

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES OF AN  
EXTERNALLY MANDATED CHANGE PROCESS: A CASE  
STUDY OF A LEBANESE PRIVATE SCHOOL

by  
HODA YOUSSEF HOUSSAMI

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
to the Department of Education  
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon  
April 2023

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

UNDERSTANDING THE CHALLENGES OF AN  
EXTERNALLY MANDATED CHANGE PROCESS: A CASE  
STUDY OF A LEBANESE PRIVATE SCHOOL

by  
HODA YOUSSEF HOUSSAMI

Approved by:



---

Dr. Lina Khalil, Assistant Professor  
Department of Education

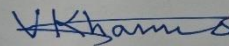
Advisor



---

Dr. Rima Karami Akkary, Associate Professor  
Department of Education

Committee member



---

Dr. Vivian Khamis, Professor  
Department of Education

Committee member

Date of thesis defense: April 20, 2023

# AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

## THESIS RELEASE FORM

Student Name:         Houssami        Hoda        Youssef          
                            Last                    First                    Middle

I authorize the American University of Beirut, to: (a) reproduce hard or electronic copies of my thesis; (b) include such copies in the archives and digital repositories of the University; and (c) make freely available such copies to third parties for research or educational purposes:

- As of the date of submission
- One year from the date of submission of my thesis.
- Two years from the date of submission of my thesis.
- Three years from the date of submission of my thesis.

*Hoda H* May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature Date

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am honored to have completed my master's degree in educational administration and policy studies at the American University of Beirut (AUB) after more than a decade of work experience in education. This journey of learning and growth would not have been possible without the support of the AUB community, to whom I extend my deepest thankfulness.

First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to my advisor, Dr. Lina Khalil, for her exceptional assistance and positive encouragement throughout the major milestone of my research journey. Her expertise, patience, and helpful feedback have been critical in helping me navigate the challenges of pursuing a master's degree while juggling work and family responsibilities.

I would also like to express my heartfelt recognition to Dr. Rima Karami- Akkary, the chairperson of the Department of Education, who has been an outstanding mentor, an inspiration, and the reason why I chose to pursue this program. Dr. Rima's continuous guidance, wealth of knowledge and unwavering commitment to excellence have been instrumental in shaping my thinking and refining my research. She has provided me with invaluable coaching throughout my academic journey, and I am thankful for her contributions to my success.

I would like to thank Dr. Vivian Khamis for serving on my committee and providing me with useful comments on my thesis. Her expertise and constructive criticism have been essential in improving the quality of my work.

Additionally, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the case study school and the participants who graciously volunteered their time and expertise to support my research. Without their contributions, this study could not have been achieved.

Finally, I must express my very profound gratitude to my family, friends and to my partner for providing me with unfailing support throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without them. Thank you.

# ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Hoda Youssef Houssami for

Master of Arts

Major: Educational Administration  
and Policy Studies

Title: Understanding the Challenges of an Externally Mandated Change Process: A Case Study of a Lebanese Private School.

Change in educational organizations has always confronted myriads of challenges (Hargreaves, 2005). It is a complex process that is accompanied with messiness and chaos (Fullan, 2020). Among those challenges, scholars repeatedly argue that teacher resistance is one of the main problems that obstructs change and school improvement (Glickman et al., 2007).

Utilizing Fuller's concerns theory and the lens of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) as a theoretical framework, the researcher employed an interpretivist approach to deepen the understanding on factors and concerns affecting the implementation of change and how the role of leaders in facilitating the change process is perceived by teachers and the leaders themselves in a Lebanese private school.

To collect data, semi-structured interviews were collected from 8 professionals in that school, 5 teachers and 3 school leaders. The data collected was analyzed thematically in both inductive and deductive approaches. The study aligned with the literature regarding the importance of the role of leadership in implementing change successfully. The study found that the perceptions of teachers and leaders could differ vastly with regard to the roles and processes of change. Finally, and perhaps most significantly, study highlights a new strategy to approach resistance that can be used as an asset in the change process. The study offers several implications regarding informing leadership on implementing change in schools, and understanding how resistance could be utilized for succeeding in change.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	1
ABSTRACT .....	2
TABLES .....	6
INTRODUCTION .....	9
Background .....	9
Current situation.....	10
Conceptualizing change.....	12
Factors affecting the change process .....	13
Role of leadership in change.....	14
Research problem.....	14
Rationale of the Study.....	15
Research Questions .....	16
Significance of the study.....	17
Structure of the study .....	18
LITERATURE REVIEW .....	19
Organizational Change.....	20
Barriers to change .....	21
Theoretical Understanding on teachers' concern to change. ....	21
Fuller's concerns theory of teacher development .....	22
The Concerns Based Adoption model (CBAM).....	23
Understanding resistance to change through literature .....	25
Resistance due to personal growth requirements.....	26
Resistance due to perception of effectiveness of change outcomes .....	27
Resistance due to psychological factors .....	28
Resistance due to cultural and organizational factors.....	31
Leadership Role to Promote Change: Shifting Perception .....	33
Using resistance to enhance change.....	33
Promoting Professional Development and Peer Coaching .....	34

Building Teachers' Capacity .....	36
Limitations in literature.....	37
Conclusion .....	38
<b>RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>40</b>
Philosophical Paradigm .....	41
Interpretive Paradigm .....	41
Research method.....	42
Case studies.....	42
Selection of the study site .....	43
Selection of participants.....	45
Purposive sampling.....	45
Methods of data collection.....	47
Semi-structured interviews .....	47
Data Analysis .....	48
Initial coding.....	48
Focused coding .....	49
Quality criteria .....	51
Credibility .....	51
Reliability.....	52
Transferability.....	52
Ethics	53
Conclusion .....	54
<b>FINDINGS.....</b>	<b>55</b>
Factors affecting Implementation of the change initiative.....	55
Psychological factors .....	56
Perception factors .....	59
Cultural and organizational factors.....	61
Role of school leadership in implementing externally mandated changes .....	64
From the perspective of leaders .....	64
From the perspective of teachers. ....	68
Role of teachers in the change initiative .....	69

Teachers' Role in Teaching & Learning.....	69
Teachers' Role in Decision Making .....	70
Teachers as Implementers.....	71
Summary of findings.....	71
<b>DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS .....</b>	<b>73</b>
Factors affecting resistance to the change initiative: from the perspectives of teachers and leaders. ....	74
Perception factors .....	76
Cultural and structural factors within the school.....	77
Organizational Factors .....	78
The perceived Role of school leadership in implementing externally mandated changes .....	80
From the perspective of leaders .....	80
From the perspective of teachers .....	85
Role of teachers in the change initiative .....	88
Conclusion .....	91
Limitations of the study .....	92
Implications on practice .....	92
Helping school leaders understand how their role is perceived from other school professionals in the curriculum change process .....	93
Inform schools undergoing change with respect of stakeholder engagement .....	93
Recommendations for research.....	94
<b>APPENDIX A.....</b>	<b>96</b>
<b>APPENDIX B.....</b>	<b>98</b>
<b>APPENDIX C.....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>102</b>



## TABLES

Table

1. Participants.....	45
----------------------	----

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

This chapter aims to introduce the reader to the research being conducted. The researcher aims to provide a background of the study through briefly surveying the context and recent events in Lebanon in relation to the topic at hand and providing an overview of the relevant literature. The researcher will identify the research problem, research questions, and the study's overall importance before summarizing the structure of the study and providing a brief conclusion.

### **Background**

The Lebanese educational system has always been relying on private schooling and a great proportion of Lebanese people chose private schools for their children because they trusted them for their quality education (CRDP, 2021). However, this perception has no basis in the available data on the effectiveness of these schools, as no formal process exists for evaluating them, nor is there a clear mandate for standards that must be observed. Those private schools are in their majority dependent on various religious communities and are established by either western clerics (French, Anglo-Saxons, Germans, and Italians) or diverse local and foreign religious and secular schools. (Lebanon - educational system-overview, 2021)

Among those private institutions, catholic schools have been acknowledged for endorsing missions and values with the aim of building lifelong learners and patriotic citizens (Mouchantaf, 2021). According to the General Secretariat of catholic schools, about 20% of private school students attend catholic schools (Abi Raad, 2018). This influx has compelled

these schools to exert relentless efforts towards promoting quality education, as well as pursuing constant improvement and growth. This commitment is evident in the various baccalaureate curricula they offer and the diverse accreditation they acquired (SGEC-L.org, 2023).

Many educational institutions became accredited and partnered with the Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE)<sup>1</sup>. They offered their students the option to take the French baccalaureate program (AEFE, 2022a). This program according to the protocol signed in 1994 with the French Republic gives any Lebanese or foreign student the right to pursue, in Lebanon or abroad, the French high school program and get a Lebanese Equivalency (MEHE, 2021).

Along similar line, this program mandates that students, teachers, and schools within its network adhere to the French national curriculum, while also embracing the language and culture of the host country. They are also required to apply the French evaluation, grading, and examination system, as well as implement any changes enacted in France (AEFE, 2022b).

### **Current situation**

In 2018- 19, the minister of National Education and Youth in France decreed a change to be implemented over the period of three years in the high school program to prepare the students for the new 2021- 22 French Baccalaureate requirements. This change entailed a modification in the curriculum, in the evaluation system, grading criteria, instructional

---

<sup>1</sup> The Agency for French Education Abroad (AEFE) is a government institution supervised by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs founded in 1990 and is responsible for monitoring and managing the network of French schools abroad

methods and examination. According to the Bureau Officiel (BO) journal (2018), the main changes introduced by this reform were:

1. The introduction of a new core subject called "human, literature and philosophy" which aimed to provide students with a broad understanding of the humanities and social sciences.
2. The integration of technology (NSI) into the curriculum, with a focus on digital skills and new teaching methods.
3. The introduction of more personalized learning pathways, allowing students to choose specific courses (specialties) based on their interests and career goals.
4. Changes in the high school exit exam (baccalaureate), including a reduction in the number of subjects tested, a high coefficient on the specialty subjects and the introduction of continuous assessment throughout the year.

This reform reflected on Lebanese private schools that adopt the French Baccalaureate.

Concurrently, Lebanon was confronted with unprecedented challenges mainly due to economic instability and the global pandemic only exacerbated the issues. Therefore, the educational sector was hit hard by this compounded crisis and covid-19 exposed the weak infrastructure of the education system (Moghli & Shuaib, 2020).

In this turbulent environment, private schools in Lebanon particularly the French affiliated ones experienced the challenge imposed by the French Baccalaureate change initiative implementation, the economic crisis, and the global pandemic repercussions. Further, most affiliated French schools undergoing change grappled with maneuvering the volatility of the environment while implementing the 2018-19 change and maintaining high

educational standards to ensure quality teaching and learning. This meant that several uncertainties were present in the process, in addition to changes in the roles and practices of many who were involved and influenced by the change initiatives. This situation led the efforts to change to be met by some criticism and controversy from teachers, students, and parents in schools.

The study aims to understand the factors affecting the implementation of externally mandated organizational change and particularly understanding teachers' concerns to change relying mostly on Fuller's concerns theory and the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) for their relevance to understanding teachers and school-level responses to educational change and to informing change facilitators on interventions that facilitate change processes (Hall & Hord, 2006).

### ***Conceptualizing change***

Change is inevitable in all sectors as in education. It plays a pivotal role in schools' life and remains a necessity in a fast-paced changing global world (Glickman *et al.*, 2007). Literature brings to light many different notions about change, yet scholars agree on some broad areas of it. Robbins & Delenzo (2001) define change as "an alteration of an organization's environment structure, technology or people" (p. 230). Carlopio (1998) describes it "as the adoption of an innovation, where the ultimate goal is to improve outcomes through an alteration of practices" (p. 2). Bell and Ritchie (2002) state that "change is the way people improve. It is not going to go away nor should it" (p. 157). Fullan (1992) argues that "change is a process of learning new ideas and things. It is learning to do and learning to understand something new" (p. 22). This is supported by Hord and Hall (1984) who argue

that “change is a process and not an event. Therefore, change requires time, energy, and resources to support it as it unfolds.” (p.20).

Of all the definitions, this study follows Fullan’s (1992) and Hord and Hall’s (1984) definitions and views change in educational institutions as a process of improving practices and learning. It also sees that a comprehensive understanding of the change process is critical to the success of the education reform (Fullan & Miles, 1992) which aims towards school improvement. However, the study recognizes that the change process, complex in nature, is accompanied with messiness and chaos due to many factors that affect its implementation (Fullan, 2020).

