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TRANSITIONING TO PRINCIPALSHIP: THE EXPERIENCES OF LEBANESE NOVICE SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

by
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AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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The shift from an industrial to a post-industrial society in which information and technology are dominant has significantly affected educators and educational leaders (Stevenson, 2006). Findings of empirical studies on novice principals show that, amidst the increasing complexity of their role, school leaders experience a reality shock during their first years on the job and are overwhelmed with feelings of stress and isolation (Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Identifying the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that novices need in order to face the challenges of a highly context-related role is becoming increasingly critical to provide them with adequate support and enhance the quality of leadership in our schools (Crow, 2006). The review of the literature on Lebanese principalship reveals that no studies specifically focused on novice principals were conducted. As a starting point towards filling this gap in the literature, this study aimed at exploring the experiences of novice school principals in Lebanon as they transitioned into their new roles.

In this qualitative study guided by the grounded theory methodology, individual interviews were conducted with a sample of 12 novice principals selected through purposeful convenience and snowball sampling from public and private schools in the Mount Lebanon and Beirut suburbs area. Individual interviews with two administrators in charge of recruiting and preparing principals also took place. Data gathered from interviews were analyzed following the interpretational data analysis method and the constant comparison technique was used as the main analytical tool.

The findings of this study showed an obvious lack of preparation and effective induction of novices into the position. Beginning principals are left alone trying to take on the Lebanese conception of the principal's role as being a "hero" in control of the situation, while in fact they are "warriors" struggling to survive in a system that provides less than minimal support to school leaders.

Findings of this study have implications for both theory and practice. With regards to theory, what this study revealed contributes to the development of a culturally grounded conceptual understanding of early-career stage principalship in Lebanon. In practice, this knowledge base emerging from the Lebanese cultural and contextual realities serves as a framework to guide the development / revision and implementation of preparation and training programs for school leaders. It also offers policymakers a basis upon which to revise principal selection criteria and selection process; reconsider how principals are assigned to schools; and design an appropriate induction plan for novices.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Research in the field of educational administration has offered an array of conceptual models and theories to describe the principal's role (e.g., instructional, transformational, moral, managerial…). Over the years, a growing body of research has also focused on various aspects of principalship: the characteristics of the principal; the influence of prior experience and preparation on principal effectiveness; principal's impact on outcomes such as student achievement, attendance, drop-out rates…; and the relationship between principal's actions and school effectiveness (Bastian & Henry, 2014). The results of decades of such empirical studies suggest that principals make a difference when it comes to school improvement and have a significant, mostly indirect, impact on students' outcomes (Spillane & Lee, 2014).

Some researchers have also explored the professional development of principals and the career cycle of school leaders. In fact, principals were found to go through distinct career stages each characterized by specific work attitudes and behaviors (Early & Weindling, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; O'Mahony & Matthews, 2003). Recently, researchers in the West have been arguing that further research is urgently needed about inexperienced principals (Stevenson, 2006). In fact, studies have shown that when a novice principal is appointed at a school, the transition period could be accompanied with adverse effects on student outcomes and attendance as well as higher rates of teacher turn-over (Bastian & Henry, 2014). Researchers also claim that the growing and changing demands on the principal (e.g., high-stakes accountability policies) are making the experiences of novices more complex. Therefore, understanding novice principals' experiences as they transition into their role is critical for providing them with better support and will constitute the main focus of this study (Spillane & Lee, 2014; Stevenson, 2006).

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Background

The shift from an industrial to a post-industrial society in which information and technology are dominant has resulted in changes that are significantly affecting educators and educational leaders (Stevenson, 2006). The expanding knowledge base and technological advancements which are invading our lives as well as the demographic changes and the climate of accountability are creating pressures on principals and making their job more complex and unpredictable than it has ever been. This is rendering the task of novice principals even harder. In order to support those novices, the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that they need to face the challenges of principalship during their early-career stage and be able to perform their role effectively should be identified. This is why an understanding of principals' early-career stage as well as the nature of socialization of these beginning leaders amidst the complexity of their role demands is essential if we want to enhance the quality of leadership in our schools (Crow, 2006).

Novice principals were found to go through three stages in their transition period: a preparation phase followed by entry, orientation and immersion, and finally control and action (Early & Weindling, 2007). Crow (2006) proposes a new conceptual model of novices' socialization meant to guide researchers who wish to explore the world of novice principals. His framework consists of anticipatory, professional, organizational, and personal socialization. Anticipatory socialization is important in understanding aspiring principals' motivation for becoming educational leaders and how they already perceive the role based on their prior experiences. Professional socialization (when novices learn their profession formally) should not simply be confined to university but should be the result of the interaction between schools, districts and universities to provide the best preparation for a specific context. Organizational socialization, when novices learn how things are done in a specific context, should not be narrowed down to one specific school but expand into a larger

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societal context (different schools, religious and governmental entities, and social and health agencies). Finally, personal socialization involves a change in the self-identity of the novice. The sources of these models of socialization can be students, teachers, parents, veteran principals, challenges, opportunities, and non-educational sectors. In this post-industrial society, principals can also make use of several methods of socialization (e.g. collective or individual). Researchers seem to agree that the outcome of this socialization process for novice principals in our modern society would become that of role-making instead of role taking and conformity (Crow, 2006).

Several researchers investigated the socialization process of principals by examining the experiences, tasks, and coping strategies specific to the transition period (Bastian & Henry, 2014; Karami-Akkary, 2014; Nelson et al., 2008; Onguko et al., 2012). Findings show that novice principals experience a reality shock: they feel that they do not possess the adequate managerial skills to overcome the obstacles that they face; they tend to focus on the technical aspect of their role and neglect the instructional dimension; and they are overwhelmed with feelings of stress and loneliness / isolation. Novices also feel as if they were "at the top of a greasy pole", about to lose their balance and fall at any moment (Walker & Qian, 2006, p. 297). Despite several qualitative studies conducted on the experiences of novice principals, researchers still call for more inquiry across different cultures and contexts and contend that these studies have important implications for principal preparation.

Empirical studies have shown that the experiences of novice principals are highly contextual (Onguko et al., 2012; Walker & Qian, 2006). In fact, Karami-Akkary (2014) found that the socio-political context highly influences principalship in Lebanon. She investigated the perspectives of Lebanese principals on their role and work context and compared her results to Western literature on principalship. Four unique aspects that distinguish Lebanese principals from their Western counterparts were found. Among these aspects is their

perception of principalship as a "craft" that does not need formal preparation. Karami-Akkary (2014) also reported that leaders were dissatisfied with the training programs and workshops that they attended and that they described them as useless. Therefore, it is necessary to study the experiences of novice principals in the Lebanese context so that adequate preparation programs can be tailored specifically for them. This is an essential step for improving the quality of principalship in Lebanon.

Statement of the Problem

Empirical literature on novice principals seems to consist mainly of studies investigating individual characteristics of novices (e.g. credentials, training / preparation, work experience, and context of hiring) (Bastian & Henry, 2014; Onguko et al., 2012); the relationship between those characteristics and student achievement (Bastian & Henry, 2014); the experiences of novice principals and the challenges they encounter (Nelson et al., 2008; Onguko et al., 2012; Spillane & Lee, 2014); the tasks that are specific to early-career principals; and the factors that affect novices' experiences (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Spillane & Lee, 2014).

Among the major common findings of these studies is the reality shock that novices experience. Further findings include: novices lack the needed technical and interpersonal skills, are overwhelmed with technical issues and do not have time for tasks related to instruction, and are constantly feeling stressed out and alone amidst all the difficulties and obstacles (Nelson et al., 2008; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Being aware of these challenges might help in better supporting those novices and in smoothing their transition period. Thus, more research on early-career stage principals is needed to gather further evidence for the previous findings and to try to conceptualize this stage of principalship based on large scale studies.

Another important conclusion that can be drawn from the literature is how context-related these experiences are. For instance, Nelson et al. (2008) reported that the climate of

accountability in the U.S. affects the socialization of principals into their job. Moreover, Onguko et al. (2012) noted that the bulk of the challenges faced by novices in Tanzania were specific to the African context. This means that when it comes to implications for preparing and training novices or for setting policies, Lebanese researchers, practitioners and policymakers cannot depend solely on Western literature. The "portability" (Hallinger, 1995, p.3) of the findings of these studies into the Lebanese schools should be carefully considered. In fact, Getzels, Lipham and Campbell (1968) explained that 'the construct of organizational culture reveals only a portion of a larger cultural variation" (as cited in Hallinger, 1995, p. 4) which is the societal culture. Thus, it is not only organizational culture which affects principals' experience but also societal or national culture. The latter is "the source of the values that shape the goals of the educational system" and the nature of principals' work (Hallinger, 1995, p. 11). Dimmock and Walker (2000) call for the "need to develop contextually bounded school leadership and management theories" (p. 145) instead of simply "borrowing" educational policies and practices with "little consideration to their cultural fit" (p. 147). Hofstede (2005) questions "to what extent do theories developed in one country and reflecting the cultural boundaries of that country apply to other countries" (p. 50). Consequently, Lebanese researchers need to check for the transferability of the findings of the Western literature into the local context and, thus, the need for descriptive studies of novice principals' experiences in the Lebanese context.

In fact, in her study which compared the role and role context of the Lebanese school principals with the empirical studies on principals in Western countries, Karami-Akkary (2014) found that, despite several similarities with the West, principalship in Lebanon is largely shaped by the socio-political and cultural conditions in which principals perform their jobs. To begin with, the selection and appointment process, in both public and private sectors, is strongly affected by politics, religion, and personal relationships: most principals get hired

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if supported by politicians, are members of a religious order or have strong personal connections with the school owners (Karami-Akkary, 1997). After being appointed, most Lebanese principals learn about their role mainly from their own experience on-the-job. They also conduct their own personal investigations and depend on their previous experiences as teachers or assistant principals to learn how to become principals. Therefore, a proper accomplishment of the principals' role will depend largely on the new principals' personal skills and experiences (Karami-Akkary, 1997). One particularly important characteristic of Lebanese principals is the conception they have about their socialization into their work: they consider the principalship to be a craft rather than a profession to which one is prepared through formal programs. Moreover, they were not convinced of the effectiveness of educational administration training for their practice. Less than 30% of the principals that were interviewed considered formal pre-service training as essential for taking on the principal position. Furthermore, many principals claimed that attending workshops was a waste of their time and that leadership is a "special talent" (Karami-Akkary, 2014, p. 726) that one either has or does not have and that no training can help in acquiring the needed skills.

This gap that exists between Lebanese principals' needs and the available professional development programs should be bridged if we were to improve educational leadership in Lebanon and help novice principals in their transition phase. This can be accomplished by developing a better understanding of their needs so that trainings and preparation programs are tailored accordingly and would not waste their time as they claim. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to explore (a) the characteristics of novice principals in Lebanon (educational background, prior work experience, and leadership preparation), (b) the selection criteria and process, (c) the challenges they face as they transition into their new roles and the strategies adopted to face them, and (d) the factors that positively influence this transition period.

Research Questions

To explore the experiences of novice principals in Lebanon as they transition into their new roles, the following research questions will be addressed:

1. What are the professional characteristics of novice school principals in terms of academic preparation and prior professional experiences?

2. What are the formal and informal processes and criteria followed for principals' selection, appointment, preparation and induction into their role?

3. What are the challenges of the transition period reported by novice principals and the coping strategies they adopted to confront them?

4. What are the factors (personal and contextual) that novice principals see as positively influencing their transition into their role?

Rationale

Novices' transition into principalship has been studied in the Western literature especially in North America and Britain mainly as a result of a general dissatisfaction of how principals were trained and prepared to take on the job: preparation seemed to be irrelevant to the actual needs of beginners and to the increasing complexity of principals' work (Stewart, 2013). Several empirical and theoretical studies have tried to capture what novices go through as they start their journey of leading schools (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Cheung & Walker, 2006; Cottrell & James, 2016; Crow, 2006; Daresh & Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Walker & Qian, 2006). Theoretical conceptualizations, whether through a description of early-career stages or of the socialization processes, were mainly developed in American and British contexts (Crow, 2006; Early & Weindling, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010). Empirical studies were also based on perceptions of Western novice principals and implications were intended for those contexts. No studies of novice principals' transition were conducted in the Lebanese context. In fact, Lebanese researchers mostly focused on principals' leadership styles

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(Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013; Mattar, 2012b), the impact they have on the performance of the school (Mattar, 2012a), how they motivated and empowered teachers (Ghamrawi, 2010, 2011), how they perceived teachers' professional development (Nabhani et al., 2014) and their perspectives of their role and work context (Karami-Akkary, 2014). Since leaders' practice is shaped by societal culture, conceptualizations of the transition period should be developed in light of the culture in which it is embedded (Hallinger, 2005). In fact, according to Hofstede (2005), "theories reflect the cultural environment in which they were written" (p. 50) and the validity of any knowledge base beyond its originating culture needs to be questioned (Hallinger, 2005). Consequently, findings of Western studies cannot be simply generalized and adopted in the Lebanese context. Therefore, this study's purpose is to fill the gap in the literature regarding Lebanese novices' transition into principalship and shed light on what is needed to help those novices perform more effectively based on contextually grounded knowledge.

A review of the available literature on the educational system in Lebanon reveals unique features that distinguish it from Western systems: it is a highly centralized and "politicized bureaucracy" facing several obstacles including poor infrastructure, poor teaching quality, lack of accountability, and a huge gap between public and private sectors (Lebanese Association for Educational Studies [LAES], 2006). Principals do not seem to be adequately prepared; the selection processes follow no clear procedures and are under the influence of politics and religion (Karami-Akkary, 2014). Despite the Ministry of Education and Higher Education's (MEHE) initiatives to improve principalship through the Education Development Program (EDP), many Lebanese principals were not convinced of the utility of trainings and formal preparation as to helping them improve their practice (Karami-Akkary, 2014). In fact, in the absence of culturally grounded empirical evidence regarding principals' needs training programs seem to be based on decontextualized knowledge base or on diffuse

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and anecdotal evidence (Cheung & Walker, 2006). One of the main goals of this study is to start developing a contextualized knowledge base on which practitioners and policymakers can depend to prepare future Lebanese school leaders. Researching the transition period of novice principals will inform the induction process so that it is based on actual needs grounded in the Lebanese context not borrowed from the West.

To attain these goals, the first thing to explore is where these principals come from especially that in the Lebanese context there are no clear criteria and standards for selecting and appointing principals whether in public or private schools (Karami-Akkary, 2014). Understanding novices' previous experiences, especially the context of their prior teaching experiences (e.g. school type, subject taught, student diversity…), helps understand not only how those beginners enact their role but also how they learn it. Researchers not only call for investigating previous professional experiences but also life experiences that might have supported how these principals learned the job, thus, the importance of researching Lebanese novices' anticipatory socialization (Crow, 2006; Holligan et al., 2006; Sleegers et al., 2009).

The experiences of novices in their first years are important to understand. Stevenson (2006) stated that the early years of principalship have not been studied extensively and that it is imperative to understand the experiences of novice principals and even of teachers who aspire to become principals. Studies on early-career principalship show that evidence concerning the experiences of novice principals is relatively thin and that further investigations are needed in diverse contexts. There is a great need for both quantitative and qualitative studies exploring the ways by which novice principals take charge as well as the relationship between contextual factors and novices' experiences. Moreover, Karami-Akkary (2014) recommended that more descriptive and contextually sensitive studies be conducted to examine the perspectives and the work contexts of the school principals in Lebanon. These studies would be essential to guide efforts for improving principalship in Lebanon (Karami-

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Akkary, 2014). In addition, Cheung and Walker (2006) highlighted the importance of coping strategies that would help beginning principals balance between their inner and outer worlds. Therefore, there is a need for a better understanding of the challenges faced by novices and the coping strategies they adopt to overcome them.

Several factors were found to either hinder or facilitate novice principals' transition into their new role (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Daresh & Male, 2000). Identifying and understanding these factors is indispensable to design training and induction programs that will prepare effective future leaders. The societal context has a considerable impact on principals' socialization (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Crow, 2006): how they learn the job is affected by various societal factors beyond the organizational context, and the profession's demand in general. Personal factors such as personal values and preferred leadership styles were also found to affect the transition period (Cheung & Walker, 2006). That is why one aspect of this study aims to identify the factors that might affect Lebanese novices stepping into principalship, mainly those related to context.

When trying to improve principalship the focus should not solely be on developing or reforming university preparation programs with little or no attention to the induction period (Crow, 2006). The complexity of the environment and the different facets of the socialization process as a whole in a specific context should be taken into consideration and this is what this study will try to cover in the Lebanese context.

Significance

Findings of this study might have implications for both theory and practice. With regards to theory, what this study will reveal might contribute to the development of a culturally grounded conceptual understanding of principalship in Lebanon, specifically early-career stage principalship. This will constitute a starting point for further research on Lebanese principals at different career stages in order to conceptualize a framework for

Lebanese principals' socialization. This will represent an important step towards understanding and improving principalship in Lebanon.

In practice, this knowledge base emerging from the Lebanese cultural and contextual realities could serve as a framework to guide the development / revision and implementation of preparation and training programs for school leaders. These programs would be tailored to the work context of Lebanese principals rather than merely being adopted from the Western literature without specific consideration to cultural differences. It might also offer policymakers a basis upon which to revise principal selection criteria and selection process; reconsider how principals are assigned to schools; and design an appropriate induction plan for novice principals to help them cope with the challenges they face during their transition period.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

To explore both the empirical and theoretical literature on novice principals, the following review has been conducted. It is divided into four main sections: the first section describes the complex role of principals; the second section presents a conceptualization of the transition period; the third section provides the findings of studies on novice principals in different contexts focusing mainly on the challenges faced, the coping strategies adopted, and the factors (personal and contextual) affecting the transition period; the fourth section is an overview of the educational system and of principalship in Lebanon.

The Complex Role of School Principals

Leading schools is considered as an increasingly "complex activity" regardless of the level of experience of the leader (Daresh & Male, 2000, p. 99). This growing complexity can be attributed to several reasons but two major causes recurrent in the literature merit highlighting below: the societal changes that are leading to changing the nature of principals' work (Crow, 2006, 2007; Stevenson, 2006) and the "emergent" nature of principals' practice (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Goldring et al., 2008; Lee & Hallinger, 2012; Warwas, 2015).

Societal Changes

Most researchers agree that the nature of the principal's work is changing and becoming more complex (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Crow, 2006, 2007; Stevenson, 2006). Crow (2006) goes into the details of why and how this complexity is arising in the educational world in general and in the principal's work in specific. He attributes this increasing complexity to the shift from industrial to post-industrial societies, i.e. from a society that relies on industry to a society where information and technology are becoming more dominant. These societal changes are affecting teachers and principals' work and making it more complex.

First of all, the rapidly increasing knowledge base is creating the need for educational leaders to foster environments where learning is a continuous, life-long process and where capacity building and motivation are essential. Leaders are pressured to improve both the quantity and the quality of knowledge delivered in schools and to contribute to building social and intellectual capital among all members of the school professional community (Crow, 2006; Stevenson, 2006).

Secondly, the expanding technology is putting pressure on principals to ensure the necessary resources for their students. They are also required to support the use of technology in their school (Crow, 2006).

Another important change is of demographic nature: with the world turning into a global village, principals have to deal with challenges related to preparing students for a more diverse world. In the US, for instance, principals are required to be increasingly aware of cultural differences and to recognize and value diversity as an enriching component for society. At the same time those same principals are expected to preserve social cohesion and national identity which is not an easy task in the midst of increasing immigration, ethnic diversity and globalization (Crow, 2006; Stevenson, 2006).

Fourth, the increase in accountability influences the principal's work. In the US, for instance, the No Child Left Behind has made educators more focused on students' outcomes to ensure all students learn. For principals this means higher expectations and more emphasis on their role as instructional leaders. Furthermore, school principals' work is increasingly scrutinized publically (Crow, 2007) and, in the US, failure to meet the standards could result in loss of funding and in some cases of their job (Crow, 2006). Stevenson (2006) adds the expectation that schools and their leaders should provide solutions to social problems and foster inclusion as opposed to alienation especially among young people.

The "Emergent" Nature of Principals' Practice

Spillane and Hunt (2010) view principals' practice as a complex phenomenon that cannot be accounted for by simply associating it to separate factors such as principal knowledge, goals and expectations, years of teaching experience, faculty trust in the principal, and staff experience. Several researchers have underscored the "emergent" (Spillane & Hunt, 2010, p. 315) nature of principals' practice which is the result of the interactions of principals' "inner worlds" and the situation or the context emphasizing therefore the important influence context has on principals' work (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Goldring et al., 2008; Lee & Hallinger, 2012; Warwas, 2015).

In fact, both the organizational and the macro-contexts were found to be major predictors of principals' activity focus (Goldring et al., 2008; Lee & Hallinger, 2012). Goldring et al.'s (2008) study of 46 US principals revealed two broad categories of leaders predicted by contextual factors: those who divide their time equally across different realms of responsibility (eclectic leaders) and those who tend to focus on one aspect (instructional leaders and student leaders). In this study, principals working under challenging conditions were found to set priorities and focus on specific aspects such as instruction whereas in schools with higher student engagement and teacher academic press, principals engaged in a variety of leadership activities. The level and size of the school mattered as well. In fact, eclectic principals worked in elementary schools and leaders focused on student matters were mainly found in small schools.

In addition, Lee and Hallinger (2012) found a significant difference across nations in how much time principals devote to their job and which aspect they emphasized. This study conducted on a total of 5 927 principals across 34 nations examined how the macro-context factors influence principals' time use and allocation. The country's level of economic development, the socio-cultural context and the structure of the educational system were

found to influence principals' pattern of behavior. In general, Western European and North American principals were found to dedicate more hours per week for their job than African, Middle-Eastern, and Asian principals. School leaders in developed countries emphasized instructional leadership more than those in less economically developed countries. Instructional leadership was found to be also influenced by the level of hierarchy in a society: in the less hierarchically organized societies more time was spent on instructional leadership. The degree of hierarchy also influenced the amount of time devoted for interacting with parents and community: less hierarchy was related to more interaction. In societies where the educational system was more standardized and structured, less time was spent on administrative issues than in less standardized systems. The educational system had the largest effect on how much time principals allocate for administration (Lee & Hallinger, 2012). Therefore, in studying the nature of principals' work not only should differences across organizational cultures be taken into consideration but also variations across societies.

Moreover, despite having a strong influence on school leaders' practice, contextual factors are found to be moderated by other factors such as professional values. A study conducted on 56 German principals showed that the effects of contextual factors were not homogeneous: they differed according to the principals' professional values profile (i.e. outcome-oriented; process-oriented; input-oriented; community-spirited principals) (Warwas, 2015).

These empirical studies on the focus of principals' work and the contextual factors influencing it as well as the demands, which can sometimes be conflicting, make principals job more complex and can result in high levels of emotional strain and stress when learning and enacting it. Cheung and Walker (2006) compare leading schools to traversing a "multifaceted terrain" that is "difficult enough for even the most seasoned leaders, and even more so for those taking their first steps into the principal's office" (p. 389). All this

complexity that puts pressure on principals, particularly the novices, requires us to explore the transition period of beginning principals in this new post-industrial context. This is what will be done in the next section.

<center>**The Conceptualizations of the Transition Period**</center>

In the reviewed Western literature on the transition of novice principals into the job, two ways of conceptualizing this period can be identified: the British scholars, and those from countries with somehow similar educational systems such as Australia, attempt to divide this period into stages or phases with specific characteristics and challenges (Briggs et al., 2006; Early & Weindling, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010) whereas the North American researchers in general focus more on the socialization processes rather than stages (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Crow, 2006, 2007). In what follows, both conceptualizations will be described.

The Stages of Transition

Influenced by adult and career development theories, scholars in the educational field developed models describing principals' career stages (Early & Weindling, 2007) and some focused only on the early stages of the career cycle (Kelly & Saunders, 2010; O,Mahony & Matthews, 2003).

Principals' career cycle can be divided into seven stages: Stage 0-Preparation prior to headship; Stage 1-Entry and encounter (first months); Stage 2-Taking hold (three to 12 months); Stage 3-Reshaping (second year); Stage 4-Refinement (years 3 to 4); Stage 5-Consolidation (years 5 to 7); Stage 6-Plateau (years 8 and onwards) (Early & Weindling, 2007). Several researchers have used this model in empirical studies on novices (Kelly & Saunders, 2010). Most novice headteachers who have been studied were in the first two years of principalship therefore supposedly being in stages 1 – 3 of Early and Weindling's (2007) framework.

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Other models focus on the early career stages only. In their study of 54 Australian headteachers, O'Mahony and Matthews (2003) identified 4 phases of learning about the role and the context: Phase 1: Idealization phase – route to headship; Phase 2: Immersion phase; Phase 3: Establishment phase; Phase 4: Consolidation phase. A British study conducted by Kelly and Saunders (2010) distinguished three phases of transition into headship: 1) preparation for headship; 2) entry, orientation and immersion; 3) control and action.

Comparing these three models shows several similarities and combining them can give us the following conceptual framework of the stages constituting the transition period.

Stage 1 – Preparation for Headship

This pre-appointment stage includes the formal and informal experiences (e.g. role models, training, university courses, position as a deputy…) through which the novices learn about headship and develop a conception of the role.

Stage 2 – Entry, Orientation and Immersion (First Months)

This stage is all about "learning the ropes" of the role in a specific context: headteachers try to apply their relevant knowledge and experience to the job and organizational socialization begins. It is characterized by sense-making as novices develop a cognitive map of the complexities of the context, the people, the challenges, the school culture… This phase is also distinguished by being a time of surprise and survival in front of the overwhelming demands of settling in to the role (Briggs et al., 2006; Early & Weindling, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; O'Mahony & Matthews, 2003).

Stage 3 – Control and Action (3 to 12 Months)

It is a stage of taking hold and establishment where organizational socialization deepens. Novices start to have a clearer understanding of priorities and to introduce organizational changes that might sometimes challenge what is taken for granted at the

school and what is part of the culture and for which they might face resistance (Briggs et al., 2006; Early & Weindling, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; O'Mahony & Matthews, 2003).

It has been questioned whether headteachers move through the above-mentioned stages of transition at the same pace or in the same order. Some argued that the time taken to progress through these stages may vary from one to several years. Others underscored that the evolution from one stage to another depends on several factors, most importantly context (Briggs et al., 2006). Each headteacher can be influenced by various circumstances and can experience different feelings, successes, or failures that might make him / her stagnate in a certain phase or even regress (Cheung & Walker, 2006). In addition, these stages were mainly identified in the British and Australian contexts, their applicability cannot be generalized into other educational systems without further evidence from empirical studies. Due to these limitations, another way of conceptualizing the transition period can be through focusing on the socialization process itself rather than stages. A review of the literature on the socialization of novices into principalship will be the focus of the following section.

The Socialization of Novice Principals

Merton (1968) defined socialization as "the processes through which an individual acquires the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to perform a social role effectively" (as cited in Parkay et al., 1992, p. 45). This section presents the traditional and the new conceptual models of novice principals' socialization as described by Crow (2006). The new model, as Crow (2006) argues, aims for a better understanding of how novices transition into their new role.

The Traditional Socialization of Novice Principals

The study of the socialization of novice principals has traditionally focused on **professional** and **organizational** socialization. **Professional socialization** is about acquiring the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform the principal's role in any

setting. This form of socialization usually occurs in the US through university preparation programs which offer courses derived from management and industrial psychology and include internship in an educational setting. **Organizational socialization** depends on the particular context where the role is enacted: principals acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be effective in a specific school setting. It emphasizes "how things are done" at the school where the novice will perform the role. This second type of socialization usually occurs informally and randomly at the individual level as the principal tries to make sense of his / her role at the school. Organizational socialization occurs for example as the principal receives informal feedback from students, parents, and teachers. Some principals have been socialized with principalship through their prior experiences as assistant principals. However, this position has been narrowed down to focusing on student discipline, which does not provide opportunities to experience a wider range of principals' work.

Crow (2006) claims that attempts to plan for the preparation of new principals focus mainly on university programs and induction resources (workshops, coaching, and mentoring) that do not take into consideration the complexity of the work therefore not helping in effectively improving and facilitating the socialization process of principals.

The New Conceptual Model of Novice Principals Socialization

Crow (2006) posits that traditional socialization captures neither the complexity of the work environment in a post-industrial society nor the changing nature of the principals' job. He suggests adding new features to the principal socialization based on the theory of organizational socialization presented by Van Maanen and Schein's in 1979 in their paper entitled "Towards a Theory of Organizational Socialization". The conceptual features Crow (2006) presents are intended to better understand the nature of novice principals' socialization and how to enhance this process by examining the content, sources, methods, and outcomes of socialization.

Socialization Content. Throughout the socialization process, learning mainly revolves around skills to perform the job; necessary accommodations to the school context; and internalization of specific values (Feldman, 1976, as cited in Crow, 2007, p. 52). Crow (2006) suggests that to be successful in this complex environment novices' socialization learning content should be focused on being open to change that will ensure all students are constantly learning. In order to do that, socialization should not only be focused on knowledge and skills (e.g. classroom observation skills; budgeting; managing…), as it has traditionally been, but also on values and dispositions. Most importantly, Crow (2006) states that principals should be culturally sensitive and committed to all students learning, two values that need to be learned and internalized during the socialization process. Preparation programs should therefore go beyond management skills to values and dispositions needed to create a culture of continuous learning, reform and improvement in schools (Crow, 2007). For a better understanding of novice principals' socialization, Crow (2006) suggested considering the content of four types of socialization: anticipatory, professional, organizational, and personal.

Anticipatory Socialization. It refers to the individuals' experiences before becoming principals such as observing other principals enact their role in addition to their own prior work experiences in educational or non-educational fields. In fact, Crow (2007) posits that novices do not arrive "as blank tablets" (p. 53) but bring with them what they learned from prior experiences. Since the majority of principals were teachers, Crow (2006) suggests that anticipatory socialization focuses on how they experienced leadership and perceived principals' role throughout their teaching career. In her exploratory study on professional growth during principal preparation, Browne-Ferrigno (2003) found out that teachers' experiences of leadership whether in a formal or informal way shape their conception of principalship. Depending on the type of school they worked at and the type of principal they

worked with (as teachers or assistant principals), novices come to the job with diverse knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Being aware of this will help researchers gain a deeper understanding of beginners' conceptions of knowledge, instruction, leadership, and cultural diversity (Crow, 2006, 2007).

Professional Socialization. In Crow's (2006) new conceptual model, professional socialization does not only consist of formal university preparation, including courses and internship, but it involves districts, schools, and universities working together to help aspiring principals learn their role by acquiring context-specific and relevant knowledge, skills, and dispositions. Pounder and Crow (2005) believe that school leaders' preparation is "everyone's responsibility" (p. 60). They call for a systemic approach to develop and sustain a "pipeline" of competent school administrators (p. 60). In order to support novices, school districts, principal academies, and university preparation programs need to collaborate for a career-long approach to principals' development. This can start with a recruitment strategy based on identifying educators who show strong leadership skills and helping them develop their talent. This is not solely the responsibility of the current principal but of teachers, school counselors, and university professors. Orientation programs need to be designed to help aspiring leaders familiarize themselves with administrative responsibilities. Crow (2006) argues that future principals should be trained to deal with issues of accountability, demographic changes, and cultural diversity. Aspiring principals should master skills needed for effective teamwork and collaboration (Pounder & Crow, 2005). Preparation programs should also provide leadership experiences and opportunities for structured reflection. During internships, they should be given the opportunity to explore different contexts to be ready to deal with a variety of challenges (Crow, 2006). According to Pounder and Crow (2005), schools should become "leadership learning laboratories" (p. 58) where aspiring leaders are given the chance to apply what they learn in formal university preparation programs. In fact,

theory and practice in principal preparation programs are often disconnected for several reasons, one of them being the complexity of the school setting and the limitations put on field work so that it does not interfere with other school processes. They recommend establishing school-university partnerships, conducting group projects in the same K-12 school, and institutionalizing field assignments. They also call for improving the quality of internship experiences such as providing full-year, full-time paid internships as assistant principals (Pounder & Crow, 2005).

  Organizational Socialization. Crow (2006) believes that the traditional conception of learning how things are done at a specific school is narrow and ineffective. To enhance the learning of novice principals, organizational socialization should not only include one school but different schools, religious and governmental entities, and social and health agencies. In addition, Crow (2006) recommends a mediated entry of principals to the profession through the role of assistant principal to avoid stress and inefficiency. Pounder and Crow (2005) emphasize the importance of this phase as an apprenticeship for future leaders. However, they argue that the role of the assistant principal has become mostly focused on student discipline with very little or no instructional leadership responsibilities. The authors suggest that the assistant principal position should provide a comprehensive training for aspiring principals and that is why schools should redefine this role and encourage shared leadership. Principals should form leadership teams and eventually create a professional learning community in which assistant principals will be exposed to various administrative experiences other than monitoring student discipline. The role should be redesigned to include especially more tasks related to instruction. Developing the leadership position of assistant principals should therefore be seriously taken into account so that it improves the organizational socialization of aspiring principals without overwhelming them with all the demands of principalship at once especially that sometimes organizational socialization

emphasizes a certain conception of principalship that conflicts with what aspiring principals have learned from courses and trainings during professional socialization (Crow, 2006, 2007).

Personal Socialization. Part of both professional and organizational socialization is the concept of personal socialization. It is when changes in the self-identity of the novices occur as they make sense of their new role within the school and try to establish their own occupational identity by assuming the role and adapting to it. Browne-Ferrigno (2003) calls this process role-identity transformation and considers it an essential phase in the professional growth of aspiring principal. This mind-shift is the result of how novices perceive themselves and others perceive them in light of the school role. They start to think like a principal and assume their new identity with confidence. During their first year in post, novices move from mimicking behavior they have seen before (previous principals, expectations…) to enacting the role in a way that suits the new situation they are in and their own beliefs. Thus, novices start by perceiving the role of the principal from a societal perspective and progressively develop a personal orientation or image for their leadership (e.g., social justice) that can be different from the traditional one (Browne- Ferrigno, 2003; Cottrell & James, 2015; Crow, 2006; Early et al., 2011; Kelly & Saunders, 2010).

Socialization Sources. In addition to teachers, veteran principals, and education professors, novice principals learn a lot from the problems, challenges, and opportunities created by students and parents which constitute major sources of socialization in this complex role. Friends and family members are also important sources of socialization through their level of support and their valuing or devaluing of certain aspects of principalship. In specific contexts, non-educational sectors can play a significant role in beginning principals' socialization: in the US, for instance, the business sector pressures schools for preparing current and future employees. Social service agencies are also sources

of socialization since the principal has to ensure the school provides for the social, mental, and health needs of every student (Crow, 2006).

Socialization Methods. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) identified six dimensions of the socialization process which can be considered as tactics or methods used when socializing novices. They suggested these dimensions can serve as a framework to analyze how beginners are being socialized into their new role. In applying these tactics to describe novice principals' socialization, Crow (2006) adopted four of these dimensions (collective vs. individual; formal vs. informal; serial vs. disjunctive; investiture vs. divestiture socialization processes) and added two other dimensions he considers essential in our complex post-industrial society (cultural tactics; variety vs. similarity). These methods will be briefly described below.

Collective vs. Individual. Approaches to socialization can be collective where a group goes through the same experiences and learns from them (e.g. training courses; graduate programs…). They can also be individual where each novice goes through a unique array of experiences and learns separately (e.g. apprenticeship; internship; on-the-job learning) (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). According to Crow (2007), despite the attempts to organize trainings for principals to collectively learn together, principals' learning of their new role "remains a largely individual effort" (p. 53).

Formal vs. Informal. Formal socialization processes involve the development of a specific program to train novices: activities are explicitly tailored and officially assigned for the newcomers. In informal processes no specific plan is set for novices and they learn on the job through trial and error (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Serial vs. Disjunctive. In serial methods, veteran principals guide novices and serve as role models (e.g. mentoring; internship). Since serial methods often tend to maintain the status quo, Crow (2006) recommends that mentors have experiences in different settings so

that they pass on innovative and culturally sensitive practices to novices. When more experienced principals do not guide beginners to learn their new role the process is known as disjunctive (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Investiture vs. Divestiture. Investiture strategies value the identity of the novices and the experiences they carry with them from their prior experiences and encourage them to enhance the skills, values, and attitudes they have already acquired to invest them as a support in learning their new role. Encouraging beginners to build on their prior teaching experiences to strengthen relationships between teachers and leaders and create learning communities is an example of investiture strategies (Crow, 2007). On the contrary, divestiture processes require the novice to let go of certain personal characteristics and experiences to create a new identity and rebuild a self-image that will allow him or her to be accepted in the new role or setting. Therefore, these processes reshape or remold the novice to become a member of the organization and in the case of school principals can promote a culture of separation between teachers and leaders (Crow, 2007; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979).

Cultural Tactics. Crow (2006) adds to the different methods of socialization the cultural modes: these are methods (story-telling, rituals, rites, ceremonies…) used by socializing agents (teachers, staff, veteran principals, students…) to relay specific messages that novice principals should take into consideration. Veteran principals, for example, can tell stories that warn beginning principals from the potential consequences of any innovation they might want to introduce. Novices learn a lot through ceremonies introducing them to the staff, rites performed at certain schools such as teachers who try to test the new principal. According to Crow (2006) these tactics can be very "powerful socialization tools" even "more potent than the formal, overt methods" (p. 320-321).

Variety vs. Similarity. Crow (2006) emphasizes the importance of variety versus similarity of experiences. He believes that the more novices have experienced diverse settings (districts / schools/demographic contexts) in their prior positions the more this will facilitate their socialization process and help them face new and complex situations. Variety of experiences is considered key to improve the ability of principals to enact their role in a society where cultural diversity, creativity, innovation, individual agency, networking, and context- tailored responses are required.

Crow (2006, 2007) reported that in general the socialization process of novice principals in the US and the UK is individual, informal, serial, and emphasizes divesting previous experiences as teachers. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) explained that different combinations of the previously described tactics lead to different socialization outcomes which will be detailed in the following section.

Socialization Outcomes. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) identified two main response types to socialization processes: custodial and innovative. In the custodial type, the novice accepts the role as it is and conforms to the knowledge, practices, and values associated with the traditional way the role has been enacted so far. However, if the newcomer tries to change the knowledge base, strategies used by predecessors or even the mission or end goal of the role, then the response is categorized as innovative. The authors distinguish between content innovation and role innovation. On one hand, when the novice tries to improve or reform the role by making changes in the knowledge base or in the way the role is performed, the authors talk about content innovation. On the other hand, trying to redefine the role and changing its mission is referred to as role innovation. Crow (2006) argues that, to be effective in post-industrial societies, the outcome of the socialization process should be role-making rather than role-taking, in other words, innovation and even rebellion instead of mere conformity (custodial response) to a certain conception of a

principal's role. Novice principals have to create a role that will allow them to deal with dilemmas, conflicting demands, and increasing complexities, a role where they can experiment, collaborate, and even lead the school towards becoming a learning community. Conforming to a traditionally accepted conception of principalship (emphasis on management skills, stability, and routinization…) will not make them effective leaders in post-industrial societies (Crow, 2006). However, Crow (2007) does not deny that in certain aspects of principalship, especially when it comes to management, conformity is important but modern schools require at the same time innovative leadership.

So both outcomes are important in different aspects of the job. Using the role boundary perspective, Cottrell and James (2016) explained through narratives of critical incidents that took place with new primary headteachers in England during the first three years on the job, how those novices "delineated" the boundaries of their role. This delineation was the result of the interactions of those new headteachers with their context. Therefore, the outcome of organizational socialization of novices was learning what practices are appropriate and legitimate in the specific context or situation they are in. By establishing those practices, novices designed their own role-as-practice. The interaction of new headteachers with the school staff, local educational authorities, and external stakeholders (e.g., teachers' union) influenced how they set their role boundary (Cottrell & James, 2016).

According to Van Maanen and Schein (1979), the interaction of specific socialization processes can promote or hinder the degree to which outcomes will be custodial or innovative regardless of the individual attributes of the novice and of the particular setting's characteristics. This allows designing socialization processes that will maximize the chance of having the desired outcome. The authors propose that serial and divestiture processes are more likely to produce custodial responses whereas collective, formal, and disjunctive processes interact to shift the response toward content innovation. To push novices towards

role innovation, the authors hypothesize that combining individual, informal, disjunctive, and investiture processes favors this kind of response. However, Crow (2006) highlights the fact that sometimes the conflicting demands of accountability and innovation at the same time create a dilemma for novices on whether to go towards role taking or role making.

Understanding each aspect of socialization described in this section is important for researchers who wish to explore the transition period of novices into principalship in an attempt to improve the induction process. Several researchers have tackled early-career stage principalship and a review of the conducted empirical studies is presented in the section below.

The Study of Novice Principals

A review of the empirical studies conducted on novice principals revealed a set of experiences and tasks that are specific to early-career stage principalship (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Cottrell & James, 2016; Daresh & Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Nelson et al., 2008; Spillane & Lee, 2014; Walker & Qian, 2006). Several factors, both personal and contextual, affecting novices' work during that transition period can also be identified (Cheung & Walker 2006; Holligan et al., 2006). The findings regarding those experiences, tasks, and factors will be presented below.

The Challenges of the Transition to Principalship

Transition into principalship seems to be a challenging journey characterized by five major experiences: surprise and reality shock; the co-existence of challenges and enthusiasm along with stress, loneliness, professional insecurity and fear of failure; a sense of insufficient managerial understanding and competence; difficulty in balancing technical and instructional aspects; and uncertainty in the principal-staff relationship.

