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PERCEPTIONS OF TEACHERS OF THE FACTORS

CONTRIBUTING TO AN EQUITABLE SCHOOL CULTURE:

THE CASE OF A PRIVATE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL IN

LEBANON

By

DANIA MAALIKI

A thesis
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for the degree of Master of Arts
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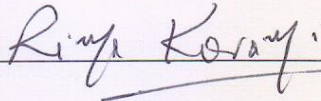
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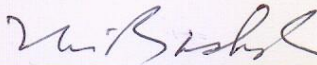
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All teachers who agreed to be interviewed for the study: I am forever grateful for the time you have given me from your very busy lives. Most importantly, thank you for your trust, it meant the world to me. Thank you for believing in me, for giving me hope and supporting me in my mission.

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Most importantly, my family: Mom, without you, I could have never dreamed of being able to pursue my Master's degree at AUB, not to say being able to produce this special paper. You encouraged me, you pushed me, and you made it all come true... Forever grateful… I love you so much. My husband, my partner, my friend, thank you for your unconditional continuous support and belief in my potential. Thank you for your magical encouragement when I would lose sight of the aim and the hope, for your solid push when I would be close to giving up, for your understanding when I would be at my worse stressful states… Thank you and the kids for your patience and for bearing with my lack of presence so I could work for my courses, for my exams, for my thesis… on top of my full-time job demands! I am forever grateful and I love you all so very much!

This paper is dedicated to your soul Dad. I wish you could attend my diploma ceremony; I know you would have been so proud. In some way, I am here because of you too, because you gave academics such high importance, and you always fought and insisted that your three girls pursued higher education studies and obtained their diplomas. This Master's diploma is for you Dad. May God rest your soul in peace.

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Dania Maaliki   for   Master of Arts
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Title: Perceptions of teachers of the factors contributing to an equitable school culture: the case of a private international school in Lebanon

This exploratory and descriptive study explored the perceptions of teachers of an equitable school culture in a private international Lebanese school with local and expatriate teachers. It aimed to gauge teachers' perceptions: (1) of an equitable school culture; (2) of the challenges faced by their school in establishing an equitable school culture; (3) of the required organizational conditions for ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture. The main data collection tool was individual interviews with teachers. The other tools employed for a triangulation of the data were the researcher journal and memo writing, focus groups interviews, and relevant school documents. The findings of the study were discussed in light of the literature review. The results of the study indicated that respondents understand what the characteristics of an equitable school culture in a diverse setting are. The results also indicated that the school culture is balkanized and inequitable due to the leadership team's reluctance to address the lack of equity openly, and its lack of preparation for leading an equitable school culture. The required conditions to ensure an equitable school culture were derived from the empirical results, and implications for practice and recommendations for further research were suggested.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the Middle East region of the World, there is a large number of students who attend private schools (Yaacoub & Badre, 2012) and a considerable percentage of these schools are either international or adopt an international program. These international schools employ local and expatriate teachers and leaders. From the literature review, it came to light that tensions are bound to exist between any sub-cultures (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Lumby, 2012) so it is likely that these schools might be facing the challenge of an inequitable school culture and thus an unhealthy school climate (Atkinson, 2013; Firestone & Louis, 1999). The literature is copious in studies that describe the large impact of leadership on school climate which in turns impacts teacher satisfaction and thus effects student achievement

(Boyd, Grossman, Ing, Lankford, Loeb, & Wyckoff, 2011; Goleman, 2014; Greenfield, 2004; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi, 2010; Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999; Pollard, 2012; Price, 2012). Many researchers have studied the characteristics of school leaders required in building a healthy school climate, and more specifically an equitable school culture in a diverse setting, yet this was done in relation to the diversity of the student body in particular. A very limited number of studies addressed the role of leaders in building an equitable school climate in relation to a diverse teacher population, especially in the Middle East region. In order to contribute to the knowledge production in the field of Educational Leadership, and in order to impact the practices and policies of leaders in Lebanese schools which hire local and expatriate teachers, this study gauged the perceptions of teachers of the role that leaders should play in building an equitable school climate in such a setting.

Purpose and Statement of the Problem

The research has linked student achievement to the effectiveness of school leaders and a positive school climate. Many researchers have studied the characteristics of school leaders required in building an equitable school culture in relation to the diversity of the student body, yet a very limited number of studies addressed the role of leaders in building an equitable school culture in relation to a diverse teacher population, especially in the Middle East region of the World. This particular importance comes from the fact that in this region, there is a large number of students who attend private schools (Yaacoub & Badre, 2012) and a considerable percentage of these schools are either international or adopt an international program. These international schools employ local and expatriate teachers and leaders. From the literature review, challenges in relation to staff diversity in international schools seem to be an un-tackled area by researchers, yet the literature reveals that tensions are bound to exist between any sub-cultures (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Lumby, 2012). This is especially true since it is common to find that expatriate hires receive different benefits, like coverage of housing and related expenses, as mentioned in the school website housing policy, and especially if leaders lack the skills to deal with diversity. As a result of this gap in the literature, and because of the prominent position of international schools in the Middle East, the researcher has explored the challenges in international schools in Lebanon that have both local and expatriate academic and administrative staff. With leaders possibly tending to be expatriates (Slough-Kuss, 2014), it is likely that this school might be facing the challenge of an inequitable school culture and thus an unhealthy school climate (Atkinson, 2013; Firestone & Louis, 1999). The literature has proven the effect that school leaders can have on school climate (Boyd et al., 2011; Goleman, 2014; Greenfield, 2004; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999; Pollard, 2012; Price, 2012). The specific

purpose of this study is thus to investigate the perceptions of teachers of the role that leaders play in climate and culture building in Lebanese schools that have local and expatriate teachers, and of the characteristics of leaders that are needed for the successful building of a positive and equitable school climate and culture in such a context.

Rationale

The literature is copious in studies that describe the large impact of leadership on school climate which in turns impacts teacher satisfaction which thus effects student achievement (Boyd et al., 2011, Goleman, 2014, Greenfield, 2004, Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013, Leithwood et al., 2010, Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999, Pollard, 2012, Price, 2012). Moreover, many of these studies and reviews suggest characteristics of leaders required to establish an effective school climate and culture such as: being knowledgeable (Bolman & Deal, 1993), being strong and skillful to face problems (Flessa, 2009; Fullan, 1996), being caring, and developing communication and collaborative relationships with teachers (Blase, 1993; Hulpia & Devos, 2010; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010).

On the other hand, some studies also help create an understanding of the reasons why challenges exist in schools with diverse populations. These include the tensions that can exist between sub-cultures (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Lumby, 2012), the lack of preparation of leaders to deal with differences in national cultures (Caffyn, 2010; Hofstede, 1980; Scott & Rarieya, 2011; Walker, Haiyan, & Shuangye, 2007) and the assumption that leadership concepts are transferable from one culture to another (Dimmock & Walker, 2000; Greenfield, 2004; Lowe, 2003).

The literature also provides a large number of studies on the role of leaders in creating a healthy school culture in a diverse setting, and more particularly on the

required characteristics of leaders in such a setting, like knowing the other cultures in their schools (Hofstede, 1980; Walker et al., 2007), valuing diversity (Walker et al., 2007; Webber & Lupart, 2011) and actively working on injustices (Hunter & Greenfield, 2014; Ryan, 2006; Ryan, 2010; Theoharis, 2007; Walker et al., 2007; Webber & Lupart, 2011). Some studies suggest models of effective leaders for an equitable school culture: the transformational leadership (Atkinson, 2013; Avolio, 1999), the ethical leadership (Avolio, 1999; Resick, Hargis, Shao & Dust, 2013), the moral leadership (Greenfield, 2004), the inclusive leadership (Coleman, 2012) and the facilitative leadership (Firestone & Louis, 1999).

However, the literature review revealed that there are a very limited number of studies providing data about challenges in schools with national and expatriate teachers, and almost none in international schools in the region. Most studies that dealt with diversity were focused on race and students in the United States (Bosu, Dachi, & Fertig, 2011; DiMartino & Miles, 2005; Hanushek & Luque, 2003; Ryan, 2006; Ryan, 2010). Challenges in relation to staff diversity in international schools seem to be an un-tackled area by researchers, and as such, provide a fertile ground for empirical exploration, especially since the literature links leadership to school climate to teacher satisfaction to student achievement (Boyd et al., 2011; Goleman, 2014; Greenfield, 2004; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999; Pollard, 2012; Price, 2012). Studies on the impact of differentiated treatment on teachers and on school climate, and on the role of leaders in building a more equitable school culture in such a context seem to be limited in the international and regional literature. The only study found that looked into the micropolitics of a school with local and expatriate staff was conducted by Caffyn (2010) and it focused on the challenges that arise due to diversity in two international schools in Northern

Europe. Moreover, this research found that Anglo-Saxon leaders have very little connection with, knowledge of and understanding of the local culture, in addition to a short-term commitment to the school (Caffyn, 2010).

This highlights the need for scholars to study the challenges faced in this regard in international schools, namely in the Middle East. In addition, it is important to solicit teachers' perspectives since as Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) propose, in order to assess the effectiveness of leaders, it is best to gauge the perceptions of the persons who work with them. Moreover, exploring the emic perspective - which is soliciting participants' viewpoint about the phenomenon under study (Gall, Gall, & Borge, 2010) - is crucial in particular because as demonstrated, leaders have a large role in creating a healthy school culture, and a healthy school culture means a satisfied group of teachers and thus improved student achievement. Qualitative research is founded on "interpretivism" in which "reality is constructed by the individuals who participate in it" and it aims "to discover the nature of the meanings associated with social phenomena" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 274). Consequently, this study employs a qualitative methodology to investigate the perceptions of teachers of the role that leaders play in climate and culture building in a Lebanese school that has local and expatriate teachers, and of the characteristics of leaders that are needed for the successful building of a positive and equitable school culture in such a context. As Leech and Fulton (2002) propose, gauging teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership behaviors is likely to equip "present and future principals with the tools to create a school climate conducive to improving students' achievement" (Leech & Fulton, 2002, p. 4).

Research Questions

Specifically, and in order to achieve the purpose of the study, the research questions are:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of an equitable school culture in the context of international schools in Lebanon?

2. What are the teachers' perceptions of the challenges faced by schools while establishing an equitable school culture in a diverse context?

3. What are the teachers' perceptions of the required organizational conditions for ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture within such a diverse context?

Significance

This study has implications to both theory and practice. Firstly, due to this identified gap in the literature, this study should contribute to the building of a knowledge database in this area, filling up the gap, as well as encouraging future research on the topic. In addition, the purpose of studies such as this one should be to inform Lebanese schools with diverse teacher populations about the leadership characteristics and practices that are needed to build an equitable school culture in the hope to have leaders become more effective in increasing the level of satisfaction among their diverse staff. Moreover, such studies should encourage leaders in the Middle East - where a large majority of students attend private schools and where international schools are perceived to be the best of these private schools - to review their practices and employee policies in their schools in order to address issues of diversity, equity and justice.

Finally, such studies could lead to the establishment of laws at the national level that would actively monitor the policies followed by international schools to impede them from discriminatory practices. Achieving that would

require specific mandates for leadership preparation, such as being trained to

lead effectively in settings where local and expatriate subcultures of teachers

coexist.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies clearly demonstrate the effect of principals on school climate which in turn affects teachers which in turn affects student learning and achievement (Boyd et al., 2011; Goleman, 2014; Greenfield, 2004; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999; Pollard, 2012; Price, 2012). In order to provide a context and framework for the data that is collected in this study, a review of the literature was performed to address the following questions:

1. What is the definition of "school culture" and "school climate"? What are characteristics of a healthy school culture?

2. What is the meaning of social equity and justice in a school setting? What is the role of leaders in maintaining social justice in a diverse school setting?

3. What are the required characteristics of leaders for a healthy and equitable school culture in a diverse and multi-cultural environment, namely one in which teachers come from different cultures?

4. What are factors that can threaten a healthy school culture?

School Culture and Climate in the Literature

The exploration of the literature helped in clarifying the meaning of culture, its overlap with climate and what the characteristics of healthy school cultures are. These findings are presented in this section of the literature review.

The Meaning of School Culture and its Overlap with Climate Concepts

In looking up studies that attempt to define culture, it became clear that different researchers define school culture in different ways and struggle to

accurately differentiate between school culture and climate. Culture is the "way we do things around here" according to Kaplan and Owings (2013, p. 4) in agreement with Bolman and Deal (2008) as well as Petersen and Deal (1998) who state that culture is a very important feature of any school but is often taken for granted. It affects all that is happening in school (Peterson & Deal, 1998). It is the set of lasting beliefs and values according to Dimmock and Walker (2000). Kaplan and Owings (2013) and Petersen and Deal (1998) see culture to be a set of "values, assumptions, norms, actions, stable, long-term beliefs and practices about what organization members think is important" (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 4). Kaplan and Owings (2013) as well as Gruenert (2008) and Petersen and Deal (1998) agree that these are difficult to change and they dictate how all members of an organization will behave, relate to others, and think about the organization and their roles in it. Goldring (2002) adds that school culture is an often hidden structure that brings together all members of the school in shared beliefs, values, discussions and behaviors that are also taught. Lumby (2012) concludes that culture is the key force that shapes organizations' functioning.

On the other hand, Firestone and Louis (1999) found that culture and climate concepts are very closely linked. Van Houtte (2005) states that school climate and school culture both describe the character of the school. Denison (1996) also notes that it is not easy to clearly separate climate from culture. In parallel, Gruenert (2008) acknowledges that culture and climate share many characteristics and that many school administrators interchangeably refer to climate and culture as being the same. However, he points to the fact that culture influences climate and he highlights their differences: school climate is the

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"attitude of an organization", its "collective mood, or morale of a group of people" while culture is the "personality of the organization", the "common set of expectations" or the "unwritten rules" (Gruenert, 2008, p. 57-59), a definition that Whitaker, Whitaker, and Lumpa (2000) rather attribute to school climate confirming how blurry the differentiation between these two concepts is.

Because climate and culture definitions seem to coalesce in many aspects, for the purpose of this study, the terms culture and climate will be used complimentarily as the climate of a school seems to be nested in its culture and be influenced by it. Indeed, Gruenert (2008) mentions that if school leaders want to improve the culture of the school, they should look into aspects of its climate that make the culture unhealthy and act upon them.

Characteristics of a Healthy School Culture

But what is a healthy school culture? It is important to explore the literature in terms of characteristics of healthy school cultures since as Gruenert (2008) states, climate has an effect on teacher's happiness which affects the quality of instruction. In fact, Greenfield (2004), Guramatunhu-Mudiwa and Scherz (2013), and Price (2012) derived from the literature findings that link student learning and development to teacher satisfaction which in turn is directly related to positive school climates. The reviewed literature included few empirical studies that established the relationship with evidence, and the rest are theoretical publications yet to be examined empirically. The findings are summarized in this section.

Kaplan and Owings (2013) and Peterson and Deal (1998) postulate that positive school cultures are characterized by a strong support to hard work and achievement (Kaplan & Owings, 2013) through an inspiring vision and leadership, high expectations, encouragement of innovation and risk-taking, data based decision making, trust,

honesty, open communication, support and recognition (Kaplan & Owings, 2013). Waters, Marzano and McNulty (2004) and Peterson and Deal (1998) suggest a link between school cultures that focus on purpose, improvement, uniting events, and student learning and achievement. In that line of thought, Brown (2004) and Peterson and Deal (1998) emphasize that for a school culture to be productive, it must target high student achievement through challenging missions and curricula, data-driven decisions, and must have leadership that encourages supportive, trusting and close relationships as such creating a unified community (Bryk, Lee & Holland, 1993). Peterson and Deal (1998) describe a healthy school culture as one in which success, happiness, and humor prevail. McLaughin (2001) and Peterson and Deal (1998) add that a school culture of excellence is one in which learning is the focus, in which collaborative, committed and passionate interactions between teachers is fostered, and in which leaders respect diverging opinions (Fullan, 2001).

In exploring the studies that target school climate and culture, and in reviewing the findings above, it is clear that schools with a healthy school culture have in common effective leaders. In fact, all authors above refer to varied factors like collaboration or unified targets, but all refer to one common factor which is effective leadership. Indeed, Leithwood et al., (2010), Peterson and Deal (1998), Price (2012), and Schein (2011) indicate that principals are main influencers of school culture. "Without the attention of leaders, school cultures can become toxic and unproductive" (Peterson & Deal, 1998, p. 31). It is thus pertinent to further explore the literature more specifically for the relationship between school leadership and school culture, namely in relation to social equity in a diverse setting like international schools which hire local and expatriate teachers. Indeed, Lumby (2012) emphasizes that since cultures can create divisions in schools, leaders must give it a considerable attention if they want to maintain social

justice. But what is social justice and what skills should leaders be equipped with to maintain it in schools?

Social Justice and Equity in International Schools

The concepts of social justice and equity were explored especially in relation to diverse school settings like international schools. Studies that describe the role and required characteristics of leaders in maintaining social justice in schools were targeted, and the findings are presented below.

The Meaning of Social Justice and Equity in the Literature

According to the *Business Dictionary online* (*http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/equity.html*), equity is "fairness and impartiality towards all concerned, based on the principles of evenhanded dealing" and it "implies giving as much advantage, consideration, or latitude to one party as it is given to another" (Equity, n.d., para.1). Synonyms of equity according to *The Free Dictionary online* (*http://www.freethesaurus.com/equity*) include fairness and justice, but different scholarly resources define social justice in many different ways. North (2006) refers to social justice as a concrete effort to treat all persons in a school with fairness and respect and with equal access to resources and benefits. Zajda, Majhanovich and Rust (2006) state that social justice can be achieved when there is an effort to alter the elements of social and organizational power or to promote self-governance and self-determination in the current state of affairs of the school. Miranda, Radliff, Cooper and Eschenbrenner (2014) propose that one way to achieve social justice in a school setting is through training in order to ensure that cultural diversity is well lived. In fact, Shriberg, Bonner, Sarr,

Walker, Hyland and Chester (2008) and Vera and Speight (2003) saw that cultural diversity and social justice were interlinked.

The Role of Leaders in Maintaining Social Justice and Equity in International Schools

As previously stated, Lumby (2012) emphasizes that since cultures can create divisions in schools, leaders must give this a considerable attention if they want to maintain social justice. This gains additional importance in international schools which consist of sub-cultures of teachers based on nationality or hiring. Divisions are therefore possible, and leaders have a major role in ensuring social justice for an improved teacher satisfaction, thus a healthier school culture - as demonstrated in the previous sections of this chapter.

But how can leaders in international schools with local and expatriate teachers achieve social justice? When searching the literature for equitable school culture studies, numerous studies were found which addressed equity from the perspective of student race or gender or social status (Bosu et al., 2011, DiMartino & Miles, 2005, Hanushek & Luque, 2003, Ryan, 2006, Ryan, 2010) but only a very limited amount of studies were found which addressed equity from the perspective of subcultures based on national belonging of teachers in international schools, and none in the Middle East. This region is of particular importance since there is a large number of students who attend private schools and a considerable percentage of these schools are either international or adopt an international program. These international schools employ local and expatriate teachers and leaders. Indeed, Slough-Kuss (2014) found that there is dominance of Western school leaders in international schools and highlights discrimination in the hiring of Heads of Schools at the level of the recruiting agencies.

Moreover, it is common to find that expatriate hires receive different benefits, like coverage of housing and related expenses as found stated in the school website housing policy. Similarly, in exploring the regional literature through the Shamaa Arabic database, the Arab Educational Information Network (www.shamaa.org), many studies on leadership were found, but these mainly describe the role or styles of leaders in schools (Akkary & Greenfield,1998; Hajal-Chibani, 2010; Wazen, 2007) or their preferred leadership styles (Yehia, 2009) or the perspective of teachers on effective leadership. Some studies even explored the link between leadership styles and teachers' job satisfaction (Al-Omari, 2008) or the competencies of leaders required in universities in order to face the challenges of internationalization (Al-Omari, 2008). However, no researcher explored the effectiveness of leadership for an equitable school culture in an international or multicultural setting with local and expatriate teachers, which is the focus of this paper. Due to this gap, the focus of the literature review was geared to studies that provide general characteristics and models of leadership that can help create a healthier and more equitable school culture in the larger sense. The findings are included in the next sections.

Characteristics of Leaders for a Healthy School Culture

Since leaders can affect school climates and cultures, it is imperative to explore what the literature provides in terms of characteristics of leaders that allow for the development of healthy school cultures. Whitaker et al. (2000) confirm that school climate can impact the success of a school, and they derive from their study the characteristics of leaders in schools with a positive climate. These leaders tend to take responsibility for the climate of the school, to be visible, to care about teachers' lives and also about their professional strengths and needs, to communicate often with teachers, to meet with them to discuss issues of concern, to help them develop

professionally where there is a gap, and to be role-models for teachers (Whitaker et al., 2000).

Effective Leaders Should be Experts and Know Their Schools Well

Peterson and Deal (1998) state that leaders should deeply know their school culture and history before they attempt to change it by identifying what is destructive to student achievement and celebrating what is positive. The authors also state that effective leaders maintain the school traditions that are positive. Bolman and Deal (1993) suggest that a leader should become aware of all that happens in a school and highlights that the focus of the training of leaders is usually on problem solving and decision-making, rather than on "problem-finding and making sense of complex and shifting human dynamics" (Bolman & Deal, 1993, p. 21). So, to be effective in building a healthy climate, leaders need to be astute in managing the micropolitics of their school. This parallels Flessa's study (2009) in which he cautions leaders to not ignore or not work on eliminating micropolitics in schools because in doing so, they end up missing issues related to school unfairness or inequity. Instead, Flessa encourages leaders to become experts at looking for injustices in all places where decision making is involved and "the concerns that motivate people to join together in support or opposition of school initiatives" so as to minimize inequities and to give a voice to "previously powerless groups" (Flessa, 2009, p. 346). Alternatively, Fullan (1996) states that strong leaders are needed to overcome challenges and transform schools.

Effective Leaders Should Build Strong Relationships with Teachers

Roby's empirical study (2010) which analyzed teachers' assessment of their school cultures in different areas of the U.S. confirms that a positive school culture is one in which there is trust between teachers and administrators. Price (2012) gathers that teacher attitudes and commitment levels are directly linked to a positive trusting

relationship with leaders. He found that it is by developing trust, cooperation and collaboration that leaders can implement school improvement ideas and lead schools effectively to success. Indeed, in his study, Blase (1993) found that effective principals were perceived to be diplomatic and problem-solvers. The teachers believed that these open and effective principals target teacher satisfaction, teacher well-being and school climate (p. 155). Teachers mentioned that the strategies used by these principals positively impacted teachers (Blase, 1993). Boyd et al. (2011) refer to the evidenced effect of principals on climate through motivating teachers and students, identifying and articulating vision and goals, developing high performance expectations, fostering communication, allocating resources, and developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning.

Moreover, in their empirical study in which teachers were interviewed for leadership practices that influenced teacher commitment, Hulpia and Devos (2010) demonstrated that leaders who practiced distributive, participative, collaborative and cooperative approaches impacted teachers' organizational commitment positively. Leaders were easy to approach and good problem solvers, and involved teachers (Hulpia & Devos, 2010). They added that these leaders "had the knowledge, competences, and the social skills to solve problems and to lead the school effectively" (Hulpia & Devos, 2010, p. 1).

From a different angle, Guramatunhu-Mudiwa and Scherz (2013) propose ideas for leaders in schools where budget is tight (and in which salaries or benefits cannot be increased) to develop an affective bond with teachers (or invisible job rewards). These would yield teachers motivation, dedication, engagement, and would minimize teacher turn over, regardless of salaries. To develop affective outcomes, Guramatunhu-Mudiwa and Scherz (2013) found that leaders must work on building relational trust

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characterized by respect, competence, personal regard for others, and integrity (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013). In addition, the authors found that leaders must have the following qualities: caring, supportiveness, warmth, gentleness, nurturing, friendliness, collaboration, cooperation, empowerment, inspiring others and relationship-building (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013). The authors also found that leaders must exhibit excitement and passion for the organization, positively encourage teachers to get involved and provide positive reinforcement (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013). Meanwhile, Lumby (2012) concludes that leaders must focus on the richness created by the different cultures in the organization as a mean to enhance collaboration and build collaborative relations.