### ***Factors affecting the change process***

Since this study examines a case study to understand the challenges of implementing externally mandated change in the Lebanese private context, several factors depicted from empirical studies must be described (Scapens, 1993). Understanding those factors impacting teachers’ behavior in relation to change is essential since without the support of teachers, successful change could be challenging and even unattainable (Terhart, 2013). Those factors are regrouped under different categories: psychological, perception, cultural, and organizational and follow the below definitions gleaned from literature.

*Psychological Factors:* Factors related to teachers' stress, discomfort, worries, fear and insecurity (Flamholtz & Randle, 2008).

*Perception Factors:* Factors related to how the change process is understood by stakeholders (Ford et al., 2008). Ford et al. (2008) suggest that leadership may unintentionally encourage resistance, and there are factors associated with this phenomenon. Meanwhile,

according to Ford and Ford (2009), what may seem like teacher resistance to change might actually stem from their belief that their approach aligns better with achieving the school's mission, rather than an actual opposition to change.

*School culture:* Factors emanating from engrained moral values and beliefs such as sharing, communication, collaboration, problem solving, support, continuous learning, and openness to change (Per, 2004)

*Organizational Factors:* Factors related to school structure that influence leadership strategies. Those strategies range from setting the main goal, aligning the workflow, planning the steps, introducing an environment conducive to staff learning, monitoring, implementing the change and working on motivating the staff to embark in the change process (Fullan & Ballew, 2004). The impact of those factors could be alleviated through effective leadership.

### ***Role of leadership in change***

The pivotal role of the principal in maneuvering the complexity of change in educational organizations, in sustaining reform efforts therefore decreasing teachers' resistance is acknowledged (Fullan, 1992, 2020). Fullan (2016) emphasizes the prominent role of the leaders in the change process and stresses the importance of effective leadership strategies for improvement, and success of school change efforts.

### **Research problem**

Considering the importance of change and its inevitability, many private educational organizations in Lebanon thrive to design and implement change with a focus to improve education. As the country grapples with multiple crises, accommodating the overgrowing demand of an ever-changing world has been a strenuous challenge. Accordingly, the

Lebanese private school in question for this study had to undergo urgent changes in their educational approaches as they worked for implementing the French baccalaureate reform that started in 2018 and entailed a change in the curriculum, methods of instruction in the classroom and examinations. This aggravated the challenges and increased the obstacles to change, namely, teachers' resistance.

The change process has neither been smooth nor easy (Fullan, 2020). Whether the change occurs on a small scale, like the integration of technology in the teaching process (Hicks, 2011) or on a wider one such as curriculum change (Troudi & Alwan, 2010), the way change is approached in terms of stakeholder involvement in the process impacts its success or failure. As stated by Glickman *et al.*, (2007), various research to explore the obstacles to leading change agree that resistance is one of the salient barriers to educational change.

### **Rationale of the Study**

This study aims to deepen the understanding on factors affecting change implementation and the role of teachers and leaders in facilitating the change process. It will depict and analyze from an interpretivist approach that allows the researcher to see through the eyes of the participants and generate multiple views for the research problem (Greener, 2008), the factors affecting teachers' successful participation to educational change and the leadership strategies to overcome the barriers to change. This leads to achieve the richest possible understanding of the implementation of change phenomenon in the Lebanese private sector and gain insights of the barriers to change through delving deeper in analyzing resistance and the factors impacting it.



Thus, the study will be placed within the context of Lebanese private schools through a qualitative case study of a catholic private schools offering the French baccalaureate program that was and is still undergoing change. The context is of importance considering the fact that catholic schools form the biggest consortium of private schools in Lebanon. Additionally, the concept of resistance in this context is understudied, meaning that this study aims to fill a gap in literature in the Lebanese context and the Arab one in general. Most reforms in Lebanese private schools receive little culturally grounded research that will contribute to the improvement of the change process; Only TAMAM worked on teacher resistance in the Lebanese context (2014) followed by a study conducted by Chaar, Khamis and Karami in 2016, the fact that reinforces the need for more in-depth contextual studies of teachers' resistance and effective leadership strategies in leading change (Akkary, 2013). Further, no studies were done in the Lebanese French baccalaureate setting in the Lebanese private school context the fact that made me conduct my study in this context with the aim to investigate the teachers concerns during change implementation and the way leadership strategies overcome the barriers to change.

### **Research Questions**

This study focuses on understanding the challenges of an externally mandated change process in a Lebanese private school setting that have and still undergoing major changes. It will attempt to answer the following questions from the teachers and formal leaders' perspectives:

1-What are the factors affecting the implementation of externally mandated changes in a Lebanese private school in Lebanon?

2- How is the role of school leadership understood by different stakeholders in light of implementing external mandated changes?

3-What are the concerns of Lebanese private school teachers in playing a role in implementing mandated changes?

### **Significance of the study**

The results of this study will be of significance to both research and practice. When it comes to research, it aims to build on the international body of research on change and factors influencing its success (Fullan 2020; Ferreira *et al.*, 2007). Locally, it aims to add to the scarcity of research about studies on leadership and concerns during change processes in the context of Lebanese schools, offering a significant contribution to fill the literature gap in the Lebanese setting (Boujaude *et al.*, 2006; Chaar *et al.*, 2016). Further, the results could be a starting point for larger scale studies that intend to undergo an in-depth examination of the barriers to change and the factors impacting in the Lebanese context, and other contexts sharing similar criteria.

Finally, this study would hope to inform practice of leadership in private schools, to shed light on factors that could affect their efforts to change and unearth useful policy implications regarding the design and implementation of successful school reform models through an attempt to reframe resistance as a tool rather than an obstacle that can be used towards change and reform. Such a conceptualization builds on the understanding that teachers and other stakeholders resort to resistance to “proactively address challenges potentially detrimental in building authentic, collaborative relationships between families and schools” (Graf and Vasquez, 2013, p. 85).

### **Structure of the study**

This study will broadly be sectioned into five chapters which sequentially are: the introduction chapter, the literature review chapter where the researcher will visit past international and local literature to gain further information regarding her topic of interest, the methodology chapter where the method to be utilized in collecting data and unpacking findings will be detailed, the findings chapter where the researcher will share the results from the collected data, and the analysis and conclusion chapter where the researcher will explain the findings and link them to what she has learned through literature to identify alignments and discrepancies.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter reviews literature to analyze relevant works in relation to the research problem tackling the challenges of change implementation and the way leadership addresses barriers to change in a private school in Lebanon. There is a plethora of studies on barriers to educational change and reform in the general community. However, since the focus of this research is on factors impacting teachers' behavior in relation to change, this will not be reviewed in detail and will only be referred to as appropriate.

The chapter will start with briefly conceptualizing organizational change and the barriers to change before discussing the theoretical understanding of teachers' concerns to change relying mostly on Fuller's concerns theory and the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) for their relevance to understanding teachers and school-level responses to educational change and to informing change facilitators on interventions that facilitate change processes (Hall & Hord, 2006). Next, the chapter will discuss major findings from empirical studies conducted to understand the way resistance is perceived among all the stakeholders involved in the change process. It will offer an understanding of the factors impacting teachers' behavior in relation to change and reveal what these studies have concluded regarding the causes underpinning resistant behavior. Finally, the chapter will emphasize the importance of the role of the school leader in facilitating change and the leadership strategies for improvement that address resistance. The chapter will end with a

summary and a discussion of the limitation of the study as well as the relevance of the adopted theory in the 21<sup>st</sup> century more specifically its pertinence to the Lebanese context.

### **Organizational Change**

Organizational Change has been studied, conceptualized, and explained by many (Fullan 2020; Lewis, 2019; Weick & Quinn, 1999). Lewis (2011) saw that change is usually synonymized with improvement and development, adding that organizations head towards change “partly owing to a cultural value, organizations are under extreme pressure to constantly change” (p. 21). This reflects a conception that change is a remedy for stagnation, which is generally frowned upon. Change for change’s sake, however, does not lead to induce improvement, but rather burdens organizations (Lewis, 2019).

To be impactful, change should be ingrained in the organizational culture and reflective of continuous efforts to serve institutional and organizational goals. (Fullan, 2020). Such a conception is shared by Weick and Quinn (1999) who differentiated two kinds of change, change “that is episodic, discontinuous, and intermittent and change that is continuous, evolving, and incremental” (p. 362). The researchers saw that the former does not yield the benefits sought after in terms of improvement and could be more prone to many barriers which risk the chances of success. I believe that for change to be successful and meaningful, it should be purposeful and enable the organization to work towards its vision and goals while remaining true to its values and philosophy. However, change of any kind is challenged by many barriers which will be discussed next.

## **Barriers to change**

Successful change implementation in organizations faces many barriers. Beer and Walton (1987) stated that “culture may be a barrier to innovation; it may diminish integration and be a phenomenon to be managed and turned around” (p. 347). Another potential barrier they identified, which indirectly ties to culture, relates to organizational structure and communication where segmentation and one-way channels could impede change. A third barrier is resistance due to lack of investment in the change and its personal benefits (Lewis, 2019). Those barriers are present in the context of change within schools in particular. This review focuses on one of the barriers which is teachers’ resistance to change because it was identified among the paramount challenges that negatively impact the change initiatives.

## **Theoretical Understanding on teachers’ concern to change.**

Since the major focus for investigation in this study is the identification of factors that impact teachers’ behavior in relation to change implementation and the way leading change overcomes resistance barriers, the researcher will mainly use Fuller’s concerns theory and the lens of the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) as a theoretical framework because she believes that it is relevant to the topic at hand and it provides a framework for organizing and understanding the research questions, guiding the selection and interpretation of data, and informing the findings and results.

Further, this model was developed by Hall, Wallace, and Dossett (1973) but revisited by Hall and Hord in 2006 which renders the framework more relevant in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It provides new insights about identifying the concerns of teachers during the implementation

of educational change and informs the choice of school leaders about the types of interventions that facilitate the change process (Hall & Hord, 2006). This will be eventually discussed in light of the CBAM model's diagnostic framework that can aid school leaders developing leadership strategies and ensure a successful implementation.

### ***Fuller's concerns theory of teacher development***

The CBAM originated from Fuller's (1969) concerns theory of teacher development. Fuller (1969) throughout her research studies on teachers' concerns defines concerns as the perceived problems of the teachers and thrive to pragmatically conceptualize the developmental concerns of prospective and in- service teachers. Her theory posits a three - developmental stage of concerns that are typically observed when people are engaged in any type of change (Hall & Hord, 2006). This sequence ranges from early unrelated concerns to late concerns classified as follows:

1. Self: concerns for the self are reflected by feelings of self-adequacy, concerns for receiving good evaluations by administrators, and acceptance by students and colleagues.
2. Task: concerns for the teaching tasks such as the instructional methods, delivery of the curriculum, and, particularly, perceived impediments to effective teaching such as a lot of non-instructional tasks, scarcity of instructional materials, high number of students etc.
3. Impact: This stage represents concerns for guiding, challenging, and meeting the diverse needs of students (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Hall *et al.* (1973) built on Fuller's work and conceptualizations to develop accordingly their Concerns Based Adoption Model.

***The Concerns Based Adoption model (CBAM)***

The CBAM is a theoretical model that not only helps identify the above stated concerns teachers have in the process of change, but also serves to inform change facilitators, namely school leaders, in making interventions that are to address implementers' concerns in our case the teachers' concerns (Hall & Hord, 2006). In fact, Hall and Hord (2006) conducted research in different schools on the verge of change (curricular, structural, strategic), with the aim of customizing the implementation of this change to address teachers' concerns. They asserted in their studies using the CBAM that "interventions to facilitate change must be aligned with the concerns of those who are engaged with the change" (p.84). They showcased in their research the importance of human dimensions, namely the teachers, in the success of any change intervention. This is explicitly manifested in the assumptions that guide the CBAM:

1. Change is a process.
2. Change is individual.
3. The perceptions and feelings of individuals are crucial to successful implementation.
4. Individuals proceed through stages in their feelings about change, and level of skill in the use of an innovation.
5. Change facilitators must proceed systematically, assess regularly, and provide support continually.



Through their research study Hall and Hord (2006) redefined concerns as “the feelings, preoccupation, thought, and consideration given to a particular issue or task” (p. 85) highlighting the fact that individuals perceive a given issue differently on the basis of their past experiences, personal constructs, and education expertise (Hall & Hord, 2006). Thus, it is “the person’s perceptions that stimulate concerns, not necessarily the reality of the situation” (Hall, George, & Rutherford, 1979, p. 5).