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Surprise and Reality Shock

Studies of novice principals in different contexts (the UK, USA and Africa) show that beginners experience feelings of reality shock when they realize how demanding and overwhelming their role actually is (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Daresh & Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders, 2010). In their mixed-methods longitudinal study on 17 elementary principals in the US in their first three months on the job, Spillane and Lee (2014) reported that novices experience a major "reality shock" in this transition period. The new principals' sense of ultimate responsibility makes them feel overwhelmed by the amount of tasks as well as the diversity and the unpredictability of the job. Daresh and Male (2000) also describe the "culture shock" experienced by first-year British headteachers and American principals due to the intensity of the job: even if they were previously deputies or assistants, those novices do not realize the breadth of the role until they assume the position of heads or principals. This shock was also the result of the change of perceptions of others towards the novice: they seemed to lose identity and became just "the principal". Even when appointed in their own school, novices become strangers among their own colleagues and friends. For some beginning principals, this feeling extends to their personal life outside the school: people see and treat them differently, some with more respect than when they were teachers (Daresh & Male, 2000). Kelly and Saunders' (2010) study confirms this "shock" that novices experience during the transition period: novices are surprised by the constant demands they have to deal with, the amount of urgent issues they have to address and the complexity of the job that they did not expect. For most principals, establishing the boundaries of their role in an unfamiliar terrain (the new school) was very challenging and the process was accompanied with feelings of incompetence and lack of confidence (Cottrell & James, 2016).

The Co-Existence of Challenges and Enthusiasm along with Stress, Loneliness,

Professional Insecurity and Fear of Failure

To illustrate this difficulty, Walker and Qian (2006) describe the experience of novice

principals as trying to maintain balance "at the top of the greasy pole" (p. 297). With getting

the job or attaining the top of the greasy pole comes a set of challenges and uncertainties that

make novices feel they are about to slip at any time. The required skills, knowledge, and

dispositions are different from the ones they were used to as they were climbing to the top

(Walker & Qian, 2006). In fact, Crow (2007) investigated the socialization of four primary

headteachers in the UK during their second and third years on the job. The findings of this

longitudinal study showed that novices described first-year experiences as "traumatic"

(Crow, 2007, p. 56). They all faced major crises at their schools that they were not prepared

for (fire, parents' adverse reaction to a change in admission processes, firing of previous

headteachers). Moreover, Cottrell and James (2016) reported that studies on new

headteachers in the UK showed that their socialization experience is "difficult, anxiety-

provoking, challenging, stressful and sometimes even traumatic" (p. 6). They analyzed the

experiences of seven primary headteachers during their first three years on the job. Data was

collected through semi-structured interviews every three months (for six of the headteahers)

and a written activity log for the seventh. The critical incidents identified by the researchers

from the collected data, showed how challenging and stressful was the organizational

socialization process of those novices. One of the headteachers was "strongly challenged"

(Cottrell & James, 2016, p.11) by the image of his predecessor who had been in this position

for twenty years: the staff did not think he was as competent as the previous headteacher. He

even described his first months in post as a "nightmare" (Cottrell & James, 2016, p.11).

Another headteacher reported feelings of frustration when trying to provide the necessary

financial and human capital to satisfy authorities' demands regarding special needs students.

In her attempt to "break the culture" (Cottrell & James, 2016, p. 15), another headteacher was faced with resentment. She described her experience as stressful and some situations "painful" and "intimidating" (Cottrell & James, 2016, p. 15). Daresh and Male (2000) also reported that newly appointed headteachers and principals underscored the high levels of stress and isolation they experience and how much their job required strength and a capacity to develop strategies to cope with stress. Moreover, beginning principals reported that they are left alone to deal with all the challenges. This has led to feelings of isolation and disappointment from the lack of guidance and support from their superiors (Walker & Qian, 2006). This feeling is exacerbated by the competition between schools which makes them feel also isolated from their colleague principals in other schools.

Sense of Insufficient Managerial Understanding and Competence

Both US novice principals and British novice headteachers felt they were not equipped with sufficient practical managerial knowledge and technical skills needed to perform their role (Crow, 2007; Nelson et al., 2008). Beginning principals in Nelson et al.'s (2008) two-year period study reported that one of the major categories of challenges was related to a lack of knowledge about technical skills such as budgeting, policy and curriculum knowledge, and time management (completion of paperwork on time). They also viewed personnel issues (conflict management, contracts) as a technical aspect of their job they were not prepared enough to deal with. Consequently, they made mistakes, spent too much time on these tasks, and lost confidence in their practical managerial expertise. Similar issues were raised by novice headteachers in the UK, mainly regarding budget and finance as well as personnel issues (dealing with incompetent staff, managing conflict, dealing with legal processes, writing policies) (Crow, 2007).

Difficulty in Balancing Technical and Instructional Aspects

Another common challenge experienced by novice principals across different cultures and contexts such as Canada (Sackney & Walker, 2006), Mexico (Slater et al., 2008) or Scotland (Cowie & Crawfard, 2008) is the limited time they have left to focus on an essential aspect of school leadership: leading instruction. In fact, Sackney and Walker (2006) reported that Canadian novice principals feel overwhelmed with the amount of work they must do, the pace of the job, the fact that they must deal with everyone's problems, and with the little time left for instructional issues. In their case study intended to explore the experience of first-year Mexican principals, Slater et al. (2008) reported that "the burden of paperwork" was one of the most serious challenges faced (p. 219). Managing paperwork was found to take most of the novices' time and attention during the first year preventing them from attending to issues they consider as key for school improvement such as student learning. This created feeling of anger and frustration for novices who tried to find several ways to overcome this obstacle. New principals' activity logs analysis by Cowie and Crawford (2008) shows that novices in Scotland elementary schools are preoccupied daily with a range of tasks which leave a limited time for educational issues. Finding the balance between technical and instructional activities remains a big challenge for novice principals.

Uncertainty in the Principal-Staff Relationship

Early-career principals' relationship with their staff, especially teachers, is characterized by being both a source of anxiety and of support: worry and concern from staff reaction to novices' initiatives for change on one side and the challenge of securing support from key staff members to survive the early stage on the other (Nelson et al., 2008). Quong (2006) reported in his study, a personal exploration of his experience as a beginning principal in Australia, worrying about living up to the staff expectations in the solutions and decisions he made. Getting staff to accept new ideas was also considered as a serious problem by UK

novice headteachers in Weindling and Dimmock's (2006) longitudinal study. Complicated

relationships with the staff, dealing with ineffective staff and negative people who resist

change, and assigning each staff member to the right position are viewed by novices as

problematic, stressful and even "heavy duty" (Hobson et al., 2003; Nelson et al., 2008, p.

693). However, novices also relate instances where strong relationships with staff members

were built and constituted a source of strength to survive first years' challenges (Nelson et al.,

2008).

Tasks for an Effective Transition Process

Throughout the reviewed empirical studies on novices, transitioning into principalship

seems to be characterized by five tasks particularly important for beginners to help them

reach the stage of taking hold, prove to be successful leaders, and move to the next stage in

their career. These five tasks will be presented below.

Learn Practical Management and Leadership Skills

One of the first tasks that early-career stage principals engage in is learning the

necessary technical and leadership skills and how to apply them in their school context.

Therefore, in the transition period, their learning moves progressively from "theoretical

preparation", if any, to "practical application" of managerial and leadership skills (Kelly &

Saunders, 2010, p. 137). From learning specific formulas needed to develop a school's

budget, to balancing competing daily activities, to leading people through negotiation,

conflict resolution, real-time problem-solving and reflection, novices learn to master the basic

skills needed for effective and efficient principalship (Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000;

Kelly & Saunders, 2010).

Diagnose the School Culture and Build Relationships

Kelly and Saunders (2010) reported that learning about the school culture was set by

novices as a priority in the "entry, orientation and immersion" phase of the transition. This

period is characterized by trying to make sense of the school context and understanding the culture. For instance, novices tend to learn about their predecessors and their influence on school staff and culture. They also pay attention to the staff's capacity to handle change and to the different alliances and conflicts that exist between different stakeholders (Cheung & Walker, 2006). In order to better read the culture they focus on establishing relationships with the school community and building key alliances with staff before applying change and innovation. Knowing who to ask for honest and appropriate information essential for problem solving and decision making is particularly critical when novices are appointed in a school where the environment is hostile to the newly appointed head. Novices try to keep the veteran and powerful leaders and teachers at school in their team and at the same time learn from them. These key people are good informants on the school's cultural context and will help the novice build a cognitive map to deal with the complexity of the environment and make sound decisions (Crow, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Sackney & Walker, 2006).

Gain Acceptance

During the entry phase, novices' main concern is fitting in. They try to ensure being accepted by the school staff and to demonstrate their credibility as leaders before making important decisions and promoting their personal values and vision (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Kelly & Saunders, 2010). They work hard to develop their leadership capabilities especially the interpersonal and political dimensions of their role to gain the community's trust and support in running the school (Walker & Qian, 2006). They form relationships with various stakeholders and get to know the politics of the community and what could be an appropriate response in specific political issues (Crow, 2007). Taking time to build relations with teachers, students, and parents facilitates the transition of the principal and makes him / her feel more accepted and appreciated. This will render his / her experience a more positive one (Sackney & Walker, 2006).

Devise a New School Vision

The next important task that first-year principals undertake is to develop a new school vision in which the staff is involved. Most importantly, they work on making the staff feel the need for change and become part of the process (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Kelly & Saunders, 2010).

Develop Coping Strategies

Daresh (2001) indicates that, in addition to the needs of the school, novices are even more concerned about their own survival in the transition period. In several studies, researchers describe how novice principals develop strategies to survive their first years on the job and cope with the stress and emotions they might experience while transitioning to their new role (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000; Hobson et al., 2003). The main identified coping strategies are: reflecting, self-learning, and taking "time out".

Reflecting. To "cross the bridge" successfully, novices reflect continuously on their values and what matters to them the most (Walker & Qian, 2006, p. 304). That way beginning leaders can face the dilemmas that they experience on the job. Daresh and Male (2000) recommend that novices spend time reflecting on their personal values as well as their ethical attitudes to be able to cope with a job that is "life-transforming": how they spend their time, what their priorities are, peers' perceptions and support are all altered radically when someone becomes a principal. Reflection can help them stay on the right track and not be overwhelmed by these changes by managing the self and maintaining perspective (Cowie & Crawford, 2008).

Self-Learning. Developing self-learning was an important strategy that headteachers emphasized. Novices continue learning through readings, workshops… building their own personal capacity helps them motivate the whole school community to learn (Sackney &

Walker, 2006). Self-learning content included survival skills, how to cope with the amount of work, and how to gain confidence (in themselves and the school). Self-confidence was a major need for novices: confidence that they have what it gets when it comes to leading and reforming a school, confidence to take risks and face challenges, and confidence to encourage and bring out the leader in others. Being confident that change can happen at their school regardless of all the problems is also a must for novices (Crow, 2007).

Taking Time Out. Daresh and Male (2000) reported that to cope with stress, administrators had their own "time out" strategies (p. 97). This time is dedicated for personal renewal through running, reading, attending concerts, and spending family time outside their town (Daresh & Male, 2000).

Factors Affecting the Early Career Stage of Principalship

Novice principals' experiences and role enactment were found to be affected by various interacting personal and contextual factors which Cheung and Walker (2006) also call "inner worlds" and "outer limits" (p. 390). Both personal and contextual factors can further be divided into categories and sub-categories that will be detailed below.

Personal Factors

Personal factors can be grouped into two categories: the preferred leadership orientation of the novice and his/her strength of heart. Those two categories constitute the "inner worlds" of the novices and were found to affect what leadership style they adopted once in post and therefore how they handle the experiences and tasks of the transition period (Cheung & Walker, 2006). Both categories will be described below.

Preferred Leadership Orientations: Role Perceptions and Role Preferences. In this category, both the novices perception of their role (what they assumed are the requirements of the job) and their preference regarding the behavior that should be associated with the principal's role are thought to affect beginning principals' role adoption and

enactment. Therefore, role perceptions and role preferences combined result in novice principals' acting with intensity and complexity as change leaders, cultural leaders, curriculum leaders, administrative leaders, standard-bearers, and gatekeepers or custodian leaders (Cheung & Walker, 2006).

Strength of Heart (Self-Perception and Sense of Efficacy). Novices' strength of heart emanates from the interaction of how they perceive themselves and their sense of efficacy. Novices' perceptions of themselves affected their degree of self-confidence and consequently the degree to which they were proactive and acted as change leaders or preferred to be maintainers of the status quo (Cheung & Walker, 2006). Novices' strength of heart can be examined at two levels: psychological on one side and professional and experiential on the other side. The factors mentioned under these two levels of strength contribute to the differences between novices "who can cope well and those who cannot" (Cheung & Walker, 2006, p. 392).

Psychological Strength. This level encompasses personality, personal values, and strength of character; perceived fitness or readiness for principalship; nature of the decision to take up the post of principal; and ability to handle stress. Novices who coped well with reform and wanted to implement administrative, curricular, and cultural changes in the school from day one had high levels of optimism and confidence, a strong character, solid personal values, and an important capacity to cope with stress. To those novices, principalship was a personal choice and taking up this post a decision they considered thoroughly (Cheung & Walker, 2006).

Professional and Experiential Strength. Holligan et al. (2006) concluded in their mixed-methods study of novice headteachers' needs that beginners' background has a significant impact on their initial experiences in terms of challenges faced and needs necessary to overcome them: not only does the extent of training and managerial experiences

matter but also the contexts in which they were conducted. Two constituents of a novice's background seem to play an important role in determining his / her professional and experiential strength: educational background (including training and preparation programs, university courses, degrees, and licensure) and professional biography (past work experience, mainly experience as an assistant principal) (Cheung & Walker, 2006). Several studies on novice principals suggest that an appropriate balance between academic preparation and on-the-job experience in roles like principalship is what seems to be recommended for novices to feel well-prepared and confident to tackle challenges ahead (Daresh & Male, 2000).

Regarding principal preparation programs, in general, novice principals in the US, UK, and Africa recognized the importance of these programs whether in the form of university courses or national training programs (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Daresh & Male, 2000; Holligan et al., 2006). In England, new headteachers who have completed the National Professional Qualification for Headteachership (NPQH) demonstrated significantly higher levels of confidence than their counterparts who have not completed the program in areas such as developing the strategic directions of the school, leading staff's professional development and performance management (Holligan et al., 2006). Most principals in the US also stated that they benefited from university preparation programs (Daresh & Male, 2000). In South Africa, where principal preparation is available through university graduate programs, novices found courses related to teaching and learning useful (Bush & Oduro, 2006). However, novices reported that these programs were not sufficient for an adequate preparation for the job and sometimes what they learned was not transferable to school contexts which leaves them unequipped with the necessary skills needed to lead schools (Daresh & Male, 2000).

Novice principals' professional biography constitutes a major personal factor affecting first year performance. Novices come to the job with varied and broad experiences

in both educational and non-educational fields which increases their flexibility in dealing with crises. Occupying the position of deputy or assistant principal has an important influence on novices' transition. In England, beginning headteachers who had previously occupied the role of deputy acknowledged having learned a lot about headship mostly from the headteachers they worked with: they learned how to deal with people, innovate, have political skills, and be determined (Crow, 2007). Kelly and Saunders (2010) also found that working with their former headteachers shaped novices' thinking and understanding of what it is to be a headteacher (role conception). However, not all novices who have been assistant principals agreed that the post has had a positive impact in terms of learning what principalship is: some novices claim having learned a little and others a lot depending on the style of the principal they worked with and his/her vision of education and leadership (Daresh & Male, 2000). Some novices even criticized their former headteachers style in that they neglected the instructional aspect of the job (Crow, 2007).

An explorative case study of two beginning school leaders in the Netherlands also underscores the importance of career history on the way beginners solve the problems they face at their schools (Sleegers et al., 2009). A detailed analysis of novices' problem-solving processes shows that the way they frame the problems they are dealing with is embedded in their professional biographies. Throughout their past experiences they develop particular values and beliefs and participate in specific professional cultures which affect how they make sense of daily problems and shape how they solve those problems. In the study, both leaders were confronted with the same problem of decrease in student enrolment and both identified the reason to be the professional attitude of teachers and school culture. The first leader who used to be a teacher and a local politician took a managerial top-down approach to solve the problem and imposed the implementation of an external pedagogical approach. His background as a politician incited him to take straight measures to change the situation

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quickly and turn things around by restructuring and restarting from scratch. The second

leader who used to be a manager and teacher at a teacher's college and worked as an

educational consultant, wanted to re-culture the existing structure by encouraging

professional role-taking of teachers, open communication, and professional discourse to build

a professional learning community because he valued professional responsibility and

independence and wanted to promote reflection and dialogue.

Contextual Factors

These factors range from the wider national context (social, political and other

environmental constituencies) to the organizational school context. They also include the

educational system and the sources of support of the novice.

The National Political and Social Contexts. Several researchers have noted that

some experiences and challenges faced by novices are specific to certain national contexts

(Walker & Qian, 2006). Studies that have been conducted in non-Western countries have

shown the influence of national socio-political conditions on the work of novice principals.

For instance, Onguko et al. (2012) conducted a study on seven headteachers of primary

schools in Tanzania (East Africa) during their first year of appointment. They concluded that

principals in Tanzania walk in unfamiliar territories and face several challenges. While some

of the problems were common with Western principals, the bulk was specific to the

challenging African context and mainly related to poverty and illiteracy.

The System: Reform and Governance Structure. In several educational systems,

curriculum is imposed and reform is approached from a top-down perspective whereby

schools are required to abide by these changes, meet specific demands, and attain standards

regardless of the school's developmental stage (Cheung & Walker, 2006). In addition, novice

principals face a dilemma between the increasing complexity and uncertainty of education in

modern society that requires customized and context-specific solutions on one hand and the

conformity and standardization that is still influencing the educational sector on the other hand (Crow, 2006). Principals are therefore exposed to "tensions" (Stevenson, 2006; Trnavčevič & Vaupot, 2009) that might hinder the accomplishment of these external expectations and are the ones mostly held accountable for the failure or success of reform initiatives at their school. This climate of accountability, especially in countries like the US, affects the socialization of the principals into their job by making them more focused on technical and administrative issues rather than on the relational aspects of leadership (Nelson et al., 2008).

Organizational School Context. The school where the novice works has a great influence on his/her transition period. In fact, Holligan et al. (2006) concluded that "the context in which new head teachers find themselves varies enormously, almost to the extent that in some ways headship of one school may be almost a different job from headship in another school" (p. 117). Important elements that either reduce or increase the intensity of the problems faced during transition can be the size and age range of the school, the recent (and sometimes less recent) history and culture of the school, the influence of the predecessor (ghost of former principal), staff turnover, staff change capacity, outcomes of inspections, local economic changes, and the degree of previous familiarity of the novice with the school and the school context (Holligan et al., 2006; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Moreover, key individuals at the school influence novices' socialization either positively or negatively. These individuals include deputies and school management staff. Crow (2007) emphasized that novices needed to learn "who to trust with what type of problem and for what kind of information" (p. 62).

Sources of Support. Several researchers also attributed much significance to the support and guidance novices receive and considered various sources of support as important factors affecting novices' transition: national preparation programs, professional networks,

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staff, parents, family, community, role models, friends, and former principals (Cheung & Walker 2006; Crow 2007; Daresh &Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders 2010). Three of these sources will be briefly discussed below: national preparation programs, professional networks, and mentoring relationships.

National Preparation Programs. These include training activities planned at the national level, funds provided by the government for professional development during induction, and meetings for novices organized by local authorities. Crow (2007) identified these sources in his study of how new headteachers in the UK learned to tackle the challenges faced during the first year as well as the socialization sources that either facilitated or hindered that learning. New headteachers commented on the positive effects these efforts had on their learning and how they helped link both professional and organizational socialization. Spillane and Lee (2014) recommended that leadership development programs help novices manage the stress associated with the job and focus on the emotional dimension so that novices could create healthy work environments.

Professional Networks. When professional support at the national level is not sufficient or limited to technical support, therefore neglecting the implementation of cultural changes at schools, most leaders develop a personal professional network and actively seek to get support from professional peers: senior management team colleagues, other principals within a district, and deputies and assistants. Many novices also have outside consultants acting as critical friends that are very important in their lives (Daresh & Male, 2000).

Mentoring Relationships. Novices mention mentors as one of the most helpful source of support and guidance in different aspects of the job especially the relational one. They are available for regular meetings and school visits, and provide various learning tools and constructive feedback (Crow, 2007).

Since principals' experiences are context-specific, understanding Lebanese novice principals' experiences cannot occur without an understanding of their work context: the Lebanese educational system and the principalship as a role.

Overview of the Educational System in Lebanon

In this section, a description of how the educational system in Lebanon is managed and organized at the administrative and curricular level is provided. The challenges facing the attainment of quality education in Lebanon are also discussed.

Administrative Organizational Structure

The educational system in Lebanon is centralized and primarily controlled by the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) (LAES, 2006). Schools are grouped into four categories: public, private free, private non-free, and private UNRWA schools (Center for Educational Research and Development [CERD], 2018-2019). Organization at the ministry level and then at the school level as well as the governance of education will be described in the following subsections.

Organization at the Ministry Level. In what follows, the vision for education as well as the mission of the MEHE and its organizational structure will be detailed with a specific focus on the directorate of general education and the Center for Educational and Research Development (CERD) of interest in this study.

Vision and Mission. According to the National Educational Strategy in Lebanon Vision Document (LAES, 2006), the vision for education in Lebanon is that of an education "available on the basis of equal opportunity; education that has good quality and contributes to building an information society, to social integration, and to economic development" (p.1). Consequently, the mission of the MEHE is to "look after the public interest in both the public

and the private educational sectors and manage public education" to realize that vision (LAES, 2006, p.1).

Organizational Structure. The MEHE is organized into:

- The directorate general of general education

- The directorate general of vocational and technical education

- The directorate general of higher education

- The joint administrative directorate

Each of the above-mentioned directorates is itself organized into several directorates and units. The directorate general of general education plays a role in: securing educational and logistics needs of primary and general education students; supervising the implementation of the curriculum; training the teaching staff; and meeting the requirements of modern education (Ministry of Education and Higher Education [MEHE], 2010). This directorate is headed by the director general of general education and is organized into:

- The directorate of secondary education

- The directorate of primary education

- The directorate of guidance and counseling

- The department of private education

- The equivalence committee

- The educational zones

Each of the above directorates and departments is headed by a director. Secondary and primary school principals report directly to the directors of the secondary and primary education directorates. These directors also communicate the main decisions to the principals of the schools their directorate is responsible for (Karami-Akkary, 2014).

The MEHE has also authority over the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) established in December 1971 by decree N° 2356. The CERD is

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considered as a public institution which has both administrative and financial autonomy while being under the custody of the MEHE to which it reports directly. The main functions of the CERD concern the general education field and include carrying out educational research, conducting educational statistics and educational planning, developing and reviewing curricula and textbooks, training workers in the educational field (except universities), proposing qualifications for job applicants in the educational field (except universities), proposing technical and health requirements of school buildings, and coordinating the preparation of official examinations .

Organization at the School Level. The CERD classifies schools in Lebanon into four types: public, private (non-free), private free, and private UNRWA schools. According to the CERD Statistics Bulletin (2018-2019), the total number of schools in Lebanon in the four sectors is 2903 distributed as follows: 43.4% public schools; 41.8% private non-free schools; 12.5% private free schools; and 2.2% private UNRWA schools. Table 1 shows the distribution of schools according to sector and by region.

In the academic year 2018/2019, approximately two-thirds (69.1 %) of students in Lebanon attended private schools: 52.6% in private non-free schools; 13.1 % in private free schools; and 3.4% in private UNRWA schools (CERD, 2018-2019). Only 30.9% of students were enrolled in public schools. Table 2 shows the distribution of students according to sector and by region.

Table 1

Percentage Distribution of Schools by Sector and by Region (CERD, 2018-2019)

Sector / Governorate	Public	Private free	Private non-free	Private UNRWA	Total
Beirut	1.9%	0.4%	3.6%	0.2%	**6.1%**
Mount Lebanon (Beirut Suburbs)	3.4%	2.2%	11.2%	0.2%	**17%**
Mount Lebanon (except Beirut suburbs)	5.9%	1.3%	6.6%	0.1%	**13.8%**
North Lebanon	8.9%	1.5%	4.4%	0.3%	**15.2%**
Beqaa	4.1%	1.6%	3.4%	0.1%	**9.3%**
South Lebanon	5.1%	1%	3.4%	1.1%	**10.5%**
Nabatieh	4.4%	1.5%	2.9%	0%	**8.8%**
Akkar	5.9%	1.3%	3.3%	0.2%	**10.8%**
Baalbek-Hermel	3.8%	1.8%	2.9%	0%	**8.5%**
Total	**43.4%**	**12.5%**	**41.8%**	**2.2%**	**100%**

Table 2

Percentage Distribution of Students in Schools by Sector and by Region (CERD, 2018-2019)

Sector / Governorate	Public	Private free	Private non-free	Private UNRWA	Total
Beirut	1.6 %	0.5%	4.7%	0.3%	**7.1%**
Mount Lebanon (Beirut Suburbs)	2.7 %	2.4%	16.3%	0.2%	**21.6%**
Mount Lebanon (except Beirut suburbs)	2.8 %	0.9%	7.5%	0.2%	**11.4%**
North Lebanon	6.4 %	1.9%	6.3%	0.4%	**15%**
Beqaa	2.6 %	1.2%	4.3%	0.2%	**8.3%**
South Lebanon	4.7%	1.3%	4.5%	1.5%	**11.9%**
Nabatieh	3.2 %	1.5%	2.8%	0%	**7.4%**
Akkar	4.5%	1.3%	3.5%	0.6%	**9.9%**
Baalbek-Hermel	2.5%	2.2%	2.6%	0.1%	**7.4%**
Total	**30.9 %**	**13.1%**	**52.6%**	**3.4%**	**100%**

In the public sector, schools have a hierarchical structure which consists mainly of the principal, the supervisors, and the teachers. Several services such as documentation, educational and technological resources, and cycle coordinators are not provided. In secondary schools however there are subject coordinators. In private schools, structure can vary but the majority follows a bureaucratic structure where the principal has the highest authority and decision making power at the school (LAES, 2006).

Governance of Education. The extent of control that the MEHE exercises while governing the public and private sectors is not identical: while public schools are tightly controlled by the MEHE which manages and finances them, private schools are only loosely controlled by the government (LAES, 2006).

In fact, in public schools, the MEHE sets policies, manages the budget, recruits staff (teachers, principals…), imposes the curriculum and the textbooks to be adopted, and supervises how the school is functioning. Private schools are free to set their own policies, recruit their staff, and choose the curriculum. Consequently, principals in private schools have more autonomy and broader authority than their counterparts in public schools (LAES, 2006).

In Lebanon, the private sector is considered as a source of power and pride and is granted freedom by the Lebanese Constitution. As a matter of fact, some of the private institutions (schools and universities) that still exist till now were founded even before the Lebanese state was established. Most of the private schools in Lebanon were started by religious communities. Freedom of education is valued by the Lebanese Constitution (Article 10) which gives the right to all communities to found their own schools (El Amine, 2010). The rest of the private schools are either owned by foreign governments / organizations (around 10%) or by local individuals / secular organizations. Private schools do not receive funds from the government but from private sources only (Karami-Akkary, 2014). Although

the MEHE's mission is to "look after the public interest in private education" (LAES, 2006, p.1) by making sure there are organizational frameworks and standards and specifications for quality education that private schools should abide by and are held accountable for, the MEHE's role in private education has been limited. Private schools are linked to the MEHE in certain aspects such as requirements for obtaining a license, criteria to select personnel and set the budget, follow-up on registered students' names, and most importantly official exams (Brevet at the end of grade 9 and the Lebanese Baccalaureate as a requirement for university entry).

According to the LAES vision document (2006), there are shortcomings in practice in the way the MEHE is supervising and monitoring private schools in Lebanon as it is supposed to do according to the Constitution: there are no clearly set organizational frameworks for private schools (specifications and standards), no quality control procedures, little support to improve the quality of education in the private sector, and a low level of involvement of private schools in national development plans and projects.

Curricular Organization

In Lebanon, formal education starts at age 4 in the nursery stage which lasts for two years, followed by the elementary (6 years) and intermediate (3 years) stages which constitute the basic education stage (grades 1 to 9). Education in Lebanon is compulsory till grade 6. At the end of Grade 9, students have to pass official exams to receive the Intermediate Certification (Lebanese Brevet) from the Lebanese government. The secondary stage lasts three years (grades 10 -12). Grade 12 students are required to pass official exams to obtain the Lebanese Baccalaureate Certificate in one of the four options they can choose from (life sciences, general sciences, humanities, economics and sociology) and have access to university education.

In Lebanon, one national curriculum is adopted in all public schools and the majority of private schools. The latter, however, are also free to implement foreign programs such as the French or American. Due to the civil war, the national curriculum did not change from 1967-1971 till 1997 as part of the Education Recovery Plan. By the academic year 2000-2001, the new curriculum was implemented in schools in all stages and has not undergone major reform since (El Amine, 2010).

The Challenges to Quality of Education

The educational system in Lebanon faces six challenges on the way to accomplishing the vision of good quality education. These challenges will be presented below (CERD, 2000; LAES, 2006).

Poor Infrastructure. The first challenge is the lack of well-maintained and adequately equipped school buildings. This constitutes one of the major problems faced especially in the public and private free sectors.

Implementation of the New Curriculum. Second, after developing and implementing the new curriculum in 1997, several gaps were identified and the difference between schools continued to increase: some were well equipped and had competent teachers capable of implementing the new curriculum and others had neither the financial nor the human capital necessary for the change.

Quality of Teaching. The third problem involves teachers: there are no unified standards for preparing, hiring, and evaluating teachers, no license needed to teach and no professionalization of teaching. Moreover, the high age range of teachers makes it difficult for them to adapt to change.

Principalship. The fourth factor influencing the quality of education is "school principals". According to the "Strategic Directions for Education in Lebanon for 2015" document (CERD, 2000), public school management suffers from three major problems:

limited authority granted to principals, lack of adequate principal preparation and training, and principal selection and appointment processes that follow no clear standards and are mostly done on a political basis.

Lack of a National Quality Assurance System. The fifth problem is that the MEHE has not set procedures, policies, and standards to maintain and improve the quality of education at the national level. Educators' unions have been mainly concerned with their rights than with professionalizing teaching and setting standards for the quality of teaching and learning in Lebanon (CERD, 2000; El Amine, 2010).

The Gap between Public and Private Sectors. Finally, according to the "Strategic Directions for Education in Lebanon for 2015" document (CERD, 2000), the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990) has had a major negative impact on the quality of education in Lebanon: it led to the deterioration of the general educational and academic regulations and standards in the public institutions as well as in many of the private institutions. Public schools were the major victims of this deterioration with consequences on this sector such as: poor buildings and equipment; lack of accountability for teachers and staff; teachers taking on several jobs to compensate for low salaries; designating a considerable number of new teachers who do not meet standards due to political pressure. As a result of this deterioration, the percentage of students in public schools dropped from 39.6% in 1973/1974 to 30.9% in 1993/1994. Meanwhile, the private sector took advantage of this situation and the number of schools in this sector increased in a haphazard way, without necessarily meeting the standards of quality education. Table 3 shows that 46.8% of schools were founded from 1986 and on and that 72.2 % of those schools are private schools (CERD, 2018-2019).

Table 3

Distribution of Schools by Sector and by Year of Foundation (CERD, 2018-2019)

Year of Foundation / Sector	Before 1925	1926-1940	1941-1955	1956-1970	1971-1985	1986 on	Total
Public	22	39	290	291	241	378	**1261**
Private free	5	5	47	100	49	157	**363**
Private non-free	19	20	78	171	133	793	**1214**
Private UNRWA	0	0	3	13	17	32	**65**
Total	**46**	**64**	**418**	**575**	**440**	**1360**	**2903**

The authors of the strategic directions (CERD, 2000) also reported that studies done by the faculty of education at the Lebanese University during the academic years 1992/1993; 1993/1994; 1994/1995 on grade 4 students in Beirut and the suburbs show that the level is low in all subjects and that there is a gap between the public and the private sector: the level is much lower in the public sector. Results of the Lebanese Baccalaureate also showed the huge difference between public and private schools (CERD, 2000).

Principalship in Lebanon

There is a lack of official statistical data on principals in Lebanon: there is no information on how they are distributed by age, gender, educational level, and years of experience (Karami-Akkary, 2014). In addition, the available knowledge base on Lebanese principals does not allow us to draw an accurate and comprehensive picture of principalship in Lebanon. In fact, literature (both theoretical and empirical) on Lebanese school principals is scarce (Ghamrawi, 2013; Karami-Akkary, 2014). The majority of studies on principalship grounded in the Lebanese context consist of master's theses or doctoral dissertations (mostly non-refereed and unpublished) and only a few are published in refereed journals. Among those few publications, some aimed to identify the leadership styles of school principals (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013; Mattar, 2012b; Theodory, 1981) and how they affect the performance of the school (Mattar, 2012b), others researched the characteristics of school leaders that fostered teacher leadership (Ghamrawi, 2010, 2011), and one explored principals' perceptions of teachers' professional development (Nabhani et al., 2014). Karami-Akkary's (2014) study examined the perspectives of Lebanese principals of their role and work context providing empirical data that will serve as a foundation for a culturally grounded conceptualization of principalship in Lebanon. Consequently, the findings of her study will constitute the basis for what will be discussed next on Lebanese principals. Research in

several databases, including Shamaa, revealed that no studies have till now specifically focused on Lebanese novice principals.

Based on findings from the above-mentioned studies, especially Karami-Akkary (2014), a description of Lebanese principals' selection and induction processes and role expectations will be presented below. The uniqueness of principalship in Lebanon will be discussed as well as the challenges it faces and the initiatives taken to improve it.

Formal Selection Criteria

A few decrees provide limited guidelines from the Lebanese government regarding the formal selection criteria of public and private school principals. In public schools, becoming a principal requires being a tenured teacher for at least 5 years. In private schools, candidates for principalship need to either hold a university degree in education / educational administration or a university degree in another field but with a minimum of three years teaching experience. In 2009, principalship training was added among selection criteria (Karami-Akkary, 2014; Mattar, 2012a). These criteria, especially in private schools, are not fully abided by. For instance, in private Catholic schools, principals, who are selected and appointed by the diocese, congregation or religious order they belong to are mainly selected based on their personalities rather than academic qualifications or experience in the educational field (Younes, 2011). Moreover, the lack of detailed guidelines for selection results in differences in criteria between schools. In fact, Younes (2011) reported that there are no clearly set written down criteria for appointing principals in Catholic schools. There are some traditional practices passed on but nothing clearly set which leads to discrepancies and differences in criteria between Catholic schools (no unified standards).

The Selection Process

For public schools principals, the selection process starts with a recommendation from the directorate of education (primary / secondary) and principals are appointed upon approval

of the recommendation by the minister of education. Principals are neither required to pass an examination process nor to obtain a license to practice principalship. In the private sector, the selection process varies between schools and is usually determined by the owner. It is mostly informal and influenced by the socio-political and religious context of the school. In public schools, many principals continue teaching after being appointed and it is very rare that principals change schools and most of them work in the same school till they retire (there is no tenure limit for principals). In private schools there are some variations with some schools setting term limits and others not (Karami-Akkary, 2014).

The Induction Process

In both private and public schools, most Lebanese principals learn how to lead schools on-the-job. They are left on their own to figure out their responsibilities which are not detailed in school policies but rather sketchy and providing minimum guidance. The majority of Lebanese principals are not convinced of the added value of formal training for future principals and do not consider it as a requirement to take on the principal's position (Karami-Akkary, 2014; Younes, 2011).

The Role of the Principal

As with their Western counterparts, Lebanese principals have to balance the various aspects of leading schools to avoid being overwhelmed by its many demands. However, in the absence of clear job descriptions, Lebanese principals find themselves assuming full responsibility of almost everything at their school. The dimensions of the role of Lebanese principals as well as the role expectations will be detailed below.

Nature / Dimensions of the Role. Lebanese principals try to address different dimensions in their work: managerial, moral, instructional, political, and social. However, the managerial aspect remains the one that takes most of the principals' time and energy. This dominant aspect makes it hard for Lebanese principals to attend to the other dimensions of

principalship such as instructional leadership. Lebanese principals were found to be weakly involved with instruction when it comes to tasks such as assisting with lesson planning, promoting new instructional practices, and providing feedback for teachers (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013; Mattar, 2012b).

Moreover, Lebanese principals' daily work was found to be similar to their Western counterparts in its unpredictability: despite the fact that they perform a lot of routine managerial functions, Lebanese principals have to deal with the many emergencies that continuously arise throughout the school day as well as competing demands that are hard to balance. This puts principals in a reactive position most of the time and does not allow them to focus on one task for long making their work fragmented (Karami-Akkary, 2014).

Another dimension of their work that was found to take up most of their time is building relationships (interpersonal / social dimension). However, when it comes to assuming the full responsibility of the school's functions, Lebanese principals rarely ask for help and describe their work as a "solo endeavour" (Karami-Akkary, 2014, p. 734).

Role Expectations. To understand what is expected from a Lebanese principal, the formal as well as reflexive role expectations (perspectives of those principals about their role) will be described below.

Formal Role Expectations. In both private and public schools, the formal job description of the Lebanese principal lacks specificity: role expectations, if written down in the school internal policy, are mostly vague and sketchy (Karami-Akkary, 2014). In general, Lebanese principals are required to perform the following tasks:

- Prepare the school year by setting schedules of teachers, setting the school year academic calendar (tests, exams), choosing textbooks, and assessing the needs of the school in terms of staff and educational resources.

- Regularly report to their superiors / the MEHE (for public schools) about the academic and financial status of the school as well as equipment and maintenance needs.

In public schools the following is also formally expected from a principal (Mattar, 2012b):

- Register students, decide on the number of sections per class, and report students' absence.

- Remain updated with policies and guidelines set by the MEHE to implement them at the school.

- Guide teachers and inform them of what is expected from them.

- Supervise instruction by attending classes at least once every two months.

- Verify the teachers' preparation notebook, the class rolling notebook, and students' notebook.

- Prepare the payroll of teachers on a monthly basis.

- Prepare the financial budget at the beginning of the academic year; it includes details about the expenses related to school maintenance, equipment needs, and activities and should be approved by the director of the education zone.

- Preserve, renew, and improve the school's resources.

- Ask for funds from the municipality of the region the school is located in.

- Plan trips for students.

Despite the fact that principals are expected to supervise all aspects of the school's functions (public and private), the centralization of the system limits the principals' authority in public schools: for instance, they cannot select teachers for their school; principals can suggest the appointment of teachers as supervisors to assist in administrative work and proctoring but the MEHE holds the final decision. In addition, public schools have no financial autonomy and cannot set their own development plans independently. Therefore,

principals cannot be made accountable for all that is happening at their schools (Karami-Akkary, 2014; LAES, 2006; Mattar, 2012b).

Private school principals, however, hold wider authority and further responsibility: they play a major role in the recruitment, appointment, and evaluation of teachers; they have more freedom in managing the school budget; they are involved in developing the internal policies of the school (mainly discipline and academic issues); and they are responsible for building and facilitating the relationship between parents and the school (Karami-Akkary, 2014).

Reflexive Role Expectations. Based on the perspectives of principals from both public and private schools in Lebanon, a shared set of core expectations about their role was identified (Karami-Akkary, 2014). These principals described how they view their role and what the activities that constitute their daily work are.

Principals' Views of their Role. Lebanese principals share despite their different backgrounds, ages, genders, school contexts, experiences, and career stages similar views of their role. They view it as complex, time demanding, constantly changing, and shaped by the unique context of each school and its continuously arising needs. They described themselves as "role models" and "parent figures" who hold the highest authority in decision making at the school and assume full responsibility for the school's functioning (Karami-Akkary, 2014, p. 726). They also described themselves as the "focal link" between the school and governance structures, the "executives" responsible for the implementation and communication of school goals and policies to teachers, the "mediators" between parents and the school, and the only "catalysts for improvement" at the school. To sum up, principals attribute to themselves the image of a "hero parent" (Harb, 2014, p. 157).

Principals' Views of their Work Day. Regarding the tasks they have to perform, most principals mentioned "customary procedures" reported to them orally and informally by their

superiors when they are newly appointed (Karami-Akkary, 2014, p. 726). The following categories of activities were mentioned by Lebanese principals:

- dealing with supervisors, teachers, students (academic and discipline issues), parents, and the community

- making sure rules and policies are implemented

- performing routine administrative functions

- planning and organizing instruction

- introducing minor structural improvements

- organizing, supervising, and evaluating teachers' work

- guiding and supporting teachers at the professional and sometimes the personal level

- establishing a good, warm, and caring atmosphere

- resolving students' disciplinary and academic issues

- enhancing parental and community involvement in the school

Uniqueness of Lebanese Principalship

Four aspects are identified as unique to Lebanese principals and thus distinguish them from their Western counterparts. First, Lebanese principals do not give importance to the instructional dimension of their role. They do not seem to be very involved in the supervision and evaluation of instruction. They only check teachers' work and evaluate them for tenure purposes but they do not practice formative evaluation and corresponding professional development to improve teaching and learning at their school (Ghamrawi & Al-Jammal, 2013). Second, Lebanese principals do not perceive themselves as leaders for change. They view themselves as managers mainly concerned with maintaining the status quo and not with being transformational leaders with a clearly set long-term strategic plan and specific goals (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019). Third, Lebanese principals show an authoritarian aspect of their role rather than a participative and collaborative one. They seem to look for teachers'

compliance rather than involvement in decision-making (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019).

Finally, they conceive their work as a craft rather than a profession. They believe in learning

the role on the job and doubt that any preparation program could be efficient since each

principal deals with different problems depending on the school that he / she works at

(Karami-Akkary, 2014).

Challenges of Principalship

Principalship in both the public and private sector in Lebanon suffers from four main

issues (LAES, 2006; Mattar, 2012b; MEHE, 2011; Younes, 2011):

Lack of Appropriate Conditions for Appointing Principals. No adequate

preparation (BA or Diploma) in educational leadership and administration is required.

However, there are attempts to solve this issue. In fact, according to the MEHE Progress

Report (2011), a draft law which determines the standards and certification requirements for

the school personnel including principals was completed and sent to the Service Board.

Lack of Adherence to the Conditions of Appointment Determined by the

Existing Laws. One of the conditions that are not being regularly conformed to is that

principals should pass a course in educational administration at the Lebanese University

before their appointment becomes effective (Law 320, 2001). According to Mattar (2012b),

most principals in public schools do not have a degree in educational administration.

