadership

The literature illustrates the various elements that directly and indirectly influence teacher leadership at school and shapes the involvement of teacher leaders in it. Some of these elements support teacher leadership and allow for it to develop and thrive, others on the contrary hinder its development. This section presents the conditions found in the literature that promote and support teacher leadership.

Supportive school leadership. To provide a supportive environment that fosters teacher leadership, schools need to be aware of a few conditions that pave the way for it to happen. The first condition for teacher leadership to thrive is to have a formal school leadership that supports it and actively plans to develop teacher leaders systematically starting with the hiring process (Chesson, 2010; DuFour, 2004; Hord, 2004; Itani Malas, 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2006). In a multi-site case study conducted by Jones (2007), the impact of teacher leadership on school performance was investigated in three high performing schools. The study aimed to identify the processes that the principals followed to develop teacher leaders within their schools and starting with how they selected teachers for various leadership roles. One of the main findings of this study is that the principal's role is crucial in developing teacher leadership at school. Results showed that the principal is a major influencer in shaping the school culture, creating opportunities for teacher leadership, and inviting teachers to participate in decision-making. In addition, for school improvement efforts to thrive, the principal must have an open-door policy, treat teachers as professionals, set high expectations, communicate openly and respectfully, listen, create collegial relations and establish trust (Jones, 2007).

There are different models of leadership that support educational reform efforts, such as instructional leadership, distributive/participative leadership and transformational leadership (Fullan, 2002; Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Bart, 1990; Li, 2015). Instructional leadership portrays a leadership model where the school leader directly supports change and improvement of the school by providing direct guidance to everyone at the school and is mostly in charge of all strategic decisions (Hallinger, 2003; Leithwood and Jantzi, 2000; Mulford & Silins, 2003). Conversely, transformational leadership represents a leadership model that aims towards instilling institutional change through building the capacity of staff, collaboratively transforming their mindset and shaping their learning and understanding as they will be directly involved in making the change happen (Bass, 1997; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Mulford & Silins, 2003). Distributed leadership/participative leadership invites staff to share part of the decision-making power and be actively involved in shared collaborations (Gronn, 2002; Leithwood, Mascall & Strauss, 2009; Marks and Printy, 2003). Harris (2004) indicates that in educational settings, distributed and participative leadership focuses on developing learning communities by developing shared goals, setting high expectations coupled with providing individualized support and intellectual stimulation, modeling expected behavior and attitude, acknowledging individual and collective effort, and consequently building collective efficacy, a culture of trust and a shared vision (DuFour, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002). The school leader plays therefore a crucial role in supporting the transformation of the school into a learning community.

A particular description of learning communities highlights the fact that they are “communities of continuous inquiry and improvement” (Hord, 1997), where the whole school environment becomes a place where teachers and administrators collaboratively and continuously seek to develop and share their learning to improve students’ learning

experiences and performance. In such an environment, the school vision is focused on students' needs while teachers' professional learning and development is centered around finding and developing collaboratively creative ways to address those needs (Hord, 2004). One of the key elements that contribute to the creation of a learning community is having a supportive strategic leadership that actively promotes teacher empowerment, fosters collective efficacy, provides intellectual direction, and supports continuous learning for all (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004; Goddard, 2003; Hord, 1997, 2004; Itani Malas, 2009; Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2005; Losee, 2000; Louis & Marks, 1996; Tallerico, 2005; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988). The school leadership therefore, plays a crucial role in developing organizational structures and policies that dynamically encourage shared decision-making among staff and administrators and promotes the development of teacher leadership, also called "parallel leadership [...] whereby teacher leaders and their principals engage in collective action to build their school capacity" (Crowther, et al., 2002, p. 38). For this to happen, teachers and school leaders realize that they need to work together in new ways, which entails changing their perception of their role and responsibility within the school so that the focus is moved from teaching to learning (DuFour, 2007). Consequently, everyone in the school is responsible to improve the students' achievement and is actively engaged in an ongoing process of goal setting, data collection and analysis, and coming up with innovative ways to address students' different needs (DuFour, 2004).

The diagram below (Figure 2) reflects how teacher leadership is positioned in the context of a learning community that supports sustainable school improvement, based on the core elements that compose it. In this model, the traditional leadership hierarchy is transformed, and leadership is decentralized (Senge et al., 2000; Smith, 2001) as it reflects more how everyone is contributing to the improvement of the school. As a result, there is a

shift in the dynamics of the relationship between the school leadership and the teachers as they are considered partners and colleagues working towards a common goal, and therefore it becomes more supportive, nurturing and empowering to teachers (Hord, 1997). Furthermore, teachers themselves gain “a greater sense of ownership of and responsibility for quality in student learning” (Kruse & Louis, 1993, p. 19).

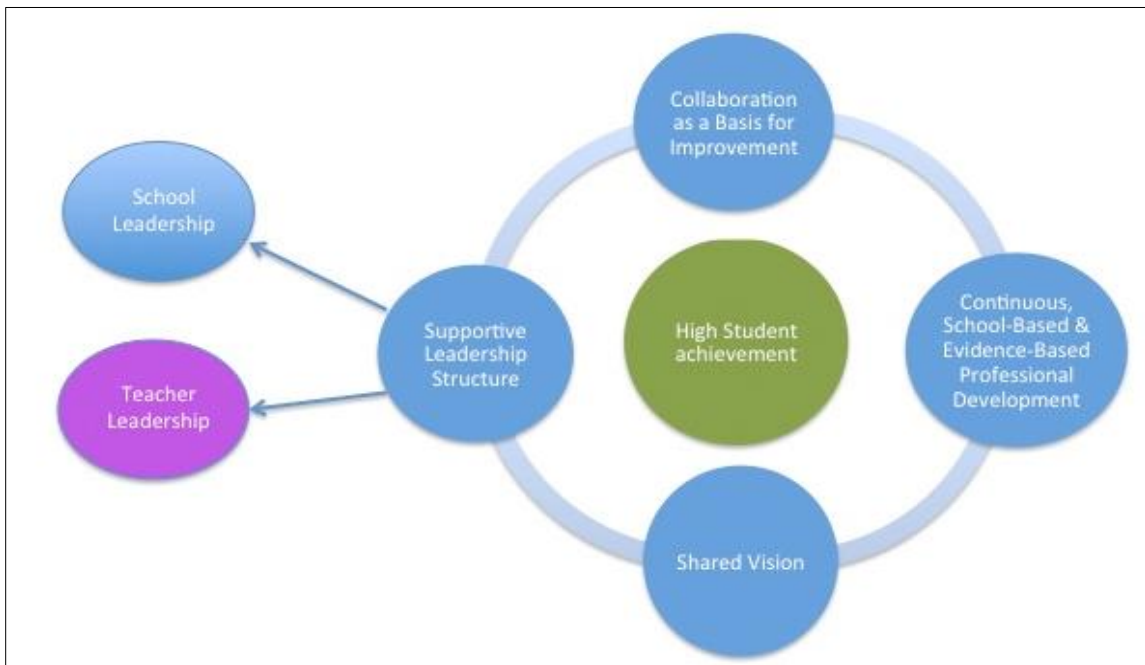


Figure 2. Developing a Learning Community that Supports Sustainable School Improvement.

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond (2001) provide a well-developed theoretical model of distributed leadership that they describe as grounded in the social distribution of leadership where tasks are accomplished through the social interaction and professional collaboration of multiple leaders, individuals or groups, who perform the function of leadership.

In practice, distributed leadership means moving away from the model where one person, namely the principal or head of school, is running the show and allowing the various leadership functions to be actively distributed among different members in the organization along with leadership authority and agency (Leithwood et al., 2007). The

distributed leadership model focuses on having power and authority be shared among the school leadership and the teachers within the organization, thus making opportunities for people to work and learn together in order to create and attain a shared goal (Harris & Muijs, 2003). In other words, teacher leadership means “giving authority to teachers and allowing them to lead” (Harris & Muijs, 2003, p. 3). In fact, studies have shown that teachers’ commitment to change and personal investment in making it happen increase when they are directly involved in decision-making related to such change (Day, 2000; Fullan, 2002). Consequently, leadership in such supportive conditions becomes the vehicle towards organizational change and improvement (Fullan et al., 2006; Hord, 2004), as it is dynamic and fluid, allowing for it to develop organically depending on the needs of the institution and the teachers, rather than being rigid. It also changes the perspective on the power relationship between teachers and the administration as the boundaries for leading and following are no longer firmly established keeping each person in one pre-defined role.

From a study that the author conducted in 2009 (Itani Malas, 2009) where she investigated teachers’ perspectives about developing a learning community in a startup school, findings showed that teachers were mostly aware of the centrality of teacher leadership highlighting the fact that collaboration is a basis for improvement. When prompted, many teachers acknowledged the importance of having a shared vision that focused on having students at the center of the teaching and learning process at school. They shared that having a supportive school leadership made their experience at school a positive one (Itani Malas, 2009). However, one interesting key finding was that although the teachers were aware of the important role they all play individually and collectively in developing the learning community, the majority were not able to articulate how they developed their own leadership capacity and decision-making power (Itani Malas, 2009).

For example, even though many teachers shared that they had the freedom to show creativity in developing curriculum materials, take initiative regarding their professional development needs, make lots of decisions about the content and the learning process in their classrooms and with their colleagues, get involved in sharing their practice and learn with their colleagues, they were not able to put this in the broader context of teacher leadership and empowerment. On the contrary, the majority of the teachers still viewed leadership as being mostly restricted to the role of the principal. Teachers did not seem to recognize that the school policies and supportive structures were in fact put in place with the deliberate intention of promoting their collective efficacy and shared decision-making power.

Consequently, it was interesting for the author to dive more in depth to understand how teachers viewed their own leadership capacity at school, what leadership roles they play, and if they are aware of them. It would also be important to compare these insights with how school leaders view teacher leadership and how they support it.

Supportive organizational structure. The second condition that supports teacher leadership at school is having an organizational structure that allows for distributed decision-making and participatory leadership (Chesson, 2010). In other words, it no longer follows the top-down hierarchical model of leadership but rather a dynamic interaction of individuals and groups across different directions, who practice leadership and decision-making within the organization and work together to develop collective agency (Gronn, 2000 & 2002, Spillane & Camburn, 2006). Organizational structures influence the flow of communication and information in the educational institution as well as the availability of leadership opportunities (Rutherford, 2006).

When the school structure facilitate shared decision-making and teacher interaction is stimulated, then professional development opportunities are supported, and teacher

leadership capacity is enhanced (Rutherford, 2006; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In fact, teacher leadership has been closely linked to models of school organizational arrangements that allow for the distribution of tasks across the institution and call for the active participation of everyone in the learning community in leadership acts and roles that vary over time (Leithwood et al., 2007).

Within these conditions, leadership therefore becomes accessible to everyone in the organization at different times, thus not restricting it to a handful of people but rather to anyone willing to take it on (Harris & Muijs, 2003). In addition, teachers can participate in administrative decision-making and in shaping the strategic decisions around the schools both in terms of sustenance function as well as improvement functions.

Lastly, promoting such supportive and positive conditions at school to develop leadership capacity and potential can be viewed as a motivator for career growth for teachers (Margolis & Deuel, 2009) and help in establishing promising career prospects for young teachers newly entering the teaching profession or considering it as a lifelong career path that allows them to earn a good living (Cochran-Smith, 2004).

In the empirical multi-site study conducted by Jones (2007) on how teacher leadership is supported in high performing schools, one of the findings was that there was a discrepancy between teachers and school leaders in defining the role of teacher leaders. School leaders defined it as having teachers do non-paid leadership tasks, while teachers viewed it as being involved in committees that dealt with various aspects of the school life and sharing in the decision-making. A recommendation to align all stakeholders' perspective of what teacher leadership encompasses is to incorporate teacher leadership positions in the school structure and set them as expectations within the overall school vision and mission. These roles should be clearly defined to gain legitimacy among the school community. Moreover, enough time needs to be built-in and made available for

teacher leaders to do their job and develop it further (Jones, 2007). As professional learning communities developed, and collegial relations were established, teachers shared that they were satisfied with their school environment and interaction with colleagues, and they were enthusiastic to mentor new teachers joining the school (Jones, 2007).

Supportive school climate. The third condition that allows for teacher leadership to flourish is having a supportive and positive school climate (Chesson, 2010; DuFour, 2004; Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009). A supportive school culture fosters constructive and open communication, collaboration, and continuous learning for adults and students (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). It also focuses on learning, which motivates staff and students and harnesses the power of a workplace that is cohesive and harbors passion, commitment, and extensive interactions among teachers (Gronn, 2008; Leithwood, Mascal, Strauss, Sacks, Memon & Yashkina, 2007; Reeves, 2006; Short, 2009), which has been found to be a crucial element in fostering teacher leadership at school (Leithwood et al., 2007).

In an empirical research study aimed at investigating how leadership capacity is built in schools, Vernon-Doston and Floyd (2012) chronicled and analyzed the outcomes of three grant-funded university-school partnerships that were connected by their approach to implementing school reform through utilizing teacher leadership teams. Two main assumptions regarding teacher leaders guided this study; 1) teachers must collaborate to provide innovation and creative strategies while maintaining a personal learning environment, and 2) teachers must learn from one another and grow together in order to adequately prepare students for their future. The results from this study show transformation of teacher roles that ranged from new formal leadership positions, to mentors for new teachers, to informal leadership roles. Stepping up and volunteering to be part of the project got the teachers to be recognized for their leadership potential and got

offered formal positions. Moreover, there was increased collective efficacy, which represents the inherent beliefs of the teachers that they have, as a group, what it takes to design, organize and implement the necessary actions to positively influence learners (Goddard, Hoy, and Hoy, 2004). When asked for their opinion, teachers felt that they promoted the idea that they are professionals and were able to develop trust and positive relationships among each other. In addition, there was more meaningful professional development, as teachers participated in setting their school's professional development program according to their needs as educators. A major implication for practice from this study is that it cannot be automatically assumed that teachers know how to lead and be a contributing member of a leadership team, and therefore, they need to be supported in assuming leadership roles and developing efficacy.

In addition, when functioning within a supportive school environment, teacher leaders not only develop the ability to shape the school culture, but also feel a moral obligation to do so and consequently fulfill their role as an integral part of the fabric of the school (Roby, 2011). Moreover, building a collaborative culture entails developing a sense of community is a key factor in cultivating a sense of excellence in schools, as teachers are less likely to be absent and more satisfied with their work, and students are less likely to drop out or experience behavior problems (Bryk, Lee, & Holland, 1993).

Furthermore, scholars report that to foster teacher leadership in schools, roles and relationships must be developed to build trust, respect, collegiality, hard work and a perception of mutual responsibility for success (Chesson, 2010; Danielson, 2006; Helderbran, 2010), which is found to impact student learning and achievement tremendously (Rutherford, 2006). This aspect of individual and collective efficacy was addressed by Angelle and Teague (2014) in a multi-site quantitative study that they conducted in 29 schools in three districts in the USA, as they examined the relationship

between teacher perceptions of the extent of teacher leadership and the extent of collective efficacy. The authors define efficacy as

“while the extent to which teachers’ belief in self to achieve goals and assess teaching effectiveness is an indication of teacher self-efficacy, a teacher’s belief in the faculty as a whole to accomplish goals is collective efficacy (p. 739)”.

Their research was guided by two questions: 1) Do teachers who perceive a strong sense of collective efficacy also perceive a greater extent of teacher leadership in their schools? and 2) Are there differences in perceptions of collective efficacy and the factors of teacher leadership, specifically, sharing expertise, shared leadership, supra-practitioner, and principal selection? The results of this study show a significant relationship between collective efficacy and teacher leadership. One of the districts, in which teacher leadership was heavily practiced both formally and informally, presented higher collective teacher efficacy. Teachers viewed informal teacher leadership roles such as collegial collaboration and support (and which did not involve being formally selected by the principal) to have a stronger impact on building collective efficacy than formal roles. One conclusion from this study is that when teachers are empowered informally, such as in teacher-led collaboration projects or through sharing responsibility for scheduling, budgeting, and interdisciplinary assignments, their collective efficacy increases (Angelle & Teague, 2014). Another conclusion from this study is that having shared leadership at school positively influences teachers’ beliefs and shared vision (Angelle & Teague, 2014). Such leadership allows professional learning communities at school to develop and grow as well as promote shared decision-making and teacher leadership (Moller, Childs-Bowen & Scrivner, 2001). On one hand, this is highly dependent on the principal’s own philosophy and beliefs regarding sharing power, authority and leadership. On the other hand, teachers need to step up and accept the new roles that emerge and the authority that comes with

being teacher leaders (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Goddard et al., 2004; Ross, Hogaboam-Gray & Gray, 2004).

Moreover, instilling a culture of continuous professional development and learning requires developing a culture of trust in the organization and in the school leadership (Hargreaves, 2007; Jones, 2007). Teacher leaders themselves need to be supported, encouraged, and patiently guided to adjust to the changes to their role and be able to assume it successfully. Trust is crucial to build a professional and respectful relationships among teacher leaders themselves, as well as with the school leadership and with colleagues, (York-Barr & Duke, 2004). This results in developing as a valued resource for others, especially that working together is a must for the success of any organization (Harris & Muijs, 2004). Furthermore, for teachers to cooperate effectively, they need to feel safe in interacting with others and sharing their practice, their ideas, and being vulnerable (Reio, 2005) to take risks and learn something new. As teacher leaders contribute to their colleagues' professional development and enhance the collective learning of the whole community, they build a learning community whereby teachers get the chance to systematically collaborate and learn together (DuFour, 2004; Hord, 2004; Itani Malas, 2009; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Rutherford, 2006).

Consequently, and as the focus turns to learning, then everyone at school is expected to learn, is encouraged and supported to learn, and teacher leaders' efforts are more likely to be appreciated by colleagues (York-Barr & Duke, 2004) because of their direct impact on school improvement (Demir, 2015).

In a multi-case empirical study conducted by Jones (2007), peer relationships were investigated to see how teacher leadership supports them. Opportunities for teacher leadership within the site schools were categorized in different school-based committees that focused on similar aspects of school life such as curriculum, professional

development, discipline, and social relations. These committees had a prominent role in influencing decision-making at the schools and teachers' voices were heard and solicited. The findings highlighted positive aspects. An important aspect depicted is that teacher leaders themselves need to learn leadership skills, so they can work effectively with peers, including developing trust and rapport. Recommendations included having teacher leaders develop and cultivate skills that help them understand the scope of their role as a resource to colleagues, as a go-to person that others respect and feel comfortable around, as a role model of collegiality, collaboration and differentiation based on the other's needs, and as a professional educator seeking continuous learning and professional growth. In addition, teacher leaders need to learn to take initiative, persevere, problem-solve, and be flexible and creative (Jones, 2007).

In summary and based on the previous discussion of teacher leadership, a major component for sustainable school improvement is to build leadership capacity at the school for both the school leaders and the teachers (Lambert, 1998), which requires having a supportive structure and a positive school climate for it to happen effectively. The following diagram (Figure 3) provides a visual representation of the conditions that promote teacher leadership at school. It shows how teacher leadership is positioned in the wider context of sustainable school improvement and summarizes the main elements that come into play to enhance student learning and achievement, which are:

- a) Building leadership capacity for the formal school leadership as well as the teachers.
- b) Developing a positive school climate, which includes the overall school environment, collaboration, evidence-based decision-making, shared vision, and continuous school-based professional development.

- c) Creating supportive structures including policies, scheduling, communication and relation within and between departments at the school.

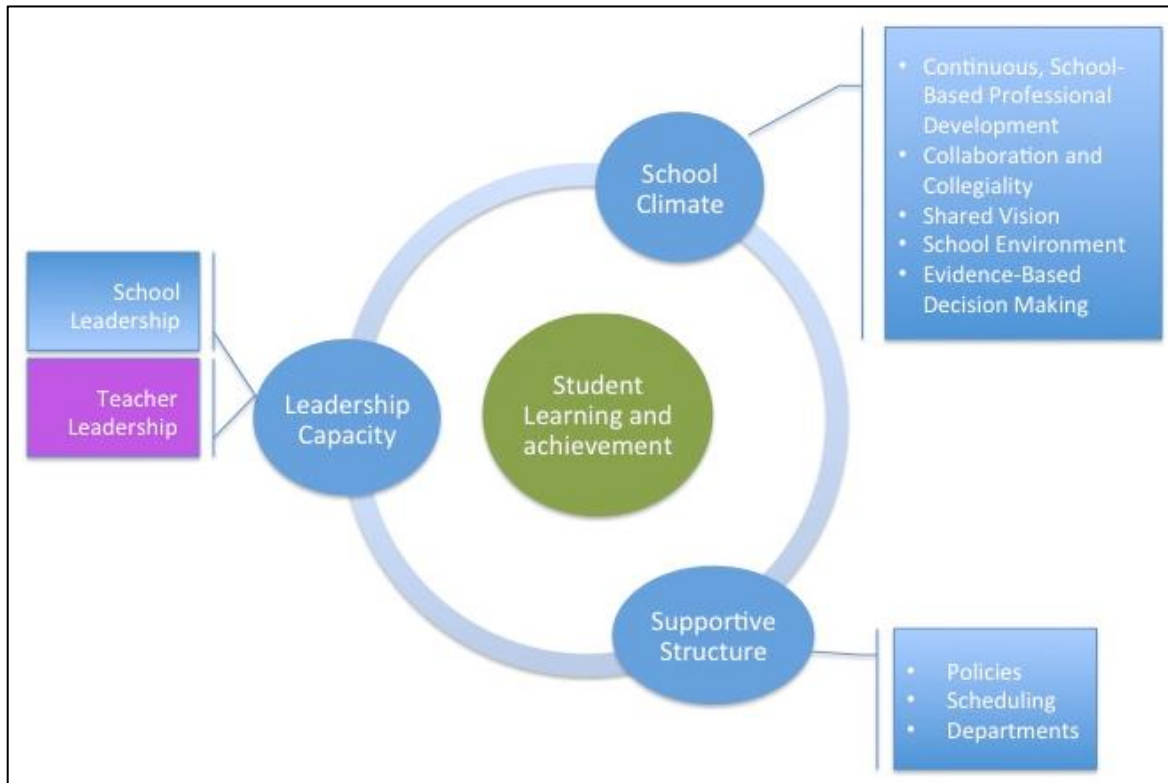


Figure 3. Teacher leadership in the context of sustainable school improvement for enhanced student learning and achievement.

Conditions Hindering Teacher Leadership

In addition to describing the forms of teacher leadership and the conditions that support its development at schools, the educational literature exposes the main obstacles and hurdles it has and is still facing in the last two decades to promote teacher leadership. The following section dives into the conditions that hinder teacher leadership.

As the previous section explicates, several essential elements need to be present at the school for teacher leadership to exist, develop and thrive. These elements represented in Figure 3 above are: a) to build the leadership capacity of teachers and school leadership (Chesson, 2010; DuFour, 2004; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002), b) to develop a

positive school climate (Fullan et al., 2006; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Hord, 2004;), and c) to create supportive organizational structures (Chesson, 2010; DuFour, 2004; Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009). Therefore, when any one of these main components is lacking, is not in place yet, or is not supported at school, teacher leadership is affected, and its existence becomes impeded. Consequently, the obstacles to the development of teacher leadership can originate from any aspect of the school environment or from any of the various stakeholders implicated in it.

Restrictive views of school leadership. A major barrier to developing teacher leadership at school is the existence of a traditional leadership approach that sets rigid boundaries for the functions and tasks that teachers can perform at school (Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006). Such a stereotypical view of what teachers should be doing at school keeps them isolated in the classroom and restricts their involvement, mainly to duties that are directly related to teaching inside the classroom (Harris, 2002). The senior leadership in traditional school settings oftentimes lacks active engagement in involving teachers in any leadership tasks, or in supporting them to develop their leadership capacity, or in deliberately creating clear paths for them to be growing into leadership roles (Muijs & Harris, 2003). This stance is reinforced by school leaders who are often unwilling to let go of their control or authority or to create opportunities and breathing space for teachers to lead (Shamsi et al., 2010).

In a qualitative study conducted by Muijs and Harris (2006) to explore factors that could be hindering teacher leadership in purposefully selected schools that were identified as being sites where teacher leadership was operational, the poor flow of communication between the school leaders and the teachers emerged as a key factor. Such poor communication also emerged in the study conducted by Sokol, Figurska, and Gozdek (2015) and took various forms including the distortion of information as well as

manipulation and limitation of communication, which led to the promotion of only certain ideas that were perceived by the faculty as reflecting the intentions of the school leadership. Findings from the study show that the lack of clear, open and honest communication between the principal and the teachers resulted in fostering dishonesty and indifference as teachers were not comfortable sharing what they really think (Sokol et al., 2015). In addition, the perception of teachers that objectives were imposed on them led to directing creativity towards resistance and stereotyping, which steered their creative effort opposite to the organization's objectives (Sokol et al., 2015). Similarly, findings from another study of teacher leadership in developing countries reflect that stringent control of the behavior of teachers by the school leadership leads to conformity, dependence, and limitation (Shamsi et al., 2010), which puts the teachers and staff in a constant situation of getting approval and validation to do their work (Sokol et al., 2015), and consequently deprives them from developing their own creative ideas which can benefit the school and the students.

The school leadership is also constrained, according to the findings by Muijs and Harris (2006), by external educational context that also plays a role in hindering distributed leadership and not involving teachers in leadership tasks. This is especially the case when it comes to the accountability to perform high on external standardized tests and to embrace the initiatives imposed on the school from the government (Muijs & Harris, 2006). Consequently, there needs to be a paradigm shift in the views upheld on leadership at the school leadership level where a shared understanding of a broader conception of leading is established and all stakeholders realize that promoting teacher leadership is crucial for the sustainability and success of any educational improvement initiative (Jones, 2007).

Teachers' reluctance to assume leadership roles. Another major impediment to teacher leadership in schools has been noted in the literature, which is the teachers' own perception of themselves, their capacities and their role as teachers and their own unwillingness to embrace any leadership roles or actions (Bowman, 2004; Helterbran, 2010). There are many reasons for such reluctance explored in the literature and one of them is that teachers tend to see themselves as "just a teacher" (Helterbran, 2010) whose duties are strictly concerned with what happens inside the classroom and with students. They consider that it is the principal's job to lead the school and the instruction process, while teachers simply follow, deliver the curriculum and do the best they can in executing decisions.

In a traditional formal school setting, teachers tend to define their role as being exclusively bound to the classroom functions no matter how long they have been in the profession or what their potential for leadership is (Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010). Moreover, they view themselves as expected to simply play the role of curriculum implementers and teach under the direction of their supervisors without making any additions or changes to the previously prescribed curriculum and without taking any self-directed initiative of their actions (Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010). Consequently, teachers do not perceive themselves as professional learners or as active contributors in the school and therefore lack individual and collective agency to go beyond their traditional roles (DuFour, 2004; Harris, 2002; Hord, 2004), which reinforces the idea that they are "only teachers" (Chesson, 2010; Helterbran, 2010).

Furthermore, and no matter how experienced they are, teachers often feel that they lack the expertise and self-confidence for leadership (Muijs & Harris, 2006), and are afraid to have to take the hard decisions and confront situations that entail 'painful solutions' (Bowman, 2004). Nevertheless, research shows that even though teachers do

not necessarily see themselves as leaders inside their school, they do engage in different informal leadership positions in their community outside of school and show confidence that they have what it takes to succeed at these roles (Helterbran, 2010).

As Durias (2010) points out, an important aspect that emerged from the study conducted by Smylie & Denny (1990) is that teachers' perception of the nature of teacher leadership as being more about 'power' than about support, which may be the result of unclear expectations and definition of the role (Silva et al., 2000, Smylie & Denny, 1990). They note that teachers themselves may be the biggest barriers to educational reform. Teachers therefore needs to make a 'profound identity shift' (Bowman, 2004, p.187) to understand the importance of widening the scope of their role to be more actively engaged as professionals in school improvement efforts.

Another reason shared by teachers for their reluctance to take on leadership roles is that they believe that they already have too many responsibilities as it is, and they cannot take on any additional duties (Shamsi et al., 2010). Oftentimes, leadership comes as a set of tasks and responsibilities added to those of teaching, which proves to be too much to handle for teachers, so they prefer to stay in their teaching role without any added responsibilities (Leithwood et al., 2007).

Other reasons depicted in empirical literature reflect that some teachers do not like change and are not comfortable with it, thus resist it even at the expense of their own development (Helterbran, 2010). In addition, many teachers consider the remuneration to be unsatisfactory for all the extra effort they are expected to put in (Shamsi et al., 2010). Other teachers are afraid to share their practice with peers and feel threatened, and therefore prefer the bitter isolation in their classroom (Helterbran, 2010).

Teachers' social-professional relations with peers. A third obstacle to teacher leadership portrayed in theoretical and empirical literature addresses teachers' social and

professional relationships with other colleagues. Collegial relationships are often negatively affected when a teacher takes on leadership roles, especially formal roles. In the study conducted by Smylie and Denny (1990), which aimed at developing new opportunities for teachers to grow their professional learning and expand their roles and responsibilities, some of the challenges that teacher leaders faced were that they spent the majority of their time doing work outside of school involving curriculum and professional development, whereas they felt they needed to be more present with their colleagues to be doing their job better. Even though they were confident in their own knowledge and in the support of the district, they were not sure that their colleagues fully understood what their role was. Furthermore, they found it the most challenging to balance their leadership work with their teaching requirements and faced difficulties with dealing with their colleague's expectations and theirs, especially that colleagues didn't like that they were away from the school a lot (Smylie & Denny, 1990).

Furthermore, colleagues can sometimes be judgmental and reprimand teachers who embrace leadership challenges and label them as power hungry (Bowman, 2004). They may also show an unsupportive attitude towards teachers having any kind of leadership role as they consider such person out of the teachers' clan and into the administration circle (Shamsi et al., 2010). Others tend to view their colleagues' involvement in leadership functions as favoritism, especially if they themselves are not willing or not able to assume any leadership roles or functions (Helterbran, 2010). Findings from an empirical study show that being in such a negative emotional climate promotes fear and distrust and leads to fearing criticism and ridicule, therefore censoring ideas and reducing reactions to issues and opportunities for more active teacher involvement (Sokol et al., 2015). This entails further negative relationships that affect collegiality, collaboration and the social-professional relations (Struyve et al., 2014). To overcome this challenge, researchers

recommend that teacher leaders themselves need to understand the change in the scope of their own role as the boundaries between being a teacher and being a leader get more blurred (Helterbran, 2010).

In the study conducted in the Netherlands by Struyve et al. (2014), the researchers aimed to examine what teacher leadership encompassed in Flemish schools. They found that it affected social and professional relations of teacher leaders having formal mandates with the rest of the school community, as well as their professional self-understanding. This study provided new empirical data illustrating how teacher leadership is supported and put in practice in schools. Results show that while the mandate was well defined and teacher leaders as well as the school community were aware of the scope of work expected, teacher leadership varied tremendously between schools and individuals, where the same title/role could bear totally different responsibilities of pedagogical, academic, administrative and social nature (create supportive working conditions). Results of this study indicate that social-professional relations change with having a teacher leadership role. On one hand, teacher leaders interact with more people and are involved in more varied issues, and thus feel they get to know their colleagues more closely. But on the other hand, it may create a feeling of 'not belonging' to a particular 'zone', whether teachers or administration, especially by fellow teachers, being torn between satisfying the needs of either group, and mostly working alone thus promoting loneliness (Struyve et al., 2014).

Regarding professional self-understanding, teacher leaders considered having such mandate as a positive choice because they got to grow professionally more than if they had stayed only teachers. However, this also created frustration, as they had to be involved in many tasks at once, and thus they were not able to do a good of a job as if they were only focused on few tasks, especially with regard to fulfilling their teaching duties.

Being a teacher leader also seemed to impact the self-image, self-esteem and job motivation of the teacher leaders. They needed to be acknowledged for doing both roles to keep their motivation up and to reinforce their ‘legitimacy’ in leading others (Struyve et al., 2014, p.19). Teacher leaders sometime struggled with dealing with colleagues while they did not have issues in that regard with the school leadership. This was because having a leadership role often brought on more interference with the teachers’ work inside the classroom and added extra effort of their part, which was not always welcomed. Consequently, their enthusiasm tended to fade away with time (Struyve et al., 2014).

A final finding from this study revealed that teacher leaders found themselves differentiating their approach to different tasks as a micropolitical strategy to deal with their daily reality. So, they focused on tasks that were different from the ones their colleagues undertook. They viewed themselves as doing other types of tasks than their colleagues without them being more or better, thus making sure they were still part of the teachers’ clan and haven’t stepped into the leaders’ zone (Struyve et al., 2014). They shared that other teachers did not see the leadership aspect of their role with regard to how they spend the release time that they were given to become teacher leaders.

In summary, the main findings indicated that in fact, having formal mandates as teacher leaders puts social and professional relations at risk as it creates different micropolitical dynamics between colleagues at school. It also forces teacher leaders to reflect on their own professional self-understanding and find ways and strategies to deal with the consequences they face (Struyve et al., 2014). However, as part of its limitations, this study didn’t take into account the perspective of the teacher leaders’ colleagues and school leaders and focused on the teacher leaders’ formal roles only. These particular aspects are addressed in the current study as school leaders’ viewpoint is taken into account along with that of the teacher leaders, teacher leadership is investigated as a

practice and not only as a role, and finally both formal and informal roles of teacher leaders are examined.

Teacher Leadership and School Improvement

The literature reviewed emphasizes the fact that schools are increasingly challenged to keep up with the continuously and rapidly changing context in which they function and stay up to speed with the evermore demanding expectations from governments, parents, students, colleges, universities and the job market, which have put a lot of pressure on the school leadership as well as on the teachers to face all these challenges (Bowman, 2004; Demir, 2015; Durias, 2010; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Jones, 2007; Rutherford, 2006). Principals find themselves not only having to deal with all the daily operations and administrative issues in a school, but they must also act as instructional leaders, visionaries and inspirational leaders who motivate the different stakeholders in the school community to work towards accomplishing the institutional vision (Rutherford, 2006). Transforming schools single handedly by principals is no longer a viable option for schools because even though visionary, dynamic and active leaders still exist, their leadership capacity is not enough for all the schools (Rutherford, 2006).

Effects of teacher leadership on school improvement. In addition, research has shown that it is essential for schools that are engaging in any school improvement endeavor to foster teacher leadership to sustain such reform (Gronn, 2000; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Harris, 2003; Muijis & Harris, 2003; Smylie, Conley & Marks, 2002). As previously mentioned, distributed leadership is a leadership design aimed at addressing those needs consisting of distributing leadership capacity around the school in a meaningful and purposeful way (Harris, Leithwood, Day, Sammons & Hopkins, 2007) and a solution that allows for a more effective way of meeting the complex requirements

of school-based education (Bowman, 2004; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Rutherford, 2006). Such shared leadership puts upfront the building of positive and collegial relationships and fosters collaboration, which directly influences collective efficacy (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Louis and Marks, 1998). When school leadership promotes teacher leadership, makes it an integral part of the school leadership structure and addresses it in school improvement plans, the effort of actively implementing the change process and taking ownership of its various aspects is no longer bound to the only person or entity leading the school but is rather distributed on a wider base of teachers (Rutherford, 2006). This also allows for the institutionalization of leadership which supports the sustainability of the improvement effort in the organization, without necessarily linking it to a specific principal who may leave the school at any time, and therefore maintains the stability throughout the reform process (Harris, 2003; Jones, 2007; Smylie et al., 2002).

In a study conducted in the UK, Muijs and Harris (2006) explored how teacher leadership influences school improvement and teacher's professional learning and development. The project had three objectives: 1) Determine the various models of teacher leadership found in practice; 2) Examine ways for teacher leadership to be developed; and 3) Examine the connection between teacher leadership as a form of professional learning and school improvement. Findings show that teacher leadership was supported in the schools involved in the study through encouraging innovative forms of school-based and peer-led professional development, building leadership capacity by heavily involving teachers in leadership development within the school, as well as through mentoring which focused on collective learning. In addition, improvement efforts focused on involving teachers in shaping a shared vision toward a distributed leadership model, which led to high levels of engagement and self-confidence, as well as teachers' appreciation of working with peers as they realized that it enhanced their collective

creativity and problem-solving skills. Moreover, there was an expectation for shared professional practice as teachers were not only sharing knowledge but were also involved in sharing their own practice with colleagues, which contributed significantly to their professional learning. Lastly, there was recognition and reward for teachers' effort and professional contributions, although mostly in the form of intrinsic rewards. In summary, results of the study show that teacher leadership enabled teachers to contribute to overall school improvement and share their practice and innovative ideas with the school community. Different elements were essential for the success of teacher leadership at school, such as having a culture of trust and collaboration, clearly defined supportive internal structures, solid school leadership, and continuous school-based professional development (Muijs & Harris, 2006). All these aspects are investigated in this current study as it examines the elements in the school environment that support teacher leadership both formally and informally.

Similar results were found in another study conducted by Durias (2010) about teacher leaders of color, where teacher leadership thrived and positively impacted educational change when major changes in the actions, beliefs and roles of teacher leaders took place. Particularly, a shift in the formal establishment of teacher leader roles, the development of leadership behaviors among all teachers, and the redefinition of the role of the principal to one that is collaborative and inclusive were deemed essential. Durias' recommendations from this study were to 1) increase the investment in leadership programs since there is a shortage in teacher leaders –particularly teacher leaders of color who are role models for students of color; 2) restructure how schools operate and acknowledge that principals need to learn how to support teachers' leadership development, create opportunities for them to participate in decision-making and take initiative to solve problems they deal with every day, make time for them to collaborate

with each other, learn together and be a resource to the school community; and 3) develop continuous learning mechanisms for all teachers, and especially teacher leaders, whether in their own subject matter, pedagogy, technology, assessment, or any other area related to education.

Although the importance of having specific roles and responsibilities within the educational institution is crucial and cannot be undermined, allowing teachers to collectively contribute to the school leadership within a distributed framework is the cornerstone that allows them to cater for the needs, challenges and complexities related to student learning and teacher practice (Gronn, 2000, Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Muijis & Harris, 2003, Rutherford, 2006). Furthermore, involving teachers in the decision-making process increases their participation and commitment to execute the school's improvement goals (Barth, 2001).

In fact, findings from an empirical research study conducted in Turkey show that the trust levels of teachers towards their organization become positive and significant when they see it supporting the culture of teacher leadership in school, thus spreading the trust to the principal and accepting to follow the management approach more willingly (Demir, 2015). In another multi-site qualitative case study looking into identifying the processes that school principals put in place to create and develop teacher leaders and assign them to various leadership roles (Jones, 2007), a major conclusion is that the principals were actually “developing their schools as communities of leaders” (p.92), which stresses on the importance of supporting teachers in viewing themselves as leaders and believing that their role as teacher leaders is crucial for the success of the institution not only of their group of students. Another conclusion is that school leaders change, therefore it is important to instill systems for the school to keep functioning smoothly when change happens (Jones, 2007).

In a study of teacher leadership in action, Margolis and Deuel (2009) explored the issue of motivation and reward for teacher leaders, and analyzed which aspect had the most impact on their motivation, whether money, recognition, and/or the opportunity to have a wider impact. The authors examined the work of five teacher leaders in promoting the teaching and learning of content area literacy at the middle and high school levels and studied how teacher leadership may impact educational reform, change at the school level, career longevity, and other forms of teacher compensation plans (Margolis & Deuel, 2009). Three main findings emerged from this study: first, that teacher leaders are motivated both intrinsically and extrinsically by moral imperatives and by monetary rewards, as well as by professional and personal concerns; second, the “teacher leader” designation meant surprisingly little to them; and third, the teacher leaders had significant capacity to impact instructional change. Therefore, implications for both the development and utilization of teacher leaders as well as future teacher leader research need to be considered (Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

Teacher leaders as source of influence. Moreover, fostering teacher leadership requires that the school principals capitalize on the impact teacher leaders have at school as a “source of influence” (Patterson, 2000). Therefore, bringing teacher leaders to believe in their capacities as change agents and as strategic allies for supporting any change at the institution needs a paradigm shift in teachers’ mindset (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Durias, 2010; Helterbran, 2010; Patterson, 2000). Such paradigm shift can only be accomplished if teachers develop a sense of self and collective efficacy (Angelle & Teague, 2014), which results in having all teachers feel responsible for the success of all students and of the organization as a whole (Goddard & Goddard, 2001). Actually, teachers who have high self and collective efficacy feel personally and collectively invested and responsible for the success of all their students (not only high achievers), their colleagues and the

school, and consider themselves as major players in instilling lifelong learning amongst learners and colleagues (Angelle, Nixon, Norton & Niles, 2011; Goddard & Goddard, 2001; Jones, 2007; Patterson, 2000). Moreover, they are aware of the impact they have on their students' lives and how much they can influence them positively at the intellectual, physical, social and emotional levels, and that may constitute a main reason for some teachers to accept to be teacher leaders (Bowman, 2004).

Furthermore, teacher leaders strongly believe that they have the skills, the passion, and the willingness to go above and beyond to positively influence the teaching and learning processes at the school, improve student learning, and bring about change at the overall institutional level. They do so by actively and passionately sharing their practice with their colleagues, engaging in duties that are beyond the limits of their classroom and accepting formal leadership roles that the principal assigns to them (Angelle & Teague, 2014; DiRanna and Loucks-Horsley, 2001). In addition, they influence school resilience and positively guide others to overcome the many hurdles on the way to embracing and achieving change as they focus on what is important while remaining flexible and open to varied ways of reaching goals. They also take charge and keep the expectations high for students and colleagues. They develop shared responsibility, encourage participation and create a hopeful and supportive school climate (Patterson, 2000). Finally, teacher leaders are persistent in their effort to make a change and reach their targets (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Goddard et al., 2004; Ross and Gray, 2006). Therefore, teachers should be encouraged to come together as professionals to engage in dialogue around a shared knowledge base about students, as well as about teaching and learning (Vernon-Dotson & Floyd, 2012), because professional learning and growth are both a motivation for teachers to embrace leadership roles and a major reason for school improvement and student achievement (Helterbran, 2010; Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

In a recent study conducted by Cooper et al. (2016), the authors wanted to develop better understanding of the teacher leadership process by which school improvement actually happens. They endeavored to go beyond seeing an influence of teacher leadership on practice as an outcome of school improvement, but rather to see an actual change of the practice by colleagues. The authors distinguish between these two outcomes and explain that “influence is indirectly altering another’s practice by informing their thinking in ways that shape what they do, whereas change is intentionally propelling others to do some specific thing in a specific way that differs from current practice (Cooper et al., 2016, p. 88).” The study examined the leadership practices of eleven teacher leaders (which constituted embedded cases) in three urban schools in order to identify how these teacher leaders attempted to change the teaching practice of their colleagues while working as professional learning community leaders and as mentors for new teachers. The particular teaching practice they focused on was to use more discussion-based teaching strategies in class and thus have students more actively engaged in discussions. The study investigated two questions: 1) What change tactics do the leadership teams and individual teacher leaders use when attempting to change the teaching practice of their colleagues, and how do they use them? And 2) How do the structural and cultural facets of the systems within which teacher leaders are situated, including the leadership teams in which they are embedded, promote and impede their efforts to create change? The key findings from this study show that change efforts among the participating teacher leaders were heavily influenced by the various internal and external systems that were at play. Internal factors included the teams’ specific school context, their leadership teams, their individual professional development experiences, their personal conception of teacher leadership and perspective towards their colleagues. External factors were such as being in a large urban environment and being charter schools. Furthermore, the authors found five embedded

systems that influenced the teacher leadership change process, which are: 1) the teacher leader's personal orientations toward leadership, 2) the school principal's orientations toward leadership, 3) the leadership team, 4) the school context, and 5) the local context outside of the school. In conclusion, the results of this study indicate that working within a "network of supportive embedded systems" (Cooper et al., 2016, p.104) is essential for teacher leaders to succeed in developing and leading change towards a clear and solid shared instructional vision. Conversely, when teacher leaders work in settings that lack connection and trust between peers, their capacity to influence or change their colleagues' instruction is highly reduced (Cooper et al., 2016).

Conceptual Framework

Different theoretical models promoting the conception of teacher leadership have been developed in the literature. These models describe what teacher leadership means and looks like in different contexts, identify the roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders, and outline the impact teacher leadership has on the school improvement and student achievement. Most of these models assert teacher leadership as possible only where the organizational structure of the school allows for shared or distributed leadership that fosters building relationships and making connections between the individuals (Barth, 1999; Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Lambert, 1998; Merideth, 2006).

A particular theoretical framework by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) groups the different roles and functions of teacher leaders in relation to whom teacher leaders interact with or what sort of task they are involved in. The theoretical framework for the current study consists of the researcher's construction of her understanding of the theoretical literature around teacher leadership, framed by the Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009) conceptual model and complimentary components from all the other models that were

reviewed. This theoretical understanding has guided the data collection, yet it was held provisionally during data analysis, where the constant comparative method was followed to compare the different categories that emerge from the fieldwork and to examine what fits under one of its theoretical categories and what needs to be modified to fit the emerging data. In what follows is a presentation of the researcher's constructed framework under the three conceptual categories of the Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2009) theoretical model.

Leadership of Others

The first aspect of teacher leadership in Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2009) theoretical framework revolves around teacher leaders leading others. In fact, teacher leaders are viewed as not only inspiring and leading their students, but also their fellow teachers and other colleagues in the school community by "engaging in collegiality for mutual learning" (Helterbran, 2010) and being perceived as experts and professionals in their field. They are therefore actively involved in facilitating meetings, mentoring new colleagues, coaching others, reviewing the curriculum, initiating study groups, and trying new pedagogical approaches.

Similarly, Harris (2002) approaches teacher leadership in the context of school improvement and focuses on the dimensions through which the teacher leader interacts with others within the school community. One of these dimensions, the "brokering" role, is directly related to the classroom practice, which remains a main responsibility of the teacher leader and helps translate the improvement efforts into the classroom with students (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Helterbran, 2010) as well as with fellow teachers. Another dimension of teacher leadership and perhaps the most important one according to Harris (2002) is having teacher leaders develop solid social relationships with the other members of the school community, as it allows for collaboration and mutual sharing of expertise,

and therefore continuous professional learning. Furthermore, Lambert (1998) advocates for the development of teacher leadership through the ‘skillful involvement’ of teachers who exhibit a comprehensive understanding and demonstrated proficiency of leadership dispositions, knowledge and skills, thus “assuming the mantle of teacher expert” (Helterbran, 2010).

A major aspect of teacher leadership as pointed out in the literature is manifested through reaching out to other colleagues and supporting them to develop their own leadership skills, so they can assume leadership roles themselves (Day & Harris, 2003, Harris, 2002, Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, 2009; Lieberman, et al., 2000). This aspect focuses on how teacher leadership is enacted in the various domains previously mentioned as being the scope of roles and responsibilities of teacher leaders. Harris & Muijs (2003) pinpoint that collaboration for school improvement is at the core of teacher leadership because school improvement is indeed the collective responsibility of all the stakeholders at the school. Such a model shifts control from being hierarchical and top-down to more distributed among peers. In addition, power and authority are also dispersed, which widens the power base and creates a different social dynamic in how colleagues interact. In such a model, relationships are governed by trust, support, and the willingness to try out new things and challenge the existing norms.