Further, Hall and Hord (2006) edited Fuller’s (1969) original developmental stages of self-concerns, task and impact for a more thorough and in-depth understanding of those stages, and CBAM in general. They split up self-concerns to informational and personal concerns, and impact concerns to consequence, collaboration, and refocusing (Hall & Hord, 2006). This configuration would help change facilitators to construct Stage of concern (SoC) profiles for the teachers that address the affective side of change—people’s reactions, feelings, perceptions, and attitudes (Hall & Hord, 2006, p.106). Further, it would allow change facilitators to assess those profiles through the CBAM three diagnostic dimensions: One-Legged Interviewing, Open Ended Concerns Statements, and the Stages of Concern Questionnaire <sup>2</sup>(p.104). Finally, change facilitators would be able to tailor “concerns-based interventions” that support and are aligned with the teachers’ concerns (Hall & Hord, 2006,

---

<sup>2</sup> One-legged interviews are short hallway or workroom conversations that probe issues related to using a new practice. They are called “one- legged” because the conversations should last if you can stand on one leg. Open-ended concerns statements could be a few short sentences staff write on an index card in response to a prompt such as, “When you think about differentiated instruction, what concerns do you have?” The final option to gauge teachers’ stage of concern is using a formal 35-question survey (Roy, 2008)

p. 88). The fact that facilitates the change implementation and therefore reduces resistance (Hall & Hord, 2006).

To conclude, CBAM's constructs, and its three diagnostic dimensions propose a number of analytical categories and possible entrances aiming at an in-depth understanding of teachers' concerns in terms of SoC that eventually leads to a better intervention approach emanating from a concerns profile analysis (Hall & Hord, 2006). The setting of the studies conducted by Hall and Hord (2006) is very similar to that of the current research, where the school is undergoing a change focused on the French Baccalaureate reform. Hence, the study at hand found the CBAM model to be a good fit because it enabled the researcher to understand the concerns and needs of teachers throughout the process of change implementation and identify effective strategies in helping teachers navigate through the different stages of concern and prevent a resistant behavior.

Teachers' resistance was found to be a major obstacle to implemented change in a school.

### **Understanding resistance to change through literature**

Based on the theoretical literature on teachers concerns to change, resistance is considered as perceived problems of the teachers that engenders internal conflicts and discomforts which will manifest in the form of concerns to the change (Fullan, 2015) and can create a barrier to its implementation (Glickman *et al.*, 2007).

Based upon Fuller's work, resistance is seen as a common reaction that occurs among teachers when their concerns are not addressed (Hall *et al.*, 1973). Fuller (1969) concluded from her three studies that teachers may exhibit resistance when their personal

adequacy and self-perception are threatened, concerns about self, to concerns about the task of teaching.

For a better understanding of the idea of resistance to change, it is essential to determine and understand, based on empirical studies, the different facets of resistance and how they can be perceived and understood by educational leaders. This will enable those leaders to gain insights of the underlying reasons for teachers' resistance and provide opportunities to delve deeper in addressing the root of their concerns. Literature delineates major challenges, specifically resistance that work against change initiatives and connect them to underlying factors that will be discussed henceforth.

### ***Resistance due to personal growth requirements***

Resistance could be linked to change that requires learning and development on the side of the teacher. The findings of a research study conducted by Hicks (2011) reported on the concerns that teachers develop towards the integration of technology in their classrooms. Hicks (2011) showed that teachers are afraid to “look stupid” in front of their “tech-savvy students” (p. 189). This fear of failure engenders a feeling of insecurity, incompetence and powerlessness that intimidates teachers, blocks change and creates resistance (Hicks, 2011). According to the study results, resistance to technology is due to a lack of professional development in this field and absence of support to troubleshoot technical problems. Ornstein and Hunkins (2017) associate this cause of resistance to the school managerial approach that should ensure the interrelatedness and alignment of all the change components, secure the necessary resources, allocate the needed budget, and provide the holding environment in terms of quality support and capacity-building for teachers. In this

view, Ornstein and Hunkins (2017) argue that teachers' readiness to embark in the reform journey would circumvent their resistance to involvement, therefore facilitate the change process.

***Resistance due to perception of effectiveness of change outcomes***

Studies have shown that resistance to change can stem from how stakeholders perceive the effectiveness of the proposed changes that eventually impacts the way they act upon it. Ford and Ford (2009) discussed in their study new approaches that view resistance as “created (constructed) in the conversations and relationships operating between agent and recipient” (p. 1). In their reexamination of the resistance approach, they bring to light the subjective nature of resistance which is reflected in how agents interpret and make sense of a particular situation. This process of sense making, according to Ford and Ford, influences how agents understand a particular situation, and decide to act upon it. Their study showed that a resistant behavior as seen by change agents is not always driven by the fact that individuals want things to stay unchanged. It is, however, perceived by teachers as a form of effort supporting the organization's mission which means that they do not see the practice of change offered as the step needed to reach the common vision. Based on this study, this way of perceiving things stems from the sense of ownership and commitment long-time employees have for their institution. Resisting, in this case can be regarded as a person's approach of changing the way a task is done for the better (Ford & Ford, 2009).

Ford *et al.*, (2008) argue that resistance could be further amplified due to how leaders perceive it and act upon that perception in their schools. They reexamined in their study the way school leaders see resistance and suggested a restructuring of the concept. According to

the study, current views of resistance perceive it as a reality only in the mind of the change recipient “in them” or “over there” (p. 362) and misses the other possible consideration that views school leaders as causal factors to the occurrence of a resistant behavior. In this respect, school leaders can promote resistance through what they label as “communication breakdowns” and “broken agreements and the violation of trust” (Ford *et al.*, 2008 p. 366).

Finally, Terhard (2013)’s article discusses teacher’s resistance, which is embodied in their reaction to feedback information based on results from standards-based performance tests that aims to influence classroom teaching, which is considered in that study as a step towards school reform.

Terhard states that the cause of resistance is not that teachers do not want school reform; it is rather that the problem arises when they are asked to change their beliefs and practices at classroom level. The author draws conclusion with the perspective that acknowledges that reform is not beyond teachers’ intellectual abilities, it is a process in which teachers are invited to take part in, to embrace, hence the importance of three questions to be answered:

- 1- How will this innovation help me in my teaching?
- 2- If it helps me, how much time do I have to invest to learn for my students to benefit?
- 2- How can I adapt the needs to fit my students?

### ***Resistance due to psychological factors***

Some studies on teacher resistance found that teachers experienced paradoxical feelings to change. Some became positive and content as they got used to the novelty with

time, whereas a significant number experienced a low morale and developed resistance (Trudi & Alwan, 2010).

Fullan and Ballew (2004) argue that people emotionally react when change is taking place. Teachers might experience fear of loss, threat, discomfort and feeling of awkwardness. Those feelings may affect the teachers' attitude towards change and result in resistant behavior among them (Fullan & Ballew, 2004).

A qualitative study conducted by Troudi and Alwan (2010), investigated the reactions of English language teachers in UAE towards the curriculum change. Their study aimed at understanding teachers' different attitudes towards curriculum change and focused on the generated affective issues that eventually turned into a form of resistance. In their interpretation of their study data, Troudi and Alwan (2010) pointed out that the reasons behind teachers' low morale lie in the way teachers perceived their role in the curriculum reform. The study denotes that the distress teachers revealed was related to the exclusion of most of them from the decision-making process regarding the curriculum change. Teachers perceived their role in the curriculum as insignificant as they were inactive agents in the decision-making process within the top-down approach to educational change (Owens & Valesky, 2011; Troudi & Alwan, 2010). This non-participatory role engenders a feeling of "low self-esteem" and "low-morale" among educators; the fact that negatively impacts their attitude towards change and triggers resistance (Troudi & Alwan, 2010). Other scholars acknowledge that this feeling of insecurity, exclusion, inactivity, disregard teachers experience during a reform might be due to the school top-down approach to educational change and therefore to the absence of the teachers' voice in the change process (Owens & Valesky, 2011; Troudi & Alwan, 2010).

Another study conducted by Chaar, Khamis and Karami (2016) aimed to explore the concerns that teachers experienced at Lebanese private schools because of their schools' adoption of the curriculum-based accreditation programs (Chaar *et al.*, 2016). Their study revealed that teachers in those schools experienced concerns related to the “self”, “task” and “impact” (p. 123). Explicitly, the study shed light on organizational factors such as time constraints, teaching and management skills, the change requirements, collaboration, coordination, and resources availability. Further, their study showcased that teachers doubted their ability to execute new type of tasks required by the new curriculum, and worried about the consequences on students' achievements. Therefore, the study points out that those concerns ranging from anxiety feelings to internal discomfort will turn into resistance if not addressed (Fullan as cited in Chaar *et al.*, 2016). Further, Ornstein and Hunkins (2017) argue that teachers' self-doubt in their ability to meet the requirements of change hinders their autonomy, effectively turning them into soldiers of the new system rather than change agents.

The topic of teacher resistance was also researched by Snyder (2017) who talked about resistance from veteran teachers to change, and how they pose a unique challenge for effective implementation of change. The purpose of the study was to clarify the reasons behind this resistance so that educational leaders can figure out how to respond to it in more meaningful and effective methods.

Snyder's study highlighted two reasons for resistance. One is social nostalgia where teachers resist change in relationships. Several teachers highlighted their frustration with new curricular demands and the presence of technology in teaching since they affect their interaction with students. The other reason is political nostalgia which is triggered by decrease in autonomy and continuous change. The study concluded that resistance can be

engaged through clarifying conversations between administration and teachers. Another action the study recommended is being aware of the value of psychic rewards for veteran teachers.

### ***Resistance due to cultural and organizational factors***

Resistance might be due to other factors related to school culture. Hall and Hord (2006) advocate the importance of the organization culture and describe this aspect as “the overall feel, the shared values and assumptions” (p. 132). Scholars assert that cultural factors play a pivotal role in teachers understanding the change process. According to Per (2004), cultural factors impact the organization workflow, build interpersonal liaisons, and interpret the way the change concept is seen in educational organizations. Therefore, cultural factors have an influence on the perception of teachers towards change and how they approach this process.

In this respect, Tusting (2009) in her research studies explored the resistance issue in relation to the “introduction of the Skills for Life language, literacy and numeracy strategy in England in 2000” (p. 1). Her analysis demonstrated that resistance occurs when teaching philosophies are challenged. This line of research suggests that teachers’ philosophy influences teachers’ dealing with the change.

Thus, change agents including school leadership should provide teachers with a venue to engage in a perpetual state of reflection about their values, to transcend the confinement of their personal beliefs, and move forward toward their professionalization (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017).



In addition to culture, organizational factors also could promote teacher resistance. Doucette *et al.*, (2012) considered the following as influential organizational factors influencing change: proactiveness, risk taking, autonomy, work ethic, and adequacy of resources. Fullan and Ballew (2004) describe the organizational factors as strategies related to the change agent's leadership style. Many scholars, curriculum developers and change experts advocate the prominent role of the school leaders and teachers as key players in the change process. This led to many studies on the role of leaders in both facilitating change and possibly causing a state of resistance towards that change. In this respect, Ford, Ford and D'Amelia (2008) addressed resistance from a different perspective and suggest that change agents themselves promote the development of resistance. In their reexamination of the nature of resistance, Ford and Ford (2009) built on their previous study and made linkages between conversation and relationship occurring between the change implementer and the recipient. Both studies highlighted the importance of leadership approach in mitigating resistance through maintaining healthy relations within the school context, and open lines of communication with all stakeholders regardless of their position within the school's organizational chart.

In conclusion, the visited literature has shown that several factors ranging from personal growth requirements, perceptions of the effectiveness of change outcomes, psychological, cultural, to organizational can impact teachers' response to change and lead to a resistant behavior. The literature review also revealed that understanding resistance from the above-mentioned angles provide further information and clarity to decision makers on how resistance can be understood and therefore offer a base to deal with resistance to induce a more successful change process. Hence, the pivotal role of the school principal and the

leaderships strategies was identified as central in both leading and managing change throughout all the studies.

### **Leadership Role to Promote Change: Shifting Perception**

Many research studies showcase the importance of leadership strategies that can facilitate the change process in educational organizations through a reconceptualization of resistance, capacity building, professional development, and peer coaching.

Park and Jeong (2013) aimed to understand the role and impact of leaders in minimizing teacher resistance to change towards reform induced by teacher autonomy. The study found that there is a positive correlation between instructional leadership behavior in principals, where the principal leads curriculum and instruction in the school, and teachers' attitude towards change. There is also a positive relation between transformative leadership, where principals attempt to instill leadership qualities in teachers, and teachers' commitment to change where level of resistance dropped when the principal was more experienced and understood what teachers want and adjusted his or her administration accordingly.