Effective Leaders Should be Caring

Leithwood et al. (2010) conclude that effective leaders are respectful of staff and caring. They have "an open door policy" and "value staff opinions" (p. 677). They also point to the evidence that effective leaders show care by being friendly and supportive with teachers, and noted that those leaders work hard to identify the need of their staff members and cater to them while staying aligned with shared school vision (Leithwood et al., 2010). Leithwood et al. (2010) explain that in order to be caring, leaders should be supportive and not directive, and should adopt a distributive orientation (Leithwood et al., 2010). Similarly, Price (2012) found that teacher commitment was highly affected by leaders' support and encouragement. Pollard (2014) mentions that good leaders are servant leaders who, among other characteristics, are more likely to put their own well-being after that of others and the organization by ensuring that the needs of others are being addressed for the growth of the institution (Pollard, 2014). She refers to the study she made and in which she found that in the companies who hired such leaders, there was less turnover and more staff engagement (Pollard, 2014). To further highlight how

leaders can affect school cultures, Pollard (2014) refers to the effects of poor leadership on employees, demonstrating the direct link between leadership and employee health and attitude which affect school climates. Pollard (2014) mentions that the chance of heart attacks or disease in employees who work in companies with managers who are not caring increases. She adds that working with managers whose behavior increases anxiety feelings and decreases safety feelings has a detrimental effect on the immune system and leads to stress and poor relationships among employees (Pollard, 2014). In contrast, Price (2012) concluded that teachers were happier, healthier and more committed to their jobs when the relationships between workers were positive. Peterson and Deal (1998) suggest that effective leaders are ones that give recognition to teachers and staff that work hard.

Moreover, in their study of schools, Boyd et al. (2011) found that the lack of support from administrators resulted in high turnover among teachers and low job satisfaction. Kraft, Marinell, and Yee (2015) state that teachers' retention as well as their efforts to improve student achievement are affected by several factors including supportive administrators. Goleman (2014) describes two leaders' styles that influence organizational climate negatively: the command-control leader (do it because I say so) and the "pace setter" leaders (do it the way I do). The author argues that these approaches don't take into consideration others' feelings and creates in employees feelings of disrespect and disappointment (Goleman, 2014) showing again how leaders can affect the climate of the school.

Characteristics of Leaders for an Equitable School Culture

While the above listed characteristics seem to improve school culture in general, the literature also informs that for an equitable and thus healthy school culture in a diverse setting like international schools, leaders must have

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additional skills, namely cross-cultural literacy and knowledge, and willingness

to value diversity and to act on social injustices. The reviewed literature

included few empirical studies that established the relationship with evidence,

and the rest are theoretical publications yet to be examined empirically.

Cross-Cultural Literacy

Hofstede (1980) suggests that leaders who have assignments abroad must gain a

thorough familiarization with the other culture to lead successfully. Indeed, Webber and

Lupart (2011) state that leaders should have "the cross-cultural literacy" and

interpersonal skills that are essential in dealing with the complexities and differences of

an intercultural learning setting (Webber & Lupart, 2011, p. 15). In addition, Walker et

al. (2007) argue that "moral literacy is important to school leaders" in multicultural

schools in order to improve the culture by being engaged and aware, "even if values,

expectations, and traditions diverge" (p. 382).

Valuing Diversity

Webber and Lupart (2011) argue that "intercultural inclusive educational

communities require leaders who […] recognize and value diversity" (Webber &

Lupart, 2011, p. 15). Walker et al. (2007) state that although difficult, leaders must

"walk in the shoes of their communities as a way of empathizing and appreciating

where they are coming from", and must move "beyond the coping with diversity

mentality to positively working with and in diversity" (Walker et al., 2007, p. 389).

Lumby (2012) concludes that leaders must focus on the richness created by the different

cultures in the organization.

Willingness to Act on Social Injustices

Webber and Lupart (2011) argue that in multicultural schools, leaders should be

creative in actively enacting social justice in their schools. Likewise, Theoharis (2007)

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argues that good leadership is social justice leadership, one which enhances and actively

ensures the respect of "equity, equality and fairness in social, economic, educational,

and personal dimensions" (Theoharis, 2007, p. 223). This is echoed by Atkinson (2013)

as well who defends that effective leadership is one that deals with issues such as

"diversity, inclusion and equity" (Atkinson, 2013, p. 3) and welcomes change to a more

equitable school. Hunter and Greenfield (2014) recommend that schools should train

leaders "to observe, critically reflect, and act strategically to move schools toward more

equitable and inclusive practices" (Hunter & Greenfield, 2014, p. 33). They advocate

that schools should hire leaders who are intentionally active in wanting to make schools

more equitable and inclusive by addressing injustice practices and by having good

interpersonal relationships with teachers (Hunter & Greenfield, 2014). Especially in

diverse settings, leaders must be trained to self-reflect on their attitudes and beliefs in

order "to overcome personal biases and change established behaviors which proliferate

less successful interactions and practices" (Scott & Rarieya, 2011, p. 78). Scott and

Rarieya (2011) advanced that in intercultural schools, leaders must be active in

searching for the social injustices, must be on-going learners and inquirers in relation to

cultures and injustices, must role-model respect of differences and implementing

changes to practices as needed (Walker et al., 2007). Leaders in such schools must

develop the skills of "listening with respect, striving for knowing, understanding others,

communicating effectively, and working in teams, engaging in dialogue and creating

forums so that all voices are heard" (Walker et al., 2007, p. 394). Most importantly,

leaders must have the courage to ask questions, even if these address taboos or issues of

culture and diversity, and to act to change things to the better, like teacher recruitment

which should be made with social justice values in mind according to Van Houtte

(2005). Ryan (2006) goes beyond a simple application of principles that "should

promote everyone's interests—not just those of management or of dominant groups" (p. 13) to the act of "searching out, understanding, critiquing, and doing something about injustices" by the leaders that he describes as the inclusive ones (Ryan, 2006, p. 4). In his view, social justice can be established with intentionally addressing of inequalities and by making sure to include all who are usually not taken into consideration (Ryan, 2006). He maintains that leaders should use political skills (Ryan, 2010) and open reflective dialogs so that people learn together about, reflect and work on the injustices, since, as he states, stakeholders in diverse settings are not knowledgeable about others and are not well prepared to deal with diversity and inclusion. He states that for that, leaders should even encourage a decision and policy making process that addresses inclusion (Ryan, 2006). The author adds that in such dialogues, dominant groups should try to create a safe listening environment so that other groups can speak freely.

Leadership Models for a Healthy and Equitable School Culture

While reviewing the literature for the required leadership characteristics to enact social justice in schools, several models of leadership that encapsulate the required characteristics were found. These are the transformational leadership, the ethical leadership, the moral leadership, the inclusive leadership, and the facilitative leadership. The studies that are included in this section are ones that described the proposed models in light of effective leadership for an equitable school culture only, and not of effective leadership in the more comprehensive sense. Many of these models are still theoretical and still need empirical evidence to be validated.

Transformational Leadership

According to the *Business Dictionary online* (*http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/transformational-leadership.html*),

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transformational leadership is a "style of leadership in which the leader identifies the needed change, creates a vision to guide the change through inspiration, and executes the change with the commitment of the members of the group." Stewart (2006) states that "transformational leaders focus on restructuring the school by improving school conditions". Avolio (1999) discusses transformational leadership and suggests that transformational leaders "can be counted on to do the right thing" and have "high standards of ethical and moral conduct" (Avolio, 1999, p. 43). Atkinson (2013) adds that transformational leaders are supportive and respectful of differences, build trust, motivation and commitment in their employees by remaining focused on the school vision and mission (Atkinson, 2013).

Ethical Leadership

Ethical leadership involves not only fairness in how people are treated but also active principled decision-making (Avolio, 1999). Resick, Hargis, Shao, and Dust (2013) derive from their studies that ethical leaders are not only role models in appropriate conduct but are also active in making sure there is clarity in what is appropriate or not. They propose that leaders must be hired and trained with ethical considerations in mind in terms of their awareness, actions, and active involvement of employees (Resick et al., 2013).

Moral Leadership

In his study, Greenfield (2004) states that a leader must be a moral agent who will make decisions based on principles that serve all human beings, and are to be applied by all, including him.

Inclusive Leadership

In his study, Coleman (2012) concludes that in schools with a diverse population, leadership must be ethical, equitable and inclusive, and emphasize the

importance of "valuing difference rather than trying to eliminate it" (p. 605).

Researchers agree that this is achieved by including everyone in the decision making

and allocation of resources towards a common goal and shared values, enhancing

teacher commitment and satisfaction (Atkinson, 2013).

Facilitative Leadership

Blase (1997) describes facilitative leadership as one that facilitates cooperative

and consensual-based approaches to empower others and share responsibility and

authority. Conflicts are avoided. Firestone and Louis (1999) see that an amalgam of

transformational (changes school culture for high performance) and facilitative (tactics

and team building skills) leadership is needed to deal with tensions and ensure a unified

school culture. They add that inclusive and distributed leadership could be helpful too

since teachers contribute to shaping the school culture.

While these models are distinct, Atkinson (2013) argues that one model might

not be enough to lead effectively, but rather a combination of many approaches,

depending on the context of each school.

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Factors that Threaten the Healthy School Culture

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If leaders have such a great impact on school cultures, it is important for

them not only possess the skills for leading an equitable school culture, but also

of the factors that can threaten the development of a healthy culture to avoid

them. This is crucial since a strong and positive culture can "direct all efforts

toward a desired common goal" (Kaplan & Owings, 2013, p. 6). In looking up

studies in the literature, it appears that these threatening factors can be grouped

up as follows: (1) the assumption that leadership concepts are transferable from

one culture to another, (2) the existence of sub-cultures and the tensions

between them, and (3) the lack of preparation of leaders to deal with differences

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in national cultures and their impact on organizational culture and leadership.

The findings are expanded upon in this section of the review.

The Assumption that Leadership Practices Are Transferable from One Culture to Another

Dimmock and Walker (2000) discuss that societal and cultural sensitivities are often disregarded in the study of school leadership, and that some leadership practices or educational policies might not necessarily work, because they were created in a given culture, predominantly the Anglo-American one, and adopted to be used in different cultures with no consideration given to the cultural fit and the cultural differences in reacting to different leadership practices and styles (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). Wee Pin Goh (2009) adds that the "transferability of educational leadership theories, policies and practices should be culturally contextual or sensitive" (p. 339).

On a similar note, Greenfield (2004) analyzed that leaders face challenges when there is a lack of fit between their personal and socio-cultural values and those of the people they work with, leading to conflict and failure. He refers to the literature that urges scholars to consider other views of school leadership, beyond the Anglo-American, English-speaking, and Western ones "that can begin to capture the different ways in which societal cultures shape leadership and schooling practices" (Greenfield, 2004, p. 180). As an example, Lowe (2003) argues that Anglo-Saxon and Chinese leadership concepts and practices are in essence very different. The former are based on the concept of democratic procedures while the latter are still more autocratic and accept contradictions that are seen as a norm (Lowe, 2003). In his review, Dickson (2003) also mentions some studies which highlight American biases in cross-cultural leadership research. In these, the focus is placed on teaching that

Western leadership values are the most important while other leadership values are indirectly seen as non-important since not included (Dickson, 2003). It is important for researchers to study the validity of assuming (Hallinger, 1995). Indeed, throughout his article, Hallinger (1995) is making a call for a critical adoption of theories and policies created in the Western world in other parts of the world, arguing against the assumption that uncritical transfer of knowledge across cultures does not work for these cultures are very different. This is particularly well illustrated as Hofstede (2011) empirically describes nations' cultures according to four criteria: power distance, uncertainty avoidance, individualism-collectivism, and masculinity-feminism. He shows how based on these descriptions, members of different national cultures would perceive and react to leadership differently, and would have varying expectations of it. He argues however that the U.S. has developed leadership and management theories that are used around the world. He questions the applicability of these theories to different countries and explains how leadership approaches cannot be accepted equally in all cultures: what is right and OK in one country might not be OK in another country (Hofstede, 1980). He extends this concept to sub-cultures within a nation, and more importantly, to policy-making which, if not compatible, could affect employee morale and motivation.

Tensions Between Sub-Cultures

In any organization, there seems to almost always be a dominant culture and several sub-cultures each with its own distinct characteristics (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Kaplan & Owings, 2013). Lumby (2012) stated that whenever it is the case in schools, the dominant culture will advantage one group and disadvantage others (Lumby, 2012). Firestone and Louis (1999) specify that the

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different school cultures can be based on race, urban status, socio-economic

status, or religious affiliation, and they further state that tensions between these

cultures can exist in schools. Through examples, they also show the different

expectations and behaviors of educators in different cultures. They mention that

these differences and tensions can hinder administrative efforts to build a

coherent and healthy climate. Powell and Kusuma-Powell (2013) further state

that cultural misunderstandings are frequent in international schools in which

cross-cultural knowledge and awareness are becoming a clear need.

This tension between national subcultures is well shown in Caffyn's study

(2010) of the micropolitics in two international curriculum schools in Northern Europe

that serve children of embassy personnel and local students. He found that in these two

international schools, the "expatriate communities can be very intense and closed" (p.

325) this often leading to tension between the expatriate and local subcultures. The

author also suggests that "location and history" in international schools are important

aspects that can help understand the micropolitics of the school and how conflicts can

generate from different "perceptions, emotions, goals, personality, group membership

and areas of interest" (Caffyn, 2010, p. 325). He refers to the fact that Canadian teachers

in the two schools live in the same block or building, creating an expatriate "subculture"

and friendship which focuses on "identity and protection in a diverse and sometimes

hostile environment" yet further helps in the "fragmentation" of the teachers (Caffyn,

2010, p. 335).

Lack of Preparation of Leaders to Deal with Differences in National Cultures

Slough-Kuss (2014) found that there is dominance of Western school leaders in

the international school market and highlights discrimination in the hiring of Heads of

Schools at the level of the recruiting agencies. This seems to have resulted in the fact

that in international schools, leaders will most probably be from a country that is not the local country. Walker et al. (2007) add that there are increasingly more persons acting as leaders in schools located in countries different from theirs, and that the task of these leaders can become complicated if their traditional socio-cultural orientations are different from those of students, parents, or teachers. These leaders can become confused "due to the interplay of the divergent cultural values, inequality of opportunity, and often, social disadvantage, carried by their students, teachers, and broader communities" (Walker et al., 2007, p. 381). Moreover, Caffyn (2010) points at the fact that the newly appointed Anglo-Saxon leaders have very little connection with, knowledge of and understanding of the local culture, in addition to a short-term commitment to the school. Hofstede (1980) concludes with a recommendation that managers need to receive good training re the culture of the countries they will work in. This is important if they want to lead effectively and create a healthy school culture, since this lack of knowledge can risk destabilizing the positive climate of the organization (Kaplan & Owings, 2013).

Pertinently, Hunter and Greenfield (2014) report that regardless of their cultural origin, most new principals lack the skills to figure out the normative dimensions or the political dimensions of a diverse school, and that this hindered their effectiveness in leading the school (Hunter & Greenfield, 2014). Similarly, Scott and Rarieya (2011), in their comparison of the professional development of school leaders in two diverse settings, one in Africa and one in Canada, found that leaders in both settings were ill-prepared to deal with the tensions arising from the complexity of the diversity in their schools. The preparation of these leaders did not encompass inclusive leadership skills development for example, or the development of skills required to living symbiotically

with diversity and making the best out of it to build a "tolerant" school culture (Scott & Rarieya, 2011, p. 78).

To conclude, tensions between subcultures seem to be inevitable in multicultural settings like international schools, and more pertinently between expat hires and local hires. The role of leaders who can impact school cultures becomes crucial. Studies found that leaders should be aware of this fact, as well as of needed skills to create and maintain a healthy school culture. They should be skilled at making the best of the cultural diversity prevailing in international schools and be particularly proactive in ensuring that not one subculture is advantaged over another so as not to fuel the feeling of inequity.

Conclusion

As seen in the literature review, many articles clearly demonstrate the effect of principals on school climate which in turn affects teachers which in turn affects student learning and achievement (Boyd et al., 2011; Goleman, 2014; Greenfield, 2004; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999; Pollard, 2012; Price, 2012). Moreover, many of these studies and reviews suggest characteristics of leaders required to establish an effective school climate and culture such as: being knowledgeable (Bolman & Deal, 1993), being strong and skillful to face problems (Flessa, 2009; Fullan, 1996), being caring, and developing communication and collaborative relationships with teachers (Blase, 1993; Hulpia & Devos, 2010; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010).

A very limited amount of studies provided data about challenges in schools with national and expatriate teachers, and almost none in international schools in the region. The only study that looked into the micropolitics of a school with local and expatriate staff, and the challenges that arise in such a context was the Caffyn (2010) study. Most

studies that dealt with diversity were focused on race and students in the United States (Bosu et al., 2011; DiMartino & Miles, 2005; Hanushek & Luque, 2003; Ryan, 2006; Ryan, 2010). Challenges in relation to staff diversity in international schools seem to be an un-tackled area by researchers. As a consequence, since it was found that leaders have a large role in creating a healthy equitable school culture, the focus was geared to the characteristics that some researchers gave of leaders who were effective in a diverse setting, like knowing the other cultures in their schools (Hofstede, 1980; Walker et al., 2007), valuing diversity (Walker et al., 2007; Webber & Lupart, 2011) and actively working on injustices (Hunter & Greenfield, 2014; Ryan, 2006; Ryan, 2010; Theoharis, 2007; Walker et al., 2007; Webber & Lupart, 2011). Leadership models for an equitable school culture were also derived: the transformational leadership (Atkinson, 2013; Avolio, 1999), the ethical leadership (Avolio, 1999; Resick et al., 2013), the moral leadership (Greenfield, 2004), the inclusive leadership (Coleman, 2012) and the facilitative leadership (Firestone & Louis, 1999).

The findings of the studies also helped create an understanding of the reasons why challenges exist in schools with diverse populations. These include the assumption that leadership concepts are transferable from one culture to another (Dimmock & Walker, 2000; Greenfield, 2004; Lowe, 2003), the tensions that can exist between sub-cultures (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Lumby, 2012), and the lack of preparation of leaders to deal with differences in national cultures (Caffyn, 2010; Hofstede, 1980; Scott & Rarieya, 2011; Walker et al., 2007).

Since this study focuses on the perceptions of teachers of the leaders' characteristics and of the role that leaders play in building an equitable and successful climate and culture in an international school that has local and expatriate teachers, the

literature review findings and their organization in the sections outlined above provide

the framework for the data collection and analysis.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Many researchers have studied the characteristics of school leaders required in building an equitable school culture in relation to the diversity of the student body, yet a very limited number of studies addressed the role of leaders in building an equitable school climate in relation to a culturally diverse teacher population, especially in the Middle East. The purpose of this study is thus to investigate the perceptions of teachers of the leaders' characteristics and of the role that leaders play in building an equitable and successful culture in Lebanese schools that have local and expatriate teachers.

Research Questions

To achieve the purpose of the investigation, this study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of an equitable school culture in the context of international schools in Lebanon?

2. What are teachers' perceptions of the challenges faced by schools while establishing an equitable school culture in a diverse context?

3. What are teachers' perceptions of the required organizational conditions for ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture within such a diverse context?

Research Design

This study follows an exploratory qualitative interpretive descriptive research design. It is a case study of a school in Lebanon which hires local and expat teachers. As in all case studies, there was purposeful selection of the school in that it is a school that hires local and expat teachers and in that it is accessible to the researcher. A case study design provides an extensive and

detailed description of the phenomenon by using various methods and sources of data (Gall et al., 2010; Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2009). Thus, this case study is an in-depth investigation in the selected school to develop an in-depth understanding (Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2009) of the role that leaders can play in shaping an equitable culture in Lebanese schools with local and expatriate teachers, from the perspective of teachers. The latter is important since as Jantzi and Leithwood (1996) propose, to assess the effectiveness of leaders, it is best to gauge the perceptions of the persons who work with them. With qualitative research and case studies, one can get more closely and meaningfully involved in the natural experiences of the participants and derive understandings from their perspectives (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Gall et al., 2010). This emic perspective which is the soliciting of participants' viewpoint about the phenomenon under study (Gall et al., 2010) is crucial because as the research demonstrated, leaders have a large role in creating a healthy school climate, and a healthy school climate means a satisfied group of teachers and thus improved student achievement (Boyd et al., 2011; Goleman, 2014; Greenfield, 2004; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010; Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999; Pollard, 2012; Price, 2012). Therefore, investigating teachers' perceptions of their principals' leadership could empower leaders to create a healthy school climate for improved student achievement (Leech & Fulton, 2002).

Research Methodology

The grounded theory provides the methodological framework and guided the data collection and data analysis. According to this theory, the meaning is grounded in the data, i.e., researchers create a developing theoretical

understanding through their collected data and the inferences that they make of the data (Charmaz, 2006; Gall et al., 2010; Lacey & Luff, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2009). Rather than testing a hypothesis set before starting the investigation, the researchers find relationships between created codes to discover the emerging concepts and categories while remaining aware of the context of the collected data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Exploratory and explanatory understanding is thus constructed from both the emic and etic perspectives giving voice and a central role to the respondents' views.

The main data sources were individual interviews and focus group interviews with teachers. The individual interviews were transcribed and then coded. Theoretical concepts and categories were created to capture the researcher emerging understanding and interpretation of the data through a constant comparison approach of emerging patterns, common themes, and recurrent instances to give meaning to the study findings through reflective analysis (Gall et al., 2010). In this study, constant comparison was continuously applied until theoretical saturation (no new emerging concepts) was reached.

Because this study involved interviewing people, IRB approval was obtained, as well as the school approval to conduct the interviews. For that, a meeting was set with the Head of School to explain the purpose of the study, the possible benefits of the outcomes, and how the identity of the school and participants would be protected and concealed in the final report (in reference to IRB). In fact, any identifiers of the school were removed.

Participants

Within the scope of a thesis study, and because of the extensive data that was needed, the case study was conducted in only one K-12 international school in Lebanon which hires local and expatriate teachers and leaders. The selection of the school was made according to purposeful convenience and accessibility considerations to the researcher. This study site is a school known for its history in hiring both local and expat teachers in Beirut. The school consists of four divisions, the High School, the Middle School, the Elementary and the Pre-school and has a total of around 1200 students. As reported by the Human Resources director, the percent of expat teachers has stabilized at around 33% over the past few years. As a case study, the results provide enough detailed descriptions about the school so that readers can judge if the findings are transferable and applicable to their own contexts.

Study Site and Sample

One school was selected for this case study. The investigation was performed in its natural context in the selected school. The study sample consisted of a total of thirteen local and seven expat full-time teachers with more than two years at the selected school. Teachers with less than two years at the school were eliminated since these teachers' perspectives might be skewed by the fact that they lack experience at and expert knowledge of the school, and might not provide informed and meaningful data for this study. In fact, Gruenert (2008) found that new teachers in schools "arrive with their own ideas about how to do their jobs" (p. 57). It takes them time to assimilate the school's culture.

Participants' Selection

The plan was to initially recruit teachers on a voluntary basis with a recruitment flyer posted in the teachers' lounge (Appendix A) and then to randomly select from the volunteers trying to get a representative cross section that reflects the school distribution of teachers. However, only twenty volunteered, and the twenty teachers who did volunteer were all selected. Thus, sampling was of a convenience sampling type, in that all available participants were included (Hatch, 2002). All teachers have been at the school for more than two years, and the distribution of teachers is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Distribution of Teachers in the Sample

	Total teachers N=20	Number of teachers by hire		Number of teachers by years at the school		Number of teachers by gender		Numbers of teachers by kids in school	
		Locals N=13	Expats N=7	< 10 N=8	> 10 N=12	Male N=5	Female N=15	Kids N=7	No kids N=13
High School Division	14	9	5	1	11	3	11	4	10
Middle School Division	2	0	2	2	0	2	0	1	1
Elementary School Division	3	3	0	0	3	0	3	2	1
Early Years Division	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	0	1

Data Collection Procedures

This study is exploratory and descriptive in nature. It aims to produce a thick description of the challenges that international schools with expat and local teachers in the Middle East face, from the teachers' perspective. The main data collection tool was the individual interviews with expat and local teachers. Other tools were employed for triangulation of the data, which is the use of a multiple source of data to validate the results that have emerged, as recommended by Lacey & Luff (2007) and Merriam (1998; 2009). These included: the researcher journal and memo writing, focus groups interviews, and school documents that have relevant information regarding the hiring process.