Other studies have explored the relationship between school improvement, student achievement and leadership (Goddard, 2003; Hord, 2004; Imants, 2002; Louis & Marks, 1996). The results show that teachers collaboration affect student results positively when it is taking place at school, which suggests that teachers need to experience collaboration and leadership themselves to create opportunities for students to do the same (Harris & Muijs, 2003). However, to promote collaboration, the school needs to have a supportive strategic leadership that dynamically fosters teacher empowerment, develops collective

efficacy, provides intellectual direction, and promotes continuous learning for all (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004; Goddard, 2003; Hord, 1997, 2004; Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2005; Losee, 2000; Louis & Marks, 1996; Tallerico, 2005; Tharp & Gallimore, 1988).

Leadership of Operational Tasks

The second aspect of teacher leadership in Katzenmeyer and Moller's (2009) theoretical framework is to assign teachers formally to assume any operational tasks that help the school achieve its goals and fulfill its mission and vision, such as heading a department, conducting action research, joining committees or task forces. Harris (2002) also identifies a similar dimension in teacher leadership, which he calls the "mediating" role. It focuses on the importance of developing the expertise and resourcefulness of teacher leaders, whereby they know how to get additional resources from within the school or look for other ones externally as needed. Barth (1999) broadens the scope of teacher leadership beyond collaboration and involvement in decision-making and takes it up to the level of fulfilling formal tasks and acts that are usually the responsibility of senior management and leadership. Some examples of such tasks include developing the curriculum; choosing the instructional resources and materials; establishing the behavioral standards for students; developing school policies related to staff retention, promotion, and evaluation; designing professional development programs for staff; setting the school budget; as well as recruiting teachers and administrators. Such a model fosters that teacher leaders basically run the school and make all the major decisions (Harris & Muijs, 2003). This perspective is not necessarily shared by many others in the literature who view teacher leadership more geared towards creating a collaborative structure between teachers and school leaders on particular aspects of school life with a main focus on keeping

teacher leaders inside the classroom (Day & Harris, 2003, Harris, 2002, Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001, 2009).

Leadership Through Decision-Making

The third aspect of teacher leadership in this model (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001, 2009) revolves around involving teacher and inviting them to actively participate in making decisions related to school improvement initiative or partnering with other institutions, such as businesses, other educational institutions, non-governmental institutions, and local associations. Likewise, Harris (2002) identifies a dimension in teacher leadership, the “participative” role, which focuses on engaging all teachers in any school improvement initiative, so they develop a sense of ownership and commitment in the change process (Helterbran, 2010), and willingly collaborate to achieve the collective goal. In addition, Lambert (1998) explains that allowing for ‘broad-based’ involvement in decision-making is essential for building school capacity and goes even further in asking to involve not only teachers in the work of leadership, but also parents, pupils, community members, LEA personnel, and universities.

The school leaders, be it the principal, the superintendent, the administration team or the board of directors, have a major role in setting up organizational structures and policies that are conducive to the development of a school culture that fosters teacher collaboration and leadership. Such structures promote shared decision-making among teachers and administrators regarding issues related to different aspects of their professional life as well as new initiatives at school, creating opportunities for them to plan collaboratively within the school week, and distributing power and leadership responsibilities throughout the school (Harris & Muijs, 2003). Moreover, these structures allow for the development of teacher leadership as well as “parallel leadership” that engages teachers and principals in collective endeavor toward school improvement

(Crowther, et al., 2002). Consequently, the hierarchy is altered, and leadership is decentralized (Senge et al., 2000; Smith, 2001) so that it doesn't reflect what each person does but rather how they must collectively contribute to the advancement of the whole community. As a result, the relationship between the principal and the teachers becomes more supportive, nurturing and empowering to teachers as they are considered colleagues working together and growing professionally to reach a common goal (Hord, 1997). In addition, teachers will gain "a greater sense of ownership of and responsibility for quality in student learning" (Kruse & Louis, 1993, p. 19).

Chapter Summary

Formal education is facing increasing challenges these days that vary from dealing with more and more diverse students' needs, violence, absenteeism, budget cuts, rising performance expectations and improving academic achievements. As a result, teachers and school principals are evermore being challenged to rethink their role as educators and instructional leaders in an attempt to meet the complex requirements of education (Bowman, 2004; Demir, 2015; Durias, 2010; Hargreaves & Fink, 2006; Rutherford, 2006). Transforming schools and sustaining school improvement plans single handedly by principals is no longer a viable option (Demir, 2015; Durias, 2010). Teachers need to be more actively implicated in shaping the school culture, forming the school strategic direction and participating in the decision-making process by taking on leadership roles and being involved in various levels of decision making that influence the whole school and not only their classroom.

A lot is known about types of leadership for school principals and administrators, but not for leadership that may be for teachers (Durias, 2010; Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999). The literature about teacher leadership started emerging over a decade ago and educational leadership is still perceived to be an area that involves school

administrators with non-teaching tasks (Durias, 2010; Silva, et al., 2000). Over the past two decades, teacher leadership has evolved in meaning and conception in three trends (Durias, 2010). First, it focused on maintaining efficiency and effectiveness of the educational system (Evans, 1996), by assigning teacher leaders some limited administrative roles such as heading a department or representing their colleagues in unions, roles that do not engage them in much instructional leadership (Durias, 2010). Then, it was recognized that teachers can play a major role in instructional supervision and leadership, and thus new roles were developed for them such as to become team leaders, to participate in developing curriculum, and to support colleagues in professional development. However, these positions and roles were still viewed as exercised outside the classroom (Wigginton, 1992) and as add-ons to the teacher's daily work that was not integrated in classroom practice nor as part of the professional identity of these teachers (Durias, 2010). In fact, these added tasks were sometimes viewed as negatively influencing the practice of other teachers who had to just follow the teacher leader's instructions without participating in the decision-making (Darling- Hammond, 1998). Later, teacher leadership was redefined out of the needs that arose in schools to meet the increasing demands for a quality education that enhances student performance and achievement, and gets them ready for the complexity of the world they will be living in.

Teacher leadership therefore is perceived as opening up opportunities for educators to be involved in school-wide improvement initiatives, build stronger relationships within the organization, nurture a collaborative culture that encompasses continuous professional learning, contribute to the enhancement of the collective learning of the whole community, and directly influence student learning and achievement (Devaney, 1987; Durias, 2010; Helterbran, 2010; Lieberman, 1995; Little, 2003; Silva et al., 2000). This new

conceptualization of teacher leadership engages teachers in roles beyond the classroom while providing opportunities for leadership to be an integral part of teachers' daily work.

However, for teacher leadership to flourish, certain conditions within the school need to exist, such as having a supportive and positive school culture, having an organizational structure that allows for distributed decision-making and participatory leadership, developing roles and relationships that build trust, respect, collegiality, hard work and a perception of mutual responsibility for success, and having a school leadership that supports and actively works toward developing teacher leadership. The absence of any of these conditions hinders the development of teacher leadership along with the obstacles and resistance that some teachers may put for themselves or for others within the school due to a lack of understanding of the role of teacher leader, an aversion to change or an unwillingness to take on the added pressure that comes with added responsibilities. Therefore, for schools to face the increasingly complex requirements and challenges of the education system, teachers need not only to be viewed as an essential resource to the students, but also as essential partners in collaboratively leading the school as professionals who are able and required to engage in the various aspects of the school life and impact its culture for students and adults alike.

Although the importance of teacher leadership has been discussed extensively in the literature, researchers assert that it is still a big idea and not quite a reality yet (Helterbran, 2010). Teacher leadership is often not systematically or deliberately fostered or infused into the regular leadership practices and structures found in most schools, although it is known that sharing leadership between teachers and principals affects positively student achievement, especially when coupled with a supportive leadership structure that encourages collaboration and sharing practice (Helterbran, 2010). Scholars point at the need to have a structural framework to support teachers' self-empowerment

and agency inside the institution as well as implications for policy makers, such as developing training programs for principals, training programs for teachers, introducing the research culture, benefits of taking turns, increasing pay, and adapting successful policies (Shamsi et al., 2010). They also recommend that more research be conducted on the nature of elements in formal leadership that foster teacher leadership as well as what choices schools make that result in supportive aspects of teacher leadership (Chesson, 2010). However, Helterbran (2010) highlights the point that educators have an important decision to define their role to themselves and to others in their school community and in the profession. They need to commit to continuously seek professional learning and growth to become leaders. Consequently, teachers first and foremost need to have a paradigm shift in their mindset to allow them to realize that they have the leadership potential, that they need to step up and have a more active role in school improvement and break out of the mold of 'just a teacher' view and into the teacher leader mindset (Helterbran, 2010).

The current study preliminarily adopts the conceptual framework framed by the Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001 & 2009) model, which depicts three main aspect of teacher leadership: 1) leadership of others, 2) leadership of operational tasks, and 3) leadership through decision-making. However, the constant comparative method is followed during data analysis to compare the different categories that emerge from the fieldwork and to examine what fits under one of its theoretical categories and what needs to be modified to fit the emerging data.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the methodology and the rationale for the choices that guided the researcher in the design of this study and the procedures for choosing the study participants, as well as the methods of data collection and data analysis. The chapter is divided into three parts. The first part discusses the four theoretical frameworks that guided research design of this investigation, which are the constructivist paradigm and interpretive epistemology, the qualitative exploratory research methodology, the grounded theory methodology, and the multiple case study method. The second part describes the research design, the selection of the case schools and the participants, the methods of data collection, and the procedures for data analysis. The third part discusses the quality criteria for qualitative inquiry followed by an explanation of the limitations of the study.

Theories Underlying the Research Design

It is recognized that in educational research the researcher's paradigm guides and influences the choices regarding collecting and analyzing data (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012). In this section, the researcher describes her stance regarding the choice of paradigm as well as the theories underlying the study design. According to Guba and Lincoln (1994), a paradigm is considered as "a set of basic beliefs [which] represents a worldview that defines, for its holder, the nature of the 'world', the individual's place in it, and the range of possible relationships to that world and its parts" (p.107). A paradigm therefore, is a set of coherent ideas and conceptions that provide a well-defined scientific, philosophical or theoretical framework (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) and defines shared understandings of reality in natural and social sciences (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012).

Furthermore, Guba and Lincoln (1994) contends that the basic beliefs that guide researchers in adopting a paradigm revolves around creating a general view of what knowledge is and how it is discovered, namely the ontology, epistemology, and methodology. Crotty (1998) adds the theoretical perspective as “the philosophical stance informing the methodology and thus providing a context for the process and grounding its logic and criteria” (p.3), thus reflecting the school of thought that drives the research findings and interpretations.

Ontology is the philosophical view of questioning what constitutes “reality” and consequently what can be known about it (Cohen et al., 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Therefore, if the assumption is that the real world is all about how things are or how they work, then anything falling in other realms such as aesthetics or ethics are not considered as acceptable scientific research (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

As for epistemology, it is concerned with understanding the nature and form of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2007; Crotty, 1998) and is related to the theories of learning (Guba and Lincoln, 1989). Epistemological assumptions involve how knowledge can be developed, learned and transferred, the relationship between the researcher and knowledge, and they are directly related to the ontological beliefs (Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Rossman and Rallis (2012) differentiate between two main schools of thought regarding the nature of knowing, which are the subjectivists and the objectivists. Subjectivists postulate that only certain principles in the physical world are absolute truths and constitute ‘universal knowledge’ (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.39), whereas most of the time there are multiple perspectives of the truth. Conversely, objectivists proclaim that there is one truth about any specific event that can be established (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012).

Every paradigm is characterized by certain ontological and epistemological assumptions, and different paradigms have different views of reality and knowledge, which is reflected in their research methodology and approach (Cohen et al, 2007). However, since paradigms are based on postulations, they cannot be proven or disproven empirically because of the nature of assumptions, and consequently are adopted by the individual based on 'simple faith' (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.107), without the possibility of verifying their definitive truthfulness.

The methodology is the overall plan of action that guides the research, the procedures that can be used to acquire knowledge and that justify the choice of certain research methods and tools (Crotty, 1998). It is about how can the researcher 'go about finding out whatever he or she believes can be known' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.108). Again, the methodology is constrained by the paradigm that the researcher is adopting, and it defines the tools and procedures to be used to collect, analyze and interpret data (Cohen et al, 2007; Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

The Constructivist-Interpretivist Paradigm

Accordingly, this study follows the constructivist paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), previously called "naturalistic inquiry" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.105; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher chose this paradigm because it corresponds with her view of the nature of knowledge, which she believes is a socially constructed reality that is tightly affected by contextual situations (Gall, Gall & Borg, 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It follows the relativist ontology where there is no one ultimate reality, rather realities are captured in the form of "multiple, intangible mental constructions, socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature [...], and dependent for their form and content on the individual persons or groups holding the constructions" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p.110). Therefore, social realities are seen "as a set of meanings that are constructed

by the individuals who participate in that reality” (Gall et al., 2005, p.305) and vary from one individual to another.

Furthermore, the study is based on the interpretivist epistemology, also called subjectivist epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994), which presumes that we cannot separate ourselves from what we know. The authors explain that the researcher and the object of inquiry are connected and influenced by the value system and worldview, which are central to how one understands oneself, others and the world. The interpretivist epistemology has as a central focus to “understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen et al, 1998, p.21). This perspective is consistent with the constructivist paradigm as, to retain the integrity of the investigation, the researcher and the object of inquiry closely interact, the focus is on understanding their subjective experiences, and findings are created as the inquiry proceeds (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012).

The theoretical perspective compatible with this epistemology is the symbolic interactionism (Blumer, 1969), which attempts to explain the social behaviors of individuals as they interact with objects, ideas, events and other people within a society. By looking at small scale interactions, symbolic interactionism intends to explicate the social order and change (Blumer, 1969). It revolves around three tenets, which are that people act based on the meaning they give to things, that different individuals give different meanings to things, and that the assigned meaning can change. Consequently, symbolic interactionism explains how various aspects of society can change as they are formed and re-formed by social interactions (Blumer, 1969).

Qualitative Exploratory Research Methodology

The methodology in this research study follows a qualitative approach, which is congruent with the constructivist paradigm and interpretive-subjectivist epistemology (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Gall et al., 2005; Guba & Lincoln, 1994;

Merriam, 2002, 2009; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012). The qualitative inquiry postulates that humans gain knowledge by “direct experiences” that involve their “physical senses” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.6), so what they see, hear, and feel. In addition, Guba & Lincoln (2003) explain that “individual constructions can be elicited and refined only through interaction between and among investigator and respondents” (p.111). The researcher therefore goes out to the field to directly interact with participants in their natural settings and studies how they behave and make sense of the phenomena around them within a social context (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012). Furthermore, the researcher herself becomes an integral part of the investigation process, as much as the participants and the data that they present (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), and continuously reflects on how she is influencing the flow of the research and how her subjective perspective of the world and personal biography is affecting the study (Charmaz, 2006; Rossman & Rallis, 2012).

The qualitative researcher also aims to understand the perceptions and conceptions of the participants, and therefore does not impose a rigid conceptual framework to the investigation. Nonetheless, the theoretical and empirical literature is thoroughly reviewed, and a conceptual framework and guiding questions are adopted as preliminary guidelines prior to entering the field; however, they are kept provisionally and are heavily affected by the interpretation of the data that emerges from the field (Charmaz, 2006; Gall et al., 2005; Glaser, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Qualitative research is open and flexible in its design, and that may create an issue of rigor when compared with quantitative research (Corbin & Strauss, 2008 & 2015). On the other hand, it is very systematic in that the research follows “a deliberate, conscious process of making decisions about data (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.11), and entails explicating the basis of

these decisions to others and rigorously documenting them so that they can be commented on and reviewed (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012).

Additionally, this research study follows the qualitative methods for data collection and analysis as the primary procedures to collect and analyze data. This entails using multiple methods that are “interactive and humanistic” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.9) and that allow the researcher to be in direct, face-to-face contact with the research participants, observe them interacting together and within their environment, experience their physical space, and see the world from their perspectives (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Typical qualitative methods for data collection include interviews and observations. However, any other types of materials that allow to capture participants’ viewpoints can be used (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998), including videos, field notes, blog posts, internal documents, historical records, digital postings on social media. Since qualitative research is fundamentally interpretive, the researcher is continuously in the process of describing, analyzing and interpreting the data through the lens of “her own personal biography that is situated in a specific sociopolitical, historical moment” (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.11).

The Grounded Theory Methodology

The grounded theory approach, a type of qualitative research first presented by Glaser and Strauss (1967) is selected as the methodology guiding this study. The main purpose of the grounded theory is “the discovery of theory from data systematically obtained from social research” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 2). However, grounded theory has other features that distinguishes it from other types of qualitative research. Corbin and Strauss (2015) explain that an important aspect of grounded theory is that the concepts that help construct the theory emerge from the data collected during the investigation and not prior to it, which leads to “constructing theory grounded in data” (p.4), hence its name.

According to Charmaz (2008), grounded theory is a “method of explication and emergence” (p.408) as it requires the researchers to clarify all analytical and methodological decisions throughout the investigation process, thus giving them control over the direction they will take and allowing both the analytical process and product to emerge from the field. A second major distinction is that the data collection and analysis are interrelated in grounded theory, whereby the initial data collected is analyzed and concepts are derived, which leads to subsequent cycles of data collection and analysis, all throughout the investigation process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Similarly, Charmaz (2008), explains that the term grounded theory “refers to both the research product and the analytic method of producing it” (p.397). She emphasizes that a social constructivist stance to this methodology “allows us to address *why* questions while preserving the complexity of social life” (Charmaz, 2008, p. 397). In addition, in grounded theory, data are analyzed using the constant comparative approach, whereby data are continuously compared for similarities and differences (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser, 1992; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Similar data are grouped under a broad conceptual construct, then concepts are grouped into categories, and categories are classified into core categories that end up forming the structure of the theory.

Although the main purpose of this study is not necessarily to develop a theory, the grounded theory methodology is considered appropriate for various reasons. First this investigation examines an aspect of the teaching practice that has a wide and varied range of conceptual views in the literature. Therefore, although one framework developed by Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001) is selected as the main conceptual framework, it is held provisionally with an open mind towards what other constructs and categories could and would emerge from the field and that would characterize the context within which

Lebanese teachers and principals and interacting. Second, as explained previously, the grounded theory methodology is congruent with the constructivist paradigm and the interpretivist-subjectivist epistemology and the symbolic interactionist perspective followed in this study. Furthermore, it is compatible with the focus of this research as it investigates the meaning that the participants, both teachers and school leaders, make of teacher leadership and their understanding of how teacher leadership influences the school environment and culture as it is undergoing a change process. Finally, it focuses on understanding the participants' perception of the roles and functions of teacher leaders, as well as the context within which they interact and how it influences their actions.

Multiple Case Study Research Design

This study adopts the qualitative multiple case study design as it is coherent with the constructivist-interpretivist paradigm and qualitative methodology (Merriam, 2002, 2009; Yin, 2004). Since Robert Yin released his first book "Case Study Research Designs and Methods" in 1984, the case study research design has obtained wide acceptance as a "viable method for doing education research" (Yin, 2004, p.1). Fundamentally, Yin (2009) explains that case studies are empirical in-depth investigations of modern phenomena within their real-life context. Consequently, the goal of case studies is to understand "complex social phenomena", and "real-life" occurrences (Yin, 2014, p.16) of people and events within the context they naturally evolve in, which is congruent with the constructivist paradigm and interpretivist epistemology. It is recommended to use the case study design when the research tackles questions that attempt to describe the phenomena, or to provide a thorough explanation of how or why it happened (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 2000; Yin, 1994, 2014). It is also pertinent to resort to case studies when attempting to shed light on a specific situation and gain a deep understand of it by collecting first-hand

data through direct observations and interactions within its natural setting (Merriam, 2002; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2014).

Furthermore, when the case study is expressed in terms of the actual phenomena it is investigating, it allows “for any number of qualitative strategies to be combined with the case” (Merriam, 2002, p.179). In this study particularly, the grounded theory is built within each case to provide a rich description of each one. As for choosing to conduct a study that involves a number of cases, Stake (2000) explains that researchers may conduct a multiple case study or a “collective case study” (p. 445) when the studied phenomenon extends beyond one particular case and to several ones. Accordingly, the

“individual cases in the collection may or may not be known in advance to manifest some common characteristic. They may be similar or dissimilar, with redundancy and variety each important. They are chosen because it is believed that understanding them will lead to better understanding, and perhaps better theorizing, about a still larger collection of cases” (Stake, 2000).

One of the major aspects that differentiate case study design from other research designs is that, during data collection, the researcher needs to simultaneously be analyzing the data collected (Eisenhardt, 1989; Yin, 1994, 2004, 2009, 2014). This allows for taking prompt decisions regarding any needed modification of the data collection plans based on the responses collected from the field and that may show conflicting responses, or that may require the researcher to conduct a follow-up interview while still in the field and having access to the data and participants (Yin, 1994, 2004, 2009, 2014). This is greatly consistent with the grounded theory methodology that requires the researcher to simultaneously collect and analyze the data to guide the course of the investigation (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). In addition, its particularity makes the process of collecting and analyzing data closely tied to the researcher himself/herself as the decisions taken will greatly impact the data and the

results of the research (Charmaz, 2006; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Merriam, 2002; Yin, 1994, 2004, 2009, 2014).

The current study aims to provide an in-depth description and explanation of the perceptions of teachers and school leaders of the practices pertinent to teacher leadership. It intends to investigate their understanding of what teacher leadership encompasses, what is its scope, as well as how and to what extent it is being supported and implemented in their school context. In addition, it aims to compare the perception of the teachers and of the school leaders to see if there is alignment in their perspectives or not and understand what the implications of any disparity are if it exists. Consequently, the researcher chose the case study research design because of its capacity to explore a “case” within its “real-life context” (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Yin, 1994, 2004, 2009, 2014). The case in this study is defined as the school where some form of improvement initiative has been taking place or was recently officially initiated at the whole-school level, and where the implementation requires the involvement of the whole school community including the students, teachers, administrators and school leadership. The real-life context highlights the specific context of the school, taking into account the various aspects that define it and providing a thick description of its different elements.

Study Procedures

This study is designed in accordance with the grounded theory methodology guidelines and procedures (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998) whereby teachers’ and school leaders’ perspective and other data collected from the field will help generate theoretical understanding of teacher leadership while being sensitive to its contextual and cultural aspects. In addition, it adopts the multiple case study design (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2004) where different case schools are selected to be studied in depth to gain better understanding of how teacher

leadership emerges in each school context and how it is perceived to exist and to be supported from the viewpoints of teachers and school leaders.

The investigation procedures were done over three distinct phases. The first phase consisted of identifying the case study schools that would consist the main school sites for this research. This step was accomplished through administering the Teacher Leadership Inventory survey developed by Angelle & DeHart (2010) to teachers in thirteen private schools to collect preliminary data about their understanding of teacher leadership and how it is being portrayed in their school. The schools that emerged in the first phase as having positive correlation with teacher leadership were selected to be the case schools in which further qualitative investigation is done. The second phase consisted of collecting in-depth information in the four case schools through individual semi-structured interviews with the school principals. The third phase involved conducting eight focus group interviews with teachers in the case schools as well as follow-up individual interviews with teachers whose contributions during the second phase needed more clarification or elaboration.

Accordingly, the investigation procedures followed comprise the basic operations of the grounded theory methodology, which are: a) the systematic selection of participants according to their relevance to the emerging categories, b) provisionally keeping the emerging categories and allowing them to steer the data collection process that would theoretically enrich the emerging categories, c) the systematic coding and analysis of the data to define the emerging categories, their properties and the relationships among them. In addition, based on the constant comparative method, the categories in each case school are identified and analyzed, then the four case schools are compared to one another in order to see the points of similarity and difference between them, and to identify the final categories that will define the overall theoretical framework (Charmaz, 2006).

The following section describes the research procedures and includes an overview of the research questions guiding the study, a description of the participant selection processes, as well as the data collection and data analysis procedures.

Questions Guiding the Study

This study focuses on understanding how teachers and school leaders in a private school setting in Lebanon perceive teacher leadership. It attempts to clarify the different leadership functions that teachers currently fulfill and undertake in various aspects of school life and whether they are aware or consider them as involving or requiring leadership skills. In addition, it investigates how the formal school leadership perceives teacher leadership in order to compare it with teachers' perception and examine if there is any alignment between the two perceptions, and consequently explore the implications and impact of that alignment or lack thereof could be having on how teacher leadership is or is not practiced in the school. Finally, this study aims to understand which factors in the school structure and environment promote teacher leadership and supports its development from both the teachers and school leaders' perspectives.

Therefore, this study will investigate the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' and school leaders' conceptions of teacher leadership?
 - a. What scope of acts do teachers undertake and perceive as involving leadership skills?
 - b. What scope of acts do school leaders perceive as involving leadership skills for teachers?
2. What are the similarities and differences between teachers' and school leaders' perception of teacher leadership?

3. What are the factors of the school environment that promote teacher leadership and support its development from the teachers' as well as the school leaders' perspectives?

Selection of the Study Sites and Participants

The grounded theory methodology guided the selection of the school sites and the participants in the study, whereby it was purposeful and steered by the researcher's review of the conceptual framework. This approach has been defined as "theoretical sampling" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), whereby the researcher collects and analyses data systematically allowing for categories to emerge then goes back to the field to collect and analyze more data in order to develop a theory. Theoretical sampling procedure starts with including participants with a wide range of variability to allow for as many categories as possible to be potentially uncovered.

Then the sampling becomes more targeted and the selection of participants gets to be determined to permit locating data that allow for the confirmation, elaboration, validation or limitation of the relations among the categories that emerged (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). In addition, in theoretical sampling, the researcher is more interested in exploring phenomena that are representative of ideas or constructs in their different forms and looking for instances that provide various examples and viewpoints of these constructs, and thus allow to create conceptual connections between the emerging categories (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).

The last phase of theoretical sampling is to conduct discriminate sampling, which involves making deliberate selection of specific participants to obtain the data still needed to integrate the categories, confirm the statements of relationships and complete any categories that need further development (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin,

1990, 1998). Theoretical sampling is stopped when no additional data can be found for the categories, or when the categories become “theoretically saturated” (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Those aspects of the theoretical sampling were followed during this study. Prior to the fieldwork, the researcher had to make decisions regarding the initial selection of school sites and participants. Practical considerations were considered mostly with regard to accessibility to school sites as well as the need to define the scope of the research study. Such a deliberate initial selection of sites or persons is a procedure supported by Strauss and Corbin (1990) if the researcher judges that they will address some of the categories expected to emerge.

The study is conducted in the educational district of Greater Beirut, which includes Beirut and its suburbs. The district is chosen because it has the largest agglomeration of private schools in the country, which account for 15.2 % of the total number of schools in Lebanon and 62.3 % of all the schools in Greater Beirut (CERD, 2015-2016). In addition, Greater Beirut serves the largest number of school students, which make up 30.4 % of the whole student population in Lebanon, among whom 73.7 % attend private schools (CERD, 2015-2016).

The study focuses only on private schools in Beirut for two main reasons. First, as previously explained in chapter one, the structure of the public schools and their affiliation and interdependence with the MEHE, the CERD, and the educational Governorates and districts puts them in a context where the roles of teachers and school principals are rigidly defined. Consequently, teachers’ role is strictly bound to classroom teaching and do not allow for any intersection of leadership and teaching (Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009), and the principals’ role is restricted to applying the decisions and policies issued by MEHE (Al-Amin, 1997a; Al-Amin & Kawas, 2009; Karami-Akkary, 1997).

The situation is slightly different in the private schools, where the role of the principals and the teachers encompasses a larger scope of authority than allowed within the structure of public schools. In fact, in some private schools shared leadership is found to be actually practiced and implemented (Berjaoui, 2013), allowing for teachers to take initiatives that are not only bound to the classroom and that involve them in participating in making decisions that extend outside of the realm of the classroom (Berjaoui, 2013; Itani-Malas, 2009). As this study mostly focuses on examining the perception of teachers and school leaders of the aspects that constitute teacher leadership and how they see that happening in their school, it is more meaningful to explore school contexts that could allow it to exist and which are not restricted by governmental policies and procedures.

Second, teachers' involvement in various leadership roles varies widely within the private sector and among different private schools as it largely depends on the school structure, the administrative policies, and the teachers' willingness and readiness to participate in school-wide decision-making (Berjaoui, 2013; Itani-Malas, 2009). Consequently, studying different private school contexts would allow to have a wider scope of how teacher leadership is perceived and to understand how it is supported and developed in different schools that have it, which would enrich the data and provide multiple examples and cases.

Selection of the school sites. In the Greater Beirut area, as per the statistical bulletin of CERD for the year 2015-2016, there are 434 private schools, serving around 232,678 of students. In the initial selection of schools, open sampling was followed considering the various aspects that characterize the types of schools as well as the numerous Beiruti communities, therefore allowing for the greatest diversity and representation among the schools.

These considerations include:

- a) The location of the school – targeting different areas inside Beirut and in its suburbs,
- b) The years of existence – ranging from startup schools that have been in operation from three years only up to schools that have been in existence for over 35 years,
- c) The size of the student body – ranging from small schools serving less than 200 students to large schools serving over 2000 students,
- d) The population the school serves – ranging from serving a relatively homogeneous population coming from a similar socio-economic background and religious sect, to serving a heterogeneous population that features families coming from diverse socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds,
- e) The socio-economic status of the school – ranging from lower middle to high socio-economic status, based on the tuition fees charged to the families,
- f) The language of instruction at the school – as explained in Chapter 1, the Lebanese educational system allows private school, in addition to teaching Arabic as the mother tongue and official language in the country, to teach in one or more foreign languages, which are typically English and French. Some schools are considered Anglophone with English being the main language of instruction at school, while others are Francophone with French being the main language of instruction, even though most of them teach the other foreign language as an additional language at the school usually starting from the elementary grade levels,
- g) The curricular program offered – whether the school follows the mandated Lebanese national curriculum which is designed assuming traditional roles for teachers, or an international program which presumes a more proactive role for

the teachers especially when it comes to curricular decision making, or a combination of both.

Teacher leadership inventory survey. In accordance with theoretical sampling (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the researcher selected twenty-five private schools featuring diverse characteristics as per the above-mentioned considerations and solicited their participation in the study. As the researcher strived to authentically distinguish schools that would emerge as appropriate case schools for this study, she identified a survey instrument that would support such endeavor, the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey. The TLI is a 17-item, four-factor model of teacher leadership developed by Angelle and Dehart (2010), which measures the teachers' perception of the extent to which teacher leadership exists and is supported in their school. A more detailed description of the TLI instrument is presented in the data collection tools section. The TLI was administered because it allowed the researcher to reach many schools and gather data from a large number of teachers working in different school settings and coming from diverse backgrounds without overburdening them.

From these twenty-five private schools that were contacted thirteen schools responded positively to the request and agreed to have their teachers fill out the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey. Among these, five schools scored highest and emerged as having positive correlation as to the teachers' perceptions of their current practices that support teacher leadership, the norms of interaction between teachers and school leadership, and the level of collective leadership within their school community (Angelle & Dehart, 2010). Only four of these five schools agreed to continue further in the study. They were therefore selected for more in-depth qualitative investigation to enrich the categories held provisionally in the theoretical framework. The choice to select two of the four schools was based on the researcher's knowledge of each of the two schools as a

practitioner, and her judgement that they will provide a valuable addition that will enrich the emerging categories.

The main characteristics of the four case schools are described hereafter while the names of the schools are withheld to ensure confidentiality in compliance with the guidelines of the research ethics and are numbered A, B, C and D as shown below. Table 3.1 provides a summary of the demographic characteristics of each school in terms of the year it was founded, the number of students currently enrolled, the number of teachers currently working there, the location of the school, the diversity of the student population and the tuition fees range. Whereas table 3.2 presents the curricular characteristics of each school, including the programs it offers, the language of instruction, the available grade levels, the availability of a special needs department, whether the school has been collaborating with any external educational consulting organization when the study was conducted and targeting which educational stage.

Table 3.1

Demographic characteristics of the case schools participating in the study in the academic year 2016-2017

School	Year Founded	# of Students	# of Teachers	Location	Student population	Range of Tuition Fees
A	2014	103	33	Beirut Suburb	Majority of Sunni Muslims	\$5,000 - \$6,000
B	1973	365	70	Beirut Suburb	Majority of Christians	\$6,700 - \$8,700
C	1975	179	28	Beirut	Majority of Shiaa Muslims	\$2,000 - \$3,000
D	2003	800	155	Beirut	Mixed Population	\$8,400 – \$11,600

Table 3.2

Curricular characteristics of the case schools participating in the study in the academic year 2016-2017

School	Programs offered	Language of Instruction	Grade Levels Available	Working with An External Educational Organization	Stage Targeted
A	IB-PYP	English / Arabic	KG1 – G5	Yes	Primary
B	Lebanese, American, IB-DP and IB-PYP	English / Arabic	KG1 – G12	Yes	Primary and Secondary
C	Lebanese	English / Arabic	KG1 – G11	Yes	Primary, Middle and Secondary
D	Lebanese and American High School	English / Arabic	KG1 – G12	Yes	Secondary

Selection of the participants. As this study aims to investigate the perceptions that school leaders and teachers have of teacher leadership and how it is depicted in their school environment, once the four case schools were defined the school principal at each site was automatically selected for the school leadership interview. Thus, four school principals participated in this study. In school A particularly, the principal's interview was additionally used to pilot test the interview protocol and make the needed changes to it.

Then, the teachers at each school site were solicited to participate in the study and take part in the focus group interviews. The invitation for participation was shared with the whole faculty by the school leadership at each site, and all the teachers who responded positively and agreed to participate in the study were invited to join a focus group interview. To accept the school as a case in the study, at least one focus group of teachers needed to be formed and consider that their input as representative of the school teachers' population (Yin, 2004). In total, 46 teachers participated in the focus group interviews at all school sites. In school A, a pilot focus group made of nine teachers from the preschool

and elementary grade levels was conducted to test the interview protocol and make the necessary edits to it. Six teachers who took part in the pilot participated again and joined another focus group one year later. Data collected from the pilot focus group was transcribed and used in the study.

Table 3.3 hereafter provides a summary of the participants in each one of the four school sites. Focus groups were arranged in a way so that teachers from the preschool and the elementary cycles were grouped together, and teachers from the middle and secondary cycles were grouped together. There were two reasons for such an arrangement. First, it was more practical and convenient for the school to schedule a common time for teachers to join the focus group. Second, teachers working together usually shared common experiences and could build on each other's intervention, which would minimize misunderstandings and give better clarification of the ideas shared.

Table 3.3

Participants in the study in each case school

School	School Principal	Number of teachers	Number of Focus Group	Grade Levels Included
A	1	25*	3	Preschool and Elementary
B	1	7	1	Preschool and Elementary
C	1	12	2	Preschool to Secondary
D	1	11	2	Preschool to Secondary
Total	4	46	8	Preschool to Secondary

Note. * The 25 teachers are divided as such: 9 in the pilot focus group and 16 in the other focus groups, 6 of which were in the pilot.

Methods of Data Collection

This section describes the methods used for data collection in this study, including the tools used and a narrative description of the procedures during the field work. Following the recommendations stipulated in the qualitative study design and grounded theory methodology, multiple sources of data were sought throughout this investigation (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Gall et al., 2005; Maxwell, 2005; Merriam, 2002; Yin, 1994, 2004, 2009, 2014). In addition, this study used qualitative methods as the main technique for collecting data, as they are considered the most appropriate when adopting the constructivist paradigm' postulation (Charmaz, 2006; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). The data collection methods that were used to develop a better understanding of teacher leadership include:

1. In-depth open-ended interviews with four school principals.
2. Focused interviews with eight groups of teachers.
3. Follow-up short interviews with four teachers.
4. A reflection journal depicting the researcher's decisions and reflections on the study's progression.

The different tools used for data collection include the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey (Angelle & Dehart, 2010) that was utilized to identify potential case schools, the individual semi-structured principal interview protocol, and the teachers focus group interview protocol. Moreover, this section explicates the procedures followed in each of the three phases of the data collection process and clarifies how each phase builds on the grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2006).

Data Collection Tools

As recommended in qualitative research, data in this study was collected from various data sources, which required the employment of different tools that were utilized

at different points in time during the study (Gall et al., 2005; Merriam, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012; Yin, 2004). Each tool helped collect a set of data and targeted a specific data source from those considered as the “traditional sources of data in qualitative research study” (Merriam, 2002, p.13). The following section describes these tools, which include 1) Teacher Leadership Inventory Survey developed by Angelle and Dehart (2010), 2) an interview protocol for school principals, and 3) an interview protocol for focus groups of teachers.

Teacher Leadership Inventory survey. The Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey is a 17-item, four-factor model of teacher leadership developed by Angelle and Dehart (2010). It measures the teachers’ perception of the extent to which teacher leadership exists and is supported in their school. The TLI instrument was chosen for this first phase because it allowed the researcher to reach many schools and gather data from a large number of teachers working in different school settings and coming from diverse backgrounds without overburdening them.

The TLI is a tool, which has been piloted and tested for validity that can measure the teachers’ perceptions of their current practices and concretely assess the norms of interaction as well as the level of collective leadership within a school community (Angelle & Dehart, 2010). It also was a short and easy instrument that wouldn’t take up too much of the teachers’ time.

The four factors of teacher leadership that are measured by the TLI are as follows:

- 1) Sharing expertise – where the teachers’ perception of teacher leadership is measured with regard to the teachers’ willingness to share their skills, knowledge and practice with their colleagues, thus collaborating and developing collective agency.

- 2) Sharing leadership – where the school principal’s willingness to share leadership with the teachers is measured as well as the teachers’ willingness to take on leadership responsibilities, therefore measuring the mutuality of sharing and accepting leadership.
- 3) Supra-practitioner – where teachers’ readiness to put on extra effort and take on leadership functions and tasks above and beyond their expected role in the classroom is measured, thus identifying teacher leaders.
- 4) Principal selection – which identifies if the principal’s actions promote exclusion or favoritism within the school, thus jeopardizing the collaboration among teachers and hindering the development of teacher leadership at the school (Appendix J).

Individual semi-structured interviews. Interviews are a typical form of data collection in qualitative investigation and are considered among the most important “open-ended” techniques (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p.176) that encourage the emergence of the categories in the study. Through standardized or semi-structured open-ended interviews, the researcher comes in with a set of categories to investigate but remains open to engage in any other topics that the participant brings up (Merriam, 2002). Some degree of standardization is particularly important when the investigation involves multiple case studies (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012), so that the main topics are talked in all interviews across sites. The nature of the questions asked allows the respondent to answer freely and creates a natural flow for the ideas shared. The most important aspect in interviewing is the researcher’s attitude towards the participants, conveying acceptance, respect, and open-mindedness (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012). The principal interview protocol (appendix H) was first piloted at one of the schools, then it was again modified to incorporate the new insights that emerged from the TLI survey data analysis.

Focus group interviews. As for focus group interviews, it is a technique borrowed from marketing research where typically, groups of 4-12 people sharing particular characteristics are formed and participants are asked questions focusing on a specific topic, hence the name (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012). The main purpose of focus groups is for the researcher to create a safe and open environment for participants to interact and express their viewpoints. According to Rossman and Rallis (2003, 2012), this procedure “assumes that an individual’s attitudes and beliefs do not form in a vacuum: people often need to listen to others’ opinions and understandings to clarify their own (p.193)”. The main difficulty here is again to create an atmosphere of tolerance that encourages the participants to interact freely. The researcher made sure to engage all focus group participants in the discussion, giving them time to respond and explain their ideas clearly. In addition, she accepted all the input shared and reminded the group that there is no right or wrong answer. She sat among the group and managed the flow of the discussion as a friendly conversation taking place among colleagues (Appendix I).

Data Collection Procedures

Data were collected over three different phases that were informed by the procedures of the case study methodology (Yin, 2004) and the grounded theory approach (Charmaz, 2006). In order to allow for an authentic emergence of the case schools that will be examined and further studied in-depth, a first phase of data collection was conducted, which consisted of administering the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey in thirteen private schools in Greater Beirut (Beirut and its suburbs). The four schools that showed the highest positive correlation as to the teachers’ perceptions of their current practices that support teacher leadership, the norms of interaction between teachers and school leadership, and the level of collective leadership within their school

community (Angelle & DeHart, 2010) were selected for the second phase while the others were disregarded.

The data collection in the second and third phases utilized two data sources, as recommended in qualitative research (Gall et al., 2005; Merriam, 2002; Rossman & Rallis, 2003, 2012; Yin, 2004). Specifically, the following procedures considered the “traditional sources of data in qualitative research study” (Merriam, 2002, p.13) were followed: semi-structured interviews and focus groups. The second phase consisted of collecting more in-depth qualitative data of the understanding of teacher leadership from school principals at those four different school sites identified from phase one through semi-structured interviews with the school principals. The third phase consisted of conducting focus group interviews with different groups of teachers in these same schools using a semi-structured interview protocol (Appendix I). The researcher conducted additional short individual interviews with teachers whom she believed needed to clarify and elaborate more on their ideas and interjections about teacher leadership at their school.

Administering the Teacher Leadership Inventory survey. As the researcher endeavored to allow the case school to emerge authentically, she used the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey instrument, developed by Angelle and Dehart (2010). To officially have access to using the TLI in this study, the researcher contacted Dr. Pamela Angelle by email and got her permission to use the survey instrument. She also got the permission to translate it into Arabic in order to reach a larger teacher population, knowing that many teachers may not be proficient in English language and therefore would prefer to fill out the survey in Arabic (Appendix D).

These twenty-five private schools were contacted by email and asked to participate in the study. One week later, the schools that did not reply were contacted by telephone and the principals’ secretaries were asked to transmit the email to the principals. Out of

those schools, thirteen schools responded positively to the request and agreed to have their teachers fill out the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey. The school principals were requested to fill out and sign the Principal's Initial Permission Form (Appendix B) and send it back either in hard copy or electronically to the researcher. It was explicitly shared that the TLI was the first step of data collection for this study and that if the school were to be selected for the second phase of qualitative data collection another permission form would be sent to the principal.

The survey instrument was uploaded as an online form and the link was shared with all the schools in both English and Arabic. In turn, the school leadership forwarded the link electronically to all the teachers on the faculty, explaining that participation is totally voluntary. The online form featured a separately filled cover page in both English and Arabic that explains to the teachers the purpose of the study, the expectations from them and requesting their explicit approval to participate (Appendix C). Once the participants approved filling the survey, they were automatically directed to a link to the survey questionnaire where they were asked to only put the name of their school. There was no way to tag the survey entries with the consent forms, so the anonymity and integrity of the survey was not compromised. The reason to ask for the school name on the TLI form is to be able to analyze the results both in the aggregate as well as for each school separately. In five of the schools that agreed to participate, the survey form was printed out and teachers were asked to fill it on paper because of the unreliable Internet connection at the schools and because the teachers preferred to do it that way. One of the schools asked to skip the Teacher Consent Form and have teachers access the online survey form directly not to cause the teachers any doubt of compromising their anonymity. In the thirteen schools that participated, a total of 431 teachers filled the surveys.

Appendix G reflects the number of teachers who responded to the survey from each of the thirteen schools sorted in ascending order.

Principal interviews. The second phase of data collection consisted of collecting more in-depth qualitative data depicting the perception of school principals to understand how they perceive teacher leadership, if they see it existing in their schools, and what they perceive in their school environment as supporting or hindering teacher leadership. The principals at those schools were contacted again by phone and by email and they were requested to fill out a second permission form explicitly giving the researcher permission to utilize the school site for the second phase of qualitative data collection (Appendix F). All the principals contacted agreed to participate and were included in the sample. The researcher contacted each school principal and an appointment was scheduled for the interview to take place. A total of 4 principal interviews were conducted, one at each case school. Each interview took between 30 to 45 minutes approximately, and they were all audiotaped for later transcription. Interviews were conducted in English and Arabic, as the participant chose to answer. All transcriptions were translated to English for analysis. All interviews were transcribed in entirety.

Teacher focus groups. The third phase included conducting focus groups with teachers at the four identified case school sites. The principal at each school invited teachers to participate and shared the participation request with all the teachers on the faculty, clarifying that their participation is totally voluntary. Teachers who agreed to participate were asked to sign the Teacher's Informed Consent Form in English or Arabic (Appendix C) if they hadn't done so in phase one. Focus groups interviews with different groups of teachers at each school site were conducted. There were between 1 to 3 focus group interviews at each school, depending on the number of teachers who agreed to participate. Teachers willing to participate were grouped either by department or by grade

level cycle, thus forming groups of 5 to 10 teachers in each focus group meeting. All focus group meetings were video-taped and audio-recorded simultaneously to keep track of the interventions and the flow of the discussion. A total of 8 focus group interviews were conducted at all 4 school sites, and each one took between 40 to 60 minutes. The teachers' focus group interview protocol (Appendix I) was also piloted at one of the schools and was modified to incorporate the new questions that surfaced from the TLI survey data analysis.

Table 3.4 presents the number of teachers who participated in the focus group interviews at each school site in comparison to the number of teachers who filled the TLI survey.

Table 3.4

Number of teachers who participated in the focus group interviews at each school site

School	Teachers Who Filled the TLI Survey in Phase 1	Teachers Who Participated in the Focus Group Interviews
A	21	25*
B	17	7
C	23	12
D	57	13
Total	118	9 (pilot) + 48 (6 were in the pilot)

Note. * The 25 teachers are divided as such: 9 in the pilot focus group and 16 in the other focus groups, 6 of which were in the pilot.

In addition, follow-up individual interviews were conducted as needed with teachers that were selected from the focus group meetings at each case school. In total, four follow-up interviews were conducted. Participants were contacted over the phone and notes from the interviews were taken. The teachers contacted were from two of the four schools, two teachers from each school. The individual interviews allowed for more focused data collection and more in-depth understanding of the teachers' individual

perception of the various aspects and issues that arose in the focus groups about how teacher leadership is being perceived and implemented within each school context. The individual teacher interviews also provided grounds to compare whether the aggregate understanding of teachers in focus group settings is similar or different from the understanding of individual teachers about teacher leadership. It also helped clarify the nuances in perceptions and elucidate any ideas that were not made clear in the interviews and address any new categories that emerged during the focus groups and that needed further discussion and clarification. Finally, individual teacher interviews allowed the researcher to triangulate the data collected from the focus groups, the principal interviews and school documentation.

Data Analysis Procedures

This study follows a constant comparative approach to data analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Merriam, 2002; Yin, 2004), which is at the basis of the grounded theory research methodology (Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Consequently, the established theoretical framework guides the data collection process but is not exclusive to conceptual understanding that may emerge from analyzing the data. The researcher continuously compares the data for similarities and differences and adapts the questions as new findings emerge from the field work, thus remaining open to any findings or categories that would emerge from the various data sources.