### ***Using resistance to enhance change***

Many studies have shifted the perception of resistance from a barrier to an asset that can be integrated in the change process. The study carried out by Ford and Ford (2010) brought to light a reconceptualization of resistance. In their view, managers are invited to perceive resistance as a "valuable resource" (p. 24) that enables change and fuels the growth of the organization. Change agents' tendency to blame negative attitude and reluctance constitutes prominent barriers to change implementation and reform (Ford & Ford, 2010). In this respect, Ford and Ford (2010) suggest that school leaders should be involved in a self-

reflective work and ask themselves why they label a noncompliant behavior as resistance; then try to consider this negative behavior as a constructive feedback and use it to improve the change process. These questions can shift the way change agents perceive resistance from a “barrier” that obstructs change to a “valuable resource” that enhances it (Ford & Ford, 2010).

This new approach towards addressing resistance could benefit in further understanding Hicks’s (2011) study that evidenced teachers’ struggle with the implementation of technology; the fact that engendered a noncompliant behavior among teachers as well as a feeling of insecurity, uncertainty, and powerlessness. According to Hicks, this reluctant attitude blocked change and engendered resistance. He added that this is where the comprehension and involvement of principals in breaking down resistance into its root causes becomes essential for limiting that resistance and promoting the change required.

By recognizing the reasons for resistance, school leaders can utilize it as a positive signal to examine and improve their reform efforts (Ford & Ford, 2010). They can then incorporate mentoring programs to facilitate transformative learning among teachers, as suggested by Drago-Severson (2004). Hence, utilizing such strategies to address resistance can be valuable in the change process and can boost teachers' self-efficacy, thus enabling them to play a more effective role in the change initiative.

### ***Promoting Professional Development and Peer Coaching***

The literature highlighted the importance of promoting teachers’ professional development and self-efficacy that proved to play a major role in empowering teachers and

helping them embrace change. Within this approach, the role of school leaders emerged to be pivotal to the success of educational reforms (Fullan, 2016).

Zimmerman (2006) argues that promoting professional development and leadership support enhances teachers' self-efficacy and guides them in the change process. According to Zimmerman, change agents are expected to promote a culture conducive to change, gain teachers' trust and engage them in the decision-making process. This culture enables teachers to embrace change and view it as an opportunity for growth rather than a barrier or a threat (Bandura, 1997). In this regard, Fullan (2016) focuses on the effectiveness of "peer support and pressure" (p. 243) in adopting innovation and approaching resistance. He brings to light the fact that influential teachers not only support their peers in their struggles but can also influence their opinion by exerting pressure and convincing them with the novelty introduced in school (Fullan, 2016).

In the same sense, Khalil's (2013) study aimed to analyze faculty's resistance to technology in academia, and to develop a theoretical basis that helps leaders in the process re-thinking this resistance to induce a process of learning instead, which can be the solution for overcoming this obstacle. The author mentions the following reasons for resistance which are based on works of Moerschell (2009); limited vision of the future, comfort with the way things are deficits in information and communication, individual's nature to be uncooperative, and lack of skills. Khalil goes on to highlight the Theory of Resistance of Change which states that change should be looked at multi-dimensionally, as it consists of three interconnected components: behavioral, cognitive, and affective. Change is represented by positive responses along all three dimensions.

Khalil (2013) showed that in addition to a learning environment, five core areas were instrumental in helping school leaders lower faculty anxiety levels when it comes to professional development which are: amount of information, quality of information, ease of use, appearance, and usefulness of information. Providing training while taking those areas into consideration would make teachers more open to professional development and hence less resistant. Findings also suggested that important antecedents to resistance to change were employees' sense of autonomy, challenge, motivation, and trust in management. Trust in management proved to be the dominant variable in association to all three resistance components.

Furthermore, Makdadi and Chrifat (2014) advocate a similar approach to deal with resistance. Their study generates the following guidelines:

- Engage teachers in the process of change.
- Build trust between change agents and recipients.
- Avoid top-down approach in the implementation of change.
- Ensure training sessions clarifying the importance of change, its objectives, and the process of implementing it.
- Motivate teachers who welcome and implement change.

Those approaches, adding to what was mentioned before, help promote teachers' agency which as described next as a correlation with resistance to change.

### ***Building Teachers' Capacity***

Many studies touch upon enhancing teachers' agency as a potential to direct teachers' professional growth and to contribute to the educational change (Owens & Valesky, 2011;

Sannino, 2009). Sannino's (2009) qualitative study attempts to address resistance by making important linkages between resistance and agency. She draws on the "experiencing concept" (Sannino, 2009 p. 839), which generates opportunities for practitioners to take active part in the change process. According to Sannino (2009), this process of capacity building allows teachers to engage in participatory shift from resistance to self-initiative. Sannino (2009) argues that this shift requires self-reflection on problematic areas teachers might face and an externalization of their concerns and conflicts. Thus, school leaders are invited in this case to build trust with their teachers, support dialogue, and facilitate the externalization of their concerns (Sannino, 2009).

To sum up, literature shows that leadership can bring about change and reduce teachers' resistance to change. This could be achieved through building capacity, promoting professional development, peer coaching, and tackling sources and reasons for resistance in school. However, scholars agree that there is no set formula or one best leadership type, tailoring an efficient model should be congruent with the culture and needs of the organization. According to Hallinger (2003), leadership models should be evolving in response to the changing needs of schools and practitioners in the context of global educational reforms.

### **Limitations in literature**

While the evidence gathered for this paper underpins the interrelatedness of the factors impacting change and the need for effective leadership, most reforms in Lebanese private schools receive little culturally grounded research that will contribute to the improvement of the change process; One limitation mentioned is the scarcity of studies on

this specific topic, which suggests that there may be gaps in our understanding of how externally mandated change is implemented in the Lebanese context. Another limitation is the fact that the CBAM model has not been used extensively in the Lebanese context for externally mandated change, which raises questions about its applicability and effectiveness in this particular setting.

## **Conclusion**

To conclude, the chapter reviewed the literature on resistance to change within educational contexts. The reviewed empirical studies argue that initiating change for school improvement will inevitably face internal resistances in educational organizations, and each resistance behavior varies in intensity according to the factor impacting it. Further, literature manifests that the success or failure of the change process is connected to factors that can facilitate or impede its implementation. The chapter highlighted the right leadership strategies that can expedite the implementation and showcased the value of the human dimension, mainly their concerns and involvement, in the success of the change process (Fullan, 2015), hence the importance of a theoretical model that helps identify those concerns and build accordingly teachers' profiles that contribute to inform school leaders in making better interventions (Hall & Hord, 2006).

The generalizability of Fuller's theory as hypothesized by Hall et al. (1973) made the findings broadly applicable to diverse situations or contexts. Moreover, the development of the Concerns Based Adoption Model (CBAM) based on Fuller's Theory and revisited by Hall and Hord in 2006 renders its role in assessing the teachers' stages of concerns significant

(Hall & Hord, 2001) and applicable to other situations. This level of generalizability allows it to be applicable in different contexts including the Lebanese context.

Thus, this study relies on the CBAM model to frame the teachers' stages of concern that is mostly important during change implementation which will then lead to informing leaders on interventions that facilitate change initiatives in the Lebanese context and guarantee higher chances of success in the implementation process.



## CHAPTER 3

### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first section of this chapter defines the researcher philosophical paradigm, the interpretivist paradigm, and offers a description of how this paradigm will guide the researcher's data collection process and procedure. The second section explains the research design and the qualitative research methodologies. It then continues to describe the context of the study with respect to the selection of the study site and participants, the data collection tools, and data analysis framework utilized to interpret meanings emerged. In the last section, the chapter discusses the strategies applied to ensure quality criteria for qualitative inquiry followed by the limitations of the study.

The objectives of this research will be to:

- Contextually Understand Teachers concerns to change and the factors impacting them.
- Determine the role of school leadership, namely the principal and section heads, in implementing externally mandated changes.
- Capture a new strategy of approaching resistance and reframe it to be integrated in the change process.

The researcher aims to reach those objectives through asking the following research questions:

1-What are the factors affecting the implementation of externally mandated changes in a Lebanese private school in Lebanon?

2- How is the role of school leadership understood by different stakeholders in light of implementing external mandated changes?

3-What are the concerns of Lebanese private school teachers in playing a role in implementing external changes?

### **Philosophical Paradigm**

Mills, Bonner, and Francis (2006) state that an effective research design is built upon a research paradigm aligned with the philosophical foundation of the researcher regarding the nature of reality (ontology) and the nature and form of knowledge (epistemology). To that end, the researcher will utilize the interpretive lens to identify the factors affecting the implementation of change at the school level, build a contextual understanding of the resistance phenomena and explore the way leading change overcomes the barriers to change.

### ***Interpretive Paradigm***

This study assumes an interpretive paradigm (Guba & Lincoln, 1994) that is interested in the relativist reality existing in the research problem under investigation (McKenna, Richardson, & Manroop, 2011). The comprehension of this problem is not universal and objective, but rather subjective and specific to the reason guiding a subject's interpretation. The researcher chose this paradigm because it is in congruence with her view of the nature of knowledge that she believes is socially constructed and impacted by contextual situation (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). It also aligns with her relativist ontology that believes in multiple truths and perceives social realities as "a set of meanings that are constructed by individuals who participate in that reality" (Gall *et al.*, 2005, p. 305) and "are socially and experientially based" (Guba & Lincoln, 1994, p. 110).

## **Research method**

Following the interpretive paradigm (Gall *et al.*, 2010) that seeks to understand the social phenomenon, namely resistance, from the perspectives of the participants themselves rather than solely from the viewpoints of the researcher (Cohen *et al.*, 2007) and given the aim of this study in deepening our understanding of the complex phenomena under study, the proposed study will employ a qualitative approach because it aligns with the interpretivist paradigm and the subjectivist epistemology (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Merriam, 2002, 2009). To capture the interpretation of the participants to the fullest extent possible under this research conditions, the researcher will adopt a case study approach.

### ***Case studies***

Flyvbjerg (2006) states that a human study “produces the type of context- dependent knowledge that research on learning shows to be necessary to allow people to develop from rule-based beginners to virtuoso experts” (p. 221). This description reflects the value of case studies where learning and understanding are constructed based on the context the study is being conducted. This, according to Flyvbjerg, does not mean that the findings cannot be generalized to similar contexts, on the contrary.

Since the 1970s, case studies have taken on increased importance in educational research and were utilized to deepen our understanding within educational communities (Stenhouse, 1978, 1980). This qualitative research method allows the researcher to observe the participants in their social context with a focus on the meanings that individuals ascribe to particular instances of a phenomenon. This means that researchers must spend significant time and effort analyzing the perspectives of the participants themselves, rather than solely

relying on the researcher's own interpretations (Gall *et al.*, 2010). This allows him to gain insights into the case and provide a contextual understanding of the phenomenon under study (Weingand, 1993). Further, Yin (2018) argues that a case study would be suitable for researchers who desire to obtain answers to how and why questions since it allows participants' learning examination within a scope of time and under a specific environment (Merriam, 1998, 2015; Yin, 2018).

This so-called "interpretation in context" (Cronbach, 1955, p. 123) makes case study a convenient means to capture the complexity of the change and resistance phenomenon under study and frame it in a particular Lebanese private school context. Case studies, however, do not negate the voice of the researcher. On the contrary,

The interpretations of the researcher are likely to be emphasized more than the interpretations of those people studied, but the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the multiple realities, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening (Stake, 1995, p. 12).

### **Selection of the study site**

This study was conducted in one of the French affiliated private schools in Mount Lebanon governate that has a history in implementing externally mandated changes. The rationale behind choosing this study site is based on its previous experience and organizational structure that both can make a good fit to the research question and are directly connected with what will be discussed in this study. Another main reason for this choice is that the researcher has been working at this school for 15 years and this allows for gaining access to a wider scope of information that might not be attainable in different site.

The case school was established in 1979 and provides education to students from K-12. It is licensed to receive learners at all pre-university levels. Its mission as stated on the school website is to “Build the person, the whole person” it embraces the education of the whole person, and actively participates in maximizing the learner’s potential. It sees the school as a place of life in which the student as a whole is at the center of all concerns. Accredited by the French ministry in 1994, the study school offers the French and Lebanese curriculum and prepares its students for both official exams. The institution is divided into KG, elementary, middle and high school. It currently enrolls 2000 students and has around 220 teachers.

The case school is currently undergoing a French curriculum-based reform, a change in methods of instructions and examinations. It is not undergoing any leadership strategies change.