Individual Interviews

Due to the scope of this Master's thesis work, and to the number of teachers who volunteered to take part in interviews, twenty interviews were conducted in total with thirteen local and seven expatriate teachers at the school from the different divisions. The individual interviews with expat and local teachers were based on open ended questions (Appendix C) which aim to address the research questions. According to Gall et al. (2010), interviews are powerful in that they allow the interviewer to probe for more information , ask more questions, or require specific examples based on given answers in "order to obtain the fullest possible response from the individual or to follow up on unexpected responses" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 105). In addition, tacit knowledge can be immediately addressed, and interviewees gauged for an understanding of non-verbal cues. Open-ended questions allow for more freedom for interviewees to express their ideas rather than be confined with a questionnaire that would direct or limit their answers. This allows for an opening up and emergence of

new ideas or details that will allow for the development of the thick description

of the phenomenon (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The questions were phrased in a way to avoid any leading or threatening

statements. They required teachers to provide their perceptions of the challenges

associated with the mix in hire in this school and explain what an equitable school

culture is in the context of international schools in Lebanon with two subcultures of

teachers, the local and the expatriate (with leaders possibly tending to belong mainly to

the latter) and what they thought leaders should do to create an equitable school culture

in such a diverse context, highlighting the characteristics of leaders who are capable of

ensuring the creation of an equitable school climate within such a diverse context. A

form was created (Appendix C), and each respondent was assigned one form separate

from the others. On the form, a code or number was assigned to each respondent and

some demographic data (local or expatriate hire/ male or female/ years at the school/

division belonging/ parent of a child at the school or not) for each respondent was

entered. After the interview, the form also served for the transcription of the answers to

the open-ended questions. The interview started with an introductory statement which

reminded the participants of the information in the consent forms that they had to read

and sign before the interviews (Appendix B): the purpose of the study and the ethical

considerations of the study, including the reassurance that any clues of their identities

would not appear in the final report, that their identities would be kept confidential, and

that IRB was monitoring the confidentiality and safety of the participants. This ensured

that they would speak freely with no fear of adverse repercussions at the school. The

interviews were recorded upon all teachers' consent, and then transcribed.

Teachers were then interviewed again for a member check in which the themes

were shared with them to check for the representativeness of their views. Fourteen of

the twenty teachers agreed to be involved in member checking and all agreed to the derived themes.

Focus Group Interviews

Focus group interviews can be very helpful to the researcher since they provide her with data from many participants in a shorter amount of time in comparison to individual interviews (Morgan, 1997). Focus groups are also useful since interviewees might build on the ideas of others and expand on what they want to share (Gall et al., 2010). This helps in an increased in-depth understanding development (Morgan, 1997) as well as in providing a member check and respondent validation (Flick, 2014; Lacey & Luff, 2007). Indeed, focus groups can be very helpful to the researcher in confirming the obtained data and the faithful representation of the meanings conveyed by teachers, especially if answers are transcribed after the interview.

The focus interview was conducted after the individual interviews and after member checking. Only one focus group was conducted due to the number of volunteers (seven) for the focus group interview. Four of the twenty participants in the individual interviews (three local teachers and one expatriate) did not sign the consent form for focus group interviews and said that they were uncomfortable in participating in focus groups. All other participants consented to be invited but only seven attended, as per the distribution shown in Table 2. This was considered appropriate, since Eliot and Associates (2005) state that an effective focus group can include 6-10 people.

Table 2

Distribution of Teachers in the Focus Group

	Distribution of teachers in the focus group								
	Total teachers N=7	Number of teachers by hire		Number of teachers by years at the school		Number of teachers by gender		Numbers of teachers by kids in school	
		Locals N=13	Expats N=7	< 10 N=8	> 10 N=12	Male N=5	Female N=15	Kids N=7	No kids N=13
High School Division	6	4	2	1	5	1	5	3	3
Middle School Division	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Elementary School Division	1	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	0
Early Years Division	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

The focus group interviews started with an introductory statement which explained the purpose of the focus group interviews, outlined the parameters of the interview, reassured the interviewees that their names would not appear in the final report and that their identities would be kept confidential in relation to answers provided (Appendix B). This ensured that they would speak freely with no fear of adverse repercussions at the school. The researcher then shared the results from the individual interviews and invited teachers to discuss the results (Appendix D). The researcher took detailed notes during the interview.

The Researcher Journal and Memo Writing

The researcher journal and memo writing are an important tool for the grounded theorist. These tools improve the quality of the research as they help the qualitative researcher to be immersed in their research, interact with the data in a closely, , and create more thorough meanings out of them (Birks, Chapman & Francis, 2008Moreover, they provide a helpful record of the many thoughts of the researcher that could otherwise be lost with time (Birks et al., 2008; Flick, 2014; Lacey & Luff, 2007). This helps the researcher organize his/her thoughts and refer to them later in the process used to review, confirm and make meaning of them (Flick, 2014). As Birks et al. (2008) state, "the interplay between researcher and data is crucial to the generation of knowledge". According to Flick (2014), memos are freely written and can include definitions, codes, categories, comparisons, gaps, questions, links to the literature, findings, hunches, changes to the codes of the researcher during data collection, coding and data analysis. In memos, the research can ask a question, create a hypothesis, and find answers in the data (Bailey, 2007).

Two journals have been adopted for memo writing: the "participant observer" journal for observations that were made through the data collection phase, reflections,

and further insights, and the "researcher journal" for the methodology, coding and categorization of data (Birks et al., 2008), and mapping of steps throughout the data collection and analysis processes. During focused coding, the researcher used the researcher journal to create categories from codes (Flick, 2014). During theoretical coding, the researcher sorted her memos and related categories to each other for a comparative analysis (Birks et al., 2008). Decisions or changes made throughout the research process were logically explained and rationalized in memos (Birks et al., 2008).

Data Analysis Procedures

As per the grounded theory, data collected through interviews was coded into categories. By coding, the researcher questioned and interacted with the data (Flick, 2014). Meanings were associated to all parts of the data or answers, and labeled with those (Charmaz, 2006). These codes were compared to and informed by the literature that was reviewed. However, the theoretical framework was not limiting. The codes were mostly grounded in the data which also provided new categories (Flick, 2014; Lacey & Luff, 2007).

Data was analyzed through the constant comparison method throughout the process to find emerging patterns, common themes, and recurrent instances of those and to give meaning to the data through reflective analysis. Both the interpretational analysis approach and the reflective analysis approach were followed to analyze the data. Qualitative research is in fact founded on the philosophy of "interpretivism" in which "reality is constructed by the individuals who participate in it" and it aims "to discover the nature of the meanings associated with social phenomena" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 274). According to Gall et al. (2010), interpretational analysis involves a "process of

closely examining and grouping elements in case study data in order to fully describe, evaluate, or explain the phenomenon being studied" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 281) and the reflective analysis results from a "deep and deeply personal process of pondering a phenomenon" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 282). The constant comparison approach continued to warrant the collection and analysis of new data until theoretical saturation was reached in which no new themes emerged (Flick, 2014; Lacey & Luff, 2007). This occurred quite quickly, with around eight interviews.

The interviews were recorded, transcribed and coded. Emerging themes and sub-themes were derived and organized in one document with all associated quotes from the interviews. Initially, teachers were numbered and given codes that indicated their number (T1), if they were local or expatriates (T1/L if local or T1/E if expatriate), their years at the school (T1/L/25), if they were males or females (T1/L/25/F if female, T1/L/25/M if male) and if they had kids at the school or not (T1/L/25/F/K if with kids and T1/L/25/F/NK if no kids). However, to protect the confidentiality of teachers, the researcher made an intentional decision to remove any clues that could hint at any teacher, so teachers' codes were simplified to represent only numbers and hire origin: T1/L as local teacher 1 etc.

The themes that were generated (Appendix E) were organized around the three research questions of the study, and answers to these research questions were derived from the teacher participants' input. Responses with a frequency higher than 5% (1 out of 20) were included, since it is important to include responses that are recurrent for at least two teachers for a more representative profile. While reading the results table (Appendix E) comparatively, it became

clear that gender, tenure and having kids at the school or not which were recorded on the form (Appendix C) were not meaningfully discriminating factors and were thus no longer referred to in the analysis.

A large amount of pertinent and meaningful direct quotes was included in the results section to enrich the thick description of this case study. A careful review of the direct codes ensured the omission of any statements that could identify or give clues about the identity of the school and/or the teacher participants to preserve their anonymous status.

Quality Criteria

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the study, that is, if the findings of the study provide a true reflection of the reality (Merriam, 2009) several measures were taken. First, the open-ended questions were checked by another educational practitioner before being administered to ensure that they were clear and free of biases. Secondly, triangulation of data occurred by using multiple sources of data as recommended in the literature (Lacey & Luff, 2007; Merriam, 1998; Merriam, 2009): interviews, focus groups, journal, and relevant documents. Thirdly, member checks were performed to provide respondent validation (Lacey & Luff, 2007) and avoid any misinterpretation of the collected data (Flick, 2014). Member checking was performed for fourteen of the twenty interviewed teachers; the six others wree not avaialbe to perform the member checks.. During member checking, the interview findings were summarized and shown to the interviewees for them to confirm or correct the information. For the ones checked, there was full agreement between researcher and teachers. Fourthly, the same data was coded and analyzed twice, a second time after one week, in order to ensure that the same coding was obtained. Finally, another educational researcher was solicited for a comparative analysis of the codes where she was

presented with the transcripts of two interviews and asked to separately code them in order to check if the emerging themes were similar.

Limitations of the Study

This research was performed to fulfill the requirements of a Master's degree in educational leadership. As such, the number of schools and the number of teachers was limited – yet deemed sufficient for the scope of a Master's degree.

Furthermore, the plan was to initially recruit teachers on a voluntary basis with a recruitment flyer posted in the teachers' lounge and then to randomly select from the volunteers trying to get a representative cross section that reflects the school distribution of teachers. However, only twenty of the one hundred and twenty teachers at the school volunteered, and the twenty teachers who did volunteer were selected. A random selection and the cross-sectional representation could not be performed – yet a representative amount of local and expatriate teachers was included – and there could be a risk that only a skewed perspective is represented in this study since all participants were volunteers as opposed to being randomly selected.

A third possible limitation could be that teachers were perhaps not completely honest in answering the questions due to the sensitive aspect of the study. There could be fear of any confidentiality breach and/or judgment. There was an attempt to have this minimized by reassuring all participants about the measures taken throughout the study to safeguard confidentiality. IRB requirements and the fact that any leading clue to the teacher identity would be omitted from the final paper – yet there could be no guarantee of a complete deletion of this limitation.

A related limitation could be that some answers might have needed perhaps more probing or clarification, yet the researcher was unable to identify this need since she was familiar with the context which gave her an impression that she was clear about

the responses in question and that what she heard was sufficient and did not need further probing.

As for member checking, it was performed for fourteen of the twenty interviewed teachers; the six others were not available to complete the member checking..   For the focus group, all teachers were invited but only seven showed up to the invitation, therefore one focus group interview was conducted.

Researcher Note

Although the sample size was small (twenty of around one hundred and twenty teachers), it must be noted that the results of the study were confirmed by the results of the school climate survey which is referred to by many participants in the interviews. The researcher also has this record in her researcher journal.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

This study aimed to explore the perceptions of local and expatriate teachers of an equitable school culture in a private international Lebanese school with two subcultures of teachers, the local and the expatriate (with leaders possibly tending to belong mainly to the latter). It aimed to address the following research questions:

1. What are the teachers' perceptions of an equitable school culture in the context of international schools in Lebanon?

2. What are the teachers' perceptions of the challenges faced by schools while establishing an equitable school culture in a diverse context?

3. What are the teachers' perceptions of the required organizational conditions for ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture within such a diverse context?

Data that has been collected through individual open-ended interviews, coded, and categorized into major themes and sub-themes is presented in Appendix E which includes the frequency of responses of each group of participants for each characteristic (category) across the variables of hire, gender, years of tenure, and if their kids are in the school. The categories (Appendix E) were aligned with the research questions as follows:

1. Teachers' perceptions/definition/description of an equitable school culture in a diverse context

2. Teachers' perceptions of the challenges faced by schools while establishing an equitable school culture in a diverse context

3. Teachers' perceptions of the required organizational conditions for ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture

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Since the total number of teachers in each group is not the same, the numbers were converted to percentages to provide a common ground for comparison purposes. For example, for the first sub-theme (Appendix E), six of thirteen local teachers contributed to the responses, and three of seven expatriates. To compare these two frequencies, the six of thirteen was converted to a corresponding percent of 46%, and the three of seven to 43%. It is clearer now that for the two groups of teachers, the frequency of responses is not substantially different.

While reading the results in the table in Appendix E comparatively, it became clear that gender, tenure and having kids at the school or not were not meaningfully discriminating factors and were thus no longer referred to in the analysis. The focus was set on hiring origin since this variable is pertinent to the topic of this study. Therefore, results in this chapter are organized the as follows: firstly, data that portrays the profile of an equitable school climate in a diverse context from the perspective of the local and expatriate participants is presented. Secondly, challenges faced by schools in ensuring an equitable school culture in a diverse context as perceived by the local and expatriate respondents are presented. Finally, the required organizational conditions in ensuring an equitable school culture in a diverse context are presented. All responses with a frequency higher than 5% (1 out of 20) were included, since it is important to include responses that are recurrent for at least two teachers for a more representative profile.

Profile of an Equitable School Culture in a Diverse Context

In this section, the profile of an equitable school climate in the described context as perceived by local and expatriate teachers is presented. The results of this analysis are illustrated in Table 3 below and described in more depth further on.

Table 3

Profile of an Equitable School Culture in a Diverse Context From the Perspective of Teachers

	Total responses N=20	Responses of teachers by hire	
		Locals N=13	Expats N=7
a. Equity in salaries and benefits for all employees	**9** **(45%)**	6 (46%)	3 (43%)
b. Equity in accountability, respect and recognition/support for all employees	**8** **(40%)**	4 (31%)	4 (57%)
c. Equity in opportunities for all employees	**6** **(30%)**	4 (31%)	2 (29%)
d. Fairness for all employees by providing to the different needs of all groups of teachers	**6** **(30%)**	4 (31%)	2 (29%)
e. Collegial school climate and tolerance	**3** **(15%)**	3 (23%)	0 (0%)

Respondents see that in an equitable school, all teachers are treated equitably in terms of salaries and benefits, accountability and support by leaders, access to opportunities, and in terms of addressing their different needs. Some teachers mentioned that in an equitable school, there is collegiality and tolerance.

Equity in Salaries and Benefits for All Employees

For nine out of the twenty teachers, an equitable school culture requires that there is equity for all employees in terms of salaries and benefits, and that the school Human Resources policies covering compensation and benefits are stated clearly and transparently. Local and expatriate teachers were mostly in agreement on this issue. Furthermore, all seven focus group attendees agreed with this view. According to an expatriate female teacher (T11/E) it is necessary: "that things are transparent and open and that everyone has an understanding of what could be financial packages, could be professional development, professional learning, that everyone knows exactly what is offered". Similarly, a local female teacher (T6/L) stated: "everybody is treated equally, be it professional development, be it salary-wise, be it accommodations, be it package, whatever is given to everybody is given to everybody." However, a local female

teacher (T1/L) was the only one who pointed out that while salaries should be the same, the benefits could be different because expatriate teachers are leaving their countries and therefore need to be given some extra benefits.

Equity in Accountability, Respect and Support for All Employees

In addition, eight of the twenty teachers, with a larger proportion of expatriates, stressed on the importance of having equity also in terms of accountability and recognition. All seven focus group attendees also agreed to this issue. Indeed, an expatriate male teacher (T4/E) explained that in a school with an equitable school culture, "all of the faculty, staff and administrators are respected equally, everyone is recognized". Additionally, a local female teacher (T2/L) stated that in an equitable school culture:

> No teacher would feel unfairly treated because of nationality or the fact that we are local or expat hires. There would be no different treatment by leaders because of the fact that we are local or expat. All teachers would feel supported, respected, appreciated because they do a good job. Teachers who don't do a good job would be addressed equally, whether they are local or expat.

Equity in Opportunities for All Employees

Six of the twenty teachers included equal opportunities as an important aspect of an equitable school culture. There was a close enough agreement for expatriates and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue. A local female teacher (T5/L) highlighted: "teachers would have equal chances for professional development. They have equal chances to be promoted into leadership roles. They have at the same time equal chances of using the resources of the school." Similarly, expatriate female teacher (T11/E) stated that in an equitable school culture "all faculty and staff and teachers have the same opportunity no matter where they come from, their background and their history". Additionally, a local female teacher (T2/L) stated that in an equitable school culture:

Employees could get promoted because of their expertise rather than having the priority because they are expats. Leaders would not be friends with expat hires only.

Fairness for all Employees

Six of the twenty teachers saw that an equitable school culture does not necessarily mean to have equal benefits for all, but rather that the different needs of all teachers are addressed. There was a close enough agreement for expatriates and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue. As expatriate male teacher (T14/E) explains: "an equitable school is balanced …. the local hires also have certain needs that they require, like child care, parking, things like that. So, I think an equitable school balances up the needs of both groups." Local female teacher (T20/L) added: "we have to have fairness. It might not be in being equal in what we get let's say talk about money wise. It could be something else that could compensate for it. Because the person who is coming from abroad is expecting to have a, b, c, d which we [locals] can't have here in this country. We will get it if we are foreign hire in another country."

Collegial School Climate and Tolerance

Three teachers out of twenty, all being local female teachers, saw that an equitable school culture is characterized by a collegial and tolerant environment in which there is honesty, transparency, empathy, respect, trust, and good relationships. All seven focus group attendees agreed to this aspect. Local female teacher (T15/L) makes a specific reference to having any hired teacher be respectful and understanding of the local culture and that of the school, while local female teacher (T19/L) speaks of acceptance and open-mindedness:

> It should accept all nationalities, be fair with all nationalities, and mainly try to apply what we call an international mindedness. Which is to accept the others whoever they are and whatever they are; some of them can have physical problems, others can have some intelligence issues, or different nationalities or whatever, we

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need to accept each other, and we need to find a compromise to create a positive environment in such schools.

As concluded from the results, respondents see that in an equitable school, all teachers are treated equitably in terms of salaries and benefits, accountability and support by leaders, access to opportunities, and in terms of addressing their different needs. Some teachers mentioned that in an equitable school, there is collegiality and tolerance.

The Challenges Faced by Schools in Establishing an Equitable School Culture in a

Diverse Context

In this section, a compilation of the perceived challenges in ensuring an equitable school culture in this international school is presented. The results of this analysis are illustrated in table 4 below and described in more depth further on.

Table 4

The Challenges Faced by Schools in Establishing an Equitable School Culture in a Diverse Context

		Total responses N=20	Responses of teachers by hire	
			Locals N=13	Expats N=7
a.	Preferential hiring packages offered for expats resulting in:	**18 (90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)
	i) Discriminatory practices in salaries and benefits	**18 (90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)
	1) At the local-expat level	**18 (90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)
	2) At the expat-expat level	**3 (15%)**	3 (23%)	0 (0%)
	ii) Discriminatory practices in contract duration	**3 (15%)**	2 (15%)	1 (14%)
	iii) Discriminatory practices in providing housing close to school	**4 (20%)**	3 (23%)	1 (14%)
	1) This facilitates school access and increases involvement in school activities	**4 (20%)**	3 (23%)	1 (14%)
	2) This creates a closed community for overseas leaders and teachers blurring the boundaries between professional and personal relationships	**4 (20%)**	3 (23%)	1 (14%)

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b.	Discriminatory accountability practices	**13** **(65%)**	11 (85%)	2 (28%)

	Col1	Col2	Col3
b. Discriminatory accountability practices	**13** **(65%)**	11 (85%)	2 (28%)
c. Dismissive attitudes towards local teachers resulting from an:	**11** **(55%)**	9 (69%)	2 (28%)
i) Underlying belief among staff that expats are more qualified	**11** **(55%)**	9 (69%)	2 (28%)
ii) Underlying belief at the community level that expats are more qualified for leadership positions	**3** **(15%)**	1 (7.5%)	2 (28%)
d. Discriminatory practices in allocating leadership responsibilities and/or appointing to leadership positions	**6** **(30%)**	3 (23%)	3 (43%)
e. Short term stay of overseas leaders and teachers due to:	**14** **(70%)**	10 (77%)	4 (57%)
i) Lack of commitment to making the school culture more equitable	**13** **(65%)**	10 (77%)	3 (43%)
ii) Lack of respect for the school history and contributions of senior local hires	**6** **(30%)**	5 (38%)	1 (14%)
iii) Lack of clear identity and consistent vision for the school	**7** **(35%)**	3 (23%)	4 (57%)
f. Administration reluctance to address and act on issues of inequity with transparency, resulting in:	**18** **(90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)
i) Balkanized professional community	**9** **(45%)**	6 (46%)	3 (43%)
ii) Unsatisfied and demoralized workforce	**17** **(85%)**	10 (77%)	7 (100%)

From the participants' answers, it is clear that there are many challenges faced by this school that hinder the establishment of an equitable school culture. These challenges are: preferential hiring packages being offered for expatriates resulting in divisive practices, discriminatory accountability practices, dismissive attitudes towards local teachers, discriminatory practices in allocating leadership responsibilities and/or appointing to leadership positions, short term stay of overseas leaders and teachers making it hard to reach an equitable school culture, and the administration reluctance to address and act on issues of inequity with transparency.

Preferential Hiring Packages Offered for Expatriates

Eighteen of the twenty teachers, with all sub-groups equally represented and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue saw that one of the challenges faced

by the school is its need to provide competitive packages to attract and retain expat

teachers, as local female teacher (T3/L) explains:

> I think essentially the school faces a big challenge which is that
> […] in order to hire American international staff, it needs to offer
> competitive wages and competitive benefits so that people from
> around the world, especially Americans and… British perhaps are
> going to want to come to this school. They need to be paid at a
> comparable level to other international schools and therefore it
> has to offer these higher wages and benefits and attractions [than
> the local hires], attract them to the school. Therefore, they are
> given those benefits.

However, the local market is not that competitive and the country not as

attractive, which necessitates offering expatriate teachers much better packages than

their local counterparts. A male expatriate teacher (T4/E) clarifies: "overseas hires are

incredibly expensive. Beirut is a difficult place to hire people for. It's got a reputation,

it's got a [low] salary scale, it's got a benefits package that [is] not as competitive as it

can be." This is also the description that expatriate female teacher (T9/E) shares:

> Beirut's particular situation in that it is perceived as unstable; I
> know they hired different people, they back out almost
> immediately because people tell them that it is not safe and all
> these sort of things, so getting an expat staff is difficult and
> getting the right expats that are going to be able to contribute and
> become part of the school fabric is even harder.

According to local and expatriate participants, this preferential package

engenders discriminatory practices in salaries, benefits, contract duration, and housing

allocations, thus impeding the establishment of an equitable school culture.

Discriminatory practices in salaries and benefits. Eighteen of the twenty

teachers see that one of the consequences of this practice is that there is discrimination

in salaries and benefits for local and expatriate teachers. Local and expatriate teachers

were mostly in agreement on this issue. Furthermore, all seven focus group attendees

agreed with this view. Local female teacher (T3/L) explains that it results in a two-tier

system:

The school at the same time has local hire, and for them to give equal benefits and pay… they wouldn't be able to afford it. They couldn't pay everyone the same. And therefore, there seems to be a two-tier system. What they do claim is that the local hire wages and benefits are very competitive in the local market. So, this is the justification that is being given for this differentiation. […] Foreign staff come they are given a very high scale that is beyond their experience. For example, I once had a colleague who was fresh out of college, and I accidentally saw his pay check, he actually kind of showed it to me, and I realized that after 10 years, after Masters, after many other qualifications, experiences and other jobs, his wage far exceeded mine.

However, an expatriate male teacher (T8/E) clarifies that this challenge of different packages is present in many international schools that has overseas hires, and local hires as explained by the fact that overseas hires must leave their countries:

Every international school I've worked in there is inherent inequity in the benefits package for overseas hires versus local hires, and there are reasons for that, you know, justifiable reasons for that, the need to attract people who are willing to leave their home countries to live in a new place and the challenges associated with living in whole new country require that they're given some sort of incentive to do so, so it usually means that there's going to be something different about what they receive as opposed to what local hires receive.

Still, the differentiated salary is presented as discriminatory and inequitable by an expatriate male teacher (T4/E) who also noted that the years of experience in a previous school are considered differently for local and expatriate teachers:

There is a difference of how experience [for local hires] is valued which gets relayed into pay scale […] if they were six years of experience in a public school, they don't get six years of experience, I am not sure if it is half or what the situation is but it is not valued in the same way; I think that is very disrespectful. There are differences in teacher responsibilities and teaching habits, skills and procedures but it is hard to accept that disrespect to the years of experience as a rule, so that is what I meant by this policy.