According to Charmaz (2006), data analysis in the grounded theory approach starts early in the process as the researcher codes the emerging data as it is being collected, therefore defining and categorizing data as it is being studied. Data should not be assigned attractive labels nor should it be forced into preconceived categories, rather coding is perceived as an approach to “helps us to gain a new perspective on our material and to focus further data collection and may lead us in unforeseen directions” (Charmaz, 2006,

p.515), allowing for the emergence of new theories that lead to further data collection.

Moreover, the study followed two stages for coding the collected data, initial or open coding and selective or focused coding (Glazer, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998).

Initial or open coding starts with examining the data line-by-line and defining the actions and events as they uncover. Such tedious process allows the researcher to study the data without imposing his or her own beliefs and theories on it and remain authentic to the research participants' own perspectives of their realities (Charmaz, 2006). In addition, it allows for the generation of a wide scope of categories and provide a starting point for the data analysis. The next step in initial coding is to develop the dimensions and properties of the categories, what Strauss and Corbin (1990) call dimensionalizing them, followed by axial coding that aims to refine the categories, linking a category to its sub-categories.

The researcher started with an open coding of the interviews with the principal of the case schools. She coded the transcripts depicting the main ideas that emerged, categorized them and looked for patterns that guided her in answering the research questions. Then, she coded the transcripts of the teacher focus groups, again line-by-line, comparing them to and building on the codes that have already been used from the principal interviews and adding new codes as they emerged. With each transcript, the researcher moved to more focused coding as the codes were more refined, sub-categories were grouped under a broader category, and big ideas were organized and color-coded. The coding of the last transcript used the existing categories, thus ensuring that there was saturation of the data. An example of initial coding conducted for coding an interview with a principal is presented in Figure 4 below.

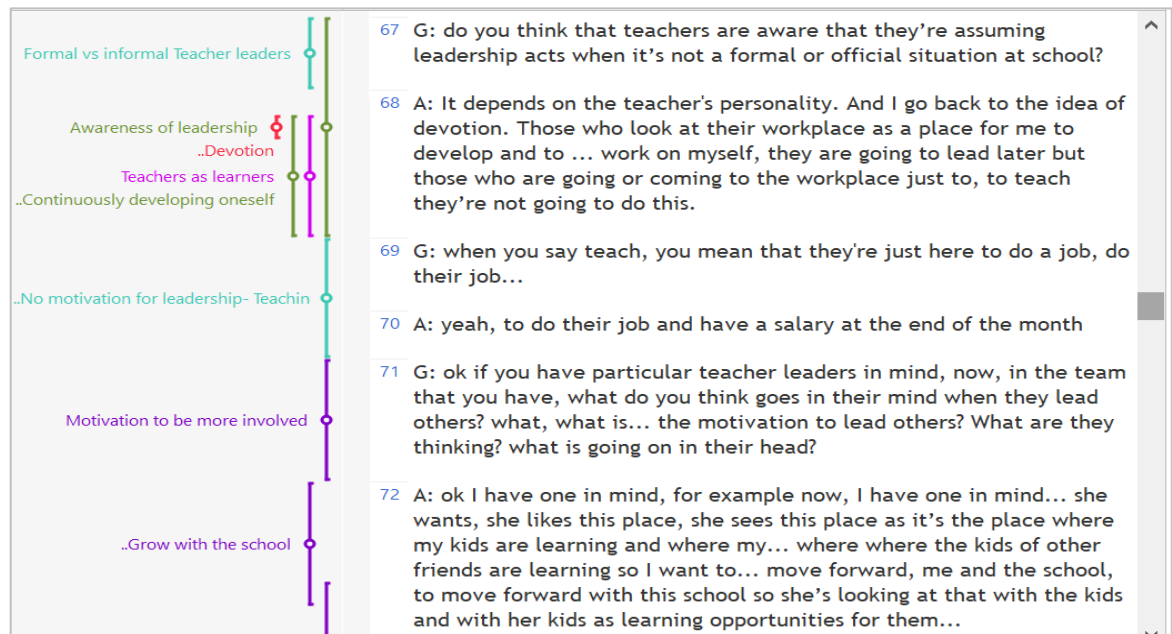


Figure 4. Sample of initial coding.

The second stage of data analysis consists of selective or focused coding, where the researcher takes the initial codes that frequently reappear in the initial coding and endeavors to sort and organize the categories, compare and relate them to other categories, and refine them further (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). These codes provide more precise categorization of the data and account for most of it. Furthermore, Charmaz (2006) explains that purposefully selecting codes allows for an authentic analysis and “gives us a check on the fit between the emerging theoretical framework and the empirical reality it explains” (p. 516). Figure 5 shows an example of focused coding and Figure 6 shows the main categories under which all the codes were organized.

Code	Frequency
Teachers collaborate	34
Teachers as learners	23
Awareness of leadership	62
Motivation to be more involved	5
See change happening	1
Like to make a difference	1
Grow with the school	1
Have a leadership position	1
Bad previous teaching experience	1
Being part of a new successful Islamic school	1
Being passionate	2
Caring about children / children's learning	4
Being afraid to make mistakes / to be labelled	3
No motivation for leadership- Teaching as just a job	4
Passive Teachers / Accept anything	3
Feeling of helplessness	2
Funtions Teachers / TL undertake	8
Provide PD for colleagues	3
Design learning spaces at school	2
Provide support and guidance to others	4
Designing / Reviewing the curriculum	3
Teacher leaders influence other colleagues	6
School supporting TL / Empowering teachers	17
Hold them responsible for decisions	4
Listen to the teachers' concerns	4
Tolerating / not tolerating mistakes	7
Sharing what they know with the admin	1

Figure 5. Example of focused coding.

Teachers collaborate
Teachers as learners
Awareness of leadership
Motivation to be more involved
Funtions Teachers / TL undertake
School supporting TL / Empowering teachers
Formal vs informal Teacher leaders
Characteristics of teacher leaders
Teachers' roles / duties

Figure 6. Main coding categories.

During the field work, data was analyzed as it was collected. Understanding reached steered the data collection process in terms of the selection of the next group of participants and interview questions. The researcher used the field notes taken after the interviews and focus groups for preliminary analysis to set the subsequent course for data collection. For example, there was a need to clarify some questions or rephrase them or ask additional prompting questions when the input seemed to have more than one interpretation. At the end of data collection, a total of four in-depth interviews were conducted with principals, eight focus groups with teachers and four follow-up interviews with individual teachers. Full transcripts of the interviews and focus groups were entered as a database using the MAXQDA 2018 digital tool for qualitative data analysis. MAXQDA is a software package for qualitative and mixed methods research and supports the grounded theory methodology, which is compatible with the type of data collected for this study.

The data collected was organized under each case school separately first, while carefully describing the contextual features of each one of them, while taking into consideration the selected case schools do not necessarily make them a representative sample of all private schools in Greater Beirut. In each case school in the study, findings from the interview with the principal were compared to those from the teachers' focus groups and direct quotations from the interviews were used. Data was triangulated by looking for instances of convergence and divergence between the principal and the teachers at the school (Charmaz, 2006; Gall et al., 2005; Merriam, 2002; Yin, 2004). Then, findings were compared across the four case schools to look for possible points of convergence and divergence at the level of the principals and at the level of the teachers, thus giving an overview of the perception of teacher leadership within each school context

as well as across four contexts in the Greater Beirut area. An example of the coding process and data analysis process is presented in Appendix K.

Quality Criteria and Limitations of the Study

The following section explains the quality criteria adopted in this research followed by the limiting factors encountered in the design of the study and that impact the quality of the findings and conclusions.

Quality Criteria in Qualitative Inquiry

As this research is a qualitative study, the discussion on the limitations and quality of the research is based on the quality criteria that are compatible with the qualitative and constructivist approach. Unlike quantitative research that relies on the positivist paradigm, is number-based and rigidly applies “traditional criteria like generalizability, objectivity, and reliability” (Tracy, 2010, p. 838), qualitative research is more flexible, complex and contextually situated (Guba & Lincoln, 2005). In response to the abundance of concepts for qualitative research quality, Tracy (2010) designed a conceptual framework that aims to set universal criteria for qualitative research quality that still attends to “the creative complexity of the qualitative methodological landscape” (p. 837). These “big-tent” criteria were adopted and used as a reference to design this study and assess its limitations. They include (a) worthy topic, (b) rich rigor, (c) sincerity, (d) credibility, (e) resonance, (f) significant contribution, (g) ethics, and (h) meaningful coherence. The researcher has followed these criteria in designing this study and continued to follow them throughout the research implementation to ensure the trustworthiness and validity of the findings.

Worthy topic – Research that merely verify or confirm assumptions that are already well established have some value and show change or stability over time. However, a “good qualitative research is relevant, timely, significant, interesting, or evocative” (Tracy, 2010, p. 840), as it investigates novel ideas that arise in the researcher’s

context, challenges existing assumptions, and questions well-accepted beliefs and practices. This is what makes such studies worthwhile. The current study addresses teacher leadership, which is a novel concept in Lebanon that has not been investigated before as it looks at a different role that teachers can and should play in the context of sustainable school improvement.

Rich rigor – Unlike quantitative research that is valued for its accuracy, high quality qualitative studies are marked by the richness and variety of theoretical concepts, data sources, contexts, and samples. In addition, they show rigor in the way that the researcher conducted the study, through putting appropriate time, effort, and due diligence to collect significant and interesting data as well as to follow thorough and transparent data analysis procedures (Tracy, 2010). This quality criterion was followed rigorously as the researcher showed diligence in explicating in detail all the steps of the data collection and analysis procedures and kept a journal to log her reflections while conducting the study.

Sincerity – It is when the researcher shows authenticity, genuineness, transparency and honesty about one's own biases and goals and is able to self-reflect on how such biases have played a role in the study and in the research process. The researcher was quite sincere in reflecting on her work in this study and in her biases especially that she had a working relationship with participants in two schools, where she engaged in designing a conducting a professional development program for teachers on child-centered pedagogical approaches.

Credibility – It refers to the “trustworthiness and plausibility of the research findings” (Tracy, 2010, p. 842), which make the reader want to act upon them. In qualitative research, credibility is achieved through various practices (Creswell & Miller, 2000), namely a thick description, triangulation or crystallization, multivocality and

partiality (Tracy, 2010). In addition, thorough documentation of the procedures and steps taken as well as setting up detailed and specific protocols and databases are highly recommended in qualitative case studies (Yin, 2003). Thick descriptions of phenomena allow the readers to understand not only what is being shared but also what is not being told by the participants as the culture and the context being explored become better understood, allowing the readers to come to their own conclusions instead of getting the researcher's perspective of what to think. The researcher endeavored to provide thick descriptions of what she saw, what she learned and what she understood from the interactions with the participants in the study as thoroughly as possible in order to allow the readers to get immersed in the study and develop an understanding of the various contexts they work within. In addition, she continuously recapped the interventions of the participants to make sure their views were shared clearly. As for triangulation, although arguments show that it does not necessarily improve accuracy in qualitative research, as research participants may adopt different beliefs or attitudes in different contexts and still consider results as true, utilizing multiple types and sources of data and varied methods is still considered valuable. Triangulation allows the researcher to notice convergence in the data collected from various sources, thus confirming that this particular incident or fact is perceived the same way by different participants for example (Yin, 2004). The value of triangulation is that it allows "different facets of problems to be explored, increases scope, deepens understanding, and encourages consistent (re) interpretation" (Tracy, 2010, p.843). A close notion is that of multivocality that allows various points of view to be explored to make meaning and gives the participants an active role in sharing their reflections of the ideas that they shared and which they believe reflect their reality. The researcher abided by this criterion and put effort to highlight any issues that were raised by

participants across the different focus groups and in the principal's interview to make sure that the various viewpoints were clarified to the reader.

Resonance – When the research can affect an audience and potentially be meaningful across various contexts and situations allowing for transferability or generalizability, resonance is achieved. Transferability is attained when readers can relate their own situation with the research story and consequently transfer it to their own reality. As for generalizability, qualitative researchers usually do not seek to generalize across cases, but rather within them, as they take small occurrences and frame them within the larger context (Tracy, 2010). The researcher attempted to create connections between the different study sites and make links that would provide an overview of the landscape of teacher leadership across different types of Lebanese private schools, so that any private school can relate her case to the developed continuum with regard to gaining understanding on how it supports or hinders the development of teacher leadership.

Significant contribution – When the research study provides answers to questions such as “Does the study extend knowledge?”, “Improve practice?”, “Generate ongoing research?”, “Liberate or empower?” (Tracy, 2010, p.438) then it brings significant contribution to understanding social interactions. Research can provide theoretical, practical, heuristic, or methodological significance or a combination of these. In fact, this study contributes significantly in explaining how teachers and principals perceive teacher leadership in the context within which they interact and collaborate, which provides insights into the different factors that need to be in place for it to thrive and develop. Given the scarcity of research on teacher leadership in the context of Lebanese schools is makes a significant contribution to the international literature by illuminating this phenomenon in a new context.

Ethics – Ethical considerations in qualitative research are especially important as it involves human participants whose lives are being studied. There are procedural, situational, relational, and exiting ethics. Procedural ethics pertain to the participants' right to know the nature, scope and consequences of the study and that their participation is voluntary. Situational ethics assume that each context or situation is different, and the researcher must continuously question ethical decisions made during the study considering the particularities of each situation. Relational ethics require the researcher to be cognizant and mindful of the consequences that the study has on the participants, always keeping respectful mutual relationships that attend to the cultural aspects and traditions in doing things. Finally, exiting ethics extend beyond the data collection phase and involve how the researcher exits the site and shares the findings (Tracy, 2010). The researcher made sure to explain to all study participants the scope and purpose of this research, their role in it, and how their contributions will be used. She kept all participants' and schools' identities confidential and made sure not to divulge any information that may jeopardize this confidentiality. In addition, she abided by the requirements and the ethical standards of the international review board and got clearance to use the data collection tools.

Meaningful coherence – “Studies that are meaningfully coherent eloquently interconnect their research design, data collection, and analysis with their theoretical framework and situational goals” (Tracy, 2010, p.848). This does not mean that they are not messy or that they cannot borrow constructs from various paradigms. Rather, they ensure that a coherent thread is built throughout the research that leads the reader to a solid understanding of the different pieces of the study. This study strived to keep a meaningful coherence across its data collection and analysis procedures throughout the various stages to ensure solid connection to the goals and conceptual framework. In summary, the design and data collection procedures in this study endeavored to tackle as much of the above-

mentioned quality criteria as possible. First, this study challenges the current practices in education whereby the teacher's role is confined to teaching inside the classroom while leadership is the sole responsibility of the school principal. Second, the researcher kept a journal and explicated thoroughly the study procedures, the data collection and the thinking process that steered the decisions impacting data analysis. In addition, she continuously reflected on her own biases and convictions throughout the research process, being an advocate to teacher leadership herself. Furthermore, the researcher strived for credibility as she provided a thick description of the context of each case. Additionally, the researcher followed the reliability procedures proposed by Gibbs (2007) to ensure reliability and which include: checking interview transcripts for mistakes, writing clear notes about the coding procedures and the codes that explicate the emerging categories and continuously comparing the data to the codes. In fact, the researcher sought another researcher's input to separately code randomly selected passages from the interview transcripts in order to conduct cross checking of the choice of codes and to reach intercoder agreement (Creswell, 2003 & 2009), thus providing consistency and qualitative reliability. As to the ethical considerations, this study procedures respected all ethics pertaining to the participants' voluntary participation and understanding of the scope and nature of the research as well as to the confidentiality and anonymity of their contributions. Lastly, this study contributed to a better understanding of human interaction within different school contexts about teacher leadership and how it is perceived, practiced and understood by the main stakeholders who are the teachers and the school principals. It also strived to keep a meaningful coherence across its data collection and analysis procedures throughout the various stages to ensure solid connection to the goals and conceptual framework.

Limitations of the Study

This study, like any other study in social sciences, had its limitations, which are explained hereafter. The first limitation is due to the limited time the researcher had in the field as data collection took place around the end of the school year. The participants made time for the interviews and the focus groups but there was no access after that to conduct member checks with the interviewees. Consequently, the final report of the themes that emerged was not shared with the participants for validation of the information synthesized. The researcher had to rely on the prompts used during the interviews to make sure the input from all participants was genuine and authentic. However, the data collection was conducted in stages and the researcher uses the constant comparative method where she compared segments of data collected through multiple sources and from many individuals to help ensure the credibility of the results.

The second limitation is related to the types of data collection procedures, which relied on surveys and interviews. In answering a survey, some participants did not provide answers to all the questions, and the explanation for not doing so remains unidentified. Furthermore, the presence of the researcher during interviews and focus groups may have influenced the participants' responses as they could have answered what they thought was expected of them. As some scholars warn, this might have caused some bias in the data (Creswell, 2003 & 2009). In addition, participants' engagement, perception and verbal expression varied between individual interviewees, especially during focus groups, which scholars indicate that it may affect the information that is shared (Creswell, 2009). Lastly, the language in which the interviews and focus groups were conducted used concurrently English and Arabic and sometimes French, whereas the reported findings were done in English. The interviews were directly translated as they were transcribed before they were

analyzed. This may be a limitation as it could have made it hard to track the data to its original source.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

This chapter presents the findings from the analysis of data collected in the field. It is divided into six main sections: a) a description of the practice of teacher leadership in Lebanese private schools, b) the selection process of the case schools for this study, c) a thick description of the individual context of each case school, d) the analysis of enacted teacher leadership across the four case studies from the teachers' perspective, e) teacher leadership from the principals' perspective, and f) the factors that promote teacher leadership at school from the perspective of both teachers and school principals. The chapter concludes with a summary of the study results.

The practice of Teacher Leadership in Lebanese private schools

As explained in Chapter 3, the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey (Angelle & Dehart, 2010), depicting how teachers perceive teacher leadership, what it looks like and how it is supported in their school, was administered in Lebanese private schools to allow for the identification of case schools where the qualitative study will be conducted. The following section presents the results of the survey and the subsequent selection of the four case schools.

The researcher reached out to 25 private schools in Greater Beirut (Beirut and its suburbs) to collect preliminary data on the perception of the teachers of teacher leadership in their school. Thirteen schools agreed to participate in the study and a total of 431 respondents completed the survey and were therefore included in the sample. The survey was made available to all teachers in both English and Arabic and they had the choice of either language. The responses were then analyzed according to the four factors in the TLI model, which are: "Sharing Expertise", "Sharing Leadership", "Supra-Practitioner" and Leadership via "Principal Selection". Results were visually represented in 4-item Likert

scale pie charts where answers pertaining to each factor were summarized ranging between “Routinely”, “Sometimes”, “Seldom”, and “Never”. In addition, findings were represented in bar graphs showing the responses per statement for each one of the factors to highlight the nuances within each factor. A sample of the data analysis and visual representations for the factor “Sharing Expertise” is available in Appendix E.

Sharing Expertise

The first factor in the TLI is “Sharing Expertise”. It measures the perception of teachers of their colleagues’ overall attitude towards sharing pedagogical and classroom management information as well as collaborating with one another at school to improve teaching practice. It comprised five statements that address teachers’ willingness to ask colleagues for assistance in dealing with classroom-related issues such as student behavior, to share knowledge, resources, or ideas with others, to discuss approaches for improving student learning, and to keep themselves up-to-date on education issues related to their area of expertise. The TLI statements that address “Sharing Expertise” are:

- Q1. Teachers ask one another for assistance when we have a problem with student behavior in the classroom.
- Q2. Other teachers willingly offer me assistance if I have questions about how to teach a new topic or skill.
- Q3. Teachers here share new ideas for teaching with other teachers such as through grade / department meetings, school wide meetings, professional development, etc.
- Q4. Teachers discuss ways to improve student learning.
- Q7. Teachers stay current on education research in our grade level / subject area / department.

The results for the “Sharing Expertise” factor show that most teachers share knowledge with colleagues and ask each other for help and advice. As represented in Figure 7, over 56% of respondents declared that they routinely share their practice with their colleagues, while around 36% said that they sometimes do, and around 8% said that they seldom or never collaborate with other teachers. A closer analysis of the data (Figure 8) show that teachers are more willing to offer assistance to others (59%), share new ideas in whole school staff meetings (66%) or discuss ways to improve student learning (66%) and stay up to date on education research in their subject area (54%) than to ask for help when it comes to dealing with student behavior (37%). This finding was interesting and was highlighted as a point of further investigation in the qualitative research in the case schools.

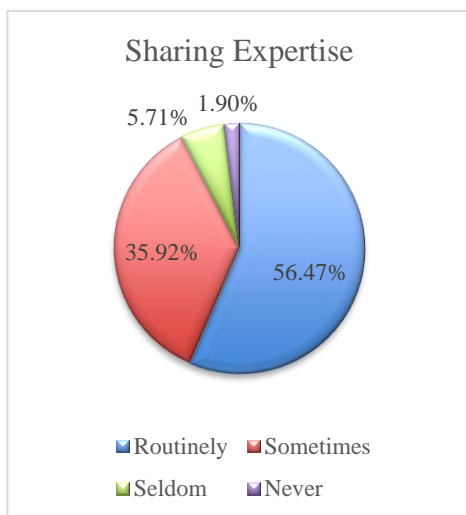


Figure 7. Overall results for Sharing Expertise

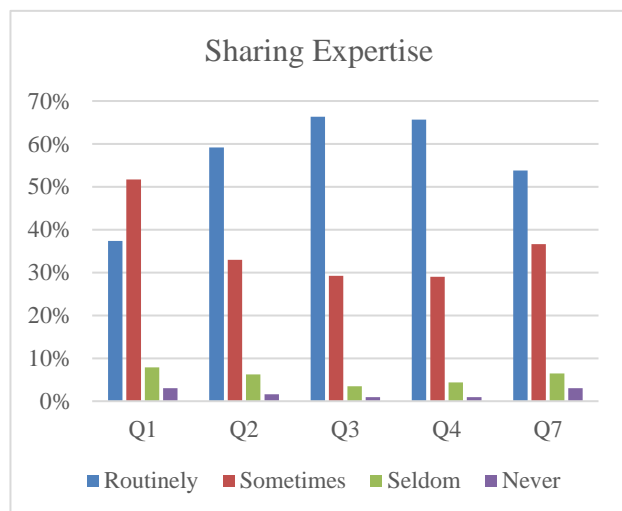


Figure 8. Results for each statement for Sharing Expertise

Sharing Leadership

The second TLI factor is “Sharing Leadership”, which addresses the perception of teachers of the willingness of the school leadership to involve them in decision making on issues relevant to their own professional development, the school’s overall improvement and on matters related to teaching and learning. In addition, this factor tackles the

teachers' willingness to take on leadership opportunities as they become available. Six statements tackled "Sharing Leadership", they were:

- Q5. Teachers are involved in making decisions about activities such as professional development, cross-curricular projects, etc.
- Q6. Teachers are actively involved in improving the school as a whole.
- Q12. The principal responds to the concerns and ideas of the teachers.
- Q13. Teachers plan the content of professional learning activities at my school.
- Q14. Teachers have opportunities to influence important decisions even if they do not hold an official leadership position.
- Q16. Time is provided for teachers to collaborate about matters relevant to teaching and learning.

According to the survey results, most teachers responded that they believe teachers are quite involved in decision making at school. As presented in Figure 9, over 34.8% state that they are routinely involved, around 44% say that they are involved sometimes, while around 20% feel that they are rarely or never involved in decision making at school. This distribution was relatively similar (Figure 10) with regard to responses about teachers' involvement in improving the school as a whole (48%), in their feeling that the school principal usually responds to their concerns and ideas (42%), and in teachers agreeing that they are involved in planning the content of professional learning activities at their school (44%). The percentage of teachers who shared that they routinely participate in decisions concerning their own professional development was around 31%, whereas those who believe they have enough time to collaborate with their colleagues about matters relevant to teaching and learning was 37%.

However, only 6% of the respondents believe that teachers usually have opportunities to impact important decisions at school, especially when they do not hold an

official leadership position, while 49% believe that they sometimes do, and the remaining 45% think that they rarely or never influence important decisions if they are not in a formal leadership position. Such a high percentage reflected some major controversy in teachers' perception and beliefs when it comes to being actively involved in shared leadership at school. A point that surely required more in-depth qualitative exploration in the case schools to clarify its meaning.

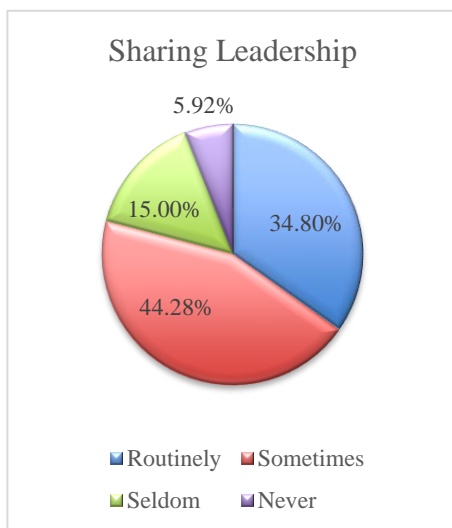


Figure 9. Overall results for Sharing Leadership

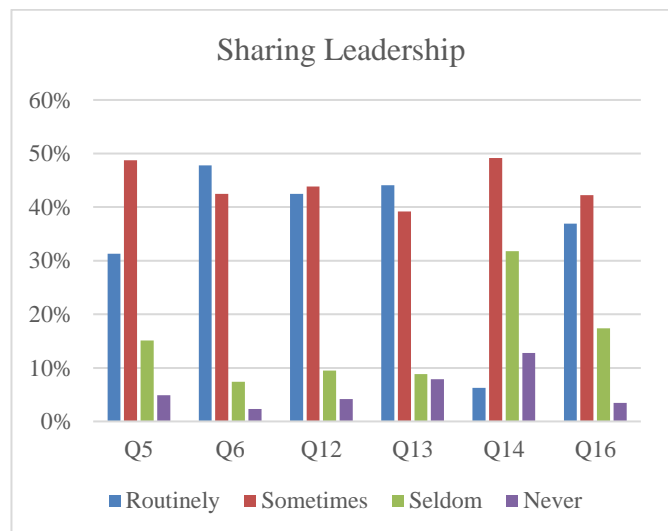


Figure 10. Results for each statement for Sharing Leadership

Supra-Practitioner

The third TLI factor is “Supra-Practitioner”, which depicts the perception of teachers of behaviors that are not only beyond their habitual roles, but that also engage teachers in willingly staying beyond working hours to support colleagues or work on school improvement activities. Three statements in the survey aim to address this factor. They are:

- Q8. Teachers willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities.
- Q9. Teachers willingly stay after school to help other teachers who need assistance.

Q10. Teachers willingly stay after school to work with administrators, if administrators need assistance.

The overall findings for this factor are reflected in Figure 11 and show that less than 13% of the teachers regularly stay after school hours to work, around 41% do so sometimes, while almost 45% rarely or never willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities, help other teachers or assist school administrators. From those who expressed that they regularly or sometimes willingly stay after school, the majority (66%) responded that they do that to work on school improvement activities (Figure 12). The percentage drops to less than 49% when it comes to helping colleagues who need assistance or working with administrators who need help. This difference was another point of interest to be further investigated in the qualitative research that followed.

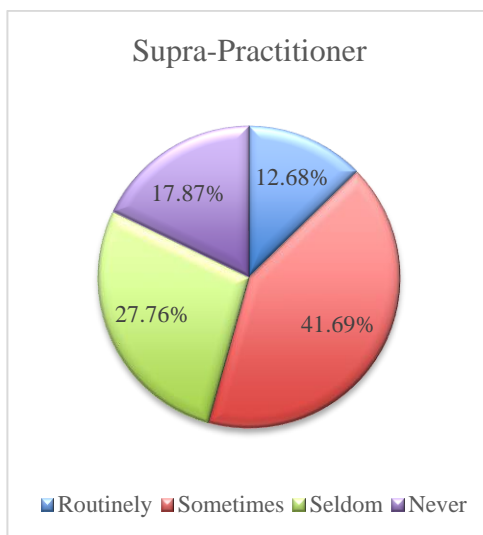


Figure 11. Overall results for Supra-Practitioner

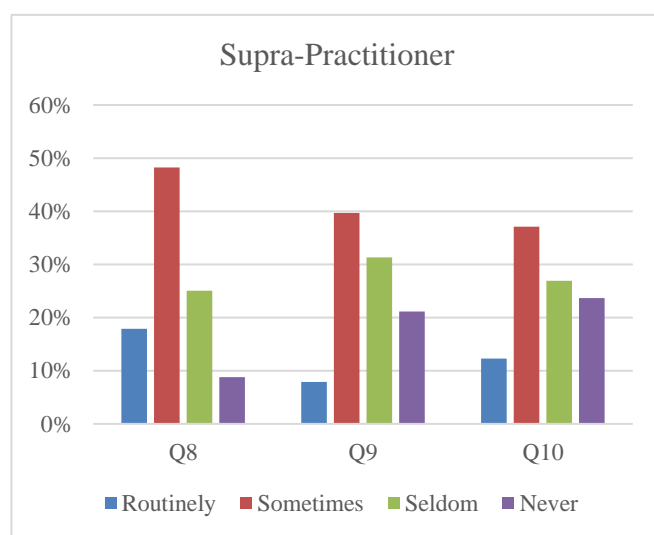


Figure 12. Results for each statement for Supra-Practitioner

Principal Selection

The fourth and last factor in the TLI is “Principal Selection”. It covers teachers’ perception of the school principal’s attitude toward supporting teacher leadership at school and how. Three statements within the survey targeted this factor. They are:

Q11. Administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities.

Q15. The principal consults the same small group of teachers for input on decisions.

Q17. Most teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been principal appointed.

As portrayed in Figure 13, most responses show that there is never (34%) or rarely (27%) a negative influence from the principal when it comes to supporting teacher leadership at school. However, around 38% of respondents shared that there is sometimes (29%) or routinely (8%) some principal selection, which may affect how well teacher leadership is supported at school. More specifically, most teachers surveyed stated that they never (43%) or rarely (29%) had administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities, while some shared that it happens sometimes (23%) and 5% said it happened routinely. Identical results are found regarding having the principal consult the same small group of teachers for input on decisions, with 43% of respondents saying that the principal never consults the same group of teachers, 29% stating the principal rarely does, and the remaining respondents saying that the principal sometimes (23%) or routinely (5%) does that. These responses bring a disagreement with what was stated earlier about shared leadership (Q14), especially regarding teachers' perception of not having the opportunity to influence important decisions if they do not hold an official leadership position. Such disparity may be the result of a misconception of what teacher leadership entails and what needs to happen at school to support it. Finally, the responses to the last statement expressing that teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been appointed by their principal, results showed that around 59% of the respondents confirmed that sometimes (44%) or always (15%) this is the case, while 25% said it is rarely so and 16% said it is never like that (Figure 14). These results show that teachers are aware that they are able to take on leadership roles without official

appointment and that principals will make exceptions to support teachers showing leadership.

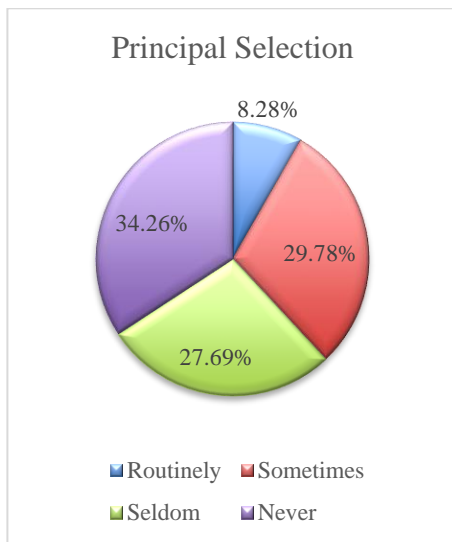


Figure 13. Overall results for Principal Selection

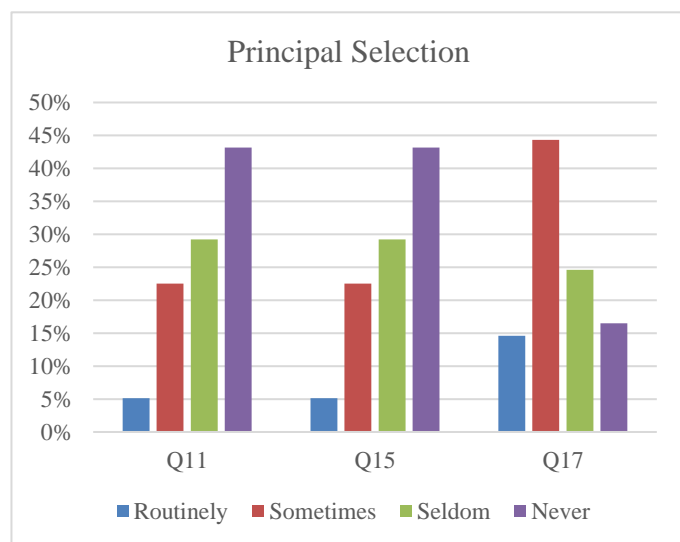


Figure 14. Results for each statement for Principal Selection

In summary, the survey results show that most respondents perceive that there are various aspects of teacher leadership being practiced and supported in their school. In fact, 28% of respondents stated that practices related to or supporting teacher leadership routinely take place at their school, 38% declared that such practices are sometimes present, while 19% responded that they seldom notice them and 15% stated that they never do (Figure 15). More specifically, the findings represented in Figure 16 show that most respondents usually or sometimes share their expertise with their colleagues (56% and 36% respectively), participate in decisions pertaining to teaching and learning with the school leadership (34% and 44% respectively), go above and beyond their required role to support colleagues, administrators and students (13% and 42% respectively), and do not see that the principal or the administrative team stand in their way to become teacher leaders (8% and 30% respectively). On the other hand, a total of 8% of respondents shared that expertise is rarely or never shared at their school, neither is leadership (21%). Another 46% shared that they seldom or never put more effort than is required to support the

school or their colleagues, and 62% stated that principal selection of specific teacher leaders rarely or never take place at their school.

Consequently, the results described in this section warrant further inquiry and informed the formulation of the interview questions for the school principals and the focus groups of teachers, highlighting the involvement of teachers in decision making at the school level, their engagement in designing their professional development opportunities, and collaborating with their colleagues to improve their practice, to make sure that disparities that were noticed here were addressed and clarified in the collection of qualitative data phase.

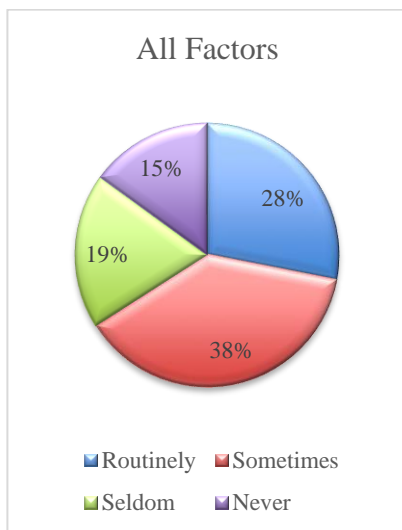


Figure 15. Aggregate results for the Teacher Leadership Inventory

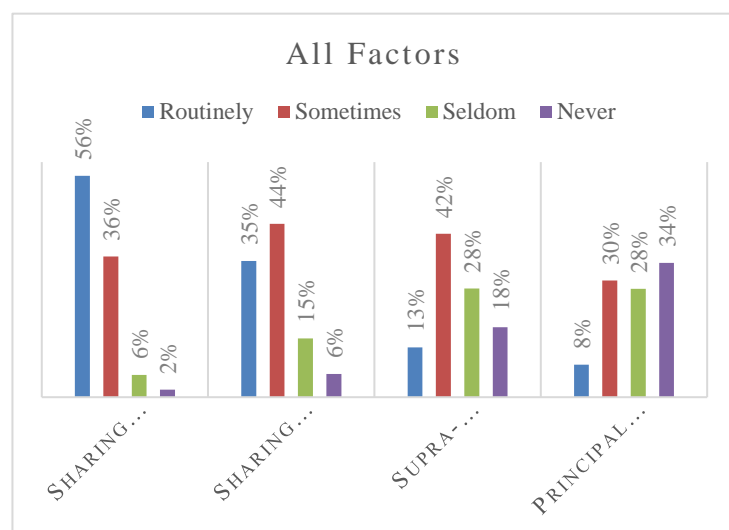


Figure 16. Aggregate results for each factor in the Teacher Leadership Inventory

Selection of the Case Schools

Following the overall analysis of the Teacher Leadership Inventory, the researcher examined the results of each of the thirteen schools separately to identify the schools that would be approached for the in-depth qualitative study. The schools that were selected were those that showed both positive and negative relationships with the four factors of teacher leadership and therefore presented themselves as interesting cases to be further

investigated. The following section describes the selection process of the case schools that will be included in this study.

The first criterion for school selection was the number of teachers who responded to the survey to the total number of teachers at each school to see if it was a representative sample. Any school that had at least 20% of the teachers participate in the survey was considered. This automatically eliminated five schools and downsized the sample to eight schools. Data from the remaining eight schools was tabulated to provide a clear means of comparison. Responses for each factor mostly were between “routinely” and “seldom”, so in order to account for all responses, data of respondents who chose “routinely” and “sometimes” were grouped together and data of respondents who chose “seldom” and “never” were grouped together. Table 4.1 represents the aggregate data for each factor and for each school.

Table 4.1

Percentage of teachers responding Routinely/Sometimes (R/S) and Seldom/Never (S/N) to each TLI factor

Responses	TLI Factor							
	Sharing Expertise		Sharing leadership		Supra-Practitioner		Principal Selection	
	R/S	S/N	R/S	S/N	R/S	S/N	R/S	S/N
School A	93%	7%	86%	14%	54%	46%	44%	56%
School B	98%	2%	94%	6%	67%	34%	61%	39%
School C	96%	4%	87%	13%	61%	39%	41%	59%
School D	92%	8%	89%	11%	77%	23%	60%	40%
School E	91%	9%	71%	29%	49%	51%	50%	50%
School F	95%	5%	73%	27%	33%	67%	41%	59%
School G	94%	6%	84%	16%	69%	31%	47%	53%
School H	93%	7%	80%	20%	59%	41%	67%	33%

Results show that respondents from all schools reported a very high frequency for “Sharing Expertise” that ranged between 91% and 98%, which reflects an engrained perception that teachers are often sharing their practice with their peers, collaborating and supporting one another. As for “Sharing Leadership”, results showed that 71% to 94% of respondents in those schools perceive their schools as places where leadership is shared between teachers and principals and that they frequently participate in decision making related to teaching and learning. For the factor “Supra-Practitioner”, results dropped significantly as responses ranged between 33% to 77% across the eight schools, reflecting that putting extra effort and time to support students and colleagues is perceived as happening less than the previous factors. Finally, for “Principal Selection”, responses ranged between 41% and 67%, reflecting that teachers perceive the direct support from the school leadership to teacher leadership as taking place some of the time.

To further analyze the results of the TLI data, the eight schools were compared in terms of positive and negative relationships across all four factors. Consequently, schools were grouped in three categories that reflect positive responses from most teachers: 1) across all four factors, 2) across three factors, and 3) across two factors. The first category included schools B, D and H as the data showed that most of the teachers believe that teacher leadership is systematically supported at their school as all four factors showed a majority of positive responses. Therefore, these schools will be interesting to examine to further understand how such support is reflected. The second category included schools A, C and G, which presented positive responses from most teachers regarding the first three factors but not the factor of “Principal Selection”. This raised a question as to what aspects of the teacher/principal relationship are not perceived as supportive of teacher leadership at school, which is another aspect of interest for further investigation. The third category included schools E and F, which showed that most teachers believed teacher leadership

was practiced and supported in their school only regarding “Sharing expertise” and “Sharing Leadership” but not for “Supra-Practitioner” and “Principal Selection”. Further examination was needed to understand how teacher leadership can be supported when two factors are not perceived as present by most teachers.

The researcher wanted to have at least one school represented from each category to be a site for the study. Furthermore, the principals of all eight schools were contacted and four schools declined to participate in the study because it was the end of the school year and teachers were overloaded with administrative work to wrap up the year. Consequently, the four schools that accepted to participate in the study were finally selected as the case schools, which were schools A, B, C and D. It is important to note that after more in-depth knowledge of school C, it was better represented in the third category as most teachers rarely stayed after regular school hours to work on school-related issues, which corresponded to having a majority of negative responses for the factor “Supra-Practitioner”. As such, the study included a total of four case schools, two of which were from the first category, one was from the second and one was from the third category.

As the survey addressed factors that supported teacher leadership, further investigation was warranted as to the context of each selected school and the aspects that affect teachers’ perception of how much teacher leadership is or is not supported in their school and consequently to what extent it is practiced. Interviews were conducted in the four selected schools to gain in depth understanding of the main factors that affect the practice and growth of teacher leadership in these schools. Special attention was given to the school cultural and structural dimension while investigating teachers’ perceptions of teacher leadership namely, How does the school leadership style and the decision making process influence the awareness and practice of teacher leadership? How does the academic curriculum implemented at the school affect the requirements for teacher

collaboration? What motivates teacher leaders to contribute additional time and effort to the school? The identified factors were examined and compared across the four case schools to provide comprehensive understanding that answers the study research questions.

Description of the Case Schools

Once the four case schools were identified, the researcher contacted each school to schedule an interview with the principal and solicit the participation of teachers in focus group discussions. The following section describes the context of each school and the formation of the focus groups. The summary table 4.2 below presents the participants in each school while Appendix A shows more details about the demographic data of the participants.

Table 4.2

Participants in each case school

	Principal	Teachers
School A	1 Female	19 Female homeroom teachers from Early Years to Grade 5
School B	1 Female	7 teachers (1 male and 6 females), from KG to Grade 5, including 1 teacher of Physical Education, 2 special rights teachers, 3 English homeroom teachers and 1 teacher of Arabic language
School C	1 Female	12 teachers (2 males and 10 females) from KG, Cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4, including 2 teachers of Math, 6 teachers of English, 1 teacher of Science and 3 teachers of Arabic
School D	1 Male	12 teachers (2 males and 10 females) from KG, Cycles 1, 2, 3 and 4, including 5 English homeroom teachers, 1 teacher of Math/Science, 3 teachers of Math, 1 teacher of Robotics/ICT, 1 teacher of Character Education, 1 teacher of Biology, and 1 teacher of Social Studies

School A

School A was established in 2014 in the southern suburb of Beirut in the proximity of three other schools that have been there for many years. It is affiliated to a religious non-governmental organization (NGO) that mostly serves the Sunni Muslim community. The school was diligently built over a period of ten years, whenever donation funds were available for construction. The campus is supposed to be composed of three main buildings, with state-of-the-art facilities including an underground gymnasium with a semi-Olympic swimming pool, a mosque, various playgrounds and underground parking. However, due to lack of funding mainly caused by the overall economic situation in the country and the region, only some parts of the campus were completed and are currently being used. Two out of three buildings are constructed and only one of them is fully functional. The second building still needs finishing from the inside and was originally designed to host the Early Years classrooms and the administrative offices. The current main school building hosts all classrooms from KG1 to Grade 6, all administrative offices, cafeteria, library, computer lab, science lab and art room. Children have access to two large outdoor playgrounds, an indoor multi-purpose area and a learning garden. The mosque was recently inaugurated and is open to the outer community for the Friday noon prayer, while the underground sports facility is not yet completed.

The vision that led the establishment of the school was guided by the founders' aspirations to build an innovative educational institution that would provide high quality education to children. Consequently, and since its inception, School A aimed to adopt the International Baccalaureate program in addition to the Lebanese program that would give it an edge over the other schools in the area and will allow it to be part of the international school community. This choice entailed several decisions that affected the organizational structure and the investment on capital and human resources as the school had to hire

more teachers to support the bilingual program, invest in continuous professional development to meet the requirements and the standards of the international program, and adopt a shared leadership model as teachers' role extended to various aspects of school life beyond the classroom.

In addition, the school is jointly managed by a leadership team that is composed of a school principal, an academic director and an operations director. The teaching staff is composed of 33 teachers serving a total of 103 students, mostly Lebanese, following a collaborative teaching structure that requires teachers to work in teams inside the classroom to provide the needed support to each other and to the students, and serve as homeroom teaching teams. One of the teachers took on the role of international program coordinator to support her colleagues further. Moreover, the school leadership engaged educational consultants, since the school was established, to design and conduct a professional development program for the teachers on the inquiry-based international program, which followed the concept-based approach. Teachers and the school principal frequently participate in local and international professional development opportunities to share their practice and learn from others.

The interview protocol with the school principal was piloted in School A, so was the focus group protocol. The 9 teachers who participated in the pilot focus group were female homeroom teachers from cycles 1 and 2. As for the subsequent focus groups, one was with 6 homeroom teachers (also females) from Grades 1, 3 and 5, and the other was with 10 homeroom teachers from KG, Grades 2 and 4, all females.

School B

School B was established in 1973 in the eastern suburb of Beirut and is family owned. It serves a mixed community of Lebanese and international students with the majority being from the Christian faith. The school campus is composed of two adjacent

buildings that host 365 students, and include an indoor multi-purpose room, computer lab, science lab, a garden, and a playground. The building is divided for preschool and elementary, and high school. The school adopts the Lebanese program in addition to the International Baccalaureate program for the primary and secondary years and the American high school program. School B is renowned for using educational technology in the classroom and is among the first schools to use tablets in class, which gives it a competitive edge with parents and students. The teaching body of 70 teachers includes Lebanese and international teachers, all of which are required to engage in teacher training at least once per year.

The teaching structure in the primary years follows the collaborative teaching approach, whereby teams of two homeroom teachers take charge of one classroom to provide needed support to each other and to the students. The school leadership is composed of two school directors, one responsible for the academic follow-up and the other for marketing and business operations, and the curriculum coordinators for each of the primary middle and secondary schools. School B has a second campus in the southern outskirts of Beirut that only offers the Lebanese program and caters for Lebanese students. The interview for this study was conducted with the principal responsible for the academic affairs at school. As for the focus group, it was done with 7 homeroom teachers from KG to Grade 5, 1 male and 6 females, including the Physical Education teacher, two special needs teachers, 3 homeroom teachers and one Arabic language teacher.

School C

School C was established in 1975 and is located inside a large compound in Beirut. The compound extends over several blocks and accommodates multiple facilities that have their own entrances. In addition to the school campus, the compound includes a large stand-alone mosque, a vocational training center, a university building that is still under

construction, a villa where the owners currently live, as well as large gardens and some woodland in the middle. As for the school, it is composed of a two-floor building that hosts all the classrooms from KG1 to Grade 11. The school campus holds a vast open-air play area situated in the middle of the building, renovated basketball courts and half a football field, a playground for the preschool children with sand box, and a large garden unused for many years. It also includes a large underground area, that hosts a covered multi-purpose room used for plays and shows, science lab, art room and indoor gym area. Around half of the underground area is completely isolated and out of use because renovation works had started a few years back but were stopped due to lack of funding.