Since its establishment, the school has been run by a religious congregation represented by a principal forming the school’s strategic apex. The current principal took office at the start of 2008-2009 academic year till present. She has the legitimate power to take all salient academic and strategic decisions. The middle line being the board of management is composed of the administrative council (heads of departments) and academic council (subjects coordinators). The school’s middle line ensures the link and the flow of information between the apex and the operating core. The technostructure consisting of auditors, IT experts, HR director plays a role in controlling the school’s financial situation, implementing technology and hiring new personnel. The operating core in the school, being the teachers are mainly BA and MA holders. Their role is limited to the classroom. Despite the presence of these units, the power is concentrated in the higher part

of the hierarchy acknowledging the importance of the apex in the strategic decision-making and school management process.

### **Selection of participants**

The researcher established certain criteria based on factors such as gender, years of experience, and job position that the participants needed to meet to ensure that the data generated based on their input could be valid and informative to the research. Therefore, purposeful sampling was used.

**Table 1**

*Participants*

<b>Participants</b>	<b>Role</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>years of experience</b>
T1	English teacher	Female	5
T2	ICT teacher	Male	17
T3	History teacher	Female	7
T4	Life Sciences teacher	Female	10
T5	French Teacher	Female	25
L1	Head of department	Female	22
L2	Coordinator	Male	26
L3	Head of department	Female	4

*Note:* Table 1 shows a description of the participants in the study.

### ***Purposive sampling***

This section aims to show how the researcher chose the participants in the research study. Purposeful or purposive sampling involves choosing individuals who are considered “information rich” and offer “useful manifestations of the phenomenon of interest” (Patton, 2000, p. 40). The phenomenon of interest is teachers’ attitude namely their resistance to change implementation and the parallel process of change agents maneuvering the

complexity of change. According to Patton (2002) “The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases for study in depth. Information-rich cases are those from which one can learn a great deal about issues of central importance to the purpose of the inquiry” (p. 230).

The criteria chosen by the research dictates that the participants who will be interviewed are currently employed in the case school. The sample included high school teachers who have been teaching in the study case school for more than 3 years (because the externally mandated reform was implemented in 2018 in the high school curriculum in all the French affiliated schools) and who have good command of the English language.

Additionally, the participants included coordinators and heads of departments who have been in a position of leadership in the study case school for more than 3 years and who have good command of the English language. These school practitioners and leaders constituted a rich source of information to this topic, thus providing purposeful sampling.

Further, the researcher included variations among participants of different gender, job status and years of experience to capture diverse perspectives of change and resistance and make sure that voices are heard to a large extent (Charmaz, 2015). Regarding the number of participants involved in the study, Israelsson (2016) states that the number is not crucial, and the focus is on the researcher’s capabilities to articulate learnings into a coherent and meaningful study. Campbell (2015) adds that the number of participants in case studies is usually not more than 12. Taking time and school size into consideration, the researcher decided to work with 8 participants, three formal leaders (one coordinator and two heads of department), and five teachers as she feels that she can gather the data she needs from this pool.

The researcher forwarded an email to all school professionals upon getting approval informing them about the research, its purpose and value. She ensured that they are aware that participation is on a voluntary basis and participants can end the process if they believe they do not want to carry on. Upon receiving replies, the researcher contacted the first teacher or leader from different capacities within the school to confirm their inclusion in the study. Upon the confirmation of participation, the researcher moved forward with the other participants until the number of participants sought after was reached. The rest was emailed back with thanks and informed that they will be contacted if needed.

### **Methods of data collection**

This section will include a description of the methods and tools used for data collection of this study. The main method selected for data collection is semi-structured interviews, which aligns with the interpretive paradigm and allows the participants to share their voice, which in turn provides the researcher with the information and data needed to try to answer the research questions of the study (Fielding, 1993).

#### ***Semi-structured interviews***

The researcher opted for semi-structured interviews due to the wealth of details and information they provide, which is an essential component for a successful case study. Semi-structured interviews are found to be consistent with the interpretivist aspect and the aim of this study given that it is the most functional methods in interpretive inquiry, and it allows an in-depth exploration and a rich understanding of a particular subject shared with participants who have had the relevant experiences (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019).



Individual interviews were conducted with the consenting participants to get a deeper understanding of how change is implemented and what are the factors impacting the change process at the study site. The aim of the individual interview here was to allow the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the leaders' role in the change process, explore from their perspective what barriers stand in the way of implementing change, and discuss the leadership strategies they adopt to lead change. The interview questions differed between leadership and teachers (see appendices A and B) to allow for more contextualized data from the perspective of the individuals according to their position and responsibilities in the school.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected was analyzed thematically where coding went through two major processes. The first process was structural coding where codes were generated based on the research questions (Charmaz, 2021). To that end, five codes were conceptualized. Preparation of teachers, Pandemic, Economic Crisis, Leadership support, and Resource readiness. After that, the researcher looked into the transcribed data from the interviews and developed coding based on two phases, initial and focused coding.

#### ***Initial coding***

During this phase the researcher attempted to “study fragments of data words, lines, segments, and incidents-closely for their analytic import” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 42). Through this process, the researcher exhibited an active and careful listening in an attempt to portray meanings and actions in the practitioners' stories then pursue further data gathering (Charmaz, 2006).

Additionally, the researcher planned to be fast and spontaneous in coding and transcribing the data because working fast in this phase ignites her analytical thinking and produces a fresh view of the data (Charmaz, 2006). Lastly, the researcher used English in her interviews since it is the language she shares daily with colleagues and according to Charmaz (2006), the codes emerging from the languages, meanings, and perspectives will allow the researcher to learn about her own and the practitioners' empirical world.

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), initial coding is followed by dimensionalizing the categories; this being said, the researcher framed the categories dimension and defined their properties. Then, the researcher initiated the categories refinement process through axial coding and therefore started to match the categories to their subcategories (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, through Initial coding the researcher fragmented the data into clear codes, while through focused coding she attempted to “[bring] data together in a coherent whole” and “converting written text into concepts” (Charmaz, 2006, p. 60-61).

### ***Focused coding***

This second major step in coding prompts the researcher to sort, organize, compare data to data, recategorize and refine further (Charmaz, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1990, 1998). Throughout this phase the researcher elicited more directed, selective, and conceptual codes than line-by-line coding (Charmaz, 2006). The researcher synthesized and explained data while deciding on the most adequate or most repeated earlier codes that can make the perfect analytical sense to sharply categorize the data (Charmaz, 2006).

Though the transition from initial coding to focused coding might look linear at first sight, the researcher found herself returning to earlier respondents and data to discern the

implicit and uncover new meanings under the influence of newly found understanding (Charmaz, 2006).

This active involvement in the coding process opens new perspectives and prompts the researcher to reflect upon her preconceptions about the topic and avoid forcing them on the data she codes (Charmaz, 2006). Thus, the researcher in this study took a “reflexive stance toward challenges” and this may “result in questioning her own perspectives and practices” (Hertz, 2003 as cited in Charmaz, 2006, p. 68). This stance was evident where the researcher initially believed that a main factor influencing the change process would be the economic situation, leading her to consider it as a focused code while later finding out that her perception was not accurate.

During the field work, the researcher analyzed the data as it was collected and was consequently using the notes she took and taped during the interviews with the leaders and teachers (Charmaz, 2006). This early memo writing as proposed by Charmaz enabled the researcher to inquire into qualitative codes that will elicit more targeted focused data collection” (Charmaz, 2006). This was done with one of the participants where the researcher went back for a follow up interview to collect more data that was deemed important to elaborate on what was initially collected in the initial interview. This phase led to the categorization of the data under big ideas (themes) which the researcher could relate to and reflect on the possible consequences, then start the data comparison and adequate selection process (Charmaz, 2006).

A sample of the initial and focused coding is provided in Appendix C.

The sample reflects the process where each interview was initially transcribed separately. The next step was to identify themes and initial codes from each document in an

iterative manner. After this process, all codes were moved over to an excel sheet where similar emergent codes were grouped, initially per participant, and then for teachers and leaders separately. Finally, the codes under similar themes for teachers and leaders were studied and later compared.

### **Quality criteria**

To establish the trustworthiness of the study and address the concerns that might emerge from a constructivist qualitative study, the researcher adopted Merriam's (1998) quality criteria that essentially relate to credibility, reliability, and transferability of data.

#### ***Credibility***

Credibility refers to the extent to which research findings match reality or in other words are congruent with reality (Merriam, 2015). To increase the credibility of the study, the researcher relied on the use of multiple methods of data collection and multiple sources of data to shore up the internal validity of the study (Denzin, 1978 as cited in Merriam, 2015). In this regard, the researcher continuously attempted to check what the interviewees said in individual interviews against what she observed from her own engagement in the school as a school professional (Merriam, 2015). Further, to ensure the use of multiple sources of data the researcher compared, and cross-checked interview data collected from participants from different department sharing different perspectives or from follow-up interviews with the same practitioners (Merriam, 2015).

Subsequently, the researcher used the respondent validation technique to rule out any sort of misunderstanding, misinterpretation, or biases (Merriam, 2015). This strategy also called "member checks" allows the researcher to go back to the participants and check with

them whether her interpretation to what they said aligns with the description of their experience (Merriam, 2009; 2015). Therefore, she was able to fine-tune her own interpretation to better capture the participants perspectives (Merriam, 2015).

### ***Reliability***

Reliability refers to the extent to which research findings can be replicated (Merriam, 2015). To enhance reliability the research used besides triangulation a strategy labeled “researcher’s position, or reflexivity” (Merriam, 2009; 2015). This method allows the researcher to explain her position with regards to the study, clarify her position and assumptions without “eliminating the researcher’s theories, beliefs, and perceptual lens”; Instead, “understanding how a particular researcher’s values and expectations influenced the conduct and conclusions of the study” (Maxwell 2013, p. 124 as cited in Merriam, 2015). Thus, this maximized the integrity of the study whereby the researcher’s position is transparent and the way she affects and is affected by the study is explicit to the readers and researcher herself (Merriam, 2015). This is clarified by clearly stating the researcher’s stance regarding the role of teachers in education as a whole and in leading and implementing change particularly. Further, the researcher kept a journal through which she documented her thought processes, decisions, and actions throughout the research process. By doing so, she was able to track her work progress and maintain a record of any changes made. This journal was continuously used by the researcher to verify the accuracy and consistency of the data and to provide transparency in the research process.

### ***Transferability***

Transferability refers to the extent to which research findings can be generalizable or in other words applied in other situations (Merriam, 2015). To enhance the possibility of the results transferability to another setting the researcher primarily employed “thick description” strategy. This common technique consists of a highly descriptive, detailed presentation of the setting, participants, and the findings of the study (Merriam, 2015). The researcher provided adequate evidence presented in the form of quotes from participant interviews and field notes (Merriam, 2015).

Further, the researcher relied on “typicality or modal categories” strategy to maximize transferability (Merriam, 2015). The researcher in this case purposefully selected a typical or modal sample through which she described how typical the program, event, or individual is compared with others in the same context (Catholic private school, religious principals, teachers of different genders and age). This allows diverse users to relate to and make comparisons with their own situations (Merriam, 2015).

### ***Ethics***

Ethics of the researcher play a major role in the research validity and reliability (Merriam, 2015). In fact, according to Patton (2015) “the trustworthiness of the data is tied directly to the trustworthiness of those who collect and analyze the data—and their demonstrated competence” (p. 706). To fulfill ethical considerations, the researcher manifested “rigorous thinking” with respect to the methods and analysis (Patton, 2015, p.703).

Further, IRB guidelines in terms of informed consent, participant confidentiality and privacy, participant protection from harm, collaboration to a large extent (including diverse voices), noninterventionist researcher position in fieldwork and so on (Merriam, 2015) will

be thoroughly respected and detectable throughout the strategies used by the researcher. In terms of informed consent, the participants were asked to sign consent forms that they are willing to participate in the research study. The participants were informed that their names will remain anonymous using pseudonyms, and they will be free to step down at any point of the research, and their data will be deleted if requested.

### **Conclusion**

The researcher aimed to offer the methodology she will follow in studying the factors affecting the implementation of change in the school context. The researcher decided to utilize semi-structured interviews to collect the data she will use in this qualitative case study. The collected data was transcribed and coded through initial and focused techniques in preparation for analysis. To ensure the quality of the research, the researcher adopted Merriam's (1998) quality criteria focusing on credibility, reliability, and transferability of data. The next chapter sheds light on the collected findings.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

In this section, I will present the results that emerged from the interview with the three leaders and five teachers. The research is based on the following three questions: 1) What are the factors affecting the implementation of externally mandated changes in a Lebanese private school in Lebanon? 2) How is the role of school leadership understood by different stakeholders in light of implementing external mandated changes? 3) What are the concerns of Lebanese private school Teachers in playing a role in implementing external changes? In line with those questions, the findings will be presented under 3 main sections. The first will focus on the barriers to change taking into consideration the themes identified in the literature review. The second is the perception of the role of leadership in facilitating the change process. Finally, the third is teachers' concerns to being active contributors to the change process. All sections will present the data from the teachers' and leaders' perspective.