Principals, who are usually selected from the existing staff members, might participate in a

training session before assuming their responsibilities at the school. In private schools as well

the minimal criteria set by the MEHE for becoming a principal (appropriate degree and

training) are rarely considered.

Lack of a System of Performance Assessment. There is no continuous evaluation of

principals' performance. In public schools, principals' evaluation consists merely of

inspection limited to checking for attendance, abidance by the MEHE's decrees, and

appropriate management of school budget. Principals are sanctioned in cases of major offenses such as bribery or stealing. In private schools, evaluation varies between schools but is still rare, informal and not based on clear standards. However, principals of private schools are mainly scrutinized by parents who pay the tuition and demand high standard education for their children. The effect of training programs on principals is not evaluated as well. No official institution is in charge of following-up the continuous professional development of principals and analyzing its effect on administrative work in schools (Karami-Akkary, 2014; LAES, 2006).

The Socio-Political Conditions. The Lebanese educational system can be described as a "politicized bureaucracy" (Karami-Akkary, 2014, p. 731): a centralized bureaucratic system highly influenced by politics and religion. Lebanese principals in both private and public schools face the challenge of dealing with the pressure exerted by local political and religious leaders. The latter tend to interfere in decisions at the ministry level as well as at the school level. Politicians and community religious leaders interfere in public schools principals' appointment, opening of new schools, and allocating resources to schools. At the school level, they interfere in decisions related to hiring and evaluating teachers, and admitting or even promoting certain students based on political or religious affiliations. Principals have to manage those demands while making educationally appropriate decisions (Karami-Akkary, 1997, 2014).

Principals in private schools also reported how the political instability in the country constitutes one of their biggest challenges. Political turmoil, external interferences and staff's political affiliations render their job difficult. They have to manage teachers and students' different political affiliations and stay neutral to teach students good citizenship (Younes, 2011).

Initiatives to Improve the Principalship

In order to improve the educational sector in Lebanon, the MEHE devised The Education Sector Development Plan (ESDP) based on the main goals of the National Educational Strategy. The plan targets the following areas: early childhood education; improving retention and achievement; development of infrastructure; professionalization of the teaching workforce; modernization of school management; education assessment and curriculum development; citizenship education; information and communication technology in education; the national qualifications framework (NQF); and institutional development (MEHE, 2011). In three of these areas, improving principalship is targeted.

First of all, the professionalization of the teaching workforce area tends to organize teaching, administrative, and educational support functions in public schools including principals' work. A draft law was sent to the Council of Civil Service on 14/12/2010 (MEHE, 2011): it includes updated standards and criteria for assigning public schools principals (ensuring they have prior knowledge in educational management and a specialized certification). This area also targets developing a mechanism for recruiting principals. It also calls for leadership development (MEHE, 2011).

Second, the modernization of school management aims at organizing the recruitment process of principals in public schools (criteria for nomination, study of applications, how to determine how eligible a candidate is). It also aims at organizing and developing school management through training. According to the MEHE Progress Report (2011), several training sessions were completed: public school principals were trained on using information technology and dealing with legislative, administrative, and financial systems; training on capacity-building was organized by the ministry for 35 distinguished public school principals so that they become trainers and assist in coaching other principals; training of 51 proctors in

specific topics in school management supervised by their principals and professors from the Faculty of Education at the Lebanese University; preparation of induction sessions.

According to the ESDP Progress Report (2013), the leadership development program designed to modernize school management has achieved several steps including the upgrade of the Leadership Development Program training material by the faculty of Education at the Lebanese University and the conduction of focus groups to evaluate the needs of school principals when implementing the School Improvement Program. What still needs to be done is to carry out a survey with the principals who went through the leadership development program training to assess its impact on their practice (ESDS, 2013).

Third, the National Qualification Standards are meant to identify necessary qualifications for education professions and develop job descriptions for these professions (MEHE, 2011). In order to accomplish the ESDP goals, the MEHE has signed agreements with various parties such as the World Bank, USAID, UNICEF, UE…Therefore; several external agencies are funding programs aiming at achieving the ESDP objectives. The two programs mostly related to principalship development are the D-RASATI program funded by USAID and the EDPII program (launched in January 2013) funded by the World Bank.

The D-RASATI (Developing Rehabilitation Assistance to Schools and Teachers Improvement) program (2011-2014) comprised revision of principal training modules and provided leadership development training for serving public school principals. It also aimed at building the capacity of teams that will conduct school self-assessment within each school and develop a school improvement plan (ESDS, 2013).

The Education Development Project II (EDP II) focuses on three main areas of the ESDP: "Early childhood education; Supporting Improvements in Quality of Education; Education Sector Policy Development and Management" (MEHE, 2011). One of the subcomponents of the project that fall under improving the quality of education is enhancing

leadership (ESDS, 2013) by gradually implementing the "New Vision of the School" developed by the MEHE and CERD. According to this vision, planning for improvement should be school-based, focused on teaching and learning, and achieved through participative leadership where the principal and staff collaborate together. To accomplish this vision, the following will be developed through EDP II:

- a principal self-assessment and assessment model with the corresponding instruments; this model should be based on professional standards that define the role of the principal and quality leadership

- a training program for principals and administrators to provide them with the skills, knowledge, and attitudes which will allow them to conduct school-based planning and improvement

Chapter Summary

This chapter started by highlighting the complexity of school principals' role, a complexity due to major societal changes and to the nature of the job which is highly contextual and affected by several interacting factors. School principals are expected to be administrators, instructional leaders, and reform leaders among other roles. Aspiring principals will need to be well equipped to face all this complexity and take on such a demanding role. Identifying the challenges and needs of novices during their transition into principalship can help develop strategies to prepare and support them while "crossing the bridge". Consequently, the chapter explored in its following two sections the theoretical and empirical literature on novice principals.

The review of the theoretical literature focused on the conceptualizations of the transition period, mainly Western frameworks, due to the absence of sufficient literature in the Arab world targeting this specific period. Two major perspectives stood out from the review: the British career stage model and the North American socialization conceptual

model. The key concepts and characteristics of both frameworks were defined and described. The career stage model divided the transition period into three stages: preparation for headship followed by entry, orientation and immersion, and finally taking control and action. Several factors, including context, affect how principals move through these stages, in what order and at what pace. The socialization conceptual model presents the different facets of principals' learning process through defining the content, sources, methods, and outcomes of socialization that allow for a better preparation and induction of novices in this complex post-industrial society. However, both conceptualizations come from Western perspectives and are context-dependent; therefore, this framework cannot be generalized to Lebanese principals transition phase. This study will serve as a basis to start building a framework grounded in the Lebanese context.

Empirical studies on novice principals in several contexts were also examined and a set of experiences and tasks specific to the transition period were identified. Personal and contextual factors affecting this transition were also described. These experiences, tasks, and factors were drawn from studies in the US, Europe, Africa, and East Asia and reinforced the importance of context. Results of these studies cannot therefore be simply transferred to the Lebanese context. In the absence of empirical research on Lebanese novice principals, this study is a first step towards filling this gap.

Consequently, a closer look at the context in which Lebanese novice principals learn and enact the role was necessary in the final section of this chapter. An overview of the Lebanese educational system was first presented and the available literature on Lebanese principals was then revisited.

The educational system in Lebanon was described as a centralized system highly influenced by politics and religious sectarianism and bureaucratically controlled by the MEHE which manages tightly public schools. Private schools which encompass almost two

thirds of students enjoy more autonomy and their principals have broader authority than their counterparts in public schools. The system faces several challenges to reach quality education and many act as major barriers for principals to effectively lead and manage these schools. In fact, school management in Lebanon suffers from three major problems: limited authority granted to principals (in public schools), lack of adequate principal preparation and training, and principal selection and appointment processes that follow no clear standards and are mostly done on a political or religious basis (CERD, 2000; Karami-Akkary, 2014; LAES, 2006).

Despite the scarcity of literature on Lebanese principals, the review of the available studies allowed to gather some information on principals' selection criteria and process, the induction process, and the role of the principal. Giving little importance to the instructional dimension of their role, not perceiving themselves as leaders for change, showing an authoritarian aspect of their role, and conceiving their work as a craft rather than a profession were identified in the literature as aspects unique to Lebanese principals distinguishing them from their Western counterparts (Karami-Akkary, 2014). Several challenges facing Lebanese principalship were also reported in this literature: the lack of appropriate conditions for appointing principals, the lack of adherence to the conditions of appointment determined by the existing laws, the lack of a system of performance assessment, and the socio-political conditions. Initiatives to improve principalship in the form of funded plans were described in the literature.

No studies have, till now, specifically focused on Lebanese novice principals. Exploring the experiences they go through in their transition to principalship and the challenges faced in this journey can help understand their specific needs and tailor preparation programs targeting them. This study can constitute a start towards filling this blank spot in the literature on Lebanese principalship.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This study is an exploration of the transition phase of novice school principals into their new roles. It aims to portray their professional characteristics and describe the formal and informal criteria and processes used in their selection, appointment, and preparation for the role. It also seeks to develop a context-sensitive understanding, from the novices' perspective, of their experiences during the transition period, namely, the challenges they face, the factors that positively influence their early-career stage, and the measures they adopt to make the transition more effective. In this chapter, the research questions and design will be presented first. Next, participants, data collection methods, and data analysis procedures will be described. Finally, quality criteria and the limitations of the study will be discussed.

Research Questions

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What are the professional characteristics of novice school principals in terms of academic preparation and prior professional experiences?

2. What are the formal and informal processes and criteria followed for principals' selection, appointment, preparation, and induction into their role?

3. What are the challenges of the transition period reported by novice principals and the strategies they adopted to confront them?

4. What are the factors (personal and contextual) that novice principals see as positively influencing their transition into their role?

Research Design

Methodology does not solely consist of describing a research method but also of explaining and justifying this method (Gall et al., 2010). Therefore, in this section, the

researcher's epistemological beliefs and the underlying theories that guide the research approach and design's choice will be clarified.

Research Approach

The researcher aims for a thick description of the experiences of novice principals because an in-depth understanding, rather than a superficial account of those experiences, from the perspective of those principals is required. The qualitative research approach allows "exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem" (Creswell, 2014, p. 32). Qualitative methods constitute therefore a "useful avenue" (Heck & Hallinger, 1999, p. 153) for researchers to understand leadership. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to identify how background, values, and beliefs shape the leader, and to comprehend how leaders think about, perceive, and solve the problems they face. Heck and Hallinger (1999) argue that quantitative methods and tools do not facilitate uncovering such aspects of leadership in the same depth as qualitative inquiry. In fact, a qualitative approach allows the researcher to "connect with their research participants and to see the world from their viewpoints" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 5). Consequently, blank and blind spots in the field of educational administration and leadership are best filled through qualitative research (Heck & Hallinger, 1999).

Therefore, the researcher adopted a qualitative approach based on the philosophy of interpretivism in which "reality is constructed by those who participate in it" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 274). Educational organizations are viewed as "constructed realities" (Heck & Hallinger, 1999, p. 148) rather than structures that exist independently from individuals. This sense-making or constructivist perspective that underlies qualitative approaches allows the researcher "to get at the inner experience of participants, to determine how meanings are formed through and in culture, and discover rather than test variables" (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 12). This is compatible with the purpose of this study and the research questions.

Research Method

The researcher selected the grounded theory method to guide this study and more specifically the process of data analysis. The purpose of this qualitative research methodology, developed in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss, is "constructing theory grounded in data" (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 6). In fact, in this "systematic, inductive and comparative" inquiry design (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p. 1), the researcher "derives a general, abstract theory of a process, action, or interaction grounded in the views of participants" (Creswell, 2014, p. 42). Since the late 1980s, the grounded theory method has become one of the most extensively used and prevalent qualitative research methods across several disciplines (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007; Corbin & Strauss, 2015).

Corbin and Strauss (2015) highlight two unique features of the grounded theory method that distinguish it from other forms of qualitative methods. First, its inductive nature, since the concepts from which theory is built are not set prior to conducting the study but emerge throughout the data gathering process and this is what "grounds" the theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p. 7). Second, data collection and analysis constitute an "ongoing cycle" during the research process (Corbin & Strauss, 2015, p.7). They "proceed simultaneously and each informs and streamlines the other" (Bryant & Charmaz, 2007, p.1): an initial stage of data collection is followed by analysis through the constant comparative method and emergence of concepts which serve as a basis for the following phase of data collection (Corbin & Strauss, 2015). It is also important to note the interpretive nature of the grounded theory method: concepts, categories or themes that are identified through data analysis are not simply descriptive but "analytic" (Willig, 2013, p. 70). This means that data is interpreted and not simply given descriptive labels.

The grounded theory methodology allows developing contextualized theories: it produces knowledge that emerges from the data, knowledge that is "out there" (Willig, 2013,

p.80). Grounded theories can therefore be viewed as "fluid" in the sense that they emphasize temporality and process and need to be explored in different situations and contexts to see if they fit. Consequently, researchers need to accept the provisional character of the generated theory (Corbin & Strauss, 1994).

The grounded theory methodology is suitable for this study since it fits with its purpose and with the chosen paradigm. In fact, the grounded theory methodology is in accordance with constructivism since it relies on participants' views. Moreover, the researcher aims at exploring the experiences of Lebanese novice principals in an attempt to contribute to building a knowledge base grounded in the Lebanese context. Since this aspect of principalship has been rarely researched in Lebanon, there are no pre-existing frameworks grounded in Lebanese context to base this study on. Therefore, the grounded theory methodology constitutes a starting point for investigating this topic.

Study Site and Participants

The main types of sampling used in grounded theory methodology are convenience sampling, purposeful sampling, theoretical sampling, and theoretical group interviews (Morse, 2007). The sampling method used depends on the development of the research process.

At the initial stage of the study, the researcher adopts convenience sampling where "participants are selected on the basis of accessibility" in order to "identify the scope, major components and trajectory of the overall process" (Morse, 2007, p. 233-234). At this stage of the research process, if participants are difficult to identify, snowball sampling can also be used whereby "the researcher requests introductions from the initial participants, to invite their friends and acquaintances to participate in the study" (Morse, 2007, p. 234). After the initial data analysis, the researcher can proceed to purposeful sampling where "participants who are going through a particular stage, or who represent a particular typology, are invited

to be interviewed" (Morse, 2007, p. 237). Next, once concepts start emerging from data analysis, theoretical sampling is adopted. According to Corbin and Strauss (2008), the purpose of theoretical sampling is "to collect data from places, people, and events that will maximize opportunities to develop concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions, uncover variations, and identify relationships between concepts" (p.143). Unlike conventional sampling methods, theoretical sampling is not established prior to the beginning of the research but is driven by data collection and analysis throughout the research process. This sampling method is flexible and allows the researcher to decide on the next participant based on the previously collected and analyzed data. Corbin and Strauss (2008) explain that "the researcher takes one step at a time with data gathering, followed by analysis, followed by more data gathering until a category reaches the point of saturation" (p. 146).

In this study, data collection from public schools was mainly based on purposeful convenience sampling. In the case of private schools, the researcher resorted to snowball sampling since the population of novices in these schools was difficult to identify from official records. Initial data collection was followed by data analysis and a second stage of data collection: based on the analysis results, the researcher conducted more data collection in an attempt to "saturate" the categories that have started to emerge from data analysis by refining interview probes and performing member checks to enrich and validate the data. In fact, since the researcher had to resort to snowball sampling, theoretical sampling was not feasible in the sense that the researcher was not able to choose the next participant based on the ongoing data analysis. Instead, the researcher used the preliminary analysis of data to refine the questions that will guide the interview with the next participant. In addition, the researcher was aware that due to the scope of the study (a master's thesis) and the limited time and resources available to complete it, saturation of categories could not be reached but a theoretical understanding could emerge and serve as a starting point for further research.

Population

Morse (2007) listed the characteristics of participants in qualitative inquiry and specifically in grounded theory methodology. She stated that "an excellent participant for grounded theory is one who has been through, or observed, the experience under investigation" (Morse, 2007, p. 230). She argues that the sample selected for the study needs to be "representative of the experience" rather than of the "population using quantitative demographic data" (Morse, 2007, p. 231). Therefore, purposeful selection of the participants can result in a good qualitative sample.

In this study, the researcher needed to locate principals in their first three years on the job. For convenience, the study site was limited to the Mount Lebanon and Beirut suburbs educational districts which encompass 30.8% of schools in Lebanon and 33% of students (CERD, 2018-2019). Morse (2007) recommends that the researcher delimits the scope of the study at the beginning of the research. Given the limited scope of this study [MA thesis] it can be followed by subsequent studies at later stages in the other educational districts of Lebanon to complete the knowledge base on the national level.

Thus, the researcher looked for novices in two types of schools: public and private non-free. The private UNRWA schools that do not serve the Lebanese community as well as the private free schools were not within the scope of this study. The population considered for this study was all female and male novice principals (in their first three years on the job) in public and private (non-free) schools in Mount Lebanon and Beirut suburbs. Teachers and other school staff perspectives on novice principals' experiences in the transition period were not within the scope of this study. Consequently, the school staff, whether in the public or private sector, was not approached.

Public schools run by novice principals were identified through the review of MEHE records (after obtaining the ministry's consent), whereas private schools run by novices were

identified through snowball sampling. In fact, the MEHE provided the researcher with a list of novice principals running public schools in the area of Mount Lebanon and Beirut suburbs. However, the ministry did not have any data regarding novices in private schools and the researcher had to resort to snowball sampling. Once the population of novice principals in public schools was identified, a letter explaining the purpose of the study and asking them if they wish to take part in it was addressed to those novices (see Appendix A). Since the email addresses of the novices were not provided by the ministry, the researcher went to the schools lead by newly appointed principals and presented to them a hard copy of the invitation script. Since novices in private schools could not be identified from reviewing MEHE records, the already identified novice principals in public schools were asked to share the invitation script with their acquaintances in private schools. Novices in private schools who were interested in taking part in the study and gave their approval to be contacted were approached by the researcher.

Other participants included in the study were administrators: those involved in setting the recruitment and selection criteria for school principals, those who participate in the recruitment and selection processes of school leaders, and those who take part in the development of induction and training material for those principals. Mainly, these administrators worked for the Ministry of Education and Higher Education, specifically in the Educational Development Project (EDPII) and Leadership Development Programs, and for the Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD). These administrators have no direct role in the school: they are not part of the school staff but they are involved in policy-making concerning principalship as well as recruitment, selection, preparation, and training of principals. Two administrators were selected through purposeful sampling. After receiving the invitation script (see Appendix B), both administrators agreed to take part in the study and were therefore included in the study population in addition to the novice principals.

Sampling Procedures

As already explained in the previous subsections, the sampling procedure was slightly different between public and private schools due to the absence of records concerning private school principals at the ministry. In the public sector, a sample of six novices was purposefully selected from the principals who were willing to participate in the study. As shown in tables 4 and 5, the researcher tried to ensure variety in principal's gender (three males and three females) and school location (urban / rural). In the private sector, despite the fact that the researcher relied on snowball sampling, a sample of six novices consisting of three males and three females resulted from the process. However, the sample did not show variety neither in school location (urban / rural) nor in school ownership (religious / secular): only one novice was found in a rural private school and all of the six schools in the study belonged to religious communities. Nevertheless, what emerged as a variation due to snowball sampling in private schools was the level for which the principal was responsible: Table 5 shows that not all novices in the sample were principals of K-12 schools. This, in fact, made them more similar to their counterparts in public schools where principals are usually in charge of one or two levels.

In total, twelve participants were selected with variety mainly according to the school type (public / private) and the gender of the principal. School type was taken into consideration since differences were already identified in the literature regarding principal selection processes and criteria across different types of schools in Lebanon (Karami-Akkary, 1997). Principals' gender (male / female) was also considered since it might affect principals' perceptions and practice of leadership (Spillane & Hunt, 2010). The sample therefore consisted of twelve novice principals with the following characteristics:

- Three novice female principals from a public school

- Three novice male principals from a public school

- Three novice female principals from a private non-free school

- Three novice male principals from a private non-free school

To secure the confidentiality of the participants' responses, novices were identified by their position at the time of the interview; i.e. NPub1 to indicate that the participant is a **N**ovice **Pub**lic school principal (NPub) and is the first among the sample to hold this position. The characteristics of the selected novices as well as the demographics of the schools they run are presented in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4

Demographics of Novices and the Schools they Lead in the Public Sector

Principal Code	Gender	Years in Position	School Type	School Level	School Location	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Number of Administrative Staff
NPub1	Male	2	Public	High School	Urban	152	45	7
NPub2	Female	1	Public	Elementary & middle School	Urban	347	32	4
NPub3	Female	2	Public	High School	Rural	100	28	3
NPub4	Male	1	Public	Middle School	Urban	50	18	2
NPub5	Male	2	Public	High School	Rural	85	22	3
NPub6	Female	3	Public	K-9	Urban	163	35	4

Table 5

Demographics of Novices and the Schools they Lead in the Private Sector

Principal Code	Gender	Years in Position	School Type	School Level	School Location	Number of Students	Number of Teachers	Number of Administrative Staff
NPr1	Female	1	Private (Catholic)	High School	Urban	340	40	4
NPr2	Female	1	Private (Catholic)	Middle School	Urban	532	43	3
NPr3	Female	1	Private (Orthodox)	Middle School	Urban	156	16	2
NPr4	Female	3	Private (Muslim)	Middle & High School	Urban	505	130	2
NPr5	Male	2	Private (Muslim)	Elementary School	Urban	413	27	2
NPr6	Male	1	Private (Catholic)	K-12	Rural	400	28	4

The researcher conducted the first phase of data collection with this initial sample of twelve novice principals. Data was gathered mainly by asking them to fill a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix C) and sit for an in-depth exploratory individual interview (see Appendix D). Originally, the researcher planned to conduct focus group interviews with a second sample of novices to ensure triangulation and enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings and resolve any discrepancy in those findings (Gall et al., 2010). However, due to the unavailability of the participants and to the unexpected events that happened in the last months, the focus group interviews did not take place. Instead, after analyzing the collected data, the researcher opted for a second round of individual interviews with all of the twelve novices that were already interviewed as part of member checking (see Appendix F) where participants commented on the findings and checked for accuracy.

In addition to the novice principals, two administrators were purposefully selected based on their experience in the field of principal recruitment, selection, induction, and training (for the past five years at least) and asked to sit for an individual interview (see Appendix E). For confidentiality purposes, administrators will be referred to as A1 and A2. A1 has a long experience in the educational field, especially in policy-making and in the recruitment and training of public school principals. A1 was working at the MEHE at the time of the interview. The experience of A2 was mainly focused on principal training. She was part of the team that worked on the Leadership Development Program and participated in the pre-service training of public school principals. At the time of the interview, A2 was collaborating with the CERD on several projects and a university professor in charge of graduate preparation programs in educational leadership. Further details of the data collection and analysis procedures will be provided in the following sections.

Data Collection Procedures

To answer the research questions of this study, the following methods of data collection were adopted: individual interviews with the twelve novice principals and the two administrators in charge of principal selection and training, collection of artifacts (document analysis), and the demographic questionnaire that the participating principals were asked to fill. Interviews with novices and administrators were conducted in Arabic. Only eight out of the fourteen participants gave their consent to the researcher to tape the interview. With the other six participants, the researcher had to resort to note-taking throughout the interview.

Information provided by the principals in the demographic questionnaire helped the researcher answer question 1 of the study. The questionnaire required principals to provide information regarding the school's characteristics (type, ownership (if private), location, grade levels available, gender and number of students, number of teachers, and number of administrative staff) as well as personal information about themselves (gender, age, educational degree, field of specialization, prior professional experience, and type of training attended).

To answer questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 the researcher conducted individual semi-structured interviews with a sample of twelve novice principals where open-ended questions were asked so that participants answer in their own terms rather than select from a set of responses (see Appendix D for the individual interview protocol). This allowed the researcher to better capture the perspectives of the participants (Gall et al., 2010). The 60-minute interviews focused on how and why they became principals, any training they might have attended; the challenges faced in their first year and what they learned from them and how (socialization content and methods); what they considered as successes or failures in the first year (outcomes of socialization) (Crow, 2007). The researcher asked all principals (from both samples) to provide, if available, written documents describing a training that they might

have attended or an induction program they might have gone through. However, the researcher could not have access to such documents.

To further investigate question 2, other participants were included in the study: interviews (that lasted for 60 minutes) were conducted with two administrators directly involved in principal selection, preparation, and induction (see Appendix E for the interview protocol). The administrators provided the researcher with documents related to the policies and guidelines that govern principal selection process and criteria as well as principal training (see Appendixes G-H-I for decrees and guidelines). These artifacts constituted an additional source of data.

Data Analysis Procedures

The researcher followed the interpretational data analysis method. Gathered data was examined inductively rather than deductively since the goal here is to explore and discover theory grounded in the data and not to test hypotheses set in advance (Gall et al., 2010).

Data analysis began while the researcher was still engaged in gathering data. In fact, the researcher collected data by intervals. First, one administrator (A1) and six novices from public schools were interviewed. Data was analyzed and coding checks were performed by another researcher. The emergent findings guided the researcher in the next step of data collection that took place with the second administrator (A2) and six novices from private schools. Again, the collected data was analyzed followed by coding checks from another researcher. It can be noted also that in between interviews, and even before detailed analysis, the researcher was reading the notes taken and listening to the recordings and refining accordingly questions for the next interview.

The steps followed in data analysis of each set of interviews started by transcribing and translating the interviews into English by the researcher. Data gathered from each interview was then coded by taking raw data and raising it into a conceptual level (Corbin &

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Strauss, 2008) through the use of constant comparison technique as the main analytical tool. Constant comparison is defined as "a process of comparing instances of each code across segments in order to discover commonalities in the data that reflect the underlying meaning of, and relationships among, the coding categories" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 282). In each interview, the researcher went through the whole transcript / notes and labeled each segment of the data. It is what Corbin and Strauss (2008) describe as "mining the data and digging beneath the surface to discover the hidden treasures contained within data" (p. 2). Then, the researcher compared labeled segments of the interview for differences and similarities and similar pieces of data were grouped together under the same concept. Next, the researcher used constant comparison between concepts that emerged from the different interviews with novices in public schools and administrators. Constant comparison did not consist simply of looking at frequencies of certain patterns but it relied mostly on the effort of the researcher to give meaning to the data (Gall et al., 2010). Since this study is exploratory, the researcher's priority was to have a comprehensive and descriptive account of all participants' perspectives. Thus, the researcher tried to capture all participants' views by including in the analysis all the concepts that emerged regardless of their frequency count. Therefore, relationships between different concepts were further analyzed and themes emerged with each having its own properties and dimensions. At the same time, the researcher used the documents pertaining to the policies and guidelines of principal selection and preparation to further enrich the understanding of the emerging themes related to those two processes and enhance their validity. Generated themes were then used to answer the research questions and provide a starting point for the theoretical understanding of the transition period of novices in public and private schools. According to Corbin and Strauss (2015), the different themes that arise build the structure of a contextualized theory grounded in the collected data.

The same steps were followed to generate themes for the transition period of novices in private schools. Before adopting the themes for both school types, the researcher conducted a round of member checking with all of the twelve novice principals to verify that these themes were really representative of their experiences: their characteristics, the process of selection and appointment, their preparation, the challenges they faced, the supportive factors, and the measures they adopted to make their transition more effective. In addition, themes that emerged for public and private schools were compared to identify similarities and differences across school types. Themes were also compared to the international literature on novice principals and the available literature on principals in Lebanon to identify if there were any themes or aspects specific to the Lebanese context.

Quality Criteria

Throughout the research process the researcher needs to make sure findings are valid and the approach reliable. According to Creswell (2014), qualitative validity is when the researcher uses various methods to check that findings are accurate while qualitative reliability means that the approach is "consistent across different researchers and different projects" (p. 251).

Qualitative Validity

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of this study's findings, the following strategies were used: triangulation, member checking, and a thick description of the findings (Creswell, 2014; Gall et al., 2010).

Triangulation was achieved by using different data collection methods (individual interviews, demographic questionnaire, and artifacts / document analysis) and different data sources (novice principals and administrators) which helped in producing "convergence" and clarifying "reasons for apparent contradictions among findings about the same phenomenon" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 289). Creswell (2014) explains that themes arising from "converging

several sources of data or perspectives from participants" add to the validity of the findings (p. 251).

In addition to triangulation, enhancing the credibility of the findings was done through member checks (Gall et al., 2010). Member checking is defined as "the process of having field participants review research procedures and statements in the research report for accuracy and completeness" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 289). In this study, member checking took place by sharing with all of the already interviewed principals the interview transcripts (each novice was shown his / her own transcript / notes to ensure accuracy) and the themes that emerged from analysis of the collected data so that they comment on the findings and check for accuracy (see Appendix F for the member checking interview protocol).

Further validity was ensured by a rich and thick description to communicate the findings. Providing a detailed description of the setting and the experiences makes the results "more realistic and richer" and increases the validity of the findings (Creswell, 2014, p. 251).

Qualitative Reliability

Reliability was ensured through coding checks and a detailed documentation of the research process. Throughout the analysis process, coding checks were performed. They aimed at determining "the reliability with which different researchers classify qualitative data by the same categories" (Gall et al., 2010, p. 289). Another researcher was asked to code samples of the collected data and when any discrepancies in the coding process emerged, they were discussed until both researchers agreed on the interpretation (Gall et al., 2010).

In addition, the researcher documented in details the phases of the research process. Thick descriptions were provided about the context and the participants in the study as well as the process of sampling in which the researcher tried, as much as possible, to have diversity in the choice of schools and principals. All of this contributed to enhancing the external validity or the transferability of the findings of the study (Gall et al., 2010).

Limitations of the Study

This study has some limitations that need to be recognized. Limitations were mainly related to the size of the sample, the sampling procedure, and the data collection procedure.

First, given that this study was conducted to complete the requirements of a master's degree, the number of participants was limited to the time and resources available. Therefore, the researcher had to limit the scope of the study to the Mount Lebanon and Beirut suburbs area because it was not feasible to take samples from all the educational districts in Lebanon. This limited the transferability of the findings and will necessitate similar studies in other educational districts in order to complete the theoretical understandings that emerged from this study so that they become more representative of the variety of school types and organizational contexts (especially in the private sector) that exist in Lebanon. Another factor that affected the size of the sample was the requirement for participants to be in their first three years of principalship which automatically reduced the size of the population from which to select participants.

Second, due to the absence of official records in the MEHE on principals in private schools, purposeful sampling could not be conducted in this school type and the researcher had to resort to snowball sampling which limited the ability to maximize variation in the sample that was included in the study. Furthermore, this limited the process of theoretical sampling through which the researcher intended to select the next participant based on emerging concepts from ongoing data analysis. Therefore, it was not possible for the researcher to reach saturation, as described in the methodology, which could affect the credibility of the findings.

Third, the study relied mostly on individual interviews where participants could have intentionally or unintentionally omitted some information or were reluctant to give in some information especially when it came to their appointment process through personal

connections and the challenges they faced. Moreover, the fact that the language in which interviews were conducted (Arabic) was different from the language used to report the findings (English) can also be considered a limitation. In fact, the researcher had to translate data into English in order to code them and identify patterns and themes. This also affected the degree to which results could be confirmed during member checking by participants who do not speak English. Finally, the fact that focus group interviews could not take place was a significant limitation since it could have constituted an important method for data collection and enhanced the validity of the results.

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The aim of this research is to explore the experiences of novice principals in public and private Lebanese schools as they transition into their new role. More specifically, this study focuses on the challenges faced by those novices and how they cope with them. In addition, it investigates the academic preparation and professional experiences of the novices, why and how they were selected, and the factors that positively influenced their transition into principalship.

This chapter reports the findings of the study and answers the research questions. These findings are presented in six sections: the first portrays the personal and professional characteristics of novice principals as well as their motivation for seeking the role, while the second outlines the selection process for the principal position and the criteria for choosing candidates. The third section describes how those novices were prepared for the position. The fourth section highlights the main challenges of the transition period, whereas the supportive personal and contextual factors are presented in the fifth section. Finally, the measures taken by novices for an effective transition period are reported in the sixth section. For each theme, the results will be presented in three subsections: one for novices in public schools, another for novices in private schools, and a third subsection where the responses of novices from both school types will be compared.

Personal and Professional Characteristics of Novice Principals

The first aspect that this study aims to explore is the personal and professional characteristics of novice principals who are being appointed in both public and private schools in Lebanon. Since this study is exploratory, it is important to note that the results presented in this section do not claim statistical significance but present an initial understanding from a diverse group of novice principals to get to know who are those being

appointed as principals in both public and private schools. Therefore, novices were asked to fill a demographic questionnaire in which they provided personal information about themselves (gender, age, educational degree, field of specialization, prior professional experience, and type of training attended). During the interview, novices were also asked whether principalship was their career goal. Participants' responses are summarized below.

Characteristics of Novice Principals in Public Schools

In public schools, the interviewed principals' age ranged between 36 and 60 with an average age of 44.3 years. They all have experience in the educational field and hold university degrees in various specialties. Those novices have not been formally trained and principalship was not a career goal for them when they first entered the educational field.

Experience as Educators

In public schools all six novices have previous experience in teaching ranging from 11 to 39 years with an average of 19.16 years. One of those principals also has experience as a supervisor while two have an informal experience in administrative work. Five of the six novices were former teachers at the same school where they were principals at the time of the interview.

University Degrees

All of the interviewed novices hold university degrees in various specializations not related to educational administration: one has a PhD in Arabic language and literature; two hold a Diploma in physics and in social sciences; two have a master's degree in French literature and business administration and finally one has a BA in history.

Principalship as a Career Goal

In exploring participants' transition phase into principalship, it is important to understand their motivation for seeking the role: what lead them to decide on leaving their previous position (teacher, coordinator…) and taking up the principal's role. When asked

whether becoming a principal was one of their career goals, novices in public schools replied that they did not enter the educational field with principalship in mind but they mentioned four reasons behind their decision to apply for the principal's position: desire to improve the school they work at, need for a change in their career, need to prevent the "wrong" people from getting the position, and encouragement from other teachers.

Two male principals of secondary public schools, NPub1 and NPub5, indicated that their decision to move from teaching to principalship came out of their wish to make a difference in their school even though principalship was not their career goal at first. NPub5 explained:

> It wasn't one of my professional goals, no, I was concentrating on my teaching career, I taught for 11 years … and my ultimate goal was to become a tenured secondary school teacher but when the opportunity presented itself, I felt I had something to add so I applied.

NPub1 did not even think of applying to the position but was encouraged to do so by others: "I didn't take the initiative, one of the important teachers here told me: apply, what do you lack? I told him no it's far from me… then I said to myself why not."

NPub1 added:

> If I wasn't appointed as a principal here, I wouldn't have applied for principalship elsewhere because my ambition is not principalship…I teach here and I know what are the needs here and I want to have a say in it, while for another school I won't apply because I don't know its needs and it's not my ambition to just be a principal. I know what the school needs because I have been teaching here for seven years. It's where I work and I won't accept to have a principal who's not eligible, eventually we will be under his mercy.

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The three female novices in public schools revealed that they entered the educational field for its convenience with their situation as married women and mothers. NPub6 stated: "When I got married and moved from the North with my husband, I enrolled in the teachers' college and started teaching." Likewise, NPub2 expressed similar motives: "I worked in a bank… but after I got married and had children I felt how much the teaching profession is good since it allows you to reconcile work and family." These women also explained that they transitioned into principalship because of their need for change and making a difference, as voiced by NPub3 (female secondary public school principal):

> In teaching… you are confined to this curriculum, you get to a point you feel you are repeating yourself. Of course you change the methods, your students change, but that's it there is no evolution in your life and I am one of those people who always seek to grow, change, and improve and I thought that maybe through principalship I can do more things than through teaching. Maybe I have more opportunities to develop and improve things because in class you have limited power.

NPub6 also added that she applied to the principal's position along with five of her colleagues from the same school: "It was not a competition…we just wanted one of us to be chosen instead of some other person, I will not say who…but this person had high chances of being appointed and we didn't want that to happen."

Characteristics of Novice Principals in Private Schools

In private schools, the interviewed principals' age ranged from 28 to 53 with an average of 34.6 years. All six novices have experience in the educational field and the majority is specialized in educational administration and views principalship as a career goal.

Experience as Educators

All of the six novice principals were teachers with an experience ranging from 1 to 17 years (average of 8.8 years). Four out of the six novices have experience in administration

(coordination and / or supervision) with an average of 10.75 years. One of the newly appointed principals has experience in social work.

University Degrees

Four of the novices in private schools hold a master's degree in educational administration. Regarding the other two novices, one holds a Teaching Diploma in the art of teaching while the other has two master's degrees in social psychology and in economics and development.

Principalship as a Career Goal

Four out of the six novices indicated that becoming a principal was one of their professional goals. However, for the other two, principalship was not a career objective and they took some time to think about it before accepting the position.

NPr1, a female principal in a secondary private school, admitted it was her ambition to become a principal and something she had been working on for several years. She pursued her MA in educational administration to have wider opportunities in the educational field. Another female principal, NPr2, said that she really wanted to become the principal of a middle school and loved working with students of this age group. From his side, NPr3 recounted that ever since he entered the educational field he knew he wanted to become a principal:

> The field of educational leadership is a field I love because of role models I used to observe such as my own school principal and I felt I wanted to be like them, so I said to myself I have to make it in this domain. At the time I started teaching and at the same time studying educational administration at university…I always came up with new ideas for the department which of course helped shed the light on the fact I have knowledge in administration. What helped also is that all assignments I did during my

master's degree were related to my school, so I always made sure to show [to my

superiors] what I was working on.

Similarly, another novice (NPr4) reported that her ambition was to become a principal

because she wanted to advance and grow in her career in the educational domain. She stated

that she could not stay in teaching forever and she had to evolve. She also said that even as a

teacher she tried to be a leader in her class to show her leadership capacities.

On the contrary, for NPr5 and NPr6, principalship was not a career goal. They both

reported that they were passionate about teaching and did not plan to become principals.

NPr6 said: "At the beginning of my career, my dream was to become a teacher." But later on,

NPr6 was offered various administrative positions such as coordinator and head of division

that he took on while continuing teaching. After thirty years of experience, he was offered the

principal position at a different school but in the same network. He considered thoroughly the

decision and consulted especially with his family before accepting. NPr6 was hesitant to

accept the position because it was going to be a big change for him on the professional and

personal levels and he did not know if he could handle it physically and emotionally. In fact,

after around thirty years in the same school, NPr6 had to leave everything behind to become a

principal in a rural area. He had to relocate and be away from his family who stayed in

Beirut. NPr5 had an identical experience where he started teaching because of his love for the

educational field and when offered the principal position he thoroughly thought about it

before accepting. Mainly the fear of change and maybe of failure in the new position made

him hesitant about accepting the position.

Characteristics of Novice Principals in Public and Private Schools

To summarize, Table 6 presents a comparison of the characteristics of the interviewed

novices in both public and private schools. All of the interviewed principals are university

degree holders with teaching experience. Some of those newly appointed principals also have

administrative experience: seven out of twelve (three in public schools and four in private schools).

Three differences between novices in public and private schools can be highlighted. First, none of the novices in public schools had received academic preparation in educational administration whereas four of their counterparts in private schools pursued graduate studies in this field. Second, in the public sector novices had more years of experience as teachers. Finally, none of the public schools novices participating in the study had the ambition of becoming principals when they first started teaching. On the other side, four of the novices in the private sector started out as teachers but had in mind to become principals and worked towards achieving that goal.

Table 6

The Personal and Professional Characteristics of Novice Principals Included in the Study in Terms of Academic Preparation and Prior Professional Experiences

Characteristics of Novice Principals		Public Schools N=6	Private Schools N=6	Total	Average
Average Age		44.3	34.6	N/A	39.45
Highest Educational Degree	BA	1	0	1	N/A
	Diploma	2	1	3	N/A
	MA	2	5	7	N/A
	PhD	1	0	1	N/A
Specialization	Educational Administration	0	4	4	N/A
	Other	6	2	8	N/A
Average Number of Years of Experience in Teaching		19.16	8.8	N/A	13.98
Experience in Administration	Yes	3	4	7	N/A
	No	3	2	5	N/A
Principalship as a Career Goal	Yes	0	4	4	N/A
	No	6	2	8	N/A

Selection Processes and Criteria

One of the goals of this study is to understand how and on what basis novice principals are being selected and appointed to run schools whether in the public or the private sector. Is there a formal process or is it done informally? Are there specific explicitly known criteria used to select principals? To answer those questions, responses from the individual interviews with novices and two professionals who were involved in selecting and preparing principals (A1 and A2) were analyzed. In addition, data from official documents (laws and decrees related to principal appointment) was collected. In the case of public schools, a unified formal selection process and selection criteria were identified and a few irregularities in their implementation were noted. In private schools, no unified process was identified and novices were simply chosen or nominated. No formal selection criteria were found to be outlined in an official document. Thus, the reported results for private principals were based on the novices' perspective.

Appointment of Novice Principals in the Public Sector

In Lebanese public schools, novices used to be assigned the task of principalship by a decree from the Minister of Education based on the recommendation of the director of education (elementary or secondary) (Decree N$^{\circ}$ 590, 1974). In 2001, the law 320 stated that principals are to be appointed following a specific selection process which includes an eligibility test and a training session. Article 4 of this law required all public school principals to undergo an evaluation at the end of the year to decide on tenure. According to A1, an administrator who played an important role in introducing this change in policies regarding principalship, the law 320 was not applied for several reasons including the absence of criteria for the test and the time needed to prepare training material. A1 stated that it was not fair to evaluate principals and make them accountable if adequate training was not provided for them. The law 320 ended up being amended in 2006 by the decree N°777 which, again,

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gave the Minister of Education the right to assign the task of principalship by a ministerial

decree based on the recommendation of the director of education (specific to the school

level). The MEHE, the CERD and the Faculty of Education (LU) started working on

designing training programs as well as selection processes and criteria and in 2009, the law

N°73 (see Appendix G) was put in place specifying the criteria and process of selection of

public school principals as well as the training and evaluation requirements that are still

applied till now. The law also details conditions of granting public school principals the

administrative compensation. They will be described in the following sections.