Additionally, teachers offered many instances of discrimination about benefits that are given to expatriate hires and not to local hires as an incentive to renew their contracts. An expatriate female teacher (T9/E) reveals the presence of this practice and

justifies it: "they were trying to make the foreign hires to stay, and so, the Head of

School was calling people down to his office seeing what their plans were and offering

those bonuses to stay." On the other hand, a local female teacher (T3/L) response

highlights the perceived injustice felt by this teacher:

> I know that when we are told to re-sign for our contracts for the
> next year it is almost as if we need to be grateful for this
> opportunity to sign on for another year, whereas now, for I think
> since last year, I think it is since last year there is this thing called
> a re-signing bonus and it's a bonus that is only offered to foreign
> hire. I don't think anyone stopped to consider that the local hire,
> although high quality, although they have experience, although
> they have done so much for the school, they are not given they are
> not told that their services are so valuable that we would like to
> give you a bonus to make sure you sign up for another two years.

This same differentiated approach seems to be a key concern for another local

female teacher (T12/L) who explains that there could be incentives given to expatriates

but that something must be also given to locals:

> It doesn't mean like they neglect their local hires, or they forget
> their local hires and only focus on the foreign hires. The local
> hires have the same opportunities. They get the same as if they
> have bonus for their expat hires, they should have bonuses for the
> local hires.

A local female teacher (T13/L) offers another example of what she considered a

discriminatory practice with benefits related to the gradual increase of the tuition

coverage for kids which starts at different percentages for newly hired expatriate

teachers. She explains that local hires had to fight for many years before they got

granted the 100% coverage for their own kids after few years while expatriates receive

it right away. She stated:

> Nowadays, as I know, if you are new local hire, you don't benefit
> from the 100%, you start with 25 then 50 then 75 or something of
> that sort, while they [expats] come with 100%, which is kind of
> really unfair, and it makes the person who starts working at our
> school feel that OK, there is kind of instability or insecurity.

For three teachers out of twenty, all local female teachers, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, the urge for the school to want to retain expatriates is portrayed as discriminatory not only at the local-expatriate level, but also at the expatriate-expatriate level, where unclear and different bonuses are given for expatriates to stay and renew their contract, as local female teacher (T3/L) explains:

> Last year, there was a lot of anxiety amongst the foreign hire because some were being offered more than others, and it was very like oh, you got this much, and why did he get that much and he doesn't do as much as I do. And I know there was a lot of anger in that group, in the foreign hire group about how some would be given more of bonus than others as if their jobs were being valued more than others.

Discriminatory practices in contract duration. Three teachers out of twenty, all female teachers with an equal percentage of locals and expatriates, see that another discriminatory consequence of the need to provide competitive packages to expatriates is providing contracts to locals that are for one year only, while expatriates receive longer contracts. All seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue. Expatriate female teacher (T11/E) expresses her surprise of the existing discrepancy in the length of contracts offered which is for two-three years and renewable for expatriates, but one year for locals: "local hires contracts are given once a year, which I am shocked at that, where we as foreign hires are encouraged to sign for two years […] It's so unsettling. Putting myself in my colleagues' shoes, that would be… oh it would be so stressful and uncomfortable every year to have to." Local female teacher (T13/L) describes the discriminatory practice in more details and highlights the anxiety that it engenders at the local teacher level:

> They have a contract for 2 or 3 years and renewable and so on, while ours is only for one year. It used to be before April, they push back till December not because of equity but because it is more convenient for them, they want to make sure that they have a say from us like "are you staying or not?" before they go recruit a new teacher. So waiting till the last minute to get to know if our

contract is renewed or not, if we are going to be part-timers or not, make you feel like… Our plans, our plans with our kids, our financials… everything should be like paused until they make their decision, which is not the case for the expat, at least they know they are staying for 3 years, and it is their choice to stay or not afterwards.

Local female teacher (T13/L) describes the discrimination in contract duration even at the hiring level which gives her the impression that locals are to be used only when needed and when the school is unable to hire an expatriate:

I know that some local teachers, when they tried to apply for the job at our school, it was OK you are excellent, but we have only one-year job for you, next we are going to get a foreign hire. It doesn't make sense, you either hire someone or you don't hire them. It is like we are filling the gap …

Additionally, local female teacher (T5/L) states that there were unjustified discrepancies not only in the bonus amount but also in the duration of the re-signed contract even among expatriate hires:

On the contrary, to attract more qualified foreign hire, the split was made even bigger by giving the foreign hire benefits that sometimes lead to splitting the foreign hires among each other because the benefits did not rely on any logical or clear rationale. It's like random. A teacher was given 10000 dollars whereas another teacher was given 5000 dollars. And a teacher who you know, some consider that should be dismissed was given not only a bonus but a renewal of contract for 2 years, whereas others were given only 1 year.

Discriminatory practices in providing housing close to school. Four of the twenty teachers see that another consequence of the need to provide competitive packages is the discrimination in providing housing to expatriate hires close to the school which gives them a huge advantage regarding their access to the school and involvement in activities. There was a close enough agreement in responses of the expatriates and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue. Male expatriate teacher (T8/E) expresses his understanding of the situation: "local hires often live farther away, have to get home, have to struggle with traffic, all of these things that

foreign hires all live in the area, don't have cars, don't have to do with traffic."

However, local female teacher (T1/L) describes what she perceives as a lack of understanding of this situation by the school leaders:

> I don't think they understand the challenges that local teachers face which are like really commuting and sometimes from different far places and living not next to the school or a walking distance by the school so that can really affect how much the local teachers can give.

She goes further to explain how this reality translates in an added hardship:

> Because we live far sometimes, and me personally, like I am spending like really like 2 hours going back home. So definitely I will not… today I don't have anything after school I'm running at 3:30 I'm not waiting till 4:00 o'clock because every day I wait, or I have a meeting or something after school or my kids then I'm stuck to for 2 hours in traffic, so how much can I give more. If I live like next I can go home, eat, rest and then come back for any activity.

A local female teacher (T2/L) additionally testifies: "once the Head of School mentioned to me that expatriates come to games and parties and events at school more often than the locals, hinting at the fact that they give more time to the school." She also explains: "this is true most of the time, and it is normal, since expatriates are given houses by the school on campus or at a walking distance of the school. The locals must commute at times long distances. Expatriates do not have to live the traffic congestions and lose time on the roads like the locals. It is easy for them" and local female teacher (T10/L) further explains this unfair situation by describing the stress that it engenders:

> They live very close to the school. They come; they live within a walking distance. I wish I lived in the vicinity. Feeling stressed out driving for one hour in traffic, feeling like you want to get to school on time or you want to go home and be home before 6 o'clock. That by itself is stressful, which adds to the stress of our lives.

In parallel, four of the twenty teachers see that providing housing to expatriate hires close to the school creates a closed community for overseas leaders and teachers.

There was a close enough agreement for expatriates and locals, and all seven focus

group attendees agreed that the many opportunities available exclusively to the

expatriate to interact is creating a sense of community among them which local can

hardly access. This is well explicated by local female teacher (T3/L):

> ….the social circles of the foreign hires tend to be the same. They
> go out together, they socialize together, their children play
> together, and so there is more of a sense of intimacy.

She also added that the fact that most of the upper administration is foreign

hires, this quality of close communal relationship also develops between teachers and

administrators:

> I mean when I go out with my children, I always see [them] you
> know with the administration, with the Head of School, with the
> Principal, teachers who are expat, [they] have a far more intimate
> relationship with or more social relationship with the
> Administration so there tends to be more of a kind of some kind
> of a feeling of a private club where local hire don't really have
> that kind of relationship with the Administration.

She explained how this is divisive as well:

> And I think that that's kind of contributing to the sense of there
> being two separate cultures, two separate groups, disparate groups
> that are not, you know, closely aligned, and I feel when I see
> foreign hire teachers interacting with the Administration, there is
> much more informality, much more intimacy.

The above stance was reiterated by another local female teacher (T1/L) who

describes the expatriate group as a "clique" who go out together, whose kids play

together, "while local teachers, except for a few, who themselves have this initiative of

coming across as social colleagues to the administration or to the foreigners, we feel

there are two cliques, and it is obvious." Furthermore, expatriate male teacher (T8/E)

and local female teacher (T5/L) explain that this difference in socialization creates a

blurry distinction between professional and personal relationships especially that leaders

are expatriates and are more likely than not to create friendships with expatriate

teachers. Local female teacher (T5/L) associated the presence of these relationships as a

challenge to equity and even considered some of these relationships as "unprofessional

behavior" and went on to describe them in detail as follows:

> I want to add as well that the unprofessional behavior of some
> administrators reinforces these perceptions especially from the
> side of the local hires, where they see that administrators
> sometimes … they don't act professionally where they should, or
> they confuse their personal relationships with their professional
> relationships which can put a lot of question marks about… you
> know… the equity… in itself it can be not a problem of equity but
> of unprofessional behavior.

Local female teacher (T5/L) goes further in what she explains above by giving

an example in a particular division as well:

> [These] administrators […] they are both foreign hires, you
> know… I have seen instances where expat administrators had
> like… double standards. It appears to be double standards to
> people whereas … it is not really double standards but it is more
> that he does not differentiate between his personal relationships
> with his fellow foreign hires and professional relationships when
> he should do that.

Moreover, local female teacher (T2/L) stated that it is well known and seen by

many teachers that the expatriate friends of the administration influence their decisions.

In fact, local female teachers (T2/L) and (T5/L) talked about the local teacher

perception that expatriates have "more privileges" and are treated "more favorably"

with local female teacher (T2/L) adding specific examples to illustrate the more favored

approach towards expatriate teachers:

> Once, the Principal asked teachers to volunteer for a committee.
> All teachers who volunteered were local teachers. Then we
> learned that the Principal asked an expat teacher to join – with no
> valid justification, but we learned later on that this teacher was a
> close friend to the administrators.

This teacher goes on to explain that even if justifiable by the closeness of the

homes, the mere presence of personal relationships between the administrators and only

some teachers invites suspicions of favoritism and qualifies this pattern to be considered

an impediment to achieving and equitable school culture:

> Whereas his relationships with the local hires is mainly based on professional relationships, so an outsider can see that there is favoritism and the local hires can see that there is favoritism. I have no evidence that there is favoritism but what I can see is this lack of professional behavior. And this can foster, this can be an additional challenge to establishing equity as a culture in the school.

Discriminatory Accountability Practices

Thirteen of the twenty teachers, with the responses being almost triple in

frequency for local teachers (85% vs. 28% expatriates), saw that another challenge is

that there is discrimination with respect to accountability measures between local and

expatriate teachers. All seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue. There is a

general feel among local teachers that the school administration exercises lenience and

favoritism when it comes to expatriate teachers. Local female teacher (T13/L)

mentioned that: "I didn't hear about anyone [among expatriate teachers] being kicked

out unless there was a big issue happening with that person, otherwise they always have

the choice to stay, while we [locals] don't have that choice kind of". An expatriate

female teacher (T9/E) explained this discriminatory treatment in not holding strict

accountability measures towards expatriates by the fact that it is not easy to get quality

expatriates to come due to the low salary:

> Unfortunately…they end up with a lot of novices or people with serious problems that probably couldn't be hired anywhere else which doesn't help any of the other problems.

However, for a local female teacher (T15/L), the case of favoritism in

accountability was tagged as a "big thing" and described as follows:

> I feel when it comes to equity, not everyone is held accountable as they should be. This is a very big thing. Some teachers are held accountable for teaching what they are supposed to teach, and some teachers are known not to follow the school philosophy or

they would teach something that is not necessarily part of our curriculum and they still are treated exactly like the teachers who are conscientious and who really are going out of their way to let the kids benefit and go smoothly [till they] graduate smoothly from high school…

Two other local female teachers (T2/L) and (T18/L) described this discrimination by a protection or an easy way out for expatriates due to friendships among expatriate leaders and teachers:

They could be doing a lousy job but because they are friends of leaders who are expats, they get nothing "bad". Local teachers are always reprimanded or looked down and we feel that leaders could do anything or say anything – no one would defend the locals. If a local comes late, he is talked to, while many expats come and go as they please.

Local female teachers (T2/L) further illustrated this friendship-based discrimination with specific examples of expatriate teachers:

Expat teachers are defended even if they are negative elements: the math teacher who was expat and created a tense and uncooperative atmosphere in the math meetings was defended by leaders when the local math coordinator would bring up this concern. In fact the math coordinator was not supported at all. This same teacher was once very rude and arrogant in his approach with a local teacher. When the teacher raised it to the Principal at that time who was always very supportive of the teacher, he was dismissive and even a bit arrogant, as if to tell the teacher that they do not have the right to raise this concern.

She also added:

An expatriate teacher used to curse and yell at students. My advisees would complain to me all the time. Once one Head of Department dared to bring the attention of the Principal to this, he immediately silenced the Head saying that this is a personnel issue. While at a different occasion, the same Head was asked to address a local teacher for a minor deed, like being late.

Teacher (T2/L) pointed that this discrimination is not only at the teacher level. She explained that one expatriate leader who was broadly considered as unqualified for his job was never held accountable and retained his job:

One expat leader is disliked by students, parents and teachers (and even by some leaders). He is highly disrespectful with his answers to local teachers. He is judgmental, unfair, aggressive and controlling, and all these are mentioned in the school surveys. Once a leader told me that he is perceived to be like this by admins as well. Yet each year, he decides not to leave and the contract is re-signed, regardless of the impact he has on the school climate. He was also promoted. Why? What is that saying?

Local female teacher (T13/L) also affirmed that:

if the same thing was happening to a local teacher, I am sure that the thing would have been completely different, the teacher would have been talked to, and would have been asked to change what he was doing and so on.

In a similar way, local female teacher (T5/L) talked about the local teacher perception that leaders are "being harsher on the locals in consequences" and that the administration has "no serious follow up or consequences for foreign hires that breach contracts or behave in ways that are not professional." Local female teacher (T15/L) became very emotional when she echoed this by giving a specific example related to her case: she had raised a concern regarding a teacher of her own child and considered that nothing was done. She cried when she said:

I did not see anything was done. I want them to take measures, like when they take measures with me. No, you have to deal with these issues equally regardless…. I truly believe it is discrimination.

Dismissive Attitudes towards Local Teachers

According to the responses of eleven of the twenty teachers, more of them being locals (69% vs. 28% expatriates), it appeared that another challenge is that there is a prevailing dismissive attitude in the school towards local teachers. This contributes to the feeling of inequity among local teachers, and all seven focus group attendees agreed to this. This dismissive attitude is described by local female teacher (T12/L) as follows:

I can understand like you wanna be an international school, you have foreign hires coming from abroad. I do understand, but it doesn't mean like we have to minimize or delete the local hire, or

we say, we start comparing like this category of teacher are better than this, or you know.

Local female teacher (T2/L) added specific examples related to the approach of a Principal towards heads of department to illustrate the more dismissive and insulting approach towards local teachers:

> The new Principal has been quite negative and unsupportive with the three heads who are locals, and very nice with the only one whom is an expat. The work that [the formers] do is always publicly criticized, and their departments trashed, while the other department is great all the time. The tone the new Principal uses with local Heads is almost dismissive, aggressive and insulting, very different from the tone used with the only expat Head: friendly, kind, considerate. If a local Head asks a question of clarification, the answer is often rude and impolite, claiming that the Heads are oppositional, yet an expat has been almost shouting and aggressive, but she was always answered patiently and calmly.

Local female teacher (T15/L) explains this dismissive attitude by the general certainty that local teachers fear losing their jobs and will accept anything:

> I mean when all these things happen, with me or any other teacher, then there is definitely this discrimination, and there is definitely this we don't care, she's definitely going to stay, whatever we're going to do, she is going to accept and sign. And this she needs her job, she's not going to leave, this is the best paid school in Lebanon, she's going to stay. Plus, I have a personal obligation towards my own kids. They've been in this system since they were in daycare. I am not serving them well by leaving the school and making them leave with me. So, I have so many obligations and they know that. This is how I feel I am being manipulated by the leadership.

Moreover, local female teacher (T18/L) describes this dismissive approach with a feeling among tenured local teachers that they are unwanted:

> It is as if they are telling us: "take it or leave it". In many forums, it was mentioned that those of us who have been here for long are of no use to the school, why are we still here, while we know from feedback that our job is very well done.

From the responses of teachers, this dismissive attitude towards locals seems to be linked to an underlying belief among its staff that expatriates are more qualified,

which is also manifested in the underlying belief that the local community sees the expatriates as more qualified and prefers expatriates in leadership positions.

Underlying belief among staff that expatriates are more qualified.

According to eleven of the twenty teachers, more of them being locals (69% vs. 28% expats), there is an underlying belief among its staff that expats are more qualified. All seven focus group attendees agreed to this. Respondents noted that this underlying prejudice is more prevalent among overseas hire leaders and teachers. A local female teacher (T5/L) stated: "there is this thing about being local which means you are not professional enough or you're not at the level of the… you know… qualifications needed to be a good teacher." Local female teacher (T15/L) testified that complaints coming from parents regarding expat teachers are dismissed by leaders who try to explain this through a misinterpretation from the parents' side, while complaints regarding local teachers are immediately addressed by leaders, confirming the belief that local teachers are less qualified:

> By the way, any comment that comes from a parent towards a local hire, is immediately taken into consideration. Any comment that goes to a foreign hire, from any parent is usually kind of "oh, let's see, oh no this is not what the teacher means".

This is well captured by teacher (T2/L) who explains that local teachers feel leaders do not take any local's input into consideration because of what they perceive as a lack of faith in their knowledge: "it is as if we have no knowledge or understanding. We don't feel welcome to state opinions or take decisions."

Local female teacher (T15/L) went even further by mentioning that the perception of local teachers being less qualified seems to be tightly connected to a prejudice and lack of respect towards the local culture:

> We have met foreign hire who really showed respect for our culture and had this bond with our students. But many come here

66

and intentionally degrade our culture in front of us, and the irony is that some teachers do not stand up for that to shut them up […]

Expat male teacher (T4/E) asserted the prevalence of these leaders' and teachers' superiority attitude among expat hires that she qualified as "disrespectful" and reiterated the underlying belief that causes it:

> This sort of disrespectful attitude, unfortunately, is prevalent among the overseas hired teachers as well; when I initially began teaching overseas, I am probably certain that I thought of the local teachers as being somehow less able, less up to date, less developed, less well-trained, now I recognize with my years of experience that this is really not the case and with my conversations with the overseas-hired teachers, I feel many of them still suffer from this idea that I am a gift to the school, bringing in this valuable experience, this valuable training, and somehow I am a superior teacher.

From a different angle, expat male teacher (T7/E) gave a specific example about the prejudiced beliefs towards locals by referring to a differentiated approach towards Arabs: "the previous HS Principal […] came in assuming we were like another school he's been at because for the lack of a better word we're an Arab school. Therefore, he initially treated us in a certain way, and then of course he found out that this wasn't true". A local female teacher (T6/L) labeled this underlying belief as racism and a different look at an "Arab or a Lebanese and non-Arab speaking" teacher. In tears, she explained: "We are looked down on and we need to be saved […] they're here to help us become better people […] We're a Third World country, but we're not […] We are very well educated […] Racism is everywhere…"

In addition, local female teacher's (T19/L) description shed an additional light on this aspect. She (T19/L) explained that "there is a mentality here which says that more support must be given to overseas hires and this is creating a gap between overseas and local hires, and the school is not really helping a lot in narrowing this gap

between the locals and the overseas hires" and she referred to the results of the school climate survey results to validate her claim.

Underlying belief at the community level that expats are more qualified for leadership positions. Three teachers out of twenty, with a close enough agreement between expats and locals, pointed at the underlying belief in the school external community that expats are more qualified specially to assume leadership positions at the school. All seven focus group attendees agreed. They explained that the community, and in particular parents, would expect that placing their kids in an American school, the teachers of their kids and the leaders of the school should be American, and if locals are to be hired it is out of lack of a better option. Local hires are the second-best choice. Expat male teacher (T16/E) explained: "the school is in business only because there are families that want to put their kids in an American school, and so, they need to feel confident that it is an American school. He added that the parents associate that with the quality of the education their kids receive. So, ensuring that there are American teachers "...helps to raise the confidence [in the school] in the eyes of the community."

Local female teacher (T15/L) described the same mentality and went further by stating that many parents' views and attitudes regarding this matter might be a factor behind the discriminatory practice in accountability:

> A lot unfortunately, and I say unfortunately because it is sad, quite a lot of our parent population would want their kids with a foreign hire because they're perceived as they're easy, they don't give too much homework, even their grading is easier, they [kids] get the accent. If they [foreign hire] do something wrong it's OK. But if one local hire made a mistake that is not that of a major mistake, they would trash her in the school. And who listens to them? The administration.

She even attempts to explain that the administration listens to the parents because they are the clients who pay the tuitions and make donations, so they "have to please them". Interestingly, expat male teacher (T4/E) added support to the same point

yet, his response excluded the student level since students normally quickly identify that

many local teachers are of high quality:

> I think that kids are very quick to pick up on this is a talented
> fairly skilled teacher. I think they get over the prejudices very
> quickly once they are in the classroom. So, it is more for the
> people that are outside of the classroom. That's problematic I
> recognize because there will be parents who would come and say
> this is the American school, so why is there a Lebanese Principal.
> There would either have to be a very clear advocacy for that. … it
> is a whole community attitude.

Discriminatory Practices in Allocating Leadership Responsibilities and/or

Appointing to Leadership Positions

For six of the twenty participants, with more of them being expats (43% vs. 23%

locals), another challenge faced by this school in establishing an equitable school

culture is the prevalence of discriminatory practices in allocating leadership

responsibilities and/or appointing to leadership positions in favor of the people with

"foreign passports" as expat male teacher (T4/E) stated. All seven focus group attendees

agreed to this issue. Expat male teacher (T16) echoed teacher (T4/E) in this: "and I have

also heard with regards to leadership roles, how mainly overseas hires get these

leadership roles, and that local hires aren't given the opportunity to even apply or to be

recognized. I was just talking to someone yesterday, he felt he was given a token

interview for a certain position here in a leadership role […] but we [the school] already

made up our mind that this is an overseas hire position." Local female teacher (T2/L)

expanded on this perceived discrimination to give examples:

> The only leadership positions that are occupied by locals are the
> deputy head of school and the curriculum director. However, the
> deputy head has an American passport and lived in the States for a
> while. He also was a close friend to the previous deputy head.
> They live in the same village.

She also added:

> Promotions and key positions are prioritized for expats. Although in the employee handbook, it says that the school does not discriminate, the reality and the practice are different. All Principals (except the Early Years one) and Vice Principals are expats. An expat always occupies the Athletic Director position while there are some solid potential local teachers for the position. The science coordination position was filled by a new expat science teacher rather than the science coordinator of high school at that time or other local teachers who were at school for a long time. The middle school assistant director position was opened, and while many competent locals who have been at school for a long time applied, a new expat was selected.

Local female teacher (T2/L) additionally referred to the trial period that is given to a local person if appointed to a leadership position, while this is not the case for expats:

> In early years, the local person who was selected for the director position was given a trial period before she was given the guarantee of the position, while expats who get into these positions are never given a trial period. And they stay in their positions whether they are good or not (results from surveys in high school and elementary school).

Short Term Stay of Overseas Leaders and Teachers

From the participant answers, it became clear that another perceived challenge to achieving an equitable school culture is that expat teachers and leaders stay for a very short period, until they find a more advantageous package. Fourteen of the twenty teachers mentioned this, with the responses being slightly higher in frequency for local teachers (77% vs. 57% expats), and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to it. Local female teacher (T3/L) testifies about this by stating that: "most of the foreign hires are not committed to the school. They come for few years to further their careers, to have an exotic experience in an exotic place. So, they are not there in the school for a long time." Furthermore, local female teacher (T10/L) describes this short-term stay as follows:

> People who come, foreign hires, they know they are coming for few years, maybe they don't want to invest the time into

considering all of these things. They already have their plans and they're only here for few years and then they are leaving. I am talking about everyone, leaders, and teachers.

As deduced from the participants' answers, this short term stay seems to make it difficult in fact to achieve an equitable culture due to a lack of commitment to changing the school culture, a lack of time or will to developing knowledge about and connecting with the school culture, and not having the time for showing care, developing loyalty, and trust and building appreciation for previous work especially for the long-term contributions of the local hires.

Lack of commitment to making the school culture more equitable. With all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, for thirteen of the twenty teachers (77% of the locals and 43% of the expats) this short stay results in the hiring of leaders who are not committed to understanding the school culture, nor to introducing improvements to it - as local female teacher (T5/L) contended: expats are less likely to engage in improving the school culture because they are mainly concerned with their personal professional advancement rather than with addressing critical issues in the school. She states: "there will always be unhealthy school environments because […] they want in 1 or 2 years leave their imprint and show how great they were, and have their CVs reflect that. So, they will not really have the true intentions to do something real authentic in improving the school."