School C is affiliated to a religious NGO that provides a multitude of social, medical and educational services to the Shiaa Muslim community. In addition, this NGO represents a prominent Lebanese political party and its president has previously been part of the Lebanese cabinet. In the past, the school used to be renowned for its good and affordable education and was operating at full capacity, reaching around 600 students. In the last few years, due to political and economic issues, as well as the surge of many new schools in the area, most of which belonging to the opposing political party, student enrolment has steadily declined to reach 179 students. This led to closing down the French section, the decrease in the number of English sections, and therefore to a much smaller teaching body of only 28 teachers.

Currently, the president of the NGO is also the president of the school board and has an oversight of the school budget, operating expenditures, as well as hiring and firing of staff. Over the last 3 years, there has been a turnover in the school principalship, which led to increased tensions with the parents who were afraid to see the school close, and a sense of insecurity among the teachers. So, the president of the board, not finding any other alternative, and to avoid keeping the principal position vacant, placed his daughter as

part-time acting principal. In addition, in an attempt to reform the school, he contracted professional consultants to provide the needed support to build the capacity of the teachers and school leader throughout the year toward delivering a high-quality Lebanese program that is centered around the student.

The school leadership interview was conducted with the acting principal. As for the focus groups, the first one was held with 6 teachers (2 males and 4 females) from cycles 2, 3 and 4, including 2 Math teachers, 2 English teachers, one science teacher and one Arabic teacher. The second focus group was done with 6 teachers from KG and cycle 1, all females, including 4 homeroom English teachers and 2 homeroom Arabic teachers.

School D

School D was established in 2003 and is located in the heart of Beirut in a renovated campus that still holds the authentic charm of Beirut's old homes. It offers the Lebanese curriculum in addition to the American high school program. The student population of around 800 students is diverse and mixed, so is the teaching body composed of 105 teachers. The school is part of a network of schools in Lebanon and abroad and is renowned for providing individualized care for students as well as an array of extracurricular activities, albeit for quite a high cost per year. The school campus includes a renovated building that hosts the administration offices, classrooms from KG1 to Grade 12, multi-purpose room, a garden, a playground, as well as labs. The school principal operates a complex hierarchical leadership structure led by the management committee, composed of 12 heads of sections, which oversees the work of the department heads, who in turn supervise the subject coordinators, who manage the teachers. In addition, everyone in the leadership team has teaching duty. The school is constantly striving to improve its educational services and trying to provide continuous professional development opportunities for its teachers.

The interview was conducted with the school principal (male) and 2 focus groups were done with the teachers. The first one comprised 6 female teachers from KG and cycle 1, including 4 homeroom teachers, one math and science teacher and the character education teacher. The second focus group comprised 6 teachers (2 males and 4 females) from cycles 2, 3 and 4, including 3 Math teachers, a Robotics and ICT teacher, an English teacher, a Biology teacher, and a Social Studies teacher.

Teacher Leadership from the Teachers' Perspective

The following section presents the results from the analysis of the teachers' focus group discussions across the four schools regarding the teachers' understanding of what teacher leadership encompasses and how they see it supported in their respective schools. The section includes a detailed presentation of the data analysis results. Findings are grouped under the two main categories that emerged from the data analysis comprising six themes and which were informed by the conceptual framework and the literature review and are represented in Figure 17 hereafter. The categories are: 1) Conception of teacher leadership, presented under two themes: Teachers' awareness of their leadership potential; and General characteristics of teacher leaders; and 2) Scope of teacher leadership acts, which covers four themes: Positioning of teacher leadership within the school's organizational structure; Functions and duties teacher leaders undertake; Teacher leaders as collaborators; and Teacher leaders as lifelong learners. Each section commences with a summary table that provides a brief analysis of the results at each one of the four case schools allowing for a rapid comparison of the main areas in which they were similar or different.

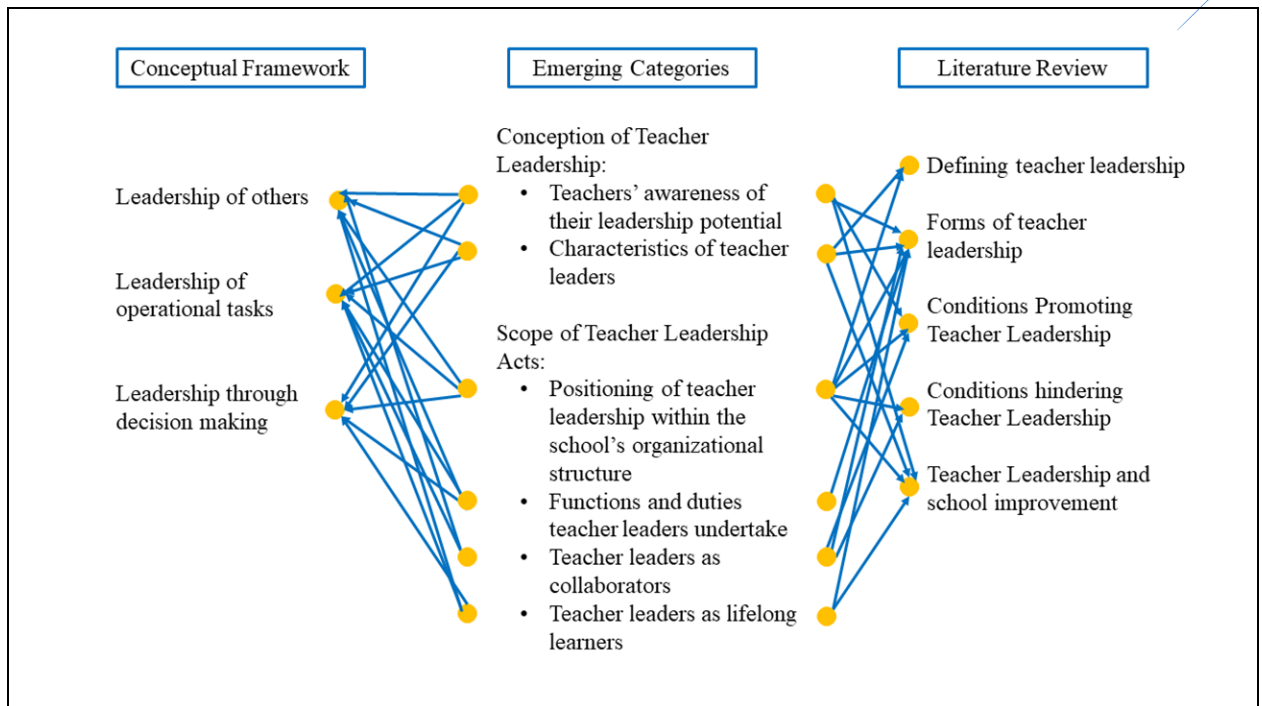


Figure 17. Connecting the emerging categories to the conceptual framework and literature review.

The themes that emerged from the focus group discussions were grouped under two main categories, as depicted in Figure 17, to provide answers to the research questions raised in this study. In addition, the researcher compared these themes to the three main aspects of teacher leadership that constituted the conceptual framework model that was preliminarily adopted for this study (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009), which are leadership of others, leadership of operational tasks, and leadership through decision-making, in order to see if all themes connect with the conceptual framework. Similarly, she compared the emerging themes with the main constructs that arose from the educational literature review, which are: defining teacher leadership, forms of teacher leadership, conditions promoting teacher leadership, conditions hindering teacher leadership, and teacher leadership and school improvement. The comparison conducted showed that the themes that emerged from the focus groups intricately connect to the conceptual framework and the literature review constructs and therefore address all the ideas that framed this study.

Conception of Teacher Leadership

One main purpose of this study is to understand teachers' perspective of what teacher leadership encompasses and whether they consider themselves or their colleagues as teacher leaders. This section presents the findings from the teachers' focus groups on their conception of teacher leadership, shared under two themes: Teachers' awareness of their leadership potential and the general characteristics of teacher leaders.

Teachers' awareness of their leadership potential. Teachers' conception of what teacher leadership means and how it translates in their everyday life differed from one school to the other. In order to unpack the extent to which teachers were aware of their own leadership potential, they were asked if they considered themselves or their colleagues as teacher leaders and to share what they identified as their main contributions to the school community. The section hereafter presents the findings from the data analysis around teachers' awareness of their own leadership potential at each school site. Table 4.3 provides a summary of the responses across the four schools.

Table 4.3

Summary table for teachers' awareness of their leadership potential across the four case schools

School	Teachers' awareness of their leadership potential
A	Teachers seem to be aware of their various sources of expert power, and consider that they enhance their ability to have influence around the school
B	Teachers believe each one brings an added value to the team and contributes to the distributed leadership at their school
C	Teachers awareness of their leadership potential revolves around their subject matter expertise, teaching experience and high students scores matter
D	Teachers are not aware how their individual contributions impact their potential to have influence at school

In response to the question about what they thought their contributions were to the school community, teachers' answers across the four schools varied between bringing in their own particular mark as individuals, promoting professional values and work ethics, as well as supporting student learning and collegial relations. A few teachers felt uncomfortable talking about themselves as they considered sharing one's own qualities to be some form of bragging and rather preferred to have their colleagues discuss what they believed to be their contributions and their qualities based on the experience of working together. So, each teacher started attributing a quality for her teaching partner, which she believed to be her most significant contribution to the team, but soon enough, everyone was confidently talking about herself as part of the team.

When asked if they see themselves or their colleagues as teacher leaders, most teachers in schools A and B strongly agreed. They believe that they are leaders and that they already act as such. Many of them attribute this assertion to several factors. First, the leadership structure at the schools encourages teachers to participate in decision making and leading. The program coordinator in school A who is also a teacher at the school explains that "leadership is not only top-down, it is also across [...], classes could be leading other classes, teachers could be leading other teachers. It is not only confined to leading students". Second, they attribute the existence of leadership practices to the learning opportunities regularly provided by the school, which include leadership workshops to help them develop these skills. Third, they see that continuously reflecting on their practice individually and with their colleagues builds their awareness on the need to stay open to improvement. Fourth, they consider that the international program that they teach supports them to a great extent and may be the main driver for them to become teacher leaders. In addition to their deep and laborious involvement in planning and developing the inquiry-based learning engagements for their students, the program

scaffolds their acquisition of the “Learner Profile” attributes and attitudes which they also strive to develop in their students. Teacher Nayla from school A says: “just like how the learner profile [targets] the students, it applies to me too. I am more responsible, I am more of a decision maker.”

As for teachers that were new to both schools, they did not consider themselves as leaders at the beginning of the year. They did not even consider being viewed as leaders by their colleagues. However, with the support and trust of their teaching partners, they slowly built this self-confidence and started getting on board. Teacher Samia from school A confides that she thought it was her traditional teaching style, which she used in her previous school job that hindered her from believing in her ability to become a teacher leader:

“I am used to having everything given to me and [being told] you have to do this and that. In many instances, I used to come up with lots of ideas, but I was never supported. [I was told] no, stop! [...] Now, I found that the ideas I had or that crossed my mind or that I wished I could implement, I am implementing them! I am using them, and it is successful, really [...] there are lots of things that I wanted to try in my class and with my students that I couldn't do. Now, I am doing them, and I found amazing success. And the [international program] has them all [...], especially assessment tools. There are lots of assessment tools I use [here] I wished I could use before, but I am using them now, and I can see [the results] in front of me [...].”

In school A, teachers are indeed aware of their various sources of expert power and consider that they enhance their ability to have influence around the school. They believe that their role as teacher leaders is crucial for the success of the institution. Teacher Maysa confirms that “[my motivation] is my love to the school. I want to it to improve, to soar, to become something important, and even the students that we have at school, for them to reach places and they can continue on their own. I feel that when we collaborate we are able to reach this goal”.

School B teachers also showed awareness of their potential to influence the school. Their responses reflect a shared belief that each one brings an added value to the team and contributes to the distributed leadership at their school. They shared many contributions that they bring individually and collectively to the school. According to them as a team, they have influence by showing love: “we all love one another, we love the school and we love to come here” says a teacher. “We love our kids” continues another. They reported that each one of them brings something to the team and painted the picture of a distributed leadership in the school where each has his/her own influence. They explained that one teacher is viewed as the one taking initiatives to organize and lead school events, another teacher with a background in environmental development is taking the lead to develop more green areas at the school with her students and colleagues by creating planters and a roof garden. A third teacher believes her contribution is to spread the positive spirit among children and colleagues, while her colleague considers that she contributes her patience, her knowledge in special needs education and in dealing with children. In addition, teachers say that they often volunteer to help each other out and therefore contribute their time and effort to support each other.

A remarkable aspect noticed in school A and B is that teachers seemed to be aware of their own potential as agents of change in the school and in their students’ lives beyond the traditional academic expectations and requirements. They consider that spending extensive time with students allows them to know them better and consequently influence them and motivate them. Teacher Nayla from school A explains:

“we spend a lot of time with the children and we engage in building their character [and moral values], this is something [...] I like a lot [in this school]. Before, I used to teach in another school, I felt that I was just coming to give my lesson, correct homework, correct a test and leave. I didn’t leave any impact on any child. Whereas here, no, I feel that I am really nurturing them, I am planting something, I am building a character and a personality, this has reflected positively

on me as a teacher, I am happy, [I feel] that I am fulfilling a mission...”

Teachers in school B take pride in the special needs educational services that they provide to their students. They actually call their department “the special rights” department and act upon it by actively engaging in providing individualized support to all students who need specialized educational services. In addition, school A teachers agree that leading by example is an effective way to deal with children and manage their learning. For example, they give their students real examples of how they collaborate together as teachers when requiring them to do group work in class. “We always give them examples of us as teachers, how when we both started [working together], there were lots of things that we didn’t agree on, but by being open-minded [and] cooperative [we are able to] pull everything together”.

In addition, teachers in both schools perceive that classroom management, planning and communication skills are essential for them as teacher leaders. They also believe that building trust with their students and with their colleagues is an integral aspect of leadership in the classroom, especially that they teach in teams. Teacher Rania from school A explains that for her

“to lead a person or a group to reach a certain goal [...] you need to have good management [skills], [build] trust between you and the persons you're helping, [and] you should love them and [allow them to] love you, [it is] not to impose anything, but negotiate.”

Teacher Mina adds:

“There should be respect, because if they don’t respect you no matter how tough of a leader you are, and they won’t pay attention to you. I never work with the students as if I am the leader {show a looking down gesture} and you have to follow me, no, [my role] is more of a guidance and in a loving way, and joking and laughing, and what about if we do this, and by themselves things fall in place”.

Teachers believe that as teacher leaders, they must be good communicators, have a positive attitude, and be kind and respectful to others. They realize that they are oftentimes

able to share insights that the parents did not necessarily know about their children. One teacher says: “the children share with us a lot their personal life, so [we understand] why this child behaved this way in this particular situation” and describes herself as a “therapist” in dealing with them. Teachers also shared that they are also in frequent direct contact with parents who ask them for advice on how to support their children’s learning at home and how to address their behavioral issues. This allows them to better understand the family background of each child and partner with parents to support the children.

School C teachers also showed some awareness of their leadership potential, however, they described their contributions to the school as mostly related to what they bring to the classroom and the familial atmosphere they create with their colleagues. The majority of teachers in school C, perceive their role as being strictly bound to the teaching and learning that takes place inside their classroom. For them, a teacher teaches and a leader leads. Dina from the preschool explains how she sees it:

“The teacher’s [place is] in her class, and above her [...] there is the coordinator and then the supervisor, the administration, there are lots of administrative things that the teacher is not concerned with. She should leave all her energy to her classroom, the class work, and she gets up to the level of the department maximum. [However, she needs to stay] focused [...] in her own sphere, where she belongs, [...] the teacher can in no way understand administrative things like the principal who understands in leadership.”

Her colleagues agree with her and another teacher elaborates that in leadership roles “there needs to be the right person in the right place, and not have [the teachers] holding ten watermelons together at the same time.” However, she thinks that the school leadership should involve teachers by asking them to participate, but without giving them authority over one another for leadership to remain efficient.

For most teachers, their subject matter knowledge and teaching experience matter the most in how they perceive their impact at school. Additionally, they associated students’ scoring high in the official exams at the brevet and baccalaureate as a very

important criterion for assessing teachers' contribution to the success and the reputation of the school, if not the most valued one. In addition, their view reflects an implicit school-wide acceptance that the middle and secondary level teachers are more likely to be influential as they are perceived to be the most knowledgeable and are the ones with the more "valuable" potential for positive impact than their colleagues at the elementary and preschool levels.

In school D, teachers are aware of the role they play in their students' life. Similarly to school C, they consider that they are teacher leaders inside their own classroom and only with their own students. They are proud of the impact they see in the academic achievement and personal progress their students accomplish throughout the school year, which is reinforced by parents' positive feedback and gratitude. At this school, teachers needed probing to express what they view as contributions to the school. They did not seem to be aware of how their contributions reflect their leadership potential in influencing the school. Some teachers shared vague responses such as "tolerance" and "patience" in dealing with students. When asked to think of what they believed their colleagues brought to the school community, few teachers shared that they did not know the teacher from outside their department well, so they could only talk about those in close contact with. The math teacher expressed his deep respect for the professional attitude of to the three colleagues in his department, although he could not remember the third teacher's name.

Teachers in school D admit that the multiple layers of hierarchy in the school leadership structure is impeding their sense of taking any initiative outside their classroom and often gets in the way of getting things done. Despite that, a teacher who joined the school two years ago affirms that she was able to involve her students in an activity in the holy month of Ramadan this year,

“Unlike last year, I have a very helpful class this year and they are responsible. So, we came up with the idea to have an iftar [dinner] for the orphans, so I planned this iftar with the kids and I talked to the activities coordinator. She fixed the logistics with the upper leadership.”

Her colleague Haya interjects and shares her own experience,

“I can understand [my colleague], as a new teacher I used to be like her, I used to take initiative outside of my class, but really you reach a point because there is this hierarchy where you have to talk to this and that, you feel that you know what, I don't want to take the initiative.”

Teacher Rania adds, “you know what this means? Frustration! Not only that, you don't think anymore. You just say, 'I will mind my own business', I will just do this I don't want to be creative, I don't want to take any initiative.” Another teacher confirms, “we already have sixty million things to finish that are our duties, so what more do we want to do as voluntary work?”. Their colleague shares her frustration regarding the physical space at school that requires teachers to climb up and down stairs all day to get to the different classes and attend meetings: “physically, the school does not help us. For me personally, I spend my day running up and down the stairs. I go up and down more than 10 times per day, then that's it, the day is over.” A teacher says: “it's physically hectic to coordinate between everybody. There are too many doors to knock.”

Overall, teachers in school A and B seem to be the most aware of their various sources of power, which enhance their ability to have influence around the school. This awareness of their leadership potential fosters their involvement in the school at various levels that go beyond their classroom and impact more than just their students and their teaching partners. As for teachers in schools C and D, their perspective on their role and the leadership practices at their schools frame their awareness of their leadership potential and limit the level of influence they have around the school.

Characteristics of teacher leaders. Teachers in all the case schools were asked to explain what they understand when they hear the term “teacher leader”. Teachers described general characteristics or personality traits that they believe teacher leaders possess, which make them stand out from the rest of their colleagues. The most common trait that was shared by most teachers across the four schools is being a positive role model to peers and students, with all the personal and professional qualities that this may involve. In the following section, characteristics of teacher leaders are presented as described by teachers at each school site, with the summary of the main results comparing the four schools provided in Table 4.4 hereafter.

Table 4.4

Summary table for the characteristics of teacher leaders shared across the four case schools

School	Characteristics of Teacher Leaders
A	Flexibility, respect, love, honesty, trustworthiness, patience Being good listeners, being understanding, and having emotional intelligence Building trust in the school community
B	Open communication, positive classroom management, cooperation, negotiation, respect, patience and having an open mind Taking initiative Accepting feedback
C	Trust, love, and flexibility with students Teacher leaders lead only inside their classroom
D	Ability to effectively teach a large group of students, using varied teaching methods, and keeping control in the classroom Working on improving their teaching practice inside the classroom

In school A, teachers perceive teacher leaders to have specific personality traits. These traits include flexibility, respect, love, honesty, trustworthiness, patience, being

good listeners, being understanding, and having emotional intelligence. However, the key factor that they believe differentiates teachers from teacher leaders is the trust that they build in the school community. Teachers explain that leaders become the “go-to” people, who are sought after by parents and other teachers for advice because they “trust” them and have faith in their knowledge and expertise in their subject matter, and because they see them as the innovators who think out of the box. Teacher leaders project a sense of self-confidence, which emanates from their experience, that is reassuring to others. They also believe that it is important for teacher leaders to be organized, have classroom management and time management skills as they have to balance their various responsibilities.

In addition, teachers in school A agree that each one of them has something that distinguishes her in what she brings to the team. The qualities that they shared about their peers included: being “enthusiastic”, “inspiring”, and “motivating to others”; being able to always and “quickly come up with creative ideas when everyone else seems to be stuck”; adding “artistic touches” to the school projects; being “flexible and always willing to discuss and communicate ideas”; or being reliable, a hard worker, and “being there, whenever you need her she's there by you”. Moreover, teachers described their contributions in terms of their own personal attributes that they believe support or add to their colleagues’ work experience as well as reflect their awareness of their own leadership potential. These attributes comprised striving for “accuracy and preciseness” and being attentive to details, being “consistent”, “patient”, “tender” and “accepting” in dealing with children, showing a collaborative attitude with other teachers, and helping whenever and wherever needed. Another attribute highlighted is having “good marketing skills”, which a teacher mentioned that she utilizes in managing the school website and social media page. Like many other peers who consider themselves ambassadors for the

school in the outer community and believe in its mission and vision, she often responds to people asking her about the school, if they should register their children in it and if she's happy there. Other teachers share that their main contribution is infusing drama and songs in the units of inquiry and school activities, being a reference for colleagues in the Arabic language, or providing support in any kind of technology issue to others. Teachers got particularly interested in talking about having strong classroom management skills, whereby they can still manage their students' behavior while being friendly and supportive and show "tough love" to the children when needed.

Teachers at school B believe that they use various leadership skills in their daily work with children, colleagues, parents and the school leadership. A teacher says an important characteristic is the ability to effectively, "cooperate with the team to get things through". Others mention "open communication", "positive classroom management", "negotiation", and "taking initiative" as leadership skills that they revert to regularly. A teacher adds that an important skill is, "acceptance, that it's not only me who give my opinion, it should be accepted [by] others." Personal traits that complement these skills are respect, patience and having an open mind when interacting with colleagues, when dealing with children inside the classroom, and when communicating with parents. In addition, teachers in school B shared that they tend to take more initiative and suggest events or trips for their students because of the support and encouragement that they get from the school leadership. A final leadership characteristic that teachers perceived as important is accepting and being receptive to feedback, as it helps them grow personally and professionally.

Like teachers in school A, teachers at school C identified the key personal traits of teacher leaders to be trust, love, and flexibility. However, they believe that these

characteristics are essential for teacher leaders to effectively lead their classroom. A teacher explains,

“[it’s not only] classroom management, no, what I mean is when you enter the class until you leave it, you are in charge. Not like an authority figure but you are leading it. [It’s] more than [being] in control, I mean to make it flow smoothly, targeting every child, every need, every center, every material, every plan... this is what I understand by leadership, not [being] bossy.”

Another teacher adds that an important trait is to always strive, “to make the student fall in love with the learning, [develop] their curiosity [so they start] researching on their own”. A few teachers mentioned dealing with colleagues as part of their daily work; however, they did not make a connection with any other aspects of the school life, limiting the scope of teacher leadership to their interactions with students only.

Similarly, for teachers in school D, their understanding of the characteristics of teacher leadership mostly addresses the ability of the teacher to effectively teach a large group of students using varied teaching methods while keeping classroom control. A teacher says that, “being a homeroom teacher by itself needs leadership [...] to guide the students and problem solve”. Another teacher replies that teacher leaders support the students, “to become decision makers [...] and we model it also. When you are already a problem solver, they become independent researchers [...] and risk takers”. Teachers believe that they acquire these skills through experience, by being receptive to feedback, and by continuously working on their personal development and attending workshops. Teachers also admit that being flexible and asking for help is indeed a leadership trait, as it shows commitment to improving their practice by capitalizing on each other’s strengths and asking the right colleague for help when needed.

In summary, teachers at each school site reflected their conception of what the characteristics of teacher leaders are based on their understanding of the role of teacher leaders and based on how they see teacher leadership practiced at their school. In schools

A and B, teachers elaborated attributes for teacher leaders that projected the importance they have for developing and growing as a learning community with values of open communication, trust and respect, while in schools C and D, the focus of teacher leadership was mostly on traits that pertain to directly to improving the teaching practice inside the classroom.

Scope of Teacher Leadership

The following section focuses on the scope of teacher leadership acts, which clarifies the different leadership functions, roles and actions that teachers currently fulfill and undertake in the various aspects of their school life, if these functions are formalized within the organization, and whether teachers consider them as involving or requiring leadership skills. This section covers four themes that emerged from the teachers' focus groups and that describes the scope of teachers' leadership. These are: Positioning of teacher leadership within the school's organizational structure; Functions and duties teacher leaders undertake; Teacher leaders as collaborators; and Teacher leaders as lifelong learners.

Positioning of Teacher Leadership within the school's organizational structure. The researcher wanted to understand if teacher leadership is a formalized role in the school's organizational structure across the case schools or not, and if teachers consider that to be perceived as a leader at their school, one must hold an official or formal leadership position. When asked if the teacher leader position exists in their school, teachers' responses varied widely, showing a big difference between the organizational structure of each. As for whether teachers consider a leader only someone who holds an official or a formal leadership position, some teachers agreed while others disagreed. In the following section, teachers' responses are described and analyzed regarding the positioning of teacher leadership in their school and their perception of the effect of

having a formal versus an informal leadership role on the teacher leader's ability to influence the school community. A summary of the main results comparing the four schools is provided in Table 4.5 hereafter.

Table 4.5

Summary table for the Positioning of Teacher Leadership shared across the four case schools

School	Positioning of Teacher Leadership within the school's organizational structure	Importance of having a formal leadership role to influence the school community
A	No formal teacher leadership position Simple organizational structure that is growing organically and that informally empowers teachers	Formal roles do not matter All teachers are involved in leadership roles beyond the classroom Many teachers are leaders in particular areas and are sought for support from their peers
B	No formal teacher leadership position School organizational arrangement supportive of informal teacher leadership	Some teachers just started to realize that they can be leaders informally because of the responsibilities that the curriculum puts upon them Informal teacher leadership is practiced inside and outside the classroom
C	No formal teacher leadership role Traditional organizational structure Formal school leadership is not stable	Informal leadership is preferred to formal not to ignite conflict between peers Teachers fear to deal with formal leadership as their authority is perceived as an inspector/evaluator more than a coach/mentor
D	Complex leadership structure that involves teachers in formal positions – all people in leadership positions teach	Among peers, teachers practice informal leadership With the administration, having a formal role is perceived to be essential to be heard

In school A, none of the teachers has a formal leadership role because of the way the school is structured, and the curriculum is set up. The hierarchy at school A is very simple with the leadership team – composed of the school principal, the academic director, and the business director – leading the school together, one coordinator liaising between the school and the IB organization and providing support to the teachers, and the teachers. There are no subject coordinators, no heads of department, and no instructional supervisors, which eliminates the administrative layers. Teachers know each other well and are aware of each other's strengths and therefore know who to consider a leader in particular areas. In addition, teachers consider the school principal as a leader rather than a mere manager because, despite her position of authority, she endeavors to communicate with teachers and convince them of her viewpoints with the utmost respect and kindness.

Teachers at school B shared that they have just begun to realize that they don't need an official leadership position to take on leadership roles. They are getting to understand better the international program they are teaching at school, which involves all teachers in similar responsibilities towards the curriculum development, planning and interacting with students. Such a "revelation" has resulted in having some teachers contribute ideas more enthusiastically toward enhancing the way the school is run as they felt that their opinions matter. Teacher Mimi explains that she came to appreciate the scope of her influence as a teacher in this school and in this program: "I can give my opinion and share my ideas [about the unit]. I can create my own central ideas and not necessarily just follow whatever the homeroom teachers are doing. I didn't know that I have the right to interfere and pitch in more". In addition, teachers shared that they are able to exercise their leadership both inside and outside the classroom and perceive that they are their own class leaders as the administration does not interfere in the planning or running of classes.

As for teachers in school C, they consider that formal titles such as supervisor or coordinator do not matter when one has teacher leader traits. They seem to prefer that teacher leaders assume an informal leadership role rather than be appointed to a formal position. They explained that their relationship with each other may be negatively affected if the administration formally appointed one of them to be a coordinator or a supervisor. They consider that dealing with someone holding a formal title may cause teachers to be less transparent with the appointed person given the fear of being reproached for doing something wrong. This concept of “making mistakes” recurred repeatedly throughout the focus groups with teachers as well as with the principal and seemed to influence teachers’ perception of the scope of what they could and should be involved with at school. Moreover, teachers at school C differentiated between being a leader and being a “boss”, whereby for them a leader builds his/her capacity through diligent hard work over time, by continuously learning and researching, and by becoming an expert and a reference in his/her subject matter. They also shared that they already identify some leaders among them and they consider them as such informally but there are no policies at the school to support their development or their career growth.

Teachers at school D shared that they believe that, in general, they don’t need to be appointed to a formal position to become a leader. This is especially true when it comes to dealing with colleagues, as they believe that teacher leaders can establish themselves as such because they earn the respect of their peers. However, with regard to interacting with the school administration, they admit that this is an entirely different matter and having a formal role is the only way to influence decision making at school. Teachers consider that the administrative hierarchy at school is very complex with multiple layers of accountability and supervision, which gets in the way of having their voice be heard or

their opinion taken. Moreover, they believe that they do not have any say in how the school is managed and hope to be able to influence overall school decisions more.

Functions and duties teacher leaders undertake. Teachers across the four schools were asked to list all the functions they performed in their daily practice at school, both inside and outside the classroom. This was an introduction to have them think of the specific functions and duties that they considered as requiring leadership skills to be performed and link that to their own school context. The following section presents teachers' description of the regular roles and duties they perform at school and the specific functions that they believe require leadership skills to be accomplished. Table 4.6 provides a summary of the responses across the four schools.

Table 4.6

Summary table for the functions that teacher leaders undertake across the four case schools

School	Teachers' regular administrative roles and duties	Teachers' regular teaching roles and duties		Functions necessitating leadership skills
		Common to all schools	Specific to this school	
A		Teach the curriculum	Teach collaboratively with a partner	Develop the units of inquiry / Deciding the curriculum content
			Develop narrative progress reports	Meet for collaborative planning and coordination meetings
B	Arrival and dismissal duties	Plan for learning individually or collaboratively with peers	Update the school's electronic platform daily	Differentiate instruction to fit learner needs
	Recess duties		Prepare individual learning plans with the special needs teachers	Prepare different forms of assessments
	Update and archive student files	Conduct research	Develop reports on student learning	Serve on committees
	Submit student grades and/or assessments		Substitute for absent teachers	Reflect on the teaching process
Organize field trips and school events	Prepare assessments		Meet with school counsellors to address learning or behavioral issues observed	
Attend parent meetings and all staff meetings		Serve on committees	Mentor new teachers	
C	Participate in extra-curricular activities	Attend professional development and learning opportunities	Update daily the school's electronic platform	Know subject matter
D			Prepare individual learning plans with teachers of special needs students	Teach the curriculum taking into consideration the individual needs of students

Teachers' regular roles and duties. The results of the data analysis regarding the regular functions and duties that teachers in general are responsible for show considerable similarities across the four schools. However, results vary significantly between schools

when teachers start sharing the responsibilities that they assume for the implementation of the academic curricula at each site, as each program sets different expectations and requirements from teachers. There are basic functions that teachers in the four case schools shared that they are responsible for to a largely similar extent. These functions are mostly divided into two broad areas. The first one engages teachers in duties and tasks that are more operational and administrative in nature. The second area involves teachers in the actual teaching practice inside the classroom as well as in preparing and planning for teaching, individually and/or with colleagues, and substituting for absent colleagues.

The operational duties are very similar across the four schools. They mostly include arrival and dismissal duties, where teachers are responsible to greet children and escort them from and to their busses in the morning and at dismissal time, and the recess duty, where teachers are responsible for supervising children for safety during recess time. The administrative duties include updating and archiving student files, submitting student grades and assessments, preparing for field trips and school events, attending parent meetings and all staff meetings.

Regarding the teaching practice itself, teachers' experiences varied between the four case schools, mostly due to the school leadership structure that sets specific expectations from teachers and to the academic program being adopted. For instance, in school A, B and D, which teach an international program in addition to the Lebanese curriculum, teachers work around 40 hours per week and spend almost half of their time in direct contact with children, teaching inside the classroom. This leaves them with another 15 to 20 hours per week to engage in other tasks such as planning, conducting research, preparing assessments, learning, attending meetings and serving on committees. As for school C, where the Lebanese program is taught, teachers have more traditional functions which are to prepare lesson plans, teach them in class, prepare examinations, and submit

grades. Teachers work around 35 hours per week and usually leave the school premises shortly after the students every day, thus leaving them with little time during the work day to engage in any additional functions besides their administrative and operational duties.

In both schools A and B, teachers spend on average 7 to 9 hours per week to plan for their students' learning, to reflect on the teaching process, and to conduct research individually and collaboratively with colleagues. Additionally, teachers meet with the school counsellor to share advice and plan together to solve any student behavioral problems. In schools B and D, teachers also support the special education teacher to prepare individualized educational plans (IEP) for children needing them.

Very few teachers in school A shared that they take work with them outside the school because they find that there is enough time during the work day to finish what they are responsible for. In school C, teachers mostly correct exams and quizzes at home, whereas teachers from school B take work with them at home, mostly to correct homework, conduct further research in anticipation of students' queries on the unit being taught, and prepare learning plans for children with learning difficulties. As for teachers in school D, they shared that their time at school is filled with department or coordination meetings, so they do not have enough time at school to finish all the work that is expected of them, and therefore frequently work on weekends to update the school's electronic system, respond to student queries, grade quizzes and post results.

Teachers' functions that necessitate leadership skills. In addition to the regular functions that most teachers shared that they were required to do, some functions were identified by teachers as necessitating leadership skills. These functions include developing the school curriculum and serving on committees.

Involvement in designing the school curriculum. Although not necessarily a common practice, a major aspect of teacher leadership identified by teachers is their

involvement in the elaboration and development of the school curriculum. This function was proclaimed by teachers in schools A and B, which adopt the International Baccalaureate (IB) program. The IB provides a curriculum framework that follows a concept-based inquiry approach to teaching and learning, based on which schools are required to develop their own curriculum taking into consideration their national education requirements as well as their vision and mission.

Since school A was established with the IB program as its main curriculum, teachers started working on curriculum development from the beginning. After four years of implementation and complete immersion in the curriculum development and review process, some teachers that have been at school since it opened have gained deeper understanding of what it takes and how it can be done. Therefore, they were playing the role of mentors to teachers newly joining the school and to colleagues who still needed support in internalizing the process. This is the case for teachers in school B as well, that recently adopted the IB program; however, since most teachers have no previous IB experience, the few teachers who do were perceived by their colleagues as de-facto mentors.

Teachers in these two schools consider that teaching the IB program has changed their whole perspective of their role as teachers. They are no longer just delivering and executing a preset curriculum that was handed to them by the school administration. They are the ones who collectively influence what and how children learn. For many of them, they appreciate the value of being involved in such a rigorous process that curriculum development is, despite the frustrations, the long hours and the hard work it requires. The curriculum development and planning in the IB program requires teachers to work together as a team in order to design learning engagements for their students that are centered around conceptual understandings within a unit of inquiry. This process puts the

children at the center of the teaching and learning process whereby they actively participate in shaping their learning experiences with the teachers. In addition, it gives the teachers an expanded and complex role beyond “just teaching”. They are more of the facilitators and orchestrators of learning, as they design each unit of inquiry around a conceptual central idea, then develop all learning and assessment activities as well as select diverse resources taking into account their students’ individual interests, needs, learning styles, and academic level in order to move them forward in their achievement. Such an expanded role is reported to force the teachers to change their whole perspective on their role as inquiry teachers and embrace the attitude of being learners themselves, always exploring new topics and new approaches to teaching and learning along with their students, as opposed to considering themselves as the source of knowledge in a traditional classroom.

A teacher in school B explains, “we always do preparation for where [children] *might* go with our plans, [...] we always look for ideas, for provocations [and] because we're always thinking how to improve the learning for the children.” Another teacher says that they support each other by sharing resources and ideas during planning phase of unit development, because, “I may have an idea, but it may not be an area that I am usually comfortable with, [...] I will always find someone who can help me, who knows more about it. When [colleagues] know you are in the planning [phase], they give you their opinion.”

Moreover, teachers perceive themselves as decision makers because they shape the curriculum as a team. Teacher Lana explains that, “We are responsible for the curriculum. In other schools, no, it is usually ready, and you just apply it.” She added that, as a team, they get to decide for example, to include a topic because the students like it or choosing the sequence that makes more sense to them and their students. She continues, “there is

decision making in every step the teacher is taking, [which means] more teacher empowerment in this kind of school”. Teachers also share that they are likely to take initiative and be leaders because the school administration encourages them to do so. When they are entrusted with a task, they are given the leeway to do it with no interference from the school administration.

Teachers in both schools C and D do not have a role in designing the school curriculum. They are mostly responsible to teach the curriculum taking into consideration the individual needs of their students. They also rarely have the chance to work together but there are instances where they support each other and capitalize on each other’s strengths in specific subjects, such as IT or Math.

Being active participants in the decision-making process. Another function that teachers identified as part of teacher leadership is serving on committees as active participants in the schools’ decision-making process. Committees were mentioned in all four schools, albeit not in the same scope. In school A, teachers are expected to volunteer and participate in one or more of the standing committees established at the school, such as a curriculum committee, library, social relations, art, marketing, school events, and a newsletter committee. All committees usually include teachers, administrative staff and sometimes parents to have all stakeholders represented and actively engaged to serve the school and the community’s interest, as well as to divide the load among committee members. Teachers also share that they consider committees as avenues for collaboration with colleagues in contexts that are different than teaching, thus getting to know their peers better.

As for school B, teachers shared that they are going to start developing committees at school and involve teachers in all of them. A teacher explains: “we used to have the teachers’ committee up until this year but we stopped. Now there are plans to have more

committees for more teacher involvement.” Teachers consider committees a platform where they freely suggest new ideas. Serving on these committees makes teachers feel that they are active contributors and decision makers at school, that they have a voice which can be heard.

In school C, teachers seemed to perceive being involved in a committee as additional work more than an opportunity to participate in decision making at the school. The concept of committees was recently introduced as part of the school reform, however, their perspective aligned with their perception of their role as being strictly bound to teaching inside the classroom and therefore not influencing any aspects of the school life outside it.

In school D, teachers shared that they mostly participate in committees that plan for after-school extra-curricular activities, and therefore consider committee work as part of their duties towards the students and not as a way to participate in decision making at the school. For teachers in this school, there is a teachers’ committee, but not many knew what it was for. A teacher shares that she used to be in the teachers' committee before and what they usually do is, “take the issues and present them [to the leadership]; if there are things that we can discuss, like if we want to take a day off, for bridging or this instead of that, it's possible to reach a solution with the admin, but there are things that are refused.”

Teacher leaders as collaborators. Teacher collaboration is one aspect of the “leadership of others” in the teacher leadership conceptual framework. In addition, teacher collaboration was considered as an essential element in the literature review for promoting teacher leadership at school as well as impacting school improvement. Consequently, teachers were asked about how and when they collaborate with each other in their respective schools in order to depict if they consider collaboration as an aspect of teacher leadership. Most teachers across the four schools confirmed enthusiastically that they collaborate frequently with their colleagues, that collaboration is a core value in their

school, and that they cannot fulfil their role as teachers without it. However, the analysis of the data about teacher collaboration shows that the concept and the practice of collaboration vary widely between schools and between teachers, and while some teachers perceived it as an aspect of teacher leadership, others did not make this connection even when probed to do so. The section below explicates how teacher collaboration is perceived and performed by teachers, and whether it is considered as an aspect of teacher leadership at each one of the case schools. Table 4.7 provides a summary of the responses across the four schools.

Table 4.7

Summary table of the conception and practice of collaboration as an aspect of teacher leadership across the four case schools

School	Conception and practice of collaboration as an aspect of teacher leadership
A / B	<p>Collaboration is considered as an integral part of the school formal structure and functioning</p> <p>Collaboration is required among teachers because of the integrated nature of the curriculum</p> <p>Teachers consider collaboration as essential for them as teacher leaders to share the responsibility for making decisions therefore collectively influence the content and process of learning for children</p> <p>Collaboration is considered a mean to support peers and mentor new colleagues</p>
C	<p>Teachers do not relate collaboration to any form of teacher leadership</p> <p>Teachers collaborate to get things done on time rather than to influence strategic decisions or come up with creative solutions</p> <p>There is not an overall collaborative environment at the school and collaboration mostly happens informally and based on personal relationships</p>
D	<p>Teachers support each other in teaching as well as administrative duties and consider collaboration to be part of teacher leadership inside the classroom only</p> <p>Collaboration is considered as part of the school culture and teachers get rated on it as part of the appraisal form</p>

As explained in the previous section, schools A and B adopt a student-centered, inquiry-based International Baccalaureate (IB) program as their main curriculum for the primary years (kindergarten and elementary), in addition to the middle years for school A and the secondary years in school B. Teachers in these two schools consider that being involved in curriculum development has expanded how they perceive their role as teachers, incorporating leadership practices within it. Teachers feel that they have a much bigger responsibility to provide a solid education to their students than in other schools because they have the biggest influence in what children learn and how. Consequently, they consider that collectively with their peers, they are the leaders of their students' education.

The fact is that the IB requires that the curriculum taught to the children closely integrates the different academic subjects around key concepts, while focusing on the disciplinary concepts as well. Consequently, teachers find themselves forced to work collaboratively, coordinate with colleagues as they have become as a collective at the heart of the decision-making process. Collectively they become the ones who influence the content that they will be teaching, the resources they will be using, and the learning engagements that the children will be performing. In addition, teachers are responsible to coordinate the design of the learning assessments and modify the lesson plans to cater for the children's individual needs and interests.

While this responsibility makes them feel empowered on one hand, teachers explained that it puts a burden on their shoulders as they keep questioning, "are we doing it right?", as teacher Tara from school A says. Therefore, they revert to their colleagues for support and for reassurance that they are fulfilling their professional and moral responsibility towards the children, their parents and the school. A teacher from school B shares that she always discusses with her co-teacher and shares ideas, "so we are as

close in what we do as possible [...], and we are sure that we are doing the right thing.”

Teachers further explain that in order to fulfill the requirement of developing coherent learning experiences for the children in each unit of inquiry they find themselves compelled to continuously collaborate with each other. Teacher Fawzia from school A considers that “collaboration is one of the most essential leadership skills for teachers”, as they have to deal with so many people during the day. Her colleague adds, “collaboration and patience” are essential teacher leadership traits as teachers learn how to negotiate, pick their battles, and sacrifice their egos for the benefit of the team and of the students.

However, such collaboration does not necessarily come easy or naturally, and most teachers believe that they have progressed a lot since they first started working together in this way. A teacher laughs when she expresses that she feels that she is “in a forced marriage”, as she gets teamed up with a partner who is going to be with her all year long and who has a totally different experience, background or teaching style. Yet, most teachers share that they figured out how to work together eventually, even when they had a rough start at the beginning of the year. A teacher from school A shares her own experience when she first joined the school,

“[collaboration becomes natural] and involuntary, even if it's not in my character to collaborate, it will become part of my character. I will learn that, no I need to ask and that's ok if I don't know everything by myself, or if someone helped me I need to help him too. So, this idea of us not being alone here grows, I am not alone in my classroom with my door closed and these are my things and my students and that's it.”

Although teachers are usually consulted before they are put in a team with another teacher for the academic year, this does not guarantee a smooth professional relationship between partners. Some other times, the school is obliged to team teachers in a certain way regardless of their preferences because of staffing issues, such as putting an experienced teacher with a novice one, dividing a strong team so they can benefit their

colleagues in other classes, or simply because a teacher leaves the school and another partner is needed. So, when teachers do not get along, they go back to the school principal or to their colleagues for support and mediation to figure out a middle ground for working together.

In school C, the Lebanese program is the only curriculum adopted and teachers follow a rather traditional teaching style. Teachers are responsible for teaching single subjects starting from grade one and up and they teach more than one grade level to fill up the required number of teaching hours to be considered full time teachers. Teachers in school C seldom collaborate in issues related to academics, and when they do it is usually to share resources or materials. They mostly work together when planning for school wide events, field trips or annual fairs.

During the current academic year, teacher reported that in the reform attempt that the school administration had started, teachers in school C were required to team up, teach more than one subject, and share the same classrooms with other colleagues. In addition, the homeroom model was adopted for preschool and classes in the first cycle of elementary. The purpose of such changes was to provide them with enough room to collaborate, innovate, and improve the overall learning experience for the children. This entailed reallocating some of the classrooms' location, creating new shared spaces for teachers to meet and work together, and redesigning the learning environment inside and outside the classrooms to reflect a more student-centered approach to teaching and learning. It also required adjusting teachers' schedule by decreasing the number of hours teachers spend teaching in class per week, allocating fixed weekly meeting times for teachers to plan collaboratively during the work day, and extending the work day for teachers by one hour four days per week so they can finish their administrative and planning work before going home.

These changes were welcomed by some teachers and resisted by others, and for various reasons. Teachers who appreciated having the chance to collaborate with others and learn together with colleagues were mostly from the elementary levels. One of them in particular, considered this experience to be the “best one in her teaching career” because she felt that she was empowered, that she had room to be creative and try new things for the first time with her students. This teacher is considered by many of her peers as a teacher leader already, mostly because of her knowledge in the subject matter that she teaches, which is English language, her ability to teach the most difficult students, the progress her students make and her native English accent. She did not necessarily feel that she was a teacher leader until this year, where she realized that she was appreciated by her peers and was able to collaborate with several of them on various projects which made her influence go beyond her classroom and her own students, as. Another teacher who benefitted from having more room for collaboration shared that having such an opportunity revealed who from the colleagues is a team player and who is not. She thinks that: “some teachers benefited from having their strengths revealed”, although she could not work with everyone necessarily.

As for teachers at the preschool level, they reacted to the reform efforts passively, on the premise that they already collaborate a lot and therefore, do not find that this school reform adds much to their experience. They did not get enthusiastic about developing their leadership beyond what they already consider as their main task, which is to teach children. Therefore, they resisted change by keeping business as usual and doing what they were asked to do, more out of the duty to comply than out of a genuine interest in building their leadership capacity. One teacher in particular, Teacher Salma, who used to be the supervisor at the preschool and then moved to teach lower elementary, was still perceived by the group as a teacher leader. One of her colleagues confessed that she still,

“feels intimidated” whenever she receives any feedback from Teacher Salma as she considers her a reference in the subject matter and in the teaching pedagogy.