A Unified Formal Selection Process

The analysis of the collected data showed that there is a unified process adopted at the

MEHE for selecting public school principals. This process can be divided into three major

steps from the announcement of a vacant school principal position to the submission of

applications by the candidates and finally the eligibility test after which the novice principal

is appointed.

Announcement of a Vacancy. In four out of the six public schools included in the

study, the previous principal retired which led to a vacancy in the principal position, as

NPub1 recounted: "Our principal retired around Christmas time. Two weeks before, they [the

MEHE] sent applications so that any of the teachers who want to run for the position can

apply." Usually, as explained by three of the novices in public schools, whenever there is a

vacancy in the principal position it is the supervisor that takes charge while the selection

process takes place and a new principal is appointed. In the school of NPub2, the previous

principal had to resign to take on another public duty: "Two years ago, the previous principal

ran for municipality elections. The MEHE announced a vacancy and opened the door for

nominations. The supervisor took charge for one year." In the case of NPub3, the school was

a new secondary school in a rural area so there was a need for a principal to run it.

Submission of Candidature. After the announcement by the MEHE of a vacant school principal position, candidates applied to the position within the deadline set by the ministry. All six novices in public schools included in the study explained that in addition to filling an application form they were required to present a professional portfolio and a project (details will be described in the next section). As mentioned by NPub2, applicants can be from the same school where there is a vacancy or a different one: "Four teachers from the school and one from another school were candidates."

Eligibility Test. All candidates go through a selection process mainly based on an eligibility test described in the decree N°1393 (2008) (see Appendix H for details about this test). The test comprises three parts:

- An interview with a committee (30 points)

- A candidature project (5 points)

- A professional portfolio (20 points)

Candidates for principalship are required to sit for an interview with a committee composed of six members:

- The director general of education (president of the committee)

- The director of education (of the corresponding school level: elementary, secondary…)

- The concerned educational zone director

- Two specialists in the field of education well known for their proficiency

- A member of the CERD selected from a list of three names proposed by the CERD director

The committee asks questions to get to know the candidate's personality, potential (scientific, educational, managerial, and cultural), and knowledge of the rules and regulations of public schools. The candidate is graded according to the following criteria (see Appendix I for a

sample evaluation form): presence (general appearance, personality, and emotionality), verbal expression (clarity and relevance of answers), and intelligence and logic (sequencing and organizing ideas).

During the interview, the candidate should also hand the committee a project (2-3 pages) in which he / she explains his / her vision on how to improve the school where he/she wants to be principal. According to A1, if the project is done about schools in general and not about the specific school the candidate is applying to, it will not be taken into consideration and the candidate will not get the required grade. Specifications of the project are given to candidates, what it should include and the plan of the project, so that they know what is required.

NPub5 described his experience going through the selection process:

> I prepared my portfolio and a project in which I included my vision for the school and how to improve it mainly based on my knowledge of the school, what I saw were its needs, and my experience in the private sector as a teacher. I sent them to the ministry and then I was called for an interview. They [the committee] discussed with me the project, the school student enrollment rate and success rate…

NPub1 also recounted the topics he was asked about in the interview:

> In the interview I remember that they asked me questions based on my work plan, which is something I liked, and they tried to make up problems, for example suppose there is no cooperation between X and Y at school. I remember also there was a question asked by the director of secondary education about a problem that is actually happening at the school and I had to tell them how I plan to solve it…

The committee will also review and grade the portfolio of the candidate: the higher the degrees, experiences, qualifications, and number of training sessions attended the higher the

grade. Finally, the committee reports the final results with the detailed grading and rankings of the candidates to the Minister of Education (Decree N° 1393, 2008).

Selection Criteria

The criteria for selecting principals in public schools will be discussed on two levels: the formal criteria as stated in the law N° 73 (See Appendix G: Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009) and the perceived criteria as described by the novices when asked why they think they were selected.

Formal Selection Criteria. Article 3 of the law N° 73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009) states the following conditions to be eligible for selection and appointment as a public school principal:

- Be part of the tenured educational staff in public schools.

- Be a holder of a teaching or university license / be a graduate of the teachers' training college and a tenured teacher for at least five years / be a tenured teacher for at least ten years.

- Not having received any sanction for the last five years.

- Be fluent in Arabic and good in one of the two foreign languages French or English.

- Present candidature for principalship within the deadline for accepting candidature applications.

- Successfully pass the eligibility test which conditions and procedures are set by a ministerial decree.

- Successfully pass, before taking on his / her managerial tasks, a preparation session in educational administration organized by the Faculty of Education of the Lebanese University / Or to have attended training programs specifically related to management and education organized by the MEHE for a duration of at least two months with the

condition of planning for attending the preparation session that will take place later as decided by ministerial decrees.

The law also indicates that, three years after their appointment, principals should be evaluated (Article 5 of law N°73, 2009): if their performance is less than average they should be discharged from principalship.

Perceived Criteria for Selection. Those criteria can be divided into two categories based on the novices' responses: success in the eligibility test and personal connections.

Success in the Eligibility Test. When asked about the reason they were selected, all of the six novices replied that it was based on their performance in the eligibility test (interview / project). For example, NPub2 stated that it was the way she talked about the school in the interview that made the committee select her:

> I don't want to say that my project was better than other candidates, they all had good ones and their aspirations and experiences…but maybe my love for this school showed in my eyes during the interview… maybe sometimes this passion motivates you to talk more and get your idea through to others better.

Similarly, NPub6 indicated that, in her opinion, she was selected because she had the highest grades on her project and in the interview amongst the candidates.

Personal Connections. Two of the novices mentioned that, in addition to passing the eligibility test, an important factor can affect whether a candidate is selected or not and that is personal connections with politicians or influential people in the region where the school is located (mayors, municipality president…). NPub1 reported how he was advised to "knock on somebody's door" if he wanted to have higher chances of becoming a principal. He described how some candidates "work on their relations" and "do their election tour just like candidates for elections." He added that qualifications and personal connections "complete each other" to be selected. NPub1 explained:

Every candidate has his strength: he has a chance having been in the administrative

staff, he has a chance because he has connections at the ministry…because he is from

the region there are people who support him, he can resort to the mayor and they want

to please him so they call the minister…it happens and it's normal in the education

field. This is the way it happens: we want to please X, who has more *wasta*…all of

these play an essential role. Nobody succeeded only 100% as a result of his grades

especially in a region like here…if we take it from another perspective; you don't do a

wasta and support somebody if he is not eligible so they complete each other I guess.

Ok, I want to recommend this person, let me see his grades in the interview, if they

are very low I will not humiliate myself.

Implementation Irregularities

Despite all the efforts made in the public sector to formalize and improve the selection

of principals, several irregularities and challenges were noted by the interviewed

administrators.

First, A1 explained that in certain cases, candidates are appointed as principals even

though they have no university degree and hold only the Bacc II or a statement of deferral of

the Bacc II. She clarified that this is because there are still tenured teachers and

administrators who were employed at the time where a university degree was not a

requirement to enter the public educational sector and the law does not prevent them from

presenting their candidature.

Second, according to A1, the fifteen-minute interview conducted during the selection

process does not really allow to determine whether the candidate has what it takes in terms of

patience, humbleness, ability to manage conflict and cooperate with the team…which are

considered as important qualities of a principal. Sometimes members of the committee try to

provoke the candidate on purpose with a question to test his/her reaction but this does not

mean you are able to discover his / her inner self. Thus, A1 stated that decisions often steer towards undeserving candidates and ones that end up being not successful.

Finally, A1 revealed that the probationary three years period and the performance evaluation mentioned in the law N° 73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009) have not been implemented till now for several reasons: lack of principal preparation, lack of resources, and absence of the culture of evaluation. In fact, the law states that evaluation takes place three years after appointment and training but in reality there are many novices who reach the third year and still did not go through training, therefore it is unfair to evaluate those principals. In addition, novices cannot be evaluated on their performance if the right conditions and resources (such as competent teachers) are not available and the ministry is not capable of providing them. Moreover, the concept of evaluation as a way to "determine the weaknesses and work on improving them whether for the principal or teacher or supervisor or any person who does a certain task" as stated by the participant MEHE administrator A1 is absent in our culture. On the contrary, A1 mentioned that evaluation is viewed as a tool to judge and take a decision about tenure and not as a way of "diagnosing reality and working on improving it." MEHE administrator A1 related that attempts are under way in order to prepare novices for evaluation. One of the World Bank projects was designed to include a goal on developing evaluation criteria and subjecting 300 principals to do self-evaluation according to a specific evaluation form as a preliminary step to enforce the law N° 73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009). A1 elaborated that she pushed for this project design to overcome the resistance to evaluation inherent in the educational sector in general and schools in particular and to help principals learn to identify their weaknesses easing them into accepting external evaluation. According to A1, before evaluating novices, there are several steps to be completed: prepare the principals, give them a first-year chance, and provide support and

guidance. The ideal scenario would be to train novices before starting work and provide them with follow up and guidance from the former principal. A1 admitted that "all this is still a vision but hopefully in time we will get there."

Appointment of Novice Principals in the Private Sector

In this section, responses of the interviewed novices in private schools regarding how and why they were appointed will be presented. Neither overarching nor specific laws were found to explicitly guide the process of selection and specify criteria for selection. Therefore, only the informal processes and criteria that were identified after data analysis will be described in this section. Findings regarding novices' views on why and how they were appointed will be presented in two subsections: the first points out the absence of a unified formal process while the second presents the informal criteria for selection as perceived by the novices.

Absence of a Clear, Unified, and Formal Selection Process

When the novices in private schools were asked how they became principals, no unified and clear selection process was described. All of the six participants explained briefly that they were approached by senior administrators (director, head of religious community, president of school network…) to ask them to take on the position. However, when asked for further details about how they became principals each of the six novices described his / her own journey to the principalship position. This means that no formal process with clear steps can be identified for novices in private schools participating in this study but simply commonalities in the informal process through which they were approached, especially that private schools have different hierarchies and organizational structures. In what follows, the two commonalities found in novices' responses will be described: being solicited to occupy the position and going through a quick informal process.

Being Solicited to Occupy the Position. Two of the novices transitioned directly from teaching to principalship while the other four gradually moved from teaching to holding different administrative / leadership positions (coordinators / heads of division / assistant principals) to finally becoming principals. In both cases, those principals did not apply for the position but were offered the job and asked if they were willing to take on the responsibility.

For instance, NPr3, the principal of a middle school which belonged to a large school network, recounted that he started as a teacher and meanwhile he was studying educational administration. Three years later, he was transferred to the strategic planning department of the network and at the same time appointed as a secretary of the executive board. Later on, he was chosen to be the assistant principal in one of the schools and the following year the principal in another school. When asked if there was a specific process (e.g. application form to fill) through which he was appointed as a principal or if there were any other potential candidates, NPr3 responded: "No it is not a question of applying, it's not as if there were a search committee…I have no idea if they had someone else in mind for this position." He added that "promotion always happens within the school network, they don't get someone from outside so maybe they [the network administration] looked at my performance appraisal and decided I was suitable for the job so they offered me the position."

NPr6, the principal of a small rural private school owned by a religious community, described his journey from when he started as an Arabic language teacher at another larger school belonging to the same religious community. After several years of teaching, he was approached by the head of the religious community that owns the school to ask him to become the Arabic language coordinator and he accepted. In the same way, he later became head of division. NPr6 explained how he was also approached to become principal of the current school:

After 13 years as a head of division at [the large school owned by a religious community], the head of the religious community asks to see me and he discusses with me the situation at the rural school they own. He tells me the school is going through a difficult phase and there are lots of financial problems and we can't continue like this. I told him I can suggest several solutions you can apply at the school, and I was at the time studying educational administration. He asked me to write them down and I did. After a while he calls and tells me I think you should be principal of the school, do you think you are capable of being a principal there?

Quick Informal Process. Another characteristic of the informal process that those novices went through is that it was very quick: they did not undergo several interviews or tests to examine further their eligibility for the job. The process simply consisted of a meeting where the novice was offered the position and sometimes given an idea about the requirements of this position and some time to think. For example, NPr2 described her relatively "quick" transition:

I have been teaching for two years when the Mother Superior called me for an interview and offered me to become a principal at one of her schools [that belongs to her religious community]. I already know her from before and she appointed me…

NPr2 explained that the Mother Superior had recently become in charge of schools in this area and she offered her the job with a very short notice when she was making changes in the schools' staff.

Similarly, NPr4 explained that he transitioned to principalship after nine years of teaching after a short process that included only two steps, a job offer and his consent to it:

My name was suggested by the school board during the board meeting and the process took place at the administration level I wasn't concerned at first. Then the previous principal had me in her office and asked me if I'm ready to dedicate more

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time for the school by accepting to take on this post and she also gave me the job description and explained to me briefly what my tasks will be. I took my time to think, to read the job description… I consulted with my family…I agreed and sent my official approval to the school board.

Perceived Criteria for Selection

In order to identify the selection criteria for novices in private schools, participants were asked to share the criteria based on which they were selected and the reasons behind their appointment as principals at a particular school. Analysis of the participants' response showed the lack of formal criteria explicitly set by private schools to appoint principals, as NPr6 said: "To tell you there were specific criteria required…maybe in the mind of those who appointed me but there was no list of criteria I had to meet." Instead, the criteria mentioned by novices were from their own perspective guessing the reasons they believe were the basis of their selection. Seven criteria were identified from the data and will be presented below: advanced academic background, professional background in the educational field, devotion to work at the school, having unique personal characteristics, personal connections, demonstrated knowledge and skills, and membership in the school religious community.

Advanced Academic Background. Five of the interviewed novices considered that the degree they held contributed to their selection for the principal position. NPr5 claimed that maybe the fact that he thought of pursuing a masters' degree in educational administration played a part in choosing him to take on the principal role. Similarly NPr1, NPr3, and NPr6 believed that graduate studies in educational administration influenced their selection. NPr2 also said that her graduate degree in adolescent psychology was one of the reasons why she was appointed because she thinks the Mother Superior who approached her wanted someone who knows how to deal with students.

Professional Background in the Educational Field. Four out of the six interviewed novices listed their long professional experience as educators as being one of the reasons they were appointed. More specifically, two of the newly appointed principals described how the gradual "promotions" from teaching to several administrative positions played an important role in being chosen to become principals. NPr3 explained how taking up various supervisory roles at the school helped him "build a comprehensive view of how the school works." He pointed out that his work at the strategic department then as a secretary of the executive board was the reason behind appointing him as an assistant principal in one of the schools of the network and later on as a principal. Similarly, NPr6 stated: "My journey in the educational field is what got me here." NPr6 described how he successfully moved from teacher to coordinator and then head of division leading up to the principal position.

Devotion to Work at the School. Four of the interviewed novices believed that one of the reasons they were chosen was how devoted they were for their job and the institution itself. NPr3 talked about his passion for the educational domain, specifically dealing with students, which made him work hard in all the positions he occupied. NPr4 also emphasized the importance of the feeling of belonging to the school: "The administration looks for the person who has a sense of belonging and commitment to the institution." In addition, NPr5 attributed his selection to how much he took his work seriously and the amount of time he was willing to dedicate to the school:

> Of course there is seriousness in work, it's not wrong to talk about oneself but there is
> seriousness in work, of course, I follow up on my tasks till the end… I can give time
> to school, I don't leave at a specific time…as a coordinator, I used to stay after 4pm
> when all the team has left to fill all the reports and follow up on emails….I gave all
> my time to work.

Similarly, NPr6 perceived his dedication to the school as one of the most important criteria that led him to move from one administrative position to the other till becoming principal. He described how he felt about the school since he was a teacher: "I was very loyal to the school and I loved the institution a lot…I felt like the school was becoming part of me and I didn't want to leave the school or the community." NPr6 highlighted the fact that he was making sacrifices by working on weekends and holidays and during his free time. He concluded: "I gave myself to teaching and to the school in a significant way that no one can imagine."

Having Unique Personal Characteristics. Four novices listed various characteristics they believed helped them in becoming principals. For instance, NPr3 said that being professional and ethical is important while NPr4 listed criteria such as sense of responsibility, punctuality, being respectful and being a fast learner. NPr5 added that his scientific way of thinking might have helped in favor of him being chosen for the position. Finally, according to NPr6, "charisma" is essential if a person is to be chosen for principalship. NPr6 admitted that he did not know whether this personality trait was developed due to his life experiences or if he was born with it but he believes that being charismatic and having talent with people contributed to his selection.

Personal Connections. One of the criteria that were cited by three novices in private schools was the fact that they had personal contact with people who were directly or indirectly involved with the selection of principals. NPr3 described how the head of the school network was a great support for him:

> I will not hide it from you, there is the opinion of the head of the school network, he's the one who pushed me to get this job, he's the one who saw my potential, he's the one I consider my mentor…He always saw that this person [NPr3] can give more so he's the one who pushed me…that means in reality all my transfers from position to

position he's the one who worked on them and in fact this helped me gain experience so when there was a vacancy here I was appointed.

Similarly, when NPr1 was asked why she thinks she was offered the position, she referred to the fact that the Mother Superior was her teacher back when she was a student at school. NPr1 believes that because of this previous relationship the Mother Superior appointed her in this position.

Demonstrated Knowledge and Skills. Three novices pointed out that one of the reasons they were chosen was that they took initiatives and made sure to show what they know and what they are capable of. NPr5 described how during the continuous professional development sessions conducted at his school he was able to draw the attention of trainers by showing his interest and what he was learning in his MA in educational administration. Similarly, NPr4 stated that when you show that you have something to give and come up with new ideas this helps in being selected for specific posts. In addition, NPr3 admitted "I always made sure my work is visible." He added:

> I had just started teaching and I was studying at the same time educational
> administration at university so I was one of the people who were very active in the
> department: I always came up with new initiatives and this undoubtedly shed light on
> the fact that I was learning more about the field of educational administration.

Membership in the School Religious Community. Another factor that came out from data analysis is the importance of belonging to the religious community of the school: being from the same religious group and participating in related events can play an important part in getting promoted to higher positions such as principalship. One novice, NPr6 described how "being in close contact" with the religious community of the school since he was a teacher played a major role in being given several opportunities to take on administrative roles: coordinator, head of division and principal. He narrated how, in parallel

with his educational duties, he assisted the religious community in establishing spiritual groups within the school. He also got to know members of the community who are abroad such as in Jordan and Egypt and to visit their schools. To sum up, NPr6 said he felt like he became "one of the family."

Appointment of Novice Principals in the Public and Private Sectors

In conclusion, comparing the processes and criteria adopted for principal selection and appointment in the public and private sector shows major differences as presented in Table 7. While in public schools there is a formal process which prospective principals go through, there is no formal process to select new principals in private schools. In the latter, principals are simply chosen to take on the position without any formal procedure. In addition, in public schools there are formal selection criteria set by laws and decrees whereas in the private schools included in the study no such criteria were found. In fact, novices in private schools were not sure what the criteria in the minds of those who selected them were but gave a list of factors they think played a major role in their selection.

One common point that can be noted is that novices in both public and private schools agreed that their personal relations contributed to their appointment in the principalship position. As reported in the findings on selection criteria in public schools, two novices mentioned the importance of having good relations with politicians or influential people in the school community to increase their chances of being appointed. Similarly, four novices in private schools recognized that personal connections with influential leaders at the school or school's religious community was one of the main reasons they were chosen for the position.

Table 7

Comparative Table of the Formal and Informal Processes and Criteria for Principals' Selection and Appointment in the Public and

Private Schools Included in the Study

	Appointment of Novice Principals		
	Public Schools N=6	Private Schools N=6	Total Number of Respondents
Selection Process			
A Unified Formal Selection Process: - Announcement of a Vacancy - Submission of Candidature - Eligibility Test	6	0	6
Absence of a Clear and Unified Selection Process: Novices Solicited to Occupy the Position	0	6	6
Selection Criteria			
Formal Selection Criteria	6	0	6
Perceived Criteria for Selection			
- Success in the Eligibility Test	6	0	6
- Personal Connections	2	3	5
- Advanced Academic Background	0	5	5
- Professional Background in the Educational Field	0	4	4
- Devotion to Work at the School	0	4	4
- Having Unique Personal Characteristics	0	4	4
- Demonstrated Knowledge and Skills	0	3	3
- Membership in the School Religious Community	0	1	1

Preparation for the Position

One of the important stages of becoming a principal is the preparation phase. This study tried to capture how novices in both public and private schools in Lebanon are being prepared to take on the principalship role. During the individual interviews, the newly appointed principals were asked to describe how they learned about their role and to explain how they acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform this role. In addition, two professionals in the field of education directly involved in appointing and preparing principals in public schools provided data on what is being done to prepare novices in the public sector before taking on the job. The gathered data was analyzed and the results are presented below.

Preparation of Novice Principals in Public Schools

In public schools, two methods of preparation were identified: formal and self-initiated. Formal preparation consisted of a one-year training program, whereas self-initiated preparation was described by novices as being through working on the school project required for applying to the position and through getting to know the rules and regulations of public schools.

Formal Preparation

The idea of training associated with preparation for assuming the role of the principal started with in-service public schools principals. Until the mid-2000's, all principals who were in service in public schools were not trained. According to A1, they were assigned with no experience in financial issues, human resources, dealing with parents and local community, and instructional supervision. Under the Leadership Development Program for principals (LDP funded by World Bank) was the in-service preparation: one third of Lebanese principals were trained (450 of 1500). A1 explained that after institutionalizing the preparation program and establishing a partnership with the Lebanese University (LU),

training of all in-service principals (around 2250 – 2450 principals) was completed with the help of donors such as USAID D-RASATI and an agreement with the Lebanese University as the national public educational institution that trains principals in a step to become independent of externally / internationally funded projects.

After this phase, pre-service training was put in place as required by the law N° 73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009), in which, as A1 indicated, the transition from "assigning someone the task to run a school" to "appointing someone as a school principal" started being applied. The design of the pre-service program that emerged and that was based on the Leadership Development Program-Capacity Building of Public School Principals is detailed below. Implementation irregularities are also highlighted.

Design of the Leadership Development Program. The design of this program was described by A1 and A2. Based on the data obtained from these two administrators, the objectives, phases and approach of the program will be presented in what follows.

Objectives of the Leadership Development Program. During LDP I, the Faculty of Education at the Lebanese University worked on the development of the program and has refined it over the years. All pre-service principals now complete this program as a part of their qualification to be a principal. According to A2, the program aims at enhancing the skills of school principals to ensure effective school management, school improvement, and community involvement.

Phases of the Leadership Development Program. A1 and A2 described the one- year pre-service training program as including three phases: an interactive workshop component, a self-learning component, and a practical project-based component. Table 8 shows the implementation process of the program.

A2 cited the topics covered during the phases of LDP. The mandatory topics included: Educational Leadership, School Management and Planning, Educational Supervision, Active Learning Methods, Public Employees Bylaws, and IT Basics for School Management. Two optional topics are added in phase II: Special Needs Services in Schools and Managing Extra-Curricular Activities and School Clubs.

During the self-learning phase (phase II), characterized by the MEHE administrators (A1 and A2) as a new approach to training in Lebanon, principals with their teams at school choose units on which they are trained and try to apply them in their schools. In this phase there are common modules for all principals and modules specific for each school on how to improve its weak aspects.

In the final phase of the training (phase III), A1 and A2 explained that principals plan the school project and execute it with the help of trainers and coaches. Trainers are in charge of giving instructions while coaches make field visits and help principals apply what they learned and implement their projects. Coaches are usually people who have already worked in the field and some may be former principals.

Table 8

LDP Implementation Process per Cohort (*Faculty of Education - Lebanese University, 2015)*

	Duration	Number of Modules	Number of Trainers + Coaches
Phase I Interactive Workshops	Total: 144 hours Per week: Friday 6h Saturday 6h	6 modules	2 to 3 trainers
Phase II Self-Learning	Total: 3 months Per module: 6 hours meeting with trainers + online tutoring	4 modules	1 to 2 trainers
Phase III Project Implementation	Total: 3 months Ongoing training (2x6 hours meetings) and coaching (up to 3 field visits)	Project-based module	1 trainer and one coach supervising each school principal (up to 3 visits per school each)

Leadership Development Program Approach. According to A2, this program follows a project-based approach of building leadership capacity. In fact, by including the improvement project as a key component, it empowers the potential school principal to be prepared to lead the change, despite the challenging professional environment. A2 added that it adopts a combined capacity building approach: interactive/self-study/coaching processes which help school principals develop their managerial knowledge and skills, get involved in a culture of professional self-development, and refine their reflective and analytical skills. Furthermore, qualified trainers, and continuous support and feedback and field visits contribute to promote the principals' self-esteem and self-efficacy, and help them to link theory to practice as the last phase of the program continues for many past the appointment to the position.

Implementation Irregularities of the Program. Similarly to the selection process and criteria, implementation irregularities can be noted regarding the formal training process. To begin with, as indicated by A1, if the number of novices is not sufficient the training course is not held. Therefore, some principals are in their second or third year and they still have not taken the course. In fact, none of the public schools novices interviewed in this study had gone through the training process yet. A1 recounted that when the law N° 73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009) was being written, policy makers suggested that the announcement of vacancy occurs one year ahead so that there is time for all steps of the process to take place and that the novice is trained before or maximum during the first year of principalship. However, when it comes to enforcing this policy during implementation this is not the case. In addition, A2 pointed out that the fact that the program is only offered at the Faculty of Education in Beirut can be an obstacle for some principals who come from remote areas. There are no funds to organize regional trainings.

Another irregularity was highlighted by A2 regarding the "mentality" of seeing principalship as prestige and becoming the boss who "knows it all" and does not need training. She stated that novices who come to training sessions with this mindset will not benefit from the program. A2 underscored that we lack a culture of professionalism and that this needs time to change.

Finally, A2 reported that there is no evaluation process for the impact of the preparation program to assess its effectiveness in helping principals acquire the competencies needed to assume their role. Improvements in the courses are based on an evaluation done by the novices as soon as they finish the training. However, the impact of the program on their practice and to what degree and in which aspects it helped them (or not) has not been analyzed to update the course accordingly.

Self-Initiated Preparation

When asked what they did to prepare themselves for the position, responses of the novices in public schools showed two main self-initiated methods that they considered allowed them to be ready. These methods included preparing a thorough and realistic candidature project and getting to know the internal regulations.

Preparing a Thorough and Realistic Candidature Project. Four novices thought that they prepared on their own when they were working on their candidature project. NPub1 said: "I was appointed in January and directly started." Therefore, when asked if he had time to prepare himself, NPub1 responded: "No, I did this when I prepared my project." Similarly, NPub3 worked very seriously on her project in order to prepare herself for the position: "I had 50% chance of being appointed and I said to myself I will work on the 50% probability better than be surprised when appointed." Therefore, she was very thorough and tried to put a realistic plan for the school: "It wasn't just theories, everything I wrote in my project I thought about it and if I get appointed will I be able to achieve it?" NPub3 also explained that

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she took the initiative to do the necessary research to write a detailed project and even to decide which step came first so that she is ready when appointed: "I didn't put any point in the project that I cannot apply and they asked me about it in the interview. From here I started preparing and even thinking from which point I should begin before I was appointed." She also emphasized the importance of doing a credible plan although she knew that no one might follow up with her later: "Even if nobody will hold you accountable for each point of the project but it's your credibility with yourself that's most important."

NPub6 also claimed that preparing the project allowed her to focus on the school's weaknesses and strengths and that she will try every year to execute part of her project.

Getting to Know the Internal Regulations. Three novices said that in order to get ready for taking on the position they read the internal regulations of public schools which also include some information on the principal's role. They considered becoming familiar with these rules, even without training, a way to prepare for the role. For instance, when asked if she did anything specific to be prepared for principalship, NPub2 replied: "No, the Faculty of Education will train us later we still didn't get there but of course I read the internal rules, nothing more."

Preparation of Novice Principals in Private Schools

Unlike public school principals, novices in the private sector are not required by law to go through a pre-service training program. In addition, the interviews conducted with six novices in private schools showed the absence in those schools of a preparation program specifically tailored to equip novices with the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions to become effective leaders. In fact, no policy was found in these schools concerning a training program for beginning principals. Therefore, findings of the study indicate that no formal preparation was taking place for the novices. However, all of the six interviewed novices in private schools mentioned several informal methods that helped them learn what is needed

for the position. These methods had three objectives: train novices to acquire technical competencies needed for the principalship; provide novices with orientation to learn about the job description and role responsibilities, and guide novices by mentoring / coaching through the transition as they assume the role. These methods will be presented in two categories: preparation through activities proposed by the school and self-initiated preparation.

Preparation through Activities Proposed by the School

Based on the novices' responses, none of the schools involved in the study had a complete formal program designed specifically to train principals. However, in some schools one or two activities intended for principal preparation were identified. Overall, five preparation methods proposed by the school were found: coaching from senior administrators or previous principals, clearly stated job description, shadowing the former principal, school-based orientation sessions, and mentorship.

Coaching from Senior Administrators or Previous Principals. In the schools of NPr1, NPr2, NPr4, and NPr5, coaching is an activity used to help novices learn about their role: it consists of one or several meetings with senior administrators or former principals just before or just after the novice takes up the role. In fact, NPr1 and NPr4 stated that senior administrators set meetings with them to provide details about their new role. In addition, NPr5 explained that he got to meet the previous principal, who he described as "very helpful" and "cooperative", several times and during those meetings the former principal taught him a lot about the position. First, he clarified to him a few aspects of the job description and how they could be applied in practice: "In the job description, for example, they say the principal has to follow up on projects and celebrations but they don't give details. He [the former principal] told me what are the projects and celebrations I need to follow up on." NPr5 also narrated how the former principal handed him a report of the work that was done and what needed to be followed up and what were the obstacles that he might face:

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He [the former principal] gave me his reports that he wrote at the end of the year. In those reports there were details about the problems he faced and how he dealt with them, what he was able to accomplish and what he couldn't…he handed me over some tasks so that I continue them after him.

Finally, NPr5 added that the previous principal told him about his experience with the staff and gave him some advice on the relational aspect of the role: "He told me where he faced problems with some team members, who are the key team members and how he dealt with them."

Clearly Stated Job Description. Three novices considered the presence of a clear job description at their institution an aspect of getting prepared for assuming the role. This description served as a guideline for novices to understand what their responsibilities were. Of course these guidelines were not sufficient for the novice to be ready for everyday challenges. NPr3 explained: "First you have the job description which is very clear. It is clear and written what the job of the principal is and the same goes for each one at the school." He added: "Of course what is written in the job description cannot fully capture all what really happens when working on the ground."

Shadowing the Former Principal. Another type of preparation of novices done ahead of taking on the position is shadowing the former principal. Two of the novices went through this experience at their schools: NPr4 and NPr6. Before officially becoming the principal, NPr6 spent all of the month of June with the former principal to learn more about the job and the context. Similarly, NPr4 narrated how she was prepared one year ahead of assuming her responsibilities as a principal:

When they told me I will become principal, they reduced my teaching hours so that I could get some training. For example, I started attending meetings for a month with the former principal then she would ask me to run the meeting and afterwards she

used to give me feedback. I attended class visits with her and learned how she gave feedback to teachers: what issues she discussed with them and in what way. Then she would ask me to be the one giving the feedback to the teacher and the former principal observed me…in this way I practiced most of the tasks. It was a practical training within our institution. I wasn't trained outside and theoretically, no, I was trained directly on the job.

School-based Orientation Sessions. Only one novice mentioned attending regular training sessions even before becoming a principal. At the school of NPr5, continuous professional development sessions take place on a regular basis. NPr5, who is in his second year of principalship, has been attending those sessions for seven years. According to NPr5, this training consisted mainly in teaching them "how to fill certain forms and how to report the work they are doing." He explained that training occurs "on how administrative work is done according to our procedures and processes and the identity of our institution." He also added that this training was practical more than theoretical that is why it was helpful.

Mentorship. Another type of preparation that was mentioned by one novice was mentorship. NPr3 explained that it is one of the ways to help in preparation whether for principals or any other position at his school. The mentor accompanied NPr3 throughout the whole year and gave him guidance and support in the transition phase:

In the mentorship program, any person who gets promoted or any new comer to the school or newly appointed in a certain position is assigned a mentor. This mentor meets with him / her on a regular basis to discuss any issue he/she might be facing…for example I can tell you that my mentor last year as an assistant principal was the principal. Whenever I had a question, I used to ask him. Whenever I had a project, I used to discuss it with him. This year my mentor is another principal at the network.

Self-Initiated Preparation

Five of the interviewed novices in private schools mentioned four methods they decided by themselves to resort to in order to learn more about their role and get support in their first years on the job. These methods included academic preparation, personal readings, personal mentor, and inquiring from colleagues.

Academic Preparation. Four out of the six novices considered their voluntary enrollment in post-bachelor's degree in educational administration as a form of preparation. For instance, NPr1 said: "The thing that benefited me the most was my master's and especially the course with […] who told us about his experience in educational administration." However, this academic preparation was not required by the school. It was the novices' initiative to enroll in this kind of university programs to learn more about leadership. Most of those novices have already started or even completed the program before they were appointed as principals.

Personal Readings. Two novices said that they read a lot in order to prepare themselves for the position: readings about leadership, education, specific subjects taught at school, child psychology… NPr5 described how he spent the whole summer that preceded his first year as a principal reading:

I was reading about the students' age group and how to deal with it. I read the curriculum plans of all the subjects…I read the reports in the archive because I wanted to know what has already been done and where I should start from. So I spent around two months reading in order to know what I should do, where I am going.

Personal Mentor. One novice, NPr3, explained that in addition to the formal mentor he was assigned by the school, he considered his friend as a personal mentor. His friend was the principal of an elementary school and NPr3 consulted her regularly in every difficulty he encountered.

Inquiring from Colleagues. The last method was mentioned by one novice. In fact, NPr1, who did not have clear job descriptions at her school, simply relied on asking to know more about her role and tasks: "There is no written job description you ask here and there…"

Preparation of Novice Principals in Public and Private Schools

Findings of the study regarding preparation for the role revealed the existence of three ways through which novices could be prepared to take on the principal position: formal preparation (exclusive to public schools), self-initiated preparation (in both school types), and preparation through activities proposed by the school (exclusive to private schools). These categories are presented in Table 9 along with the frequency of responses of novices regarding the type of preparation they went through.

Data from interviews with administrators and reviewed policies showed that, in the public sector, a unified formal preparation program was designed and all novices were required by the law to successfully complete this one year pre-service training. However, as shown in Table 9, none of the interviewed novices had received any kind of formal training at the time of the interview, even those who were in their second and third year of principalship.

In theory, these novices should be receiving training to acquire knowledge and competencies needed for principalship but in practice this was not happening. They were left alone in their first years to figure out how to practice their role. Consequently, all of the interviewed novices in public schools were depending on themselves through self-initiated strategies to learn about their role. Some of the novices took the opportunity of writing their candidature project to make it a self-learning experience about the school and principalship so that this project could serve as a plan to guide them in their first year. Others chose to rely on the internal rules and regulations of public schools as a guide and consult them to know how to perform the technical part of the job and what are the tasks they were supposed to accomplish. Five out of the six novices in private schools also admitted depending on self-

initiated methods to be prepared for the position. They tried to make a personal effort to learn their role through enrolling in an academic program related to school leadership, reading, and consulting with others (inquiring from colleagues and having a personal mentor).

In the private sector, no unified formal process for training had been identified but, as shown in Table 9, some methods were adopted in the different schools where novices were interviewed. These methods were independent activities and not part of a structured program specifically tailored for principal preparation. Coaching from senior administrators or previous principals was the most frequently cited by novices (four out of six) in this type of activities. It was closely followed by having access to a clearly stated job description provided by the school (cited by three novices). Shadowing the former principal was an activity happening in two schools. Finally, school-based orientation sessions and mentorship were each pointed out by one novice as methods proposed by their schools for the purpose of preparation for the position.

The strategies adopted to prepare novices in private schools provided them with some training to acquire technical competencies needed for the principalship: mainly the academic preparation, the training sessions, and shadowing the former principal. The job description present in certain schools, the personal readings done by novices, and inquiring from colleagues helped in the orientation of those novices to learn about the job description and role responsibilities. Finally, the mentoring and coaching from senior administrators or previous principals guided novices through the transition period. It can be noticed that novices in private schools had a wider array of methods of preparation than their counterparts in public schools.

Table 9

Comparative Table of the Responses of Novice Principals in the Public and Private Schools Included in the Study Regarding their

Preparation for the Role

	Preparation for the Position		
	Public Schools	Private Schools	Total Number of Respondents
	N=6	N=6	
Formal Preparation	0	NA	0
Leadership Development Program	0	NA	0
Self-Initiated Preparation	6	5	11
Preparing a Thorough and Realistic Candidature Project	4	0	4
Academic Preparation	0	4	4
Getting to Know the Internal Regulations	3	0	3
Personal Readings	0	2	2
Personal Mentor	0	1	1
Inquiring from Colleagues	0	1	1
Preparation through Activities Proposed by the School	0	6	6
Coaching from Senior Administrators or Previous Principals	0	4	4
Clearly Stated Job Description	0	3	3
Shadowing the Former Principal	0	2	2
School-based Orientation Sessions	0	1	1
Mentorship	0	1	1

<center>**Challenges of the Transition Period**</center>

One of the research questions guiding this exploratory study focuses on the challenges faced by novice principals during the transition period. During the individual interviews, novices were asked to list and describe the obstacles they encountered in this particular stage of their career. Answers of the novices were analyzed and categorized under themes that will be presented in this section. Challenges faced by novices in public schools will be elaborated first, followed by those mentioned by novices in private schools. Finally, responses of novices in both school types will be compared.

Challenges Faced by Novice Principals in Public Schools

Data collected from interviews with novices in public schools showed that those newly appointed principals faced five major challenges: experiencing feelings of stress, surprise, uncertainty, and fear of failure; seeking excellence; limited authority and financial resources; relational challenges; and difficulty in balancing personal and professional life. Each of those challenges will be elaborated in the following paragraphs.

Experiencing Feelings of Stress, Surprise, Uncertainty, and Fear of Failure

The most frequently raised challenge by novices in public schools was that the transition period was very difficult for them on the emotional level. All of the six novices realized the amount of responsibilities and tasks they had to deal with on a daily basis which surprised them and engendered feelings of constant stress and worry. In addition, the novelty of the situations and relationships they found themselves in produced a sense of insecurity and fear of not being up to the expectations to succeed in this role. These aspects of the challenge will be described in the following subsections: sense of a huge responsibility coupled with stress and surprise, and feelings of uncertainty and fear of failure.

Sense of a Huge Responsibility Coupled with Stress and Surprise. All of the six interviewed novices explained that one of the biggest challenges they faced as soon as they

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became principals was the sense that they were carrying a huge responsibility. They were overwhelmed by the feeling of being responsible for everything and everyone at the school and in charge of all school aspects from maintenance to teaching and learning to educating a whole generation.

In particular, three novices talked about how they used to view principalship as teachers and how this perception changed completely once they became principals. For them, principalship was a reward or a promotion you get so it should be "easier" than teaching and the title of principal was considered as a "prestige." This perception shifted from "prestige" and "promotion" to responsibilities and hard work. This constituted an element of surprise and a challenge for them because they had to cope with all the things they did not know were part of their job. It was especially the difficulty of being a principal that they did not expect as illustrated by NPub2:

> On the personal level, when you see Rome from above, it's different. When you are part of the teaching staff you do not realize the difficulty of principalship. We think the principal sits behind the desk, has coffee, enjoys the prestige, receives people…no it's a very big responsibility, it's a very tiring thing, especially if it's a large school with high number of students.

Two novices described how by transitioning from teaching to principalship they discovered new aspects of the school that they were not aware of as teachers. They were overwhelmed with the new things they had to learn and new tasks they had to perform. NPub1 portrayed the challenge as follows:

> The moment I sat here I saw the school in a different way, I saw it from a completely different angle, and I started to worry. It was in July, there were no classes but we used to come every Tuesday. It's the time of the year where you have to renew for the

shop, renew for the cleaners and the social security and all these things. I looked and said to myself: all these things exist?

These new responsibilities generated feelings of surprise and stress at the same time since they were not aware of the nature and size of the tasks they were about to handle. For instance, NPub2 said she was "surprised" by the fact that in public schools the principal is "multi-tasking":

The principal should be the financial manager, the one responsible for organizing the programs, ensuring the adequate number of teachers, pursuing things related to insurance, the school building, modernizing things at school…you are directly responsible, you can't always delegate, sometimes it is possible but I like to do some things myself.

NPub6 emphasized that the principal is "responsible for everything" and it is not easy. She gave two examples to illustrate what she meant: "If water enters the building or if one of your students, a girl, is talking to a boy somewhere near the school before going in…it's all your responsibility."

In addition, novices mentioned the huge moral responsibility of educating young children. According to NPub3, the principal along with his / her team hold the responsibility of "making a generation." She added that the principal has to remember he is not a "businessman" working on a product and if things go wrong they can be fixed. Instead, he is dealing with humans: "We are educating generations and mistakes are not allowed." NPub2 also illustrated this feeling of being responsible and accountable for students' education and how stressful it can be on a daily basis:

Other things [paper work] like mail, budget…are nothing in front of the huge responsibility you are put in daily in front of every student who comes to you and has a problem: how are you going to deal with him? How can you not negatively

influence him / her or even his life because at this age the slightest word or action from an adult he / she will carry its impact his / her whole life so how big is our responsibility in dealing with them… and they are a big number of students.

Feelings of Uncertainty and Fear of Failure. Five out of the six interviewed novices admitted experiencing feelings of uncertainty while transitioning into their new role. The three main sources of uncertainty cited by novices were: new tasks to which they were not sufficiently prepared, unpredictability of the job, and changing relationship with the school staff.

NPub2 described her first year as "stepping into something new in which I had no experience." Another novice, NPub6, also experienced anxiety as she felt insufficiently prepared and trained prior to taking on the position. Talking about his first weeks at the school, NPub1 stated: "I had no idea what I was supposed to do about certain things that needed to be done at that time of the year: renew this, sign here, stamp there…" In fact, almost all of the novices in public schools said that they had to learn routine managerial tasks on a day to day basis.