Participants also explained that due to the short term stay of overseas leaders and teachers, they rarely develop knowledge about and connection to the school culture, or deep understanding of the underlying roots of the challenges faced at the school. As expat female teacher (T9/E) and local female teacher (T5/L) respectively stated: "they can't see anything through in this time period" and "when you are talking about perceptions, when you are talking about unmeasurable things, when you are talking

about feelings and sensitivities, this needs long term work." Local female teacher

(T15/L) stated that "I feel it is related to the turn over. Sometimes we have teachers who

come here for a short period of time. You don't feel they have this connection with the

culture […] I have a principal who did not know my degrees in education […] they have

zero background on me […] my file is there. […] probably them not being curious

about their employees is causing the inequity." Local female teacher (T10/L) further

added that this lack of knowledge can create misjudgment:

> I felt it many times when administrators would misjudge you or
> your capabilities or your professionalism or they ignore it, or they
> don't know about it. They are ignorant about the professionalism
> of their local hire teachers. It's because they come, and they don't
> really investigate into … they don't try to understand or learn
> about who the professionals are in this institution, their
> background, their years of experience maybe.

Local female teacher (T2/L) asserted that there is no will or effort by the expats

to understand what locals go through. She narrated as an example the reaction of the

wife of the High School Assistant Principal when the climate survey results that were

shared with the faculty reflected dissatisfaction among teachers. Rather than engage in a

dialogue about the root causes of the issues that the survey results identified, the key

concern that was pointed out by the high school assistant principal wife was that expats

would feel unwelcome and would not want to come to school. She even was reported to

have accused the local teachers of being lazy and complaining about work. At no point

she tried to inquire about the perspectives of the locals to understand the problem.

Lack of respect for the school history and contributions of senior local

hires. As teacher (T10/L) mentioned above, this short term stay of teachers and leaders

results in them not caring, trusting, or appreciating the previous work done at the school

especially by senior loyal teachers. In fact, six of the twenty teachers referred to this

consequence in their responses. There was a close enough agreement for expats and

locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreed. Local female teacher (T15/L) described the lack of interest in understanding the salience of the contribution of the now senior local teachers, and pointed at specific incidences and behaviors that reflect lack of understanding and recognition for the dedication of the local hires:

> During wars, we were the ones who opened the school. We are the reason the school is open. These things should be taken into consideration. But at this point, what happened? They started [instead] firing people. Is this the way you respect the teachers who came under bombs and fires. This is where, really, for anyone to come and be a leader, they have to know what we've been through, they have to know what the school has been through, and they have to know that the school would have closed years ago if these local teachers did not come under bombs with their kids to open the school. I don't know if they know it. Do they know it? They should know it.

In a similar way, the response of the local female teacher (T6/L) elaborated further this point: "there is no community anymore, there's an establishment to make money and that's it. Get whoever, let them teach whatever, let them do whatever, and things will go on. We don't like whoever, let them go […] they don't care, we don't know where they're coming from." Similarly, expat male teacher (T7/E) captured this lack of respect to the school history and traditions explaining:

> We're changing guards all the time […] So with the new administration, and I am not saying they don't appreciate us, but sometimes you get the sense that they don't care, or that it is not important to them. It's not that they don't value it, it's just not important to them. Because what they are trying to do is what they want to do regardless of whether it fits our culture [history] at this school which I think you have to respect. You may not have lived it at any point in your life, you may not have experienced it but that doesn't mean it doesn't work or it isn't good or effective because it works for who we are. […]

On the other hand, a local female teacher (T20/L) further described that the disrespect to the school traditions and history is reflected in the devaluation of the local teachers who have been the longest at the school: "some of the teachers have been here for a long time and this is becoming like a shame, if you're a long term teacher doesn't

mean you are not innovative, it doesn't mean that you don't read, that you don't…

apply research in your teaching methods and styles in your classroom". Local female

teacher (T12/L) blamed the same feeling of lack of appreciation for senior-tenured

teachers on leaders who are indifferent towards or not aware of the quality of the senior

teachers:

> From another thing, you do a great work, no one sees that […] what am I doing, like no one knows about me […] they expect you to always be creative with students, I think a good school also should be creative with the faculty, surprise us, there is nothing, I have been here 15 years not one single surprise, so, the faculty, what are you doing? As leaders […] if I tell you a good compliment a good word or something you feel good you know, you need this. It's very passive now it feels like everyone is on its own doing their things.

Lack of clear identity and consistent vision for the school. For seven of the

twenty teachers, with more of them being expats (57% vs. 23% locals), another

consequence of the short term stay of expat teachers and leaders is that the school does

not have a clear identity and consistent vision. All seven focus group attendees agreed.

Expat male teacher (T7/E) described the constant turnover and the resulting change, and

associated it with an unclear identity and inconsistent vision for the school:

> We're changing guards all the time. With every change, somebody comes in with a new focus, a new agenda, a new something, and it becomes very difficult to feel that there is continuity in what we pursue, especially if you have been here over a certain amount of time. […] I keep feeling that we're like this house that has never gotten a roof put on yet because they keep changing. Either they'll try to build the walls without the foundation or then they put the foundations and then they put the Jacuzzi, and there are no walls. I feel that way!

He also expressed a sense of loss and a wish for more stability in the school

strategic direction:

> You have the feeling that the last two years, the last three years I have invested in all this and now all of a sudden, we are not going to even talk the same thing. We are going to talk something different.

Local female teacher (T10/L) echoed this by referring to the most recent three High School Principals with very different visions:

> We have challenges, especially that we have different administration changing over the years, and every administration has their own views and plans… because we have changing administrators every few years, the school culture is changing with the administrators that are being here. So unfortunately, I feel we have a moving culture not a stable culture that depends on who's coming next. It's sad. The people who usually come to be in charge of this and then they leave and then there is no continuity in maintaining certain things.

Furthermore, local female teacher (T19/L) summarized it by highlighting that the constant changes in administration lead to constant changes in policies, identity and vision:

> …… mainly the continuous changes in the administration, this leads to continuous changes in the agendas and the policies and everything, so, we are really living a year by year changes because we have to abide by what the administration wants and we cannot change it […] there is no clear identity because everyone wants it his own way, it is not a system, that is continuously applied but it depends on the person himself, not on the whole group, not on the whole community, and that is really a very big challenge. …Now we are living day by day in terms of policies, in terms of laws, ideas, whatever it is, and this is really not healthy for the community.

Teacher (T13/L) and local female teacher (T19/L) also wondered who runs the school, if the Head of School or the Board, and whether the Board, who is absent, is involved in any decision-making at all or the creation of a clear vision for the school.

Administration's Reluctance to Address Inequity Issues with Transparency

For eighteen of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, another challenge faced by this school in establishing an equitable school culture is the reluctance of the administration to address issues of inequity with transparency by seeking and accepting feedback from teachers and acting upon the issues raised accordingly. All seven focus group attendees agreed. This was well

illustrated by local female teacher (T17/L) who refers to an unclear differentiated pay scale and merit pay:

> There is a difference in pay scale, and it is not really clear why, and on what basis, and what is the formula they are using … it is not obvious like it is not written anywhere, but everybody knows.

On the other hand, the perception of a lack of will or care to act upon issues of inequity was well illustrated by what a local female teacher (T6/L) questioned the leaders and Board of the school for, namely the lack of transparency, stating:

> I think it trickles from the top to the bottom, I think it is the administration that has this goal or vision … I don't think they want to address it [inequity]. Are we ever asked? Or if we are asked, is it ever taken into consideration? […] Everything! Do we ever know about what's happening? We never know about what's happening. […]

Moreover, a local female teacher (T3/L) elaborated by relating the case of a committee that was to be formed to compare local and expat salaries, but never concretized:

> I know a few years ago I raised this issue with the Head of the School, and he told me there was going to be a committee whose sole purpose would be to discuss this differentiation between local and foreign. And no committee, if it was ever created by the leadership as promised, no one ever heard about it. I certainly did not get…. I tried once to raise it and it was brushed aside […].

She added that:

> I raised it with the administration and this person who is exactly the same as me, why is this person getting free housing and bla bla bla bla and there was no…like convincing response to that, so it seems that there are sometimes exceptions made, the teachers being given this other treatment, this inequitable treatment simply based on random decisions. I am not sure what they are really. [Even] if we have had leaders who listened but they have basically not done anything about what they have heard.

In fact, expat male teacher (T16/E) referred to many hidden and taboo topics that cannot be discussed, and suggested that policies are not clearly stated and written somewhere leading to a detrimental lack of transparency: "then it keeps people

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guessing, and as soon as the communication breaks down or as soon as things are not discussed in a mature manner and saying this who we are, and this is the direction we need to go." Expat female teacher (T9/E) too kept mentioning the prevalence of a lack of transparency: "there is not a lot of discussion that goes on, so maybe you hear something here, a whisper there, but there is no way to know for sure; it is all kind of done behind the screen." This lack of clarity was well illustrated by expat male teacher (T7/E) who also expressed a certain level of frustration with statements like: "I just feel that … I never know. And when I feel a disconnect with people who are above me and make decisions it really bothers me. Cause I want to be a partner…" Expat female teacher (T11/E) gave a specific example pointing at the lack of a documented pay scale that described the lack of transparency in policies and procedures:

> There is no one location that one can go to and say this is what it is. For example, just even pay scale. All other schools I have worked in there is a scale and a document that says this is what step you have according to your education, according to your years of experience, and so this is what you get paid. I wouldn't know where to find that for our school. That's not transparent.

On the other hand, local female teacher (T5/L) gave an example related to professional development to describe the lack of transparency in policies and procedures:

> Also for the professional development we don't really have a transparent professional development policy that will lead to equal opportunities. Many times, we don't know why X was sent to that workshop or not that one. […] But again, this is where the lack of transparency and the lack of evidence lead people to accuse each other and to increase this split without it being based on real data.

Another local female teacher (T2/L) concluded that there is a lack of will at the school administration level to respond to the issue of inequity that was raised in several forums, even by the students:

> The feelings of unfair treatment exist. […] Two years ago, seniors mentioned an unequal treatment of local and expat teachers in their exit questionnaires which leaders read. Did any leader stop at these? No one acted upon them. But maybe this is what they want: that we close our mouths. […] They do not care about keeping us. They want to get rid of us.

From the participants' testimonies, this lack of clarity and transparency seems to be a main hindrance at the creation of an equitable school culture, and the perceived reason behind encouraging balkanization and engendering an unhappy school climate.

Balkanized professional community. For nine of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement between expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, the reluctance of the administration to address or act upon the issue of inequity is resulting in a divide between the two sub-groups of teachers, the locals and the expats that is exacerbating the lack of trust and the feeling of inequity. Local female teacher (T20/L) described the divide between both groups as a gap that "is getting bigger and bigger and bigger, and we are feeling isolated as local hires. And don't forget that the foreign hires also are feeling isolated in a way." This point was well explained by local female teacher (T2/L) who holds leaders responsible for a growing lack of trust among the teachers and for increasing the divide between locals and expats:

> Two years ago, seniors mentioned an unequal treatment of local and expat teachers in their exit questionnaires which leaders read. Did any leader stop at these? No one acted upon them. This leads to a difficulty in building trusting relationships between local and expat teachers, as well as between leaders and teachers. Undercurrents exist and create a toxic culture. Collegiality is compromised. Instead of addressing this, leaders blame a toxic environment on the local teachers that are not open to new ways, that take things personal, that are not collaborative, etc.

Similarly, expat female teacher (T9/E) raised this issue of divisiveness connecting it specifically to the differential in the salary scale:

Since I only heard a little bit about salaries and things, if that is true, if there is disparity between the salaries, then this would be one example that could be impeding school culture because it sets up a divide between the staff which is unfortunate […] again creates an unhealthy relationship between the two groups.

She also mentioned that this friction exists in all international schools that have a high percentage of local teachers.

Local female teacher (T3/L) mentioned that there is a clear division between the local hires and the foreign hires. She characterized it as "deep rooted" as it covers a broad range of school functioning, and highlighted that though this division is well felt, it is highly unspoken about:

The division I think is deep rooted. I think there is a difference in terms of treatment, in terms of pay, in terms of benefits, in terms of prospect, opportunities, so I think there is very little equity between these and I think the division is mostly not spoken about. It is there, I think everybody feels it. I think local hire mostly are quite aware of the differentiation between these two groups of people.

Two other local female teachers (T5/L) and (T19/L) used the school survey to further describe this divide. Teacher (T5/L) said:

The school climate surveys have always showed […] recently there was a clear and serious concern about the split between the foreign and local hires […] each one is accusing the other of things which may not be true, and I don't believe the school has been transparent enough in its plan to address this split.

On the other hand, expat female teacher (T11/E) related the perspective of the new expat hires regarding this divide as they join the school pointing out that they also painfully feel that the local colleagues have a stigma towards them as being the favored colleagues. She mentioned that though this unequal treatment is prevalent in most international schools, the fact that this divide exists poses a serious challenge: "it's hard to build relationships with colleagues when they feel they are not treated the same. And

it's a shame. It's definitely something international schools don't take care of their local staff as well as they should."

Unsatisfied and demoralized workforce. For seventeen of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, the persistence of this discrimination and the lack of transparency create a non-trusting climate with unsatisfied and demoralized teachers. All seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue. Indeed, expat male teacher (T16/E) while referring to many hidden and taboo topics that cannot be discussed, states that the lack of transparency is detrimental: "then it keeps people guessing, and as soon as the communication breaks down or as soon as things are not discussed in a mature manner and saying this who we are and this is the direction we need to go […] then it will always cause confusion and questions and that is going to lead to people being frustrated." Indeed, the fact that discriminatory practices are perceived to prevail led expat female teacher (T9/E) to express her strong empathy to local hires: "I would have been pretty upset if I have been working here for a number of years and the foreign hires come in and there is a scramble to give them money to stay, and if I was a local hire I would be like "how about me?", it is very unhealthy I would think." Another expat male teacher (T14/E) gave a similar account by stating: "I talked to some people sometimes and there have been several people who have been here for many years and it's almost a hopelessness that they feel like nothing is going to change, because it's always been this way".

In parallel, local female teachers (T2/L), (T3/L), (T5/L) and (T20/L) described the disturbing morphing of the school environment to an unhappy one in which local teachers lose their motivation to work and struggle with developing any sense of commitment to the school. This was well captured by local female teacher (T2/L) who

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described how leaders blame local teachers for a lack of engagement which, conversely, she attributes to the lack of trust and transparency:

> It is so demoralizing that we stop wanting to speak with these people or even share any enthusiasm. This was not the climate before and now I am so tense when I go to school. I used to love going to school. Now I am unhappy. And then when teachers start being more quiet or absent because of this, some leaders say: "you see, locals don't contribute; don't add anything to the school." Of course, if we are not feeling welcome or empowered. I wonder sometimes if it is even a scheme.

This feeling of low morale coupled with helplessness seemed to prevail in teachers' answers, especially the local teachers' ones, as they reported feeling abused and unsupported. This was apparent in the response of a local female teacher (T15/L) when she reported feeling powerless in the face of what they perceived as being unfairly treated. She wondered: "who to go to, who to talk to? Quite a lot of these mistakes… someone else will sue the school, for sure." The same teacher explained that this sense of frustration seems to become accentuated because local teachers would not voice their concerns or fight for their rights as they felt their jobs were not secured and feared not being offered a new contract. She even accused the school for abusing this insecurity:

> Unfortunately, sometimes we feel that we're looked down upon as if we are, when you ask for what is rightfully yours, that you are probably a threat, even if you say it in a very respectful way, even if you say it with evidence. Yes, there is always this fear of this is the last year; they will not renew our contract. […] probably also because this is how they hold us, that teacher needs her job, I can do whatever I want, that teacher needs her job. She cannot leave, and this is very unethical. If this is the way they're thinking, and I am assuming quite a lot of it comes like that, it's very unethical.

From a different angle, local female teacher (T12/L) attributed the unhappiness of the teachers to the lack of clarity of whether leaders appreciate them or not since they rarely give encouragement or praising statements but rather only stress on negatives, while expat male teacher (T8/E) attributed the feelings of unhappiness to what they perceived as prevalent nepotism:

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> … there is a lot of nepotism, there is a lot of who do you know? "Wasta" sort of thing, that really creates a demoralizing climate for the school, because if you're not IN, with where you need to be IN or who you need to be IN with, you don't necessarily get to take advantage of the opportunities that you really want, and that you really are entitled to, I think as a professional, so you don't feel like you're a professional, or that you're treated as a professional because everything is sort of just wishy-washy, there are apparently guidelines and policies in the handbook but they're not always followed.

Briefly, teacher (T20/L) evidenced the unhappiness by "the teacher's faces when we're leaving school" and said: "no, it's not fair."

To conclude, there are many challenges faced by this school that hinder the establishment of an equitable school culture according to the participants. These challenges are: preferential hiring packages being offered for expatriates resulting in divisive practices, discriminatory accountability practices, dismissive attitudes towards local teachers, discriminatory practices in allocating leadership responsibilities and/or appointing to leadership positions, short term stay of overseas leaders and teachers making it hard to reach an equitable school culture, and the administration reluctance to address and act on issues of inequity with transparency.

The Required Organizational Conditions for the Creation of an Equitable School Culture in a Diverse Context

In this section, the required organizational conditions in ensuring an equitable school culture are presented. This analysis is illustrated in table 5 below and described in more depth further on.

Table 5

The Required Organizational Conditions for Ensuring the Creation of an Equitable School Culture in a Diverse Context

			Total responses N=20	Responses of teachers by hire	
				Locals N=13	Expats N=7
a.	Proactive school leadership in ensuring equity by:		**20 (100%)**	13 (100%)	7 (100%)
	i)	Respecting diversity and being advocates for equity	**9 (45%)**	5 (38%)	4 (57%)
	ii)	Encouraging and listening to all teachers' input	**12 (60%)**	7 (54%)	5 (71%)
	iii)	Developing knowledge and understanding of the school culture	**14 (70%)**	10 (77%)	4 (57%)
	iv)	Valuing and respecting the local community culture	**8 (40%)**	4 (31%)	4 (57%)
b.	Amending discriminatory policies		**13 (65%)**	7 (54%)	6 (86%)
	i)	Ensuring equity in hiring and compensation packages	**5 (25%)**	3 (23%)	2 (28%)
	ii)	Ensuring equity in advancement opportunities and professional development	**5 (25%)**	3 (23%)	2 (28%)
	iii)	Ensuring equity in accountability	**6 (30%)**	3 (23%)	3 (43%)
	iv)	Ensuring transparency in all processes, decisions and policies	**13 (65%)**	7 (54%)	6 (86%)
c.	Adopting a long-term clear vision and reinforcing a unifying school identity		**7 (35%)**	4 (31%)	3 (43%)
d.	Ensuring the hiring of leaders who are advocates of social justice		**7 (35%)**	4 (31%)	3 (43%)
e.	Appointing an external audit to hold the school accountable for ensuring an equitable school culture		**2 (10%)**	2 (15%)	0 (0%)

All respondents touched upon the central proactive role of the school leadership and Board of trustees. Respondents recommended that for ensuring an equitable school culture, the following conditions should be in place: amending discriminatory policies and ensuring equity in their implementation, adopting a long-term clear vision that reinforces a unifying school identity as well as appointing an external audit to hold the school accountable.

Proactive School Leadership in Ensuring Equity

All interviewed teachers touched upon the central role of the school leadership and Board of trustees to ensure an equitable school culture. All seven focus group

attendees agreed. Expat male teacher (T14/E) explained it by stating: "I feel in every school I have been in, that a school reflects its top leader. The Headmaster, it's his role to set that climate, and it's every committee down from there, whether be it the facilitators of every division, the Principals, the Vice Principals." Similarly, expat male teacher (T8/E) stressed on the importance of role-modeling of leaders in terms of ethical and professional behaviors required for the creation of an equitable school culture:

> The conditions just require ethical and professional behavior on the part of the people that are in the school, and hopefully that starts with modelling from the top in leading by example. It's the same with professionals in the work place, if you have the high expectations and the high standards of the work place being led by example, people naturally will follow that and fulfill those expectations, and then those same people in another school may not, just depending on how they're led. It really comes down to leadership and example.

In fact, from the testimonies of the teachers, it appeared that this proactive role of leaders should be manifested through a belief in respecting diversity and advocating for it, through actively encouraging and listening to all teachers' input, valuing, and respecting the school culture and developing knowledge and understanding of the school culture.

Respecting diversity and being advocates for equity. For nine out of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing, an equitable school culture requires that leaders primarily are not biased, show respect for teachers' diversity, and celebrate it. Local female teacher (T2/L) stated: "to ensure an equitable school culture, leaders have to make sure all differences are welcomed and seen as richness rather than a way to favor one group over another. Leaders should encourage, promote and celebrate the differences." Expat male teacher (T7/E) and expat female (T9/E) added that leaders should be able to work with people from different backgrounds, with fairness and

without alienating anyone while local female teacher (T17/L) stressed on possessing a character that embraces diversity:

> They need to be open, to different views, different perspectives, should have a character that believes in the right of everybody to express his/her concern. Not only that, to be worked on to reach a certain harmony between the different groups.

Encouraging and listening to all teachers' input. Twelve of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees pointed out that to ensure an equitable school culture, leaders should actively encourage, teachers' input and listen to their voice. Expat male teacher (T14/E) mentioned that "this is critical for any school, to have that open communication, and that a leader is flexible and willing to listen." Expat male teachers (T7/E) and (T14/E), expat female teacher (T11/E) and local female teacher (T3/L) expressed this by mentioning that leaders should listen to the teachers, "give all teachers a voice" and give "people the opportunity to discuss", as local female teacher (T3/L) stated:

> I think a leader should be someone who listens to the faculty, to the staff, someone who is willing to not only solicit people's perspectives and points of views but also want to act upon them. I think it should be someone who encourages honesty and clarity and who values fairness.

Expat female teacher (T9/E) went further by mentioning that a leader should "be willing to come to you and talk to you about things" and not "alienate people", and local female teachers (T17/L) and (T19/L) added that a leader should be someone who is open, who will listen and compromise, who has "excellent listening skills and communication skills". Moreover, local female teachers (T3/L), (T6/L), (T17/L), (T18/L) and (T20/L) and expat male teacher (T7/E) suggested facilitating this process and increasing representativeness through establishing a committee that includes staff, leaders, Board members and teachers who would be chosen by the faculty to speak for everybody, as teacher (T17/L) proposed too:

I believe that to ensure this, the responsible for equity in opportunity should be a committee, and that committee should include board members, learning team, leadership team, representatives of teachers from different divisions, from local and foreigners, from new and old, students, parents and also we need to have people from outside so to be like facilitators and people from you know an outer perspective. This way you ensure that no one is not heard, and you ensure that there are people that are there representing their sub-groups in the community and they're voicing their concerns, and making sure that nothing is passing without anybody knowing.

Expat male teacher (T14/E) stressed on adopting a participative and inclusive decision-making process by stating that "it should be a conscious decision, that when decisions are made, all stakeholders are portrayed." Local female teacher (T5/L) explained the importance of having open forums in which people can express their perceptions, since silencing them hinders any progress towards establishing an equitable school culture:

Because if those who feel that they are treated unjustly they don't talk, then they also foster this, and it increases this unfairness … it will become like you empower those who are in this unequitable culture by being silent. Like it's like devil. Being silent in this case it just encourages the unfairness to continue and the wrong perceptions to continue until they become… as if they become reality to a certain extent.

Developing knowledge and understanding of the school culture. For fourteen of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, to ensure an equitable school culture, leaders must make an intentional effort to get to know the school culture by getting to know teachers and making connections and speaking with them. All seven focus group attendees agreed. This was well captured by local female teacher (T5/L) who stated:

The leaders need to be more aware of the cultural differences, and more sensitive to the cultural differences that exist among the faculty […] These are people who are all the time in contact with their faculty and not behind closed doors or in meetings or in observations. […] They need to know their faculties. They need to show support and empathy. They need to remove this culture of

fear in which teachers will fake stuff for their evaluation because they are afraid of losing their job. This is when all of this is removed, there is trust … they inspire … they foster trust in the school, then these are the leaders that will be eligible to address equity in the school culture.

Local female teacher (T15/L) added the personal component and went further by encouraging leaders to access the files of the teachers to get to know them as professionals:

They should know who we are. You have to be curious enough to open our files and get to know us. Who are we? Why have we stayed that long? There's a reason. If you're incapable, probably they'll ask you to leave. I want them to open these files and read through them and ask in the community. I mean…We're very deep roots. It's difficult to pluck us out you know. We have roots aged 20, 30, 40 years, it's not easy to pluck them out. So probably they need to be more curious about their employees. When they're curious about us, probably that positive push gives a positive vibe that definitely penetrates through the students and though this whole community.