Overall, in School C, teachers at all levels expressed that coordination and cooperation mostly happens between teachers who teach the same subject matter across grade levels. They follow the preset scope and sequence for their subject and agree on the units, the objectives, and the activities to do with students. Teachers also collaborate to assess the activities and collect feedback on what worked and what did not. Most teachers across all levels share that they frequently collaborate on smaller tasks when needed regardless of the subject area or grade level, such as to write signs for bulletin boards, prepare materials for activities, collect grades to meet deadlines, and generally help each other around the school. However, teachers in middle and secondary levels found collaboration in academic issues to be irrelevant to their work as they are mostly alone to teach each subject matter because of the small number of students in these grade levels. Therefore, they mostly interact with their colleagues to discuss school events, playground duties and student behavioral issues.

Despite the reform efforts, many teachers in school C still do not see that there is an overall collaborative environment at the school even though they consider the school as their second home and their colleagues as family because they have been working together for many years. They perceive that a lot of the collaboration still happens based on personal relationships and often outside school hours. For teachers who newly joined the school, they find it difficult to integrate in this closed circle and feel that they have to conform to be accepted as part of the “family” or else they will be excluded. They find it challenging that there is no onboarding mechanism for new comers and they do not necessarily find a teacher leader or a mentor to support them. Rather, following the established “familial” social norms, someone from the group will step up and give them a

few tips here and there. However, they are mostly expected to figure things out as they unfold and prove that they are up to the level through being “experts” in their subject. In addition, teachers share that the largest part of their planning happens individually at home, be it preparing class materials, writing exams, grading homework, or researching for activities to be done during whole-school events. They rationalize that it is easier and more convenient for them to work at home where they have ample time and space to do so. Furthermore, teachers believe that their collaboration is still mostly to get things done on time rather than to influence strategic decisions or come up with creative solutions, and therefore do not relate it to any form of teacher leadership.

As for school D, the main programs adopted at the school are the Lebanese and the American high school programs. Teachers in preschool and elementary share that they often work together because they have the homeroom model at these levels, whereby they teach several subjects to the same children across the different sections. Such a model makes them feel responsible for their students’ learning and fosters their sense of being teacher leaders in their classrooms. Teachers explain that as they have to spend substantial amount of time with the children every day, they get to know their individual learning needs. So, they often spend time after teaching hours discussing student behavioral issues and collaborating to benefit from each other’s experience solving them.

Teachers in school D do not directly consider collaboration with peers to be related to teacher leadership. However, they report that collaboration do take place with the subject coordinators who have a formal leadership role to support teachers, as well as among teachers who support each other as well. According to the teachers, they coordinate activities, plan lessons together, and rotate the administrative tasks among themselves taking into account the load each one has during the week, including the teaching schedule, load of class activities, substitution tasks, and recess duty. Teachers have the

freedom to organize themselves and divide the tasks and duties among themselves; so, some teachers lead activities with the children while others complete any pending administrative tasks, organize the classrooms and prepare learning materials. Teacher Lara explains how this is done across subjects, saying that teachers in the same grade level divide the tasks among each other, so “I take everything in English, prepare and share it with the other two teachers and the coordinators. Another teacher prepares everything in science and sends it back to me and I send it to the coordinator, the same goes for math.” Furthermore, teachers in preschool and elementary engage parents in the teaching and learning process through the Parents Involvement Program (PIP), where parents are invited to join the teachers for activities in class or participate in a pre-planned activity outside the classroom. Nevertheless, teachers still consider collaborating with others as part of their leadership role inside the classroom and do not perceive it as extending beyond it. Moreover, they explain that when and if it takes place collaboration depends on a teacher’s personality whether or not he or she asks for help or provides it to others. A teacher explains,

“It definitely depends on the teacher. The [school] setting is supportive for you to ask for help, but some people don’t [...]. It depends on you if you take the initiative [and say] I have a problem with this child so help me because I can’t find the key [to deal with him].

Interestingly, and despite the limited view about collaboration as a function of teacher leadership, when asked about their motivation to collaborate with colleagues, teachers shared that it was part of their school culture and is clearly expected from the school administration. Teachers explained that they consider their collaboration a professional need. A teacher says, “we collaborate spontaneously, it makes our life easier and we learn from each other”. Another teacher shares, “I had difficulty in teaching [a topic], so I asked [my colleague] to come into my class to explain the lesson instead of

me.” For another teacher, collaboration with peers provides real hands-on learning experiences,

“I feel that sometimes reading [about a topic] is different from the actual life and the actual experiences we're living. And I may have seen something that [my colleague] was able to use with the student and I couldn't, so I learn from her. Why do I ask? because I need answers and I want to learn more.”

For the upper grades in middle and high school, teachers in school D explain that they are responsible for teaching a single subject to more than one classroom usually. Therefore, they spend most of their time teaching in class, preparing exams, attending coordination and department meetings, correcting homework and tests, preparing progress reports, and updating the electronic platform for the students and the administration. In addition, teachers are responsible for transmitting to students the curriculum on core values and ethics, positive behavior, and character building qualities. Similarly to their colleagues in the lower grade levels, teachers do not consider that they are involved in any teacher leadership roles beyond those directly related to their classroom. Most teachers share that they do not have much room for collaboration because they are overburdened with administrative and teaching duties and because they are bound to follow the prescribed curriculum. A teacher even complains that she spends around 30% of her time teaching while the rest is spent on paperwork and administrative tasks.

Consequently, many teachers admit that they capitalize on personal relationships and on each other's strengths and expertise to collaborate informally and get all their tasks done on time. However, they consider these qualities as part of being collegial towards peers more than as part of showing teacher leadership and do not relate them together. A teacher explains that collaboration for him is a natural thing to do because he believes in team work and because he perceives the school to be one entity and students being at its center. He says,

“The school is one body, if we don’t see it as such, then it doesn’t work. I can’t say for example that my hand has an infection, I don’t care it’s only my hand, because the other hand will get infected. So, we are one body. If we don’t work together, it won’t work at all. I can’t say ‘what do I care if this student is not doing well in this subject?’ because if he’s not doing well, then he is just ‘not doing well’.”

Another teacher explains how they divide the tasks among colleagues in the same department, “I might prepare for example a test and someone else will prepare another test and we would share it [with each other] before it is finalized”. However, and despite teachers’ input that collaboration does not happen as frequently as they want it at their grade levels, teachers still perceive that collaboration is one of the cornerstone values for them personally as teachers in this school. Finally, some teachers share that they engage in collaborative efforts across varied school activities because helping out is expected by the administration and on which they receive rating as part of their year-end appraisal.

Teacher leaders as lifelong learners. Another aspect of teacher leadership that has emerged from the analysis of teachers’ focus group discussions is their perception of the teacher leader as lifelong learner. Continuous professional learning was depicted in the literature review as an important aspect supporting teacher leadership and allowing for continuous school improvement. It was also portrayed in the conceptual framework as an essential component for teacher leaders as they inspire others in the school community to keep learning so they can support others to become teacher leaders as well. Once again, there was disparity between the four schools in terms of how teachers linked professional learning to teacher leadership, how they perceived their own engagement in pursuing learning opportunities for themselves, and their role in supporting the learning of their colleagues. The section below presents the research findings about teachers’ perception of teacher leaders as lifelong learners as well as depicts how they pursue learning in their respective schools. Table 4.8 provides a summary of the responses across the four schools.

Table 4.8

Summary table for teachers' conception of teacher leaders as lifelong learners across the four case schools

School	Teachers' conception of teacher leaders as lifelong learners
A	<p>Continuous professional learning is integral to teacher leadership</p> <p>For a teacher leader learning should be intentional and happens anywhere and with anyone</p> <p>Teacher leaders share their learning and their practice with colleagues and the school community</p>
B	<p>Teachers influence their own professional learning and that of their colleagues as teacher leaders at school</p> <p>Continuous learning is expected and is supported by the school leadership</p> <p>Teacher leaders model lifelong learning to their peers and to their students</p>
C	<p>Teacher learning mostly means to stay up to date in one's own subject matter and is acquired through peers and external trainings</p> <p>Practices and expectations of the school leadership lead teachers to focus more on their teaching rather than on their learning</p> <p>Being involved in professional learning entails new responsibilities, decision making, venturing outside one's comfort zone, which may jeopardize the acquired status of 'expert teacher'</p>
D	<p>Teachers consider that they actively participate in their own professional development</p> <p>Teacher learning happens through workshops and peer observations, which teachers engage with because it is part of their rating in the end-of-year appraisal</p> <p>Teachers perceive school requirements as duties and separate them from their personal conviction of their relevance to their own learning and professional growth</p>

School A teachers viewed teacher continuous learning as an integral part of who they are as teacher leaders. They approach learning as a natural way to grow and acknowledge that they intend to learn every day, from anyone and anything around them. They share that they learn from each other, from their students, and from the frequent interactions they have as a team. For them, teacher leadership and learning are tightly

connected and go hand in hand. Teachers explain that they feel they need to continuously keep learning and develop a learning community at school, so they can support their students and their colleagues, take charge and responsibility for their own professional development, and be agents of change.

Teachers explain that part of the requirements in school A is for them to develop their own professional learning goals, individually and collectively. They set their professional development goals collectively as a team first following a particular protocol, whereby they define their goal statement, identify the activities they need to do to reach their goal and the evidence they need to collect about their learning. Then, they set an individual learning goal, which could be related to the collective goal or different from it, based on what they consider to be their learning needs. Teachers spend the entire year documenting their learning journey and their reflections on the process in a portfolio that they share with their colleagues at the end of the year. Teachers consult each other on their goals and discuss their learning plans so they can support one another as needed. Marina laughs as she says, “here you're always researching! and you know what the other teachers are doing too.” This process is facilitated by the school principal, who is often solicited for advice. Teacher Maysa describes her own experience to get help from the principal, which she knows well by now,

“When I go to [the principal], I know that she will give me a book to read or she would tell me there is a workshop happening somewhere and she will send me to attend it. She will even think about conducting workshops here for everyone and she takes everyone's opinion about it. This happens a lot in our school, because everything you need and you want to develop in yourself, the school endeavors to do it”.

In addition, teachers in school A are required to conduct regular peer observations where they attend a colleague's class as observers then share their feedback following a specific protocol. Teachers are expected to use peer observation not only as a learning opportunity, but also as a chance to help their peers reflect on their own practice as part of

their own professional learning as well. Consequently, they meet after the observation to share with their colleagues some factual aspects that they noticed in their class, in addition to some genuine curiosity questions that would trigger a reflective conversation between them. Teachers mention that they benefit from peer observation a lot, especially that they get to see first-hand how colleagues conduct their class and learn from one another to improve their own practice. A teacher says, “I learned a lot of things from [my colleague], from what they do in the morning meeting, from the things that they put, that they use, there are a lot of things that I liked”. Another teacher comments that she finds peer observation important, “because when I go and observe different teachers and many ways of teaching, I get many ideas and I end up combining and using what I like”. Moreover, teachers get used to having other adults with them in class, so do the children. This helps them to become less self-conscious about being observed and look forward to getting feedback, which for them is the essence of learning and improving as teacher leaders.

Another form of learning that teachers in school A reported to be related to teacher leadership is during their regular sharing meetings. These meetings take place every two weeks and aim to allow teachers to share their teaching practice with their colleagues and get their feedback on it. Teachers gather in a different classroom each time and the team that is hosting the meeting walks them through the inquiry process that they have designed to the students and choose to highlight whatever they like from their practice. Teachers value these opportunities as they see the benefit they get from giving and receiving feedback from their colleagues, asking questions, getting ideas from one another, and sharing resources. A teacher comments from her own experience when she first joined the school,

“Some of us came here and we were fresh graduates and we were not used to the IB-PYP, so we had a lot of colleagues share their expertise with us. So, instead of building our experience over one or

two years, [...] we have double [the experience] because you are learning from the others.”

Similarly, teachers in school B also believe that as teacher leaders they greatly influence their professional learning. They also participate in the learning of their colleagues by sharing their practice, providing advice and contributing their own learning experiences. “I remember when [three of us] went to a conference together, when we came back [...] we shared it with all the admins and [teachers]” says teacher Diya. Teachers believe that the school supports them a lot by providing all the needed assistance for them to be on board and ready to implement the school program. Teacher Johanne explains that although teachers were not consulted before the school adopted the IB program, the administration provided them with all the needed help to embrace the change and understand the new program. She explains,

“If there is a change in the school program, we have to accept it as a fact but [the school leaders] don't leave us alone. So, they give us workshops, they sit with us to get the ideas through, they convince us [...]. They stay behinds us till the end so we are convinced, but as for the big decision, we have nothing to do with it, but they support us to understand it and accept it.”

Teacher Diana confirms that teachers feel empowered as they influence the planning of professional development at school and that the school leadership collaborates with the teachers to plan for their learning. She states, “the principal sits with us and we identify areas of weakness together and how to work on them.” She gives an example of an issue that teachers have recently identified in the primary years program through their collective work on the unit and which was tackled differently for teachers in the early years and for those teaching primary levels. She explains,

“Now for example, we are doing the ‘art of teaching reading’ as a way to support language integration in the classroom and to integrate how reading can support the PYP units in the classroom. This was based on a need that was expressed by most of the teachers. It is a very differentiated program, so, for the early years

they are doing something different that targets their students and their needs.”

In addition, empowered teachers learn together by reading and discussing research articles, implementing what they learn in their classrooms and then coming back together to compare and see how it impacted their practice. One of the teachers considers herself a researcher who is continuously exploring how children’s learning evolves so she can do a better job supporting her students. She also considers that she is modeling being a researcher to her colleagues by always supporting her ideas with evidence. Her colleague confirms, “she is a researcher and not only in the classroom. Even in our collaborative meetings or our professional development sessions, she always brings in some research to support the discussion”. Other teachers feel that they need to keep learning so they can lead their students through their inquiry and guide their understanding. A teacher shares,

“We are learning about 'under the sea', they asked me about something I don't know. So, at home, I think about the questions and find out answers to them. The next day I make sure to answer them. I always think about, what if they ask me something else? where would they take me in their conversation?”

The teachers in school B also pointed at engaging in life long professional learning as apart of teacher leadership. They explained that the school administration supports their continuous learning through sharing local and international learning opportunities with them, while giving them the choice to select their professional development activity. There is even a yearly budget allocated to support teachers’ professional learning. They confirm that they can apply to attend any workshop they deem important to them and the school accepts if they find it relevant to their professional development. Teachers had a brief discussion about a potential workshop taking place in Harvard and a few were excited about it. Teacher Rana notes: “you have to convince [the administration] about, why do you need it? how will it improve your practice?”. Teacher Layla was very happy to take a third workshop this year:

“I thought I exceeded the limit because I took already 2 courses other than the workshops, so I sent an email for a third course [...] I didn't ask for it to be paid [by the school], I only said that you can take the money from my salary [...] and they said no, we're going to pay half of it.”

In school C, most teachers share that they like to keep learning; however, they do not connect lifelong learning to teacher leadership despite the probing from the researcher during the focus group discussions. For many of them, especially teachers who have been teaching for a long time at this school, learning is more related to staying up to date with one's own subject matter content, so they can support students pass exams and move on to the next grade level. For others, it is a matter of not falling behind if they do not keep up with new things without necessarily having any plan of what this looks like or entails. Only a few teachers were able to clearly express how continuous learning impacts their professional development and their personal growth as teachers, still without touching upon the idea of teacher leadership. One of them is teacher Salma, who shares that:

“For me, since the first year that this institution opened 25 years ago, I still feel that I am learning and if I stay perhaps for another 10 years inshaAllah, I feel that I will keep learning. There is always something new that one can benefit from and learn. I never feel that I know and that's enough.”

Other teachers consider that the main source of learning for them is their colleagues as they learn from each other continuously. They share how they benefited from this or that teacher and in which aspects. For example, teacher Lamia says: “I benefited a lot this year from [my colleague's] experience with the children, I ask her all the time”. The Arabic teacher shares: “most resources are in English, and I don't know English, so, if we are starting a new unit and we need new ideas, [my colleague] finds me resources and translates them to me. I can't find everything in Arabic.” Another teacher expresses, “I don't know much in technology, I seek the help of my colleagues and I ask

them about everything I need to do and what steps should I take. I never felt anyone was annoyed or made feel they are doing me a favor, no, on the contrary.”

Furthermore, some teachers stated that they also learn from the workshops that they attend both inside and outside the school. However, only two teachers could name a specific workshop that they attended recently outside the school and said that they did not share it with their colleagues. The other teachers explained that they can request to attend a certain training from the administration, but nothing guarantees that they will get approval to attend it because there is no specific mechanism nor a set budget for that. Teacher Layla explains that teachers do not usually get recommendations to attend specific trainings; however, “occasionally, the administration sends a memo that there are some workshops available and teachers choose what they need to attend and go.” Such a passive stance toward their own learning reflects teachers’ perception of their role as curriculum implementers and supports their previously shared view of being mostly responsible to teach their students and ensure they move up the levels at school. It also highlights that the school administration’s practices and expectations made teachers focus more on their teaching rather than on their learning, which is explained hereafter.

When asked about the professional development plan that was developed for the school during the current academic year under the school reform initiative, responses came diversified as some teachers considered it to be extremely beneficial while others did not find it all useful. Those who found it useful were the same teachers who appreciated the innovative approaches to teaming up with other teachers and collaborating with colleagues. They were also mostly teachers who have been at school for only few years and who were frustrated by the isolation and the lack of teacher support they felt at school. These teachers shared that, last year, the only trainings they got at school were four sessions about the backward planning methodology, which was not even adopted at

school. These sessions were given by the former school principal and were mostly in a lecture style where teachers listened and took notes. Moreover, teachers expressed that before the current year, they rarely had anyone observe in their classroom and give them feedback on their teaching. They did not get any formal appraisal for their performance either, so they could not tell if they were appreciated by the school management or not. For some, this uncertainty created a sense of insecurity as they did not know if their job was secured for the following year or not, especially that the school was downsizing due to the diminishing student body.

As for teachers in school D, they consider that getting involved in professional learning is a school requirement and is part of the overall appraisal system and expressed no connection with teacher leadership. They all link their professional learning to their appraisal results at the end of the year, without necessarily finding value in the learning itself. For them, the goal is to score high on the self-evaluation form. Teachers explain that they are required to fill out a self-evaluation form that helps them assess themselves and set specific learning goals based on the appraisal results. This evaluation form addresses the teachers' performance in class, their academic, social and interpersonal skills, their personal and professional traits, and their involvement in school wide events and activities. It is then shared with the subject coordinator and the supervisor who provides the needed guidance and support to the teachers in terms of which workshops to attend, whether inside or outside the school.

Moreover, most teachers reported that they actively participate in setting their own learning plan at school and decide for themselves which trainings to attend. A teacher explains, "the school leadership give us options, they give us lists, they ask us what we want". Another teacher says, "if the coordinator feels that I need more management in a specific area, she will suggest it, but she asks me where I would like to go." Nevertheless,

some teachers complain that the school leadership is the one that sets the learning plan for the whole school regardless of individual teachers' learning needs. They give as an example the new inquiry-based learning approach that is currently being piloted at school. A teacher also finds that they are obliged to attend a session at school even when they are not interested in it, "sometimes they limit us and they bring someone to do an assembly for us, or meeting, or workshop inside the school." Furthermore, teachers in school D share that, "when we attend a workshop outside of school and it is really effective, we come and share with our colleagues." However, they agree that this is more of a school requirement and do not perceive it as connected to teacher leadership.

Additionally, teachers share that they learn from their colleagues through peer observations. They explain that they are expected to conduct minimum three peer observations in their colleagues' classrooms per term. Many of them see the value of learning from observing colleagues, as a teacher expresses, "you always learn something wherever you go [to observe], even when you discuss it later, it is very beneficial". Nevertheless, some teachers do it as a duty to fulfil the school requirement, without connecting it to their personal benefit. One teacher admits, "honestly, I do it as a duty, I prefer when I go into a class to observe on my own [...] for fun." When asked if they are required to share feedback with their colleagues as part of the peer observation process, teachers responded that they are not. A teacher explains, "after peer observation, we don't even give feedback, we just have to go in and observe", then they fill the required paperwork afterwards. Other teachers reply that it depends on the colleague if they share feedback or not. They explain that some teachers seek feedback after the classroom observation and gladly accept it, while others don't. For most teachers, whatever the school requires from them is automatically perceived as a duty that must be fulfilled

separately from their conviction of its relevance to their own learning and professional growth.

Teacher Leadership from the Principals' Perspective

The following section presents the results of the principals' perspective of teacher leadership, which emerged from the analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted with principals across the four schools. The analysis depicts their understanding of what teacher leadership encompasses in light of how they see it happening in their school. In addition, the analysis of the findings aims at depicting the similarities and differences between teachers' and school principals' conception of teacher leadership and their perception of how it is being supported in their respective schools. Findings are grouped under two main categories, which are: 1) Principals' conception of teacher leadership, and 2) Positioning of teacher leadership within the school's organizational structure, including how principals perceive teachers' awareness of their leadership potential. In addition, each section begins with a summary table that provides a succinct overview of the results that emerged at each one of the four case schools.

Principals' Conception of Teacher Leadership

Principals in all four schools shared a common view of what teacher leadership involves. For them, teacher leaders are first and foremost experts in teaching their subject matter within the curricular program adopted at the school. They are also those teachers who always take initiatives and are willing to support their colleagues and the school whenever needed. This broad understanding was similar to what most teachers shared as being the main characteristics they perceived to be of teacher leaders, albeit to varying degrees in the four sites. Table 4.9 provides a summary of the responses shared by the principals across the four schools.

Table 4.9

Summary table for principals' conception of teacher leadership across the four case schools

School	Principals' conception of teacher leadership
A	Teacher leadership is working together to build a community of leaders at the school
B	Teacher leadership is showing up wherever you are needed and pitching in Teacher leadership is instigated by the school leadership
C	Teacher leaders support others to assume their responsibilities and fulfill obligations
D	Teacher leadership is about motivating students to learn and being persistent in getting your ideas through to the management

To understand the principals' conception of teacher leadership, the principals were asked to explain which functions, duties or actions that teachers undertook were considered to require leadership skills from their point of view. In all four schools, the principals commended teachers' involvement in the various tasks that pertain to their teaching practice and the efforts they exert, each according to the expectations set at their own school and which were previously explicated. In general, these tasks and functions described by the principals included all the activities and duties that were mentioned by the teachers in relation to academic and extra-curricular activities as well as administrative tasks. Moreover, the principals considered that engaging in any of these tasks and completing them successfully requires teachers to have leadership skills, therefore implying that, in general, all teachers must have leadership skills to engage in teaching at their school.

Taking initiative was shared as a common trait of teacher leaders by all four principals and was considered extremely important; however, the extent and scope of these initiatives differed largely between them. For the principal in school A, teacher

leaders take initiatives to build the school community and explains that, “the teacher leader takes it upon herself to lead others to a certain place, to go forward with them, paving the way, [they] are continuously working on themselves to become role models and take part in team building activities.” So, teacher leadership in her opinion extends beyond collegiality and collaboration among peers, to purposefully working together to build a community of leaders. “Teacher leaders do not wait for someone to tell them do this and don't do that. They are devoted [...] and have balance in assuming their responsibilities.” In addition, she believes that being a leader extends beyond having a title, “it's being accountable for everything you're doing, you're saying, you're being.”

School B principal expresses that teacher leaders take initiative by showing up wherever they are needed. They could volunteer to organize whole school events, such as a book fair for example, or substitute for an absent colleague. She believes that all teachers are leaders because “nobody chooses to be a teacher if they are not willing to give. However, for her, it is the school leadership that holds the responsibility of stimulating teacher leadership at school by providing room and opportunities for teachers “to spark this” in their teachers.

The conception of teacher leadership for the principal in school C revolves around motivating students to learn and on being persistent in getting your ideas through to the management. She explains that teacher leaders are those who give to their colleagues “not only information and materials, but also give feedback.” She perceives them as “following up on their tasks and letting [other colleagues] assume their responsibilities” so they learn to fulfill their obligations.” She thinks that if teacher leaders take too much responsibility themselves, they will encourage others to become dependent upon them. So, it is important for teacher leaders to get the whole community to feel accountable towards each other and towards the school.

As for school D principal, he considers that teacher leadership is twofold. First, it's about motivating students in class. Second, he believes that teacher leaders are those who persistently strive to get their idea through "if they see something that can be done differently". According to him, a teacher leader does not give up and will keep going up the leadership hierarchy as much as needed to be heard and will persevere to see his or her suggestion implemented. However, he believes that most teachers in his school "say things once then [complain] that no one got back to them." He wishes that they would persist to follow through, because it could be possible that the request, "is circulating, or maybe [the supervisors] forgot, so one needs to go and ask again, twice, three times."

Positioning of Teacher Leadership Within the School's Organizational Structure

The researcher aimed to comprehend if teacher leadership is a formalized role in the schools' organizational structure and how principals relate holding formal leadership position to perceiving teachers as leaders at their school. When asked if the teacher leader position exists in their school, all principals responded that there was no such formal position or title. In school D, teachers in formal leadership roles take other titles such as coordinator, head of department or head of section, while in schools A and B the formal position is mostly the coordinator role. Nevertheless, all principals agree that leadership is not necessarily bound to a formal position or an official title. They acquiesce that true leaders can and do lead others regardless of their position, whereas people who lack leadership qualities fail to lead others despite being in formal leadership positions. However, all four principals unanimously recognize that having an official position is a major source of formal authority and help in getting everyone else to comply to the authority of the teacher leader rather than depending on other informal sources of power that requires a lot of individual effort from the part of the teacher leader and is likely to receive compliance from others around the school. The following section presents the

principals' responses regarding positioning of teacher leadership roles within the formal structure, the impact of this formalization on the teacher leader's ability to influence the school community, and their perspective on whether the teachers at their schools are aware of their leadership potential. A summary of the results is provided in Table 4.10 hereafter.

Table 4.10

Summary table for principals' perspective on formalizing teacher leadership within the organizational structure across the four case schools

School	Principal's perspective on formalizing teacher leadership within the school's organizational structure
A	<p>Teacher leadership is embedded in the job requirements of all teachers and they are aware of it, yet is not associated with a formalized position in the school hierarchy</p> <p>Teachers' awareness of their leadership potential depends on their involvement at school</p> <p>Formal titles are given to teacher leaders only if a need for such a position arises and not as a way to grant them more authority and potential to influence others as teacher leaders.</p>
B	<p>All teachers embrace informal leadership roles within their routine teaching duties</p> <p>Teachers continuously use and develop their leadership skills; however, they are not aware of their leadership potential nor their contributions to the school because the school does not address teacher leadership explicitly</p> <p>Novice teachers seem to be more self-aware of their leadership potential than veterans</p> <p>Teachers in formal leadership positions have added formal administrative responsibilities for coordinating the team efforts</p>
C	<p>Teachers follow the lead of the person in charge and do not want to take formal responsibility for leadership roles</p> <p>Teachers need to develop their communication and learning skills to be perceived as leaders by others</p> <p>Teachers may not be aware of how important their effort is to the school</p>
D	<p>Formal leadership positions are given to the teachers who show the needed leadership characteristics and earn the position. These assignments are functional by nature and are not associated with an intent at promoting teacher leadership.</p> <p>Teacher leadership of students prevails rather than leadership of colleagues</p>

In school A, Expectations for teacher leadership in her school is embedded in the job expectations of all teachers and staff, and this is something that everyone at school recognizes. The principal believes that it is still early for the school to start burdening itself with formal administrative layers, since they are still new and have only a small number of teachers and students. According to her, teachers can acquire informal power based on their level of expertise and ability to influence their colleagues. However, she also acknowledges the fact that a formal title gives added legitimacy to a teacher who is expected to lead a project or a group of colleagues,

“Teachers are supposed to do things informally as teacher leaders, but sometimes have to give them formal [leadership] roles so they are protected [...]. We are dealing with human nature, [...] sometimes they are charismatic enough or skilled enough to bring everyone to them, but it doesn't always work.”

The principal in school A related that many teachers are engaged in leadership acts already. Nevertheless, she believes that some of them are well rounded as teacher leaders while others still lack some skills. So, for her, balancing the mindset, the devotion, and the work requirements are essential for teachers to be leaders. For example, in her team, she has “someone who has a lot of devotion [but not] time management, [...] or helps others but forgets to work on her learning plan [...], so as leaders, they need to have balance”. In addition, she sees that her teachers are on the right track and are actively developing the various skills needed to lead their classrooms, implement the rigorous academic program, as well as engage with the professional development program designed for the teachers.

The principal believes that teachers are aware of their leadership potential in varying degrees, “some of them really contribute and others just like to sit aside and watch [...] how the school is growing and how our contributions are adding to the school.” She continues, “some people are really passionate and like to add something, to leave a print wherever they go”. Teachers at school A realize that they have to keep working on

themselves and follow up on their own professional development goals, which they select based on their needs, if they are to develop leadership.

The principal points that teacher leaders need to “gain the trust of their colleagues” before they are given a formal title because doing it the other way around may create negative effects and resistance. She also confirms that this authority is not given to someone unless she proves to be up to the responsibility, “[teachers] who look at their workplace as a place for them to develop and to work on themselves, they are going to lead [formally] later, but those who come [...] to do their job and get a salary at the end of the month, won’t”.

In School B, principal sees that leadership is a position free role. She explains that teachers in her school already have informal leadership roles within their routine teaching duties. She admitted that when teachers are assigned formal leadership positions they acquire additional form of authority, but this form should not be considered exclusive. She notes that,

“Leadership is a position-free role; there are different types of leadership and different types of authority that comes with it. I see leadership as the ability to make a difference. So, whether you're in the classroom or whether you're in the admin, or whether you're a teacher assistant, I believe that every person is a leader. Of course, being in a leadership position helps because then you would have that formal authority, but also you can be in a leadership position and not have leadership.”

In addition, the principal considers that one venue to acquire leadership is connected to the fact that at the school teachers are continuously developing as professionals and demonstrating their leadership skills all throughout the school day. She gives as a live example the fair that was taking place that same day, clarifying that “honestly speaking, it's them.” The teachers organized the whole event with the students, parents, and even vendors,

“Our drama teacher has done everything from buying the costumes, to supervising with the maintenance regarding the stage, to writing the circulars for the parents, to making sure that it integrates with the curriculum, to leading the students, so, yes I mean for me this is leadership.”

Nonetheless, the principal was not sure if the teachers themselves are aware of their contributions to the school and the value of their efforts. She believes that,

“Teachers sometimes underestimate their contributions to the school. I am saying that because when I verbalize their contributions and I tell them 'you've done this, this and that and that's awesome, that's great', they look at me and they're very surprised.”

She thinks that it is because, “after a certain time, we do things unconsciously. We have that automatic pilot on, we're doing things all the time and we think that its normal, it's part of the job.” However, she admits that this is an area that needs to be addressed more with the teachers as their contributions are valued at the school and need to be highlighted more.

As for the school C principal, she herself is a fresh school leader who was appointed by her father, the chair of the organization, just this year to fill the vacant position after the previous principal resigned unexpectedly. As a special educator, she was hesitant to take on this role because she did not feel she had the needed qualifications or experience, nor was she enthusiastic to leave her position as the head of the special needs department. However, she reluctantly accepted because she did not want to leave the school without any formal leadership after many candidates for the position were turned down as inadequate by the hiring committee.

Although she said that she believed a leader does not need a formal title to lead others, she contrasts that to the reality in her school that she describes as different. Once she was appointed principal, she was automatically perceived as the “leader” and the main source of authority, and everyone continued their usual business while waiting for any

instructions and directions from her. Most teachers and staff are used to following the lead of the person in charge and consider that it is an added burden to be involved in any kind of leadership themselves.

The principal also perceives that teachers should be “leaders around each other, helping each other, [and] being a good model for students.” She reiterates that most teachers volunteer to help out if they see that their colleagues need a hand, especially during whole-school events. She was not able to clearly articulate how she sees teachers being leaders besides the broad ideas of supporting one another and students. She pinpoints two main areas that she considers to be essential for teachers to develop in order to be better teacher leaders at her school. The first one is “working on their communication”, as she thinks that teachers confuse the notions of,

“Leading people and bossing people around, they still they have it mixed up. Sometimes, they come with good intentions, but the way it is communicated turns out to be bad, so it becomes like bossing people around.”

The second point related to positioning leadership in the school is related to the need for teachers to engage in learning and continuous development. The principal believes that teachers need to acquire “more information and knowledge, because sometimes they want to do something, but they don't know how to do it, so it ends up being messed up.” She also shares that teachers do not express what they need and how it can be fulfilled, implying that they may not be aware of what kind of support they need in order to improve. She says, “if they don't express it or work on it, it will not happen; no one can come and say, ‘we wish we could’, they need to take action.”

As for teachers' awareness of their leadership potential, the principal believes that teachers are aware that they are assuming leadership acts by helping others. She expresses that her understanding of teachers' awareness of leadership is that, “they feel appreciated, that the school is changing, that the work they're doing is making a change [...], they're

given feedback, they're given the necessary praise.” However, she admits: “I am not certain if they really feel that the work they're doing is important to the school.” This is why, according to the principal, teachers are being given a lot of support this year to improve, through the intensive workshops and continuous feedback. Furthermore, the principal thinks that teachers should assume more responsibility and share what they are doing with the administration, so they get the proper guidance. However, she does not specify if there are any procedures put in place to support and require teachers to communicate certain aspects of their work with the administration and therefore, puts the burden of sharing information on the teachers alone.

In school D, the principal shares that he considers teachers to be leaders in the classroom when they are able to “motivate kids to work” he notes “that’s what leadership is.” He also adds that teacher leadership is manifested when teachers can deal with their colleagues at school. He clarifies that dealing with the adults at school, namely the teachers, coordinators, department heads and administrative staff is more demanding than dealing with the students. According to him, “leadership in the classroom is much easier than leadership outside.” He also considers that, “probably motivating kids is easier than motivating teachers, and at the same time disciplining teachers is more difficult than disciplining kids.”

The principal shares that the school has recently started to investigate using the inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning in the high school to engage students in authentic learning experiences with the support of the teachers. The principal explains that this approach requires that both teachers and students keep an open mind in order to see and accept different perspectives other than your own. He considers that teachers are not aware of their leadership potential and he hopes that these new practices will motivate teachers to become more aware of their potential and would more likely enact it among

themselves and with their students. In addition, he anticipates that reflecting on their practice, which is part of the inquiry approach, will help teachers manage their classroom interactions with students better and therefore motivate them to learn more. He says,

“We’re trying to shift the whole attitude in people, because you cannot teach something you don’t believe in and if you don’t practice it [...], so people start thinking and it becomes common sense.”

A particularity of school D is that all the staff involved in leadership positions across the school hierarchy also teach. So, all the academic leaders, who make up more than 30% of the school staff, including the coordinators, heads of department as well as the principal himself, are teachers. According to the principal, those teachers in formal leadership positions are obviously aware of their leadership potential and their ability to influence others, however they believe that many teachers still lack it, “especially the young ones” according to the principal. He says,

“[Young teachers] come out of university and still think that if they complain somebody is going to pick on them. And that takes time, maybe a few years, before they see that maybe life is not like that.”

Moreover, in school D, the principal shares that before allowing teachers to assume leadership roles, he always makes sure to identify someone who has proven that he/she has the characteristics that are required for the position. He says,

“When [teachers] show [leadership] qualities then you give them the title and not the other way around. The title doesn’t make the qualities. The qualities make the title. They have to earn the title, they have to earn it.”

The principal believes that caution needs to be exercised when allowing teachers to assume leadership positions. According to him, the authority given to someone who cannot lead has negative repercussions on the organization: “some people, you give them a title and suddenly they become Hitler. And others you give them a title and they say, ok that’s my mean to get everybody do the work and I sit down and watch.” Additionally, and

from his personal experience, he has witnessed people ruining their careers when taking on leadership roles. He continues, “when you put the person in the wrong place, you actually ruin him sometimes. There’s a saying, ‘you promoted them to their death’ or to their destruction.” He also believes that one needs a formal role to be able to lead effectively noting, “pragmatically speaking, not necessarily, [but] logically speaking the answer is yes.” The principal concludes that oftentimes “the word of appreciation is more of a motivator than a title for teachers.”

In brief, all principals shared that the formal position of teacher leader does not exist in their schools. However, the principals in school A and B expect teachers at their school to assume leadership roles as part of their job requirements, albeit informally, and most teachers are fully aware of these expectations. They also explained that, teachers who show commitment and involvement in the school are those who tend to be aware of their leadership potential and most likely are the ones who will get assigned to formal leadership roles contributing more and influencing others.

As for the principal in school C, she believes that teachers do not want to take responsibility for formal leadership roles and prefer to follow the lead of the one in charge. Finally, the principal in school D explains that teacher leadership can mainly be manifested in formal leadership positions and that it should be given to the teachers after they demonstrate the needed leadership characteristics to earn the position; however, these assignments are functional by nature and are not associated with an intent at promoting teacher leadership.

Comparing the Views of Principals and Teachers

After analyzing the views of the teachers and the principals on teacher leadership, these views were compared to see to what extent they were aligned, in anticipation of understanding how such alignment or lack thereof would impact the existence and the

support of teacher leadership in each school context. A common perspective shared by all teachers and principals across the four schools was that, to be considered a teacher leader, someone needs to be a ‘good’ teacher, meaning to have a solid subject matter knowledge, pedagogical expertise, classroom management skills and be able to have a positive rapport with students and colleagues. However, when going further in depth in examining the views of principals and teachers regarding the conception of teacher leadership, the characteristics of teacher leaders, the scope of acts that teacher leaders undertake, and the positioning of teacher leadership in each school context, it was noticed that the principals’ responses in schools A and B were aligned with those of the teachers, whereas the responses of the principal in school C reflected partial alignment and the perspectives of principal and teachers in school D were quite divergent from those of the teachers on many points.

With regard to the conceptions on teacher leadership, the principals and teachers in school A and B shared congruent views as they considered that teacher leadership requires involving teachers in actions and decision that extend beyond the classroom, and they all agreed that this is essential for the improvement of the whole school community. In school A, the principal considered that teacher leadership is about developing a community of leaders who are able to fulfill the school’s mission and take it forward. She also acknowledged that teachers who are actively involved in the school are aware of the influence they have around the school. This perspective was shared by the teachers who not only perceived themselves as already acting as teacher leaders, but who also considered that it is their role to support their students to develop their leadership potential as well. In school B, the principal considered that teaching by itself is an act of leadership and all teachers are leaders. She also explained that teacher leadership means taking on the responsibility of being there for others in the school whenever and wherever needed. In

addition, she recognized that the school leadership has not put enough effort to make sure teachers are aware of the influence they have at school, even though from the teachers' perspective, most of them feel that they effectively contribute as teacher leaders in the school community and share that they feel they have the space to develop as teacher leaders.

In school C, what was common in both the principal and the teachers' perspectives of teacher leadership is their understanding that it is mostly confined to fulfilling classroom duties well and ensuring that students succeed in exams. As to the role of teacher leaders, they shared the broad idea that teacher leaders support their colleagues, but from different viewpoints, with teachers viewing it as a sign of collegiality and doing each other favors, whereas the principal attributed it to assuming responsibilities and fulfilling obligations. However, the principal and the teachers had divergent views about teachers' awareness of leadership. While teachers portrayed that their students' performance determines their value as teacher leaders at school, the principal considered that teachers are not aware of their potential role in the school reform and still need to develop their knowledge and communication skills to be better teacher leaders.

As for school D, the principal's conception of teacher leadership converged in some respects and diverged in others from what teachers expressed to be their understanding of teacher leadership. While teachers considered that teacher leadership is mostly confined to their classroom, they also considered teacher leadership to encompass pursuing leadership initiatives outside the classroom. However, they explicitly shared that the complex leadership structure at school often gets in the way of them playing that aspect of their leadership role. On the other hand, the principal highlighted that having teachers pursue initiatives outside of their classroom and be willing to endure whatever it takes to have their idea heard and considered to be one of the two main characteristics of

teacher leaders. Furthermore, both teachers and principal reflected a common viewpoint that teachers are not aware of their leadership potential and the influence that their contributions have in the school community. As teachers considered the administrative layers to be a main reason for not venturing into leadership acts, the principal saw that a lack of communication skills, perseverance and common sense keep teachers outside the decision-making realm.

Regarding their perspective on formalizing teacher leadership in the school, the principals' and the teachers' views coincided to a large extent in schools A, B and C, and diverged in school D. In school A and B, the principals and the teachers shared their understanding that informal teacher leadership is expected as part of the teachers' everyday duties and that it is performed by most teachers whether they are dealing with their students, with each other or when they are working on developing themselves professionally. They also agreed that formalizing teacher leadership is not necessary, although it will add a layer of authority that may allow the teacher leaders to have a wider reach at school and influence more colleagues.

In school C, the principal and the teachers shared a common perspective, which is that there is no need to formalize teacher leadership nor to consider it as a position or a role in the organization. The school's traditional leadership focuses on the leadership of the principal and considers it to be the only source of authority and all the staff seem to be accepting of such form of leadership, keeping teacher leadership off the radar for everyone.

In school D, the principal perceives that his school is a model of shared leadership as around 30% of teachers have formal leadership roles. He also considers that teachers who show leadership potential and prove themselves worthy have the chance to be appointed in a formal position if available. On the contrary, from the teachers' perspective,

this leadership structure consisting of having teachers in various layers of leadership positions creates an expectation that teacher leadership is bound to having a role within this formal hierarchy. Consequently, they consider that if a teacher has no formal title or position, he or she has no chance to lead nor has any kind of authority.

Furthermore, there was a common view between all principals and all teachers across the four schools, which consisted of acknowledging that one can only lead if one has the qualifications and qualities to do so. Consequently, having someone have a formal teacher leadership position without having the necessarily skills to lead will backfire and may hurt the institution.

Factors that Affect the Promotion of Teacher Leadership at School

The researcher aimed to understand the teachers' and principals' viewpoints regarding the factors that support teacher leadership at their schools and what motivates teachers to undertake acts of leadership that may or may not necessarily be required of them. Consequently, teachers and principals were asked whether they consider that their school can and does promote teacher leadership or not, and which factors they perceived as supporting its development based on their experiences in their respective schools. Results show that teachers' perspective in all four schools was compatible with that of their principals regarding how the school environment, structure, and formal leadership can promote the development of teacher leadership, even when this congruence meant that there was total support, little or even no support. The following section presents the combined results from the teacher's and principals' perspectives of the factors that affect the promotion of teacher leadership at the school. They are presented for each school separately and are followed by a section that summarizes the results. Table 4.11 hereafter provides a summary of the responses given by teachers and principals across the four schools.

Case School A

In school A, the teachers' and the principal's responses came congruent as they shared the factors that they consider to be supporting the development of teacher leadership at their school. Four factors were depicted by teachers and principal. The first factor is a positive and supportive school environment, which is enhanced by a supportive school leadership and the development of a sense of community among the various stakeholders in the school community. The second factor is the commitment to the school's vision and mission, which fosters engaging teachers as partners in decision-making and opens up the way for them to be involved in various aspects of the school life through the standing school committees. The third factor reflects the rigorous requirements of the academic program adopted by the school and which necessitates that teachers continuously collaborate together to develop and teach the curriculum and constantly keep learning and sharing their practice to improve. The fourth and last factor is the positive impact that teachers and the school leadership observe on the teaching practice and on students' learning, which opens up opportunities for teachers to grow professionally.

Positive and supportive school environment. In school A, teachers identified the positive and supportive school environment that is created by the school leadership and the principal in particular to be a major factor that promotes teacher leadership. They consider that it fosters a sense of appreciation and acknowledgement for their efforts, which builds their confidence and trust in the organization, and consequently their sense of ownership and engagement in all what they do.

Supportive school leadership. Each teacher had a personal story to share about how supportive the school leadership has been to her personal and professional development and to promoting her sense of being a teacher leader. They compare their

current experience with other schools where they had previously worked or where their friends currently work and are awed by the difference. A teacher says,

“What's special in this school is that the administration is really positively supportive. In other [schools], there is always a feeling that you're not doing enough, there is no appreciation, you're under scrutiny, if you make a mistake you are reprimanded”.

Another teacher states, “here, if someone does something nice, she receives praise [from the principal], even if she, herself, didn't pay attention to it; this really gives support.” A third teacher continues, “just a word of encouragement really means a lot; when someone tells you [Allah yaatikel aafiyeh] ‘bless your efforts’, while you were working like a robot all day, seriously, it will mean a lot.” Teacher Salma gives as an example an incident that happened a few days earlier, when teachers had gathered in the teachers’ lounge in the early morning, chatting and laughing loudly. As the principal passed by, she smiled and said, “it’s so nice to hear your laughter across the hallway in the morning”. Salma acknowledges that she would have expected a different reaction in her previous school, something along, “please ladies, I can hear your voices all the way down the hallway, keep quiet, we have parents coming in”. She confidently shares that, “here, they are happy when they see us happy.” In addition, teachers assure that they have never been reprimanded at this school. One of them says, “even if we do a mistake, [the principal] says ‘how many times did I say you shouldn't do that’ [with a smile on her face], I like the way she talks to us.” She also states that, “if the principal needs anything from us she says, ‘please, bless you, do this and that’, not once she asked us in an inconsiderate way”.

Developing a sense of community. Teachers also consider that the positive school environment fostered close relationships among each other as they perceive themselves as one family. This enhanced their teacher leadership as they considered that it reinforced the sense of community that they helped develop. Ban says: “you feel comfortable [...] when

you walk in every morning, someone is [always] smiling, you come in happy”.

Elaborating their point, the teachers in school A highlighted their appreciation for being a small school, where they know each other very well and have become very close to one another. They explain that their support to each other stems from the school’s sense of community that they helped in developing. Furthermore, the fact that they celebrate each other’s successes, birthdays, graduations and often organize outings together further strengthens existing teacher bonds.

They also proudly divulge how their students love coming to school. An elementary teacher explains:

“[...] it's not only us who care for each other and love one another, look at the children in the morning while they are coming into the school and laughing. You never see a child coming in crying. You know that you are the source of his laughter and happiness. You are making this environment for him. When you feel that, you take a lot of positive energy from them.”

Preschool teachers laugh at how parents seem surprised that their young children do not cry when they come to school, not even on the first day. “They came the first day with their parents and no one cried. The second and third day they told their parents goodbye and came in. The parents would call the school and ask '[my daughter] is not crying?' we say 'no she's not'. [parents reply] 'why isn't she crying? She doesn't miss me?'”, says Samia. They even tell how little children get upset when it’s time to go home because they are having a good time, even when they are visiting the school for the entrance interviews. Samia insists that “there is something in this school that is like a magnet to the children.”

Commitment to the school’s vision and mission. An additional factor that teachers identified as promoting teacher leadership in their opinion, is the sense of ownership that they feel towards the school and their commitment to its mission and vision. This motivates them to be involved in various aspects of the school life that extend

beyond their teaching responsibilities. As they explain it, they perceive that the school is creating a unique identity among other schools in Lebanon and the region because of how it is weaving the Islamic values that it promotes inside the International Baccalaureate program and creating an integrated, high quality learning context for their students. As teacher Lana explains: “Something that motivates us, that this is an Islamic school and that inshaAllah we are getting good deeds, that we are changing the kids, and that there is hope for the future [...]”. Teacher Salma adds: “we have the space to feel and have the awareness that we are succeeding in some places, that we have achieved something.”