In addition, the unpredictability of the job itself made it harder for the novices to complete the tasks they were supposed to on a daily basis. NPub1 described how every day there were things that took him by surprise:

For example, today I came wanting to do one, two, three things but I don't do them. You don't know what happens. Maybe now two teachers start fighting for trivial things, it happens, and the principal has to solve the conflict.

This unpredictability was difficult for novices and increased their feelings of insecurity especially when they faced certain situations for the first time as NPub2 narrated: "Since day one… and every other day that passed was a lesson for me and there were lots of first times but next year of course will be more comfortable for me."

Another source of uncertainty was related to their changing relationship with the staff as NPub2 noticed during her first year: "There were people who were friends with you, they're not anymore or who were supporting you but it appeared they became against you." Therefore, NPub2 said she could not have a clear preset strategy from the beginning and had to build her strategy "on the ground" to see how others will accept her. NPub5 also admitted that during the first period he was testing grounds. He was very cautious in the decisions he took because he wanted to have first solid steps and did not want to fail:

> The first period is about testing the waters: teachers who were my colleagues have to get used that I am the principal now who needs to impose authority. I need to gain their love and trust, especially the one who applied with me to the position, it's very sensitive…with students I need to create a new type of relationship…so first phase is about testing the waters to have steady steps.

Seeking Excellence

Another challenge that was common in all of the six novices' responses was the strong desire not only to improve the school but to make it the best. Their main concern was to improve the image and reputation of the public school which is usually viewed as "inferior" to private schools. Every novice had his / her own view of what was needed to accomplish this goal depending on the school's context and circumstances.

For instance, four of the novices were attempting to promote activities related to arts, music, and citizenship at the school. They were also aiming at involving students in planning new activities and organizing celebrations. Three of the novices also wanted to improve the school by trying to implement the project they prepared during the selection process. Two of the novices, NPub1 and NPub5, were targeting to increase student number which is viewed as an indicator of confidence in the school in addition to the success rate in official exams. In fact, NPub1 explained that what was lowering student enrolment at his secondary school was

the fact that it is an afternoon school and there are other high schools in the region that have an a.m. schedule. Moreover rumors about lack of discipline had affected the school's reputation. Therefore, NPub1 worked hard to change this situation: "I'm focusing my interest on students' activities more, stricter discipline rules to improve school image and reputation that was shaky."

Other novices (NPub3, NPub4, and NPub5) focused on improving the school's infrastructure and facilities and equipping the school with modern technologies. For instance, NPub3 who runs a newly founded secondary school in a rural area set a goal of providing her students with technological knowledge and skills so that they do not feel different from students in urban areas or in private schools: "So what we want are graduates who can be in line with this era's needs. They shouldn't be seeing things for the first time at universities." Therefore, she introduced robotics into teaching and equipped five laboratories to be used by teachers and students. She also worked on equipping all classrooms with smart TV. In addition, she transformed one of the classrooms into a library by putting cabinets in it and asking for books to be donated. This way, NPub3 believed her school had "a name and a reputation" and her students felt that "we are evolving and following up with new technologies." NPub4 faced a bigger challenge regarding school building: in fact, his school is part of a residential building so he was trying with the small space he had to provide rooms for a laboratory and a library. NPub4 was working hard to improve the situation by asking for an independent building for his school so that students had the best possible physical environment to learn.

Limited Authority and Financial Resources

Five novices revealed that one of the main challenges facing principals in public schools is the limited decision-making authority they have regarding certain aspects of the

school functioning. Among the domains they have little or no control of, those novices cited: choice of staff and curriculum, enrolment of foreign students, and financial resources.

Four of the novices highlighted an important issue facing public schools principals: the limited authority they have with regard to teachers' selection and students' recruitment. They explained that they feel helpless they cannot get qualified teachers and administrators that fit into the criteria they believe are important to be effective. NPub5, for example, struggled with the fact that when he asked for a teacher specialized in a specific subject matter, he got a teacher that can teach the subject but held a degree in another subject. NPub1 also mentioned that he was limited to the administrative staff he had although he wished to have a younger team:

> I have a lot on my team who are old. Next year I want to start introducing young people in the team. I want a young lively administration. For instance, a supervisor in his sixties can't go up and down stairs all day and if he doesn't do his job perfectly you can't say anything; he's doing his best. There are places where you need young people but you already have supervisors; they don't allow you to bring others.

In addition to the limitations set regarding selecting their staff, NPub2 added that in public schools they have limited authority to introduce change into the curriculum which is set by the ministry and has to be followed as is: "We are a little bit limited; you will find the difference with private schools. In public schools there is a predetermined program, preset teachers, we have limited powers not like the principals of private schools."

Finally, one novice mentioned the issue of the enrolment of non-Lebanese students at his secondary school and how it was lowering the success rate. Most of these foreign students did not have the same level as Lebanese students:

> There has always been success in our school but last year was the lowest percentage (60%). It used to be around 74-75% and it annoyed me since it was my first year, it's

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not good for me but there are several factors that influence this. For instance, you have students coming from Irak who registered here while waiting for their visa. They are counted on your school let's say 7 out of 70 this is 10% and if from the others 50 succeed practically 70% of your students.

Lastly, all of the five principals raised the issue of limited financial resources that compounded their limited decision-making authority with regard to allocating the available resources and taking initiatives to improve their school. NPub3 considered it as her biggest challenge:

I have lots of plans to execute but no financing. There are even things that the government doesn't finance because it has other priorities… and since we are in a rural area, the number of students doesn't cover the school's needs. This was the biggest challenge.

Relational Challenges

Relational challenges were listed by four novices. They included challenges with students, with teachers and staff, and with parents and community.

Relational Challenges with Students. Two of the novices in public schools pointed out the challenges faced regarding their relationship with students. Two issues were highlighted in this case: the difficulty for the novice of establishing his / her new status as a principal and the challenge of having students comply with strict discipline rules.

For example, NPub1 had been teaching for seven years at the same school before taking up the principal's role. In the transition from teacher to principal, he had to build a new and different relation with students from when he was a teacher. He had to find ways to make students view him as the principal and not the teacher anymore. He needed to impose his new status and consequently make them respect the stricter discipline rules he started implementing at the school.

Another novice, NPr3, explained how she struggled during her first year to impose strict discipline rules on students. She reported that, at first, students rebelled against the new discipline system and considered it very strict: she imposed the uniform and prohibited cell phones at the high school. However, she insisted on following the rules because, according to her, "this is how it was supposed to be." She justified the new rules by saying: "I am firm but not harsh and I know where I need to pull and where to loosen."

Relational Challenges with Teachers and Staff. In this category, two novices described two aspects of the challenge: dealing with previous colleagues as a principal and learning how to deal with different kinds of people encountered on the job.

NPub5, who was a teacher at the same school for several years, pointed out that one of the challenges he faced in his first year was to get his previous colleagues used to the idea that he was the principal now and not a teacher anymore and to impose his authority. He was very careful in his relationship with them to gain their love and trust as the school leader. He also mentioned that he paid special attention to one of the teachers who had applied with him for the principal position so he had to be very delicate in how he is relating to her to avoid any tension.

NPub5 and NPub3 experienced the challenge of dealing and understanding different kinds of people. As a principal, NPub3 said that she got to "deal with students, teachers, business men… this changes your way of looking at people there are things you thought didn't exist there are things that are different …your relationship with people becomes well thought out." NPub3 added that the challenge for him was to find a way to cope with people who occupy different positions at the school and who come from different educational and social backgrounds:

You can't deal in the same way with everybody. In the public sector the principal is

responsible for everything from the lamp to the bus driver to the teacher and you can't

treat people from different backgrounds in the same way.

Relational Challenges with Parents and Community. Two novices, NPub1 and

NPub2, explained what was challenging in their relationship with parents and the community.

In fact, both novices needed to prove to parents and the local community first that they were

capable of leading their schools, and second that they could maintain or even improve the

schools' reputation.

For example, NPub2 knew that the previous principal was very appreciated and loved

by parents and had strong relations with the mayor and the priest of the town. It was very

challenging for her, especially being a young woman, to convince parents she was capable of

taking the responsibility of a school with a large number of students: "This was very

stressful… to show yourself, impose yourself, make them like you and to convince."

When NPub1 became principal, the school's reputation had been dropping for the last

few years. NPub1 explained that, for political reasons, some members of the community were

convincing parents to register their kids in the other public school situated in the same region.

NPub1 reported that to encourage parents to choose the other school they were giving them

money to cover the registration fees of their children. NPub1 had the challenge to build

strong relations with influential people in the community so that this behavior stopped. In

addition, he had to gain the trust of parents and show them the growth of his school so that

they were confident enough to enroll their children in it.

Difficulty in Balancing Personal and Professional Life

Three novices admitted that when they became principals they started facing more

difficulty in balancing between their personal life and their work. Novices sensed that tasks

were not limited to school hours and sometimes they got invited to meetings, conferences, and social events that they had to attend.

NPub5 said that he had no more time for activities: he spent afternoons and sometimes weekends at school or accompanying teachers to workshops. Similarly, NPub1 had no more time to focus on a project he started when he was a teacher: publishing a poetry book. NPub1 explained:

Ever since I became principal, I haven't written any poem because when you think in an administrative way you're not the person who dreams anymore, who moves to another state of mind and comes back. I couldn't focus on writing a poem anymore so I stopped the book project for now. So this is one of the things I consider I lost or needs more time to come back to me.

NPub3 talked about the fear of failing to meet her family needs, since principalship was very demanding beyond school hours, and the fear of failing as a principal. She was a wife and a mother with responsibilities at home and at the same time she was a novice principal who was trying to impose herself as a successful leader in a new school. NPub3 reported what she was experiencing:

Principalship needs time, work never stops and you have responsibilities that you have to follow up on after school at home. Even at night you have to always be ready. It's difficult to be a principal and have kids. It's very difficult to balance between your family and your job. As a principal, working hours increase… your work doesn't end when school day ends. You have more social relationships and more social duties and at the same time you have your family. That's the challenge for me to be able to create this balance and not to fail in any of the two roles.

Challenges Faced by Novice Principals in Private Schools

Analysis of the responses of novices in private schools revealed that these principals faced four main challenges during their transition period: relational challenges; introducing change; experiencing feelings of stress, uncertainty, and fear of failure; and difficulty in balancing personal and professional life. In the subsequent paragraphs, those challenges will be detailed based on the examples given by novices.

Relational Challenges

All of the six interviewed novices faced relational challenges. Whether with students, teachers and staff, or parents and community, these challenges marked the transition period of those newly appointed principals and constituted for them one of the main problems to cope with.

Relational Challenges with Students. Three novices described the difficulties they encountered when dealing with students. Those challenges were mainly related to maintaining order, dealing with the problems specific to students living in difficult social conditions, and knowing how to approach students from a specific age group.

Because of her young age and the fact that she welcomed her students with a smile and rules that were not so strict the first couple of weeks of the school year, NPr2 admitted that she faced difficulties imposing order and gaining her students compliance with discipline rules across the classrooms in her middle school: "I wasn't expecting this age group to be that difficult to deal with." That was one of the main problems she had to overcome and she had to work hard on it with teachers to make students comply with stricter rules.

NPr4 had deeper preoccupations when it came to the behavioral problems that adolescents (13-14 year old students) at her school were displaying. According to NPr4, those problems were the "reflection of their social conditions: divorced parents, death of one or both parents, domestic violence…" She explained that students' disruptive behavior was their

way of "venting" the emotions they felt due to their social or personal conditions. Therefore, the challenge for her as a principal was how to solve those issues taking into account students' social and emotional backgrounds. For instance, she recounted how she took the initiative of staying after school with students who did not receive enough attention at home to help them with their homework and sometimes to listen to their problems.

NPr5 became a principal at a primary school after a teaching experience of eleven years with adolescents and high schoolers. He had to deal with an age group different from the one he was used to as a teacher. He described the effort he made to know how to deal with children who were that young:

> With my former students I used to make lots of jokes but now I stop and ask myself should I joke with this student or not? Maybe I will be misunderstood because he doesn't have the maturity to understand what I'm saying? They are not like the 17-18 year-old young men I used to teach, it's different.

The first couple of months, NPr5 wanted to impose discipline but he discovered that some of those young students were scared and started crying when he talked to them or looked at them in a severe way. Thus, he had to learn how to communicate with them and make them understand they did something wrong without causing them too much fear.

Relational Challenges with Teachers and Staff. In dealing with teachers and administrative staff, three novices faced certain difficulties. Challenges were described as tension, resistance and feelings of jealousy from colleagues in addition to having to deal with teachers with different personalities and academic backgrounds.

When he was first appointed, NPr3 had a specific view on how to deal with students: he wanted them to feel heard and understood and to be able to express their opinions. However, teachers at the school had a different perspective concerning the relationship with students: they did not have time to listen to students and their problems. Consequently,

whenever a student faced a problem with a teacher he went to NPr3 to talk to him about it. This created a tension between the novice and the teachers who felt like he was becoming close to students so that they complain to him about their teachers:

> With time this created a discrepancy or even tension between the teachers and I because they felt that every time a student had an objection on something and the teacher didn't have time for him he would ask the teacher if he can come see me…Teachers started to blame me that I was playing the 'good guy' and making them look as the 'bad guys.' But I didn't mean it that way…

> NPr3 also faced another problem with his assistant regarding the nature of the work to be done: she was more into paperwork and administrative tasks while he wanted to focus on the relational aspect especially with students: "We were not getting along at all at the beginning, every one of us used to focus on a different aspect…" NPr3 had to make the effort to make her build more relations with students instead of focusing on pure administrative tasks.

The challenge that NPr4 and NPr5 faced with teachers was to transition from being their colleague to becoming their leader. On the one hand, NPr4 had to work hard to develop her leadership skills, but on the other hand she had to deal with the jealousy and resistance of some of her previous colleagues. Similarly, NPr5 transitioned from math coordinator to principal, so one of the challenges he mentioned was dealing with teachers coming from different educational backgrounds and having different ways of thinking. As a coordinator, he used to work with math teachers who had a similar work methodology. As a principal, he had to try to cope with the differences among his team members and try to find the "key" to build a successful relation with every teacher.

Relational Challenges with Parents and Community. Four novices reported facing difficulties with parents and the local school community. The challenges were related to communicating with parents and adapting to people's mentality in a rural school community.

NPr1 and NPr5 stated how they were worried about facing parents' complaints. Their challenge was to "absorb" parents' reactions, stay calm, and know how to talk to them to solve the issue. Similarly, NPr3 expressed his "fear" from facing angry parents because he felt he would not know how to deal with them. NPr3 described himself as a calm person and a good listener but who lacked the courage to stand up for his ideas in an argument. Thus, NPr3 considered improving communication with parents as a personal challenge and something he had to work on to be more comfortable in his relationship with them.

NPr6 had a different kind of challenge. After working for thirty years in a school located in an urban area, the novice was appointed to run a school in a small village: "The rural environment is completely different from the environment I was living in." He was not used to people's social relations in a rural setting where "everyone knows everyone: relatives, friends…" This affected him as a principal because every time he took a decision about anything related to the school, the word spread fast, and members of the community started interfering with that decision:

> Here if you say 'bah' everybody knows… I used to take my decisions before and
> nobody knew about them except the concerned people. Here, if I say I want to change
> the screw of the wheel of the school bus all the villagers will come and give their
> opinion and interfere…so it was difficult.

Introducing Change

When asked about the challenges they faced when they were newly appointed as school principals, four novices raised the issue of introducing change. Each had a different priority regarding the aspects that needed change at the school but the common point was that

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they all admitted it was not as easy as they thought: change needed time and could not be done overnight and several obstacles delayed its implementation such as resistance from staff or lack of financial resources. The main areas where novices wanted to introduce change were: student-teacher relationship, instructional content and methodologies, and financial management. In the following subsections, each of these challenging areas will be presented. The last subsection will portray how novices acquired a more realistic view regarding implementing changes at the school.

Improving Student-Teacher Relationship. Three novices (NPr2, NPr3, and NPr5) targeted improving student-teacher relationships through shifting the teachers' perspective on how to deal with students. Their goal was to make teachers listen more to students, be more understanding of their problems, and help them overcome their difficulties instead of judging them as failures. For instance, NPr2 intended to change the way teachers dealt with students who had behavioral problems and learning difficulties. She did not want the teachers to simply "kick the students out of the classroom" or label them as "lazy" but instead to listen to them and communicate with them to find the reason behind their behavior. Similarly, NPr3 tried to convince teachers of the importance of listening to students, especially teenagers who needed to be heard and understood. However, it was not easy because teachers were not ready to change the way they were dealing with students. As NPr5 explained: "Those teachers have been doing it this way for years so they will not easily accept that a novice principal who has just been appointed at the school tells them how to deal with their students." Therefore, novices realized that this change needed time and had to be introduced slowly without having a clash with teachers.

Updating Instructional Content and Methodologies. Four of the novices planned on improving the quality of instruction by adjusting the weekly schedule to include more activities for students, making learning more student-centered and based on real-life

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situations and problem-solving, and equipping the school with the latest technologies. However, once again, novices encountered obstacles that slowed down progress in this area. For example, NPr5 had to work hard to convince subject coordinators who were used to traditional methods to shift to new methods in teaching and evaluating students.

Reforming Financial Management. One of the biggest challenges faced by one novice, NPr6, was the financial reform he had to do at the school to save it from the economic crisis it was going through. Some teachers wanted to leave because they were not getting paid and some parents wanted to move their kids to another school. NPr6 described this challenge as a "burden" and worked hard to try to ensure the feeling of "stability" for teachers, students and parents. He wanted to make sure teachers got their salaries at the end of each month and felt secure in their jobs. He also wanted to convince parents and students that the school was not going to close and the future of their kids is not uncertain so that they trust the school again and pay tuition fees. NPr6 described how he felt amidst all this: "I was under a lot of pressure and I was working really hard to get the school out of this situation." But despite the plan he had put ahead of time, things were not easy to change and he used to find himself at the end of the month not able to pay all the salaries or calling parents to ask them to pay the tuition fees. He described this as "the worst situation I've ever been in." In addition, NPr6 wanted to "make parents feel that those who are learning at this school are like any student learning in the city. It's not because we are in a rural area that they get less than the others so we need to have all the modern technology here." However, he was faced with the financial crisis at the school which made him realize his plan was going to take some time to be implemented.

Adopting a More Realistic View of Change. All of those four novices learned to accept that change needed time. NPr3 portrayed the difficulty of implementing change despite having planned and prepared for the challenges:

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I thought that, since I studied educational administration, I come with so many concepts, so many theories, so many ideas you think that now as soon as you step into the school you are going to do school reform. Then you discover with time that all those things need time, now my vision of things is more realistic.

NPr3 narrated how he had dreams and expectations when he was first assigned but with time when he discovered that several obstacles can be in the way of reform he became more realistic and learned to adapt his dreams and lower his expectations based on the limitations of the contextual realities.

Experiencing Feelings of Stress, Surprise, Uncertainty, and Fear of Failure

Four novices in private schools highlighted the issue of dealing with feelings of stress, uncertainty, and fear of failure that overwhelm the principal during the transition period. Novices pointed out the sense of huge responsibility coupled with stress along with feelings of uncertainty. These two categories will be described below.

Sense of a Huge Responsibility Coupled with Stress and Surprise. Three novices pointed at an overwhelming sense of responsibility as a challenge they faced. They tried to portray the huge responsibilities of a principal by giving examples of the tasks they have to accomplish on a regular basis. From small logistical details to "educating a generation", those novices described what they believe is expected from a principal.

NPr4 stated that, in this position, "you do not have time to experiment on students." She explained that a principal has to be aware that he is in charge of the education of a whole generation and he has to take this responsibility seriously by making sure the curriculum and the methodologies are implemented. NPr4 elaborated that no mistakes are allowed and this puts the novice under a lot of stress to do the right thing and make the right decisions.

NPr6 went into more details regarding his responsibilities as a k-12 school principal: "The principal needs to take care, I always say it, of the diapers in pre-school and take care of

the diploma of grade 12." He explained that the principal is in charge of the physical environment and maintenance issues:

> He has to take care of the garden, take care of the flowers, take care of the diesel, take care of the wheel of the school bus, take care of the driver, and take care of the playground, of the concierge, of the toilets, of cleaning.

After citing all those details, NPr6 added the two biggest responsibilities of a principal which according to him are educational and financial:

> He needs to take care of all this, and in addition to his educational responsibility of managing the school, he has to take care of the biggest burden which is the financial burden to ensure income from the tuition fees.

After citing all those examples, NPr6 emphasized that novices are constantly worried about juggling the educational and managerial responsibilities so that they do not fail in performing their role to the fullest.

From his side, NPr5 described how he followed up on every single matter related to students, such as discipline and instruction, from the moment they arrived to school to the moment they left. He was always with them and rarely went to his office:

> From the moment students arrive and stand in line in the morning I am present with them … I am on the floors inside classes much more than in my office. I came in the morning, opened the office, honestly I just came back once because I needed an info, and then I went out and now I just got in after students have left.

Two of the novices admitted that their view of principalship changed a lot when they became principals. They imagined that whenever they would take on this position, things would be very easy and all what they planned to do will be implemented smoothly. However, they were surprised by the difficulty of the tasks and how overwhelming and full of responsibilities this job was. According to these novices, hard work does not end when

someone becomes a principal; on the contrary hard work starts there. In addition, according to NPr6, a principal should not expect others to serve him but he must be ready to serve others and worry about providing the best for students and teachers: "So I learned that principalship is service and responsibility and worry it's not prestige." NPr6 highlighted this change of perception by clarifying that being appointed as a principal is not enough for the person to deserve this title but hard work and continuous learning will make him / her earn to be truly called a principal: "The title of principal doesn't solely make you a principal and maybe a person needs a lot to become a principal, he keeps learning always."

Feelings of Uncertainty and Fear of Failure. Three novices described their feelings when they first took on the principal position. They all felt they were stepping into something new and were uncertain how things will go. When talking about his first months at the school, NPr6 stated: "It was very difficult, the beginning is always difficult even if you have experience: change of environment, change of teachers, change of parents, change of students, and change of scenery. Whether the people or the place everything was new."

In this new experience, novices were uncertain of what was to come which affected their ability to take decisions. For example, NPr4 recounted her experience at the beginning of her first year as a principal: "I felt lost…even though I received training from the previous principal but when I was there all alone and needed to start imposing myself as a principal I didn't know where to start from." NPr4 added that she was not sure which challenge she should tackle first because she did not know what the students' and teachers' reactions will be. NPr5 shared similar feelings when he became principal. He was in doubt whether he will gain the staff's support and trust:

> Even if I am trained but I haven't done this job before, the work is new, the place is
> new…will the staff accept me or not, especially that I knew they respected and

appreciated the former principal and cooperated with him. So what should I do to give

them a good impression?

This uncertainty also triggered a fear of failure for NPr5. He explained that he was very

successful as a teacher and math coordinator so he was worried not to succeed as a principal:

It's not easy for a person to be successful in his position, in an environment he knows

very well and you put him in another position where almost everything is new. I

didn't want to feel for a certain moment that I failed. I didn't want to put myself in

this position.

Difficulty in Balancing Personal and Professional Life

Two novices described how principalship affected their personal life. Both NPr5 and

NPr6 reported that they had to sacrifice their family life to be able to take on this very

demanding position.

NPr5 pointed out how time consuming the principal position was for him: he stayed

late at work in the afternoons and had to do some tasks at home. Even during the month of

July when there was nobody at school, he used to come for several hours to finish the

required paperwork regarding the year that passed and to plan for the year to come. His wife

could not understand why he had to work so much in summer and not spend time with his

family. NPr5 admitted he dedicated more time for principalship at the expense of family

time: "There are lots of family matters; I don't want to say I sacrificed them, but I didn't give

them priority because of my work."

NPr6 had to make sacrifices to become the principal of a school in a rural area. He

had to leave his family in Beirut and live alone in the village away from his wife and kids:

If you ask me if it's easy no it's not, when I think that for example my daughter has

tomorrow an official exam and I'm sitting here and not by her side and I'm a teacher I

can help her in many things the idea bothers me.

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Similarly, NPr6 explained how he gave up a big part of his social and personal life to devote more time for the school: "I dedicated all my life to the school, honestly there are lots of things I canceled from my life because of it."

Challenges Faced by Novice Principals in Public and Private Schools

The challenges of the transition period reported by novices in both public and private schools are presented in Table 10 which also shows the frequency of each challenge. It can be noted that three out of the six challenges stated by novices were common to principals in both public and private schools: experiencing feelings of stress, surprise, uncertainty, and fear of failure; relational challenges; and difficulty in balancing personal and professional life. Two challenges were unique to public schools novices: seeking excellence and limited authority and financial resources. Lastly, the challenge of introducing change was exclusively cited by novices in private schools.

The most frequently mentioned challenges by novices were: experiencing feelings of stress, surprise, uncertainty, and fear of failure and the relational challenges. The challenge related to how novices experienced this transition on the emotional level was characterized by a sense of a huge responsibility coupled with surprise and stress as well as feelings of uncertainty and fear of failure. Nine out of the twelve interviewed novices recognized that they felt responsible for every detail related to the school which constituted a source of stress for those principals. Novices explained how, after they were appointed, their view of principalship shifted from a position of prestige to hard work, service, and responsibility. They indicated that they saw the school from a completely different angle than from when they were teachers and, to their surprise, discovered aspects of how the school functions they did not even know about. Furthermore, eight novices revealed that the transition period was characterized with unexpected events and professional insecurity since they were starting something new and did not know whether they will succeed or not and be accepted or not.

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These feelings of uncertainty were very stressful for novices. Ten out of the twelve novices were also very keen to build good relationships with students, staff members, parents and school community but they were confronted with difficulties which made the relational aspect of their job constitute one of the main challenges they had to deal with in their transition period.

Another challenge that novices in both sectors experienced was the difficulty in balancing personal and professional life. In fact, five of the novices admitted that becoming principals affected their personal life with less time for family and personal activities.

The second most cited challenge was "seeking excellence". It was exclusively pointed out by novices in public schools. All of the six principals in the public sector showed enthusiasm and strong desire to improve the reputation and image of their school in particular and public schools in general. Another challenge unique to public school novices was related to having limited authority and financial resources. Five out of the six novices in public schools pointed out the fact that there are some aspects where they have no power to make decisions especially when it comes to recruiting the teachers and supervisors they would like to have at their school. They added that they lacked the necessary financial resources.

Finally, the challenge of introducing change was mentioned by four novices in private schools. Novices were trying to implement changes immediately after they were assigned this role. However, they all pointed at their discovery that initiating change at this stage constituted a major challenge. They found the road to be hard for them and they faced several obstacles from resistance to financial difficulties.

Table 10

Comparative Table of the Challenges Faced by Novice Principals in the Public and Private Schools Included in the Study during the

Transition Period

Challenges of the Transition Period			
	Public Schools N=6	Private Schools N=6	Total Number of Respondents
Experiencing Feelings of Stress, Surprise, Uncertainty, and Fear of Failure	6	4	10
Sense of a Huge Responsibility Coupled with Stress and Surprise	6	3	9
Feelings of Uncertainty and Fear of Failure	5	3	8
Relational Challenges	4	6	10
With Parents and Community	2	4	6
With Students	2	3	5
With Teachers and Staff	2	3	5
Seeking Excellence	6	0	6
Difficulty in Balancing Personal and Professional Life	3	2	5
Limited Authority and Financial Resources	5	0	5
Introducing Change	0	4	4
Improving Student-Teacher Relationship	0	3	3
Updating Instructional Content and Methodologies	0	4	4
Reforming Financial Management	0	1	1
Adopting a More Realistic View of Change	0	4	4

Supportive Factors during the Transition Period

The transition period of novices can be affected by various factors. After discussing

the challenges and difficulties they faced during this early-career stage, novices were asked to

talk about the factors that, in their opinion, positively influenced their transition and

supported them during that phase. Both contextual and personal factors were listed by

novices whose responses will be presented in the following subsections.

Supportive Factors for Novice Principals in Public Schools

In public schools, all of the six novices cited contextual and personal factors that they

perceived as supportive during their transition into principalship. Contextual factors were

found to be linked to the novices' external environment whereas personal factors were mainly

related to the novices themselves: their career, their social status, and their state of mind. In

what follows, contextual factors will be elaborated first and then personal factors will be

described.

Contextual Factors

Novices in public schools mainly mentioned the availability of support as an

important contextual factor that facilitated their transition. Several sources of support were

cited: the school staff, the local school community, other principals, and the novice's family.

Support from the School Staff. This was the most cited contextual factor by novices.

In fact, five out of the six participants declared that the cooperation of the teaching and

administrative staff with the principal, or even between each other as members of the school

team, played an essential role in the success of the transition period.

NPub1 highlighted two ways in which the school staff had a positive influence on his

transition. First was the fact that he already had the staff on his side from the moment he was

appointed: "They accepted me, cooperated with me and were happy for me." He mentioned

that the reason the staff welcomed his appointment was that he was a candidate from the

school, who knew the "identity" of the school and not a stranger. Second, the team that surrounded NPub1 was professional: they had experience and knew what was required from them, thus they helped remove the burden of many administrative tasks from NPub1. For example, NPub1 explained how he did not worry about certain types of paper work because the staff already took charge of it: "I do not worry if the students' candidature documents arrive [for official exams, from the ministry], they [the staff] immediately start with them. Files and records…I don't worry about these things." He added that there are certain administrative tasks that he still did not know how to do because he counted on the team who had been taking care of this for years:

> There are things I don't even know about, can you believe it? If another principal calls to ask me about how to do a specific thing and he's so overwhelmed by it, I tell him I don't know I will ask for you. There are things till now in students' archive for instance that I know nothing about. Why? Because it's working the way it is, they [members of the administrative team] know their job so why should I tire myself in this aspect? I move to another aspect.

NPub2, 3, 5, and 6 also stressed the importance of having a supportive team. NPub2 specifically mentioned the supervisor who "stood by" her and was ready to help because "I can't do everything on my own." NPub3 also argued that the most important factor is "the team." She went on to detail the characteristics of her team that helped her succeed: "Compatibility between people, having same goals, their fear for the school's interest…These are the essential success factors."

Support from the School Community. Three of the interviewed novices talked about the support received from the parents and the municipality mainly in helping with material or financial needs of the school or even by just backing up the principal's decisions. NPub3 explained how quickly the local community in the rural area where her school was

located responded to the school's needs: "People started to come to us and ask us what we needed. This trust that we gained quickly and the response of the local community that was also very quick were very important." NPub4 shared how important it was to have the help of the municipality to get funds for his school that suffered from poor infrastructure and lack of material. NPub5 simply mentioned the moral support of the parents and municipality and how they "embraced" the school. This meant a lot to him and gave him a push in his work.

Support from Other Principals. NPub1 and NPub5 considered the support they got from other principals, whether current or former, as a factor that positively influenced their transition period. For NPub5, being able to consult another principal (novice or not) about how to do a certain task reduced the feeling of loneliness that a novice could experience at the beginning of his / her career. NPub1 had reached out to the previous principals and invited them to an event at the school to keep in touch with them and be able to consult them whenever needed:

> Having them by my side is richness for me and it strengthens me more…If I have any problem I call any of the previous principals to consult them and take their opinion about the issue. I have no problem with it; it's enriching to me.

Support from the Novice's Family. Only one female novice revealed that the support she received at home from her husband was important for her during the transition period. As a wife and mother, NPub3's family was a "priority" for her but she also wanted to succeed in her new position where, as she said: "You have to give all your time because laying the foundations is the basis." If it were not for her husband's support it would have been much more difficult for her: "Thank God my husband supported me a lot! If there is something I am not able to do [at home / with the kids] he covers for me and this is an essential thing: support at home."

Personal Factors

In public schools, all of the interviewed novices listed personal factors as part of the reasons that facilitated the transition period. These factors will be detailed below and they include: professional experience, psychological factor, being a mother, and being young.

Professional Experience. All of the six novices in public schools listed their past work experience whether in teaching, supervision, or social activities as an important factor that positively impacted their transition into principalship. These factors will be described in what follows.

Previous Experience with Administrative Work. Three novices (NPub3, 4, and 5) considered their previous experience in administration as being helpful in the early stages of principalship. NPub4 and NPub5 reported that while teaching they were also assigned administrative tasks which helped them become familiar with part of the principal's administrative role. However, it was NPub3 who really emphasized the importance of having been a general supervisor for five years before taking up principalship. She compared the supervisor's role in the Lebanese educational system to that of a "vice principal who follows up on all administrative issues." She noted that, even though the law does not require an experience as a supervisor to apply for principalship, her transition would have been more difficult if it took place directly from the classroom to the principal's office. She clarified her opinion: "The teacher is very far from administrative work in schools. It's necessary to pass by supervision so that he knows what the supervisor should do so that later on he can manage them correctly." She added:

> Without experience in supervision you enter [into principalship] weak and you have
>
> to see who can teach you and who to ask while on the contrary with administrative
>
> experience you enter and you are the reference so I think this period as supervisor is
>
> necessary.

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Background as a Teacher. Two of the female novices, NPub2 and NPub6, perceived their teaching background as a factor that facilitated their transition to principalship. They believed it was important for the relational aspect of the job in dealing with both teachers and students. Since they were teachers before, they could understand what teachers went through and what their needs were. In addition, their teaching experience taught them how to deal with students and understand their problems. NPub2 explained:

> If I came from a company I would have succeeded faster in the bureaucratic aspects, but for dealing with students you have to have an experience in teaching. This daily direct contact with students has a high impact on them.

Experience in Social Work with Different Age Groups. NPub1 was the only novice to mention his previous experience in social activities as a supportive factor for the relational aspect of principalship. According to him, being a principal requires dealing with people from different age groups, social and educational backgrounds, and personalities. Therefore, NPub1 underscored the added value of having an experience in a variety of social contexts:

> I've been dealing with public affairs for 25 years: church activities, took several courses (e.g. in human rights), done several spiritual retreats, worked with youth…All this becomes part of your personality and culture; all this carries you in an indirect way so that you don't "limp" when you sit on this chair.

Psychological Factor. Another personal factor that affected two of the interviewed novices was their strong determination. They both admitted that they were resolved to overcome difficulties. NPub1 was confident that he could solve the problems he knew existed at the school: "There is no problem to which there is no solution." NPub2 also explained the mindset in which she embarked into principalship and which helped her face the difficulties encountered in this stage of her career: "I have a principle in life, it's not arrogance, but I

always say that the one who was before me was not smarter and it won't be difficult for me to learn and do the same thing they did."

Being a Mother. Two of the female novices listed motherhood as a factor that positively influenced them in their early career as principals. NPub2 recounted how being a mother of three girls aged 22, 18, and 8 helped her stay up to date with how young people think nowadays and what their needs and problems are. This facilitated her relation with students as she was able to understand them better and become closer to them. Similarly, NPub3 explained how her responsibilities as a mother made her more organized and capable of paying attention to details and this reflected on her work.

Being Young. Both NPub1 and NPub2 considered their young age as a positive factor influencing their first steps as principals. Being the youngest principal in a secondary public school (34 years old) at the time he was appointed, NPub1 considered that a young principal can have an easier transition especially when it came to relations with students. He even went further into viewing young age as a requirement for principal's success: "Sixty plus principals don't work with today's generations." According to NPub1, the younger the principal the more "energy" he has and the more active he is and "students appreciate this." He has the ability to better "understand the student and at the same time not be lenient with him and the student accepts it" coming from that young principal. NPub1 added that a young principal can play the role of a "link" between older staff and students: "If you have a good relationship with older staff you can play an important role between them and the students."

Similarly, NPub2 underscored the importance of not being too old in order to be able to better understand students' problems and how they think. She explained that based on her experience with supervisors and teachers who were close to the retirement age she could tell they had difficulties dealing with students: "There was a conflict of generations; they couldn't understand them. Their style was to scream and lack lenience: this is what we want

this is what you should do." NPub2 insisted that students nowadays should be treated differently and mainly through dialogue: "You can't talk to them with superiority and loudly because they consider they know better: if you ask them a question about technology they feel more important than you." That is why, according to NPub2, a young principal can be closer to students and build better relations with them.

Supportive Factors for Novice Principals in Private Schools

Responses of the interviewed novices in private schools also fell under the categories of contextual and personal factors. Findings are presented in what follows.

Contextual Factors

Availability of support and familiarity with the context were the two main contextual factors mentioned by novices in private schools. These supportive factors will be detailed in what follows.

Availability of Support. All of the interviewed novices in private schools agreed that availability of different sources of support was a key factor for a successful transition phase: support from the staff, the school community, and former principals. These sources will be outlined below.

Support from the School Staff. Five out of the six interviewed novices in private schools pointed out the importance of the support they got from the teachers and the administrative team as well as the counseling department at the school. NPr2 admitted she was lucky to have an active administrative team with her because it lessened the amount of paper work she had to deal with: "There isn't much load in administrative work because I have a team to help." She added that teachers were "very cooperative" and they even gave her their opinion on dealing with several issues. Both NPr1 and NPr4 mentioned the counseling department that helped them in better understanding students' problems. Both of

the psychologist and the social worker also assisted in coming up with solutions to those problems.

Support from the School Community. Two novices pointed out the support provided to them by the school community, mainly the parents and the religious community owning the school. NPr1 was the only novice to talk about parents' support when asked about factors that facilitated her transition. She explained that parents were very cooperative and supportive of decisions taken by the administration especially when it had to do with discipline. This facilitated her work since they did not stand against her way of dealing with their kids. As for NPr6, he narrated how he received "full support" from the religious community of the school. NPr6 already had built over the years a strong personal relation with the members of this community and this had helped him occupy several leadership positions. When he became principal he described the transition as very difficult but what made it easy was the feeling of being backed up by the religious community which gave him more confidence and encouraged him to go on with his role.

Support from Other Principals. One of the novices indicated the role that the previous principal at the school played in helping him through the transition period. In fact, NPr6 admitted that he still considered the previous principal as "an assistant to whom I go when I need anything." NPr6 explained that she helped him when he had just been appointed by providing him with information about the teachers at the school since she had a long experience with them. She also went through all the important files with him and advised him on how to deal with main issues at the school. In addition, the previous principal gave him tips on how to deal with teachers and parents. Through the help of the former principal, NPr6 was able to better understand the context of the school and the difficulties it was going through. All the information she provided NPr6 with allowed him to have a clearer picture of what was waiting for him and to start drawing a plan to face the obstacles.

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Familiarity with Context. Two novices mentioned that what made their transition easier was the fact that they already knew the context in which they were going to be appointed. Novices were either familiar with the school context itself or with the local community.

Familiarity with the School Culture. Two novices, NPr3 and NPr6, underscored the importance of being familiar with the school culture. NPr3 said that having occupied several positions in teaching and administration at the same school before becoming the principal, he was "knowledgeable of how the school works" and had an idea of what was expected from him. This helped him avoid the confusion of not knowing exactly what to do during the transition period.

As an alumnus of the school he is now running, NPr6 had an idea of "the nature of the school" and knew many of the teachers. He used his connections to get some stories about the school's situation and this helped him a lot in developing a plan for the school.

Familiarity with the Local Community. In addition to being a former student at the school, NPr6 is also from the village where the school is located. He grew up there and knows the villagers who were "comfortable" with the idea of his appointment as a principal and even thought that he was the "right person" for this position. Therefore, the fact that he was not a "stranger" made the local community accept him easily.

Personal Factors

In private schools, four of the interviewed novices considered that personal factors played a role in facilitating the transition period. Participants reported that their professional experience, their educational background, and psychological factors had a positive impact on their transition into principalship.

Professional Experience. Three novices in private schools listed their experience in both educational (teaching / administration) and non-educational fields (social and religious) as an important factor positively influencing their transition.

Previous Experience with Administrative Work. Three of the interviewed novices viewed their experience with administrative work as an essential factor that gave them a different perspective of the school than if they only had a teaching experience. For instance, NPr3 explained how the fact that he occupied several positions in different departments in his school network gave him the opportunity to get a broader view of different aspects of the school, to know more about how administrative issues are dealt with, and to be more in contact with people in higher administrative positions and see how they work and think. In fact, NPr3 moved from working in the extracurricular activities department (awareness programs), to doing action research with curricular departments, and to the strategic planning department (vision / mission). He was later appointed as a secretary of the executive board where he got the chance to be with principals of all schools of the network and observe how they discussed projects for the schools. Then he became an assistant principal where he learned a lot about administrative tasks to finally become a principal. This journey had a positive effect and helped smooth out his transition to principalship.

Similarly, NPr5 highlighted the importance of occupying an administrative position before becoming principal. He justified it by the fact that "the teacher is only responsible for students whereas a coordinator has a team and learns to manage and lead this team."

The third novice, NPr6, admitted that if he had not moved from being a teacher then coordinator and later on head of division before taking up principalship he would have "failed." He clarified his point of view by saying: "From teacher to principal there is a missing link". He added that experiencing those different administrative roles made him

realize how much effort they need and what can be done in practice. Therefore, now he knows what to expect from teachers, coordinators and heads of division he works with:

> I wouldn't have been able to understand the coordinator's role if I didn't go through it. I couldn't have understood what it's like to teach and prepare if I hadn't taught for 17-18 years and the same goes to head of division role. All of these stages I went through made me realistic in what I ask from my staff. I won't be asking for something that can't be done. When I ask for something I will know if it can't be done or not and if it's done I know how much it costs in terms of the person's time and health and how tiring it is. So in other words, it made me more realistic and I deal with my staff accordingly.

Background as a Teacher. Both NPr3 and NPr5 mentioned the fact that they were teachers as a supportive factor because of the direct contact they had with students which helped them better understand their needs. In addition, NPr3 explained that his teaching experience helped him set certain goals for himself as a principal such as to focus on student leadership.

Experience with Youth Related Activities. One novice, NPr6, explained that his experience in social activities with "scouts" and religious activities with the youth in his parish gave him the ability to better understand students and feel their needs. These experiences also helped develop his personality and made him capable of building relations easily with people. He reported that this was very helpful for him in the transition period.