#### **Factors affecting Implementation of the change initiative.**

In the last decade, the school understudy has been subjected to numerous change initiatives. The most recent initiative was an externally mandated change in high school curriculum, methods of instructions, and evaluations in 2018. According to teachers and leaders, this initiative has faced many challenges, and various factors have influenced its implementation.



### *Psychological factors*

Teachers and leaders cited several psychological factors such as discomfort, instability, fear of change, lack of enthusiasm, apathy, depression, and difficulty in adapting, which impeded the implementation of change.

**Instability.** Some of the teacher participants identified instability as a major factor influencing the change initiative. This was attributed to the constant change that came with the French baccalaureate reform. Teachers attributed their reluctance to commitment to reform requirements to the instability they felt as a result of constant change. This was evident in T1's reply "every year they change. So, dealing with this is a challenge itself, you are never settled. Always on the run and always it's a challenge against time, against this rapid change of everything."

**Concerns about change.** Leaders attributed the concerns they observed among teachers to many factors. One factor was students' outcomes which manifested in L3's reply "part of the teachers was resisting this change because they were afraid of the outcomes" "their fear was reflected in the students' low grades" due to the influence that might have on students' future plans. Another was the financial crisis that came after Covid and compounded in magnitude afterwards since, at that point, teachers were responding to the curriculum change in light of the challenging circumstances that unfolded due to Covid. With this regard, L2 stated that "the financial situation that made them very indifferent to the whole thing and basically they were there but at the same time, they were fishing for a new job". L2 attributed the challenges and resistance he encountered to the financial difficulties and admitted that sometimes he "lacked policies". He noted, "I just wanted to do what we call

make do. They [academic director and principal] put the coordinator and teachers in charge of everything. Because they were primarily preoccupied with other issues, particularly the parents' refusal to pay on time and the financial issues.”

Finally, external influence was another reason where L3 shared that “part of the teachers was resisting this change because they were afraid of the outcomes in terms of threats coming from the outside”.

However, teachers attributed their concerns to completely different factors, mainly their lack of confidence in their ability to bring about change and the absence of support. Teachers were “afraid of the change” and the new requirements it entailed. They doubted their ability "to be up to it," as T1 stated in her interview. Similarly, T2 described the difficulty of teaching a new curriculum and the anxiety it causes among teachers, particularly when they are unsure whether they will be able to perform as well as before. Teachers expressed concerns about the lack of support they received in terms of guidance, clarification sessions, and frequent meetings, which made them anxious about the upcoming change. This manifested in many answers T1 expressed uncertainty about whether the support she received could be attributed to the school, as evidenced by her response “I don’t know if I can call it a support system, but my support system in school concerning this reform, ehh, are actually colleagues.” T2 mentioned “it was really personal effort, ok. The only support we had from the AEFÉ was this specific diploma given over two years. Yes, here we have we had the support, but we hadn’t, we didn’t have any other kind of support.” T3 noted “I had to prepare lessons for 3 levels without any guidance.”

**Teachers’ morale.** Teachers' low morale, according to leaders, was among the factors that impacted their engagement in the implementation of the change process. Teachers

felt indifferent towards the reform and lacked enthusiasm. This was attributed to the economic crisis and covid 19 as evidenced in the leaders' responses. L2 noted that after covid teachers "ran out of patience and energy." They manifested indifference, not only towards the French reform but also, towards their career. People felt underpaid, they felt depressed, and this is why we have about 30% of teachers in Lebanon who left their career." He further explained that low morale cultivated resistance among some teachers during the implementation process, which manifested itself in absenteeism, lower productivity, and less participation of some teachers in the activities and projects mandated by this reform.

**Difficulty in adapting.** Adjusting to new methods of instruction, criteria of evaluation and curriculum content was among the main elements the respondents recognized as having a significant impact on the implementation process.

Leaders attributed the difficulty in adapting and the resulting resistant behavior of the teachers to their age, which caused discomfort and difficulties in embracing change and adapting to the reform's requirements. This was manifested in L2's reply stating that "People were not happy to adapt" "people above the age of 35, become resistant to change because they become comfortable, their comfort zones become more dominant in their psychology."

Teachers' narrative also shared their discomfort and struggle to adapt to change. This was evident when some discussed issues such as feeling overloaded in their work. T3 shared: "We had to start from zero. And it was a lot of work for me because I had to work on 3 academic years: grade 10, 11 and 12 in one year. So, I was really overloaded, and I had to change everything. The first year the workload was extreme. As I told you, I had to prepare lessons for 3 levels without any guidance." T4 also displayed her struggle with the change due to misalignment with their teaching philosophy: "All the objectives do not align with my

objectives and my teaching philosophy, and they were not clear to me, so I cannot implement them in Lebanon," she explained. L1 raised this issue, observing that "teachers were a little bit puzzled between the old ways of teaching and the new ones".

### ***Perception factors***

Teachers and leaders hold divergent views regarding the objectives of the reform and its implications. This, according to the respondents, posed a hindrance to the change process.

**Questionable impact.** Most of the teachers interviewed felt that this reform had many gaps and had a negative impact on students and teachers. This negative perception of the reform resulted in resistant behavior as evidenced in the teachers reply. T4 stated "it is not a reform for Lebanon, it is a reform to be applied in France". T5 clarified the negative impact it had on students' learning and the insecurity it instilled in teachers "teachers were puzzled and insecure." T3 explained that this reform has put a lot of pressure on students who aren't yet ready to make the right decision about their future specialties. As a result, they were "mal orienté" [Mis-oriented]. "T2 elicited the fear caused by the change and the negative impact it had on teachers she stated, "every change generates some fear in people, because we don't know if we will go about as well as before".

The three leaders presented different responses to those of teachers. They believed that teachers believed in and endorsed the change because they trusted the impact. This was evidenced in their responses. L1 stated "the teachers I know are thrilled about this; they are passionate about this. There were not many difficulties; They were convinced since the beginning that this is going to work and that this is interesting and meaningful to the students". L3 emphasized the significance of change and its positive impact on students'

learning and future paths. L2 argued that the loss of enthusiasm and motivation among teachers was not attributed to lack of trust in the reform impact, but rather due to other reasons, particularly COVID and the economic crisis rather than the reform itself.

**Vague objectives.** One of the initial challenges cited by most of the teachers was the vague objectives of this externally mandated reform. This is reflected throughout T1-T3-T4 respective answers “it was ambiguous” “unclear goals” “not clear enough”. Additionally, some of respondents reported that the constant change perplexed teachers and leaders. T3 for example noted that the Agence pour l'Enseignement Français à l'Etranger (AEFE) seemed uncertain of their goals as they made frequent changes during the initial years: “It appears that our school is still in the process of determining the optimal structure for implementing the reform, as we continue to see yearly reforms”. She added that in such an unpredictable context, it was “impossible” for anyone or any school to maneuver the complexity of the situation.

The unclarity about the reform objectives could also be reflected in how T2 and T5 interpreted the reform objectives when asked to describe the reform initiative. While T2 says that the main objective of the reform is “to prepare every student for real life for the future as workers in society”, T5 gave a different explanation stating that “the most important objective is to motivate students to express themselves orally and let them talk with self-confidence, without hesitation.”

Leaders seemed to have varying perceptions regarding the clarity of the reform objectives. L1 specifically believed that the reform objectives were clear to the teachers. According to L1, some teachers had attended training sessions aimed at elucidating the objectives of the reform, with the intent of subsequently disseminating the knowledge

gleaned from these sessions to other teachers within their schools. As a result, L1 believed that teachers possessed an understanding of the reform objectives. In addition, L1 stated that regular coordination meetings were conducted on a weekly basis, and teachers were encouraged to seek clarification, ask questions, and provide feedback at any time.

L2 and L3 were less confident in the clarity of the objectives. While acknowledging the existence of workshops intended for teacher training, L2 underscored the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and the economic crisis, which hindered attendance. L3 observed a lack of awareness among some teachers and emphasized the importance of increasing the number of training sessions that clarify the reform's objectives. This was reflected in her response “I think the change must be more explained for the teachers because we start to feel some resistance, I think that we need to create some moments with teachers where we make them remember why we did it in the first place.”

### ***Cultural and organizational factors***

The school culture and context, as well as structural factors such as school logistical readiness, teachers’ readiness, and availability of resources, were frequently cited by both teachers and leaders as major barriers to the implementation of change. Most respondents claimed that this significant barrier made implementation challenging and generated resistance.

**School structure and culture.** The school structure and culture were some of the factors mentioned to negatively affect change, particularly in terms of how teacher involvement in decision making. This was evident in T5's response, in which she stated that she has been teaching for 25 years in a religious and private school, and that everything has

been imposed since then. This reflects the fact that such practices have withstood time and became normalized into the daily actions within the school, making them part and parcel of the culture. On a similar note, T3 characterized the imposition of changes on the school culture without involving all stakeholders in the decision-making process as dictatorial. This was evident in her answer “not all the coordinators are being involved in decision making. They want to be involved, but the situation appears to be dictatorial.” Similarly, T4 noted that tasks were imposed, and her role was only to apply what was required.

**School context.** Furthermore, context-specific challenges emerged throughout the teachers' narratives. Teachers questioned the applicability of the foreign mandated reform in Lebanon, a country with a hugely varied context than that of France. Teachers revealed that this reform does not fit the school context in any way. T4 argued that the objectives could not be implemented in Lebanon. Other said, "Yes, because it is not a reform for Lebanon, it is a reform to be applied in France. It is not a reform that can be implemented in Lebanon, particularly in our schools with the current curriculum. The Lebanese baccalaureate is abolished, and they only focus on the French baccalaureate."

**Teachers' readiness.** Some teachers mentioned that they were not ready to take part in the reform. They attributed this to their lack of preparedness to engage in the change process. T4 for example mentioned the scarcity of training sessions and the lack of follow-ups. This was evident in her reply: “I attended a training session once during the implementation process. I learned a lot from this session. But unfortunately, there wasn't any follow up”. The perception of teachers however was vastly different than that of two of the school leaders.

Two school leaders had a different take on teachers' readiness and even commended implementers' readiness and high level of expertise. This was manifested in L2's reply "In our case, it was successful because of the competency and well-trained people who are doing it". On the other hand, L3 opposed this view and suggested the need to improve teachers' preparation at all levels. She said, "the HR department is planning to inform teachers about sessions that tackle class management, students' motivation, working through projects". This discrepancy was eye-opening, especially that it was not limited to perception on teacher readiness but stretched to different aspects such as resources and role of leadership in the change process as depicted in the upcoming sections.

**Lack of resources.** A lack of resources in the form knowledge acquired from workshops, training sessions, internal, and aiding tools to facilitate the teaching and learning process were among the top coded challenges mentioned by all of the teachers in the interview. This was clearly illustrated by the responses provided by the participants. T1 stated "I wouldn't wait for the workshops; I would be left behind. There wasn't even a single workshop, or any training session or any aiding resources or tools to guide us" "workshop did not meet the points of this reform. T2 noted "there were not any book in the market to tell us what we could teach to the students exactly, so I prepared the contents, the exercises, the way of assessment completely alone, of the students, so that they could pass the baccalaureate without any problem. It was the main challenge in fact."

T3 expressed that they were not informed about how to work, hence nobody discussed it with them. "No one talked to us." T4 shared her experience of attending a training session during the implementation process, where she gained valuable knowledge. However, there



was no subsequent support or follow-up provided to them. “I learned a lot from this session. But unfortunately, there wasn’t any follow up. Besides, there wasn’t any support system.”

Leaders did acknowledge some challenges in terms of resource readiness but focused on logistics in particular. L1 explained that the challenges she confronted were "logistics". They were concerned with the availability of students, teachers, and classrooms. "The schedule didn't allow me to put all the courses in the same day or to have all the periods in the day with available teachers/ this is logistics, it was difficult because we do not have enough classrooms. We do not have teachers available all the time.”

### **Role of school leadership in implementing externally mandated changes**

In this section, the perceptions of both the leaders and teachers towards the role of leadership in implementing the change will be shared, with each presented in a separate section. The study revealed a significant discrepancy in opinion and perception between the two groups, which will be highlighted in each section under the corresponding title in the findings.

#### ***From the perspective of leaders***

School leaders are the initial recipients of the reform requirements from the AEFÉ and are accountable for integrating them into the school's culture. As reported by the interviewees, their responsibilities encompassed a variety of tasks, including offering structural and psychological support, conducting student assessments, and facilitating reforms.