This view was echoed by the principal who believes that accomplishing the vision and mission of the school depends on sharing leadership with teachers. She thinks that,

“It’s the duty of the school to involve teachers in leadership because we want leaders in our community. It’s not a one-man show! They must have a voice, we have to share decision-making with them because they know what they need. [Also,] having lots of teacher leaders in your school is what’s going to row our boat forward.”

She perceives that it is the school responsibility to enhance teacher’s motivation to engage in leadership. She also explains that from her experience, an important motivation for many teachers to take on leadership roles, according to the principal, is their belief in the mission of the school because they understand the importance of the new learning approach it provides to learners. This is especially true to those teachers who have worked in other schools before and did not enjoy their working experience.

“It’s a new Islamic school, a new context, [...] so they want to be there and move forward with this school. They tried in other schools and they didn’t succeed, so they want to be part of this new success story hopefully”.

Engaging teachers in decision-making. Teachers explain that another factor that promotes teacher leadership and fosters their influence as teacher leaders at school is their engagement in decision making on all matters pertaining to the various aspects of school life. They also know that it is the school administration who is actively involving them in

decision making at school. A teacher says, “of course, the school leadership is opening the way for us in decision making, they give us the space to make decisions”. A teacher states,

“I remember that when we first came to the school as new teachers, [the principal] told us ‘each one of you is coming from a different place, and has gained her own experience, now we are here so each one of you adds your own touch and your own experience to this place’.”

From their viewpoint, the stance from the school principal has put a load of responsibility on the teachers’ shoulders, one that comes with empowerment and shared leadership. It also engaged them to rise to the expectations and put the needed effort to fulfill all that was required of them in this school. A teacher affirms that, “honestly, although [the principal] is kind and sweet, but we take her a lot into account and we think very highly of her; she is a leader and we feel her authority, while she is being very kind to us.” This affirmation was seconded by many other teachers. Another teacher confirms, “she has her own way of dealing with us; not once, she made us feel that she is the boss.” Teachers’ responses also reflected that their ability to practice teacher leadership at the school is facilitated by the fact that the principal always puts in effort to convince them during their conversations even when they believe that she doesn't necessarily have to. They consider the respect she treats them with and taking her time to listen to them, bring them on board and make them understand her perspective as a factor that enhance their ability to be teacher leaders.

Moreover, teachers perceive that the more involved they are in decision-making at school, the more they can enhance their ability to practice teacher leadership with regard to what works best for their students. They consider that they are the ones who know the students the most and can best identify what they need, what they prefer and how to care for each one of them. The constant communication between all stakeholders at the school

and involvement in the various aspects of the children's life is therefore crucial for an approach to teaching and learning that is student-centered.

Furthermore, both the teachers and the principal consider that engaging in the standing committees at school nurtures teacher leadership. The principal states that fostering motivation for teachers to be leaders is continuously soliciting their contributions and ideas and providing them with the needed support to implement them, as well as through directly communicating changed expectations of their role. She gives the example of such expectations as involving them in committees and putting them in charge of various projects at school. She considers that participating in the standing committees at school allows teachers to actively engage in all aspects of school life as well as develop their leadership skills outside the classroom. She also believes this is where teachers' true character shows, so she particularly keeps an eye on their interactions with colleagues during committee work. She says:

“Being involved in a committee is going to tell us a lot because it's outside the formal work environment, [...] it's their ideas, how they are going to follow up on these ideas, how they're going to implement them, [...] it tells us more about their personality, how they perceive things and how they interact with other people.

The principal further explains that teachers can volunteer to join any of these committees, each according to their interest. The committees include, a) Library/Resource Center committee, which takes care of managing school resources and designing the learning spaces, b) Student life committee that organizes all student activities, c) Safety and security committee, that develops safety plans for the school community, d) Curriculum committee in charge of developing and reviewing the curriculum and the teachers' professional learning opportunities, and e) Social committee, which organizes team building activities for the staff. This last committee is particularly important according to the principal because,

“It’s good for teachers, for team building and bonding together because it’s their workplace, so if they’re not comfortable, they’re not happy, they will work to make it a more comfortable place for them.”

Requirements of the academic program. Again, both the teachers and the principal perceive the program adopted at school to be a major factor that promotes teacher leadership. Teachers explain that, in this program, they are held responsible for planning and teaching the curriculum. They also have the opportunity to change the content of the curriculum itself, which for them means that they feel empowered and trusted as they are aware that it requires a serious rationale and a laborious intellectual exercise to take place and be implemented. Moreover, they have the confidence to suggest changes if they feel that they make sense and add to the learning experience of the children. For them, having this flexibility and freedom to suggest changes is essential for promoting teacher leadership. Teacher Samia explains:

“if [the admin] didn't give me this flexibility I would be very limited. This is the part where I think [my] leadership allows me to understand the students well and gives the teacher the right to decide what to do. Of course, there is accountability and I have to go back to the admin and have a discussion about how successful it was or not, but you have that first step.

Teacher Ayla continues:

“If you go to see the classrooms, each classroom has its own culture, atmosphere and environment, of course we are all on the same track at the end but [there is individuality], there is this freedom to create your own culture with your colleagues, your own touch with the students in class, you set your own rules, it gives you the flexibility to give the students the freedom to set the rules and consequences, this by itself is leadership to teachers.

Nurturing teachers’ collaboration. Collaboration between teachers is perceived as a key factor in promoting their leadership skills. From the principal’s viewpoint, nurturing teachers’ collaboration with each other is essential to develop their leadership skills and to create a supportive school environment. The principal explains that she closely follows up

on all the teachers' work at school, whether in their teaching practice or in all other aspects of their participation in life at school, so she knows each one of them very well and is able to provide the support each one of them needs. Moreover, she explains that the staffing model adopted at the school, whereby teachers work in homeroom teams at each grade level allows them to actively collaborate, find ways to work together in harmony, and develop as teacher leaders.

The principal explains that the institutional structure at the school not only encourages collaboration among teachers, but rather requires it and supports it. Teachers are collectively held responsible for teaching all academic subjects to the children and are accountable for the learning achievements of all students. In fact, teachers share the same classroom space and have collaborative planning time built into their weekly schedule, so they can work together during the school day. In addition, students are dismissed around an hour before teachers every day, which gives additional time for teachers to come together on a daily basis to conduct any necessary planning or preparation for their class. A teacher shares that, "the idea of collaborative work is a core value at the school, so even [teachers] who don't like to collaborate, here they are forced to collaborate." Also, both the teachers and the principal consider that the relatively horizontal hierarchy of the leadership structure at the school reinforces the teachers' perception that, as teacher leaders, they are entrusted to work collaboratively as one team for the greater good of the students and the school community.

Facilitating teachers' learning and sharing. Moreover, the principal believes that another factor that supports the development of teacher leadership and collaboration among teachers is having a structure that facilitates the sharing of teachers' practice and expertise. She gives as an example that teachers at her school are expected to conduct peer observations, where they observe in their colleagues' classes and share their feedback, and

consequently benefit from this opportunity to develop their leadership skills. Another example is supporting teachers to develop their own learning goals and improve their practice through a professional development policy that ensures all teachers get involved in learning opportunities offered at school and outside it.

The positive impact on teaching and learning. Teachers consider that the success they feel from the high-quality teaching that they are designing and implementing at the school to be an important factor and a major motivator for them to engage in leadership. They feel that because conducting research, reflecting on their practice and continuously questioning everything has become integral to the team's way of thinking and teaching practice, their ability to lead at their school has been enhanced. Teachers reflected that they consider themselves growing as professional teachers, as they are continuously learning new things and expanding their thinking. "We are doing inquiry ourselves even when we are not in class", says teacher Samia. She continues

"When you feel that you got to a certain point, this success is like 'wow I did something new', really, I have the awareness that I was able to see it from this or that aspect and that this one is more coherent. Next time I try to do it even at a higher level or in a better way, I conduct a new research. [...] Getting somewhere that allows you to see things differently is what makes you move forward."

Another factor that seems to be fueling teachers' motivation to go beyond their traditional roles and practice teacher leadership seems to be the continuous positive changes that teachers see in their students. For them, being aware of the impact that they have on their students is a matter that they take very seriously. Teacher Naya says,

"We feel that each one of the students is our child and that we are entrusted with them. If we are not giving from the bottom of our heart and we are giving from all ourselves then we are doing something wrong for sure".

From their perspective, teachers share that they are aware that the children observe them, learn from their actions and their words, and imitate them in the way they think,

express their ideas, make connections and approach the learning experiences. Teacher Nayla gives an example: “we went on a fun school trip, so the [students] started analyzing everything that related to the unit without even being asked to. It was amazing”. In addition, teachers acknowledge that their students have improved in assessing their own learning, in organizing and presenting their portfolios, in participating in classroom discussions, and in initiating action at school and at home. The principal’s view comes in agreement with that of the teachers as she perceives that teachers are motivated to act as leaders when they feel they are succeeding in providing the students with quality education. She says that, “teachers consider that this school gave [them] the opportunity to be teacher leaders and impact how their children and the children of their friends are learning.”

Opportunity to grow professionally in a startup school. Finally, many teachers consider that working in a startup school is another factor that promotes teacher leadership and motivates them to take on leadership roles and acts, which allows them to grow professionally while the school itself is growing and getting established. Since school A is a new school, many teachers perceive working in it as offering opportunities to climb the leadership ladder. As teacher Naya expresses: “there is potential to grow and to get better positions; I am currently continuing my education, [and I hope that] I can reach higher positions besides teaching and move up the ladder. This pushes me to strive to do more, knowing that I won't remain in my place.”

Such perspective is shared by the principal who believes that each person at the school brings an added value to the whole school community especially that the school is a new school. She states, “I’m good in certain things but other people are good in other things, so it’s exchanging ideas and exchanging experiences.” She considers that she personally benefits from having teacher leaders at school, “you always need somebody to

talk to at the same level, teacher leaders enrich my experience as a leader as well.” She is also aware that many teachers are looking to grow with the school and they see it as an opportunity to join the school leadership, so “they think that in a couple of years they are not going to be there inside the classroom, they will be somewhere else”. Furthermore, the principal points out that in a new school, promoting teacher leadership enhances the school leadership’s ability to identify teachers that have leadership potential. She explains that having teachers take initiatives and come up with ideas at school to support their colleagues or their students help in her opinion to distinguish teacher leaders, “when teachers work in informal ways and share with others, it tells you a lot about them; so, you push that person forward.”

In summary, the teachers and principal’s perspectives regarding the factors that support the development of teacher leadership were quite compatible in school A. Teachers in school A consider that the positive school environment and the supportive school leadership are conducive for them to develop their leadership through having an active role in decision making, developing their sense of community and sharing leadership by participating in the different committees at school. Similarly, the principal perceives that sharing leadership with teachers helps develop leaders, which is essential to fulfilling the school’s vision and mission and engages them in being in charge of the various projects at school. It is perceived that the teachers’ belief in the mission and vision of the school, their love for the children, their ambition to learn and grow with the school and eventually join the leadership team are depicted by both the principal and teachers as main motivators to be involved in leadership roles that go beyond their classroom duties. Finally, the international academic program implemented at school is considered by the teachers and the principal to play a major role in supporting the development of teacher

leadership by encouraging teacher collaboration, continuous learning, sharing their practice with colleagues.

Case School B

In school B, the teachers' and the principal's responses were somewhat aligned as they explained which factors they perceived to promote teacher leadership at their school. Four factors were identified. The first factor is having a supportive school culture, which is reflected by a supportive school leadership that considers mistakes as opportunities to learn and grow. The second factor is involving teachers in decision-making about the various matters at school through serving on the standing committees. The third factor is related to the requirements of the academic program newly adopted by the school and which promote teachers' collaboration. Finally, the fourth factor is the opportunity for teachers to grow professionally, which encourages them to develop their leadership potential.

Supportive school culture. Teachers in school B identified having a supportive school culture to be an essential factor for promoting teacher leadership at their school. They considered that such support gives them the possibility to lead and to take responsibility for implementing their ideas. From their perspective, they perceive this support to reflect that the school leadership trusts them as professionals and this motivates them to be involved in different aspects of the school life that encompass tasks and acts beyond their classroom teaching responsibilities. In addition, teachers consider that the school leadership views them as central to the school development and they consider that their hard work contributes greatly to the building of school's good reputation. Consequently, they feel motivated by the institution's overall success.

Supportive school leadership. This perspective was also reflected by the principal, who shared that she believes it is in the school's interest to support teacher leadership. She

considers that, “in the school, teachers are ‘par excellence’ leaders”, and perceives that her role as school principal is to support teachers, “to coordinate and make sure that they're happy, that they have hopefully enough time to reflect, enough time to be in collaborative meetings and to professionally develop, [and] teach!”. Furthermore, she believes that this is the way it should be, because, “life and leadership is about give and take, so when teachers feel appreciated and happy in the school, they're willing to give more.” She explains,

“Personally, I believe a teacher is a leader. She's a leader in her classroom, she's a leader in the school community, she's an ambassador of the school. So, my teachers are very much empowered.”

In addition, the principal highlights that it is important for teachers to that the school leadership is supportive of their own leadership, so they are not afraid to take initiatives and suggest new ideas. She believes that in her school, teachers are “quite comfortable voicing out their concerns and their feedback.” She explains that, because of the open-door policy put in place at school, teachers know “that they can jump in all the time”, which encourages them to take initiatives and bring in new ideas to the school administration. She also believes that at her school, there is “a very positive school culture, so teachers are very bonded, and they know that when they collaborate, the students learn better, [because] they've experienced this”, which also supports teachers in feeling as an integral part of the school community.

However, and despite all the teachers' active involvement in various roles around the school, the principal believes that many still do not have the awareness that they are being teacher leaders. She knows that some of the teachers are aware, but they are only a few. This, in her opinion is because, “we're not using the proper language [...] with the teachers.” She thinks that the fresh graduates seem to have acquired this language through their university years, while others have not, “especially the teachers who have been here a

long time [...], we need to tell them you are leaders. [...] I do think we're not doing it often enough." She plans to tackle this issue next year and emphasize the use of the proper terminology to describe what the teachers are doing.

Considering mistakes as learning opportunities. The principal also believes that part of supporting teachers to develop as leaders is how the school culture views and approaches teachers when they make mistakes. She clarifies her point stating that teachers should not be blamed if something goes contrary to their plans or if a lesson is not successful, the important thing is that they learn from it and improve. According to her, "teachers do not make mistakes, these are learning opportunities." She also shares that she models it herself, "I am not ashamed of sharing my mistakes with the team. So, I would say, 'I forgot to do this or I shouldn't have done that'; I think I empower them like that." She thinks that this allows them to function in a safe environment, where they are not penalized for making mistakes but rather view them as part of the learning process. She says,

"People do not feel safe to make decisions on their own. You model to your teachers that it's fine if things don't go well. You change that experience into a learning opportunity, so they feel very empowered to make decisions. I think it's believing in the teachers and telling them it's not about the mistakes, it's about the learning."

Involving teachers in decision making. An additional factor that the teachers and the principal of school B considered as promoting teacher leadership at the school is involving teachers in decision-making and soliciting their feedback and input in all matters related to the various aspects of the school life. Teachers considered that when they had ample room to make decisions they will take initiative to try new things with their students and at school. They viewed this as an opportunity to develop their leadership and lead the different projects that the school administration entrusts them to implement with their students. One of the teachers shares a personal experience where she suggested hosting an

event that celebrates reading and stories for her students. She points that the school principal gave her the green light to do it, so she organized the whole event from beginning to end and she involved her students whenever it was possible. This entailed contacting the publishers, setting up the display spaces, making invitation cards, and hosting the event. The event was a big success and later became a yearly event that involves the whole school.

The principal voices her perspective in that regard, which was in alignment with the teachers' view as she says,

“We usually take decisions in collaboration with our teachers, we send out surveys to see what are their expectations, what are their views, what are their concerns. I believe that being data driven is very important and part of the data that we get are from our teachers. We see teachers as leaders and we practice this, so, in our meetings we don't usually inform teachers of decisions, we tell them this is our view, what is yours?”

She gives a recent example where all teachers at the school filled a survey about their professional development needs and their areas of strength, which they feel confident about to facilitate workshops for their colleagues. To support all teachers to voice their needs, the principal collaborated with the coordinators to make sure all teachers are involved in the process that led to setting the professional development program. Going forward, she shared that the school will even coordinate the logistics of the program with teachers. At the end of this exercise, the principal was surprised by some of the findings regarding the abilities of the teachers at her school. She says,

“Some of these teachers have been at school for the past 15 years and we never knew that for example that they had training in emotional intelligence. So, it was a good opportunity for us to learn about them and for those teachers to feel empowered, and they did give the workshops.”

The principal shares another example where the school involved teachers in a major decision a few years ago regarding introducing Arabic literacy in the early years,

which was not the case previously. The principal explains that teachers in grade one raised their concern that children were not able to read or write, so the whole Arabic literacy program was changed by the teachers themselves and the issue was solved. The principal shares, “this was not a [about changing a] teaching strategy in the classroom, this was changing the whole philosophy of the school regarding teaching and learning, and it was done bottom up.”

Another aspect of being involved in decision-making as shared by both the teachers and the principal, is involving teachers in the different standing committees at school. From their perspective, teachers perceived their involvement in the various committees to be an opportunity for them to become aware of all that is going on at school and a platform to come up with their own ideas and share them. They explained that it allows for the teachers’ voices to be heard and their opinions to be taken into account in making any decision. According to the teachers, they feel empowered as teacher leaders when they are implicated in curriculum reviews, planning field trips and school events, and designing the professional learning of their colleagues. A teacher explains that being involved in decision making is essential not to feel that,

“[things are] imposed on you and you may not be excited to do it, but when the decision is yours, then this is a motivation for you to do it and accomplish it and show yourself that you are successful before showing it to others.”

Requirements of the academic program. Teachers’ also considered that teaching the international program to be a major factor that promoted their leadership at school. In addition, they pointed that the nature of the program played a role in having the school leadership support them as teacher leaders, as they are expected to be active participants in the various aspects that affect the learning of the students. They are also aware that the additional responsibilities they have towards the school and their students requires them to take the lead on many levels if they are to do their job well. Teachers agree that because

the school supports them a lot as teacher leaders, they always find new ideas to improve what they are doing. One of the teachers shares: “I feel trusted and appreciated, these two adjectives are enough for me”. However, teachers point out that this support alone is not sufficient for them to enact their leadership. They explain that though they are eager to be more involved and do more, they find it hard to make time to do so. One teacher shares, “it all goes down to feasibility and application”, as sometimes there are restrictions that they, as teachers, are not necessarily aware of and which force the school to prioritize project proposals from teachers.

In addition, the principal confirms that teachers have ample room to decide how to teach the academic program, how and when to collaborate, and which teaching strategies to use. She considers this approach to be supportive of their development as teacher leaders, which seems to be congruent with the teachers’ own views. In fact, teachers shared that they perceive the administration’s hands-off approach as a sign of trust in their leadership abilities, which pushes them to take full responsibility for collaborating and creating great learning experiences for their students. Additionally, the positive impact that they see on the learning and the personal development of their students motivates them to put additional effort and initiate more work to serve their purpose.

Opportunity to grow professionally. A last factor that teachers considered as important to promote their leadership at school was the opportunity to grow professionally beyond their current formal roles. They saw that as an incentive to grow their leadership skills and practice leadership. One teacher noted that she considers that it is in teachers’ best interest to work on developing their leadership skills because,

“For one to advance as a teacher, you need to develop. In the end one needs to move forward and not stay a teacher forever, [and] you need to develop your leadership skills to reach higher positions.”

Teachers believe that the presence of such potential for advancement is critical for their motivation to develop as teacher leaders. They also consider that the school leadership is supporting them by establishing a new practice where teachers set their own learning goals based on what they consider to be important for them to develop. Teachers perceive this as an incentive for them to develop their leadership potential as they consider it an opportunity to project where they like to see themselves in the future and decide which capacities they need to develop in order to achieve their goal and overcome the challenges they may face.

In summary, in school B, the teachers and the principal shared similar perspectives on many aspects of the factors that support teacher leadership in their school. Teachers considered that the positive and supportive school culture and the opportunities they have to be involved in decision making in matters related to the whole school to be essential factors that supported the development of teacher leadership at their school. Similarly, the principal perceived involving teachers in decision making, soliciting their input and feedback in all matters related to school life and modeling that mistakes are in fact learning opportunities were forms of supporting their leadership. In addition, the international academic program adopted at the school were viewed by both the principal and the teachers to be fostering teacher leadership as it promoted collegial and collaborative relations between teachers, impacted the quality of teaching and learning at school, and opened up opportunities for teachers to grow personally and professionally.

Case School C

In school C, the notion of leadership is perceived by both the teachers and the school principal as separate for teachers and administrators/leaders, whereby teachers teach, and leaders lead. Consequently, the factors that they consider to be affecting the development of teacher leadership were framed within the restricted scope of leading

inside the classroom, such as subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise. In practice, this view limited teachers' involvement in decision making to the teaching and learning process and led them to resist getting actively engaged in the reform efforts initiated at school as they did not see it as part of their role. Furthermore, the lack of policies that support the development of teacher leadership at school was another factor mentioned by teachers, which reinforced their perception that there was no sustainability for all their efforts and deterred them from embracing leadership roles as well as the authority and responsibilities that come with it. On the other hand, the principal considered that teachers' main resistance to embrace leadership roles was caused by their fear of making mistakes and losing their status as teachers- experts.

Separation of leadership and teaching functions. Teachers and the principal in school C share a common understanding of teacher leadership whereby they all perceive it as clearly and strictly bound to the classroom duties and to issues related to the teaching and learning process and subject matter content. In this school, teacher leadership is perceived by the teachers and the school principal to reflect the teacher's subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise. They consider that a teacher leader is the one who has what it takes to have students succeed at school through scoring well on the school tests and passing the official exams at the end of Grade 9 and Grade 12. This adopted conception seems to hinder teachers from seeking new ways to promote their teacher leadership as they do not see the added value of engaging in any acts or roles besides teaching. In fact, they consider that engaging in any other functions to be an additional burden that they are not equipped to carry out, as their role is to teach and not to lead. Similarly, the principal believes that teachers are leaders in their classroom and are the ones who know the students best and consequently provide a kind of input that no one else can when it comes to the students and content to the school administration.

Lack of involvement in decision making beyond the classroom. Even though they did not seem to want to get involved in strategic decisions at the school, some of the teachers pinpointed that their limited engagement in decisions at the school level negatively impacted their ability to “lead” within their classroom. Oftentimes, they find themselves having to deal with unexpected issues and to change their class plans because the administration took a decision without involving them. Such decisions impact the examinations calendar, the daily schedule as well as which forms of assessment to be used. A teacher expresses, “I need to be consulted before deciding when the reading period should start because this is something that the teacher knows more than the administration”. Another teacher shares, “I want to be consulted before deciding when the fire drill should take place [...] in case I am giving a test during the drill”. Although teachers complained about the lack of coordination by the administration, their comments reflected issues beyond scheduling concerns and touched upon their isolation and lack of involvement in the decision-making process at the school. A teacher shares that she likes to have more control over what kind of assessments to use with her students and “not be forced to give an exam to my young students” when another form of assessment is more appropriate.

The principal’s responses reinforced the perspectives of teachers on what hinders their abilities to lead beyond the classroom. She says, “teachers are involved in decisions that are related to the students and the teaching process; now, for the administrative stuff, we don't involve them.” In addition, she considers that, “most of the time, teachers are consulted or are asked to give their opinion regarding other school-related issues.” However, when asked to share instances where teachers’ opinion was solicited and considered, the principal’s answers converged to matters directly related to teaching and learning. One example that the principal shared related to involving teachers in the

allocation of teaching hours to make sure that the governmental requirements are fulfilled in conjunction with the subject matter provisions.

Another example, that confirmed that at the school there are restrictions on involving teachers in decisions beyond those related to their classroom, was the principal listing of giving teachers the freedom to add or remove lessons and to teach in any way they like as an “opportunity” given to teachers to contribute to decision making. Moreover, although the principal assures that teachers have the freedom to choose the school events they want to participate in or even suggest, she noted that some events are assigned, and all events need to be approved by the administration, which was more in line with what the teachers expressed. In fact, based on the responses of teachers and principals from that school, it became clear that the limited involvement of the teachers was the result of the unstable leadership at school for the past few years, where teachers were left alone to decide what and how to teach rather than an intentional attempt to promote it or facilitate its practice. Moreover, teachers and principals’ answers reflected that this de facto independence to make certain decisions was actually a burden that added to their isolation and prevented them from interacting with their colleagues professionally.

Furthermore, and although the teachers’ and the principal’s views were aligned as they all considered that there was a lack of proper communication at school, the teachers perceived it to be caused by the administration, whereas the principal explained it as reflecting a lack of engagement from the teachers. Teachers shared that they often learn about the dates of exams, outings, or school events from their students. A teacher says, “all dates are set without our knowledge”, “but the students know them before we do”, says another. A teacher states that sometimes, “students would have a trip planned that the teacher is not aware of; who will go and who will stay, everything is not specified to the teachers.” On the other hand, the principal expresses that teachers do not communicate

what they are doing with the administration as much as they should, which creates uncertainty and unclarity as to what is happening in class. She considers that this is the case, though she perceives herself as approachable by teachers and has done her part to communicate with them by calling for regular all staff meetings to share instructions and expectations with teachers as well as listen to their concerns and feedback.

Moreover, the principal explains that as the school leadership started the reform initiative at the school, there was an effort to engage the teachers in it from the beginning in order to prepare them to play a different role at school. The purpose of this reform was to move toward a more student-centered teaching and learning approach while promoting teacher leadership and collaboration. Although the teachers and the principal shared a clear understanding of the purpose of such improvement plan, they had different perspectives on how it was supporting teacher leadership at school. Teachers' views varied as some of them were excited about being involved in the reform efforts and engaging in new learning and practices that promoted their leadership, while others considered that it was not part of their job to engage in such practices and were not happy of all the additional work that they were required to do. They considered that their realm was the classroom and that what happens beyond it is the administration's responsibility. As for the principal, she considered that involving teachers in the design of the improvement plan from the beginning was to promote their own sense of ownership. However, she was not certain that they appreciate the value of their involvement and considers that sometimes they perform their work as a duty and comply with the requirements because they have to, not because they believe in it.

Lack of policies to support teacher leadership. A few teachers raised their worries about the continuity and sustainability of the reform and expressed that they were afraid to see all the work that they and their colleagues are putting into the school this year

come to an end. They were not sure if this improvement plan will continue beyond this year and that whatever has been already accomplished will stay and thrive or just disappear. In the absence of any clear policies about how to institutionalize teacher leadership or any of the efforts that were put in place this year, teachers' trust in the vision of the school lacked. Some teachers had concerns about being recognized by the school administration as teacher leaders and being given the opportunity to continue their professional growth.

A teacher was convinced that whatever she contributes into this reform, whatever leadership skills she develops, or innovative ideas she comes up with will not matter and will not be acknowledged by the school administration. She says,

“there are [leadership] qualities in a lot of teachers [...] but it gets mixed up with [other things]. Whether you're doing your job really well or not, it's all treated the same.”

This for her and her colleagues is considered a major hindrance to developing teacher leadership at the school and sustaining any effort to change and improve. Furthermore, one teacher noted that in a context lacking support for teachers to take leadership initiatives, teachers attempts become a source of frustration and are thus abandoned. He explains,

“You need to be given the space to lead, [...] and appreciation comes in the form of incentives such as material reward or promotion. You need to be given the authority and a margin of freedom to practice your responsibilities, or else you will be frustrated and will not take any initiative.”

Reluctance to embrace the authority and responsibility of leadership. Most teachers seemed not willing to mix leadership and teaching, mostly because they do not want to assume the responsibility that comes with leadership and be held accountable for it. This constituted a barrier to making any attempts at developing their leadership. Based on their responses, teachers consider that bearing the burden of such a responsibility is

“the work of a supervisor or a principal, not a teacher.” A teacher says that she prefers to interact with her colleagues more informally without the authority and the responsibilities that a leadership position may add. She says that,

“through participation, assistance and collaboration, [...] I can convince [my colleague] of something I am convinced of and she could do the same if it helps me, but I should not necessarily be responsible for her or her for me. It's efficiency more than authority. [...] one knows what is expected of him when the roles are well defined.”

Moreover, some teachers justified their position on teachers' leadership by explaining that if teachers' involvement in leading can become a source of conflict and trouble at the school. The first reason shared was altering the social-relational aspect at school where a teacher who takes the lead may be perceived by others as superior and thus will lose their collegiality. A teacher states that, “there will be competition, someone will be annoyed from someone else, of course something will go wrong, one will be bothered by another or why is this a leader.” A second reason shared was that a teacher cannot do her job as well as the leader's job because there must be one leader only. A teacher expresses that, “it is not a teacher's job to lead” and adds, “like the proverb says: too many cooks burn the meal.”

As for the principal, she considers that teachers' reluctance to take responsibility and take ownership of their actions is the main obstacle for them to actively engage in leadership. She also believes that the teachers are not doing their part and repeatedly says,

“It's important that they assume the responsibility [...], it's their school too, it's not a one-man show. The students have a say, the teachers have a say. It can't be like a dictatorship.”

Fear of making mistakes. As for the principal, she thinks that teachers show skepticism towards embracing teacher leadership, because it constitutes a change from the current practices and “they're scared, worried about messing up; [they believe that] it's either that we do it perfectly or we don't do it, it's all or nothing.” She clarifies that this

lack of teachers' motivation to engage in leadership comes, in her opinion, from their fear to not be "perfect" in their contributions. She admits that she cannot tell if this attitude is fueled by the school leadership's own perspective on change and dealing with errors or the teachers' own views. She says, "I don't know if it is our fault or if we project this; [teachers] are afraid to be punished or held accountable, but it's not the case, really." From her perspective, the school encourages teachers and supports them to take initiative. She explains,

"We always encourage them to take the lead, to do things in the way they find it better, of course with our consultation. I always tell them to brainstorm, I ask them questions, they give me answers, we see what applies, what they need, what they feel is doable and feasible at school. What they want to do also, they have the full freedom to do it."

She confirms that expectations to have teachers step up and take more responsibility are verbally shared with them during all staff meetings. She says, "is not written, but it's said, it's always encouraged." However, there is no clarity at the school on how to have teachers engage in translating these expectations into action. The principal envisions that if teachers get over their fears and take more responsibility at school, the impact will be that,

"No one will feel lost, 'where should I go to and what should I do'; the school will be more active, more lively, because everyone wants to work, they want to give. It will help the school succeed because people are genuinely working for it."

In summary, in school C, teachers separated teaching from leading completely, so did the principal, as they did not show any interest in being involved in leadership beyond their classroom. For them, teacher leadership is confined inside the classroom and is limited to having subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise. However, the teachers' and the school principal's perceptions of the factors that impact teacher leadership at their school were inconsistent. Teachers perceived that there was no support of teacher

leadership at their school, mostly due to a lack of involvement in decisions, which negatively impacted their teaching, and the lack of policies that support the development of teacher leadership. On the other hand, the principal seemed to be waiting for teachers to come up with ideas to be more involved beyond their classrooms and subject matter specialization, which she considered to be the teachers' responsibility. The teachers' and the principal's perspective regarding the improvement efforts that started at school this year differed in how they promoted teacher leadership. While some teachers' views showed enthusiasm about these efforts, others considered them imposed and not relevant to their role as teachers. Conversely, the principal viewed that teachers resisted to engage in the reform efforts because of their fear to make mistakes and lose their status as teachers- experts.

Case School D

In school D, the teachers and the principal shared similar views that the notion of teacher leadership is quasi absent at school beyond the confines of the teachers' own classroom and with their own students. However, their perspectives on the reasons that hinder the development of teacher leadership were totally divergent, as the teachers blamed it on the school leadership and the principal blamed it on the teachers. There were three main factors depicted from the study that are perceived to have impacted the flourishing of teacher leadership in this school. The first one is the centralized and complex organizational structure that supports leadership only through formal positions and lacks clear policies to promote informal teacher leadership. The second factor was the heavy existing workload that teachers perceived to be demotivating for them to get involved in any leadership functions beyond their current obligations at school. The third factor was the lack of teacher involvement in decision making beyond the classroom, which teachers perceived to be. Although teachers shared their frustration for not

participating more in decisions that impact their work and wellbeing at school, they considered that the negative reactions from the school leadership to their initiatives or suggestions discouraged them from getting involved in leadership. On the other hand, the principal considered that teachers' lack of engagement in leadership at school reflects their lack of leadership skills and their fear of speaking up.

Centralized complex formal leadership structure. A flagrant disparity between the principal's perspective and that of the teachers is their divergent understanding of the leadership structure and its role in supporting teachers. Whereas teachers perceive the complex leadership structure as hindering them from taking initiatives and speaking out when they want to, the principal views it as a structure that is put in place specifically to support teachers and enhance the teaching and learning process.

Leadership restricted to formal positions. In fact, teachers consider that teacher leadership is supported only if a teacher has a formal leadership position within the school's complex structural hierarchy. Many of them view their role as strictly bound to the classroom, where they are expected to deliver the academic program and support in the extra-curricular activities. They perceive all the requirements from the school leadership, such as conducting peer observation, setting development plans, and participating in school events, as obligations that they have to fulfil to get a good appraisal at the end of the year and secure their job. Most teachers view their teaching position as being at the bottom of the structural leadership hierarchy, where they have to report to a supervisor, who in turn has to report to another supervisor and so on. These multiple layers of authority result in having teachers feel confined to their department or their section, get them isolated in their classrooms, limit their involvement to issues strictly related to their teaching functions, and restrict their interaction to colleagues who teach the same class and to their own students. A teacher expresses her perspective by saying, "hierarchy wise,

I am just a teacher in this school [...], if I see something [wrong], I just report it to my direct supervisor and consider that the administration is now responsible.”

On the other hand, the principal explains that the leadership structure developed at school is there to get the voice of teachers through. He says,

“Basically, every 3 teachers have a coordinator on top of them [...] you can imagine how many coordinators we have, and obviously, they all participate in events and any idea comes from them. [So, when teachers have a suggestion] they go to the coordinators, who then carry them to their meetings with the head of departments, and that gets raised to the management committee. However, we have direct lines for teachers, they go to anybody, the coordinator or head of department or anybody, even the heads of sections; if they have an idea that’s not encouraged [by their supervisor] they go straight to the vice principal.”

Furthermore, the principal describes the hierarchy as an inverted pyramid of services. By that he means that the leaders at the top are responsible to “serve” the teachers at the bottom of the pyramid and ensure their wellbeing, because they are the ones dealing directly with the children. He explains that,

“The head, principal, vice principal, head of section, head of department, coordinators and teachers [form the top-down leadership pyramid]; however, service-wise, it’s the other way around. I serve the vice-principal and the management committee. The management committee serves the heads of section and the coordinators [and so on], and then the coordinators’ job is to serve the teachers that are [in his department] and at the same time evaluate them. But their main job is to serve them; because if teachers are not comfortable and relaxed and have access to the material that they have and have self-confidence, they’re not going to teach properly. At the end of the day, they are the most important people in the school because they are serving the most valuable aspect of the school, which are the students.”

Lack of clear policies to support teacher leadership. In addition, the principal shares that, in order to open up the way for more teachers to be involved in leadership, the school is considering the possibility of having rotating coordinators in the future, where teachers who show leadership skills are given formal coordination responsibilities for two years then they go back to having teaching responsibilities only. For him, this will allow

the school, “to see, maybe there are hidden talents that we’re not reaching” and will encourage teachers to step up their game.

Moreover, the principal views that the workshops that are offered to some teachers, such as “leadership training, and how to become consultants”, support the development of their leadership skills and allow the school administration to select which teachers can be potential candidates for management positions. He explains that, “the activities that we do, [help us] see the people who are really on the ground, they’re there and they’re doing the work and motivating others, and so [we] mark them for possible management positions as and when they arrive.”

However, there are no clear school policies or procedures to support these plans and teachers seem not to be aware of them at all. In addition, teachers do not seem to be aware of the pathways that they may take to grow and develop at school. When asked about that, the principal agrees that this is an issue indeed and he did not seem to know for sure what was exactly written about that in the teachers’ manual. He says,

“We have the manual and I am pretty sure it should be written. Even if it’s not, in all the interviews, the first thing I tell people, absolute first thing, is that it’s nobody’s school. So, your coordinator does not own the school, neither does your head of department, nor your head of section, nor your vice principal. So, you go complain to all those people, then they complain to me, and if I don’t satisfy you, tell us this school sucks and walk out.”

He means by this explanation to the newly recruited teachers that they are expected to step up, feel ownership in everything they will be doing and not be afraid to assert themselves. Nevertheless, from the teachers’ perspective, there seems to be great disparity between what the teachers believe and what the principal expects or hopes for.

Teachers’ existing workload. Another factor depicted to hinder the development of teacher leadership was the existing workload that teachers already have as part of their regular duties. Most teachers consider that they have a lot of work as it is and they do not

want to add any more tasks upon themselves, which directly impacts their motivation to be involved in leadership at this school. Some teachers share that the way their work week is structured puts a big burden on them. They already feel that they do not have enough time during the day to accomplish all their required tasks, let alone to add to it any additional leadership tasks. A preschool teacher says that oftentimes, “it's possible for the day to go by without us sitting for 15 minutes.” In addition to the duties that come with teaching, they are required to participate in all school-wide events and after-school extracurricular activities, even on weekends sometimes.

The principal shares a similar perspective as the teachers on that point, as he considers that teachers' involvement in additional tasks and extra-curricular activities to be more a fulfilment of their duties than an act of leadership and a sign of motivation to be more engaged at school.

Lack of teacher involvement in decision making beyond the classroom. The third factor that influenced the development of teacher leadership in this school was the lack of involvement of teachers in decision making beyond their classroom. In fact, the majority of the teachers perceived their leadership to be restricted to their students, their classroom and their subject matter. They consider that what determines their leadership is the success of their students at school, their happiness and their academic achievement, which supports the good reputation of the school and gives value to the efforts that they put with their students in class. However, they view that they are not involved in decision making outside their classroom except for small administrative issues, such as the colors of the bulletin boards or the location of water bottles at school. They share their frustration for not having their opinion taken in more substantial matters such as the working hours, school curriculum, teaching strategies, or exams, which they consider to be at the heart of their teaching functions.

Although teachers share that they would like to see many things happening differently at their school, they do not state that they would like to take the lead in seeing these changes materialize. They related many instances that highlight barriers to their opportunity to practice teacher leadership at their school. Teachers consider that they cannot initiate suggestions about revising the heavy and outdated curriculum, which they consider to be, “from our time, it doesn't respond to the needs of the children now”, still they have to endure teaching it to their students and have them do well in exams. They also perceive that they do not have a role in decisions related to the workload, long hours and the approaches they use to teaching and learning. Teachers from the primary levels wished they could engage their students more in opportunities for learning through play, which they considered to be essential for children of that age to learn how to express themselves and communicate with others. A teacher says,

“If I am empowered, I really work to have time for the children to use literature to express themselves, not to read this text and analyze it. [Tackle] pure literature, discussion, calm, because outside [school], everything is chaotic.”

Many teachers seemed to agree that these restrictions were negatively affecting their leadership potential as teachers; however, none of them seemed to be willing to advocate for these ideas with the administration or had a clear idea of how being “empowered” would impact their position as teachers in this school.

On the other hand, this perspective comes totally opposite to that of the principal, who considers that the school has been actively promoting teacher leadership through not only soliciting teachers' ideas, but also by implementing them. He shares that the school opened the way for “a forum for ideas, of things to do with student life”, and this has led to receiving “a huge number of proposals from teachers.” According to him, the school has already adopted several events that were suggested by teachers and they have become regular events, such as “the spelling bee and the talent show”, as well as two

environmental projects that were initiated by the teachers and were run by them. However, these initiatives were not mentioned by teachers during the focus groups.

Administration's negative reactions to initiatives. For some of the teachers, they attributed their lack of engagement in leadership at school from negative experiences encountered with the school administration in the past. They consider that they learned their lesson and are no longer willing to take initiatives that may put them at risk of being exposed to adverse reactions. Two teachers share an incident that happened with them and that “was taken in such a bad way, that it nearly cost a man his job.” This incident pertained to the lack of cleanliness that a teacher colleague noticed in the toilets of the younger children, which she took very seriously because of the health hazard it presents and because she did not want to be blamed for not raising the issue. She explains,

“I took the initiative to talk about it because sometimes you might be blamed as a teacher on 'how did you not see this dirt', let's say. I informed, and I reported, and this reporting turned into chasing after the poor guy who is responsible for the maintenance staff and helpers, and he was almost kicked out of school.”

After her bad experience, the way she decided to go about making any change was to either report it to her direct supervisor and take the responsibility off her shoulders, even if this meant not seeing the change happen, or fix the problem herself. She explains that from her point of view, she considers herself positioned at the bottom of the hierarchy pyramid, like most teachers, meaning that she does not have any authority or power outside her classroom. She says,

“I honestly got to that point, if I see something, I stop and think [before acting]. I try to fix it, or I stay quiet. [If] I report it to my direct supervisor, I consider that the administration is now responsible.”

Her colleague echoes: “We fix [issues] ourselves! How many of us have a cleaning cloth in class? I got one myself, seriously!” This teacher shares another incident where the reaction from the school administration made her feel guilty for speaking up and look bad

in front of her colleagues. She explains that her son was sick, and the school nurse gave him his medicine at school; since she didn't know if he took it, she suggested to the administration to develop a medication form to keep parents informed. She says that, "the way it was handled by the administration was so bad, that I felt that I was hurting the nurse." After that, she decided not to suggest anything else to the school.

Lack of teacher leadership skills. Responses of the principal revealed that he considers that the main barriers for teachers to engage in leadership is that teachers lack the needed leadership skills. From his perspective, he finds it difficult to say that, nowadays, there are many teachers "who can really lead the students." He believes that it is hard "to get teachers excited" about an idea to the extent that they are willing to convince the management of it, take it upon themselves to make it successful and carry it forward. He states that "there's a lack of real leaders" among teachers, as he notices that most teachers do not have the motivation to persevere if they want to make a request, suggest a change, or introduce a new idea. Furthermore, the principal considers that teachers lack "common sense", which in his opinion is a key skill in leadership. He gives as an example how teachers choose to react to certain issues happening in class, where they do not differentiate between what they need to make a big deal out of, and what they can just ignore. As he explains it,

"If it makes sense [...], you put your foot down, and [if it doesn't] you let go. And sometimes teachers don't see the difference. They are just as harsh on something that is so trivial [...], and they are lenient on something that they should have raised hell. That is really, I don't know where they can learn that, but definitely that's one thing that needs a lot of work."

The principal believes that such an attitude stems from the way teachers themselves were taught when they were students at school and at university. According to him, the inadequate pre-service learning and training in universities is not practical and does not provide teachers with real life experiences and an understanding of what teacher

leadership is about. He says that learning at university “is all in books. [Leadership] needs character, [universities] don’t work on teachers’ character; they need to put them in real life situations.”

Fear of speaking up. In addition, the principal sees that teachers are still afraid to voice their concerns despite the efforts that the school leadership has put to promote collegiality, encourage the open-door policy, and reassure teachers that they are welcome to share feedback about their supervisors if needed. He considers that many of them and especially the new comers are still afraid to say their opinion, “they do not speak up, they are very passive; they complain quietly, but do not come forward and face the leadership.” He relates teachers’ submissive attitude to their traditional upbringing at home, where they were disciplined to comply with authority and “do as they were told”, which in his opinion resulted in having them “accept anything thrown at them.”

In summary, in school D, there was congruent perception by teachers and principal that teacher leadership is restricted to the teachers’ own classroom and with their own students. However, their views were quite divergent with relation to the factors that influence the presence of teacher leadership in their school. Teachers consider that the school hinders their engagement in any acts of leadership because they are not involved in decision making and seem to perceive their teaching role to be at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. On the opposite side, the principal considers that the leadership structure at school is put in place to serve the teachers since they are the ones serving the children. However, he does not seem to have a clear trajectory for teachers to be involved in leadership except through formal roles. Although the teachers and the principal perceive that teachers’ motivation to take on leadership functions lacks at the school, their views diverged completely on the reasons that hinder the development of teacher leadership. While teachers consider that they do not need to add to their overly charged schedule and

risk to confront negative reactions from their supervisors, the principal perceives teachers as being passive, and not having the needed leadership skills that are required to lead.

Summary of the Study Results

This chapter presented the findings from the analysis of data collected in the field. It was divided into seven main sections that illustrated how teacher leadership was perceived by teachers in the context of Lebanese private schools, how the case schools were selected for this study, what was the context of each case school, how teachers conceived the enactment of teacher leadership in their school, how the school principals conceived teacher leadership in their school, a comparison between the perspectives of teachers and principals on their understanding of teacher leadership, and the factors that teachers and school principals considered to be promoting or hindering teacher leadership in their school. The findings are summarized hereafter.

The practice of teacher leadership in Lebanese private schools was described based on the analysis of the results from the Teacher Leadership Inventory (TLI) survey (Angelle & Dehart, 2010) that was administered in 13 private schools in the Greater Beirut area. More specifically, findings showed that most respondents usually or sometimes share their expertise with their colleagues, participate in decisions pertaining to teaching and learning with the school leadership, go above and beyond their required role to support colleagues, administrators and students, and do not see that the principal or the administrative team stand in their way to become teacher leaders. On the other hand, a few respondents shared that expertise is rarely or never shared at their school, neither is leadership; they considered that they seldom or never put more effort than is required to support the school or their colleagues, and that principal selection of specific teacher leaders rarely or never takes place at their school.

Data from the schools that participated in the survey was analyzed to select the schools that will be considered for the in-depth qualitative data collection and analysis. The key criteria were to have at least one school presenting all four factors from the four-factor model of the teacher Leadership Inventory, one presenting three factors and one presenting two factors who would accept to participate in the study. The result concluded with four case schools that were identified, whose teachers were then invited to participate in focus groups while the principals were interviewed individually.

As the survey addressed factors that supported teacher leadership, further investigation was warranted as to the context of each selected school and the aspects that affect teachers' perception of how much teacher leadership is or is not supported in their school and consequently to what extent it is practiced. The identified factors were examined and compared across the four case schools to provide comprehensive understanding that answers the study research questions. Results from the qualitative data analysis of teachers' focus groups and principal interviews were compared within each school first then across the four schools, and findings were interpreted according to the categories that emerged.

Based on the data analysis, teachers conceptions can be categorized under the following themes: 1) Conception of teacher leadership, presented under two themes: Teachers' awareness of their leadership potential; and General characteristics of teacher leaders; and 2) Scope of teacher leadership acts, which covers four themes: Positioning of teacher leadership within the school's organizational structure; Functions and duties teacher leaders undertake; Teacher leaders as collaborators; and Teacher leaders as lifelong learners.