Educational Background. Three of the novices interviewed in private schools considered their degree in educational administration as a supportive factor during their early-career stage in principalship. For instance, NPr3 explained how his studies gave him a better understanding of what was happening around him at the school with the teachers and the students. What he learnt also helped him "shed light on the path to take to channel the

experience" he already has gained in order to apply the theoretical knowledge he acquired with regard to effective schools and the recommended organizational arrangements such as the professional learning community. He explained that these theories gave him an analytical lens to examine the school functioning through: "My master's degree helped me understand what I am observing, what I am experiencing at school. It helped put words on feelings, understand the problems that students are facing, and know where I want to take the school."

NPr6 also regarded what he learned from his degree as an added value to his long experience in the educational field: "Theories strengthened me intellectually and gave me broader horizons." He added that he benefited a lot from all the learned theories in practice especially the courses related to student cognitive and psychological development.

Psychological Factor. One of the novices in private schools mentioned the positive effect on his transition of two psychological factors: the sense of belonging to the school and the satisfaction from the positive impact on students. In fact, NPr5 recounted that his attachment to the school and the fulfillment he got when seeing students improvement are what influenced him positively in his transition and made the stress of this phase more bearable and even worth it. NPr5's feeling of being part of this school helped him handle the stressful situations: "If I didn't consider it as my school I would have left directly because of all the stress." The novice added that, when he saw how he impacted students even in a small way and made them more confident, he forgot all the fatigue and realized he made the right decision to accept the task of principalship.

Supportive Factors for Novice Principals in Public and Private Schools

Novices in both public and private schools listed several factors that positively influenced their transition period. All of the twelve novices cited contextual factors whereas ten novices mentioned personal factors. As shown in Table 11, some factors were common to novices in both sectors whereas others were specific to one of the two groups of participants.

Concerning contextual factors, availability of support was found to be essential for all of the twelve novices during the transition period. Principals in both school types cited support from school staff (teachers, administrators, counselors…), local community (parents, municipality, and religious community support pointed out by one novice in private schools), and other principals (acting or former principals). Family support was mentioned by only one novice in public schools.

Another factor that was only brought up by two of the private school novices was familiarity with the cultural context of the school: being a former teacher or student at the school or being from the region where the school is located facilitated relations with teachers and parents and helped in reducing some of the uncertainty that accompanies the transition period.

Regarding the personal factors, professional experience was considered by novices in both school types as a supportive factor: nine out of twelve principals mentioned their experiences in both educational and non-educational field. The second common personal factor cited by three novices was psychological: readiness and determination to overcome obstacles, sense of belonging to the school, and satisfaction from the positive impact on students were all cited by participants as helpful in easing the transition.

Motherhood and young age were brought up by novices in public schools whereas educational background was an important factor for three of the private school novices. In fact, novices felt that the theories they learned about while pursuing their degrees in educational administration gave them a better understanding of what they were experiencing at the workplace and guided them towards finding solutions to problems faced or to coming up with ways of implementing new concepts at their school.

Table 11

Comparative Table of the Supportive Factors Cited by Novice Principals in the Public and Private Schools Included in the Study

	Supportive Factors		
	Public Schools	Private Schools	Total Number of Respondents
	N=6	N=6	
Contextual Factors	6	6	12
Availability of Support from:	6	6	12
The School Staff	5	5	10
The Local School Community	3	2	5
Other Principals	2	1	3
The Novice's Family	1	0	1
Familiarity with Context: School Context and Local Community	0	2	2
Personal Factors	6	4	10
Professional Experience	6	3	9
Background as a Teacher	2	2	4
Previous Experience with Administrative Work	3	3	6
Experience in the Non-Educational Field	1	1	2
Educational Background	0	3	3
Psychological Factor	2	1	3
Being a Mother	2	0	2
Being Young	2	0	2

Measures Taken by Novices for an Effective Transition Period

After asking about the challenges faced by novices in public and private schools as well as the supportive factors, the researcher inquired about the measures they took to face the obstacles they encountered. Understanding what novices do to survive the transition period is important to identify ways that could help beginners succeed and move to the next stage of their careers. In the following subsections, responses of novices from public schools and then from private schools are presented. The last subsection compares the measures taken by novices in both school types.

Measures Taken by Novice Principals in Public Schools

Six measures were identified from the interviews with novices in public schools. These measures included: build relations; develop coping strategies; develop leadership skills, attitudes, and values; promote teamwork; learn the rules; and develop a vision. They will be elaborated in what follows.

Build Relations

All of the six interviewed novices in public schools cited building relations as a strategy they used to help them go through the transition period. In order to build relations, novices mainly depended on what they believe are effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills that a principal should learn and adopt. Novices stressed the importance of communicating with teachers and students. For instance, NPub2 stated: "You have to dialogue! Let's summarize it as dialogue this is what I did, whether with students or everyone else." In addition, three novices explained how they tried to improve their communication, not only with students, teachers, and administrators, but also with members of the school community, universities, and influencing personalities. Examples of how those novices worked on improving communication as a way of building relations that would be helpful during their transition are presented below.

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One of the novices, NPub1, stated that he adopted an open door policy to show that he was willing to listen to teachers and students or anyone who needed his help or advice:

Since I was appointed I wasn't able to sit alone. Now if you leave, there are three or four who want to see me and this is a healthy sign. I don't close my door in the face of anyone. It's a healthy sign; I feel that there is life. My door is open to everyone for help whatever he / she needs and I believe it's a good thing.

NPub6 said that he tried to be "creative" in communicating with people: as a principal he had to work with people from different backgrounds so he had to adapt the way he dealt with them to their academic and social level. According to NPub6, communicating is an "art" and if a principal masters it then it can make things easier for him / her especially at the early stages of his / her career.

NPub5 and NPub6 targeted the relationship between teachers and administrators by aiming at improving communication between team members. NPub6 tried to strengthen the relation and the communication between the staff members by creating a climate of cooperation and unity as a team. Similarly NPub5 tried to create a sense of "joy, fraternity, and cooperation" at the school.

Three novices explained how they worked on strengthening connections with entities outside the school such as municipalities, universities, and influencing people so that they increase the chance of getting donations, funding, and sponsorship for the school and the activities they wanted to organize. NPub1 stated: "The principal represents the school and should take care of external relations in case there are any services needed for the school."

Five novices gave general ideas on how they think good communication should be. Two of the novices, NPub4 and NPub6, used the strategy of more listening, less talking. Similarly, NPub3 said that, to start with, she treated people well and even if they came to complain she would listen to them. NPub5 stated that he paid attention to every word he said.

Moreover, three novices (NPub2, NPub5, and NPub6) underscored the importance of being diplomatic. NPub2 clarified what she meant: "It's very easy to get into a dispute with someone, shout, swear, and insult people…but the more difficult is to know how to manage things which means to solve problems in a diplomatic way so that everyone is satisfied."

Develop Coping Strategies

Regularly faced with the unexpected, and feeling overwhelmed with the role demands, novices had to develop their own coping strategies in order to survive. These strategies can be divided into two categories: self-learning and developing self-discipline.

Self-Learning. Four out of the six novices pointed out that they relied a lot on self-learning especially during the first year. The main methods they used were reading, asking questions, and seeking information by referring to school archive. Self-learning content included laws related to public schools, routine practical and managerial skills, and leadership in general.

Reading was a method cited by the four novices as a way of learning. Whether they wanted to know more about their duties, their rights, and their teachers and supervisors' rights, those novices went back and read the laws that govern these subjects. In addition, NPub6 read articles that would help her as a leader in different aspects of her role. She gave the example of meeting with parents and how she used to read articles on how to deal with them and what verbal and nonverbal communication skills she should apply in this type of meetings. NPub6 described how hard she worked during her transition: "The first phase was difficult. I had to work a lot on myself: I studied the laws and the internal regulations; I had to learn the formalities of routine managerial tasks…. I helped myself by reading articles."

Three novices stated that whenever they were unsure of how something should be done they used to ask questions. NPub1 stated: "In the domains I knew nothing about I used to ask and know who to ask and what to ask for." NPub5 reported that he would call the

ministry to get clarifications about certain tasks or even consult with other principals. Moreover, NPub6 said: "I asked lots of questions to the inspectors, the regional administrators, my team…and I wasn't ashamed of it." Novices mainly used this strategy to learn about routine managerial tasks: how to write letters and reports for the ministry, what formal documents are needed in a specific situation, how to handle financial issues… As NPub2 mentioned, these tasks were learned on a daily basis.

Finally, two of the novices indicated that, whenever it was necessary, they would refer back to the school archive. This method was also used when it came to paperwork to know for example how filing certain documents should be done.

Develop Self-Discipline. Under this category, all of the six public schools novices reported qualities and behaviors through which they coped with arising problems or conflicts and stressful situations. Being patient was the most cited, with four novices saying it was a much-needed quality that they tried to develop in order to successfully deal with the stress of the transition period and the problems faced at school. Being calm was mentioned by two novices. NPub1 explained that he tried to solve problems in a calm way without raising his voice. NPub2 added that she remained calm with a smile on her face especially when the person in front of her was angry so that the situation did not escalate:

> This year I learned how much to contain and understand people. I have lots of people who come in angry, tired, upset... I smile, always have a smile on your face because this person who enters your office has lots of worries. If he sees you smiling it will calm him down. This helped me a lot to look in a different way at problems and not to confront the person and have an argument with him to reach a solution.

NPub3 also highlighted the importance of being patient and calm: "He [the novice] should be extremely patient. He should be able to cope with stressful situations and be always in control of his nerves. He can't lose it because he can't take the right decision anymore."

Two novices, NPub5 and NPub6, also gave some examples of how they tried to stay in control in difficult situations. NPub5 explained that he tried not to be hasty and to think well before acting. NPub6 emphasized the importance of being very smart and not being easily influenced by anything or anyone. She added that she started to know how to weigh things: not to give things more than they deserve and not to underestimate problems. Both novices agreed on the fact that the principal should "absorb" shocks and conflicts which are inevitable when you are in a position of responsibility and try to solve problems with caution.

Develop Leadership Skills, Attitudes and Values

All of the six interviewed novices cited leadership skills, attitudes, and values that they tried to develop and use as part of their strategy to have a smooth transition. Examples of these three categories drawn from novices' interview data will be presented below.

Learn Leadership Skills. Four of the novices mentioned certain skills that they believed were helpful for them as principals. First, NPub3 and NPub5 talked about the ability to motivate the staff by being cooperative and understanding and by treating them well. In addition, NPub4 said the capacity to be flexible is important for a novice to succeed in his / her relations with teachers and students. Finally, NPub1 mentioned a skill that he believes is essential for a novice in public schools: adapting to the system in order to survive the first years on the job.

Adopt Specific Leadership Attitudes. Two novices pointed out specific attitudes that they adopted and perceived as important for newly appointed principals. These attitudes included: being proactive; always remembering they were once teachers; being committed; and acting as role models.

NPub1 advised novices to be proactive: whenever they take on the role they should be ready for work and start to make things happen at the school. He also added:

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It [principalship] needs energy and to be active. If he's not, he'd better not become

principal. Principalship is not a reward for the work you did! You don't come here to

relax! It's the start of a work journey and you will have to be ready for hard work.

NPub2 indicated that, in her relationship with teachers, she tried to always remember

she was once a teacher. By reminding herself constantly of her teaching experience she was

able to be more understanding with teachers and more in touch of their needs.

Moreover, NPub2 emphasized commitment. She indicated that a principal should be

passionate about what he/she does and love the school so that he/she does not quit in front of

the first obstacle but instead is willing to overcome it.

The third point tackled by NPub2 was that, as a principal and educator in general, she

saw herself as a role model and she believed novices should have this attitude: pay attention

to what they say and how they act because they are role models for their colleagues and for

future generations. NPub2 clarified her idea by saying:

We are educators; we are role models. If we behave in a wrong way, people will say

'If a principal is acting like this?' We are building those generations; we are the

image. Go to the classroom and see how students are staring at their teachers and how

much they are influenced by them. I'm until now influenced by several teachers and

principals from my school.

Adhere to Certain Leadership Values. Four novices named three values they tried

to adhere to in order to effectively lead their schools: being democratic, fair, and humble.

Three of the novices advised that the principal does not take decisions alone but instead be

open to different points of view and if possible let the team participate in the decision-making

process. Those three novices also said they worked on being fair as much as they can with

their staff and students. NPub6 stated: "You have to put yourself in the shoes of the person

who is in trouble and not be judgmental because you're in a higher position…you have to be

fair." Finally, NPub1 indicated that being humble is very important. He clarified by reporting

how he tried to always recognize the achievements of previous principals and to remind

himself that he does not own the school: "You are going to leave one day, this place is not

yours forever." Novices have to remember that just because they are in charge it does not

mean they are superior to others and have the right to act as they wish: they are here to

continue the work of their predecessors without arrogance and to be there for their team.

Promote Teamwork

Four novices advanced that promoting teamwork is a strategy to reduce the amount of

tasks they had to do themselves and therefore feel less stressed and overwhelmed with the

role demands. NPub3 expressed this idea clearly:

> I'm against the principal that says I do everything. You supervise everything; you
>
> manage everything; you put the guidelines but if you want to do everything you will
>
> fail in some aspects of course. There is a lot of work, so you can't do it all by
>
> yourself.

Those novices delegated some responsibilities to individuals or committees, but, of course,

kept supervising the work and making sure it was done as it should. NPub3 described how it

was done at her school:

> You have to divide the charges and specify to each one what his responsibilities are.
>
> Your role is to supervise and follow up on everything to be sure of the results. You
>
> draw the outline, you give someone the responsibility, and you hold him accountable
>
> later on.

Some novices adopted this strategy since they were appointed while others waited for a while

or even for the second year to get to know their staff and assign tasks accordingly, as NPub1

stated:

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I sacrificed and did everything during my first year but in my second year I created committees for several tasks. For example, we did a school magazine last year. I worked a lot for it; this year a committee took it in charge and I supervised.

In addition to delegating tasks to teachers and administrators, two of the novices included them in the decision-making process. In fact, NPub6 and NPub4 reported that they do not make all decisions on their own but work on involving the team in the process. NPub4 specifically mentioned the financial aspect where a committee is in charge and all decisions are made after committee members have discussed and approved them.

Learn the Rules

Four novices mentioned that one of the strategies they adopted during their transition period was to become familiar with the rules and regulations of public schools and abide by them. In fact, NPub6 even said that she spent the first weeks as a principal studying these laws. NPub5 stated that, in addition to getting a good grasp of the internal regulations of public schools, he also made sure to have a look at the writing formalities required in order to communicate with the ministry of education.

Novices insisted on the importance of knowing the rules for two reasons: be able to work their way through the system and avoid facing any trouble with the ministry and the inspectors. Actually, NPub1 expressed the first reason very clearly: "He [the novice] has to have a strong idea about the system and know how to face it in a smart way."

Regarding the second reason, NPub4 and NPub6 explained that by abiding by the laws they prevented sanctions and were ready whenever inspectors showed up at the school. Moreover, NPub4 and NPub6 mentioned they were very cautious with legal issues: NPub6 did not give answers to any question if she was not sure whether it falls within what the rules and regulations mandate while NPub4 consulted with officials and applied for approval for every legal matter before making any decision.

Develop a Vision

Three novices highlighted the importance of having a vision for the school, sharing it with the team, and working so that the school community becomes united around that vision. NPub1 explained that the novice should have new ideas and the will to change and translate them into a new vision of the school: "He should also have a vision and something to add and not be just another principal. He has to come and turn some things around, create something new." He added that this vision should be "constructive" and that the novice should think of building instead of criticizing or blaming the staff for not having done anything before to improve the school: "Build and cultivate as much as you can. This is what I adopt today…we have to plant good seeds and to be positive." Furthermore, NPub3 insisted that, in her case, not only did she have a "clear" vision but also she tried to unite her team around the same vision and goals:

> The team and I converged to the same goal: we are establishing a high school and we want the school to be noticed. In two years we accomplished things that took much longer time in other schools. We are all united for one goal: to launch this school in a powerful way.

Measures Taken by Novice Principals in Private Schools

Six measures for an effective transition emerged from the responses of novices in private schools. These measures included: develop coping strategies; build relations; diagnose the school culture; develop leadership skills, attitudes, and values; promote teamwork; and develop a vision. They will be elaborated in what follows.

Develop Coping Strategies

During the transition period, novices in private schools were faced with several challenges which could sometimes arise by surprise. Consequently, all of these novices stated that they developed some strategies to help them cope with the challenges of the early stages

of their career as principals. These strategies are presented below in four categories: self-learning, planning, developing self-discipline, and reflecting.

Self-Learning. Five novices underscored the importance of being a self-learner, as NPr4 clearly stated: "I believe in continuous self-learning, and this position [principalship] requires continuous self-learning." The main methods used for self-learning were readings, discussions with specialists, and attending conferences. Self-learning content included leadership, communication skills, instructional methods, curriculum, child psychology, and general knowledge.

Three novices cited reading as a method they used to learn about different topics important for them during the transition period. NPr4 narrated how, as soon as she was appointed as a principal, she scheduled time for reading and she changed the type of content she read about to focus on leadership and instruction:

> I had to work on myself a lot surely and I had to have different types of readings. For example, when I used to read something for me, I tended to choose books related to religious or social topics or novels. Now it all changed into leadership, all about leading a team: how to be a successful leader, how to stand out, how to develop my skills, how to communicate with others and with the whole team. I had to read a lot. Plus I had to go back and read the things a teacher needs in class to manage a classroom so that I give feedback correctly to teachers.

Furthermore, NPr4 explained that, as a principal, she should be ready for any discussion that would come up or any question she would be asked, so she had to stay updated with recent studies and what was happening around the world. Consequently, in addition to the readings related to leadership and education, she read the news every day and articles from various domains. NPr5 also used reading as a self-learning strategy: he read books and articles related to child psychology to better understand the age group he was going to deal with. NPr2 stated

that whenever she encountered behavioral problems with her students she would go back and review her university courses and do some research on articles related to the problem so that she knows how to act. She claimed that this was her way of improving herself.

Two novices, NPub1 and NPub3, recounted how they referred to specialists whenever they encountered a problem with a student and they did not know how to solve it or they needed more information to know how to deal with it. These novices usually asked the school psychologist for help: they would have a meeting with the psychologist to discuss the issue and come up with solutions. For instance, NPr3 wanted to be able to give his students proper advice if they came to him to tell him about a problem they are facing. At the start of the year, he felt incapable of doing this, but, after several discussions with the school counselor, he learned a lot about adolescents and started to be more confident and felt ready to help them.

One novice mentioned attending conferences as a way of learning. In fact, NPr3 tried, as much as his time allowed, participating in conferences or training sessions organized by universities about topics related to education in general and students in particular. One conference that marked him was about child protection where he learned how to detect if any of his students were experiencing abuse or violence at home and what he can do to help.

Planning. Five novices revealed that one strategy they used to cope with the amount of tasks they have and be more effective was planning. However, the types of planning that novices mentioned were not all the same. For instance, on one hand, NPr1 and NPr4 planned their day or their week by scheduling the tasks they were supposed to do: class visits, writing reports, administrative tasks… On the other hand, three novices put a yearly plan with the objectives that needed to be achieved at the school. NPr3, NPr5, and NPr6 explained how, after identifying for the first months what the school needs are, they developed an action plan of what goals needed to be targeted and how. NPr5 stated: "This way you know exactly what

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you want and where you are going." NPr3 added that he also developed a plan of action for himself on things he wanted to improve on the personal level such as communication with teachers.

Developing Self-Discipline. Five novices gave examples of how they handled stress, pressure, and problems by developing self-discipline. In fact, three of the novices stated that being patient was very important. NPr2 added that being calm and organized, avoiding anger, and staying in control whatever the situation is, were essential for novices. This allowed them to think clearly before they talked and to make sound decisions. NPr4 explained how she controlled the way she communicated with people:

I concentrate on what I want to say to people then, I determine the purpose of the conversation in my head, and plan for what I'm going to say. I don't let words come out from my mouth randomly. I became stronger facing challenges and solving problems.

NPr4 pointed out the importance of being mentally ready and not letting personal problems interfere with work in order to face challenges:

You have to work on yourself and be psychologically relaxed. Leave your problems at home so that you can come here and face someone who gets a nervous breakdown in front of you, someone who is tired, someone screaming, and someone moody… How will you manage them if you are not mentally ready and in control?

Reflecting. Two novices reported using reflection as way to help in solving problems and to learn from mistakes in order to improve. NPr3 recounted that, during his first months as a novice, he used to reflect on what he observed at the school based on his experience and tried to find solutions. He added: "If a person wants to progress, reflection is essential. I feel it helps me see my mistakes and in what domains I need to evolve. It is important for every

novice in any domain." NPr4 also resorted to a daily written reflection after school as a strategy to better understand the challenges she faced.

Build Relations

For novices in private schools, one of the challenges faced was the uncertainty of being accepted by the school staff, and consequently the fear of failure as a school leader. To overcome this challenge, all of the six interviewed novices mentioned focusing on the relational aspect of their position. By building relations and improving communication with teachers, students, and parents, novices tried to gain acceptance and show the school community that they are competent leaders. For instance, NPr3 stated that he focused on building relationships and that he believed this was critical for every novice. Similarly, NPr1 prioritized the human aspect of her role as a principal over the administrative aspect: "You have to be present for parents, students, and teachers. You are here for them, not for paperwork."

Novices gave examples of what they believe are good communication skills for a principal. NPr5 highlighted the importance of good communication skills for novices to succeed and be able to achieve their goals: "No matter how competent I am, if I don't have good communication skills I won't be able to transmit my idea correctly and the other person will not accept me and things could go wrong." NPr1 believes that the principal's office should always be open for students, teachers, and parents whereas NPr2 said it is important to smile: "A smile can get you the result you want and break the ice." In addition, NPr3 revealed that he learned to become more diplomatic and NPr5 described how he tried to adapt his way of communicating to the person he was talking to. He explained that the same message sometimes cannot be delivered in the same way to two persons with different characters, mentalities, or backgrounds. That is why he tried to discover the "key" to deal with each of his staff members. Three novices also emphasized the importance of being a

good listener. In fact, NPr1, NPr3, and NPr5 underscored the importance of listening to students, parents, and teachers. NPr5 stated: "I consider myself a good listener and this helped me a lot especially in the first year."

Two novices narrated how they built trust with their teachers. NPr5 explained the strategy he adopted: "First I should have a meeting to break the ice and build trust with those teachers." NPr5 wanted teachers to feel that he was there for them and not to watch them and make them lose their job. Throughout his meetings with teachers he would try to make them understand that he was here so that they succeed, because their success leads to his success: "At the end of the day, when teachers fail, the principal fails. So I have to make them understand I am here for them and what I do as class visits and feedback are to help them improve." The second novice, NPr4, recounted that whenever she felt there was a resistant staff member she would communicate with him / her to solve the problem: "I learned to go and sit with them individually and discuss our goals and clarify to them what is my goal…I am not here to throw theories at them; I am here to support them."

Three of the novices emphasized the importance of having a good relationship with students. For instance, NPr1 wanted "to leave a mark" in the minds of students and that her relationship with them "doesn't pass unnoticed" and be "human" and maybe last till after they graduate. From his side, NPr6 insisted on building a strong connection with students by communicating with them and through this communication make them feel loved: "Whenever a student feels loved he / she can overcome many difficulties." As for NPr4, she described how she built a strong relation with students by talking to them, listening to their problems, and being with them during breaks or trips outside the school. She gained their trust and built a relation of love and respect so that now they simply knock on her door if they need to talk.

Building a good relationship with parents was also a strategy adopted by three novices. NPr1 and NPr2 highlighted the importance of listening to parents especially when they need to talk about their kids' problems. NPr3 described how he pictured his relationship with parents to be: "I want a healthy communication with lots of understanding from my side and involvement and honesty." NPr3 worked on attaining that objective and noticed that his relationship with parents started improving: "With time I started feeling that when parents call the school they feel there is someone to listen to them and someone to tell them what their child is going through."

Diagnose the School Culture

Five novices adopted the strategy of taking time the first few months, and sometimes all of the first year, to focus on observing and inquiring about the school culture and context: who are the key teachers or staff members, how things are done at the school, how was the relationship with the previous principal, and how the school community reacts. In fact, NPr1, NPr3, and NPr4 emphasized the importance of this observation period so that whatever change or reform they wanted to apply they could adapt it to the culture and context of the school and expect the obstacles they might face in the process. NPr3 described how he waited till December to write his plan and set the goals he wanted to achieve at the school:

> Around Christmas, I had thought and reflected about what I observed in the past few months and I started to know more the context of the school and on that basis I started to work. This observation period is critical. You cannot come with a pre-set plan that you want to implement. You need to take some time to contextualize your plan.

Novices mainly depended on observation as a way to understand the context and get to know the teachers and students: how the teaching and learning process was taking place and what needed to be improved or changed. For instance, NPr5 described how he acted with caution in the first couple of months: "It was all, if you want, about gathering information but

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trying as much as I can not to give feedback. I was very cautious and just observing and collecting data." The novice explained that he spent most of his time conducting classroom observations:

> Now in the first period, honestly, it was 24/24 inside the classroom. I wanted to see if what I read, those educational plans and this background I took about students of this age group, the things I read about theoretically, I wanted to see practically how it is.

NPr5 added that what he focused on during these class visits was to get a grasp of teachers' needs and students' behavior to be able to come up with contextualized action plans to improve the process of teaching and learning. He had already done research but he did not want to base his decisions on theory without taking into account the reality of the school context:

> So I used to go to class and tell the teacher to act as if I wasn't here and to act spontaneously and I started writing and writing and writing to collect data. I observed students: any move they made, anything that happened… I took notes and gathered data to see if there was something common with what I read or not. Second, I observed the teachers' reaction to see what the key is to deal with this teacher, what I should work on with this teacher…

NPr5 also attended meetings of teachers with their subject coordinators. He explained that he used to sit with them silently and just take notes. According to NPr5, this helped him a lot in avoiding conflict with teachers because it allowed him to discover how each one of them thinks.

Other than observation, novices also resorted to inquiry by asking about the school. NPr5 asked the previous principal especially about the team and the key teachers that could help him during the first year. He also asked about the important celebrations that took place at the school: who organized them, how they were organized, what he should pay attention

for in these events. Another novice, NPr6, reached out to the former principal and to some teachers at the school that he knew from before to get an idea about the context especially that the school is set in a rural area where the mentality is very different for a novice who has been working for years in an urban school.

Develop Leadership Skills, Attitudes, and Values

Five of the novices interviewed in private schools cited skills, attitudes, and values that are helpful for a newly appointed school leader during the transition period and that they tried to adopt themselves. The responses of the novices are presented in the following paragraphs.

Learn Leadership Skills. Four novices cited skills that a principal should acquire to face the challenges of the transition period. Four skills were mentioned: ability to motivate staff, creativity, problem-solving, and ability to adapt leadership style to circumstances.

By trying to create a climate suitable for teachers to work and succeed, NPr3 aimed at motivating teachers and providing the necessary conditions for them to give their best. He considered that the more he was able to motivate teachers, the quicker he would gain their trust and thus, they would be more willing to cooperate to achieve the goals of the school.

Another skill mentioned by NPr1 was creativity: she believes that a novice should have the ability to innovate and come up with new ideas instead of just being there to make sure rules are respected. NPr1 stated: "You can't be like a computer that simply applies instructions or like a police who focuses on rules, you have to be creative." Similarly, NPr4 explained how important it is that the novice gives new ideas that can be applied in practice.

Both NPr1 and NPr4 emphasized that the novice should have the capacity to solve problems. NPr1 mentioned that the novice has to acquire the capacity to find solutions that can be at the same time for the interest of students, teachers, and parents and not favor one

group at the expense of the other. NPr4 added that the novice has to be capable of suggesting ideas to help someone facing a problem.

The last skill was mentioned by NPr6: the ability of a principal to adapt his / her leadership style to the circumstances. He explained how he used the different styles (authoritarian, participative…) he learned about in his master's degree according to the situation he was facing:

> When I feel that someone is going in the wrong direction and I'm trying to give him advice or I'm trying to give my opinion but he's not listening and I can tell he will fail or do something wrong, of course I will be authoritarian.

Adopt Specific Leadership Attitudes. Five novices reported that a principal should have specific attitudes that could help him / her avoid mistakes during the transition period: be a role model, be there for the team, be committed, be firm and tender, and be open.

NPr4 and NPr5 stated that a principal should act as role model. NPr5 explained that he considered himself in a leadership position, so any mistake that he might make could have serious consequences. Therefore, viewing himself as a role model made him think twice before acting or saying anything. NPr4 said that thinking of herself as a role model motivated her to keep reading and learning and improving to become very knowledgeable and ready for any discussion with students, teachers, and parents. She mentioned that she kept working on herself to show she deserved to be in this position.

NPr1 and NPr5 made it clear that one of their priorities was to show their team and their students that they were there for them. NPr1 stated: "Your role is to be close to those young boys and girls." She added that she prioritized the human aspect of her role over any other aspect. On his side, NPr5 made his best so that the teachers did not feel he was far from them: "As a leader, I can't make them [teachers] feel that I'm theorizing. They have to see me with them on the ground." NPr5 made the effort to be present as much as possible in

classrooms and during meetings. He recounted that, even during parent-teacher meetings, he used to walk around and see if there was any need to interfere and support teachers especially when parents have undesirable reactions: "I try to absorb these reactions." He added that teachers needed to feel that he knew what their problems were and he was working hard to find solutions.

Three novices underscored the importance of being committed to their role: to love what they do and believe in it. NPr1 focused on the idea that a main aspect of a principal's work involved dealing with people: "If you don't love them you can't succeed." NPr3 reported that what made him stand in front of challenges was how much he loved working with students on projects and having discussions with them. He revealed that he feels passionate about this aspect of his job, and that was what kept him going: "I come to school for those things." Similarly, NPr6 said that to survive the stress of principalship novices have to strongly believe in what they are doing and in their mission as principals.

Two other attitudes were mentioned by NPr6 and NPr1. Being firm and tender at the same is what NPr6 cited as an attitude that he adopted with students mainly: "You have to be tender like a mother and firm like a father." NPr6 clarified what he meant by explaining that he had to be firm to impose discipline rules, but at the same time students had to feel that he loved and supported them. NPr1 noted that the novice should have the attitude of openness especially when listening to students' problems. She explained that if a student came to her and told her that he was addicted to drugs she had to try to help him instead of blaming him.

Adhere to Certain Leadership Values. Three values were cited by novices: being humble, being true to yourself and your beliefs, and being respectful.

NPr6 said that one of the most important values he adhered to as a principal is humbleness. He believes leadership is "service" and "sharing": serving different age groups and sharing the same goals and responsibilities. He advised novices not to take principalship

as prestige and think they are superior to others because they will fail. He explained how he is always in casual clothes at school so that he can be around students and teachers and make them feel he is with them and sensing their daily challenges.

The second value that NPr5 and NPr6 pointed out was that novices needed to be true to themselves: stick to their beliefs and act accordingly. NPr5 explained that this did not prevent him from being flexible, on the contrary, he is open for discussions, but there are certain principles that he cannot let go of. NPr6 added that novices should not let the position make them forget about their values and beliefs.

Finally, the last value mentioned by NPr3 was being respectful. NPr3 mentioned that it was essential for him to establish respect between everyone at the school: teachers, students, and administrators. He believes it is a key value for having healthy relationships and communication between all members of the school community.

Promote Teamwork

Four novices worked on encouraging team work at their schools. The two main reasons behind this strategy were to empower teachers by participating in decision-making and to delegate some of the responsibilities so that the novice does not feel overwhelmed by all the tasks. For example, NPr3 created committees where a group of teachers took on the responsibility of a certain task. This way, he involved teachers in making decisions about certain aspects of the teaching and learning process. Another novice, NPr4 emphasized the importance of teamwork: "Without teamwork you [the principal] can't succeed, work doesn't get done. You can't do it on your own; it's a big school." She explained the role teamwork played in developing the staff's leadership skills: "Without team work you can't develop the abilities of your team. A team needs to grow, acquire new skills, get promoted…" NPr4 also explained that she tried not to take decisions on her own and always take the opinion of the staff especially if there was something new to implement at the school: teachers need to have

a say in the change that will take place. Similarly, NPr5 related how he shared making decisions with teachers and if he found new ideas that convinced him, he would adopt them. Finally, NPr6 stated:

> 75% of my decisions are taken through participative decision-making. I ask before I decide, even if I'm convinced and I know what I want to do. I ask and I welcome new ideas and this allows me to make sound decisions.

NPr6 reported that this method made teachers more comfortable because they were involved in what was happening at the school. He also organized teachers into committees and assigned a role to each one of them.

Develop a Vision

Three novices indicated that one of the strategies they adopted when they were first appointed as principals was to develop a vision in order to set goals and plan accordingly. For example, NPr6 narrated how he elaborated a strategic plan with objectives for each aspect of the school to guide his work and the main reforms he wanted to implement:

> I put a plan; I put a strategic plan on the short term, on the medium term, and on the long term, and I put my vision: how I want to see the school in 2030 whether I am the principal then or someone else. So I put this long term vision and now I am trying to accomplish it bit by bit. I have a specific plan for the school on the academic level, on the sports level, and on the cultural level…I divided my work to cover almost all aspects.

In addition to developing a vision for his school, NPr3 also tried to communicate this vision to teachers by talking about it and disseminating his ideas during almost all meetings with teachers and even in the emails he used to send teachers.

Measures Taken by Novice Principals in Public and Private Schools

The interviewed novice principals took several measures to make the transition period less challenging and more effective. These measures are presented in Table 12. The frequency of each measure is also shown.

Five out of the seven measures stated by novices were common to principals in both public and private schools. The measures that were mentioned by all of the twelve novices were: build relations and develop coping strategies. In fact, all of the participants made it their priority to focus on the relational aspect of their role. They tried to gain acceptance by building strong and healthy relations with students, teachers, and parents through practicing what they believe are effective communication skills. In addition, all of the interviewed novices worked on developing coping strategies to deal with the overwhelming demands of principalship: developing self-discipline as well as acquiring the skill of self-learning were methods used by novice in both sectors, whereas planning and reflecting were only cited by novices in private schools.

Next was a measure pointed out by eleven out of the twelve participants: develop leadership skills, attitudes, and values. As a matter of fact, novices worked on acquiring skills that would help them succeed as school leaders: the ability to motivate staff was mentioned by principals in both school types; flexibility and adapting to the system were indicated by novices in public schools, whereas creativity, problem-solving, and adapting leadership style to circumstances were tackled by novices in private schools. In addition, specific attitudes were mentioned by novices: being committed and acting as a role model were common attitudes found in responses of novices of both school types; being proactive and always remembering you were once a teacher were considered important for public school novices, whereas their counterparts in private schools emphasized being there for the team, being firm and tender, and being open. Leadership values that novices viewed as essential for an

educational leader were: humbleness mentioned by principals in both school types, being democratic and fair cited by novices in public schools, and being respectful and true to yourself and your beliefs underscored by novices in private schools.

The other two common measures were: promoting teamwork and developing a vision. Eight out of the twelve interviewed novices believed in delegating responsibilities to committees of teachers and empowering them by taking part in the decision-making process. Half of the novices mentioned developing a vision as an important task to be able to succeed as a principal.

Finally, two measures were exclusively mentioned by novices in either private or public schools: diagnosing the school culture was reported by five newly appointed principals in private schools, whereas learning the rules was a strategy used by four novices in the public sector. In fact, in private schools, novices acted with caution at first and took a period of observation and collecting information about the context to decide on their next steps and prepare for challenges they might face. At last, since public schools are guided by many rules and regulations set by the ministry of education, it was important for a novice in the public sector to know these rules to be able to avoid any problem or misunderstanding during the transition period.

Table 12

Comparative Table of the Measures Taken by Novice Principals in the Public and Private Schools Included in the Study for an Effective

Transition Period

Measures for an Effective Transition Period			
	Public Schools N=6	Private Schools N=6	Total Number of Respondents
Build Relations	6	6	12
Develop Coping Strategies	6	6	12
Developing Self-Discipline	6	5	11
Self-Learning	4	5	9
Planning	0	5	5
Reflecting	0	2	2
Develop Leadership Skills, Attitudes and Values	6	5	11
Learn Leadership Skills	4	4	8
Adopt Specific Leadership Attitudes	2	5	7
Adhere to Certain Leadership Values	4	3	7
Promote Teamwork	4	4	8
Develop a Vision	3	3	6
Diagnose the School Culture	0	5	5
Learn the Rules	4	0	4

Chapter Summary

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of novice principals in Lebanon as they transition into their new roles. To answer the research questions, twelve novice principals from public and private schools were asked to fill a demographic questionnaire and sit for an individual interview. Two professionals who were involved in selecting and preparing principals were also interviewed. The collected data was analyzed and findings of the study were reported in this chapter.

The first section of the chapter highlighted the personal and professional characteristics of the interviewed novices. It was found that all of the newly appointed principals have a teaching background and hold university degrees. In addition, seven out of the twelve novices have administrative experience. Three differences were observed between novices in public schools and their counterparts in private schools. The first difference was related to academic preparation: four novices in private schools held a master's degree in educational administration, whereas none of the novices in public schools had received academic preparation in this field. The second difference was that novices in the public sector had a longer teaching experience compared to novices in private schools. The last difference was that none of the novices in public schools participating in the study considered principalship as a career goal, whereas four of the novices in the private sector started out as teachers but had in mind to become principals.

In the second section of the chapter, the process of being appointed was described. In public schools, a unified formal selection process was identified: it starts with the announcement of a vacancy by the MEHE, followed by submission of candidature, and ends with an eligibility test. Formal selection criteria were also found to guide principal selection. These criteria included among others: holding a university degree, having a teaching experience of at least five years, passing the eligibility test, and completing the pre-service

training offered by the Lebanese University. In private schools, no formal selection process was identified: novices narrated how they were solicited to occupy the position through a quick, informal process. Moreover, no formal selection criteria were found to regulate principal selection. Also reported in this section, were the perceived criteria for selection. Novices in both school types presented a list of factors they believe played a major role in their selection. The common point that five out of the twelve novices in both public and private schools agreed on was that their personal connections with political and / or religious figures contributed to their appointment in the principalship position. In addition to personal relations, all novices in public schools attributed their selection to their success in the eligibility test. In private schools, novices listed six other criteria: advanced academic background, professional background in the educational field, devotion to work at the school, having unique personal characteristics, demonstrated knowledge and skills, and membership in the school religious community.

In the third section of the chapter, findings of the study regarding preparation for the role were presented. Three ways through which novices could be prepared to take on the principal position were identified: formal preparation (exclusive to novices in public schools), self-initiated preparation (for novices in both school types), and preparation through activities proposed by the school (exclusive to novices in private schools). Data from interviews with administrators and reviewed policies showed that, in the public sector, a unified formal preparation program was designed (the Leadership Development Program) and all novices were required by the law to successfully complete this one-year pre-service training. However, none of the interviewed novices had received any kind of formal training at the time of the interview. They were left alone in their first years to figure out how to practice their role. Consequently, all of the interviewed novices in public schools were depending on themselves to learn about their role through self-initiated strategies such as writing a

thorough and realistic candidature project and getting to know the internal regulations. In the private sector, no unified formal process for training had been identified, but some sporadic activities (not part of a structured program specifically tailored for principal preparation) were offered in the different schools of the novices. Coaching from senior administrators or previous principals was the method most frequently cited by novices (four out of six), closely followed by having access to a clearly stated job description provided by the school (cited by three novices), and by shadowing the former principal (cited by two novices). School-based orientation sessions and mentorship were each pointed out by one novice as methods proposed by their schools for the purpose of preparation for the position. Like their counterparts in public schools, novices in the private sector (five out of six) also admitted depending on self-initiated methods to be prepared for the position. These methods included academic preparation, personal readings, having a personal mentor, and inquiring from colleagues.

The fourth section of the chapter focused on the challenges of the transition period as reported by novices in both public and private schools. The most frequently mentioned challenges by novices in both school types were: experiencing feelings of stress, surprise, uncertainty, and fear of failure and the relational challenges. Ten out of the twelve novices explained that, on the emotional level, the transition period was characterized by a sense of a huge responsibility and unexpected events which constituted sources of surprise, stress, and professional insecurity. Relational challenges were also reported by ten novices. Those newly appointed principals were very keen to build good relationships with students, staff members, and school community but were confronted with obstacles such as students' behavioral problems, imposing their new status as principals, teachers' resistance, and dealing with people from different backgrounds and age groups. The second most cited challenge was seeking excellence. It was exclusively pointed out by novices in public schools. All of the six

principals in the public sector showed enthusiasm and a strong desire to improve the reputation and image of their school in particular and public schools in general. Another challenge that novices in both sectors experienced was the difficulty in balancing personal and professional life. In fact, five of the novices admitted that becoming principals affected their personal life with less time for family and personal activities. The fifth challenge was unique to public school novices and was related to having limited authority and financial resources. Five out of the six novices in public schools reported that they have no power to make decisions when it comes to recruiting teachers and supervisors and that they lacked the necessary financial resources. The last challenge, introducing change, was mentioned by four novices in private schools. They pointed at their discovery that initiating change immediately after they were assigned the principal role constituted a major challenge due to resistance from school community and financial difficulties.

In the fifth section of the chapter, the contextual and personal factors that positively influenced the novices' transition period were presented. All of the twelve novices cited availability of support as a contextual factor that facilitated their transition. In fact, novices regarded the support they received from the school staff, the local community, other principals, and family members as essential during this stage of their career. Familiarity with the school context and school community was another contextual factor considered by two novices in private schools as supportive for their transition into principalship: being a former teacher or student at the school or being from the region where the school is located facilitated relations with teachers and parents and reduced some of the stress and uncertainty that accompany the transition period. Regarding the personal factors, professional experience was considered by novices in both school types as the most important supportive factor: nine out of twelve principals described how their experiences in both educational and non-educational fields contributed to a smoother transition. The second common personal factor

cited by three novices was psychological: readiness and determination to overcome obstacles, sense of belonging to the school, and satisfaction from the positive impact on students were all cited by participants as helpful in easing the transition. Motherhood and young age were brought up by novices in public schools whereas educational background was an important factor for three of the private school novices.