**Leadership structural support.** School leaders provided both structural and psychological support to the teachers to assist them in implementing the reform requirements. In terms of structural support, L1 stated that their initial step as head of departments was to

organize internal meetings for her teachers to equip them with the necessary skills to implement the changes. In addition, she had to send her teachers to external workshops organized by the (AEFE), which is based in Lebanon. Simultaneously, she commenced modifying the programs in line with the official curriculum (BO). She pointed out that in the initial stages, classroom visits were conducted regularly, with weekly visits being the norm, particularly when teachers expressed uncertainty about specific matters.

L2 mentioned that currently, the school and its departments are solely responsible for executing, supervising, and evaluating the plan. This means that the entire responsibility rests with the teachers and coordinators who are carrying out the plan's implementation. L2 attempted to provide the necessary resources to aid successful delivery of the plan, equipping individuals with the appropriate materials. One strategy that L2 utilized to support the teachers was “task simplification”. Rather than providing the entire program at once, he divided and separated it into manageable chunks. This strategy, according to him, made it appear more straightforward, allowing individuals to better digest and process the information with more energy. L2 recognized the obstacles they continually encountered in their department. When he experienced “a drop-out case”, he resorted to modifying the staff's responsibilities entirely. He recruited new individuals in the department. However, this strategy did not make a noticeable difference in terms of increasing teacher motivation since people remained indifferent for various reasons.

**Leadership psychological support.** L1 noted that psychological support played a vital role in easing the implementation process. She highlighted that the head of the department provided assistance in facilitating the process, encouraging the teachers, and arranging for all necessary logistics. L2 employed the "sponge approach" throughout the

implementation process, particularly when he encountered resistance. He followed a strategy of patience, aiming to absorb any negative reactions, and to raise the morale of those feeling discouraged or down.

In a follow up interview, L3 explained that after a year from the implementation process, her approach to addressing resistance included:

- Avoiding conflicts and disturbances in the department by refraining from clashing with resistant teachers and instead trying to bring them to my side.
- Encouraging resistant teachers to discuss the reasons behind their behavior in a safe environment, such as my office, where they can disagree on various points.
- Recognizing that burying concerns and not discussing them can lead to viral resistance in the department, affecting student outcomes and departmental functioning.

Utilizing negative comments, criticisms, and nagging from resistant teachers to reflect on flaws in the reform and, to an extent, discussing them with the principal and academic advisor to modify and adapt requirements to the needs of the department and reduce resistance.

**Support through evaluation.** Another form of support was evaluation to identify areas of support that teachers needed. L1 mentioned that she adopted “a midterm evaluation approach”, which involved conducting multiple meetings to assess the progress of the implementation. Similarly, L3 adopted an end of year assessment approach, and this was evidenced in her reply, “So, at the end of the year, we conduct a teacher evaluation. Every coordinator gathers his team and attempts to evaluate the year, the academic year, in terms of its strengths and weaknesses”.

**Leaders as facilitators.** According to the interview data, leaders view their role as facilitators in implementing the change initiative. This was evidenced in several of their responses.

L1 emphasized the importance of open and frequent communication channels between herself, the head of departments, and the coordinators in order to facilitate the implementation process. She noted that they have weekly coordination meetings and that she is available at any time for clarification, questions, evaluation, and other communication needs. However, L3 recognized that communication breakdowns posed a significant obstacle during the school's implementation phase. To address this, she undertook efforts to establish “circular communication channels”, both with parents to keep them informed of any changes or decisions made, and with students on a weekly basis to discuss important updates and information.

When asked about the role of the school principal in the initiative, both L1 and L3 referred to the principal's role as a facilitator in relation to budget allocation. According to L1, the principal and academic director worked together to support the decision that arose from the end-of-year evaluations. They endorsed this decision with the board and are committed to providing necessary support in terms of budget, training sessions, and other academic-year decisions.

While leaders offered many insights into their role in the change process, teachers generally seemed to have a different perspective of that role.

*From the perspective of teachers.*

Teachers' perception of leadership roles in terms of support and guidance, personal initiative, communication, and professional development differs from the way leaders perceive these roles, as revealed by the interview data. This is further detailed below.

**Lack of guidance and support.** Teachers generally reported on the lack of guidance and support that hindered their efforts and ability to properly contribute to the reform. T1, T2, T4 teachers took personal initiative to seek guidance and support when implementing new reforms or initiatives. They conducted their own research and reached out to colleagues and other schools for advice.

The lack of support left teachers reflecting negatively on the role of school leadership in the change process. T2, T3, T4, T5 expressed frustration with the lack of support and guidance from leaders. They felt that there were gaps in the process and that they were left to figure things out on their own. One of the gaps identified in the entire process was the absence of reflection meetings to address the concerns of both teachers and students, and to discuss all the necessary details pertaining to their needs. T4 added, “at school we had small meetings but not effective meetings.”

**Communication problems.** The importance of clear communication from leaders was emphasized by more than one teacher. Teachers wanted to know what was expected from them and how to implement new initiatives effectively. T1, T4, and T5 all shared that there was a problem with communication where what was required of them was not communicated clearly by leadership. T4 shared that “[communication] was ambiguous enough that even

when they come to tell me about certain presentations, it was not clear”, T5 shared insights along the same lines: “presentations were not clear”.

**Professional Development.** Teachers expressed a desire for more professional development opportunities. They wanted access to training, coaching, and mentoring to help them develop their skills and expertise. T1 shared that there were no development efforts orchestrated by leaders: “my support system in school concerning this reform, ehh, are actually colleagues”. T3 shared that “there were no learning sessions”. Along those lines, T4 added: “I attended a training session once and this was in the implementation process. I learned a lot from this session. But unfortunately, there wasn’t any follow up”. Finally, T5 noted that “the lack of teachers support led to negatively impacting the students learning and outcome, the teachers were puzzled and insecure”. Teachers felt that the lack of support and guidance negatively impacted student learning and outcomes, and they emphasized the need for leaders to prioritize students and teachers in decision-making.

### **Role of teachers in the change initiative**

Based on the interview data, the responsibilities of teachers in the change initiative can be classified into three categories - teaching and learning, decision making, and implementation - as reported by both teachers and leaders.

#### ***Teachers’ Role in Teaching & Learning***

All the participants who participated in the interview agreed that their primary responsibility was focused on teaching and facilitating the learning process. T1, T3, L3, and T5 shared their experiences regarding the role of teachers in teaching and learning. T1 mentioned that teachers play a vital role in course planning, lesson planning, and activity

planning. Additionally, T1 asserted that teachers face the challenge of dealing with a class consisting of students with multiple intelligences and their role consists in devising strategies to ensure that all students comprehend the subject matter.

Further, L3 described a process where teachers engage in impact measurement at the end of the academic year, where coordinators evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the year. However, T3 indicated that teachers were not asked to assess the success or failure of the reform, emphasizing their exclusion from the impact analysis. Instead, their role was limited to evaluating students' performance.

### ***Teachers' Role in Decision Making***

According to the responses of all the interviewees, teachers displayed the urge to play a more elaborate role in decision-making, planning the reform, or assessing the impact of change initiatives processes in line with their perception of their professional identity. They shared that the school practice in line with this aspiration was underwhelming. This was validated through the fact that only one leader highlighted the need to include teachers in these processes. This was evidenced in their answers.

T1, T4, T5, and L3 discussed the importance of a larger role for teachers in decision making. T1 stated that teachers had no role in decision making, while T4 mentioned that teachers had no say in the planning process. T5 shared that teachers were not encouraged to express their opinions about changes in the school because it is perceived as resistant behavior. this was manifested in her answer: "We as teachers don't participate in the decision making and were kind of raised to repress our concerns or opinion about any change that

takes place in the school”. L3 highlighted the need to integrate more the teachers in the evaluation meetings and action plans because as she said, “they are the front liners.”

### ***Teachers as Implementers***

The role of teachers in implementing changes related to the curriculum, instructional methods, and evaluation was mutually discussed and agreed upon by both teachers and leaders.

Throughout their narratives, all teachers mentioned that they implemented the requirements of the reform. Leaders also shared their views on the teacher's role as implementers. L3 explained that “The Conseil d'Établissement” (school council) is responsible for devising and initiating plans, which are then implemented by coordinators and teachers. Similarly, L1 mentioned that the head of department facilitated the implementation process, but the teachers are the ones who implement the changes and stated that teachers were up to the implementation task” They were excellent and up to it”. T5 noted that their role was limited to implementing the requirements of the reform in the class and meeting with the coordinator to change the methodology for the oral. L2 stated that the most significant shift has been the transfer of responsibility from those in charge of reform design, implementation, and monitoring to the teachers who are now responsible for executing the program, along with the coordinators who support them. “All is now in the hands of the teachers who are implementing the program.” He explained.

### **Summary of findings**

This chapter aimed to share the findings based on the collected data from the participants’ interviews. The data was shared considering the research questions guiding this study.



According to the data that was thematically presented, several factors seemed to affect the change initiative. Psychologically, teachers and leaders cited several factors impeding the implementation of change such as instability, fear of change, lack of enthusiasm, apathy, depression, and difficulty in adapting.

Additionally, the perception of the impact of change played a role in the change process. Teachers seemed to question the impact and process of the change initiative due to the vagueness of the objectives and their questionable application to the Lebanese private school context.

The school culture and context also seemed to influence the change process. Teachers considered their role in the change process to influence their buy-in and effort. Additionally, the school readiness to take on the change was also seen as a factor to impact the success of the process. They added that they felt that they had a limited role in decision making when it came to change.

In terms of the leadership role, leaders shared that they perceived their role as supporters on structural and psychological levels, and expressed that evaluation and facilitation were main venues to offer that support. Teachers also saw support to be essential in terms of leadership roles and responsibilities in the change process. However, did not seem to share the same feedback shared by the leaders in relation to the success leaders had in implementing this role, citing a lack of guidance, communication, and professional development opportunities. Those results will be discussed in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND IMPLICATIONS

The findings of the study were highly indicative in terms of answering the study's research questions. Several factors of psychological nature impeded the implementation of change. The perception of the value and applicability of change was perceived as influential in the change process. Additionally, school culture and context also influenced how change was understood by teachers and leaders. Regarding the roles of leaders, teachers and leaders did not seem to see eye to eye. While leaders saw their role as support and facilitation, teachers shared that they didn't feel supported in the process.

This chapter will discuss the findings presented in chapter 4, drawing from the theoretical understanding provided in the literature review and using the CBAM lens to answer the research questions of the study. First, it will discuss the factors affecting the implementation of the change initiative. These factors will be categorized as psychological, perception, cultural and organizational. Then, it will discuss the perceived role of leadership in facilitating the change process. Finally, it will discuss the teachers' concerns to being active contributors to the change process. Each of these sections will rely on insights from both the teachers' and leaders' viewpoint. The chapter will conclude with an overview of the study and its limitations and will highlight implications for practice and research.

## **Factors affecting resistance to the change initiative: from the perspectives of teachers and leaders.**

This section will discuss in light of the literature review conducted the first research question pertaining to the perceived challenges that influence the implementation of externally mandated change. Therefore, the factors will be discussed in the subsequent subsections, which include psychological, perception, cultural and organizational, with a focus on the discrepancy in opinion and perception between the leaders and teachers highlighted in each section under the respective title from the findings.

### ***Psychological factors.***

One of the main challenges that emerged to impact teachers' resistance at the high school level and was underscored in the results as a major impediment to the initiation of change, was psychological in nature. Participants shared that they experienced fear of change, low morale, instability, and difficulty adapting. Teachers attributed these concerns to diverse factors such as workload, misalignment with their teaching philosophy, lack of confidence, lack of efficient support, and the constant change the school undergoes. These results corroborate the findings of previous studies by Fullan and Ballew (2004) and assert that those feelings if not addressed may affect the teachers' attitude towards change and result in resistant behavior (Fullan & Ballew, 2004).

This psychological factor was also perceived to be a significant challenge impacting teachers' resistance of UAE schools (Troudi & Alwan, 2010). In fact, the feelings that the participants shared aligned with findings of Troudi and Alwan's (2010) qualitative study, which investigated the reactions of English language teachers in UAE towards the curriculum change and the generated affective issues that eventually turned into a form of resistance.

Hence, disregarding the psychological factors that affect teachers' attitude towards change is a major challenge that can lead to resistance and hinder the successful implementation of the change initiative.