Local female teachers (T10/L), (T13/L) and (T15/L) added that leaders should get to know and understand the societal culture before even coming to the school, as teacher (T15/L) explained:

You cannot underestimate our beliefs and our culture. This is truly why I would support that whoever wants to come and teach in this culture, they really need to be educated about our culture, and they need to show respect about our culture. Leadership should be aware of first thing who are the employees that have been here for some time, who are the new employees who are coming, and what are the personal aspects that they have that they've hired them for. For anyone to come and be a leader, they have to know where they're coming.

Teacher (T13/L) discussed a specific aspect related to the local celebrations like Ramadan and Eid that the leaders need to know more about:

I will give you an example, when it is Ramadan, they cannot keep everyone till 4 when 4:30 is when we break our fast, because breaking our fast is not just eating anything, it is like a big thing to us here in this country. Those are maybe small details that have nothing to do with teaching and the school running and all of that, but it is very important for the person, when he feels that he is

> respected in that, plus if I want to add to this part, even for the Eid, those are important moments for us, the same way two days before Christmas is important for the Christians. These should not be debatable they should not wait for someone ask for these.

Moreover, teacher (T15/L) explained that new leaders need to inquire about the school history and develop and understanding of its organizational culture:

> They must know what we've been through, they have to know what the school has been through, and they have to know that the school would have closed years ago if these local teachers did not come under bombs with their kids to open the school.

Lastly, all present teachers in the focus group suggested that this study should be shared with the Head of School so that he knows about the challenges, and an expat male teacher in the focus group added that this study should be shared with the Board of Trustees of the school for them to be aware of the issues, as well as with the NESA Board.

Valuing and respecting the school culture. For eight of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, leaders should not only get to know the culture but also visibly show care for, respect for and value the school culture, to ensure an equitable school culture. Expat male teacher (T16/E) related the caring for the school culture to the expected characteristics that leaders should possess like being approachable, well-meaning, showing empathy, compassion and a true interest in all teachers, having a good sense of humor and handling all issues with fairness and a light heart. On the other hand, local female teacher (T17/L) focused on the respect that leaders should have for all school members, local and expat, to ensure everyone feels part of the school culture:

> And the most important character trait is respect. If a leader has respect for everybody in their community, whether it's a student, a parent, a new teacher, an old teacher, a local teacher, a foreign teacher, then all of those things could be developed […] and makes everybody feel I am valuable here. My job is worth spending my time and my use in it. Everybody will be happy.

Local female teacher (T17/L) particularly stated that one way that leaders can demonstrate their respect for the school culture is by respecting the experience of teachers who have been at the school for a long time.

Amending Discriminatory Policies

According to thirteen of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, one of the issues that need addressing is ensuring that there is equity in policies. Expat male teacher (T4/E) summarized that the policies that need to be amended or added to ensure equity are in hiring and compensation packages: "So with regards to procedures and policies, dealing with the salary scale", in opportunities and professional development regardless of origin of hire:

> dealing with professional development, and dealing with opportunities for leadership within the school, HODs or to the extent that you can say you move up if you become a curriculum director or an assistant Principal, not necessarily I think it is up, but if the situation would be that if there would be an opening for the assistant Principal and this is not a passport required position which is certainly what it feels like, this would be a good thing.

Other teachers mentioned a need to ensure equity in accountability measures. There was also agreement on the need to ensure transparency in all processes, decisions and policies, and that the rules are applied equally by all, "so that everybody feels like safe", as local female teacher (T1/L) stated. Local female teacher (T2/L) explained that the school leaders should actively promote equity and justice, thus challenging the status quo. She stated that they should not accept such inequities, and that they should constantly bring the issue at board meetings. She also asked that they ensure that documented policies are enforced and implemented:

> Although on paper it says that there is no differentiation made based on race, nationality (etc.) the reality is different. Leaders

must make sure that the written document and the lived reality match and are compatible.

Ensuring equity in hiring and compensation packages. Analysis of the responses show that five of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, agreed that there should be equity in the hiring policies themselves and in offering equitable hiring opportunities. All seven focus group attendees also agreed. Ensuring equitable salaries and benefits, including durations of contracts is one of the policies that were repeatedly mentioned. Local female teacher (T3/L) referred to a fair pay according to experience and qualifications rather than origin of hire or any other factor, an idea also mentioned by local female teacher (T2/L): "leaders should also ensure no teacher is treated differently based on local expat hiring. The only factor would be effective teaching. All employees should get the same benefits and salaries for the same jobs performed and not differently because of hiring origin." Similarly, expat female teacher (T8/E) explained that equity in hiring can be achieved by focusing on the quality of work as follows: "leadership is going to make sure they hire people and retain only people who are professional and who will work hard to contribute positively to the school culture". Expat female teacher (T9/E) and local female teacher (T3/L) also stressed on making enforcing equity a budget priority by the school: "and if it is an issue of not being able to afford, I think, you know, so much money is wasted that I think giving teachers fair pay, fair opportunities, it should be a priority, and not somewhere down on the list of priorities." Teacher (T9/E) suggested that for this to happen, tuition should be raised.

From another perspective, for three of the twenty teachers, all being expats, equity could be ensured by hiring teachers who are all locals or all expats. All seven focus group attendees agreed. The school should decide about this.

Ensuring equity in advancement opportunities and professional

development. For five of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats

and locals, another policy singled out for amendment is related to professional

development and growth opportunities. All seven focus group attendees agreed. Local

female teacher (T2/L) explained that teachers' promotions should not be linked to hiring

origin:

> Leaders should promote employees because of their expertise
> rather than having the priority because they are expats. Where
> possible, one local and one expat should be put in given positions
> rather than all expats. For example, the Principal can be an expat
> but the associate Principal can be a local.

She links this to the friendships and explains that promotions should not be

linked to the possible friendships that leaders have with expat teachers: "leaders should

not be friends with expat hires if not also possibly with local teachers" said local female

teacher (T2/L), and she added: "leaders should empower all teachers equally and should

include them all in the decision making." Expat male teacher (T4/E) expanded on this

aspect explaining that teachers should be given equal opportunities for advancement and

that their nationality should not factor in as one of the criteria. He stated that promotion

to leadership positions at the school "should not be a passport thing" and expressed that

"there needs to be an open opportunity."

Ensuring equity in accountability. For six of the twenty teachers, with a close

enough agreement for expats and locals, another one of the policies that leaders should

make sure to be equitable is in relation to accountability. All seven focus group

attendees agreed. This was well explained by local female teacher (T2/L):

> The only factor would be effective teaching. All teachers should
> feel supported, respected, appreciated because they do a good job.
> Teachers who don't do a good job should be addressed equally,
> whether they are local or expat. Leaders should support all
> teachers equally in their jobs and where there is a needed missing
> skill, leaders should provide the appropriate professional

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development. […] Teachers all have to prove themselves as competent – not only locals who feel they should do so much more to be "liked" and appreciated.

Expat female teachers (T8/E) and (T9/E) urged leaders to be strong and decisive in asking people who are not performing well to leave and being "more proactive in terminating people on either side of the fence that are ineffective":

There needs to be accountability and the leadership needs to make that clear that there is a very consistent accountability. It takes a strong leader to be able to say "I am sorry, we have worked with you through these issues but you're still not performing to the expectations that we have and we are going to have to let you go", whereas it is easier to just continue and let things be without rocking the boat, sort of say.

Furthermore, expat female teacher (T8/E) stressed on the equity affirming that the school leadership needs to ensure that policies are being implemented consistently if they intend to build a culture of equity in the school:

If leadership is strong and is very intentional and wants to create a culture of equity and professionalism in the school then they are going to do all of those things in terms of implementing policy and accountability and consistency, transparency.

Ensuring transparency in all processes, decisions, and policies. The participants' responses reflected their views that for the school to become equitable, amendment to policies need to also include ensuring a high level of transparency. In fact, for thirteen of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, to ensure equitable school culture, there should be clarity through more transparency in policies as all thirteen teachers suggested, and in decision making, as expat male teachers (T4/E), (T8/E), and (T16/E), expat female teacher (T11/E) and local females (T5/L) and (T10/L) asked for, in particular in relation to professional development. Local female teachers (T17/L) added:

> I believe to diminish the impact of human beings in contaminating any institution with lack of equity we need to have clearly stated and very strict policies and rules that cover personnel and hiring, evaluation, involvement of teachers in decision making

Furthermore, local female teacher (T17/L) suggested that greater accountability need to be implemented with evidence to be shared with the community for a greater and improved transparency:

> Not only having those rules, making sure they are put in action, and every year, there should be a report on how all those rules were activated and what came out of them. There is a difference of having rules and they're hidden in drawers and whatever is being done is different, and by reporting back and sharing with the community those are the rules, this is what we did this year to ensure we have them. Rules are there to control human misconduct or human abuse of systems, and making sure that there is reporting there and documents of every year's activities that ensures this equal opportunity – if we want it, if the institution wants it be there.

It is worthwhile to note that some teachers saw that rules have to be the same for all teachers, while interestingly, others felt rules needed to be based on the different needs of teachers. In fact, for five of the twenty teachers, addressing discriminatory practices includes ensuring the consistent application of rules by all regardless of whether they are locals or expats. There was a close enough agreement for expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue.

On the other hand, for three of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, addressing discriminatory practices include ensuring the application of rules according to the different needs of the teachers. Local female teacher (T13/L) explained:

> Sometimes when it comes to equity, it doesn't mean to apply the same rule for everyone, whatever is convenient to me may not be convenient to you, so take some of the personal needs of the teachers in terms of their time, their working habits, the way they approach things, and then help them, support them in that to

become more efficient, what make you become more efficient teacher may not apply to me, so my needs may be different on a personal level than your needs, so get more into the personal needs and happiness of every single person, there is no one recipe for everyone's happiness or well-being. In term of rules, they may have a common rule but it has to go into details, it doesn't mean that I break the rule for you different from…

She explained that this would create a happier teacher workforce:

It is like making adjustments to different people within certain parameters to make sure that you are happy, you are more productive under your specific current.

Moreover, expat male teacher (T16) expressed his belief in differentiated policies but illustrated it through presenting it in relation to professional development:

Perhaps a more inexperienced teacher needs to get more professional development, and if someone is given that benefit, then an experienced teacher of 30 years, in my opinion, shouldn't feel that this is now inequitable because this is helping the school community, being fair doesn't mean everything has to be the same. But what they should be able to know is that they have also benefits, if they have needs that these also be addressed, and that overall, at the end of the day, there will be some sort of balancing of the pendulum.

Adopting a Long-Term Clear Vision and Reinforcing a Unifying School Identity

For seven of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, school leaders need to clarify a long-term unifying identity and vision for the entire school away from prejudice and that transcends the agenda of individual principals, to ensure an equitable school culture. All seven focus group attendees agreed. Expat female teacher (T9/E) and expat male teacher (T16/E) joined expat male teacher (T7/E) in agreeing that the Board is crucial in identifying "who we are" and that this identity cannot be shaken each time someone new comes in:

It certainly must come from top down. It certainly has to come from the Administration. I think even the Board need to say this is the type of school we want to foster and then we put in the people that will move that forward [...] no matter who we bring in at least the foundation will carry them.

Ensuring the Hiring of Leaders who are Advocates of Social Justice

An equitable school culture requires that the organization makes it intentional to ensure the hiring of leaders who are advocates of social justice and who have all the necessary characteristics for an equitable school culture, as well as ensuring that all overseas hires come with no prejudices and show an open-mind. In fact, for seven of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for expats and locals, the characteristics of the hired leaders are key to ensuring an equitable school culture and these should be sought, assessed and conditional throughout the hiring process of leaders. All seven focus group attendees agreed. From the participants' responses, it was clear that they believed in the leaders playing a role as advocates of social justice to enforce an equitable culture. Local female teacher (T5/L) explained that the recruitment of the Headmaster must take into consideration equity while addressing academic and budget issues. She explained that advocacy for equity should be a collective responsibility that is led by the higher administration in the school, including the Board of Trustees. She also added:

> There should be what are you plans to ensure an equitable culture. It needs to be part of the recruitment. And for teachers, and for Principals, and for higher administrators as well. Everybody has a responsibility, and in recruitment, you need to ask, what is going to be your role in promoting and equitable culture.

Moreover, interviewed teachers described an effective leader' profile and characteristics for an equitable school culture. They all agreed that leaders must hold social justice beliefs in addition to their expertise. There was agreement that leaders who are hired should be knowledgeable, strong, good problem-solvers, good investigators, good communicators, solution oriented, organized, have a good sense of humor, authentically respectful, unbiased, non-judgmental, good listeners, understanding, approachable, caring, patient and open-minded. These leaders should

bring the community together and solve the problems of inequity, and should have high

emotional intelligence. This profile was well summarized by expat male teacher (T16/E)

who considered that the social justice leader should be:

> Approachable, first thing, faculty should not feel afraid to ask these questions, they should feel that their questions will be addressed seriously, with compassion, with empathy, so that these leaders show that they are truly interested in all of their diverse faculty members in the different areas, beliefs they come with, or situations they come with, so they should be approachable, they should be able to give a frank feedback, but also, it should be well-meaning, and not just this is it, take it or leave it, but well-meaning done with empathy for the faculty, they should be well organized as well, to be able to keep track of all the different moving pieces, well informed, clear communication, good communicators, and empathetic. I think they need to [have] a good sense of humor [that] keeps us through, going through the day with a smile.

Interestingly, for four of the twenty teachers, with a close enough agreement for

expats and locals, and all seven focus group attendees agreeing to this issue, it seemed

important to make sure that when hiring expat teachers too, leaders screen them for any

prejudices and open mindedness. This was well captured by expat male teacher (T4/E):

> In the interview process, you get sort of a feel whether people have an attitude of that I am not coming in as God's gift to Beirut. I know of the school's long history. I know enough that my colleagues who all have 20 years of experience. [...] Hire people who have an equitable point of view. Have administrators and teachers and staff members and school leaders and even parents who through experience recognize that there can't be any stereotyping. There may be teachers of both types who are talented and skilled and wonderful. You can have overseas and local teachers that are just wonderful educators. There can also be weak people on both sides. So that would be a necessary condition.

Appointing an External Audit to Hold the School Accountable for Ensuring an

Equitable School Culture

For two of the twenty teachers, both being local females, the ensuring of an

equitable school culture should also be monitored by an external authority that can hold

the school accountable for that. All seven focus group attendees agreed to this issue.

This external authority could be the government, and teacher (T15/L) gave the example

from another country in which this happens:

> I know from a lot of schools in the UAE, if there is a teacher who
> is not teaching appropriately or who is being sarcastic with kids, a
> government official comes to the school to check on that teacher
> and gives recommendations. And if that teacher is not fit, the
> government has the right to kick them out. Where if a teacher is
> here, if she's coming for site seeing, she is not doing her job, the
> parents have approached the Principal and the headmaster and
> nothing has been done. They have the power. Now I am not
> saying any power. I am saying the power that they have to track.
> The school has to document these things, that this teacher had this
> infraction, this, this, this, and so what do we do?

Furthermore, the external authority could be the accreditation or the IB

organization, as teacher (T17/L) suggested:

> I am talking that I wish we have some kind of an external
> authority like the accreditation team or like the IB authorization
> committee that would impose this [equity] to happen for this
> school to get its accreditation or authorization. Other than that, the
> system will continue the way it is […] And communication, yeah,
> it could happen, but no ears to hear. I think we need an external
> authority that will impose it

Two local female teachers in the focus group suggested that this study should be

shared with the ministry of education so that laws are created to protect local teachers

from discriminatory practices in international schools. They mentioned that in other

countries, such laws are put in place.

To conclude, when the teacher participants were asked to reflect on the required

organizational conditions to ensure an equitable school culture, all touched upon the

central proactive role of the school leadership and Board of trustees. Analysis of the

participants responses led to identifying the following conditions that respondents

recommended for ensuring an equitable school culture: amending discriminatory

policies and ensuring equity in their implementation, adopting a long-term clear vision

that reinforces a unifying school identity as well as appointing an external audit to hold the school accountable.

Conclusion

The results of the study indicated that respondents understand what the characteristics of an equitable school culture in a diverse setting are. Respondents see that in an equitable school, all teachers are treated equitably in terms of salaries and benefits, accountability and support by leaders, access to opportunities, and in terms of addressing their different needs. Some teachers mentioned that in an equitable school, there is collegiality and tolerance.

The results also indicated that there are many challenges faced by this school that hinder the establishment of an equitable school culture. These challenges are: preferential hiring packages being offered for expatriates resulting in divisive practices, discriminatory accountability practices, dismissive attitudes towards local teachers, discriminatory practices in allocating leadership responsibilities and/or appointing to leadership positions, short term stay of overseas leaders and teachers making it hard to reach an equitable school culture, and the administration reluctance to address and act on issues of inequity with transparency.

The required conditions to ensure an equitable school culture that were derived from the empirical results were: a proactive leadership that prioritizes addressing issues of inequity openly and transparently, amending discriminatory policies and ensuring equity in their implementation, adopting a long-term clear vision that reinforces a unifying school identity, as well as appointing an external audit to hold the school accountable.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, RECOMMENDATIONS

This study followed a qualitative exploratory research design. Data was collected and analyzed to explore the perceptions of teachers of an equitable school culture in a private international Lebanese school comprising two subcultures of teachers, the local and the expatriate (with leaders possibly tending to belong mainly to the latter). It had a three-fold purpose: (1) to gauge teachers' perceptions of an equitable school culture; (2) to gauge teachers' perceptions of the challenges faced by their school while establishing an equitable school culture in this diverse context; (3) to gauge teachers' perceptions of the required organizational conditions for ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture within such a diverse context. This chapter discusses the results of the study and presents the conclusion and recommendations. The first section discusses the conceptions of the respondents of an equitable school culture in light of the literature on equitable school cultures reviewed for this study. The second section brings the study to a conclusion. The last section offers implications for practice and recommendations for further research.

Discussion

The respondents' views will be discussed under four main headings: (1) the vision of an equitable school, (2) the current balkanized inequitable school culture, (3) the challenges impeding building an equitable culture, and (4) the conditions for an equitable school culture.

The Vision of an Equitable School Culture

As deduced from the results of the study, it appears that the interviewed teachers have a clear understanding of the meaning of equity, of the characteristics of an equitable school culture and of the role of the leaders in building this equitable culture,

which corresponds to definitions reviewed in the literature. However, the focus of their view dealt exclusively with equity related to treating teachers while the literature mostly focused on equity as it relates to serving all students. While many components of their definition overlapped with the basic tenets of equitable cultures and the leadership and organizational dimensions that characterize it, it was clear that the expressed view is shaped by the grievances of the respondents from perceived discriminatory practices directed at local teachers within the context of an international school with a diverse teacher national belonging.

Based on the responses of the teachers, an equitable school culture is defined as one in which: (1) a unifying vision that addresses equity is shared and actively implemented; (2) transparency and equity in policies and accountability processes prevail; (3) all stakeholders are equally respected, have an equal voice, and are listened to; (4) leadership is intentionally trained with the required skills to lead for social equity, valuing all stakeholders equally for the quality of their work and impact they have on student learning rather than for their origin of hire; (5) leaders make an intentional effort to act on any issues of inequity which become a priority for an effective learning school environment; and (6) potential issues of inequity are addressed and discussed openly and proactively. In what follows, the results related to teachers' perceptions of the characteristics of an equitable school culture in a diverse setting will be discussed under two main themes: (1) the organizational characteristics in an equitable school culture, and (2) the leadership characteristics for an equitable school culture.

The organizational characteristics. The results indicate that an equitable school culture is viewed as one that embraces diversity and resolves prevalent prejudices and discriminatory practices. This can be achieved through having a unified

school identity that adopts a vision of advocacy for social justice. In such a culture, the respondents emphasized the fact that equity manifests itself in treating and valuing all teachers equally, regardless of hire origin, and consider them all essential partners in the school decision making processes. Furthermore, the results indicate that an equitable school culture is viewed as one where there is equity for all employees in terms of salaries, benefits, and opportunities. Accountability and policies covering hiring, compensation, benefits, and opportunities are also stated clearly and transparently. This description seems to correspond with the meaning of equitable cultures stated in the Business Dictionary online: equity is "fairness and impartiality towards all concerned, based on the principles of evenhanded dealing" and it "implies giving as much advantage, consideration, or latitude to one party as it is given to another." It also resonates with the general principles found in existing research to characterize positive and equitable school (Boyd et al., 2011; Kaplan & Owings, 2013; Peterson & Deal, 1998). However, these reported characteristics did not emerge in studies on equitable school cultures that focus on expat teachers and employees in a diverse school setting. Rather, these characteristics were enlisted in studies which addressed equity with regard to students' race or gender or social status (Bosu et al., 2011; DiMartino & Miles, 2005; Hanushek & Luque, 2003; Ryan, 2006, Ryan, 2010). Inequitable treatment of teachers has not been considered as a priority among international researchers in face of the prevalent inequities related to students. In contrast, results of this study revealed that the prevailing inequitable practices within the school context are those directed to the teachers and not to the students. While aware of the characteristics of an equitable culture, respondents pointed out that these practices are prevalent in their school. It can be, thus, inferred that the view of an equitable school culture that neglects any mention of students, and that is only centered on teachers seem to have emerged from the

grievances of teachers in a setting that advocates for the values of equity while still engulfed in a societal culture where there are no protective laws against such discriminatory practices.

The leadership characteristics. Based on the results, the role of leaders in ensuring an equitable school culture is believed to be fundamental. Leaders must give the school culture and climate active attention for it to become equitable. This finds confirmation in the literature as researchers have found that positive school cultures are characterized by an inspiring vision and leadership (Peterson & Deal, 1998, Boyd et al., 2011, Kaplan & Owings, 2013). In fact, many researchers concluded that principals play a key role in shaping school culture, and recommended that those principals be actively engaged in creating a healthy school culture (Leithwood et al., 2010; Peterson and Deal, 1998; Price, 2012; Schein, 2011). In line with the literature, the results from the study allocate a central role to school leaders believing that they can create an equitable school culture by (1) building relationship of trust, (2) respecting and embracing diversity, (3) being caring, and (4) being social justice advocates.

Building relationship of trust. As based on the study results, there is a clear understanding that to enforce an equitable culture, leaders must possess the predispositions needed to build relationships of trust with and among their diverse school members, such as having a good sense of humor, being good communicators, solution oriented, authentically respectful, good listeners, patient and open-minded. These characteristics are commensurate with leading effectively in a diverse setting, and resonate with the interpersonal skills that are found essential in dealing with the complexities and differences of a multi-cultural setting (Webber & Lupart, 2011). Empirical studies confirm that leaders of equitable cultures build trust between teachers and administrators, and promote a positive school climate by being approachable, by

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being good problem-solvers and by involving teachers (Hulpia & Devos, 2010; Price, 2012; Roby, 2010).

Respecting and valuing diversity. According to the results, leaders' contribution to building an equitable school can be achieved by avoiding bias, showing respect for teachers' diversity and celebrating it, and by respecting and recognizing all employees equally. Equitable leaders are those able to work with people from different backgrounds with fairness and without alienating anyone. All these aspects parallel the characteristics reported in the literature on leaders who build equitable school cultures by: (1) showing respect to diverging opinions (Fullan, 2001), (2) working well with persons from diverse backgrounds (Walker et al., 2007; Webber and Lupart, 2011), and (3) focusing on the richness created by the different cultures in the organization (Lumby, 2012). Existing literature and the findings of this study confirm that to ensure an equitable school culture in diverse settings, leaders must visibly value and respect the diversity that is present at their schools, and must actively encourage, ensure and listen to all teachers' input and voice (Walker et al., 2007). Similarly, respondents who spoke later of the challenges faced at their school highlighted this characteristic of leaders mirroring their needs at the school.

Knowing and understanding their school cultures well. The results of the study also point at the fact that to ensure an equitable school culture, leaders must make an intentional effort to know the school culture well by making connections and speaking with teachers. This is what the literature conveys as well. In fact, researchers state that leaders should know their schools well by identifying what is destructive to student achievement and celebrating what is positive (Bolman and Deal, 1993; Peterson and Deal, 1998). Therefore, to be effective in building a healthy equitable climate, leaders must become familiar with and be astute in managing the micropolitics of their school.

Researchers go even further to address the need for cross-cultural literacy when leaders have assignments abroad (Hofstede, 1980; Webber and Lupart, 2011).