The last section of the chapter reported the measures taken by novice principals to make the transition period less challenging and more effective. Five out of the seven measures stated by novices were common to principals in both public and private schools. Building relations and developing coping strategies were the main measures cited by all of the twelve novices in both public and private schools. In fact, all of the novices explained how they relied on effective communication skills to build strong and healthy relationships with students, teachers, and parents. In addition, they adopted four types of coping strategies to deal with the overwhelming demands of principalship: developing self-discipline, self-learning, planning, and reflecting. The next most frequent measure that emerged from the responses of eleven out of the twelve participants was developing leadership skills, attitudes, and values. As a matter of fact, eight novices gave examples of the skills they worked on acquiring to help them succeed as school leaders: the ability to motivate staff, creativity, problem-solving, adapting leadership style to circumstances, flexibility, and adapting to the system. The last two skills were reported exclusively by novices in public schools. In addition, novices mentioned the importance of adopting the following attitudes: being committed, acting as a role model, being proactive, always remembering you were once a teacher, being there for the team, being firm and tender, and being open. Leadership values that novices viewed as essential for an educational leader were: humbleness, democracy, fairness, respect, and being true to yourself and your beliefs. The fourth measure was reported by eight out of the twelve interviewed novices who described how they promoted

teamwork in their schools by delegating responsibilities to committees of teachers and involving them in the decision-making process. Half of the novices mentioned developing a vision as an important task to be able to succeed as a principal. Finally, two measures were exclusively stated by novices in either private or public schools: diagnosing the school culture was reported by five newly appointed principals in private schools, whereas learning the rules was a strategy used by four novices in the public sector.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study is to explore the experiences of novice principals in Lebanese public and private schools as they transition into their role. The in-depth individual interviews with novices and administrators, as well as the review of laws and policies, aimed at collecting data that provides a better understanding of the early-career stage of principals in the Lebanese context. More specifically, the study focused on examining who these novices were, why and how they became principals, what kind of preparation they received, what were the challenges they experienced, the factors that positively influenced their transition, and the measures they took for an effective transition. In this chapter, the findings that emerged as answers to the research questions will be first discussed, followed by the conclusion and recommendations for practice and for further research.

The results will be discussed in four sections: novices' journey to principalship, challenges of early-career stage principalship, factors perceived as positively influencing the transition period, and measures taken by novices for an effective transition. The discussion will mainly focus on comparing the results of the study at hand with findings of empirical and theoretical studies on novice principals in the Western and Arabic literature. The chapter will end with a conclusion that will highlight what was learned about novice principals' experiences in the Lebanese context and a presentation of recommendations for practice. Suggestions for future research will also be offered.

Novices' Journey to Principalship

This study tried to capture the journey of twelve Lebanese novices to principalship. Findings revealed that all of the novices had a teaching experience and approximately half of the newly appointed principals had some kind of experience in administration. Those novices had various motivators for becoming principals, but for only one third of the participants

principalship was considered a career goal. A formal appointment process with clear criteria for selection was identified in public schools, whereas it was non-existent in private schools. Despite the requirement of the Leadership Development Program as a form of pre-service training for principals in public schools, none of them had went through the program at the time the interviews were conducted. In the private sector, no formal preparation programs were identified and training consisted mainly of sporadic activities that were either self-initiated by the novice or proposed by the school. Presented next is a discussion of the journey of those novices to principalship which will focus on four main aspects: the background of novices, their motivation for seeking the role, the process of being appointed (including selection criteria and selection process), and the preparation for the role.

Background of Novices

In this study, both the educational and professional backgrounds of the newly appointed principals were examined. It was found that all of the participants were university degree holders but only four novices in private schools had pursued graduate studies in educational administration. This finding is in line with the study of Mattar (2012b) in which none of the ten Lebanese public school principals (five of which were novices) was specialized in educational administration: two held a teaching diploma; two graduated from teachers' college; and one held a baccalaureate degree.

In addition, all of the newly appointed principals started out their career as teachers, with principals in public schools having on average more years of experience in teaching than their counterparts in private schools. In fact, this finding echoes the results of studies conducted in most countries on novice principals where it was shown that school leaders begin their professional careers as teachers (Bush, 2018).

Finally, only five out of the twelve participants (four in private schools and one in a public school) occupied administrative and leadership positions before assuming the role of

principals, while the others transitioned directly from teaching to principalship. This result reflects the assumption held by many, in Lebanon and other countries, that a qualified teacher makes a competent leader (Bush, 2018).

Motivation for Seeking the Role

This study revealed that for novices in public schools, principalship was a non-planned career path: they did not think about becoming principals when they first started teaching. This might explain why none of these novices thought about enrolling in an academic program focusing on school leadership. However, when there was a vacancy these novices applied to the principal's position. They provided different reasons behind their decision which will be discussed next.

Three of the novices said that they needed change in their career, whereas two others expressed their desire to make a difference and improve the school they work at. These motivators resonate with those found by a quantitative study conducted by Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013) on 800 teachers in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Participants were asked to rate ten factors that were identified as being motivators for pursuing principalship: the desire to have an influence on education was ranked fourth, and the desire to broaden career options was fifth.

Two novices in public schools mentioned the need to prevent the "wrong" people from getting the position as the reason behind applying to principalship, and one novice explained that he was encouraged by another "important" teacher at the school. Encouragement by colleagues was rated as the eighth most important motivator for teachers to pursue principalship in the study by Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013). However, these last two reasons presented by Lebanese novices in the public sector reveal a process that reflects the desire of teachers to have a say when it comes to the principal who will be appointed at their school. Even if they are not involved in the process of selection that is mainly in the

hands of the ministry, teachers in public schools hope they would get the principal they want by encouraging candidates they believe are suitable for the position to apply and decreasing the chances of candidates they see as incompetent or unwanted by the school staff.

In private schools, four out of the six novices indicated that becoming a principal was one of their professional goals. However, for the other two, principalship was not a career objective and they were hesitant to accept the position. Four novices said that their main motivator was the desire to become a principal, a factor ranked second by teachers in Saudi Arabia and Jordan in Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013) study. One novice saw principalship as an opportunity to advance, evolve, and grow. In fact, the desire to reach potential or self-actualization was the third most cited motivating factor by teachers (Al-Omari & Wuzynani, 2013). Having wider career opportunities was cited by one novice in a private school and this motivator was ranked fifth in the study of Al-Omari and Wuzynani (2013).

The two novices who hesitated at first to accept the position saw it as a big change that might affect their family life and feared failure in the new position. In fact, for one of the novices accepting the position required from him to leave his family and relocate to the rural area where the school is located. The other novice who saw himself as a successful coordinator was hesitant to move to principalship and fail. Novices presented personal reasons and no factors specifically related to principalship or the organizational structures of the schools were mentioned as deterrents to accepting the position.

One of the main differences between public and private school principals' motivation for seeking the role is that none of the novices in public schools mentioned the desire to become a leader as a motivator for principalship and none of them saw this role as an opportunity for growth and learning. These two factors are actually associated with internal satisfaction from one's work (Moore, 1999). This can be partly explained by the fact that the work context in Lebanese private schools is more supportive to the principals than in public

schools (Karami-Akkary, 1997). In fact, in private schools parents are more involved in their children education, politicians interfere less in the work of principals, and the organizational structure is less centralized. This last factor makes decision-making in private schools faster, since it does not have to go through the bureaucratic system of the ministry of education, and entitles private school principals to have more authority than their counterparts in public schools (Karami-Akkary, 1997).

To conclude, understanding the experiences and motivations behind teachers' decision to move towards principalship or not provides a better insight into how principalship is perceived in the Lebanese context and what can be done to support those who decide to progress through their careers to principalship. Stevenson (2006) states that there is little evidence on why teachers decide to move up or stay put. He argues that there is an imperative to better understand the career trajectories of teachers as they potentially move towards, into and through principalship. The results of the study at hand constitute a starting point to understanding what motivates Lebanese teachers to pursue principalship. This knowledge is vital for designing recruitment and retention strategies for educational leaders and developing policies and procedures that can support and facilitate their transition (Al-Omari & Wuzynani, 2013).

The Process of Being Appointed

During their journey to principalship, novices pass by a selection process through which they get appointed based on specific criteria. In public schools, despite the formalization of the process and selection criteria, implementation irregularities and political interferences were found to affect the choice of the principal. In the private sector, the selection process is informal with no clear steps and no explicit criteria for appointing the principal. In what follows, a discussion of the findings regarding the selection process and selection criteria in both school types is presented.

The Selection Process

A unified formal selection process is applied to appoint principals across public schools in Lebanon: candidates apply for the position following an announcement of vacancy by the MEHE then they undergo an eligibility test consisting of an interview and a presentation of a candidature project and a portfolio. According to law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009), principals are appointed for a probation period of three years at the end of which they should be evaluated to decide on tenure. However, this evaluation is not taking place and principals are staying in this position even if they are not competent. This shows that the lack of adherence to policies is still considered one of the main obstacles to improving principalship in the Lebanese educational system (LAES, 2006).

In private schools, no policies governed the appointment of principals and no formal process was identified across the schools included in the study. All principals reported being solicited for the position through a quick informal process consisting of a short interview in which they were offered the position. In addition, four out of the six novices were chosen from within the same school or school network. These results are similar to what was found in the available literature on principalship in Lebanese private schools where the owners of the school (in this study the religious communities) mostly rely on selecting principals from their experienced educators and limit the selection process to an interview when needed (Karami-Akkary, 2014). This might justify why novices in private schools tend to have higher academic qualifications and specialize in educational administration while they were still teachers.

In both school types, the school community is not involved in the process of principal selection: teachers and parents are not consulted and have no say in who will become the next school leader. In the public sector, the principal is imposed by the MEHE and in the private

sector by the school owners. This is an important aspect to highlight since it will have implications on the obstacles that novices might encounter in their relationship with parents and teachers. Therefore, this is why in certain states in the US, teachers and parents on local school councils participate in principal selection decisions (Winter & Jaeger, 2004).

The Selection Criteria

Three aspects of the findings regarding selection criteria will be discussed: questionable selection criteria, personal connections, and compatibility of religion.

Questionable Selection Criteria. In public schools, formal selection criteria are dictated by the law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009). They include: holding a university degree, having a teaching experience for at least five years, having a record clear from sanctions for the last five years, showing language proficiency, passing the eligibility test, and having received training in educational administration. Although having these criteria is a good step towards improving principal selection, they are not enough to prove the competency of the candidate. In fact, it has been shown in studies in different contexts that a teaching experience is not sufficient (Bush, 2018). Therefore, the requirement of administrative experience becomes imperative. Moreover, in the eligibility test, candidates are evaluated based on the interview, the project they present, and their portfolio. Taking a closer look at the criteria of grading the candidate during the interview, one can note that they are very general and not specifically related to being an effective principal. In fact, presence, verbal expression, intelligence, and logic are very broad criteria that can be considered in an interview for any position. The only aspect related to principalship that the committee looks at is "knowledge of the rules and regulations" and this really shows how important it is for the MEHE that the principal conforms to the top-down decisions taken in a centralized educational system (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019; Karami- Akkary, 2014). Also included in the eligibility test is the

portfolio which shows the candidate's educational and professional background and can give an idea of certain skills he / she might possess. Finally, the candidate is required to hand a project for school improvement. No formal criteria were documented regarding the criteria for evaluating and grading the project, therefore it is left to the committee's judgment of what an effective school improvement plan is. Finally, the last criterion regarding training is loosely enforced and all of the public schools novices in this study were appointed without having done any kind of training in educational administration. The problem of not abiding to policies emerges here again to undermine the value of those selection criteria as quality gatekeepers to ensure the effectiveness of the performance of these novices when they assume the principalship role.

In the private schools included in this study, no formal selection criteria for principals were found. This means that the requirements to be considered for principalship are, like one of the novices in the study clearly stated it, "in the minds" of those who appoint principals: it is left for the discretion of those running the private schools and the wide variations in their professional knowledge and philosophies of what constitutes effective principalship.

To sum up, the absence of valid criteria for selection for both public and private school principals can be explained by the absence of national standards for principal effectiveness which can often lead to choosing incompetent school leaders (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019). In addition, with the lack of clear formalized criteria and a process of evaluation of the performance of those novices, ineffective leaders remain undetected and can stay in this position for a long time especially in public schools.

Personal Connections. Novices in this study were asked to list the criteria they believed contributed to their appointment in the principalship position. The newly appointed principals cited several criteria but one common point that was mentioned by novices in both sectors as a "criteria" for their selection was their personal connections. Five out of the

twelve novices admitted that the support they got from a politician or an influential figure in the school community (e.g., the mayor) as well as their personal relations with the school's owner (in the case of private schools here: the head of the religious community) played a major role in their appointment. This criterion was not found in Western literature so it is not considered common in European and American contexts and is unique to the Lebanese context, yet, as indicated by a novice in public schools, it is considered "normal". Novices actually believe that their qualifications alone are not enough if they want to become principals: they need to do their "election tour" and work on getting the endorsement of a politician or prominent figure to increase their chances of being appointed. This finding is supported by Karami-Akkary (2014) who concluded from her study on 53 secondary school principals in Lebanon that the selection of principals is highly politicized with principals being appointed due to their personal connection with a political leader or with someone in power in the school.

Compatibility of Religion. Another reason behind principal selection that was mentioned by novices in this study but not found in the reviewed Western literature is religion. One novice particularly recounted how having the same religious affiliation as the group that owned the school allowed him to get involved in religious activities and become like "one of the family" which he believes helped him a lot in taking on various administrative positions at the school and then becoming the principal. Religion was also found by Karami-Akkary (2014) to be among the important selection criteria in both public and private schools in Lebanon: 97% of the principals in her study had the same religious affiliation as the owner of the private school or as the community where the public school is located.

Preparation for the Role

The study revealed the existence of three ways through which novices in Lebanese schools can be prepared for principalship: formal preparation (exclusive to public schools), self-initiated preparation (found in both school types), and preparation through activities proposed by the school (exclusive to private schools). These three methods will be discussed in this section.

Formal Preparation. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) define a formal socialization process as involving the development of a specific program to train novices in which activities are explicitly tailored and officially assigned for the newcomers. The only formal program identified in this study is the Leadership Development Program which completion is a requirement for being appointed as a public school principal according to the law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009). However, as shown from the interviews conducted in the study, it is not happening this way: novices are being appointed without having completed and not even started the program. What is supposed to be a national pre-service training program is not being implemented as such for several reasons including mainly absence of funding, waiting to have a sufficient number of novices, and the fact that it is only offered at the Lebanese University. Therefore, principals are taking on the position in public schools without any kind of formal preparation. In addition, no such program exists for private schools on the national level and no formal preparation was identified in the schools included in the study.

Novices in Lebanese schools are missing an important aspect of the socialization process, the professional socialization, which should take place before they take on the role so that they acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to practice as effective leaders. This type of socialization usually occurs in the West through pre-service principal preparation programs (Crow, 2006). In Lebanon, the program is there but it does not include

private school principals and it has only been offered twice since the beginning of the implementation of the law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009) in 2009. This leaves novices alone to try to figure out how to learn the role (Daresh & Male, 2000).

Self-Initiated Preparation. As shown in the results of this study and the available literature regarding Lebanese principals, most school leaders come from a teaching background without much administrative experience. Transitioning directly from teaching into principalship, these novices are not equipped with what is needed to perform the role effectively. In fact, Bush (2018) argues that "being a principal is a different role from classroom teaching and requires specific preparation" (p. 67). Novices have no choice but to try to find ways to learn by themselves. They reported several methods through which they attempted to do so: preparing a thorough and realistic candidature project, enrolling in academic programs, getting to know the internal regulations, personal readings, having a personal mentor, and inquiring from colleagues.

For novices in public schools, the only methods they mentioned were: working seriously on their project and getting to know the internal regulations. In fact, novices in public schools seem to believe that all they need to know about principalship can be found in those rules. This echoes the finding of Harb and Karami-Akkary (2019) on Lebanese conceptions of effective school leadership as "bureaucratic maneuvering" where the principal's role is mainly that of a "bureaucratic executive" (p. 14) who is astute at navigating the existing policies that are often the root cause of some of the obstacles they face in their work. This is also in line with previous findings on Lebanese principals as mainly preoccupied with the managerial aspect of their role (Karami-Akkary, 2014; Mattar, 2012b). This characteristic is unique to the Lebanese context when compared with Western literature where the transformational, distributed, and instructional leadership models advance

additional dimensions to the role of the principal and are advocated as conducive to being an effective educational leader (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013).

In private schools, most of the novices in the study took the initiative to enroll in a graduate university program to learn about educational leadership although it was not a requirement for selection at their schools. This shows how much these novices are eager to gain the knowledge and skills required to lead schools in the face of absence of the needed professional socialization processes. However, the problem here lies with the quality of those programs and their ability to train leaders who will be effective in the Lebanese context. In fact, with the absence of national standards for effectiveness, the MEHE does not have any point of reference to enforce quality training programs in the universities around Lebanon. Harb and Karami-Akkary (2019) found that "Western-based conceptualizations of effective leadership do not always respond to Lebanon's social and political make-up" (p. 16), hence the importance of training programs based on the contextual realities of the Lebanese schools.

Other methods of self-initiated preparation mentioned by novices in private schools were personal readings, having a personal mentor, and inquiring from colleagues. This highlights the fact that, in addition to the need for acquiring knowledge and skills, novices interviewed in this study were actively seeking orientation and guidance from any source they can find. They relied on others (friends / colleagues) to be by their side to provide them with information that is not available for them through formal documents or preparation programs. Interestingly, instead of relying on publications geared to practitioners like their Western counterparts (Sackney & Walker, 2006), Lebanese novice principals seem to rely heavily on the knowledge of their colleagues that they can have through conversations and direct interactions. This is probably the results of the dominance of oral culture over print culture in the Lebanese context (Ralston et al., 2011): principals rather communicate through

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conversations to get the information needed given that the information they need is not publicly available through printed forms.

Preparation through Activities Proposed by the School. This type of preparation was only mentioned by novices in private schools. It included: coaching from senior administrators or previous principals, shadowing of the former principal, a clearly stated job description, school-based orientation sessions, and mentorship.

Coaching is the most used method: it was cited by four novices. However, as described, it aligns more with what is often referred to in the literature as "orientation" activity as part of the induction process (Kitavi & Van Der Westhuizen, 1997). It is limited to one or several meetings with the previous principal or with a senior administrator, just before or just after the beginning of the academic year, to orient them in mainly two aspects of the role: managerial (focus on the tasks that need to be done) and relational (some advice on how to deal with staff). Shadowing occurred only in two schools with the objective of learning about the job and the context. In one of the schools, shadowing as described by the novice consisted of observing the principal and then trying to perform the same task and get feedback from that principal. School-based orientation sessions took place in one school and according to the novice it was focused on administrative work, mainly paperwork of reporting and filling forms, according to the procedures adopted by the institution. The novice revealed that he found the sessions helpful because they were practical and not theoretical.

The next activity that was considered by novices as preparation was through provided job descriptions (cited by three novices) which do not fully portray all the aspect of the job as admitted by novices. Finally, mentoring was also described by one novice as a method used at his school to guide newcomers. His mentor was another principal in the same network.

Although in private schools there is some effort to provide orientation to novices through the period of organizational socialization, what is done cannot be described as effective induction (Wong et al., 2005). None of these schools has a complete program for orientation and guidance of novices through the first years. What was found are sporadic activities that are not part of a program specifically customized to meet the needs of the novices (Hashem, 2013). This is what Bush (2018) describes as the traditional type of induction that usually occurs in practice and that consists of "one-off events unconnected to previous or subsequent development and often provided just before, or just after, the principal takes on the position" (p. 69).

Taking a closer look at what the activities proposed by schools focus on in terms of socialization content, it can be noticed that the managerial aspect is dominant: tasks to be done, reports to be written, and forms to be filled. This is very much in line with what is found in the literature on the nature of the Lebanese principals' role (Karami-Akkary, 2014). In what is described about shadowing, the importance of conforming to the way managerial tasks are done in the institution can be noticed. In fact, training limited to the administrative aspect with main focus on adherence to procedures leads to system conformity (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). This can be useful for Lebanese novices to be able to meet the requirements of a bureaucratic educational system. However, the other dimensions of the role such as the instructional, human, and cultural which are also important for effective leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 2013) are being neglected.

Mentoring was proposed in one of the schools, as an ongoing process of orienting novices that can respond to the principals' needs. However, the purpose of this mentoring was not very clear and the criteria to choose the mentor were not specified. Bush (2018) argues that if the mentoring process is not planned, it can leave the novice "to draw on an ad hoc apprenticeship model" and have as a result "the replication of previous practice" and this

is not what is needed in the complexity of twenty-first century schools (p.70). In the context of Lebanese schools this results in novices conforming to the role as it has been traditionally enacted, mainly as bureaucratic executives (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019). This can make novices effective in the managerial aspect, but they will be left alone struggling to learn the other aspects of the role such as leading for change and school improvement.

Challenges of the Early-Career Stage Principalship

The first years of principalship were marked by six challenges that were reported by the interviewed novices. These challenges will be discussed under two themes highlighting where they stemmed from: challenges due to lack of preparation and orientation and challenges stemming from the system itself.

Challenges due to Lack of Preparation and Orientation

The first set of challenges faced by novices can be attributed to the lack of formal preparation and inadequate induction into principalship which resulted in a lack of awareness of the actual demands and responsibilities of the role. This set of challenges included: experiencing feelings of stress, surprise, uncertainty and fear of failure; relational challenges; and introducing change.

Experiencing Feelings of Stress, Surprise, Uncertainty, and Fear of Failure

The interviewed novices reported that the transition period was challenging in the sense that they felt overwhelmed by the huge amount of tasks and responsibilities that they had to handle and this generated a lot of stress. Novices also recounted how they were surprised to discover certain aspects of principalship and the school that they did not know about before. This experience seems to be shared by novices across different contexts since the results are in line with Western literature on novices where it was found that novices had to deal with loneliness, professional insecurity, and fear of failure that came with the

transition period (Cottrell & James, 2016; Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000; Walker & Qian, 2006).

In fact, empirical studies on novice principals in the US, the UK and Africa have shown that novices experience a "reality shock" when they face the overwhelming demands of the job as soon as they take on the role (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Daresh & Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Spillane and Lee (2014) reported that novices in the US experienced "the ultimate responsibility shock" as they transitioned into their role: this sense of being ultimately responsible for everything at the school accompanied with increased stress is similar to what was described by Lebanese novices in this study. Similarly, Daresh and Male (2000) found that British and American novice school leaders experienced a "culture shock" due to the intensity of the job. Studies on novice principals in Africa also reported the "daunting" experience they lived during their transition period and the feeling of "overload" especially with the difficult work conditions they have to deal with (Bush & Oduro, 2006). Researchers explain this shock by the complex nature of the principal role and the inadequate preparation of novices (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Spillane & Lee, 2014). Letting novices embark on a very complex and demanding role without effective preparation is a major source of personal stress (Bush & Heystek, 2006).

The feelings of uncertainty and fear of failure that the participating novice principals have experienced can surely be attributed to their lack of preparation. This was best described by Walker and Qian (2006) who portrayed the challenge that novices face as being able to maintain balance "at the top of a greasy pole" (p. 297). They argue that if these novices do not learn the necessary knowledge, skills, and dispositions specific to principalship they will slip at any time, hence the importance of preparation and induction to face insecurity and fear that might lead to failure of the novice. In fact, the unawareness of the nature of the role and the scope of its responsibilities exacerbate these feelings of stress and uncertainty. The

surprise factor that was emphasized by novices signals the absence of any orientation or documentation that can convey at least the basic formal responsibilities of the role.

Relational Challenges

The second type of challenge experienced under this category is linked to the relational aspect of the job. Lebanese novices reported facing relational challenges with students, teachers, and the school community. This is very much in line with the literature on novice principals in various contexts: the US, the UK, and Colombia (Cottrell & James, 2016; Crow, 2007; Nelson et al., 2008; Pineda-Baez et al., 2019; Weindling & Dimmock, 2006).

Challenges with parents and community consisted mainly of the need for novices to prove that they were capable of leading their schools and that they could maintain or even improve the schools' reputation; communicating with parents; and adapting to people's mentality in a rural school community. The study conducted by Crow (2007), where the socialization of four novice primary headteachers in the UK was investigated, showed that those principals had to deal with parents' adverse reactions when they did not trust the decisions taken by the novices in times of crisis.

With students, three main challenges were identified. The first is related to maintaining order which was also reported by Karami-Akkary (1997) in her study on Lebanese principals who considered tackling discipline problems as one of the obstacles encountered in their work. This implies that this challenge is not specific to the transition period and can be faced by principals at any stage. The second challenge was about dealing with the problems specific to students living in difficult social conditions. This result is in line with the study of Pineda-Baez et al. (2019) on Colombian novice principals who admitted having trouble managing disruptive behavior of students coming from difficult social environments. The last challenge concerned approaching students from a specific age

group. This challenge can also be related to the lack of preparation and needed expertise to respond to needs of the students at the school the novice was assigned to be its principal.

Regarding the relation with teachers and staff, Lebanese novices described three aspects of the challenge: dealing with previous colleagues as a principal; coping with tension, resistance and feelings of jealousy from colleagues; and learning how to deal with various kinds of people with different personalities and backgrounds. These challenges were also experienced by novices in several contexts. For instance, a study by Quong (2006) showed that one of the challenges faced by a novice in Australia was living up to his staff (previous colleagues) expectations. Dealing with teachers' resistance was also found in studies about novices in the UK (Cottrell & James, 2016; Hobson et al., 2003; Weindling & Dimmock, 2006), the USA (Nelson et al., 2008), and Colombia (Pineda-Baez et al., 2019). Relational challenges with teachers and staff can be very problematic and stressful for teachers and are even considered "heavy duty" by some (Nelson et al., 2008, p. 693). Weindling and Dimmock (2006) attribute these problems to the process of socialization through which novices are still trying to understand their new role and take charge of the school. Scholars have found that getting formal preparation and induction by a professional mentor can help novices deal with these kinds of challenges. In fact, novices in the UK mention mentors as one of the most helpful sources of support and guidance in different aspects of the job especially the relational one (Crow, 2007).

Introducing Change

The third challenge was only conveyed by novices in private schools stemming from their attempts at introducing change. Novices recounted that they tried to improve the student-teacher relationship, update the instructional content and methodologies, and reform financial management. However, they were faced with several obstacles including teachers' resistance. They ended up realizing that change needs time and cannot happen overnight as

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they were expecting upon entry to principalship. Weindling and Dimmock's (2006) explain that even before they take on the position novices have their own conception of how certain aspects of the school should be so as soon as they step into the principal's role they want to make changes. Nevertheless, when they face the contextual realities of the school they have to adjust their expectations. Therefore, what the Lebanese novices in private schools did was rushing into making changes and introducing new ideas as soon as they assumed the position, but they ended up discovering that the first years are not the ideal time to introduce changes. In fact, the literature on novice principals recommends that reshaping or introducing change occurs in the second year after having experienced a complete annual cycle of school events (Early & Weindling, 2007). By that time, novices would have taken their time to read and understand the school's culture and climate and developed a cognitive map of the complexities of the context, the people, the challenges, the school culture… (Early & Weindling, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; O'Mahony & Matthews, 2003). This is an important step to assess the readiness of the school and its staff to undergo change since the school's climate is a "barometer" that can serve as a tool to evaluate present conditions, plan change, and monitor progress (Sergiovanni, 2002, p. 312). Real change is difficult if the school's climate and culture do not support it. However, due to the lack of preparation, novices in the study at hand made the misstep of trying to introduce changes from the first year which left them with several challenges and tensions to deal with at the school. Here lies the importance of guiding those novices in their early-career stage so as to help them avoid such mistakes.

Challenges Stemming from the System Itself

The second set of challenges that emerged from this study was exclusively mentioned by novices in the public sector and relates to challenges stemming from the system itself. These challenges are manifested in the following: seeking excellence and having limited

authority and financial resources. This set of challenges that result from the system and the governance structure constitute what Stevenson (2006) calls "tensions." They are "factors that can, in a given set of circumstances, make it more difficult to provide effective schooling and provide a response to the expectations set out above" (Stevenson, 2006, p. 411). According to Nelson et al. (2008) these tensions affect novices' socialization and hinder the practice of effective leadership making the novice more focused on technical issues rather than other aspects of principalship.

Seeking Excellence

Seeking excellence is considered as a challenge related to the system because novices were doing their best to offset the short comings of the MEHE in providing the schools with the infrastructure and basic needs to support an effective learning experience for the students. From the moment they assumed their responsibilities, the participating novice principals felt responsible to improve the image and reputation of the public school. They worked on increasing student enrolment and success rate in official exams, improving the school's infrastructure and facilities, and equipping the school with modern technologies. All of the novices expressed the same motive underlying what they were trying to do: make students and parents feel that even though they are in a public school they can get quality education. In their longitudinal study on novice headteachers in the UK, Weindling and Dimmock (2006) reported that novices were concerned with promoting a positive image for the school particularly if the community held the school in low esteem or student numbers were falling. This relates to the case of novice principals in public schools in Lebanon. In fact, the Lebanese society tends to view public schools as "inferior" to private schools and people do not trust the quality of education delivered in this sector. Only 30.9% of Lebanese students are enrolled in public schools while 65.7% are in private schools (CERD, 2018-2019). One of the features that distinguish the Lebanese educational system from Western systems is the

huge gap between public and private sectors (LAES, 2006). This gap is considered as one of the important challenges that face the Lebanese educational system and impede the progress towards quality education (CERD, 2000; LAES, 2006).

Limited Authority and Financial Resources

The second challenge that was mentioned by novices in public schools only was having limited authority and financial resources. The limited authority granted to principals in public schools constitutes one of the major challenges of principalship in Lebanon and is due mainly to the organizational contexts of public schools in the Lebanese system (LAES, 2006; Mattar, 2012a). Moreover, in the study of Karami-Akkary (1997), Lebanese principals listed the lack of decision-making power and financial problems among the key problems that they faced. In fact, decisions on school budget and expenditures in public schools are under the control and high scrutiny of the MEHE. This challenge can actually be considered as pertaining to Lebanese principals in general and not only to novices.

Factors Perceived as Positively Influencing the Transition Period

Findings regarding supportive factors for novices in public and private schools revealed two categories: personal and contextual factors. These categories correspond to what Cheung and Walker (2006) define as novices' "inner worlds" and "outer limits" (p. 390). The inner worlds include the beginning principals' experiences and expectations, psychological state, preferred leadership orientation, and value system. The outer limits include the novices' context (national and organizational) as well as the sources of support. Cheung and Walker (2006) argue that novices' inner worlds and outer limits concurrently shape their leadership role and affect how they manage the first years on the job. Factors pertaining to the inner worlds and the outer limits that novices perceived as facilitating the transition period will be discussed in what follows.

Novices' Outer Limits

Findings of the study revealed two main contextual factors positively affecting novices: the availability of support and the familiarity with the context. These factors will be discussed below.

Availability of Support

In this category, all of the twelve novices in both public and private schools cited the availability of support from the school staff, the local school community, other principals, and their own family as being an important contextual factor that facilitated their transition. These are part of what Crow (2006) defines as the main socialization sources for novice principals and what Cheung and Walker (2006) consider as sources of support for novices. These findings are in line with what was found in empirical studies on novice principals in the US, the UK, and Hong Kong who listed among others those sources of support (Cheung & Walker 2006; Crow 2007; Daresh &Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders 2010).

Two sources of support need to be particularly emphasized: other principals and the school community. In their studies on British headteachers and American principals, Daresh and Male (2000) noted that whenever novices did not receive enough support at the national educational system level or if that support is limited to technical tasks, these novices tended to develop their own personal professional networks in order to get support from peers. This can explain why Lebanese novices view former or current principals as important sources of support in the absence of formal preparation and induction in both public and private schools.

Regarding the school community, the response of one of the novices in private schools regarding the "full support" he got from the school religious community underscores again the interference of factors not found in the Western literature but which play a key role in the Lebanese educational system.

The last point to highlight in this category is that this was the only contextual factor mentioned by novices in public schools: they did not mention the educational system (the MEHE) as being a source of support which basically indicates that the principals are making it through this transition in spite of the "existing organizational system" and not because it was set as it is supposed to be to support them. This echoes with the findings of researchers in several educational systems where the top-down approach, imposed reforms, and increased accountability climate can actually hinder the principal's work instead of facilitating it (Cheung & Walker, 2006; Crow, 2006; Nelson et al., 2008; Stevenson, 2006; Trnavčevič & Vaupot, 2009).

Familiarity with School Context and Local Community

This factor was only listed by novices in private schools: they explained how being familiar with the school context due to being a former teacher at the school and familiarity with the community by being from the same region in which the school is located facilitated their transition especially when it came to the relational aspect of the job. This is common in private schools since mainly principals are selected among experienced educators in the school itself. This finding is supported by what studies of Holligan et al. (2006) and Spillane and Lee (2014) revealed on factors that facilitated the transition of British and American novices. These researchers reported that when novices take up the principal position in schools where they used to work, they tended to have less challenges and problems of practice because they know a considerable amount of information about the school. Familiarity with the school context usually means that these principals have the advantages of information and potentially staff cooperation, which tends to reduce the amount of challenges encountered upon taking up the position. However, when novices become principals in schools that they know relatively little about, the problems of practice tend to be exacerbated. These findings reinforce the need for formal induction especially when novices are from

outside the school. During the induction program the novice should be provided with access to information about the school and the adequate time to go through this information. This could help easing the problems of practice associated with transitioning into the principal occupation (Holligan et al., 2006; Spillane & Lee, 2014).

Novices' Inner Worlds

The two main personal factors pointed out by novices were their background (educational and professional) and psychological factors such as readiness and determination to overcome obstacles, sense of belonging to the school, and satisfaction from the positive impact on students. Cheung and Walker (2006) list educational and professional background under a category of personal factors they call "professional and experiential strength" and the psychological factors under the category "psychological strength". These two categories will be discussed below.

Professional and Experiential Strength

Novices in both public and private schools mainly cited in this category their background as teachers and their experience in administrative work and in social activities. Educational background was only listed as a supportive factor by novices in private schools among those who held a graduate degree in educational administration. Novices in public schools emphasized more their experience and did not mention their academic background as a facilitating factor.

These findings can be supported by a substantial amount of empirical studies that investigated the impact of novice principals' background on the way they enacted the role and dealt with challenges in their first years on the job (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000; Holligan et al., 2006; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Sleegers et al., 2009). Professional experience was found to affect how novices solve problems (Sleegers et al., 2009) and how they conceive of the role of a principal especially when they have occupied

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positions of deputies or assistant principals (Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders, 2010). Studies conducted in the US, the UK, and Africa showed the importance of academic preparation whether through university graduate programs or specific preparation programs in increasing novices' self-confidence in performing certain aspects of the role (Bush & Oduro, 2006; Holligan et al., 2006). Daresh & Male (2000) concluded that both academic preparation and professional experience impact novices' preparedness and confidence. Therefore, a balance between the two is what is recommended.

It seems that possession of broad based knowledge and expertise at the same time is perceived by the participating novices as a supportive factor. Possession of broad knowledge is very much in line with the Lebanese conception of what the study on the conceptions of effective school leader on a group of Lebanese principals has found (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019). This implies that what novices actually cited in this category as supportive personal factors reflect their role perception and consequently what they assume should be the requirements to become a successful leader. These factors in fact should be considered as criteria for selection for the principal position. This again highlights the lack of awareness of what kind of preparation the principal's role needs.

Psychological Strength

Novices in both public and private schools perceived their strength of character and determination to face the problems encountered as well as their commitment to the school as important personal factors that helped them during the transition period. This finding is supported by Cheung and Walker (2006) in their study on novices in Hong Kong: novices who had resilience, a strong will to cope with challenges, and high levels of self-confidence were able to go through the transition period more smoothly and survive the obstacles. In addition, this psychological strength resonates with one of the effectiveness characteristics of school leadership as perceived by Lebanese principals and teachers. In the grounded profile

built from Lebanese principals and teachers' perspective, "having exceptional personal traits" was listed as an important characteristic for an effective and successful school leader (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019). Additionally, it is not surprising that novices in this study cite psychological strength as a supportive factor given the conditions these novices are working under and in which they need to be exceptionally strong and resilient. They need to have the characteristics of warriors to beat challenges in a system that provides no preparation and minimal support for novices. In fact, principals are expected to supervise all aspects of the school's function without having received any formal training or induction and sometimes this can be coupled with limited authority and resources and increased accountability (Karami-Akkary, 2014).

Measures Taken by Novices for an Effective Transition

In this last section of the discussion, the measures that novices adopted to have an effective transition will be examined. Seven measures emerged from the interviews with the newly appointed principals: build relations; develop coping strategies; develop leadership skills, attitudes, and values; promote teamwork; develop a vision; diagnose the school culture; and learn the rules.

Build Relations

All of the novices in this study reported that building strong and healthy relations with students, teachers, and parents was their priority during the transition period. Novices emphasized some of what they perceive as effective communication skills to help in building relations. The main purposes of the novices behind this measure were to gain acceptance, be able to achieve goals with the least obstacles possible, deal with resistance, and gain trust. This is an important part of those novices' organizational socialization where they were trying to fit in and reduce the feelings of anxiety and insecurity that characterize the transition period. In fact, research studies in the UK and Canada revealed that one of the tasks that

novices prioritize during the early stages of taking on the position is to establish relationships with the school community (Crow, 2007; Kelly & Saunders, 2010; Sackney & Walker, 2006). Kelly and Saunders (2010) described how novices in the UK solved the challenges they faced during their first year through focusing on the relational aspect of their job. For instance, one of the novices spent the first weeks building professional relationships across the school community and making everyone feel valued to make them forget about the bad image of the previous headteacher. Another novice found himself in a hostile environment and was faced with rejection so he worked on strengthening his relation with the deputy who was very popular among teachers to gain acceptance. Therefore, the literature on novice principals gives evidence that building relations is one of the most important measures that help novices integrate into their new environment. Moreover, building strong and effective human relations was found to be one of the effectiveness characteristics of school leaders according to the profile developed in the Lebanese context (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019). This supports the choice of the novices in this study to adopt building relations as a strategy to ease their transition and make it more effective. In fact, being left alone to discover the system, building relations and establishing good communication channels became crucial and a survival line for them to get the information they need through the grape vines of teachers, parents and students.

Develop Coping Strategies

The second measure taken by all of the novices was to develop coping strategies that would allow them to survive this difficult and stressful period of their career and deal with the overwhelming demands of principalship. Those strategies included developing self-discipline, acquiring the skill of self-learning, planning, and reflecting. American, British and Scottish novices share the same need to develop coping strategies as the novices in the study at hand (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000; Hobson et al., 2003).

Particularly, two strategies were found to be common with the Western literature: self-learning and reflecting (Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000; Sackney & Walker, 2006; Walker & Qian, 2006). Reflection was found to be a useful method to allow novices to "cross the bridge" successfully and stay on the right track despite all the responsibilities and the feelings of uncertainty and fear (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Walker & Qian, 2006). Crow (2007) claims that self-learning is an essential skill for novices if they were to survive a complex and continuously changing role.

Develop Leadership Skills, Attitudes, and Values

All novices except one pointed out that learning leadership skills, adopting specific leadership attitudes, and adhering to certain leadership values were part of the measures they took to help them effectively practice their role and successfully lead their schools. Empirical research on British and American novices reported that learning management and leadership skills was one of the first tasks these novices engaged in during their transition period (Crow, 2007; Daresh & Male, 2000; Kelly & Saunders, 2010). Crow (2006) posits that, in addition to learning the necessary skills to perform the job, novices should also include in their learning values and dispositions such as being culturally sensitive and committed to student learning. Crow (2006) argues that learning these values and dispositions should be part of the socialization content of the novice and therefore should be included in the preparation and induction programs. However, in this study, since novices are left alone, they are taking the initiatives to do this learning by themselves.

Taking a closer look at the skills, attitudes and values that novices in this study presented as important to learn and adopt, two aspects can be highlighted in this section. First, "adapting to the system" was considered to be an important skill by novices in public schools only. This reflects the role perception of those novices as bureaucratic executives who should conform to the top-down decisions imposed by the ministry. Second, novices in

both school types mentioned "acting as a role model" as an attitude they need to adopt as principals. The responses of the novices showed their desire to set an example for everyone around them (teachers, students, parents…) so they started paying attention to what they said and how they acted because they believed it had a great impact especially on students. In addition, these principals believed that they were not supposed to make mistakes because they occupy a leadership position. Moreover, those novices wanted to acquire as much knowledge as possible and "show" that knowledge to others. As if the principal has to be the person who knows it all, is never wrong, and models the ideal attitudes and behaviors. This mirrors these novices' conception of the principal as a "hero" and an example for others (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019).

Promote Teamwork and Develop a Vision

Almost two thirds of the novices in this study reported that they promoted teamwork for two main reasons: first, they wanted to delegate tasks to reduce the amount of work they had to do themselves and second they needed to involve teachers in decision-making. This aspect was found in Western literature on novice principals in the US and Hong Kong (Stevenson, 2006; Walker & Qian, 2006). However, the Lebanese novices always made sure to have the final say when it came to the final decisions. In fact, three of the novices commented that they already knew what they wanted but they were open to other opinions and if they were convinced by them, they would adopt them. Therefore, what they described as involving teachers in decision making seems to be in fact just consulting with the staff and asking for those teachers' input before making the final decision. This reflects that those principals still find it hard to let go of their image as the sole decision makers at the school and shift their authoritarian view of the role into a more participative approach (Karami-Akkary, 2014).

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Developing a school vision was a measure taken by half of the participating novices. Similarly, studies on Scottish and British novices reported that they involved the staff in developing a vision for the school, thus making them feel the need for change and that they are part of it (Cowie & Crawford, 2008; Kelly & Saunders, 2010). However, Lebanese novices consider it their sole responsibility to develop the vision themselves then disseminate it rather than consulting and engaging the staff around the school in forming a shared vision (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019).