Results show that teachers' conception of teacher leadership is shaped by their own experience in how teacher leadership is fostered and practiced at their school. It is also

formed by the functions that they engage in and the responsibilities that they assume for the implementation of the academic curricula adopted at their school, as each program sets different expectations and requirements from teachers.

In schools A and B, the main academic program adopted is the International Baccalaureate program, which places teachers as partners in decision making related to all what pertains to the learning and wellbeing of the students. In addition, it requires the school leadership to review its practices to make sure that teachers participate in various aspect of school life and actively engage in professional growth to fulfil the complex requirements of implementing the program successfully. Most teachers in schools A and B seem to be aware of their various sources of power and already consider themselves or their colleagues as teacher leaders. Their perception of their leadership potential enhanced their awareness of their ability to have influence around the school. It also promoted their ability to conceive of their involvement at various levels in school that go beyond their classroom and impact more than just their students and their teaching partners. In addition, teachers in these two schools perceived teacher leadership to be essential for developing and growing as a learning community and stressed the values of open communication, trust and respect for it to happen. They also considered that the international program taught at their schools facilitated their development into teacher leaders as it required them to develop and use leadership skills in order to collaboratively design and implement the curriculum.

As for teachers in schools C and D, their perspective of teacher leadership was strictly bound to the influence and the functions related to teaching and learning inside the classroom. They considered that teacher leaders are experts in their subject matter, they are ones who can handle their classrooms well and fulfill the administrative tasks and

duties as well as the basic planning and teaching practices properly. Their understanding of teacher leadership was more restricted to teaching the preset curriculum well.

Furthermore, teachers considered that an aspect of teacher leadership is collaborating with colleagues and supporting one another. Although most teachers confirmed that they frequently collaborate with their colleagues, teachers in schools A and B perceived collaboration as a core value in their school, which is essential for them to fulfil their role as teachers. On the other hand, in schools C and D, while teachers mentioned that they occasionally collaborate, they did not connect it to teacher leadership. In addition, teachers in school A and B viewed that teacher leadership means having teachers involved in continuous professional learning for themselves and to support their colleagues. However, this aspect was not perceived as such by teachers in schools C and D, who considered continuous learning to be essential for them to stay up to date in their own practice.

Finally, teachers in all four schools shared a common understanding that although leadership roles for teachers are not necessary for them to have influence at school, having an official title helps in providing legitimacy and authority.

Findings from the principal interviews regarding their conception of teacher leadership and how it is happening in their school were grouped under two main categories, which are: 1) Principals' conception of teacher leadership, and 2) Positioning of teacher leadership within the school's organizational structure, including how principals perceive teachers' awareness of their leadership potential. Results show that principals in all four schools shared a common view of what teacher leadership involves. For them, teacher leaders are first and foremost experts in teaching their subject matter within the curricular program adopted at the school. They are also those teachers who always take initiatives and are willing to support their colleagues and the school whenever needed.

This broad understanding included a set of characteristics of teacher leaders that were similarly shared by most teachers, albeit to varying degrees in the four sites. These characteristics include flexibility, respect, love, honesty, trustworthiness, patience, trust, communication, positive classroom management, cooperation, negotiation, open-mindedness, taking initiative and accepting feedback.

Comparing the views of principals and teachers in each school site across the various categories, it was noticed that the principals' responses in school A and B were congruent to a large extent to what the teachers had expressed to be their understanding of what teacher leadership involves. They all consider that teacher leadership is essential for the improvement of the whole school community. It requires involving teachers in actions that go beyond the classroom, that informal teacher leadership is expected and performed by the majority of teachers. In school A, like the teachers, the principal considers that teachers who are actively involved in the school are aware of the influence they have around the school. They also perceive that the teachers are motivated to engage in acts of leadership because of their belief in the mission and vision of the school, their love for the children, their ambition to learn and grow with the school and eventually join the leadership team. Teachers considered the positive and supportive school environment conducive for them to have an active role in decision making and in sharing leadership. Similarly, the principal perceived that sharing leadership with teachers helps develop leaders, which is essential to fulfill the school's vision and mission and engages them in being in charge of the various projects at school.

In school B, the principal acknowledges that the school leadership has not put enough effort to make sure teachers are aware of the influence they have at school, even though teachers feel that they effectively contribute as teacher leaders in the school community. In addition, the collegial relations between teachers, the impact of high

quality teaching and learning on the growth and development of children, as well as the safe school environment where mistakes are perceived as learning opportunities, are considered by both teachers and principal to be the main motivators for teachers to take on leadership roles within the school community. Although teachers felt that they had leadership roles, they were not able to clearly express how the school was promoting teacher leadership. Whereas the principal considered that involving teachers in decision making, soliciting their input and feedback in all matters related to school life and modeling that mistakes are in fact learning opportunities were forms of supporting teacher leadership.

In school C, teachers and principal seemed to understand teacher leadership as mostly confined to the classroom duties. The school's traditional leadership focuses on the authority of the principal only and all the staff seem to be accepting of such form of leadership, keeping teacher leadership outside the confines of the classroom off the radar for everyone. However, what was common in both perspectives related to the broad idea of teacher leadership as supporting colleagues, with teachers viewing it as a sign of collegiality and doing each other favors, whereas the principal attributed it to assuming responsibilities and fulfilling obligations. While teachers portrayed that their students' performance determines their value as teacher leaders at school, the principal considered that teachers are not aware of the importance of the effort they are putting in the school reform and still need to develop their knowledge and communication skills to be better teacher leaders. The teachers expressed that they are not interested in the added burden and extra responsibilities that come with leadership roles, while the principal related such reluctance to the fear of making mistakes as teachers are required to venture outside their comfort zone and try new work approaches. In addition, the principal and teachers consider that although student success is what motivates teachers the most, albeit it was

not conducive for them to take on leadership functions. Moreover, teachers perceived that there was no support of teacher leadership at their school mostly due to a lack of communication and involvement in decisions. On the other hand, the principal considered that it is the teachers' responsibility to come up with ideas to be more involved beyond their classrooms and subject matter specialization and seemed to be waiting for teachers rather than taking charge to trigger teachers' initiatives.

As for school D, both teachers and principal reflect a common viewpoint that teachers are not aware of their leadership potential and the influence their contributions have in the school community, and that teachers' motivation to take on leadership functions lacks at the school. However, the principal's conception of teacher leadership diverged from that of the teachers on different points. While teachers considered a teacher leadership role, to be informal and confined to their classroom, they shared that a complex leadership structure at school often gets in the way of them pursuing any leadership initiatives outside the classroom and creates an expectation that teacher leadership is bound to having a role within this formal hierarchy. While principals accepted the view of teacher leadership as confined to the classroom their interpretation for the reasons behind this confinement deferred dramatically. According to the principal, what is keeping teachers outside the decision-making realm is not the existing complex structure but rather a lack of communication skills and common sense as well as lack of perseverance on the part of the teachers to endure whatever it takes to get their ideas heard and considered that to be what is keeping teachers outside the decision-making realm. While the principal perceives them as being passive, and not having the needed leadership skills that are required to lead, teachers consider that they do not need to add to their overly charged schedule. Furthermore, teachers perceived that the school hinders their engagement in any acts of leadership because of the negative reactions to initiatives from supervisors and

seem to perceive their role as teachers as being at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. On the opposite side, the principal considered that the leadership structure at school is put in place to serve the teachers since they are the ones serving the children. However, he did not seem to have a clear trajectory for teachers to be involved in leadership except through formal roles and he even considered creating rotating roles for that purpose.

As teachers and principals reflected on the factors that they perceive to be affecting teacher leadership at their school, their responses came most compatible in school A. Teachers in school A consider that the positive school environment and the supportive school leadership are conducive for them to develop their leadership through having an active role in decision making, developing their sense of community and sharing leadership by participating in the different committees at school. Similarly, the principal perceives that sharing leadership with teachers helps develop leaders, which is essential to fulfilling the school's vision and mission and engages them in being in charge of the various projects at school. It is perceived that the teachers' belief in the mission and vision of the school, their love for the children, their ambition to learn and grow with the school and eventually join the leadership team are depicted by both the principal and teachers as main motivators to be involved in leadership roles that go beyond their classroom duties. Finally, the international academic program implemented at school is considered by the teachers and the principal to play a major role in supporting the development of teacher leadership by encouraging teacher collaboration, continuous learning, sharing their practice with colleagues.

In school B, the teachers considered that the positive and supportive school culture and the opportunities they have to be involved in decision making in matters related to the whole school to be essential factors that supported the development of teacher leadership

at their school. Similarly, the principal perceived involving teachers in decision making, soliciting their input and feedback in all matters related to school life and modeling that mistakes are in fact learning opportunities were forms of supporting their leadership. In addition, the international academic program adopted at the school were viewed by both the principal and the teachers to be fostering teacher leadership as it promoted collegial and collaborative relations between teachers, impacted the quality of teaching and learning at school, and opened up opportunities for teachers to grow personally and professionally.

In school C, the teachers separated teaching from leading completely, so did the principal, as they did not show any interest in being involved in leadership beyond their classroom. For them, teacher leadership is confined inside the classroom and is limited to having subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise. Despite that, teachers pointed at factors that negatively impacted their teaching when asked on what affected teacher leadership. In that school, teachers perceived that a lack of communication and involvement in decisions reflects a major absence of support of teacher leadership at their school, which. On the other hand, the principal seemed to be waiting for teachers to come up with ideas to be more involved beyond their classrooms and subject matter specialization, which she considered to be the teachers' responsibility. The teachers' and the principal's perspective regarding the improvement efforts that started at school this year differed in how they promoted teacher leadership. While some teachers' views showed enthusiasm about these efforts, others considered them imposed and did not relate them to teacher leadership. Conversely, the principal viewed that teachers resisted to engage in the reform efforts because of their fear to make mistakes and lose their status as teachers- experts.

Finally, in school D, there was congruent perception by teachers and principal that teacher leadership is restricted to the teachers' own classroom and with their own students.

Teachers consider that the school hinders their engagement in any acts of leadership because of the negative reactions to initiatives from supervisors and seem to perceive their teaching role to be at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy. On the opposite side, the principal considers that the leadership structure at school is put in place to serve the teachers since they are the ones serving the children. However, he does not seem to have a clear trajectory for teachers to be involved in leadership except through formal roles. Although the teachers and the principal perceive that teachers' motivation to take on leadership functions lacks at the school, their views diverged completely on the reasons behind their lack of interest in the development of teacher leadership. While teachers consider that they do not need to add to their overly charged schedule, the principal perceives them as being passive, and not having the needed leadership skills that are required to lead.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This study was designed to examine the conception and practice of teacher leadership in private schools in the Greater Beirut area, the capital of Lebanon. The main goal of the research was to provide empirical data on the landscape of distributed leadership and explain the variables that influence teacher leadership in four private schools that were actively engaged in school improvement initiatives. The study generated results that described how teachers and school principals understand teacher leadership and perceive its role in improving student learning and sustaining the school improvement initiatives instigated by the school leadership. It also clarified how teacher leadership is shaped by leadership and the different organizational structures in these private schools.

In accordance with its objectives, the study results provided for each one of the four case schools: a) a description of the characteristics of teacher leaders, the roles and functions that they undertake and which involve and/or require leadership skills as perceived by the teachers, b) a description of the characteristics of teacher leaders, the roles and functions that they undertake and which involve and/or require leadership skills as perceived by the school principals, c) an overview of the various forms and acts of teacher leadership that are currently being exerted or practiced at school from the teachers' as well as the school leaders' perspective, d) an analysis of the impact of the alignment or lack thereof of teachers' and principals' views on how teacher leadership is practiced or not at school, and e) an outline of the factors that teachers and principals perceive as affecting the development of teacher leadership, either supporting it or hindering its growth in the school environment.

This chapter discusses key research findings of this study and concludes with recommendations for organizational structures that support and promote teacher leadership in schools, the development of policies that target teacher leadership as an essential pathway to improve the overall existing practice in schools, and for further research.

Discussion of Research Findings

This section presents the discussion of the research findings in response to the research questions the study intended to answer. It depicts the researcher's interpretation of the findings based on her understanding of the context of each case school and in relation to what emerged from the literature review. This section is divided into two parts, each one addressing one of the research questions. The first part discusses the teachers' and school principals' conception of teacher leadership. The second part examines the contextual conditions, the organizational culture, values, norms and the celebrated practices that were identified as factors that impact the development of teacher leadership in the school.

Teacher Leadership, a Missing Conception and Practice in Lebanese Schools

The first research question in this study aimed to explore teachers' and school principals' conception of teacher leadership and understand what they perceive to be the scope of acts and tasks that teacher leaders undertake and that involve or require leadership skills. Even though the teachers' and school principals' conception of teacher leadership and what it encompasses varied significantly across the four case schools, it became apparent that, when compared to the teacher leadership conceptual framework adopted for this study, the conceptions of teacher leadership as presented in all four schools is not yet established in Lebanese schools. Of the four schools, teachers and principals in schools C and D addressed none of the aspects in the conceptual framework.

In school B, teachers and the principal's conception of teacher leadership partially addressed dimensions of the theoretical conception of leadership while teachers and the principal in school A showed an emerging comprehensive understanding of teacher leadership, albeit still incomplete.

Teachers' conceptions in relation to the conceptual framework. The three main aspects of the conceptual framework (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009) address teacher leadership as encompassing, 1) leadership of others, 2) leadership of operational tasks, and 3) leadership through decision making. In what follows, teachers' conceptions that encompass these aspects are presented for the case schools.

Leadership of others. The first aspect of teacher leadership in the theoretical framework revolves around teacher leaders leading and inspiring others in the school community including their students, their fellow teachers and other colleagues (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). Teacher leaders are perceived as experts and professionals in their field and are therefore actively involved in facilitating meetings, mentoring new colleagues, coaching others, reviewing the curriculum, initiating study groups, and trying new pedagogical approaches (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010).

Teachers in the four schools seem to be aware of the influence they have on students and most of them perceive themselves as leaders inside their classroom. In addition, many of them shared that they viewed their colleagues as leaders in specific areas, such as languages, technology, problem solving or coming up with creative ideas. Some of them were also aware that they are considered as leaders by their peers and they are sought for support in the particular areas of expertise or leadership that they project to others. Nevertheless, most teachers still perceive this engagement in leadership of colleagues as an extra effort that they personally choose to do out of collegiality and because of the personal relationships that they have built with colleagues. Many consider

such support as doing their peers favors and expect it to be returned, more than an aspect of their role that they are expected to perform as teacher leaders.

In fact, teachers' conception of teacher leadership as leadership of others in schools C and D was almost inexistent. Even though both schools were totally different in size, organizational and leadership structure, student engagement and teachers' scope of involvement at school, teachers' perception of their role as well as their views on what teacher leadership encompasses were similar across both schools. At both these schools, teachers perceived the leadership of others as restricted to the students inside the classroom, while collaboration with colleagues remained at the level of preparing for whole school events only. They perceived teacher leadership to mostly involve the way teachers engage with their students inside the classroom in order to teach them the prescribed curriculum and get them to do well on their exams. Such perception is engrained in what has been habitually celebrated as 'good teaching' and what teacher leadership has traditionally been recognized for.

This limited conception of their role and the absence of understanding that leadership of others goes beyond leading students, constitute an impediment to developing and practicing teacher leadership at these two schools. In fact, there is evidence in the international literature that teachers' own perception of themselves, their capacities and their role as teachers and their own unwillingness to embrace any leadership roles or actions is considered a major impediment to developing teacher leadership (Bowman, 2004; Helterbran, 2010).

On the other hand, there were indication in school A and B that teachers' conceptions of teacher leadership encompassed aspects of leadership related to leading their colleagues. In school A teachers stood out from the teachers in the other case schools as they perceived their involvement in supporting colleagues, working together,

developing and reviewing the curriculum, continuously learning together and mentoring new teachers as an institutional requirement that they are constantly working on improving in themselves. They considered that their various sources of expert power enhance their ability to have influence around the school and showed interest in cultivating it further. This aspect of leadership of others was also found in school B, even though to a lesser extent than school A and in areas restricted to the curriculum development and review. Teachers at both schools A and B considered that stepping up to support colleagues informally whenever needed is an aspect of teacher leadership, which allowed them to build trust with their colleagues and support their leadership in the classroom. This understanding of teacher leadership in school A and B is facilitated through the requirement in their school for classroom team teaching. Moreover, the positive relationship that they have with their school principals reinforced their view that they are important allies in making the school successful. Angelle and Teague (2014) consider that such teacher leaders, who believe in their ability to lead others, who are ready to share their expertise and their practice with colleagues, and who persistently put all the effort needed to support the school success, are also confident of their teaching abilities and perceive themselves as successful teachers in the classroom.

Leadership of operational tasks. The second aspect of teacher leadership in the theoretical framework focuses on formally assigning teachers to assume operational tasks that help the school achieve its goals and fulfill its mission and vision while developing a collaborative structure between teachers and school leaders on particular aspects of school life (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009). These tasks may include heading a department, conducting action research, joining committees or task forces at the school (Day & Harris, 2003, Harris, 2002). It also strives to develop the expertise and resourcefulness of

teacher leaders, so they know how to get additional resources from within the school or look for other ones externally as needed (Harris, 2002).

Leadership of operational tasks beyond the classroom was totally absent in school D, as teachers did not consider that they were positioned to take on any functions or roles that the school leadership traditionally takes. Teachers views of being teacher leaders were restricted to instances inside their own classroom and with their own students only in aspects where they feel they are in control and their opinion matters. Teachers perceived that they are leaders when they can effectively teach a large group of students, use varied teaching methods, keep control of the classroom, improve their teaching practice and receive parents' positive feedback in affirmation of the impact that their teaching has on the academic achievement and personal progress of students. For them, this is what they consider to be an endorsement that they are teacher leaders and a reward for all the effort they put in their work. However, they did not show awareness of how their exceptional contributions in the classroom is related to their potential to have influence at school level. In fact, they considered getting involved in leadership functions an overload and had no interest to add more work to their intensive teaching schedule. This was commonly found in the research literature to be a reason shared by teachers for their reluctance to take on leadership roles. Oftentimes, leadership role comes as a set of tasks and responsibilities added to those of teaching. The lack of organizational arrangements that accommodate these leadership roles within the existing work load proves to be too much to handle for teachers, so they prefer to stay in their teaching role without any added responsibilities (Leithwood et al., 2007).

Similarly, teachers in school C did not include leadership of operational tasks beyond the classroom in their conception of teacher leadership. Most of them perceived their leadership role to be related to having good classroom management skills, knowing

their subject matter well, and getting their students to pass the school tests and the official Lebanese exams. They emphasized the separation of functions between teachers and leaders, where a teacher teaches and a leader leads. As depicted by Helterbran (2010), they consider that it is the principal's job to lead the school and the instruction process, while teachers simply follow, deliver the curriculum and do the best they can in executing decisions. The fact that they had more experience than their principals did not affect this strongly held belief.

In both schools C and D, teachers did not perceive themselves as professional learners, and lacked the individual and collective agency to go beyond their traditional roles which limited their chances to acquire the leadership skills needed to become active contributors in the school operational functioning (DuFour, 2004; Harris, 2002; Hord, 2004).

As for schools B and A, teachers' conceptions included aspects of leading school wide operational tasks, especially in school A. Teachers in these two schools considered part of their leadership role is to support the school leadership to fulfill its vision and mission through engaging in the various standing committees. These aspects of their conceptions of teacher leadership reflected the role expectations at their school emanating from the requirements of the international academic program implemented. Within this context, they perceived their role in developing the curriculum to be essential to their role as teacher leaders. Additionally, they related their active participation in setting the professional development program for the school to their leadership role and described their active engagement in sharing their practice and expertise with their colleagues and set their learning plans.

However, teachers' conceptions in both school A and B did not encompass their involvement in leadership of operational tasks found in the conceptual framework such as

policy development or engaging in setting the school budget (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

Leadership through decision making. The third aspect of teacher leadership in the theoretical conception revolves around involving teachers to actively participate in making decisions related to school improvement initiatives or partnering with other institutions, so they develop a sense of ownership and commitment in the change process and willingly collaborate to achieve the collective goal (Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Kruse & Louis, 1993). This aspect of teacher leadership is viewed to require supportive organizational conditions set by the school leadership whereby structures and policies are set to support decentralized decision making (Senge et al., 2000; Smith, 2001), fosters nurturing and empowering relationships between teachers and the principal, and allows teachers to grow professionally (Hord, 1997).

Teacher leadership through decision making, was completely missing in the conceptions advanced in schools D and C. Teachers in both schools did not include engagement in decision making in their conceptions, especially when it encompass decisions beyond their classroom. Additionally, they related that the existing organizational conditions often do not allow for them to take part in what gets decided in their class either, such as exam dates for example.

However, teachers in school B considered that teacher leadership encompass their involvement in decision making at the classroom level. Yet, their views keep this involvement confined in the safety of their classrooms.

Views of teacher leadership encompassing active participation in decision making was only found in school A, even though it was still emerging and not readily reflected in their practices. Teachers' conceptions at this school included being informed of everything that is happening at the school and having a say in what gets decided in the various aspects

of the school life. Teachers' perceptions of their influence in decision making differed between those who have been at the school for a few years and those who joined it recently, as the former developed more confidence and trust that their input in decision making will be taken into consideration. The reason those who are new to the school did not emphasize that aspect is due to the fact that they were not familiar with being involved in decisions pertaining to aspects beyond their classroom, so they found it hard to conceive of taking this responsibility for such participation in decision making. Some of them were still figuring out to which extent they should or could get involved in decisions beyond their direct classroom duties.

These results indicate that in all four schools, teachers are not exposed to established norms of practice and organizational arrangements that facilitate and value a broad range of teacher leadership. Rather, these arrangements were either absent or partial or emergent. According to Gronn (2002), conceptions of teacher leadership are shaped by what the teachers experience in their own school environment. So, when teachers' experience puts them in an environment where the distinction between leader and follower is blurred, where the workload is shared among all stakeholders within the school, and opportunities to lead are created for teachers in various circumstances, then teachers will find themselves in a position of authority that gives them collective responsibility for school improvement (Barth, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Harris & Lambert, 2003; Woods, et al., 2004). Under such conditions, they are more likely to perceive themselves as agents of change in their school and with all stakeholders (Danielson, 2006; Glickman, 2002; Katzenmeyer and Moller; 2001). However, when teachers are restricted by a traditional school leadership to performing functions and duties that keep them isolated in the classroom and that relate solely to teaching (Harris, 2002; Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006), teacher leadership will not be on their mind and they will consider

themselves as ‘only teachers’ (Chesson, 2010; Helterbran, 2010) who impact their students’ academic achievements, support them to pass their exams, and get the parents’ and school administration’s appreciation.

Principals’ conceptions in relation to the conceptual framework. When comparing the principals’ perspective to the teacher leadership conceptual framework, it was clear that only the first aspect related to the leadership of others was present to a certain extent while the other two aspects, leadership of operational tasks and leadership through decision making, were completely missing from the conceptions offered by principals in all four schools.

From the principals’ perspective, teacher leaders are first and foremost leaders in their classroom and therefore of the students. They are considered to be experts in teaching their subject matter within the curricular program adopted at the school. They are also those “super teachers” who go above and beyond their regular classroom duties, always take initiatives and are willing to support their colleagues and the school whenever needed, without specifying if such attitude is supported or required by the school administration or not, or if it is expected to be done as a personal effort from the teachers.

The principals in schools D and C perceived teacher leadership as mostly restricted to leadership of others and more specifically to leadership of students and not of colleagues. They both expressed that they would want to see teachers more engaged and taking more responsibility for matters that pertain to the school life beyond their classrooms; however, neither one of them was able to formulate how they see such roles concretely put into practice. In addition, they both rationalized their limited conceptions of the role by voicing their doubts regarding what teachers are able to do in terms of taking leadership roles at school and did not have a clear idea of how teachers’ involvement would look like or what it would require from the school administration.

As for the principal in school B, she viewed that teachers are already leaders and are responsible for all aspects of school life related to the learning and wellbeing of their students. She considered them to be in charge of developing and reviewing the curriculum, designing learning engagements for students, engaging in school-wide activities, and supporting each other in professional learning.

The principal in school A seemed to be the most aware of the three aspects of the conception of teacher leadership as depicted in conceptual framework. For her, teachers as leaders need to be leading others, leading operational tasks and participating in decision making while being involved in various aspects of the school life. However, her view of involvement seems to be confined mostly to informal roles played by teachers. This includes taking on informal leadership roles to mentor colleagues, develop and review the curriculum, and participate in setting the professional development program for themselves. Her view of a formal involvement for teachers in leadership was limited to their involvement in standing committees that take care of different areas of school life, such as extra-curricular activities, resources for the library, social relations and events.

In summary, conceptual awareness of teacher leadership is still missing among educational practitioners in Lebanese schools when compared against the internationally based conception. The views of teachers who participated in the study barely scratched the surface of engaging in teacher leadership. The situation is not any better when it comes to the principals' conception of teacher leadership. Despite having a broader vision of the functions and roles teachers could be undertaking at school, most principals do not have a clear idea of how to support the establishment of teacher leadership in their institutions.

Organizational Context that Impact the Development of Teacher Leadership at School

The limited conception of teacher leadership seems to emanate from the lived experiences within an organizational context shaped by norms, structures and values that mostly hinder rather than promote the development and practice of teacher leadership. The responses shared by teachers and principals revealed some variations among the four cases and they also reflected a lack of alignment between the perceptions of teachers and those of principals of the factors that impact the development of teacher leadership in their school.

Based on the findings from the four cases, the factors perceived to shape teacher leadership at the schools can be categorized on a continuum, starting with school conditions conducive to teacher leadership development, to those where teacher leadership development is not supported at all. The main aspects in the schools' organizational context that were depicted by the teachers and the principals to impact teacher leadership were: 1) the academic program, 2) the principal's supervisory approach, and 3) the organizational structure, and 4) positioning of teacher leadership. In each one of the case schools, the enactment of these aspects was perceived as either promoting teacher leadership or hindering its development.

The academic program. The nature of the academic program adopted at the school, especially in the expectations it dictates in term of teachers' participation in designing it, influence how teachers and principals perceived teacher leadership. When the curriculum is prescribed, whether it is the Lebanese program or a foreign program, and teachers are expected to just deliver it to the students, there were no opportunities for teachers to practice leadership. Moreover, there were no organizational norms in these schools that set role expectations for teachers to lead beyond their traditional execution

tasks at the classroom level. With the prescribed curriculum, teachers' leadership was conceived as the individually driven instructional or relational strategies within the classroom that are mostly attempts at perfecting their teaching methodologies or volunteering limited sporadic services aimed at enhancing the learning environment for their students.

On the other hand, when teachers were invited to actively engage in collaboratively designing their curriculum as mandated in the IB program adopted in school A and B, teachers started to show awareness and enact a role that aligns more closely with the international conceptions of teacher leadership. As found in the literature, this quality involvement clearly constituted a factor that promoted and supported the practice and development of teacher leadership (Helterbran, 2010; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009).

In fact, in schools A and B, where the main academic program adopted is the International Baccalaureate (IB) program, a key aspect of this program is that it places teachers as partners in decision making in all matters pertaining to the learning and wellbeing of the students. It also requires that teachers actively and collectively participate in the various aspect of school life, and that they continuously engage in professional learning to fulfil the complex requirements of implementing the program successfully. Moreover, the program is instituted at the school through an accreditation process that requires the school members to review its practices, so they comply with the program standards. Consequently, teachers' responses in these two schools reflected awareness of their leadership role as teachers. The IB program requirements for an active participation of teachers in order to collaboratively design and implement the curriculum seem to have compelled them to use their leadership skills and develop a broader conception of teacher leadership. As a result of the program planning requirements, teachers not only learned

how to collaborate with colleagues and support one another, but also this more distributed enactment of leadership has turned into a core value in their school that is essential for them to fulfil their role as teachers. In fact, collaboration and mutual support between peers is defined in the educational literature as an essential aspect of teacher leadership that allows teacher leaders to participate in the professional development of their peers and influence their practice in light of what they collectively developed in the teaching and learning process (Durias, 2010; Harris and Muijs, 2004; Rutherford, 2006). In addition, the program expectations lead the teachers to perform functions beyond their role in the classroom, which seem to have lead them to embrace their role as not only teachers, but also as responsible learners, who needs to engage in continuous professional learning for themselves and to support their colleagues, which opened up the way for them to actively shape the functioning of the school in areas typically reserved to formal leaders.

Other responsibilities that teachers in schools A and B assumed and associated with the development of their leadership skills comprised differentiating their instruction to fit the diverse needs of the learners, preparing and using different forms of assessments, meeting with school counsellors to address learning or behavioral issues observed in class, and continuously reflecting on their practice so they can identify areas to improve and share areas of strength with their peers. This aspect of teacher leadership is addressed in the literature as a way to build deeper connections within the school community as well as develop collective efficacy and peer capacity with the purpose of constructing conceptual understandings and meeting educational learning outcomes (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004; Goddard, 2003; Hord, 1997, 2004; Itani Malas, 2009; Kimonen & Nevalainen, 2005).

Furthermore, teachers in school A and B considered that the regular learning opportunities, that their schools require them to engage in and provide them access to, are

essential to help them develop as professionals, an essential foundation to fulfill the functions entrusted by the school and roles as teacher leaders. Such a stance toward teaching as a profession is associated in the literature with inspiring teachers to build self-efficacy, continuously seek development and professional growth, and strive to develop their leadership capacities to be a resource for their colleagues and their students (Leithwood & Mascal, 2008; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). Continuous professional learning for teacher leaders should be intentional and the learning that emerge from it needs to be shared with colleagues and the school community. Additionally, by adopting the norm of continuous learning, the school is opening up the space for teachers to reflect on their practice individually or with their colleagues collectively and built their awareness on the need to take the lead in continuous improvement. The conditions imposed by the demands for continuous learning led to changed teachers' attitudes of how to approach mistakes, viewing them as opportunities to learn and correct course. Such attitudes set the norm that ultimately impacted their perspective of their own role as teacher leaders and helped them perceive themselves as empowered agents in the learning community that they are contributing to develop.

On the other hand, in schools C and D, teachers were expected to deliver the academic program as it is prescribed by their supervisors or by the governmental requirements with no input from them. Although both schools offered different curricula, with school C teaching the Lebanese program only, while school D offered the Lebanese and the American high school programs, in both cases teachers were subjected to strict requirements of prescribed curriculum. In light of the adopted curriculum, teachers' roles were quite restricted. In school C, teachers followed the government requirements, which set the minimum expectations for each subject matter, and in school D, teachers followed the curriculum that their coordinators and supervisors developed for them. Consequently,

the restrictive conditions they operated under did not challenge their traditional conception of the role, nor put additional role demands to exercise any agency in term of collaborating with colleagues, actively engaging in professional learning, or participating in any decision-making activities or roles. Therefore, teacher leadership was not conceived as desirable rather as a burden that would add to their duties.

The principal's supervisory approach. Teachers in all four schools considered the school principal supervisory approach to be essential in influencing the development of teacher leadership in their school. Such supervisory approach impacted the overall school climate, as it influenced the way teachers interacted with the school leadership, how they collaborated with colleagues, and how they dealt with students and families. Once more, there was a big difference between the four schools, where the teachers in schools A and B acknowledged that the positive relationship with the school principal impacted the school climate and opened up the way for them to engage in leadership acts and feel supported. On the other hand, teachers in school C and D seemed to be working in isolation and not engaging in any actions beyond what is strictly required of them, by fear of making mistakes and getting reprimanded.

In fact, the principal's supervisory approach is highlighted in the educational literature as directly impacting the conditions that either support or hinder the development of teacher leadership at school. So, as the school principal adopts a developmental approach, which promotes a sense of community and continuous professional learning (DuFour, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002). Within these conditions, teachers are encouraged to engage in informal leadership roles that allows them to influence the behavior of others through modeling best practices, sharing their expertise and putting all the effort needed to support the school success (Angelle & Teague, 2014). These teachers' roles are particularly important to support new

colleagues so that the developmental school culture is maintained (Bowman, 2004). On the other hand, when the principal follows a traditional supervisory approach, these supporting conditions lack in the school environment and teacher leadership is hindered. Such traditional approach sets rigid boundaries for the functions and tasks that teachers can perform at school (Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006), keeps them isolated in the classroom and restricts their involvement in school to duties that are directly related to teaching inside the classroom (Harris, 2002).

Teachers in school A considered that the positive school environment and the supportive school leadership are conducive for them to develop their leadership through having an active role in decision making. In addition, they perceived the principal's requirement that they participate formally in the different committees at school as contributing in developing their sense of community and considered it a practical way to contribute ideas and engage in the various aspects of the school life. Similarly, the principal perceived that sharing leadership with teachers is essential to fulfilling the school's vision and mission. Essentially, such positive school climate deepened teachers' belief in the mission and vision of the school, which influenced their love for the children, their ambition to learn and grow with the school and eventually assume formal leadership roles as part of the school leadership team are depicted by both the principal and teachers as main motivators to be involved in leadership roles that go beyond their classroom duties (Cochran-Smith, 2004; Margolis & Deuel, 2009).

In school B, the teachers considered that the positive and supportive leadership and the opportunities they have to be involved in decision making in matters related to the whole school to be essential factors that supported the development of teacher leadership at their school. Similarly, the principal perceived involving teachers in decision making,

soliciting their input and feedback in all matters related to school life and modeling that mistakes are in fact learning opportunities were norms that supported their leadership.

In both schools A and B, teachers recognized that the developmental supervisory approach of the principal greatly influenced their willingness to develop their sense of community and perform leadership acts. One aspect that they mentioned was adopting continuous professional development programs at the respective schools, which teachers developed collaboratively with their colleagues and the principal. These learning programs provided the forum and the incentive to engage teachers to go beyond their comfort zone to better develop their practice and were used as formative evaluation of their work. In addition, teachers were required to continuously reflect on their practice, identify their strengths and areas that they need to develop further, and approach their mistakes as opportunities to learn in an authentic manner. Furthermore, as explained by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2009), many teachers found themselves playing the role of mentors to new teachers who joined the school, which for them was a great opportunity to develop their leadership capacity through supporting their peers and sharing with others what they had recently learned themselves. Bowman (2004) considers that mentoring fosters the idea of professionalism and being influential beyond one's role and without being in a control position and helps maintain the developmental school culture (Bowman, 2004). It provides new teachers with scaffolding that allows them to be successful in their first years of teaching and sustain their efforts to stay in the field. It is also associated with building strong collegial relationships, improving teaching techniques and creating increased job satisfaction for both mentors and mentees all conditions conducive to leadership development.

In school C, teachers and the principal focused on the factors that hinder leadership development and presented those on the backdrop belief that separates teaching

from leading completely, where teacher leadership is limited to having subject matter knowledge and teaching expertise and therefore remains confined inside the classroom. Teachers believed that teacher leadership cannot develop under conditions where there was no support, where there is a lack of communication and involvement in decisions, which they identified as negatively impacting their ability to excel in their teaching and consequently their ability to enact teacher leadership. Under these conditions, sporadic initiatives, like occasional collaboration with one another on a school project or a field trip, happen informally and are based on personal relationships and are viewed more as a practical way to get things done on time rather than leadership acts aimed at influencing strategic decisions or come up with creative solutions to issues they are facing.

Additionally, the principal in school C did not have any clear idea of how to support teachers to develop as leaders. Having no experience in leadership herself, she seemed to be waiting for teachers to come up with ideas to be more involved beyond their classrooms and subject matter specialization, which she considered to be the teachers' responsibility. Interestingly, despite the improvement efforts that started this year at the school, there was no common perspective between teachers and principal of how to promote teacher leadership and make an impact on the teachers' performance and school climate. While some teachers showed enthusiasm about these efforts, others considered them burdensome and imposed, especially that their perspective on what professional learning entails is mostly restricted to asking more experienced peers and attending occasional external trainings in order to stay up to date in their own subject matter. Conversely, the principal viewed that teachers resisted to engage in the reform efforts because of their fear to make mistakes. She considered that, for many of them, being involved in professional learning may jeopardize their acquired status of 'expert teacher'. While this improvement initiative presents an opportunity for the school to build

leadership capacity among its teachers by pushing them to venture outside their comfort zone, both teachers and principals failed to conceive it as such. Such an attitude might have resulted from the lack of formalized conditions supportive of teacher leadership and the absence of mental models that encompass a broader view of leadership practices and expectations of the teacher leadership, which might have lead teachers to focus more on their teaching rather than on their learning and the potential leadership growth embedded in it (Helterbran, 2010).

Similarly, teachers in school D highlighted the factors that are not conducive to develop as teacher leaders. While they acknowledged the role of having good relations with their direct supervisors, most teachers emphasized that, when teachers are considered at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy where they felt the least important in the school, as conditions not conducive to developing their leadership skills and enacting it at the school. While they applauded opportunities to work in small groups of two or three colleagues from the same department or section and of developing a good working relation, they highlighted that a heavy workload leaves them feeling overwhelmed and prevent them from taking initiative to volunteer to support colleagues. In addition, teachers pointed out that with the absence of norms that value initiatives to mentor and lead with others, teachers become reluctant to continue venturing beyond their assigned responsibilities. They explained that some colleagues can be offended and may consider them as showing off as more knowledgeable.

Moreover, the absence of valuing for teacher leadership, resulted in teachers perceiving existing structural conditions that set expectations for continuous professional development as an added burden rather than factors that can facilitate their leadership development and the chances to enact their leadership. Most teachers perceived engagement in professional development and collaboration as an additional requirement

on the appraisal form, which they are compelled to do and are rated on at the end of the year. Although teachers admitted that they actively participate in choosing their own professional development, which mostly happens through attending workshops and conducting peer observations, they perceive it as an imposed school requirement and did not connect it to leadership development. Many of them separate their professional development activities from their personal conviction of the relevance of such learning to their own personal and professional growth and end up doing it just as a duty.

Finally, and even though the teachers and the principal agreed that teachers' motivation to take on leadership functions lacked at the school, their views diverged completely on the reasons why. While teachers considered that they do not need to have "additional" tasks to their overly charged schedule, the principal perceived them as being passive, and not having the needed leadership skills that are required to lead.

The organizational structure. The educational literature reflects how the various types of organizational structures influence the positioning of teacher leadership in the school, whether formally or informally, and how they promote or hinder leadership development. In traditional organizational structures, which are dominated by bureaucratic models where there is a strict distribution of authority along a hierarchical order, most of the authority is concentrated in formal leadership positions at the top (Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006). Consequently, in schools where a more traditional structure exists, there is no room for teacher leadership to be positioned formally. In addition, the strict bureaucracy makes it hard for teachers to practice informal leadership, so it remains very restricted and devoid of any substantial influence (Hord, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006).

At the other end of the spectrum organizational arrangements that distribute leadership authority among the different stakeholders at school like professional learning

communities (PLCs), are seen to promote building leadership capacity among all its members (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004). Under such arrangements, teachers feel safe to cooperate, interact with each other, share their practice, take risks and learn new things. As teacher leaders contribute to their colleagues' professional development and enhance the collective learning of the whole community, the focus turns to learning and everyone at school is expected to learn, is encouraged and supported to learn. Then teacher leaders' efforts are more likely to be appreciated by colleagues because of their direct impact on school improvement (DuFour, 2004; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009; Rutherford, 2006). In line with the literature, the four cases schools studied in this research have shown that the organizational structure influence how teacher leadership is supported and developed.

School A reflects an organizational structure that is closest to a professional learning community, with its relatively flat hierarchy, distributed leadership and collaborative culture that focuses on continuous professional learning and growth. Teachers' focus was not only on serving students better, but also on becoming better teachers and better leaders in the learning community. As depicted in the literature (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004), when the school structure has elements of a professional learning community, the conception of teacher leadership is more likely to developed for teachers as well as school principals. In fact, the school leadership opted for this kind of organizational structure because it believed that this is the appropriate structure that will allow the school to fulfill its mission of continuous growth and improvement. They also believed that they need to be working continuously on putting the supporting structures in place to make this a reality for the teachers and for the students, acknowledging that it is a never-ending process that they need to keep perfecting and

tweaking to accommodate the changing context and the evolving needs of the learners at all levels.

In school B, it became apparent from the responses of the participants that, while the organizational structure includes several layers of hierarchical roles, an emerging collaborative climate supports the development of a learning community. Norms of professional collaboration seem to be developing as teachers are engaging with the requirements of the newly adopted curricular program and are expected within the implementation of this curriculum to take the lead in various aspects of its implementation. Teachers' conception of teacher leadership reflects signs that they are gradually opening to more than simple collaboration between colleagues to getting more involved with decision making that encompasses the school as a whole.

As for school C, the organizational structure is traditional with the school principal holding all the decision-making power and seem to be restricting rather than supporting the development of teacher leadership. There was no formal assignment for teachers to enact their leadership, and despite having teachers who have more than twenty five years of experience, the only other leadership positions in the structure were the preschool director and the school supervisor, and both were relatively new to the school and had no authority nor decision-making power. In the previous years, there used to be subject coordinators who supervised the work of the teachers, but because of the downsizing, these positions were abolished, and no one took over these functions. In addition, though the principal was recently appointed by the governing board to lead the school and was new to the school as well, the "expert" teachers perceived her to be the one fully in charge despite her lack of readiness and experience. This was mainly because, in this restrictive organizational structure, teachers were used to having one person in charge and one figure of authority at the school on which all the responsibilities of leadership to fall.

Another existing organizational condition that is restrictive to the development of teacher leadership was the separation between teaching and leading. This has clearly impacted their conception of teacher leadership and limited it to “good teaching” and superficial collaboration with colleagues. Teachers account showed that teachers feel that they lack the authority to implement new initiatives and be remunerated accordingly which limited their willingness to even attempt to do so. The only teacher who considered herself to be a teacher leader in a broader sense that engages her with colleagues and students outside her classroom had previously a formal leadership role as the coordinator at the school and was still considered by her colleagues as such, even though she has not had this function for many years now.

The restrictive conditions have also resulted in a negative attitude among teachers towards the possibility of taking leadership action. In fact, most teachers showed no interest in being engaged in leadership at all and some of them were even surprised to consider that a teacher could be at the same time a leader. In their mind, mixing the two brings trouble and creates a divide between colleagues, which is something they were not ready to do. This is presented in the literature by Muijs and Harris (2006) who consider that, no matter how experienced they are, teachers with such an attitude often feel that they lack the expertise and self-confidence for leadership and are afraid to have to take the hard decisions and confront situations that entail ‘painful solutions’ (Bowman, 2004). Even the few teachers who believed that the school leadership should involve teachers in decision making, could not conceive of it as a normal part of the school functioning. They expressed their concerns that such additional role for teachers will disrupt the school and preferred to keep such involvement informal not to ignite conflict between peers. According to them, it is better and safer that no one is given authority over another and all teachers remain at the same distance from each other and from the school administration.

This attitude seems to grow from their perception through their “traditional” view of leadership as ‘power over’ rather than ‘power with’. It clearly resonates with the findings from the study conducted by Smylie & Denny (1990), which portrays teachers’ perception of the nature of teacher leadership as being more about ‘power’ than about support, which is feared to negatively impact the social-professional relations with peers.

Regarding the organizational structure in school D, it follows a complex hierarchy showing layers of responsibility and authority with a management committee composed of 12 heads of sections, which oversees the work of the department heads, who in turn supervise the subject coordinators, who manage the teachers. Interestingly, this heavy structure, often considered in the literature to be hindering for building leadership capacity (Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2009) was seen positively by the principal and justified to be intended to help teachers towards fulfilling the school goals. The principal celebrated that the school structure provides support to teachers since almost every three teachers have a supervisor. However, it became apparent from the data collected that the main role of these supervisors was highly directive and prescriptive, where they were expected to monitor whether teachers follow the mandated curriculum and deliver it up to expectations. On the other hand, teachers perceive this elaborate bureaucracy as a rigid structure that puts them at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy because they view that they have no say in what goes on outside the walls of their class.

Conversely, teachers did not agree with their principal about the positive impact of this multi-layered hierarchy in their school’s organizational structure, instead they viewed it to be an obstacle for them to thrive as teacher leaders. They consider that this complex hierarchy often gets in the way of getting things done and restricts their work to what is required at the level of their department, their subject and the colleagues they directly

interact with. They also perceive that only colleagues who have official leadership positions in the school have decision making power while they do not, and therefore consider that in order to have any power, one needs to have a formal title or position. This frustrates teachers who have been at the school for a long time and intimidates the new teachers, who find themselves reluctant to take initiatives in such an environment. Moreover, in such an organization, teachers develop reluctance to embrace any leadership roles or actions as they perceive themselves as “just teachers” (Chesson, 2010), with capacities limited to what they are responsible for in the classroom (Bowman, 2004; Helderbran, 2010) and consequently feel that they have no room to participate in leadership and consider any additional functions or duties as added responsibilities that they decline to take on.

While teachers reacted to this structure negatively, they still considered it “normal” and did not challenge its foundational concentration of authority, nor pointed at its hindering effects when it comes to developing their leadership potential. As reported in the literature, within this model of authoritarian bureaucratic structure there are no normative practices or organizational policies that provides a clear trajectory for teachers to be involved in leadership roles except through traditional formal positions (Muijs & Harris, 2003). Something that will not lead to building leadership capacity among teachers.

Positioning of teacher leadership. None of the four case schools had an established formal teacher leadership position or teachers holding a teacher leader title. In fact, teachers and principals shared that formal teacher leadership positions are not necessary for teacher leaders to have influence at school. However, they all agreed that having an official title helps in providing legitimacy and authority to their efforts among peers. The results of the study showed that in both schools that have a more traditional power concentrated organizational structure, more in school D than in school C, teachers

considered that they do not have a role to play in leadership, even at the informal level. Their experiences in an organizational structure and culture that does not value a role for teachers in leadership, and where valuing of teachers' initiatives is restricted to the individually triggered attempts within their classroom, have clearly shaped what they consider to be possible and conceivable in terms of their formal role. In these schools, the practice of leadership, if present is strictly associated with a formal assignment for specific teachers.

On the other hand, in schools A and B, the school has made a commitment to a curriculum reform initiative that requires transforming the school to collaborative professional learning community. Under these conditions, where there are normative expectations for teachers to be actively involved in pedagogic decisions at the level of planning and designing the school curriculum, teachers were able to conceive of teacher leadership outside the confines of a formal position. Teachers in those schools expressed that they were expected to informally take the lead in the various aspects of the school life. These leadership initiatives are likely to promote collegiality in the school (Muijs & Harris, 2006), and allows for facilitating communication among colleagues, supporting the development of others, modeling best practices, and sharing ones' own experiences without any formalized authority (Struyve et al., 2014).