Being caring. In particular, the results indicated that respondents are aware that in order to ensure an equitable school culture, leaders should visibly show care for teachers by being approachable and well-meaning, and by showing empathy, compassion and a genuine interest in all teachers. Respondents voiced their wish to have leaders at their school show more care since the lack of it and the prevailing indifference and disconnect resulted in local teachers losing motivation and enthusiasm for the school as well as gaining resentment and self-doubt for their role at the school. Yet the literature is rich in the caring aspect of leaders as conducive to building a healthy school culture. In fact, researchers found that leaders must have the following qualities: caring, supportiveness, warmth, gentleness, nurturing, and friendliness (Guramatunhu-Mudiwa and Scherz, 2013; Leithwood et al., 2010). They also point to the evidence that effective leaders show care by being friendly and supportive with teachers, and noted that those leaders work hard to identify the needs of their staff members and cater to them while staying aligned with the shared school vision.

Being social justice advocates. The results point to an additional crucial characteristic of leaders to build equitable cultures which is that of being social justice advocates. Such leaders democratically bring the community together and actively address inequity problems. This resonates with North's (2006) definition of social justice leadership as being a concrete effort to treat all persons in a school with fairness and respect, and giving them equal access to resources and benefits. Respondents in the study see that leaders at the school do not treat all employees equally. In fact, they discriminate between expats and locals, and thus help create a divide in the community. Indeed, researchers advocate that schools should hire leaders who are intentionally

active in wanting to make schools more equitable and inclusive by addressing injustice practices through good interpersonal relationships with teachers (Hunter & Greenfield, 2014). Similarly, the respondents of the study believe that leaders have to be advocates for social justice by amending discriminatory policies and ensuring that they are applied equally by all, and by being creative in actively implementing social justice. This is a conclusion that parallels literature findings (Atkinson, 2013; Ryan, 2006; Scott & Rarieya, 2011; Webber and Lupart, 2011). For some researchers, social justice can be established with the intent of addressing inequalities by making sure to include all who are usually not taken into consideration and by encouraging a decision and policy making process that addresses inclusion. Leaders should use political skills and open up reflective dialogues so that people reflect upon and work on the injustices (Flessa, 2009; Ryan, 2006). Respondents in the study revealed that leaders in this school do not allow for such dialogues to take place. The issue is never spoken of openly. Yet the research confirms that leaders must have the courage to ask questions, even if these address taboos or issues of culture and diversity, and to act to change things for the better, like teacher recruitment which should be made with social justice values in mind (Van Houtte, 2005). Indeed, the results of the study reveal the respondents' belief that when hiring expat teachers, leaders should screen them for any prejudices and open mindedness. This is because many are seen to arrive to the school with prejudices and biases and therefore have superiority attitudes towards the local teachers and students. As Theoharis (2007) argues, good leadership is social justice leadership, one which enhances and actively ensures the respect of equity, equality and fairness.

The Current Balkanized Inequitable School Culture

While teachers appear to have an understanding of what the characteristics of an equitable school culture are and what the characteristics of leaders should be in order to

ensure an equitable school culture, the results of the study reveal that the school

displays many characteristics of an inequitable school culture with a balkanized

professional community divided into two camps: the local and overseas staff. All

interviewed teachers, locals and expats alike, point in their accounts at examples of this

inequity and are well aware of the need for improvement initiatives to achieve an

equitable school culture. According to the respondents, the leadership's actions at this

school seem to be giving teachers the feeling that they are treated inequitably and

unfairly. In fact, expats are viewed to be always advantaged in treatment, accountability,

involvement in decision-making, respect and financial packages. Respondents often

reported that leaders at the school don't know and respect the school culture and history

well. They arrive with biases about the culture and society, lacking the skill of being

social justice advocates, a needed characteristic for leaders in multicultural settings, and

do not stay long enough to develop a good awareness of the school context and its

population. .

In addition, teachers' views converge on the belief that, within this balkanized

culture, their school climate has become toxic and is directly affecting the quality of

everyday experiences of the interviewed teachers. The toxic climate is evident in an

acute sense of painful dissatisfaction, with an unhappy and demoralized workforce

exasperated by stereotypes that overvalue expats contribution and describe them as

possess a higher professional status than local teachers. It was clear that the local

teachers felt marginalized and discriminated against. These feelings were validated by

expat teachers who themselves pointed to this reality and expressed their dismay at the

"accepted" unfair treatment of their local colleagues. According to the local teachers,

the balkanized culture is a result of the neglect of the leaders to attend to their

grievances and to the fact that leaders uphold a clear bias towards the expats, viewing

them as more qualified than locals. This bias has resulted in a dominant status of the expat and a state of marginalization and alienation among the locals.

According to the literature, this phenomenon is found to be common in organizations, whereas a dominant sub-culture can develop within a culture that comprises several sub-cultures, each with its own distinct characteristics. The dominance of a sub-culture is manifested in inequitable practices that advantage one group and disadvantage others. As a result, tensions between these cultures can emerge (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Kaplan & Owings, 2013; Lumby, 2012). In fact, the respondents portrayed their expat colleagues as a closed privileged community that seem to have been enhanced by housing vicinities to the school, the disproportionate number of expats that serves in the school administration and the prevailing belief that all members of the administration (expat and locals alike) legitimize the preferential treatment of the expats on the ground of a perceived higher expertise and professional qualifications. All respondents cited many privileges to the expat group that perpetuate that dominance; namely differentiated salaries, access to professional development, and leadership opportunities. Tensions between the two subcultures are apparent in the grievances of the local teachers about discriminatory policies and in the recurrent theme among local teachers, of not "fitting" anymore, or not feeling included, of being put on the side at the expense of the expats. The perceived discriminatory practices have also resulted in the impressions that local teachers seem to have developed that their knowledge of the local community, and their long-term contributions and loyalty to the school, are not valued, and that the expat teachers will always be privileged for being seen as more qualified. As a result, the feelings of indignation and unfairness prevail, resulting in an increased alienation that is injecting divisiveness in the school culture. These divisive feelings of have and have-nots risk solidifying the balkanization and

make it hard to build a cohesive healthy culture with a unified identity and vision that embraces diversity and transcends prevalent prejudices.

Moreover, the balkanized school culture seems to be increasing the toxicity of the school climate because of the lack of trust in the fairness of the administration as represented by the school leadership. The members of the leadership team are seen to belong to the "expat" side of the divide, either because of their country of origin, or because of their perceived bias to the expat. As such, one of the indicators of this toxic balkanization was the fact that many of the participants were reluctant to address the issue of inequities as raised by the researcher, and though eager to help the researcher, many teachers initially expressed a fear to sign the study consent forms, wanting to just stick to an "oral" participation. Others hesitated to consent to be taped during their interviews out of fear of being "heard" by mistake by the administration; and others refused to take part in the focus group out of fear of being recognized by others.

In addition, the findings of the study demonstrate that the prevailing lack of trust and the acute feelings of unfairness among the local teachers have affected those teachers' ability to address the issue of inequity as an all-encompassing challenge for the whole school, rather than a cause restricted to voicing their individual grievances for unequal treatment. There was no indication in the responses that achieving diversity is essential to the school's educational mission, and that the diversity is to be celebrated as an asset. According to literature on social justice leadership, achieving equity is not a personal issue but rather a school challenge given the school's announced vision to educate a global citizen within a diverse school community. The inequities in treatment of faculty members, and the general prejudice about the local culture, have put the local teachers' "camp" either on the defensive or consumed with embarrassment and shame. The whole topic appears to be hushed and avoided. While this avoidance might help

reduce clashes, it is surely compromising the chances to invest in this diversity as an asset to building a healthy school climate characterized by coherence and professional collaboration. Moreover, the prevailing anger and pain risk hindering potential collaborations among faculties on both sides of the divide for the benefit of students.

Challenges of Building an Equitable School Culture

Based on the study results, the key challenges that seem to contribute to the inequitable school culture is the failure of the formal leadership to promote an equitable school culture at two levels: (1) the leadership team's reluctance to address the lack of equity openly, and (2) their lack of preparation for leading an equitable school culture.

The leadership reluctance to address the lack of equity openly. As inferred from the results, the formal leadership in the school, namely the school principals and directors, are not addressing the challenges, and as such, are perceived as obstructing the development of an equitable school culture. Indeed, it appears that a challenge to achieving an equitable school culture in the studied school is that issues of inequity are rarely given center stage by leaders or openly discussed with all teachers from all backgrounds. This is constitute a critical challenge based on the literature, whereby school cultures can disintegrate and become toxic if problematic issues are not attended to by the leaders (Peterson & Deal, 1998). In many instances, local teachers in particular expressed the need for open dialogue about issues of inequities in the school, citing the fact that their marginalized status is compromising their contribution to the school decision making processes. In the absence of forums like committees that are inclusive based on nationality, local teachers feel silenced by a dominant discourse that marginalizes their concerns and accentuates the existing inequities. In fact, many scholars agree that to build an equitable school culture, forums must be developed that would allow all to speak, especially the marginalized groups (Ryan, 2006; Walker et al.,

2007). It was also specified that in such dialogues, dominant groups should make a conscious effort to create a safe listening environment so that members of marginalized groups can speak freely. This does not occur in this school, quite the contrary in fact, and the unresolved teachers' grievances persist reinforcing the balkanization of the school culture.

Moreover, the problem appears to be aggravated by the fact that expat teachers' and leaders' tenure at the school is often short, which leaves little room for them to become familiar with the local teachers' issues, or to develop commitment to improving the institution they are working for. Despite the expressed sympathy about the inequitable status of the local peers, expat teachers do not raise this issue or use their privileged status to call on the school leaders to alleviate its causes. In fact, this low commitment to advocate for social justice in the school they work in seems to be evidenced in the literature on international schools in which leaders, who are largely from a country that is not the local country, are often found to show little engagement or understanding of the local culture, and display a short-term commitment to the school (Caffyn, 2010.) However, according to researchers, to deal with the complexities and differences of an intercultural learning setting, leaders must invest time and effort (Theoharis, 2007) to gain a thorough familiarization with the host societal culture to succeed in leading an equitable school (Webber and Lupart, 2011). Leaders in this school staying for a short time seem to choose to focus on what they perceive to be more urgent and immediate aspects.

The lack of preparation for leading an equitable school culture. According to the results of the study, the various leaders of the school seem to be predominantly expats. According to the findings, they appear to be unequipped to address and act upon issues of inequity. While the literature recommends that leaders engage in cross-cultural

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training to acquire the skills needed to lead in a diverse school setting (Scott & Rarieya, 2011), there was no evidence that those appointed to leadership position at the studied school were exposed to such training. Indeed, the preparation of these leaders have encompassed inclusive leadership skills development, for example, or the development of skills required for living symbiotically with diversity and making the best out of it while proactively working to build an inclusive and tolerant school culture. The feelings of being marginalized, not cared for, not listened to, among the local teachers might have resulted from the unfamiliarity of the predominantly expats leaders with the nuances of the local culture, and their lack of readiness to effectively communicate across cultural divide and address the needs of those teachers. . Moreover, the cited discrimination in the hiring of leaders in the school might explain the failure of the administration to address and celebrate cultural diversity at the school. In fact, it was found that the dominance of Western school leaders in international schools might itself be the result of discrimination in the hiring of Heads of Schools at the level of the recruiting agencies (Slough-Kuss, 2014). Moreover, and as indicated in the literature (Dimmock & Walker, 2000), leadership practices or educational policies designed in an Anglo-American cultural context might not necessarily work. This is because they were adopted to be used in this school's different culture with no consideration given to the cultural fit and the cultural differences in reacting to different leadership practices and styles. On the other hand, the fact that expat leaders in this school might not know or understand the culture of the school makes the task of these leaders complicated since their traditional socio-cultural orientations are different from those of students, parents, or teachers (Walker et al., 2007). According to the results of the study, there seems to also be prejudices due to this lack of knowledge.

Consequently, leaders in this school often struggle to lead effectively and appear to have failed to create a healthy school culture, since they lack the required knowledge about the culture of the country they work in as well as the skills to lead in a diverse setting while safeguarding equity and social justice at all levels.

The Conditions for an Equitable School Culture

As previously discussed, the school is facing serious challenges in building an equitable school culture. While there is awareness among teachers of the challenges faced that are preventing the school from achieving the characteristics of an equitable culture, analysis of the responses of the participants offered guidelines in terms of the organizational conditions that need to be in place for the school to acquire the status of an equitable culture, such as having: (1) a unifying vision that addresses equity and embed it in the school identity that is actively implemented in the school community as a model of equitable society for students; (2) transparent and equitable policies and accountability measures; (3) respect and inclusion of the diverse voices and issues of all stakeholders; and (4) selection criteria for leaders who value diversity and commit to uphold and advocate for equity and social justice.

Participants agree that leaders need to be trained to acquire the skills needed to lead for equity, including developing knowledge and understanding of the school culture, valuing all stakeholders equally for the quality of their work and impact they have on students and their learning rather than for their origin of hire. They also agree that leaders need to prioritize issues of inequity and provide venues where these can be discussed openly and proactively to avoid balkanization within their institution.

The above views seem to align with what the review of the literature reveals in terms of how equitable school cultures are built. In fact, equitable school cultures are found to be characterized by a strong focus on hard work and achievement through an

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inspiring vision that highlights support and recognition (Kaplan and Owings, 2013; Peterson and Deal, 1998). Furthermore, research results have shown evidence that the most effective approach to promote an equitable school culture is by proactively and explicitly addressing equity issues while (1) fostering communication, (2) allocating resources, and (3) developing organizational structures to support instruction and learning. Pertinently, Theoharis (2007) found that principals were able to promote social justice principles in their schools and raise student achievement by morally and intentionally addressing inequitable structures in the school with full involvement of the teachers. Moreover, there is agreement that whenever it is the case in schools, leaders in diverse settings should be ready and prepared to launching initiative to tackle discrimination and inequity (Lumby, 2012). Moreover, cross-cultural knowledge and awareness are being acknowledged as a clear need to avoid cultural misunderstandings in international schools (Webber and Lupart, 2011). Researchers concerned with equity have recommended that in order to facilitate the creation of an equitable school culture, leaders should make a strategic and intentional effort to encourage and listen to the voice of all teachers, all groups and all sub-groups, and give additional attention to the group of teachers who might feel ignored (Walker et al., 2007).

As inferred from the results, and despite the awareness of the staff members of what needs to be done, the school does not seem to be intentional in developing these required organizational conditions. There was no indication in the teacher responses of the need to promote a wide-spread cultural awareness among all school members or of a belief that it is a necessary condition to achieve equity in line with what is recommended in the literature. The teachers seem cognizant of the delicate balance between the subcultures and of the challenge to instill mutual two-sided understanding among all members of these subcultures if equity is to be achieved. However, there was

a strong sense of "us" vs "them" with leaders considered as part of the expat group, rather than of a tension that needs to be resolved among diverse world views.

Moreover, the international literature (Leech & Fulton, 2002) emphasizes that leaders in diverse schools like the one under study should make an intentional effort to keep the focus on identifying what is destructive to student achievement, making it the moral imperative of all their decisions while ensuring an equitable culture. Yet this does not seem to occur in this school. When asked about the conditions conducive to an equitable school culture, the focus of the respondents was mostly on introducing and enforcing policies that can stop the practiced inequities while preserving the diverse composition of the faculty and aligning with international standards that enforce equitable practices. As derived from the results, recruiting expat faculty and leaders seems to be taxing to an already high cost school. While recruiting expats appears to be integral to the school and its identity and mission as an international school, it seems to constitute a major budget constraint which in itself constitutes a key hindrance to creating an equitable school culture. The salaries of teachers are relatively high, the accreditation and professional development that the school has committed to, its pressing need to attract good quality teachers is expensive, are taxing to its budget. The school thus struggles with ways of addressing various discriminatory practices and policies.

As a consequence, a dilemma emerges: on one hand, the school is facing the challenge of inequitable practices which are leading to an unhealthy school culture, and on the other, it should maintain its identity of an international school – which is also a unique characteristic in the region that makes it appealing for competent local teachers. This situation is obviously creating a sensitive dilemma which might explain the position of the school administration to choose to turn a blind eye to this challenge and

to react to it as compartmentalized practical problems despite the general awareness of the existing inequities in practices and policies. Unfortunately, this avoidance approach seems to exacerbate this sensitive problem which becomes the elephant in the school that everyone sees but no one wants to or fears to talk about.

Conclusion

This study followed an exploratory qualitative research design to collect and analyze data for exploring the perceptions of local and expat teachers of an equitable school culture in a private international Lebanese school comprising two subcultures of teachers, the local and the expatriate (with leaders possibly tending to belong mainly to the latter). Although tensions between subcultures seem to be inevitable in multicultural settings like international schools (Firestone & Louis, 1999; Kaplan & Owings, 2013; Lumby, 2012), it can be concluded that an equitable school culture in a diverse setting such as an international school could be achieved by proactively establishing necessary conditions. These conditions include the creation of a unifying vision that is shared and that addresses equity among teachers with the aim to create a model of an equitable society for students. Additionally, there should be no discriminatory practices and no teacher should feel undervalued or ignored as based on origin of hire. Clear and transparent standards for equity in school policies and accountability measures should prevail (Atkinson, 2013; Ryan, 2006; Scott & Rarieya, 2011; Webber and Lupart, 2011). The entire community should embrace diversity and see it as richness and an important asset of the school to model international mindedness and values. Furthermore, it is important in such diverse settings to ensure that all voices are heard. All persons should feel safe to voice concerns. For this, leaders should prioritize the building of social capital by engaging stakeholders in reflective dialogs about equity issues openly and proactively. Forums with representation from all groups in the school

should be created in which issues of concern can be raised and addressed (Ryan, 2006; Walker et al., 2007). Stakeholders are welcome to be proactive in suggesting or discussing possible solutions.

Moreover, leadership being a key element for ensuring an equitable school culture (Leithwood et al., 2010; Peterson & Deal, 1998; Price, 2012; Schein, 2011), it should be intentionally hired and trained with the required skills to lead for social equity, valuing all stakeholders equally for the quality of their work and impact they have on students' learning rather than for their origin of hire. Leaders must be prepared to avoid bias, engage in learning about and understanding the school culture, and must visibly value, respect and encourage the diversity that is present in schools. Leaders should also be prepared to work with people from different backgrounds, with fairness and without alienating anyone. In fact, many studies associate excellence with school cultures in which leaders respect diverging opinions, value and work positively with diversity, and highlight the richness created by the different sub-cultures in the organization (Fullan, 2001; Lumby, 2012; Webber & Lupart, 2011). As the literature suggests and the study results confirm, differences in such a diverse setting can lead to tensions, therefore leaders in such a diverse setting should make an intentional effort to act on tensions especially those caused by inequitable treatments among employees.

Achieving equity must become a priority for an effective learning school climate. Leaders who are to be hired in international schools should be moral leaders and social justice advocates. They have a moral imperative to promote equity and respect for diversity, especially in a country where the national legal system does not protect against discrimination like in the Western world. These leaders could achieve this by committing to the school for a longer time, or at least by ensuring a continuity system is put in place, by amending discriminatory policies and ensuring that all equally

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applies them. Any potential issues of inequity should be addressed and discussed democratically, openly, and proactively instead of being left unaddressed and allowed to become a taboo. As Theoharis (2007) found, principals were able to act on social justice issues and raise student achievement in their schools by morally and intentionally addressing inequitable structures in the school with full involvement of the teachers.

Accordingly, several leadership models such as the transformational leader, the ethical leader, the moral leader, the inclusive leader, and the facilitative leader are recommended as models for an equitable school culture. While all could serve to establish an equitable school culture, in reviewing the empirical results, it could be concluded that one model alone does not seem to be enough to lead effectively in such a diverse staff context. Indeed, almost all aspects in each of the model descriptions are required to ensure the creation of an equitable school culture. Therefore, it is rather a combination of all the suggested models that appears to be the "ideal" model for an equitable school culture. This hybrid model could be the "relational" leader model. Relational leaders are astute at building social capital in their schools (Leithwood & Duke, 1999) in order to establish a healthy climate. Relational leadership is one that promotes the building of social capital, through trust and opportunities for people to engage in open reflective dialogues (Smylie & Hart, 1999). As empirically proven, building social capital enhances those relations that are characterized by reciprocity, interdependence, egalitarianism, mutual trust, and common focus on teaching, and ensures that teams develop social relations characterized by a shared vision, mutual trust, mutual responsibility, shared goals, and accountability for work (Smylie & Hart, 1999). Based on the study results, these are all needed components for building an equitable school culture. Indeed, "developing social and human capital among teachers represents a potentially powerful approach to school improvement, one that may prove

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much more effective in enhancing instruction and student opportunities to learn than more structural or political approaches to reform" (Smylie & Hart, p. 438).

Moreover, it is critical that the issue of building equitable school cultures should not be restricted to ensuring equitable treatments among its diverse faculties. Rather, the key moral imperative of schools should remain that of promoting the value of equity by example and ensuring that it permeates the school that constitute the learning environment of students (Theoharis, 2007). Though not directly concerned by the inequities among teachers that are depicted in this study, students are to be influenced by the toxic balkanization of their school climate. Research has shown that climate has an effect on teacher's happiness which affects the quality of instruction (Gruenert, 2008).

Unfortunately, while all interviewed teachers seemed versed in expressing their grievances and consumed with describing their pain and anger, none of them addressed in their testimonies the repercussion of the lived inequities on the students' well-being and learning experiences. No connection was drawn between the need for ensuring equity among teachers and the well-being of students. While this is an expected consequence of the pain associated with the discriminatory practices, it is crucial to turn the focus on the essential holistic vision of an equitable school culture to avoid the repercussion of such inequities on the students.

In sum, unless the above conditions are in place, and the related challenges are addressed overtly and explicitly, the school will fail to set the conditions needed to avoid the prevalence of a toxic culture. As Whitaker et al. (2000) confirm in their study, the quality of the school climate can impact the success of a school. As such, a courageous and proactive approach to addressing the challenge of inequity openly and transparently by involving all stakeholders in open dialogs appears to be crucial to make

the best out of the diversity and resolve this dysfunctionality that is detrimental to the school success and future, most importantly to the quality of learning of its students.

Implications for Practice and Recommendations for Further Research

As previously stated, a very limited number of studies addressed the role of leaders in building an equitable school climate in relation to a diverse teacher population, especially in the Middle East region. It is hoped that this study will pave the way for more research to contribute to the building of a knowledge base in this area, filling up the gap and shedding light on a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. It is also hoped that the results of this study inform the administration and formal leaders of international schools with diverse teacher populations about the leadership characteristics and practices that are needed to build an equitable school culture, and inform policies at national and school level that would actively monitor the practices of international schools to impede them from discriminatory practices. In this section, more specific implications for practice and recommendations for further research are proposed considering the results and discussion.

Implications for Practice

Although tensions between subcultures seem to be inevitable in multicultural settings like international schools, more pertinently than between expat hires and local hires, the research suggest that an equitable school culture can be ensured. This study informs practice in three main areas: (a) training leaders of international schools to lead in a diverse setting; (b) ensuring that leaders prioritize the building of social capital by engaging stakeholders in reflective dialogue about equity issues openly and proactively; (c) including clear standards for equity in the school policies and accountability measures.

Training leaders of international schools to lead in a diverse setting.

In order to ensure an equitable school culture, leaders should be aware of the challenge of an inequitable school culture that could exist in international schools. They should also be mindful of cultural differences and approach their job as social justice activists (Atkinson, 2013; Theoharis, 2007; Webber and Lupart, 2011) skilled to create and maintain an equitable school culture. This entails learning how to make the best of the cultural diversity prevailing in international schools (Scott & Rarieya, 2011) and how to ensure that no subculture is advantaged over another. Importantly, when new leaders are hired in schools with high diversity, commitment to equity and social justice should be among the most important hiring criteria.

Ensuring that leaders prioritize the building of social capital by engaging stakeholders in reflective dialogs about equity issues openly and proactively.

Leaders can also benefit from the study by learning that they should focus on relationships and develop social capital in the school. They should engage stakeholders in open reflective dialogs to unveil the challenge of inequity. They should engage the entire school in reflections and discussions on what equity means, how it can be established, what threatens it and how it can be practiced as an integral part of the learning community. By addressing issues of inequity among teachers, leaders will be creating a learning environment for the student which models the values the school is committed to transmit to the students. In fact, students quickly catch onto verbal and non-verbal cues of biases from adults, perceiving the unease between groups of people (Skinner, Meltzoff, & Olson, 2016). Through role-modeling of the values of equity and inclusion, students will learn to develop the appropriate skills to live in a diverse setting with fairness for all. This should be addressed at the adults' level as a priority by

forming a task force to address staff members grievances related to inequity. The school could also benefit from explorations of other schools that share their commitment to diversity and equity to learn how the specific challenge of equity is being tackled in similar settings.