Diagnose the School Culture and Learn the Rules

This sixth measure "diagnose the school culture" was mentioned by almost all of the novices in private schools only. Learning about the culture was considered a priority by British headteachers as well (Kelly & Saunders, 2010). Cheung and Walker (2006) describe how novices observe and collect data to understand the influence of the predecessor and the staff readiness for change. Novices take their time to discover the context before making any decision or implementing any change.

The seventh measure "learn the rules" was reported by the majority of novices in public schools only. This strategy was not found in the reviewed Western studies but it shows again how principal effectiveness in public schools is viewed as the bureaucratic executive who makes sure rules are being applied and abided by (Harb &Karami-Akkary, 2019). It is important to note that what is considered here by novices as a "measure" they took to make transition effective should have been part of a formal preparation, but instead novices are left alone to learn the rules. Novices took in charge their learning about the role.

Comparing the last two measures, diagnosing culture in private schools and learning the rules in public schools, affirms how the organizational context shapes the role of the school leader (Holligan et al., 2006). With the private school principals having more discretion and authority they felt enabled to diagnose the culture to prepare for introducing

changes, whereas the more restrictive context of public school principals directed the novices' priorities to learning the rules imposed on them.

Conclusion

This study explored the transition period of a sample of novice principals in Lebanese public and private schools. The main objectives were (a) to investigate who these novices are, why and how they were selected; (b) to examine how these novices were prepared for the position; (c) to uncover the challenges they encountered during their journey; (d) to find out, from the novices' perspectives, what factors positively influenced the transition period; and (e) to understand what measures these novices took to survive this period. The findings of this study showed an obvious lack of preparation and effective induction into the position leaving novices alone trying to take on the Lebanese conception of the principal's role as being a "hero" in control of the situation, while in fact they are "warriors" fighting and struggling to survive in a system that provides less than minimal support to school leaders.

The lack of preparation of novice principals can be attributed to four main reasons that emerged from the results. They include: the lack of abidance to policies in the public sector; the absence of policies regulating the process of appointment in the private sector; the highly politicized educational system; and the assumption that qualified teachers will make good leaders. First of all, in the public sector, a selection process is mandated by the law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009) which specifies the selection criteria for school principals. These criteria comprise completing a training program at the Lebanese University prior to appointment and an evaluation of the principal after three years to decide on tenure. Unfortunately, both of these criteria are not being implemented properly: the preparation program is not offered on a regular basis and the system of principal evaluation is absent. Novices are therefore stepping into principalship without any kind of formal preparation and remain this way for several

years. Secondly, in the private sector, no policies were found to regulate the appointment process neither at the national level nor at the organizational level. In fact, novices described a quick selection process that usually consists of a short interview where they are offered the position. No clear selection criteria were identified and the pre-service training requirement is not imposed on private school principals. With the absence of national effectiveness standards for principals, private school owners will choose a principal based on their own perceptions of effectiveness. Thirdly, the highly politicized educational system was also found to be affecting principals' appointment. Novices in both school types considered the support of politicians or religious figures as a factor that played a major role in their appointment. Finally, there is a widespread assumption that a teaching qualification is sufficient to become a successful leader. This shows in the selection criteria for public school principals which only require the candidate to have a teaching experience. This is also evident in the fact that more than half of the participants in this study transitioned directly from teaching to principalship without having any experience in administrative or leadership positions. Bush (2018) argues that teaching experience is not sufficient to qualify for a principal position especially in the absence of pre-service training:

> Being qualified only for the very different job of classroom teacher is no longer appropriate. If this model were followed for other careers, surgeons would be trained as nurses and pilots as flight attendants. Although competence as a teacher is necessary for school leaders, it is certainly not sufficient. (p. 68)

Despite the lack of preparation, novices entered into principalship and tried to act as "heroes." In fact, very few novices mentioned in a direct way that they felt unprepared for the role. Principals did not highlight enough their lack of preparation as the sources of most of their challenges nor directly pointed at organizational factors (beside the authority) as reasons for making their transition challenging. When asked about their preparation, they

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immediately cited either self-initiated methods or activities proposed by the school (in the private sector) without mentioning their need for a comprehensive formal training program. It is as if it is normal not to have this kind of preparation and that with a little bit of extra effort it is their responsibility to pull it off by themselves.

Although some of the challenges that those novices cited such as the relational challenges are not specific to the transition period only but were also found in studies with experienced principals (Karami-Akkary, 1997), novices still attributed those obstacles to the transition as if once they figure this out all will be well. This reflects a lack of awareness of what the actual preparation for the position, with proper orientation and induction could have done for them. Instead, novices indicated personal factors such as their professional and experiential strength as well as psychological strength as supportive factors for the transition. When describing the measures they took to have an effective transition, novices explained how they acted as role models, developed their leadership skills, and upheld leadership values. In fact, what those novices mentioned mirror the heroic personal traits that were found to be part of the Lebanese conceptions of effective leadership (Harb & Karami-Akkary, 2019) rather than the trained professional that embarks on a learning journey that includes both a pre-service component as well as an in-service induction process.

Even though those novices were trying to portray the image of a hero, a closer look at what they were experiencing shows that these newly appointed principals were fighting a lonely battle to survive their first years in the position. With the lack of awareness about their role, those novices took on a demanding set of responsibilities without much support. They felt overwhelmed and surprised by the work load. This engendered stress, uncertainty, and fear of failure. In some cases they also faced resistance from the school community. They had to face these problems and go through this period that most of them described as very difficult without adequate support. In fact, except for some sporadic activities that took place

in some of the private schools, novices were not receiving any kind of continuous guidance especially in the public sector where they were left all alone to try to figure out how to survive this transition period. So novices in both public and private schools tried to develop their own coping strategies and used all the sources of support around them (school staff, school community, other principals, and even their families and friends) to survive the very system that was supposed to be helping them. In the absence of formal preparation and planned induction, these novices were left alone to fight their own battle.

Recommendations

This section discusses a number of recommendations for principal recruitment, preparation, and induction directed at easing the transition period of newly appointed school leaders in Lebanese public and private schools. Recommendations for future research are also offered.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the findings of the study at hand, the need for rethinking the process of selecting, appointing, preparing, and orienting novices is urgent to ease the transition of beginning principals in the Lebanese context, and to increase their chances of success as effective principals. It is recommended to design a longitudinal process of building their leadership capacity, beginning with the identification of potential future leaders, and continuing with careful selection, sound preparation, induction, and ongoing professional development (Bush, 2018). In what follows is a presentation of how findings of the study at hand can inform practice in three main areas related to early-career principalship: principal recruitment, preparation, and induction.

Principal Recruitment

Findings of the study revealed a unified formal selection process for principals across public schools as stated in law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for

public school principals, 2009). Despite the implementation irregularities of this law that were presented in the study, the existing process and criteria can constitute a base that policymakers can revise and amend according to what was found regarding novices' transition.

The first step should be for policymakers to amend the law so that it applies to the process of appointment of principals in the private sector as well. In fact, in the private schools included in the study at hand neither formal selection processes nor formal selection criteria were identified. Personal connections and membership in the school religious community played a major role in the selection of principals. It is highly recommended that policies regulate principals' appointment in private schools to ensure that minimal requirements of competency are being met when choosing who will run those schools.

The second step for policymakers should be to raise the standards when it comes to selection criteria. In addition to the requirements already stated in the law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009), criteria should include administrative experience for at least two years and preferably as assistant principal. In fact, six out of the twelve novices in this study considered experience in an administrative position as a factor that facilitated their transition, whereas only four novices regarded teaching experience as a supportive factor. In addition, Crow (2006) recommends a mediated entry of principals to the profession through the role of assistant principal to avoid stress and inefficiency. Pounder and Crow (2005) also emphasize the importance of this phase as an apprenticeship for future leaders. By raising the standards of the requirements for selection, the pool of candidates to choose from will be made of more competent educators. Therefore, even if politicians or prominent religious figures interfere, as is the case in Lebanon, the candidate they will back up will already be qualified (Karami-Akkary, 1997).

The third step concerns the eligibility test that, according to law N°73 (Criteria for granting administrative compensation for public school principals, 2009), all candidates to principalship are required to pass. The test includes sitting for an interview with a committee, preparing a candidature project (an improvement plan for the school the candidate is applying) and a professional portfolio. Two amendments can be introduced at this stage by policymakers. First, in order to accommodate for the process to take place in private schools, the committee members should include the people in charge of the recruitment process in the concerned private school as well as a representative of the ministry to make sure all steps of the process are being abided by as stated by the law. Second, in addition to the first interview with the committee, the candidate should sit for a second interview in the presence of representatives of the school community such as parents and teachers' committees. Involving teachers and parents in choosing the principal is recommended based on findings of the study. In fact, A1 mentioned that the short fifteen-minute interview with the committee at the ministry is not always sufficient to evaluate the candidate's competency, thus another interview could help in getting a clearer picture of the applicant's eligibility for the position. Another reason for involving parents and teachers is the fact that the relational aspect of the job was highlighted by novices in this study: the relational challenges they faced with teachers and parents and the fact that building relations with the school community was one of the measures they took to make their transition easier. Moreover, the study showed that teachers want to have a say in the choice of the principal: in fact, two of the novices in public schools said that what motivated them to apply for principalship was not the position itself, but to become principals in their own school because, according to them, they did not want someone incompetent to take on the position.

The fourth step would be for policymakers to make completing the pre-service training a mandatory requirement for principals in both sectors. The training process will be discussed in the following subsection.

To conclude, educators who fit the above-mentioned selection criteria can apply and go through the process of selection to be appointed in public and private schools. Another recommendation here is for school leaders whose role also is to identify within their staff talented educators who have the potential of becoming principals in the future so as to encourage them and maybe start training them, as Bush (2018) argues that leadership succession should not be left for chance.

Principal Preparation

The lack of preparation and awareness of the role that showed throughout novices' responses in this study underscores the need for a pre-service training program for principals in both public and private schools. In fact, Crow (2007) demonstrated in his study the positive effect that the national preparation program had on novice headteachers in the UK and how it helped them tackle first year challenges. In addition, Bush (2018) argued that effective leadership preparation "makes a difference" and that it is a "moral responsibility" (p. 68). Pounder and Crow (2005) contended that school leaders' preparation is "everyone's responsibility" and called for a systemic approach to develop and sustain a "pipeline" of competent school administrators (p. 60).

In Lebanon, completion of the Leadership Development Program is a requirement for being appointed as a principal in public schools. It is designed for the pre-service training of principals in public schools. However, several implementation irregularities were noted in the study, namely training not conducted unless there is a sufficient number of novices, training taking place only in Faculty of Education of the Lebanese University in Beirut, and problems of funding, which result in novices taking on the position for several years before getting

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adequate training. In private schools, novices count on graduate programs offered by different universities across Lebanon for their professional socialization. However, enrolling in such programs is not a requirement but an initiative took by the novice. The absence of national standards for principal effectiveness makes it difficult to assess whether these novices are receiving the preparation needed to perform in the Lebanese context. As a result, it is recommended for policymakers, trainers, and university professors to take the steps described below.

The first step is for preparation to be mandated by requiring through policies that aspiring principals in both public and private schools go through a pre-service training program. The second step is to review the currently adopted leadership development program by evaluating its impact on practice for principals who already took it and by using the results of this study and subsequent contextually grounded studies on novices' experiences to tailor the program based on the challenges and supportive factors cited by those novices. Trainers should review the knowledge, skills, and dispositions taught in the program to see whether they respond to practitioners' needs. For instance, novices in this study expressed their sense of a huge responsibility coupled with stress and how much their new position has affected their personal lives. For some they could not even leave the job behind at the end of the workday and even on weekends and in the summer vacation. Therefore, in addition to focusing on technical aspects of principalship, trainers should include in the preparation program the emotional dimension of the work such as stress management and creating healthy work environments: novices should be made aware of the amount of responsibility in their new role and the stress that accompanies it and then informed on ways to manage stress in the work life and in the work place (Spillane & Lee, 2014). To further help novices, trainers should identify what leadership style is more effective in the Lebanese context to

ease novices' transition and at the same time promote student learning (instructional /
distributed / transformational).

After refining the program, the next step that is recommended is to make this pre-service training part of a graduate study program that will be offered regularly at the Lebanese University instead of waiting for external funders to sponsor limited training programs where a limited number of novices participate. Moreover, other universities across Lebanon offering graduate studies in educational leadership should review their academic programs and incorporate the core requirements of the Leadership Development Program so that a novice who enrolls in any of these programs receives preparation according to the national standards of the Leadership Development Program.

To sum up, what is recommended in the area of principal preparation is more uniformity in policies for public and private schools and in programs offered by universities. In fact, Bush (2018) contends that good practice needs to emerge and be generalized to ensure adequate preparation of novices on a national level. However, because of the unique organizational contexts of schools, more personalization will be needed in induction and accompanying novices in their first years on the job. This aspect will be discussed in the next subsection.

Principal Induction

Results of the study show that novices are left alone to learn the role and deal with the challenges that they face. Effective induction can ease the transition period by providing continuous and individualized support for novices instead of leaving them to "sink or swim" (Bush, 2018, p. 69). Therefore, it is recommended that professional trainers and university professors work on designing an effective induction program that would enable Lebanese novices in both public and private schools to customize their learning to their personal needs and those of their school. This program should be mandated across schools in Lebanon.

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In order to design this program, trainers and professors need to consider the nature of the process of induction and the providers. The following questions need to be answered: In what form will induction be provided? Who will provide induction? What will the main focus and purpose of the program be? In addition, when designing the program, the needs of novices as adult professionals should be taken into consideration in order to find the best methods that will enhance novices' learning. In fact, the literature on how professionals learn has underscored the centrality of experience, reflection, and context. Professionals learn best on the job by being actively engaged in practice. That learning is shaped by the context and critical reflection (Webster-Wright, 2009).

Results of the study at hand show that novices need someone that can guide them in the different facets of their role, someone they can trust and that is present with them throughout their first years to provide support and assistance. Literature on principal induction programs suggests mentoring as an effective induction method for novice principals. Pocklington and Weindling (1996) claim that "mentoring offers a way of speeding up the process of transition to headship" (p. 189). Mattar (2012b) also calls for continuous mentoring so that novices can "share their problems and find satisfactory solutions by taking fruitful advice from more experienced leaders" (p. 528). Moreover, Bush (2018) argues that mentoring provides a "personalized" induction process that is "co-constructed" by the novice (p.69). This process will be more effective than a "one-size-fits-all" approach.

Once the nature of the induction process is identified, there is a need to decide on who will provide induction. A professional mentor could be an experienced and successful principal or one of the university professors or trainers who were involved in the novices' preparation and who will stay with the principal in the first years.

Finally, the main focus and purpose of the induction program should be set. The program needs to focus on ongoing professional learning of the novice with the purpose of

school improvement (Webster-Wright, 2009). It will help the novice learn the role in the specific context of the school.

To sum up, the induction program in the form of job-embedded learning experiences supported by mentoring will be an ongoing process that will provide a personalized and customized assistance to the novice. Novices must also be involved in building this program depending on what the context they will be in will require and the challenges they will face (Hobson & Sharp, 2005; Webster-Wright, 2009). It is hoped that this model could ease the stress, fear, loneliness, and insecurity expressed by novices in this study.

Recommendations for Further Research

One of the main reasons for conducting this research study was to fill the gap in the literature regarding Lebanese novices' transition into principalship and to shed light on what is needed to help those novices perform more effectively based on contextually grounded knowledge. This study attempted to fill this gap by investigating the personal and professional characteristics of a sample of novices in Lebanese public and private schools, the processes and criteria of their selection, their preparation for the role, the challenges they faced, the factors that positively influenced their transition, and the measures they adopted to ease the transition.

Given the absence of research on novice principals in the Lebanese literature, this study adds to the existing body of literature on Lebanese principals by highlighting the transition period of novice principals and the different facets of their socialization in the Lebanese context. What this study revealed, even if based on a small sample, constitutes a first step towards the development of a culturally grounded conceptual understanding of the socialization of Lebanese novice principals and a starting point for further research on the early-career stage principalship in Lebanon.

However, this study had limitations such as the size of the sample and the fact that focus group interviews could not be conducted. Therefore, additional research needs to build on the current study. The next step would be to replicate this research but with two modifications: selecting a larger sample of novices and conducting focus group interviews. In fact, a larger sample of participants is recommended in order to represent more diverse contexts especially for private schools since all those included in this study belonged to religious communities. It would be interesting to explore what other selection processes and criteria are adopted in non-religious private schools especially that findings of the study at hand showed that no policy or law governs the appointment process in the private sector. Moreover, conducting focus group interviews is suggested so that participants get the opportunity to talk to each other, hear each other, and maybe express ideas or opinions that would not emerge in individual interviews thus adding richness to the findings (Gall et al., 2010). Such research will help in further validating (or refuting) the findings of the study at hand.

After this next step is completed, further research can be conducted to explore novices' transition from the perspectives of policy makers and trainers. More specifically, the study can focus on the novices' appointment and preparation processes as well as the challenges they face. Examining the viewpoints of policy makers and trainers and comparing them with novices' perspectives might help get a clearer understanding of the results of the study at hand, namely the lack of preparation of novices who are left alone to make it through principalship.

Once there is sufficient evidence on the challenges facing Lebanese novice principals in various contexts, future studies can be conducted to examine the Leadership Development Program designed to train principals in public schools. A thorough analysis of the objectives and content of the program and a comparison with what the novices actually face in their

schools can help refine the program to address novices' needs. An impact assessment of this program is also needed.

Another line of research that can be derived from the findings of this study concerns the anticipatory socialization of novices. Since nine out of twelve participants viewed their previous professional experience as an important factor that facilitated their transition, investigating how certain aspects of their experiences (e.g. school type, position, content area taught, and variety of experiences with different student groups) and their motivations (whether they considered principalship as a career objective or not) could have possible implications for how those novices perceive, learn and enact their role (Crow, 2006). All the above will represent important steps towards understanding and improving transition into principalship in Lebanon.

APPENDIX A

LETTER TO INVITE NOVICE PRINCIPALS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

Invitation to Participate in a Research Study

This notice is for an AUB-IRB Approved Research Study

for Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at AUB.

(ra10@aub.edu.lb)

It is not an Official Message from AUB

I am inviting you to participate in a research study, which is titled " Transitioning to Principalship: the Experiences of Lebanese Novice School Principals", that explores the experiences of Lebanese novice principals, more specifically (a) the characteristics of novice principals in Lebanon (educational background, prior work experience, and leadership preparation), (b) the selection criteria and process, (c) the challenges they face as they transition into their new roles and the strategies adopted to face them, and (d) the factors that positively influence this transition period.

This research is being conducted for the purpose of a Master's thesis study in Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the American University of Beirut.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire with demographic information and participate in an individual interview to describe your experience.

You are invited because we are targeting novice principals (in their first three years on the job) in both public and private schools in Lebanon.

The estimated time to complete this survey is approximately 5 minutes whereas the individual interview will take around 60 minutes.

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

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the investigator/research team (Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at 01-350000 ext. 3058 or by email: ra10@aub.edu.lb or Miss Mirna Maatouk at 70-968639 or by email: mim18@mail.aub.edu).

Kindly consider forwarding this invitation to other novice principals (in the first three years on the job) in both public and private Lebanese schools or provide the research team with eligible novice principals' contact information after securing their approval.

APPENDIX B

LETTER TO INVITE ADMINISTRATORS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE RESEARCH STUDY

<u>Invitation to Participate in a Research Study</u>

This notice is for an AUB-IRB Approved Research Study

for Dr. <u>Rima Karami Akkary</u> at AUB.

(ra10@aub.edu.lb)

It is not an Official Message from AUB

I am inviting you to participate in a research study, which is titled " Transitioning to Principalship: the Experiences of Lebanese Novice School Principals", that explores the experiences of Lebanese novice principals, more specifically (a) the characteristics of novice principals in Lebanon (educational background, prior work experience, and leadership preparation), (b) the selection criteria and process, (c) the challenges they face as they transition into their new roles and the strategies adopted to face them, and (d) the factors that positively influence this transition period.

This research is being conducted for the purpose of a Master's thesis study in Educational Administration and Policy Studies at the American University of Beirut.

You will be asked to participate in an individual interview to describe your experience in novice principals' recruitment, selection, training and induction.

You are invited because we are aiming for an in-depth understanding of the selection criteria and processes of novice principals in public and private schools in Lebanon as well as the training programs provided to prepare them for their role.

The individual interview will take around 60 minutes.

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

If you have any questions about this study, you may contact the investigator/research team (Dr. Rima Karami Akkary at 01-350000 ext. 3058 or by email: ra10@aub.edu.lb or Miss Mirna Maatouk at 70-968639 or by email: mim18@mail.aub.edu)

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

I - School Profile

1. School type:

   a. Public

   b. Private

2. School level:

   a. Elementary

   b. Middle school

   c. High school

   d. K-12

   e. Other: _____

3. School ownership (if private):

   a. Religious institution

   b. Secular institution

   c. Other: _____

4. School location:

   a. Urban

   b. Rural

5. Year of establishment: _____

6. Number of students: _____

7. Gender of students:

   a. Female

   b. Male

   c. Both

8. Number of teachers: _____

9. Number of administrative staff: _____

II - Principal Background

1. Age: _____

2. Gender: _____

3. Degree: _____

4. Specialization: _____

5. University / Institution: _____

6. Professional experience:

    a. Educational field   Position: _____   School:

    _____

                             Number of years: _____

    b. Non-educational field Position: _____ Number of years: _____

7. Years of experience as a school principal in total: _____

8. Years of experience as a school principal at the current school: _____

9. Have you received any kind of training (academic / nonacademic) in the field of

educational administration prior to becoming a school principal?

Yes ☐   No ☐   If yes, please specify the type and duration of the training:

               _____

APPENDIX D

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PRINCIPALS

1. How did u become the principal of this school?

Possible probes: Describe the selection and appointment process. In your opinion, on what basis were you selected? Why do you think you were appointed at this school? Was there someone else who would have deserved this position? Why? What did u do to get this job? Was this one of your career goals?

   a. How did you learn about your role?

   Possible probes: How did you "learn the ropes" of the role at your school? How did you acquire the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to be effective in your specific school? How did you know "how things are done" at your school?

   b. In what ways did taking on this position change you?

   Possible probes: What did you learn on the personal and the professional level? Were there any personal traits you had to give up or to acquire to survive this transition phase?

   c. How do you describe the transition from being a _____ (recent position e.g. teacher, coordinator, assistant principal…) to being a school principal?

   Possible probes: Please give an account of the steps involved, the key players and surrounding conditions.

2. What is your vision for yourself as a successful principal?

Possible probes: How do you perceive your leadership style? Do you view yourself as a manager? An instructional leader? A change leader? Why? What are the effective characteristics that you have or you aspire to acquire as a school principal?

3. How were you prepared to take on this position?

Possible probes: Describe your formal and informal preparing experiences (role models, training, university courses, position as a deputy, prior professional experiences…). Explain how you acquired the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to perform the principal's role (provide examples). Looking back at this transition period, what type of training do you think would have benefited you the most?

4. What factors were important in facilitating your transition?

Possible probes: Which aspect of the transition seems the most critical to you? In what ways was it easy for you? Were there any positive surprises encountered during this period? List some of the personal and / or contextual factors that helped you during this phase. Give examples of the most important factor in your opinion.

5. What challenges did you face as a principal at this school?

Possible probes: What makes_____ a challenge? What are the situations that you would warn an aspiring principal of?

6. What strategies did you adopt to face those challenges?

Possible probes: What specific skills or techniques did you learn or acquire to survive this transition phase (reflecting, self-learning, taking time out…)?

7. From your perspective, what do you think you accomplished during your first years at this school?

Possible probes: What aspects of the school were improved? Why did you consider those as a priority? What do you plan on improving next?

8. What advice would you give to aspiring principals?

Possible probes: Are there any particular steps to take to make the transition smoother? What should they pay attention to? What particular knowledge, skills and dispositions do they need to be equipped with to go through this transition phase successfully?

9. Is there anything else that you wish to add that I haven't asked you about and that you want to share with me?

APPENDIX E

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR ADMINISTRATORS

Individual interviews will be conducted with two administrators in charge of selecting principals in public schools. The purpose of these interviews is to further explore the process of principal selection, appointment, preparation and induction of novices into their role.

The following list of questions will guide the interview:

1. What are the criteria followed for principals' selection?

Possible probes: Are there any specific educational or professional requirements for becoming a principal? Are there any required knowledge, skills, and dispositions that the candidates need to be equipped with? Are there specific qualities and values that you look for when considering someone for a principal position?

2. What are the formal processes followed for principals' selection and appointment?

Possible probes: Is there any recruitment strategy in place? What are the steps followed?

3. What is being done to prepare novice principals before taking on the job?

Possible probes: Is there an induction program in place? Do you provide novices with training? Do they have access to university courses / programs? Do they have internship opportunities before taking on the job? Do veteran principals play a role in preparing novices?

4. Is there any follow up during the first years?

Possible probe: Do you continue to provide novices with any assistance / training after they take on the job?

APPENDIX F

MEMBER CHECKING INTERVIEW PROTOCOL FOR PRINCIPALS

Introductory ideas

The purpose of this interview is to seek your feedback on the conclusions I have reached after analyzing the data collected from artifacts, individual interviews with principals, and individual interviews with administrators in charge of selecting principals in both public and private schools. I will be sharing with you the results which include the initial categories and themes generated after analysis of the collected data so that you comment on the findings and check for accuracy. I am interested in your views to clarify discrepancies and to validate the major themes that capture the experiences of novice principals in Lebanon as they transition into their new roles.

This interview will take around 30-45 minutes. The information to be exchanged during this interview will be used only for the purposes of this study and confidentiality is assured.

Core questions

1. **Please comment on the findings concerning the professional characteristics of novice school principals in Lebanon in terms of academic preparation and prior professional experiences. How would you interpret such results?**
   Possible probes: Do you agree with these results? Why? Why not? Do you think these results provide a valid description of Lebanese novice principals' characteristics?

2. **Please comment on the findings regarding the formal and informal processes and criteria followed for principals' selection, appointment, preparation and induction into their role.**

Possible probes: In your opinion, is there anything that needs to be changed, added/removed so that these processes and criteria capture what happens in Lebanese schools?

3. **Please comment on the findings concerning the challenges experienced by Lebanese novice principals as they transition into their leadership roles and the coping strategies adopted to confront them. Do you think the generated categories are representative of your own experience as a novice principal?**

Possible probes: Do you agree with all the generated categories? Do you have anything to add? Do you recommend changing anything?

4. **Please comment on the findings concerning the factors (personal and contextual) that positively influence Lebanese novice principals as they transition into their role. Do they represent your own views?**

Possible probes: Do you have anything to add to these factors? Do you recommend changing anything?

Concluding question

Would you like to add, modify or clarify anything? Do you think there is something that we have missed?

APPENDIX G

CRITERIA FOR GRANTING ADMINISTRATIVE

COMPENSATION FOR PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPALS, LAW

N°73 (2009)

المملكة الاردنية الهاشمية»، شرط المعاملة بالمثل لجهة الضريبة أو الرسم المتعلق بخدمة المسافرين الى المطارات الثلاث.

المادة الثانية:

يعمل بهذا القانون فور نشره في الجريدة الرسمية.

بعيدا في ٢٣ نيسان ٢٠٠٩

الامضاء: ميشال سليمان

صدر عن رئيس الجمهورية

رئيس مجلس الوزراء

الامضاء: فؤاد السنيورة

رئيس مجلس الوزراء

الامضاء فؤاد السنيورة

قانون رقم ٧٣

تحديد شروط إعطاء

مديري المدارس الرسمية

تعويض إدارة

أقر مجلس النواب،

وينشر رئيس الجمهورية القانون التالي نصه:

المادة الاولى:

يعطى مديرو المدارس الرسمية الذين يتولون مهام الادارة وفقا للشروط المنصوص عليها في المادة الثالثة من هذا القانون تعويض إدارة مقداره ١٥٪ (خمسة عشر بالمئة) من الراتب ابتداء من تاريخ صدور هذا القانون.

المادة الثانية:

يقصد بعبارة «المدارس الرسمية» من أجل تطبيق أحكام هذا القانون:

١ ــ رياض الأطفال

٢ ــ المدارس الابتدائية

٣ ــ المدارس المتوسطة

٤ ــ المدارس الثانوية

٥ ــ دور المعلمين والمعلمات

٦ ــ المدارس والمعاهد المهنية والفنية

٧ ــ المجمّعات المدرسية

المادة الثالثة:

يشترط في من يعين مديرا لمدرسة رسمية:

أولا: أن يكون:

أ) ــ من موظفي الملاكات التعليمية.

ب) ــ من حملة الاجازة التعليمية أو الجامعية أو من خريجي دور المعلمين والمعلمات الذين مارسوا التعليم مدة خمس سنوات على الأقل بعد دخولهم الملاك، أو ممن مارسوا مدة عشر سنوات على الأقل بعد دخولهم الملاك.

ج) ــ غير محكوم خلال السنوات الخمس الأخيرة بأية عقوبة من عقوبات الدرجة الثانية المنصوص عليها في نظام الموظفين أو بالعقوبتين الأخيرتين معا من عقوبات الدرجة الأولى بحدهما الأقصى أو مرتين بأي منهما بحدها الأقصى.

د) ــ مجيدا للغة العربية ومحسنا إحدى اللغتين الأجنبيتين الفرنسية أو الانكليزية.

ثانيا: أن يتقدم بترشيحه لتولي الادارة خلال المهلة المحددة لقبول طلبات الترشيح.

ثالثا: أن يجتاز بنجاح اختيار أهلية تحدد شروط وأصول إجرائه بقرار من الوزير.

رابعا: أن يجتاز بنجاح قبل توليه مهام

الادارة دورة إعداد في الادارة التربوية تنظمها كلية التربية في الجامعة اللبنانية. أو أن يكون ممن تابعوا دورات تدريبية خاصة تعنى بأمور إدارية وتربوية نظمتها وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي على أن لا تكون مدتها قد تدنت عن شهرين وعلى أن يوضع نظام للدورات التي ستتم مستقبلا، وذلك بمرسوم يتم إصداره تطبيقا لأحكام هذا القانون.

المادة الرابعة:

يعين المدير بقرار يصدر عن وزير التربية والتعليم العالي بناء على اقتراح المدير العام المختص وبناء على اقتراح رئيس المركز التربوي للبحوث والإنماء فيما عنى مديري دور المعلمين والمعلمات.

المادة الخامسة:

يخضع مديرو المدارس لنظام تقييم الاداء كل ثلاث سنوات.

ويعفى من مهام الادارة كل مدير أثبتت تقارير تقييم الاداء أن أداءه كان وسطا وما دون خلال سنة دراسية واحدة.

المادة السادسة:

يستفيد من تعويض الادارة المنصوص عليه في المادة الأولى من هذا القانون أفراد الهيئة التعليمية في الحالات الآتية:

ــ الذين كانوا يقومون بمهام الادارة قبل صدور القانون رقم ٧٧٧ تاريخ ٢٠٠٦/١١/١١ واستمروا بتأدية مهامهم بعد بدء العمل به، وذلك اعتبارا من تاريخ ٢٠٠٦/١١/١١ وإن كان تكليفهم غير مستوف للأصول المرعية الإجراء قبل ١/٧/٢٠٠١ تاريخ بدء العمل بالقانون رقم ٣٢٠ تاريخ ٢٠٠١/٤/٢٠.

ــ المكلفون أساسا بمهام الادارة وفقا للأصول اعتبارا من ٢٠٠١/٧/١ تاريخ بدء العمل بأحكام القانون ٣٢٠ تاريخ ٢٠٠١/٤/٢٠، وكانوا عند البدء بتطبيقه في وضعية غير المستفيدين من تعويض الادارة لأنهم نقلوا الى مدارس أخرى أو فروع لها أصبحت مركز عملهم وقاموا بمهام الادارة فيها.

ــ أفراد الهيئة التعليمية الذين تولوا مهام الادارة بعد ٢٠٠٦/١١/١١، وذلك من تاريخ تكليفهم بتلك المهام، وإن لم تراع في تكليفهم الأصول المرعية الاجراء.

يعين القائمون بمهام إدارة المدارس الرسمية حاليا والمكلفون بذلك قبل وبعد ٢٠٠٦/١١/١١ مديرين لهذه المدارس وذلك بقرار يتخذه وزير التربية والتعليم العالي خلال سنة من تاريخ صدور القانون على أن يكون كل منهم مستوفيا الشروط المحددة في البندين الأول والرابع من المادة الثالثة من هذا القانون.

المادة السابعة:

تحدد دقائق تطبيق أحكام هذا القانون والشروط الخاصة لتعيين مديري المعاهد والمدارس المهنية بمراسيم تتخذ في مجلس الوزراء بناء على اقتراح وزير التربية والتعليم العالي.

المادة الثامنة:

يلغى القانون رقم ٣٢٠ تاريخ ٢٠٠١/٤/٢٠ وتعديلاته الصادرة بالقانون رقم ٧٧٧ تاريخ ٢٠٠٦/١١/١١.

المادة التاسعة:

يعمل بهذا القانون فور نشره في الجريدة الرسمية.

<div dir="rtl">

بعبدا في ٢٣ نيسان ٢٠٠٩

الامضاء: ميشال سليمان

صدر عن رئيس الجمهورية

رئيس مجلس الوزراء

الامضاء: فؤاد السنيورة

رئيس مجلس الوزراء

الامضاء فؤاد السنيورة

ــــــــــــ◆ــــــــــــ

اتفاقية

بين وزارة العمل في الجمهورية اللبنانية ووزارة القوى العاملة والهجرة في جمهورية مصر العربية في مجال التعاون الفني وتنقل الايدي العاملة

توثيقا لأواصر الاخوة والتعاون بين حكومة الجمهورية اللبنانية وحكومة جمهورية مصر العربية،

وانطلاقا من روح التضامن العربي،

واستمرارا للعلاقات الوثيقة بين الشعبين الشقيقين،

ورغبة منهما في تنمية وتطوير اقتصاديات كل من البلدين،

فقد اتفق الجانبان على ما يلي:

المادة الاولى

تقوم وزارة القوى العاملة والهجرة في جمهورية مصر العربية ووزارة العمل في الجمهورية اللبنانية بالتعاون المباشر فيما بينهما لتسهيل وتبسيط اجراءات استخدام عمال كلا البلدين، ووضع القواعد والنظم التي تكفل وضع احكام هذه المذكرة موضع التنفيذ.

المادة الثانية

يكون استخدام القوى العاملة المصرية

بعبدا في ٢٣ نيسان ٢٠٠٩

الامضاء: ميشال سليمان

صدر عن رئيس الجمهورية

رئيس مجلس الوزراء

الامضاء: فؤاد السنيورة

رئيس مجلس الوزراء

الامضاء فؤاد السنيورة

ــــــــــــ◆ــــــــــــ

قانون رقم ٧٤

الاجازة للحكومة ابرام اتفاقية

بين

وزارة العمل في الجمهورية اللبنانية ووزارة القوى العاملة والهجرة في جمهورية مصر العربية في مجال التعاون الفني وتنقل الايدي العاملة

أقر مجلس النواب،

وينشر رئيس الجمهورية القانون التالي نصه:

المادة الاولى:

أجيز للحكومة ابرام اتفاقية بين وزارة العمل في الجمهورية اللبنانية ووزارة القوى العاملة والهجرة في جمهورية مصر العربية في مجال التعاون الفني وتنقل الايدي العاملة، الموقعة في القاهرة بتاريخ ٢٠٠٨/١٠/٣٠، والمرفقة ربطا.

المادة الثانية:

يعمل بهذا القانون فور نشره في الجريدة الرسمية.

</div>

APPENDIX H

CRITERIA AND GUIDELINES FOR CONDUCTING THE

ELIGIBILITY TEST FOR A CANDIDATE TO THE POSITION OF

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, DECREE N° 1393 (2008)

الجمهورية اللبنانية
وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي
الوزير

قرار رقم ١٣٩٢/١٣

شروط وأصول إجراء إختبار أهلية المرشح لإدارة مدرسة رسمية
من مدارس التعليم العام

إن وزير التربية والتعليم العالي،

بناء على المرسوم رقم ١٨ تاريخ ٢٠٠٨/٧/١١ (تشكيل الحكومة) ،

بناء على القانون رقم ٣٢٠ تاريخ ٢٠٠١/٤/٢٠ ولا سيما المادة الثالثة منه، (إعطاء مديري المدارس الرسمية تعويض إدارة)،

بناء على إقتراح المدير العام للتربية،

وبعد إستشارة مجلس شورى الدولة (الرأي رقم ٢٣٤/٢٠٠٧-٢٠٠٨ تاريخ ٢٠٠٨/٩/٢٤)

يقرر ما يلي:

<u>المادة الأولى</u>: يخضع المرشحون لتولي إدارة مدرسة رسمية من مدارس التعليم العام (المدارس الثانوية، المدارس المتوسطة، المدارس الابتدائية ورياض الاطفال) المحددة في المادة ٢ من القانون رقم ٣٢٠ تاريخ ٢٠٠١/٤/٢٠ لاختبار أهلية يتضمن:

١– مقابلة مع لجنة اختبار أهلية	١٥ علامة	التقييل ٢
٢– مشروع الترشح	٥ علامات	التقييل ١
٣– دراسة ملف	٢٠ علامة	التقييل ١

تؤلف اللجنة بقرار من وزير التربية والتعليم العالي من:

– المدير العام للتربية رئيساً

– مدير التعليم المختص مقرراً

– رئيس المنطقة التربوية المعنية (عضواً)

– عضوين اختصاصيين في مجال التربية والتعليم مشهود لهما بالكفاءة

– عضو من المركز التربوي للبحوث والانماء بناء على لائحة ترشيح من ثلاثة أسماء يرفعها رئيس المركز التربوي للبحوث والانماء

المادة الثانية: تتضمن المقابلة مع لجنة اختبار الأهلية طرح أسئلة على المرشح بقصد التعرف على شخصيته وما يملك من إمكانيات: علمية، تربوية، ، إدارية وثقافية تؤهله لتولي مهام إدارة المدرسة الرسمية وعلى مدى معرفته بالأنظمة التي ترعى المدارس الرسمية بشكل عام ، وتعطى له علامات بنتيجة المقابلة وفق المعايير التالية:

الحضور: (المظهر العام – الشخصية – الانفعال)	5 علامات
التعبير الكلامي(وضوح و ملاءمة الجواب)	5 علامات
الذكاء – المنطق (تسلسل وتنظيم الأفكار)	5 علامات

تضع اللجنة العلامة من صفر إلى عشرين وتضرب بالتثقيل المقابل لها المذكور في المادة الأولى في هذا القرار.

المادة الثالثة: تضع اللجنة محضرا بنتائج المرشحين في المقابلة يتضمن العلامة التي وضعها كل من أعضاء اللجنة لكل مرشح إضافة إلى العلامة النهائية المعتمدة (متوسط علامات المرشح) ويعتبر غير مقبول كل مرشح نال دون العشرة على عشرين.

المادة الرابعة: تدرس اللجنة مشروع الترشح الذي يجب على كل مرشح أن يسلمه خطيا من صفحتين أو ثلاث صفحات أثناء المقابلة مع لجنة اختبار الأهلية ويجب أن يتضمن رؤيته لكيفية تطوير المدرسة التي ترشح لتولي إدارتها.

المادة الخامسة: تدرس اللجنة الملف الشخصي لكل مرشح، وتعطي للشهادات الأعلى وللخبرات وللمؤهلات التي يحملها وللدورات التي أنجزها العلامات المستحقة وفقا لما يلي:

1. شهادة الدكتوراه في الإدارة التربوية	8 علامات
2. الشهادة التي تفوق الأجازة التعليمية أو ما يعادلها في اختصاص الإدارة التربوية	7 علامات
3. الشهادة التي تفوق الإجازة التعليمية أو ما يعادلها	6 علامات
4. الإجازة التعليمية أو ما يعادلها	5 علامات
5. الإجازة الجامعية أو ما يعادلها	4 علامات
6. الشهادة التعليمية المتوسطة أو ما يعادلها	3 علامات
7. الشهادة التعليمية الابتدائية أو ما يعادلها	علامتان
8. الخبرة التعليمية أو العملية عن كل سنة فوق العشر سنوات	ربع علامة
على أن لايزيد مجموع علامات الخبرة عن أربع علامات	
9 . دورة في الشؤون التربوية أو الإدارية أو المعلوماتية	علامتان

10. كما يعطى علامتان للمرشح الذي يثبت ملفه الشخصي أنه غير محكوم بأي عقوبة من العقوبات غير المانعة للترشيح لتولي إدارة مدرسة رسمية.

المادة السادسة: فور انتهاء اللجنة من دراسة الملفات الشخصية تنظم محضرا بالنتائج النهائية يتضمن ترتيب المرشحين وفقا لتسلسل مجموع العلامات لكل منهم مع بيان تفصيلي بها وترفعه الى وزير التربية والتعليم العالي.

المادة السابعة: ينشر هذا القرار ويبلغ حيث تدعو الحاجة ويعمل به من تاريخ صدوره.

٦/١٠/٨

وزير التربية والتعليم العالي

بهية الحريري.

APPENDIX I

SAMPLE OF INTERVIEW EVALUATION FORM FOR THE

PUBLIC SCHOOL PRINCIPAL SELECTION

وزارة التربية والتعليم العالي
المديرية العامة للتربية
مديرية التعليم الثانوي

إختبار أهلية المرشحين لتولي مهام إدارة ثانوية رسمية

تاريخ المقابلة :

المركز الشاغر :   إدارة ثانوية   الرسمية

إسـم المرشح :

العلامـة النهـائيـة	التثقيل	5	4	3	2	1	العلامـة / التقييـم
	1						الحضـور
							المظهـر العـام
							الشخصيـة
							الإنفعـال
	1						التعبير الكلامي
							وضـوح الجواب
							ملاءمـة الجواب
	1						الذكــاء
							المنطـق
							تسلسل تنظيم الأفكـار

العلامـة / 15   التثقيـل 2   العلامـة / 30

الاسـم :

التوقيـع :

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