In school A particularly, the supportive norms and structures seem to have resulted in teachers and the principal increased awareness that each one of them can engage in a leadership act that brings an added value to the organization and to the team and contributes to enhancing the distribution of leadership capacity at their school. They shared a common perception that teacher leadership, even when practiced informally, engages teachers in roles beyond the classroom while providing opportunities for leadership to be an integral part of teachers' daily work. Furthermore, this integrated

practice of teacher leadership allows every member in the school team to be involved in school-wide improvement initiatives, build stronger relationships within the organization, and contribute to the enhancement of the collective learning of the whole community (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004). In addition, they viewed the collaborative culture at their school to nurture continuous professional learning and were aware that by doing so they will have a greater chance to influence student learning and achievement, something that is widely supported in the international literature (Helterbran, 2010; Lieberman, 1995; Little, 2003; Silva et al., 2000).

Conclusion

There is increasing awareness that dealing with the ever more complex issues at schools is no longer possible by the school leaders alone. In that context, there is wide agreement that teachers need to be involved alongside the principal to develop new ways to confront all these issues. Various reform efforts in the last four decades recommend promoting 'teacher leadership' and allowing teachers to collectively contribute to the school leadership within a distributed framework. However, this requires a paradigm shift with teachers adopting a new identity as teacher leaders and schools modifying their organizational structures to enable the development of teacher leadership capacity.

Based on the study results, though to varying degrees, it is apparent that teachers have always had leadership roles, but this is still done unconsciously, unintentionally and hence inconsistently. In addition, their understanding of teacher leadership is directly shaped by their experiences at their school, the functions that they engage in, the responsibilities that they assume for the implementation of the academic curricula adopted at their school, as each program sets different expectations and requirements from teachers. Consequently, their experience shapes their understanding of what they can do, what role they are expected to play at school and what responsibilities they are supposed

to take as teacher leaders. It also forms their paradigm of what characterizes teacher leadership.

Continuum for Emerging Teacher Leadership in Lebanese Private Schools

The case schools that were investigated represent instances of teachers' leadership views and practices that fall on a continuum of emerging levels of adoption of teacher leadership as a vision, practice and organizational arrangement within the organizational culture of Lebanese private schools. The variation resulted from the diverse organizational conditions that resulted from the constitutional discretion accorded to private schools in Lebanon to adopt the curricular model they choose, and from the absence of any monitoring procedures or organizational accountability that forces schools to conform with standardized organizational arrangements. While the prevailing organizational norms are similar across the private public divide (Karami-Akkary, 2013), private school administration has more discretion to alter its organizational structure and institutionalize innovative initiatives. This allowed for variations to emerge as the organizational arrangements and the structures of the schools varied. These variations allowed the researcher to draw teacher leadership in the context of Lebanese private schools as a continuum ranging from "non-existent" to "emerging" highlighting as such the impact of the varied organizational conditions and is more likely to inform reformers interested in promoting teacher leadership in this context. The Lebanese education system in general strictly limits teachers' role to teaching-related functions. The lack of conception of teacher leadership in most schools is not a failure of the school or teacher at the outset but is more a reflection of the educational system and expectations set for teachers.

Teacher leadership as non-existent. On one side of the continuum, lie schools D and C where teacher leadership is non-existent, and teachers do not view themselves as leaders outside the confines of their classroom. These two schools represent the majority

of schools in Lebanon, where the principal is solely responsible for all decisions related to the various aspects of school life (Karami-Akkary, 2013) and where teacher leadership is quasi inexistent. In such school contexts, the expectations from teachers are restricted to delivering the program and making sure students succeed in exams. In addition, there are general misconceptions about supervision, which portray the principal as an inspector or formal evaluator rather than the coach and source of support and expertise to the teachers. Such view prevents teachers from risking to do anything new or different from what is prescribed to them, keeps them confined in traditional roles inside the classroom, and directs them to preferring informal roles that come with no added responsibilities. Teachers feel that there is a divide between them and the school leadership and perceive themselves at the bottom of the organizational hierarchy, which negatively affects their sense of agency and prevents them from considering participating in any leadership roles. Teachers tend consider that all the problems faced at school are not related to the teaching and learning processes, that the issue is rather political and out of their control, which for them means that they are not directly concerned to solve it. Finally, teachers tend to link teacher leadership with a formal position only, therefore limiting it to a few 'outstanding' teachers who can fill available positions, which prevents them from recognizing that anyone can be a leader.

Teacher leadership as emerging. On the other end of the continuum, teacher leadership seems to be emerging in school B and A and teachers have started to perceive themselves as leaders and decision makers at school. While school A and B are not typical schools in Lebanon, they show that with improved organizational conditions that enable teacher leadership, teachers are able to engage in functions, roles and acts that require leadership skills. In these schools, it became clear that teachers have achieved a breakthrough in defying and overturning existing educational norms to do what they are

doing. In addition, the evolved understanding of the principals in what teachers' role could be in overall school improvement, their belief in teachers as learners and leaders, their willingness and ability to impact the organizational structure and focus on functionality in terms of collaborative joint production, is key to making something different develop in the school.

These two schools follow an international academic program and abide by the requirements of the accrediting organization that include empowering teachers and engaging them in functions that are not usually demanded of them in traditional school settings. Consequently, teachers are involved in leadership functions across the whole school that comprise participating in curriculum development and review, engaging in continuous professional development and learning, sharing expertise and practice with peers inside and outside the school, collaborating with colleagues for planning and co-teaching in teams. Moreover, teacher leaders are responsible for mentoring new colleagues and designing professional learning opportunities for the whole community, which gives them an unintended expert authority. This is where teacher leadership plays a crucial role, when teacher leaders are able to contain their colleagues, support and guide them to fulfill their professional duties away from any personal conflicts.

In school B, teachers showed the beginning of engagement in some aspects of teacher leadership, which is directly linked to the international program that they started implementing at their school and which requires them to collaborate more closely with colleagues and keep learning themselves. They consider their school to foster innovation and perceive their role as essential to keep its reputation as such. This was mirrored by the principal who sees teachers as leaders already because they are responsible for all aspects of students' life at school in addition to developing the curriculum and serving on committees. However, there were no clear guidelines for how teacher leadership is being

supported and developed at school to encompass wider aspects as per the conceptual framework.

As for school A, teachers appeared to have the most advanced conceptions of what teacher leadership entails and showed the most congruence with the various aspects of the teacher leadership conceptual framework. The reasons for their advancement in comparison to teachers in the other case schools include being part of a school startup, which makes possibilities for innovation and change more easily accepted if not sought, for the school to create its own niche among the existing schools around it. In addition, as teachers are implementing an international curriculum that sets specific expectations for the nature of teacher involvement in the school, they are required to develop their leadership skills to be more involved in the various aspects of students' life at school. Finally, the school principal shows full support and believes in the value of developing teacher leaders to fulfill the school's vision and mission and engages teachers in decision making and responsibilities that go way beyond their teaching tasks.

Contrived Teacher Leadership within the Current Organizational Culture

The existing conceptions of teachers are shaped by the organizational conditions and organizational culture in which they work and interact, which in turn are influenced by the limited conceptions of the school leaders themselves. Such limitation comes from the reality in which school leaders operate and the organizational norms that put them at the center of all decision-making at the school. In fact, norms of the principals' role in Lebanon put them in charge of supervising all aspects of the school's life (Karami-Akkary, 2013). They are also perceived to play a motherly/fatherly role by teachers and school staff as well as students and parents, and are expected to resolve conflicts, find solutions, provide guidance and keep the proper functioning of the school (Itani-Malas, 2009; Karami-Akkary, 2013).

In addition, principals are held directly responsible for everything that happens at school, which makes them unwilling to delegate authority to anyone else and consider that they are the “only catalysts for improvement in their school” (Karami-Akkary, 2013). As for the teachers, they are held accountable for everything that takes place inside the classroom and are expected to put all their effort and time in teaching and planning for teaching. In such conditions, teacher leadership is contrived and has no room to develop and flourish. Moreover, the acute absence of the conception of teacher leadership in traditional schools requires not only efforts to introduce it but also a paradigmatic shift at the leadership and the teachers’ levels.

School A presents glimpses of hope and demonstrates that when certain organizational conditions are in place, teachers’ conceptions broaden, and certain practices are integrated in the existing structure. Such changes in the organizational structure and the scope of the role of the teachers can yield more distributive practices in the school as well as impact the changes in the conceptions of teacher leadership and its positioning within the school. However, as reflected in the literature, when the conditions that are conducive to the development of teacher leadership are not in place, these limited conceptions and the sporadic, informal practices that emerge from it cannot be sustained. These essential conditions include: 1) building the leadership capacity of teachers and school leadership (DuFour, 2004; Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001 & 2009; Sergiovanni & Starrat, 2002), 2) developing a positive school climate (Fullan et al., 2006; Harris & Muijs, 2003), and 3) creating supportive organizational structures (Chesson, 2010; DuFour, 2004; Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004).

Indeed, the school leaders have a major role in setting up organizational structures and arrangements that promote shared decision-making among teachers and administrators and distribute power and leadership responsibilities throughout the school (Harris &

Muijs, 2003). Such “participative” role engages teachers in school improvement initiatives and helps them develop a sense of ownership and commitment to willingly collaborate and achieve the collective goal (Helterbran, 2010). However, a well thought of program to build capacity of leadership needs to be considered in this case as building teacher leadership cannot happen in a vacuum. Rather, it should happen as part of a school wide effort to build leadership capacity in the school that target transforming the norms of leading towards more distributive practices. Moreover, as Lambert (1998) explains, allowing for such ‘broad-based’ involvement in decision-making is essential for building the leadership capacity at school, not only with teachers but also parents, students and community members. Consequently, the hierarchy is altered, and leadership is decentralized (Senge et al., 2000; Smith, 2001) so that it doesn’t reflect what each person does but rather how they must collectively contribute to the advancement of the whole community. As a result, the relationship between the principal and the teachers becomes more supportive, nurturing and empowering to teachers as they are considered colleagues working together and growing professionally to reach a common goal (Hord, 1997).

In sum, unless the conceptions are broadened and then aligned with norms as well as structures that support them, the transformation in practices that we are seeking will never happen, and the wide, across the board adoption of conceptions of leadership that contains all the three dimensions will not take place in the Lebanese context.

Recommendations

This section discusses recommendations for practice related to organizational structures in schools that support and promote teacher leadership and for policies that target teacher leadership as an essential pathway to improve the overall existing practice in schools. In addition, recommendations for further research are shared.

Recommendations for Practice

Teacher leadership is an “innovative intervention” that goes against existing organizational norms and traditional leadership conceptions. However, it is recognized in the literature for the impact it has on the overall school environment and culture (Danielson, 2006). It is considered to create opportunities for teachers to lead in various circumstances, thus putting them in a position of authority and giving them collective responsibility for school improvement (Barth, 2001; Gronn, 2000; Harris & Lambert, 2003; Woods, et al., 2004), and the agency to impact the whole school and be agents of change (Glickman, 2002). Consequently, developing teacher leadership needs to become a key focus of schools’ vision and strategic improvement goals that aim at transformative change that requires a breaking of existing paradigms.

The enactment of such vision requires the adoption of new mental models to reframe their conception of teacher leadership and help school level practitioners and decision makers alike adopt this innovative practice. This change not only involves teachers but everyone at school, including the principal, who needs to support teachers and put in place a professional development strategy to develop teacher leadership (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004). In addition, there needs to be interventions and innovations where teachers have an active role from the beginning and learn how to behave as leaders, take on responsibilities, and follow a bottom-up approach.

In Lebanon, there are two examples of projects that have followed this approach, the TAMAM project (TAMAM, 2012, tamamproject.org) and the School Improvement Program (SIP) under the DRASATI (ESDS, 2013), which have been implemented in the aim of building the capacity of public and private schools to develop and implement school improvement plans based on their particular needs. These projects have marked an important milestone in teacher development and empowerment as they provided an

opportunity for teachers to develop their leadership capacity and to be involved in any form of school improvement project that extends beyond their own classroom. TAMAM continues to provide support to the lead teams in the project schools to develop and build on the core competencies that would allow them to continue their school-based improvement efforts.

The main lessons learned from these two projects align with what is recommended by the literature supporting the development of Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) (DuFour & Eaker, 1998; DuFour, 2004; Rutherford, 2006). Namely, to achieve the impact demonstrated by these projects, teacher leadership needs to be gradually introduced as part of an improvement initiative that is designed in a manner that allocates an active leadership role to teachers holding them responsible for successfully implementing the initiative. For such initiatives to succeed in establishing teacher leadership, it is imperative to allow for distributed decision-making and broad-based, participatory leadership at all levels of the organization (Chesson, 2010; Lambert, 1998). In addition, the organizational structure needs to support this change at the systemic level with a clear process that includes continuous teacher training and capacity building, principal training, which will lead to a change in conceptions about teacher leadership, a paradigm shift, and a strong belief of self-efficacy and collective efficacy (Angelle & Teague, 2014; Crowther, et al., 2002, Goddard et al, 2004; Harris & Muijs, 2003; Leithwood et al., 2007). The gradual change in the organizational structure that accompany capacity building will support the change in the organizational culture, which will allow teachers to break out of the old paradigm that keeps them from engaging fully in leadership (Helterbran, 2010; Hord, 2004; Muijs & Harris, 2006).

Recommendations for Policy Development

In order to support the establishment of teacher leadership in schools, policies need to be developed to enable the efforts at the systemic level. Therefore, there is a need to rethink the overall conception of the teaching profession in the government policies, including how teaching roles are articulated and expectations are set. These changes in conceptions should influence how teachers' contracts are structured and how job descriptions are developed and set formal articulation of the scope of their involvement at school.

Another recommendation is to develop policy to support distributed leadership and engaging teachers in school-wide decision making and responsibilities. This involves designing the organizational structure that not only allows for the involvement of teachers in functions outside the restricted realm of classroom teaching, but also requires them to actively participate in decision making that supports school improvement and empowers them to develop collective efficacy as they develop trust in the system.

Finally, there needs to be a clear policy that requires schools to allocate an annual budget for continuous professional learning and development for teachers that includes capacity building in leadership, so teachers are supported in developing the needed skills to participate in school-wide decision making. Such a policy will help teachers develop a stance toward teaching as a profession, which will inspire them to build self-efficacy and to continuously seek development and professional growth to be a resource for their colleagues and their students (Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; York-Barr & Duke, 2004). In addition, more professional development is needed for principals on distributed leadership and on introducing the research culture in schools (Shamsi et al., 2010).

Recommendations for Further Research

Teacher leadership in Lebanon needs further study in private schools as well as public schools, namely to develop a grounded conception that takes into consideration the cultural context as well as the unique aspirations of teachers. First, more studies that follow the design of the current study can be conducted in a larger number of schools accounting for the existing variations in the type of schools (public private) as well as in the level of awareness and enactment of teacher leadership in these schools. These studies will help develop a more nuanced continuum of leadership conceptions and help identify organizational conditions that seem to contribute to the natural emergence of this practice within the confines of the existing bureaucratic Lebanese educational system. Thus, the study can be replicated in other private schools to capture more cases that show a broader variation of organizational conditions where teacher leadership is supported. In addition, the study can be replicated in public schools where improvement projects that implicate teachers in roles and functions guided by the participatory leadership conceptions are being implemented.

Another recommendation is to research in the same case schools the extent to which the stated conceptions that emerged from this study are enacted in practice and develop an in-depth understanding on the measures that need to be taken to ensure that enactment.

A final recommendation is to conduct in-depth case studies of teachers and school principals to understand how their conceptions of leadership came to be formed and where in their living and/or learning journeys they encountered phenomena that shaped their paradigm as to what leadership involves.

Appendix A

Demographic Data of Teachers Participating in Focus Groups

Table A.1

Gender of teachers who participated in the focus groups

School / Gender	Female	Male	Total
A	27	0	27*
B	6	1	7
C	10	2	12
D	11	2	13
Total	54	5	59

Note. *6 teachers participated in the pilot focus group and a follow-up focus group.

Table A.2

Years of teaching experience of teachers who participated in the focus groups

School / Gender	Less than 3 years	4-10 years	10-20 years	More than 20 years	Total
A	7	13	5	2	27*
B	1	6	0	0	7
C	2	5	1	4	12
D	2	6	4	1	13
Total	12	30	10	7	59

Note. *6 teachers participated in the pilot focus group and a follow-up focus group.

Table A.3

Subject taught by teachers who participated in the focus groups

School / Gender	Math / Science	Language / Social Studies	Arts / PE	Other	Total
A	9	13	3	2	27*
B	2	2	1	2	7
C	5	7	0	0	12
D	5	6	0	2	13
Total	21	28	4	6	59

Note. *6 teachers participated in the pilot focus group and a follow-up focus group.

Table A.4

Grade level of teachers who participated in the focus groups

School / Gender	Preschool	Cycle 1	Cycle 2	Cycle 3 & 4	Total
A	7	15	5	0	27*
B	2	2	3	0	7
C	5	2	2	3	12
D	2	2	2	7	13
Total	16	21	12	10	59

Note. *6 teachers participated in the pilot focus group and a follow-up focus group.

Appendix B

Principal Initial Permission Form

Beirut, [date]

Dear [name of school principal/head]

My name is Ghinwa Itani Malas and I am a doctoral student at the Saint Joseph University in Beirut, Faculty of Educational Sciences. I am currently preparing for my doctoral dissertation about “Teacher Leadership in Lebanon in the Context of Sustainable School Improvement”, and as part of my research study I would like to survey teachers in various schools in Lebanon that are involved in school improvement initiatives to understand their perception of teacher leadership. The questionnaire takes approximately 5 minutes to complete and is available in paper format and electronically, depending on the school’s preference. The data will be analyzed to identify what is teachers’ understanding of teacher leadership, as well as what are the practices that support or hinder teacher leadership in schools. The results generated could be useful in providing recommendations for structures that support teachers in developing their leadership capacities, so they can be active agents in continuous and sustainable school improvement.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct the survey with the teachers at your school [name of the school]. All data collected will be strictly confidential and individual participants will remain anonymous. No teacher, school or region will be identified in reporting the findings. Participating in this study is absolutely voluntary, and teachers may withdraw at any time without any repercussion. Only aggregate results will be reported in the findings, and all results will be solely used for educational research purposes.

If you give your approval for participation, please sign the approval form below and send it back to me. I will contact you to schedule the administration of the survey at your convenience.

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me. You may also contact my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at ra10@aub.edu.lb.

Thank you in advance for your valuable collaboration,

Ghinwa Itani Malas
Saint Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon
03-796998, gimalas@hotmail.com

I, (Name and position) _____, agree to allow teachers at my school (School name) _____

_____ to participate in the study of ‘Teacher Leadership in the Context of Sustainable School Improvement’ conducted by Ghinwa Itani Malas. I have read the material above and understand that participation is voluntary; participants can stop at any time without repercussion; participants’ identity and answers as well as the school’s name will be kept confidential; and answers will be used for research study purposes only.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form for Teachers

Thank you for considering participation in the research study that I am conducting about “Teacher Leadership in Lebanon in the Context of Sustainable School Improvement”. This study consists my doctoral dissertation in Educational Leadership at the Saint Joseph University in Beirut, Faculty of Educational Sciences.

I am requesting your participation in this study as a teacher currently working in a Lebanese school, to understand your perception of teacher leadership. Your participation will provide valuable information to understand the landscape in which teacher leadership is developing in schools and to identify teachers’ perception of teacher leadership. Your school principal [name of principal] has given me permission to ask for your participation.

Data collection will consist of administering the Teacher Leadership Inventory Questionnaire, which takes approximately 5 minutes to complete and is available in paper format and electronically depending on your preference. If your school is selected as a site to conduct further data collection, you may be asked to participate in a 45-minute focus group interview with a group of teachers with a possibility of being selected for a follow-up 20-minute individual interview to be scheduled at another date if needed.

Please find below explanation of how your input will be used in the study:

- All data collected will be confidential. Only the researcher will have access to the data.
- Your name and your individual responses will remain anonymous.
- Your school name will not be identified in reporting the findings.
- Your participation in this study is absolutely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without any repercussion.
- Only aggregate results will be reported in the findings.
- All results will be solely used for educational research purposes.

If you agree to participate, please sign the approval form below. If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me by email on gimalas@hotmail.com.

Thank you in advance for your valuable collaboration,

Ghinwa Itani Malas
Saint Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon
03-796998, gimalas@hotmail.com

I, (Name and position) _____, teacher at (Name of school) _____ agree to participate in the study about ‘Teacher Leadership in the Context of Sustainable School Improvement’ conducted by Ghinwa Itani Malas. I have read the material above and understand that my participation in this study is absolutely voluntary; I may withdraw at any time without any repercussion; my answers will only be used for educational research purposes; my identity and answers as well as the school’s name will be kept confidential.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix C (Arabic)

استمارة الموافقة للمعلمين

أشركم على التفكير في المشاركة في الدراسة البحثية التي أجريها حول "قيادة المعلم في لبنان في سياق التطوير المدرسي المستدام". هذه الدراسة هي أطروحة الدكتوراه في القيادة التربوية التي أقوم بها في جامعة القديس يوسف في بيروت، في كلية العلوم التربوية.

أطلب منكم المشاركة في هذه الدراسة بصفقتكم عضوًا حاليًا في الهيئة التعليمية في مدرسة لبنانية، وذلك لفهم تصوّركم للقيادة لدى المعلمين. وستوفر مشاركتكم معلومات قيمة لفهم الواقع الذي تتطور فيه قيادة المعلمين في المدارس ولتحديد مفهوم المعلمين لقيادة المعلم. وقد منحتني مدير مدرستكم الإذن بطلب مشاركتكم.

سيتم جمع البيانات من خلال استبيان حول مخزون القيادة لدى المعلمين، والذي يستغرق ملؤه حوالي 5 دقائق، وهو متاح لكم إلكترونياً عبر رابط تلقائي يتبع الموافقة. وإذا تم اختيار مدرستكم كموقع لإجراء القسم الثاني من جمع البيانات، قد يطلب منكم المشاركة في مقابلة ضمن مجموعة تركيز من المعلمين لمدة ٤٥ دقيقة. كما يمكن اختياركم للقيام بمقابلة فردية لمدة ٢٠ دقيقة تحدّد في موعد آخر إذا لزم الأمر.

وتجدون في ما يلي شرحاً مفصلاً لكيفية استخدام البيانات التي ستشاركونها مع الباحثة في الدراسة:

- ستكون جميع البيانات المشاركة سرية، ولا تعرفها سوى الباحثة فقط.
- سيبقى اسمكم وردودكم الفردية مجهولة الهوية.
- لن يتم تحديد اسم مدرستكم في عرض النتائج.
- مشاركتكم في هذه الدراسة طوعية تمامًا. يمكنكم الانسحاب في أي وقت دون أي عواقب.
- سيتم عرض النتائج بشكل عام فقط في الدراسة.
- سيتم استخدام جميع النتائج لأغراض البحث التربوي حصرياً.

إذا وافقتم على المشاركة في هذه الدراسة، يرجى التوقيع على نموذج الموافقة أدناه. وإذا كان لديكم أية أسئلة حول هذه الدراسة البحثية، لا تترددوا في التواصل معي على البريد الإلكتروني المبين أدناه.

شكراً لكم سلفاً على تعاونكم القيم،

غنوة عيتاني ملص
جامعة القديس يوسف، بيروت، لبنان
gimalas@hotmail.com

أنا الموقع أدناه، (الاسم والمركز)

معلمة / أستاذ في (اسم المدرسة)

أوافق على المشاركة في الدراسة حول "قيادة المعلم في سياق التحسين المدرسي المستدام" التي تجريها غنوة عيتاني ملص. لقد قرأت المادة أعلاه وأفهم أن مشاركتي في هذه الدراسة طوعية تماماً، ويحق لي الانسحاب في أي وقت دون أي عواقب، وسوف تستخدم إجاباتي فقط لأغراض البحث التربوي، كما وستبقى هويتي وإجاباتي واسم مدرستي سرية.

التاريخ

التوقيع

Appendix D

Teacher Leadership Inventory Survey

Teacher Leadership Inventory

For each statement below, indicate how often this occurs in your school. Mark only one response per item.

	Routinely	Sometimes	Seldom	Never
1. Teachers ask one another for assistance when we have a problem with student behavior in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Other teachers willingly offer me assistance if I have questions about how to teach a new topic or skills.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Teachers here share new ideas for teaching with other teachers such as through grade/department meetings, school wide meetings, professional development, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Teachers discuss ways to improve student learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Teachers are involved in making decisions about activities such as professional development, cross-curricular projects, etc.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Teachers are actively involved in improving the school as a whole.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Teachers stay current on education research in our grade level/subject area/department.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Teachers willingly stay after school to work on school improvement activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Teachers willingly stay after school to help other teachers who need assistance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Teachers willingly stay after school to work with administrators, if administrators need assistance.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Administrators object when teachers take on leadership responsibilities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
12. The principal responds to the concerns and ideas of teachers.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
13. Teachers plan the content of professional learning activities at my school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
14. Teachers have opportunities to influence important decisions even if they do not hold an official leadership position.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
15. The principal consults the same small group of teachers for input on decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
16. Time is provided for teachers to collaborate about matters relevant to teaching and learning.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
17. Most teachers in leadership positions only serve because they have been principal appointed.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Appendix D (Arabic)

مخزون القيادة لدى المعلمين

لكل جملة من الجمل التالية، حدّدوا إلى أي مدى يحدث ذلك في مدرستكم. اختاروا إجابة واحدة فقط لكل بند.

أبداً	نادراً	في بعض الأحيان	دائماً	
				١. يطلب المعلمون المساعدة من بعضهم البعض عندما يكون لدينا مشكلة مع سلوك الطلاب في الصفوف الدراسية.
				٢. يقم المعلمون الآخرون لي المساعدة عن طيب خاطر إذا كان لدي أسئلة حول كيفية تدريس موضوع جديد أو مهارات جديدة.
				٣. المعلمون هنا يتبادلون الأفكار الجديدة حول التعليم مع معلمين آخرين من خلال الاجتماعات الصفية مثلاً، أو خلال اجتماعات القسم، أو الاجتماعات العامة في المدرسة، أو خلال التنمية المهنية، الخ.
				٤. يناقش المعلمون سبل تحسين تعلم الطلاب.
				٥. يتم إشراك المعلمين في اتخاذ القرارات المتعلقة بأنشطة مثل التطوير المهني، والمشاريع المتداخلة في المناهج الدراسية، وما إلى ذلك.
				٦. يشارك المعلمون بشكل ناشط في تحسين المدرسة ككل.
				٧. يبقى المعلمون على اطلاع حول الأبحاث المتعلقة بالتعليم لمستوى صفنا أو المادة التعليمية أو القسم.
				٨. يبقى المعلمون طوعاً بعد المدرسة للعمل على أنشطة لتحسين المدرسة.
				٩. يبقى المعلمون طوعاً بعد المدرسة لمساعدة المعلمين الآخرين الذين يحتاجون إلى المساعدة.
				١٠. يبقى المعلمون طوعاً بعد المدرسة للعمل مع الإداريين، إذا احتاج الإداريون إلى المساعدة.
				١١. يعترض الإداريون عندما يتحمل المعلمون مسؤوليات القيادة.
				١٢. يستجيب المدير لمخاوف المعلمين وأفكارهم.
				١٣. يخطط المعلمون لمحتوى أنشطة التعلم المهني في مدرستي.
				١٤. لدى المعلمين الفرص للتأثير على القرارات الهامة حتى ولو لم يكن لديهم منصب قيادي رسمي.
				١٥. يتشاور المدير مع المجموعة الصغيرة ذاتها من المعلمين للمساهمة في اتخاذ القرارات.
				١٦. يتم توفير الوقت للمعلمين للتعاون حول المسائل ذات الصلة في التعليم والتعلم.
				١٧. معظم المعلمين الذين لديهم مناصب قيادية يؤدون هذه المهام فقط لأنه تم تعيينهم من قبل المدير.

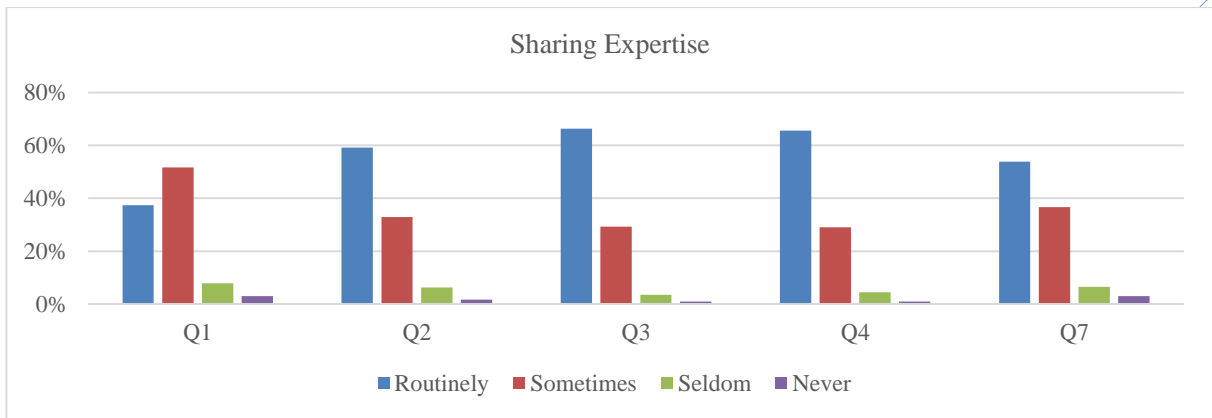


Figure E.1. Distribution of the data for Sharing Expertise by percentage.

The bar graph hereafter shows the responses distributed by answer on the 4-item Likert scale for all five statements.

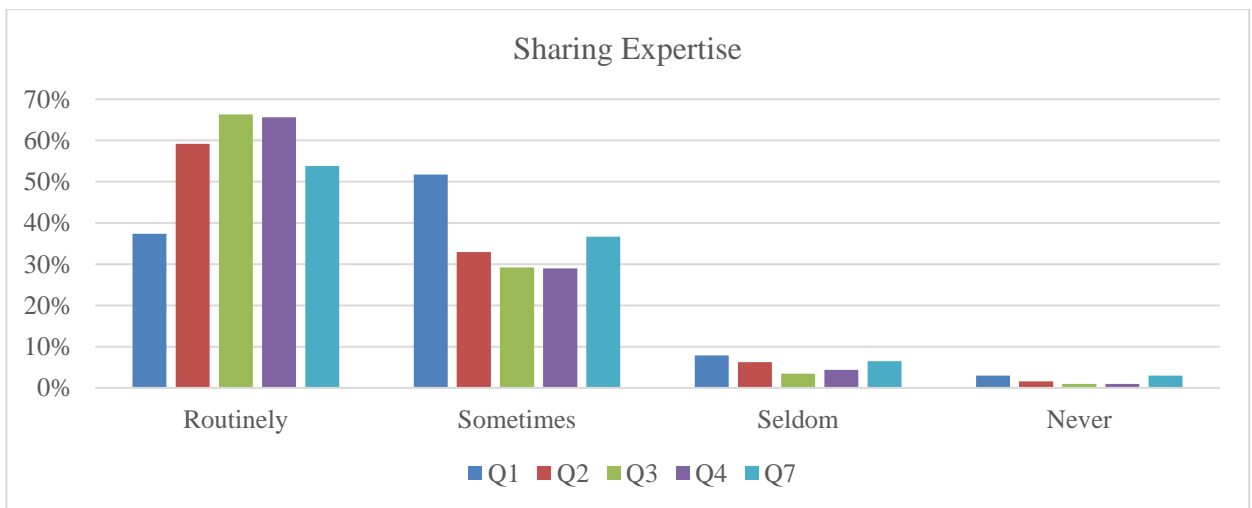


Figure E.2. Data for Sharing Expertise represented by response.

The pie chart below summarizes the responses for the factor Sharing Expertise per answer.

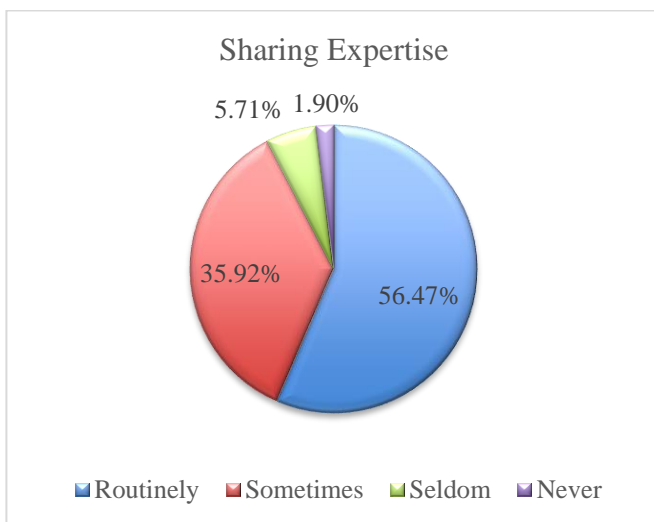


Figure E.3. Overall responses for Sharing Expertise.

Appendix F

Permission Form for the Second Phase of Data Collection from the School Principal

Beirut, [date]

Dear [name of school principal/head),

Thank you for allowing me to conduct the teacher survey about teacher leadership at your school on [date of survey] for my doctoral dissertation about “Teacher Leadership in Lebanon in the Context of Sustainable School Improvement”, which I am doing at the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Saint Joseph University, Beirut.

As a follow up for my study, and based on the results of the teachers’ survey, I would like to interview the school principals at a few schools that are involved in school improvement initiatives to understand their perception of teacher leadership and what structures do they have in place to support it. The interview is semi-structured and takes approximately 30-45 minutes. It will be audiotaped for full transcribing later on. The data will be analyzed to compare how school leaders’ perception of teacher leadership is similar or different from that of the teachers. The results generated will help provide recommendations for structures that support the development of teachers’ leadership capacities so they can be active agents in continuous and sustainable school improvement.

In addition, I would like to conduct focus group meetings with different groups of teachers with a possibility of selecting one or two teachers for a follow-up individual interview if needed. The focus group interview is also semi-structured and will allow me to understand in depth teachers’ perception of teacher leadership and how they see themselves engaging in leadership roles or functions that support the school’s improvement. The focus group interview takes around 45-60 minutes and can include up to 8 teachers from the same department / cycle. If individual teacher interviews are needed, they will be done with one or two teachers from each focus group. Teachers will be selected for the individual interview if the researcher notices that they can add more in-depth insights to what was shared in the focus group meeting. An individual interview takes around 20 minutes.

I am writing to request your permission to conduct the interviews at your school. All data collected will be strictly confidential and individual participants will remain anonymous. No teacher, school or region will be identified in reporting the findings. Participating in this study is absolutely voluntary, and participants may withdraw at any time without any repercussion. Only aggregate results will be reported in the findings, and all results will be solely used for educational research purposes.

If you give your approval for participation, please sign the approval form below and send it back to me. I will contact you to schedule the interviews at your convenience.

If you have any questions about this research study, please feel free to contact me. You may also contact my Thesis Advisor, Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at ra10@aub.edu.lb.

Thank you in advance for your valuable collaboration,

Ghinwa Itani Malas
Saint Joseph University, Beirut, Lebanon
03-796998
gimalas@hotmail.com

I, (Name and position)

_____, agree to participate in the study about ‘Teacher Leadership in the Context of Sustainable School Improvement’ conducted by Ghinwa Itani Malas and conduct the school leader interview. I also allow teachers at my school (School name)

_____ to participate in the focus group interviews, and if needed in individual interviews. I have read the material above and understand that participation is voluntary; participants can stop at any time without repercussion; participants’ identity and answers as well as the school’s name will be kept confidential; and results will be used for research study purposes only.

Signature:

Date:

Appendix G

Responses for the Teacher Leadership Inventory Survey

Table G.1

Number of responses from each school in Phase 1

School	Number of Responses from Teachers	Total Number of Teachers at the School	Percentage of Teachers Who Responded
1	6	100+	6%
2	6	35	17%
3	8	50	16%
4	9	47	19%
5	16	100+	16%
6-A	21	33	63%
7-B	17	70	24%
8-C	23	28	82%
9	35	100+	35%
10	36	100+	36%
11	52	100+	50%
12-D	57	155	36%
13	139	150	92%
NA	6		
Total	431		

Appendix H

Principal Interview Protocol

Good morning Mr./Mrs., thank you for accepting to participate in this interview. I am currently conducting a study for my doctoral research about teacher leadership in Lebanon. This interview is confidential, I will record it so I can transcribe it later on and no one besides me will listen to it. No names will be mentioned in the study, the school and the interviewees will be given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Feel free to answer the questions in English or Arabic, whatever is preferable for you. Are you ready?

1. What are the main aspects of the teachers' work in this school?
 - *What duties do they have outside of teaching time?*
 - *Do you do any schoolwork outside of school?*
2. Do teachers collaborate with their colleagues?
 - *How? (Do they share pedagogical knowledge? Do they share classroom management knowledge?)*
 - *When? (While teaching? Planning? School events?)*
 - *Why? (What is your personal motivation to collaborate?)*
3. Do teachers volunteer to help out at school?
 - *Who do they mostly help out?*
 - *Why do they do it?*
 - *When do they do it?*
 - *What do you think they expect in return?*
4. Do you encourage teachers to participate in making decisions at schools?
 - *What kinds of decisions do they make?*
 - *Who do these decisions affect mostly?*
 - *As the school leadership do you take their suggestions into considerations?*
 - *Do you think their colleagues take their suggestions into consideration?*
5. Do you see teachers doing any acts in class or at school that require leadership skills?
 - *What are such acts?*
 - *What kind of leadership skills do they require?*
 - *How do they develop these leadership skills?*
 - *What kind of support do you think they need to be able to develop these leadership skills?*
6. Do you think that teachers are aware that they are assuming leadership acts / being leaders?
 - *What motivates (inspires, pushes or leads) them to assume leadership acts at the school or to lead others, whether formally or informally?*
 - *How do they perceive their contributions to the school community?*
 - *How does their understanding of leadership influence their behavior?*
 - *What do you think they expect from taking on such leadership roles?*

7. Do you think that one needs to be in a formal leadership position to be able to lead others?
 - *Can one be viewed as a leader by others, or influence others if one does not hold a formal position?*

8. Do you think that teachers should/can be involved in leadership at school? Why or why not?
 - *If yes, what are some of the functions/acts that they can/should be involved in?*
 - *Can they still teach and have leadership roles?*
 - *What is the added value that they may bring to the school community by being involved in such functions/acts from your perspective?*
 - *Do you think any of the teachers at your school would want to be involved in such roles?*
 - *Are they already doing any of that?*

9. How do you support / promote teacher leadership at your school?
 - *How are teacher leaders selected?*
 - *Which functions / roles do they fulfill?*
 - *How do the leadership structure, policies and procedures influence the leadership dynamics in the school?*
 - *How are professional development opportunities developed? Are teachers involved in setting their own PD needs?*
 - *Do teacher leaders participate in supporting the PD of their colleagues? How?*

10. Do you have any last thoughts about teacher leadership you would like to share to wrap-up our meeting?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix I

Teacher Focus Group Interview Protocol

Good morning everyone, thank you for accepting to participate in this focus group meeting. As you know, I am currently conducting a study for my doctoral research about teacher leadership in various schools in Greater Beirut. This focus group interview is confidential, I will record and videotape it so I can transcribe it later on and no one besides me will listen to it or view it. No names will be mentioned in the study, the school and the interviewees will be given pseudonyms to maintain confidentiality. Feel free to answer the questions and engage in the discussion in English or Arabic, whatever is preferable for you. Are you ready?

1. What are the main aspects of your work as teachers in this school?
 - *How do you spend your day?*
 - *What duties do you have outside of teaching time?*
 - *Do you do any schoolwork outside of school?*

2. Do you collaborate with your colleagues?
 - *How? (Do you share pedagogical knowledge? Do you share classroom management knowledge?)*
 - *When? (While teaching? Planning? School events?)*
 - *Why? (What is your personal motivation to collaborate?)*

3. Do you volunteer to help out at school?
 - *Who do you mostly help out?*
 - *Why do you do it?*
 - *When do you do it?*
 - *What do you expect in return?*

4. Do you participate in making decisions at schools?
 - *What kinds of decisions do you make?*
 - *Who do these decisions affect mostly?*
 - *Are your suggestions taken into account by the school leadership? By colleagues?*

5. Do you see yourself as doing any acts in class or at school that require leadership skills?
 - *What are such acts?*
 - *What kind of leadership skills do they require?*
 - *How do/did you develop these leadership skills?*
 - *What kind of support do you need to be able to develop these leadership skills?*

6. What motivates (*inspires, pushes or leads*) you to assume leadership acts / be leaders at your school?
 - *What goes in your mind when you lead others? How do you feel about it?*
 - *What are your expectations from taking on such roles?*
 - *How do you perceive your contributions to the school community?*

7. Do you think that you need to be in a formal leadership position to be able to lead others?
 - *Can you be viewed as a leader by others, or influence others if you do not hold a formal position?*

8. Do you think that teachers should/can be involved in leadership at school? Why or why not?
 - *Can you still teach and have leadership roles?*
 - *What is the added value that you may bring to the school community by being involved in such functions/acts from your perspective?*

9. How do you see teacher leadership being promoted / supported at your school?
 - *How does the school principal support teacher leadership?*
 - *How are teacher leaders selected?*
 - *How do the leadership structure, policies and procedures influence the leadership dynamics in the school?*
 - *How are professional development opportunities developed? Are teachers involved in setting their own PD needs?*
 - *Do teacher leaders participate in supporting the PD of their colleagues? How?*

10. Do you have any last thoughts about teacher leadership you would like to share to finish our meeting?

Thank you for your participation!

Appendix J

Permission to use the Teacher Leadership Inventory



Ghinwa Itani Malas
Educational Consultant
Grey Matters Education
Beirut, Lebanon

March 5, 2017

Dear Ghinwa,

With this letter, I grant permission to use the quantitative instrument, the Teacher Leader Inventory, for your research study. You have my permission to disseminate the instrument either through an online or hard copy format. You do not have permission to modify the instrument without additional permission.

This permission is granted with the following terms:

- The instrument will be used for research purposes only, barring any monetary profiting from the instrument.
- Author citation is included on all copies.
- Links to subsequent manuscripts generated from the study will be forwarded to me.
- A summary of research results is forwarded to me upon completion of the study.

Best wishes for your research and I look forward to seeing the results.

Pamela S. Angelle, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Graduate Program Coordinator
The University of Tennessee
Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies
323 Bailey Education Complex
Knoxville, TN 37996

Appendix K

Sample of the Coding Procedure

The following two figures show an example of the coding system used during the study whereby the transcripts are coded during initial coding (Figure G.1), then categories are developed and grouped under wider headings (Figure G.2).

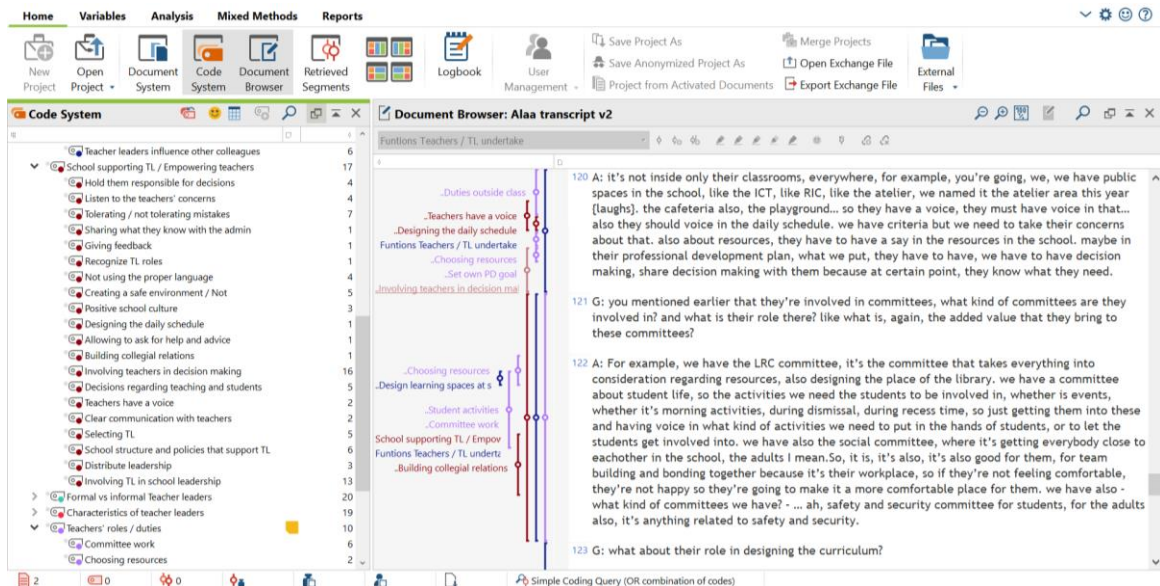


Figure G.1. Subcategories included under one main category in the coding system developed and the codes on the transcript.

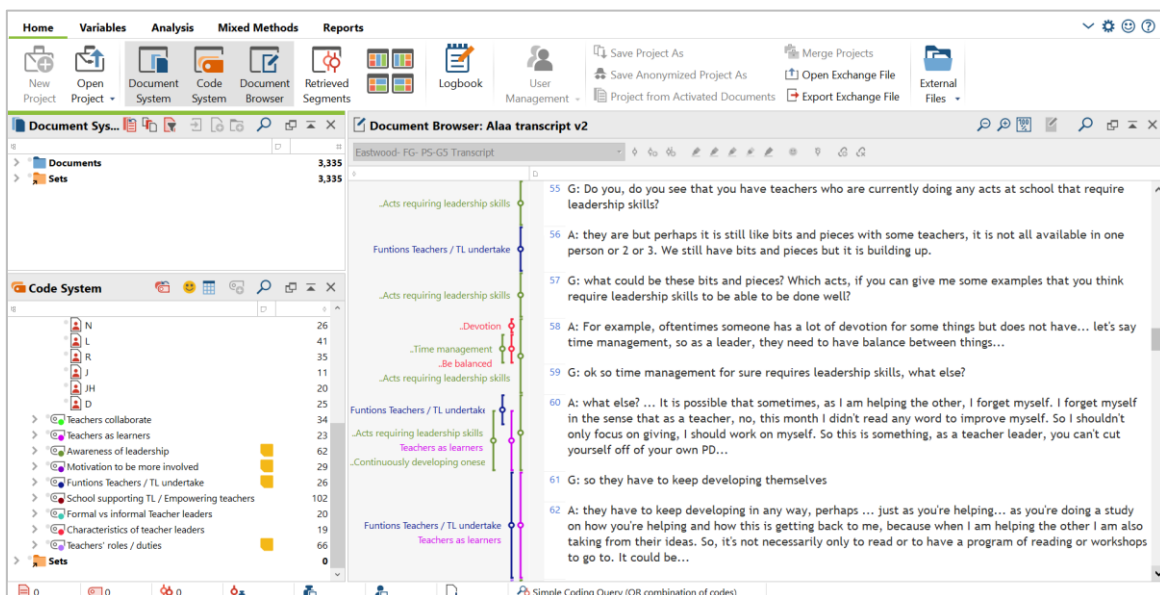


Figure G.2. Coding procedure showing the main categories in the coding system developed.

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