Including clear standards for equity in the school policies and accountability measures. While engaging the community members in discussions, reflections, research and task force committees, the school's policies should be revised by incorporating clear criteria and measures that safeguard a healthy climate and enforce equitable treatment of its employees. This should specifically cover policies related to hiring and evaluating teachers to make them clear, fair and equitable. The newly revised policies should reflect a clear vision for the school in which social justice and equity are emphasized. The policies should also follow national and international equity standards and include explicit accountability measures to be applied to all members of the school. A recommendation would be to encourage accreditation organizations and the International Baccalaureate to include equity criteria in their evaluation reports.

Recommendations for Further Research

Due to the sensitive aspect of the study, teachers might not have been completely honest in answering the questions out of fear of any confidentiality breach and/or judgment. It could be valuable to explore alternative data collection methods that would guarantee full disclosure of information anonymously. Similarly, it could be worthwhile to consider replicating this study in an international school that is not familiar with the researcher.

It is hoped that this study will encourage further research that could extend on the number of participants in the same school, and in more schools. This would allow

for extended in-depth constant comparisons in order to generate new, more accurate insights and understandings. It would also allow for a variety of variables to be explored: variations in teachers, in departments, in school settings, in principals etc. in order to confirm the results, or shed light on new understandings. This is particularly important as some differences in the results were observed as far as the frequency of responses of local and expat teachers for some categories, warranting further research to explore them more in depth.

It would also be worthwhile to conduct a study in which the characteristics of equitable school are examined while focusing on students and the implication that an inequitable school culture has on their learning: how being in such an inequitable climate in which there are inequities in treating staff affect their world view and their espoused beliefs when it comes to respecting diversity and advocating for equity?

Finally, the local teachers that were interviewed were all among the "senior" group of teachers. All have been at the studied school for a long time. It is, therefore, worth considering further research to gauge if the perceptions of inequity are in fact accurately related to a local-expat differentiation, or rather to a feeling among senior teachers that their contributions are being disregarded and dismissed at the expense of more recently hired teachers.

APPENDIX A

RECRUITMENT OF TEACHERS ANNOUNCEMENT

Teacher Recruitment Form
Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

This notice if for an IRB-AUB approved research study for Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at AUB.
It is not an official message from AUB

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rima Karami Akkary
Address: American University of Beirut (AUB)
Associate Professor at the Department of Education
Phone: (01) 350 000 ext: 3058
Email: ra10@aub.edu.lb

Co-Investigator: Dania Maaliki
Address: American University of Beirut (AUB)
Beirut - Lebanon
Phone: (03) 858230
Email: dae18@mail.aub.edu

Dear Teacher,

I am inviting you to participate in a **research study about the p**erceptions of teachers of the factors contributing to an equitable school culture. This research explores teachers' perspectives of the factors contributing to an equitable school culture. It is being conducted for the purpose of a Master's thesis study in Education Administration at the American University of Beirut. The study is not meant in any way to be evaluative. It will fill in the gap in research about this subject by comparing perspectives to identify commonalities and/or differences on this topic. The study is divided into 2 parts: the first part consists of collecting data about equitable school cultures through conducting individual interviews with local and expat teachers from the participating school on their perspectives of the phenomenon. Each individual interview should take about 60 minutes. The teachers participating in the study are teachers who have gained two or more years of practical experience in this school for the purpose of having developed the adequate expert knowledge of all the aspects of the school. The questions of the individual interviews are intended to collect descriptive data only and answers will not be evaluative, rather descriptive and exploratory. Individual interviews will take place outside the school. The date and location used in the interviews will depend on the teacher preference. The second part consists of conducting focus group interviews. After the completion of individual interviews, the investigator will analyze the interview data, draw conclusions, form themes and invite teacher participants to participate in the focus group interview. Its purpose is to get your perspective on the conclusions reached by the researchers after analyzing the data from the individual interviews. The focus group interview will take between 60-75 minutes and will take place at the American University of Beirut. In case you consent to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in 2 interviews: 1) the individual interview that should take about 60 minutes

and will consist of a set of questions that are drafted to collect the information strictly needed to answer the research questions of the study; and 2) a focus group interview which should take about 60-75 minutes. The focus group interview will include a set of questions on which you and the participants will be asked to discuss and to provide your perspective on.

Please read the consent form and kindly consider if you want to be involved in the study.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you may contact Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at 01-350000 ext. 3058 or by email: ra10@aub.edu.lb or Ms. Dania Maaliki at 03- 858230 or by email: dae18@mail.aub.edu

Sincerely,

Rima Karami Akkary
Associate Professor at the Department of Education
American University of Beirut (AUB)

Dania Maaliki
Graduate Student
American University of Beirut (AUB)

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW

Principal Investigator: Dr. Rima Karami Akkary
Address: American University of Beirut (AUB)
Associate Professor at the Department of Education
Phone: (01) 350 000 ext: 3058
Email: ra10@aub.edu.lb

Co-Investigator: Dania Maaliki
 Address: American University of Beirut (AUB)
Beirut - Lebanon
Phone: (03) 858230
Email: dae18@mail.aub.edu

Study Title: Perceptions of teachers of the factors contributing to an equitable school culture: the case of a private international school in Lebanon

Dear Teacher,

We are asking for your participation in a **research study**. Please read the information below and feel free to ask any questions that you may have.

A. Project Description
1. This research explores teachers' perspectives of the factors contributing to an equitable school culture. It is being conducted for the purpose of a Master's thesis study in Education Administration at the American University of Beirut. No personal or sensitive questions will be asked as part of this study. The estimated time to complete this study is approximately six months. The estimated time for the data collection at this school is 4-6 days.

2. In the Middle East region of the World, there is a large number of students who attend private schools (Yaacoub & Badre, 2012) and a considerable percentage of these schools are either international or adopt an international program. These international schools employ local and expatriate teachers and leaders. From the literature review, it came to light that tensions are bound to exist between any sub-cultures (Lumby, 2012, Firestone & Louis, 1999) The literature is copious in studies that describe the large impact of leadership on school climate and culture which in turns impacts teacher satisfaction which thus effects student achievement (Boyd et al., 2011; Goleman, 2014; Greenfield, 2004; Guramatunhu-Mudiwa & Scherz, 2013; Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi, 2010; Murphy & Seashore Louis, 1999; Pollard, 2012; Price, 2012). Many researchers have studied the characteristics of school leaders required in building a healthy school climate, and more specifically an equitable school culture in a diverse setting, yet this was done in relation to the diversity of the student body in particular. A very limited number of studies addressed the role of leaders in building an equitable school culture in relation to a diverse teacher population, especially in the Middle East region. In order to

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contribute to the knowledge production in the field of Educational Leadership, and in order to impact the practices and policies of leaders in Lebanese schools which hire local and expatriate teachers, this study will gauge the perceptions of teachers of the role that leaders should play in building an equitable school culture in such a setting. The study is not meant in any way to be evaluative. It will fill in the gap in research about this subject by comparing perspectives to identify commonalities and/or differences on this topic. The study is divided into 2 parts:

The first part consists of collecting data about equitable school cultures through conducting individual interviews with a total of 30 teachers (20 local and 10 expat teachers) from the participating school on their perspectives of the phenomenon. Each individual interview should take about 60 minutes. The teachers participating in the study are teachers who have gained two or more years of practical experience in this school for the purpose of having developed the adequate expert knowledge of all the aspects of the school. The questions of the individual interviews are intended to collect descriptive data only and answers will not be evaluative, rather descriptive and exploratory. Individual interviews will take place outside the school. The date and location used in the interviews will depend on the teacher preference.

The second part consists of conducting focus group interviews. After the completion of individual interviews, the investigator will analyze the interview data, draw conclusions, form themes and invite teacher participants to participate in the focus group interview. Its purpose is to get your perspective on the conclusions reached by the researchers after analyzing the data from the individual interviews. The focus group interview will take between 60-75 minutes and will take place at the American University of Beirut. Transportation will not be covered.

3. In case you consent to participate in the study, you will be asked to participate in 2 interviews: 1) the individual interview that should take about 60 minutes and will consist of a set of questions that are drafted to collect the information strictly needed to answer the research questions of the study; and 2) a focus group interview which should take about 60-75 minutes. The focus group interview will include a set of questions on which you and the participants will be asked to discuss and to provide your perspective on.

4. I would like to tape record the individual interview and the focus group discussion so as to make sure that I remember accurately all the information provided. I will keep these tapes and the transcripts in a locked drawer in the Principal Investigator's office at AUB. They will only be used by the Principal Investigator and me. Only the aggregated data from the individual interviews (which will have no identifiers) will be shared publically. There will be no direct reference of any form to you or to your school in the final study report or any other publications resulting from this study. You may still participate in the individual interview if you do not want to be taped. I will just be taking notes of your answers. As for the focus group interviews, recording will be made after seeking consensus from the participants. If no consensus is reached, the recording for the whole focus group discussion will be dismissed and I will be taking notes instead.

5. There is neither compensation nor any costs associated with participating in the study.

B. Recruitment Procedure

The co- investigator will obtain permission from the school head to post an announcement that explains the purpose of the study in the school's teachers' lounge. The announcement will specify that the study is recruiting teachers with two or more years of experience and will ask those interested in participating to contact the co-investigator either by email or phone. A list will be generated from all those who contacted the co-investigator and a total of thirty teachers (ten expat and twenty local) will be selected randomly from the list obtained after ensuring that teachers with less than two years at the school are not included. Once the selected the 30 participants, she will contact them and set time to meet with them. At the meeting the Co-investigator will give the consent form in person to the teachers and will introduce herself and explain the purpose of the study, its ethical procedures of her study and the IRB regulations. Teachers will be given up to five working days to respond. The consent form includes contact information. Once contacted, the Co-Investigator will answer any questions these teachers have and request an appointment from these teachers. At the opening of the individual and the focus group interviews, the researcher will explain the purpose, the ethical procedure, what will be done with the information, the benefits of the study, how long the interview will take, and will point out to them that they reserve the right to withdraw from the interviews at any time they wish without any penalty or loss of benefits.

C. Risks and Benefits

Your participation in this study does not involve any physical risk or emotional risk to you beyond the risks of daily life. You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to withdraw will not involve any penalty. Discontinuing participation in the study will in no way affect your relationship with the school or with AUB. You receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however your participation does help researchers gain insight about the phenomenon and could influence the future principal leadership behaviors of school leaders and future research.

D. Confidentiality

If you agree to participate in this research study, the information will be kept confidential. To secure the confidentiality of your responses, your name and other identifying information will never be attached to your answers. The researcher will keep the records safe and secure. All codes and data are kept in a locked drawer in a locked room in the Principal Investigator's office at AUB and in the Co-Investigator's password-protected computer that is kept secure at all times. Data access is limited to the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator working on this project. All electronic files and transcripts will be deleted from the computer and from the digital recorder and all hard copies will be physically destroyed responsibly after the required retention period (usually three years). Records will be monitored and may be audited by the IRB while assuring confidentiality. Your privacy will be maintained in all published and written data resulting from this study. While discussing the interview findings during the focus group discussions, there will be no link to verbatim data collected during the interviews. Your name and that of the school or other identifying information will not be used in our reports or published papers. All files including personal identifiers will be deleted from the computer and digital recorder and hard copies will be physically disposed of immediately after the focus group interviews are conducted.

During focused group interviews, school administration will not be involved, and your names will not be shared with the school administration. Only aggregate results may be shared with the school.

E. Contact Information
1) If you have any questions or concerns about the research you may contact Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at 01-350000 ext. 3058 or by email: ra10@aub.edu.lb or Ms. Dania Maaliki at 03- 858230 or by email: dae18@mail.aub.edu.
2) If you feel that your questions have not been answered, or if you have any questions, concerns or complaints about your rights as a participant in this research, you can contact the following office at AUB: Social & Behavioral Sciences Institutional Review Board at 01- 350000 or 01-374374, ext: 5445 or by email: irb@mail.aub.edu.

F. Participant Rights
Being a participant in the interview is completely voluntary. You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to or you can leave the study at any time. Your decision not to participate influences in no way your relationship with AUB. You may also skip any questions in the individual interviews that you may not wish to answer. Your decision will not result in any penalty. You will also receive a copy of the consent form. If you have questions about your rights you may call:
Institutional Review Board (IRB) on 01-350000 ext. 5445.

G. Permission to Tape the Interview and to Quote from it
You will be asked if you would allow me to audio-tape the interview so as to make sure that all the information you provide will be remembered accurately. If you disagree on being tape recorded, you may still participate; instead I will only be taking notes of your answers. The tapes and transcripts will be kept in a locked file drawer in the Principal Investigator's office. They will only be used by the Principal Investigator and the Co-Investigator working directly on this project. Only the aggregated data from the interviews (which will have no identifiers) will be shared.
I may wish to quote from the interview either in the presentations or articles resulting from this work. A made-up name will be used in order to protect your identity. Do you agree to allow me to quote from this interview?

Do you have any questions about the above information? Do you voluntarily wish to participate in this study? If yes, please fill in the below:

Kindly note that you will be provided with a copy of this consent form.

Signing the consent form
I have read and understood all aspects of the research study and all my questions have been answered. I voluntarily agree to be a part of this research study and that the interview will be taped. I know that I will receive a copy of this signed informed consent.
Participant Name: _____
Consent for participation in the individual interview (Signature): _____
Consent for participation in the Focus Group discussion (Signature): _____
Consent for taping of individual interview (Signature): _____
Consent for taping of focus group discussion (Signature): _____

Consent for quoting from the interviews (Signature): _____

Date: _____

Recording Time for giving consent: _____

Location: _____

Investigator/Research Staff

I have explained the research to the participant before requesting the signature above. There are no blanks in this document. A copy of this form has been given to the participant or his/her representative.

_____ _____ _____

Person obtaining consent   Signature   Date

APPENDIX C

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1-Thank you for participating in this interview. Do I have your permission to tape this interview?

2-You are a: local hire   overseas hire

3-In which division do you teach? HS   MS   ES   EY

4-You are a: Male   Female

5-You have been at this school for: _____ years

6-You have a child at this school: YES   NO

7-How would you describe an equitable school culture in the context of your

international school?

8-Does your school face challenges in establishing an equitable school culture? If yes,

can you please describe them and give specific examples?

9-Does the context of your international school with both local and expat hires provide a

challenge to an equitable school culture? If yes, please explain and describe with

examples. In your opinion, what are the reasons that lead to these challenges?

10-In your view, what are the required organizational conditions and practices for

ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture within such a diverse context?

11-In your view, who are the parties that can and should ensure an equitable school

culture? What would your recommendations to them be?

12-What are characteristics of school leaders in a school with an equitable school

culture?

APPENDIX D

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1-Thank you for participating in this interview. Do I have your permission to tape this interview? Please remember that all information should remain in this room and not be shared or discussed. Please do not refer to names and keep it anonymous to each other. ALL DISCUSSIONS SHOULD BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

2-The following are the results obtained from the individual interviews.

[Sharing of results – projection]
[Time for participants to read]

3-Do you have anything to add? Is there anything that does not seem correct or

complete? Is there anything else that you would like to say about the conditions

required for an equitable school culture?

[Depending on teachers' engagement in further discussions, and based on the results categories and analysis, questions that are aligned with the ones used in the individual interviews could help start the discussion and probe for more input.]

7-Do you agree with the descriptions of an equitable school culture in the context of

your school?

8-Do you agree that these are challenges that your school faces in establishing an

equitable school culture?

9- Do you agree with the listed measures needed to be taken within the school to ensure

that the values and practices of an equitable culture in your school are in place?

10-Do you agree with the strategies described for enforcing this culture?

11-Do you agree with the outlined role of leaders for ensuring the creation of an

equitable school culture within such a diverse context?

12-Do you agree with the required organizational conditions and practices for ensuring

the creation of an equitable school culture within such a diverse context?

COMPLETE RESULTS TABLE

Table 3

Frequency of Responses of Teachers in the Sample

	Frequency of responses of teachers in the sample								
	Total responses N=20	Responses of teachers by hire		Responses of teachers by years at the school		Responses of teachers by gender		Responses of teachers by kids in school	
		Locals N=13	Expats N=7	< 10 N=8	> 10 N=12	Male N=5	Female N=15	Kids N=7	No kids N=13
1.Teachers' perceptions/definition/description of an equitable school culture in a diverse context									
a. Equity in salaries and benefits for all employees	**9** **(45%)**	6 (46%)	3 (43%)	2 (25%)	7 (58%)	1 (20%)	8 (53%)	3 (43%)	6 (46%)
b. Equity in accountability, respect and recognition/support for all employees	**8** **(40%)**	4 (31%)	4 (57%)	2 (25%)	6 (50%)	3 (60%)	5 (33%)	2 (29%)	6 (46%)
c. Equity in opportunities for all employees	**6** **(30%)**	4 (31%)	2 (29%)	2 (25%)	4 (33%)	2 (40%)	4 (27%)	1 (14%)	5 (38%)
d. Fairness for all employees by providing to the different needs of all groups of teachers	**6** **(30%)**	4 (31%)	2 (29%)	2 (25%)	4 (33%)	2 (40%)	4 (27%)	2 (29%)	4 (31%)
e. Collegial school climate and tolerance	**3** **(15%)**	3 (23%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (17%)	0 (0%)	3 (20%)	2 (29%)	1 (7.5%)
2.Teachers' perceptions of the challenges faced by schools while establishing an equitable school culture in a diverse context									
a. Preferential hiring packages being offered for expats resulting in:	**18** **(90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)	6 (75%)	12 (100%)	4 (80%)	14 (93%)	6 (86%)	12 (92%)
i) Discriminatory practices in salaries and benefits	**18** **(90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)	6 (75%)	12 (100%)	4 (80%)	14 (93%)	6 (86%)	12 (92%)

1) At the local-expat level	**18 (90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)	6 (75%)	12 (100%)	4 (80%)	14 (93%)	6 (86%)	12 (92%)
2) At the expat-expat level	**3 (15%)**	3 (23%)	0 (0%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (17%)	0 (0%)	3 (60%)	1 (14%)	2 (15%)
3) At the teacher-staff level	**1 (5%)**	1 (7.5%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	1 (8%)	0 (0%)	1 (7%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.5%)
ii) Discriminatory practices in contract duration	**3 (15%)**	2 (15%)	1 (14%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (17%)	0 (0%)	3 (20%)	1 (14%)	2 (15%)
iii) Discriminatory practices in providing housing close to school	**4 (20%)**	3 (23%)	1 (14%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (25%)	1 (20%)	3 (20%)	2 (28%)	2 (15%)
1) This facilitates school access and increases involvement in school activities	**4 (20%)**	3 (23%)	1 (14%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (25%)	1 (20%)	3 (20%)	2 (28%)	2 (15%)
2) This creates a closed community for overseas leaders and teachers blurring the boundaries between professional and personal relationships	**4 (20%)**	3 (23%)	1 (14%)	1 (12.5%)	3 (25%)	1 (20%)	3 (20%)	2 (28%)	2 (15%)
b. Discriminatory accountability practices	**13 (65%)**	11 (85%)	2 (28%)	4 (50%)	9 (75%)	0 (0%)	13 (87%)	4 (57%)	9 (69%)
c. Dismissive attitudes towards local teachers resulting from an	**11 (55%)**	9 (69%)	2 (28%)	2 (25%)	9 (75%)	1 (20%)	10 (67%)	4 (57%)	7 (54%)
i) Underlying belief among staff that expats are more qualified	**11 (55%)**	9 (69%)	2 (28%)	2 (25%)	9 (75%)	1 (20%)	10 (67%)	4 (57%)	7 (54%)
ii) Underlying belief at the community level that expats are more qualified for leadership positions	**3 (15%)**	1 (7.5%)	2 (28%)	1 (12.5%)	2 (17%)	2 (40%)	1 (7%)	1 (14%)	2 (15%)
d. Discriminatory practices in allocating leadership responsibilities and/or appointing to leadership positions	**6 (30%)**	3 (23%)	3 (43%)	2 (25%)	4 (33%)	3 (60%)	3 (20%)	1 (14%)	5 (38%)
e. Short term stay of overseas leaders and teachers resulting in:	**14 (70%)**	10 (77%)	4 (57%)	3 (37.5%)	11 (92%)	1 (20%)	13 (87%)	4 (57%)	10 (77%)
i) Lack of commitment to making the school more equitable	**13 (65%)**	10 (77%)	3 (43%)	3 (37.5%)	10 (83%)	1 (20%)	12 (80%)	4 (57%)	9 (69%)
ii) Lack of respect for the school history and	**6**	5	1	2	4	1	5	3	3

	Col1	Col2	Col3	Col4	Col5	Col6	Col7	Col8	Col9
contributions of senior local hires	**(30%)**	(38%)	(14%)	(25%)	(33%)	(20%)	(33%)	(43%)	(23%)
iii) Lack of clear identity and consistent vision for the school	**7** **(35%)**	3 (23%)	4 (57%)	5 (63%)	2 (17%)	2 (40%)	5 (33%)	2 (28%)	5 (38%)
f. Administration reluctance to address and act on issues of inequity with transparency, resulting in:	**18** **(90%)**	12 (92%)	6 (86%)	6 (75%)	12 (100%)	4 (80%)	14 (93%)	6 (86%)	12 (92%)
i) Balkanized professional community	**9** **(45%)**	6 (46%)	3 (43%)	5 (65%)	4 (33%)	1 (20%)	8 (53%)	1 (14%)	8 (62%)
ii) Unsatisfied and demoralized workforce	**17** **(85%)**	10 (77%)	7 (100%)	8 (100%)	9 (75%)	5 (100%)	12 (80%)	4 (57%)	13 (100%)

3. Teachers' perceptions of the required organizational conditions for ensuring the creation of an equitable school culture

	Col1	Col2	Col3	Col4	Col5	Col6	Col7	Col8	Col9
a. Proactive role of the school leaders and the board in ensuring equity by:	**20** **(100%)**	13 (100%)	7 (100%)	8 (100%)	12 (100%)	5 (100%)	15 (100%)	7 (100%)	13 (100%)
i) Respecting diversity and being advocates for equity	**9** **(45%)**	5 (38%)	4 (57%)	3 (37.5%)	6 (50%)	2 (40%)	7 (47%)	1 (14%)	8 (62%)
ii) Encouraging and listening to all teachers' input	**12** **(60%)**	7 (54%)	5 (71%)	7 (87.5%)	5 (42%)	3 (60%)	9 (60%)	4 (57%)	8 (62%)
iii) Developing knowledge and understanding of the school culture	**14** **(70%)**	10 (77%)	4 (57%)	3 (37.5%)	11 (92%)	1 (20%)	13 (87%)	4 (57%)	10 (77%)
iv) Valuing and respecting the local community culture	**8** **(40%)**	4 (31%)	4 (57%)	3 (37.5%)	5 (42%)	3 (60%)	5 (33%)	2 (28%)	6 (46%)
b. Amending discriminatory policies	**13** **(65%)**	7 (54%)	6 (86%)	5 (65%)	8 (67%)	4 (80%)	9 (60%)	3 (43%)	10 (77%)
i) Ensuring equity in hiring and compensation packages	**5** **(25%)**	3 (23%)	2 (28%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (33%)	2 (40%)	3 (20%)	3 (43%)	2 (15%)
ii) Ensuring equity in opportunities and professional development	**5** **(25%)**	3 (23%)	2 (28%)	1 (12.5%)	4 (33%)	2 (40%)	3 (20%)	3 (43%)	2 (15%)
iii) Ensuring equity in accountability	**6** **(30%)**	3 (23%)	3 (43%)	3 (37.5%)	3 (25%)	2 (40%)	4 (27%)	2 (28%)	4 (31%)
iv) Ensuring transparency in all processes, decisions and policies	**13** **(65%)**	7 (54%)	6 (86%)	5 (65%)	8 (67%)	4 (80%)	9 (60%)	3 (43%)	10 (77%)
c. Adopting a long-term clear vision and reinforcing a unifying school identity	**7** **(35%)**	4 (31%)	3 (43%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (33%)	1 (20%)	6 (40%)	1 (14%)	6 (46%)
d. Ensuring the hiring of leaders who are advocates of social justice	**7** **(35%)**	4 (31%)	3 (43%)	3 (37.5%)	4 (33%)	1 (20%)	6 (40%)	1 (14%)	6 (46%)
e. Additional role of an external authority to hold the	**2**	2	0	0	2	0	2	2	0

school accountable for ensuring an equitable school culture	**(10%)**	(15%)	(0%)	(0%)	(17%)	(0%)	(13%)	(28%)	(0%)

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