It's important to note there was a variation in the leaders' and teachers' responses pertaining to the factors that influenced the teacher's morale. Leaders identified distinct factors that contributed to teachers' role in the change process, which differed from the psychological factors emphasized by teachers and supported by the recommendations of the existing literature. When asked about how teachers experienced the change and how it was manifested in their professional life, leaders attributed their negative attitude to age, COVID 19, financial crisis, student outcomes, and external influences. In contrast, teachers cited factors such as instability, worry about change, low morale a lack of confidence that they attributed to the lack of support, the school's continual changes and inconsistency with their teaching philosophy. Hence, those perceptions did not converge with those of leaders. This observed discrepancy reflects a disregard to the teachers concerns and will be tackled next from the lens of the CBAM model.

Previous research has demonstrated that addressing teachers' concerns can have a positive impact on their attitude towards change. Hall and Hord (2006) conducted research in different schools on the verge of change (curricular, structural, strategic), with the aim of customizing the implementation of this change to address teachers' concerns. They asserted in their studies using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) that "interventions to facilitate change must be aligned with the concerns of those who are engaged with the change" (p. 84).

When comparing the results of the teachers' interviews to the stages of concerns outlined in the CBAM model, we notice that teachers' concerns were identified across different stages and with various natures, rather than being limited to the impact stage as perceived by leaders. In other words, teachers manifested concern for the self (they were worried about the change and how it will impact them), concern for the task (they were lost about what to do and how to do it) concern for impact (they were concerned about impact the change will have on the students' learning and outcomes). These findings suggest that leaders might not be giving ample focus to teachers' perceptions and actions, especially in terms of the problems they face in the process of change. This falls in line with what Fullan and Miles (1992) shared "it is usually unproductive to label an attitude or action "resistance." It diverts attention from real problems of implementation, such as diffuse objectives, lack of technical skill, or insufficient resources for change" (p. 747).

### ***Perception factors***

Teachers' resistance to change was influenced by various perception-related factors. One such factor is the divergence of views between teachers and leaders regarding the objectives of the reform and its implications. The data indicates that teachers considered that the reform has a negative impact on themselves and on students' learning and prospects, "students are Mis-oriented" "teachers were puzzled and insecure", whereas leaders viewed that the reform is important and has a positive impact on teachers and students' learning "the teachers are thrilled about it; they are passionate about it". "It has positive impact on students' learning and future paths."

On a similar line, leaders' perceptions of the clarity of the reform objectives differed from those of teachers. While teachers report “ambiguity” and “unclear” of the reform objectives, leaders seem to perceive the goals of the reform clear. This discrepancy observed in the replies reflects communication breakdowns that might lead to a violation of trust between leaders and teachers and the objective of the reform itself (Ford *et al.*, 2008).

With this being said, leaders attributed teachers' negative reactions towards the change to factors related to the economic crisis and covid 19 disregarding factors related to the process of change, its applicability, and its goals. We can infer that resistance in this case can be considered as a product that arises in the interactions and discourse occurring between the leaders and the teachers (Ford & Ford, 2009). In fact, Ford and Ford (2009) highlighted in their study the subjectivity of resistance, wherein change agents' interpretation of a situation influences their understanding and subsequent actions.

In addition to the above-mentioned factors, the school's culture and context, along with organizational factors such as the school's logistical readiness, teachers' readiness, and the availability of resources, were frequently cited by both teachers and leaders as key factors that significantly affect teachers' willingness to embrace change and the successful implementation of the reform. These factors are supported by the literature as affecting the success of implementation of change as well as its sustainability (Lukk, Veisson, & Ots, 2008; Purkey & Smith, 1983).

### ***Cultural and structural factors within the school***

The literature pertaining to the organization culture strongly suggests that cultural factors play a pivotal role in teachers understanding of the change process. According to Per

(2004), cultural factors impact the organization workflow, build interpersonal liaisons, and interpret the way the change concept is seen in educational organizations. Therefore, they influence the perception of teachers towards change and how they approach this process. The responses of the teachers at the case-study school highlighting the “top-down approach”, “the misalignment of the reform with their teaching philosophies”, and the perceived "dictatorship" in decision-making provided us with an overall feel of the school culture that seems like a culture of compliance rather than collaboration. This culture can foster fear, mistrust, low morale, and therefore leads to conflict, disengagement, and resistance to change (Starr, 2011).

### ***Organizational Factors***

Organizational factors in terms of lack of resources in the form of workshops, effective training sessions, adequate internal and external support, tools, and follow-up plan were among the top coded challenges mentioned by all the participants in the interview. This finding falls in line with Lucas (2017) who shared that successful implementation requires the principal to provide instructional leadership through continual, ongoing conversations, collaboration with teachers, developing themselves and others, and participation in all professional development that is provided to the teachers, echoing the findings of Karami (2019) in the study on the design of reform in the Arab region. The study found that there is major neglect of concurrent and relevant capacity building for the teachers. Additionally, several studies have investigated the impact of organizational factors during the change process and focused on promoting professional development and leadership support to enhance teachers’ self-efficacy and guide them in the change process (Zimmerman, 2006).

This study results acknowledge the need of professional development yet, provide support for the hypothesis stating that the challenge that is manifested in the Arab context is that professional development provided in schools is often not aligned with the needs and priorities of teachers (Karami-Akkary, 2014). In fact, teachers noted that “workshop did not meet the points of this reform nor their needs.”

A notable discrepancy between the responses of the teachers and the leaders when asked about teachers’ readiness is observed. Leaders did acknowledge some challenges in terms of resource readiness but focused on logistics in particular. They were concerned with the availability of students, teachers, and classrooms. Yet, when asked about the resource availability teachers stated: “I wouldn’t wait for the workshops; I would be left behind”. “There wasn’t even a single workshop, or any training session or any aiding resources or tools to guide us” there wasn’t any follow up. Besides, there wasn’t any support system.” The fact that only teachers raised the issue of inadequate training and lack of support and resources as impeding challenge could indicate that they either did not communicate their concerns to leaders or that leaders were not convinced of the ineffectiveness of the training and perceived the support and resources they provided as adequate. This misalignment in perception between teachers and leaders provides a definite basis for potential problems to arise and can promote resistance through what literature label as “communication breakdowns” (Ford *et al.*, 2008 p. 366). Therefore, it is important to consider the important role of leaders and change agents in ensuring an alignment in terms of the change process and outcomes to increase the chances of success of educational reforms (Fullan, 2016).



I will move now to discuss the second research question pertaining to the role of school leadership in implementing the externally mandated reform. This will be discussed from both teachers' and leaders' points of view.

### **The perceived Role of school leadership in implementing externally mandated changes**

This section discusses in the light of the literature review the role of leadership in implementing the change as perceived by both the leaders themselves and the teachers. Each will be presented in a different section with a focus on the discrepancy in opinion and perception revealed by the study between the two groups. It is important to point out that all the practices shared by leaders fall under effective school leadership practices in the Lebanese context as highlighted by Harb and Karamy (2021).

#### ***From the perspective of leaders***

There is a variation in opinion among leaders themselves when it comes to their role in the implementation process. While leaders may share some common ground on certain aspects of leadership, they hold divergent views on other aspects.

**Structural support.** In terms of structural support, the three interviewed Leaders had various ways to provide support to the teachers. L1 opted to begin by organizing internal meetings, sending their department teachers to external workshops organized by AEFÉ, modifying programs in accordance with the Official Curriculum, and conducting classroom visits during the early stages of the implementation with minimal feedback to teachers which falls in line with what they shared regarding the lack of proper communication and development. The tasks that were carried out suggest that the leader's position in this department is more akin to a managerial role rather than leadership one (Ornstein, 1991). The

findings of the study call into question the validity of the commonly held beliefs about the managerial role of the leaders in the change process and its efficiency in a successful change implementation and optimal treatment of teachers' resistance.

On the other hand, L2 attempted to provide the necessary resources to aid successful delivery of the plan, equipping individuals with the appropriate materials and using the "task simplification strategy" to make teachers understand better the required tasks. However, this leader's approach was surprising when it came to handling a "dropout case," as he opted for a strategy that involves completely restructuring the staff's responsibilities and recruiting new personnel for the department. This strategy diverges from literature on leadership. It may even be perceived as deviating from supportive leadership strategies to address resistance and could potentially cause further issues. According to Ford and Ford (2010), it is common for leaders in organizational change contexts to view negative attitudes and reluctance as significant barriers to the implementation of change and reform. Leaders may attribute the resistance to change to personal flaws or a lack of commitment on the part of the change agents, rather than recognizing the systemic and contextual factors that may be contributing to their resistance. This tendency to blame teachers for their negative attitudes can create a confrontational dynamic and alienate them from the change process, making it more difficult to achieve successful change implementation (Ford & Ford, 2010).

Interestingly, L3 approaches were observed to be consistent with previous research in this area. The study results show that L3's suggestion was to focus on working with teachers to provide coaching and support that meet their needs and as she stated, "allocate some effort towards addressing their specific needs" because she believed that they are the "frontliners". Such an approach was important to L3 to lessen resistance to reform in the

department she leads. This view corroborates the findings of Zimmerman's (2006) studies that highlight the importance of promoting professional development tailored to the individual needs of teachers and coaching for teachers to foster their development and efficacy. Leader 3's approach was also highlighted by Haddad (2006) as one of the positive traits of instructional leadership that could promote the success of teachers.

**Psychological support.** In terms of psychological support, the responses shared by the leaders reflected a lack of alignment between leaders' 1 & 2 understanding of psychological support and the one of leader 3.

Both L1 and L2 agreed on the importance of understanding the teachers and encouraging them throughout the implementation phase. However, their interview findings indicate that their understanding of psychological support was limited to logistical facilitation to the teachers and a patient attitude towards absorbing the negative reactions exhibited by the teachers during the change process. They stated that they encouraged teachers, provided assistance, arranged for all the necessary logistics and employed the "sponge approach" throughout the implementation process.

Surprisingly, leader's 3 interview results indicated a different understanding to psychological support and even the findings contradicted the widely held belief in the literature that resistance is always a barrier to change. In fact, L3 perceived resistance as a "valuable resource" and treated it as an asset that enables change and fuels the growth of the organization with the purpose of mitigating resistance (Ford & Ford, p. 24, 2010). This was manifested in her non-conflictive approach that addresses resistance through the following strategies:

- avoiding conflicts with resistant teachers and instead trying to bring them on board.
- encouraging discussion of concerns in a safe environment.
- recognizing that burying concerns could lead to wider resistance.
- using negative comments from resistant teachers to reflect on flaws in the reform.
- discussing modifications with the principal and academic advisor to reduce resistance.

This aspect of leadership is addressed in the literature as a way to build relationships that involves listening to others, valuing their perspectives, and building trust through honest and open communication (Fullan, 2016).

**Support through evaluations.** In terms of the evaluations conducted by the leaders, the results of the interview were found to be inconsistent with the recommendations in the literature for organizational change. While the evaluations in the study school were intermittent (mid-year or end of the year) and involving only coordinators and heads of departments, the literature emphasizes the significance of continuous evaluation and reflection meetings involving all stakeholders throughout the change process (Glickman *et al.*, 2007).

**Leaders as Facilitators.** In terms of leadership roles, the three leaders being 2 heads of departments and one coordinator perceived their role differently where they used the term ‘facilitators’ to describe it particularly in relation to budget allocation and academic year decision making. This doesn’t align with the following criteria stressed by the CBAM model: change facilitators must proceed systematically, assess regularly, and provide support continually.

Leader 1 highlighted the importance of open and frequent communication channels between the heads of departments and the coordinators and emphasized her availability at any time for clarification, questions, evaluation, and other communication needs. This reflects the absence of the teachers in the communication channels.

On the other hand, leader 2 stated that he served as a facilitator during coordination meetings by simplifying tasks and breaking them down into manageable chunks to help teachers better understand and digest the information.

Conversely, leader 3 identified that communication breakdowns constituted a significant obstacle during the school's implementation phase. To overcome this challenge, she implemented measures to establish "circular communication channels". These channels facilitated regular and open communication with both parents and students, allowing for the sharing of important information and updates.

These findings indicate that while L1 and L2 strategies are supported in literature, they are missing crucial elements that are deemed essential for effective school leadership and successful change implementation. L1 and L2 relied mainly on strategies related to the task and leader-to-leader communication, which meant that teachers were not included in those channels and their concerns were disregarded. Hence, resistance was more likely to surface within the department under their leadership. Contrarily, L3 demonstrated a broader and more inclusive approach. She managed to address the concerns of the teachers related the self-task and impact, and view resistance as an asset to be integrated in the change process. This conceptualization of teacher resistance as a positive impact in change has been discounted by literature as Gitlin and Margonis (1995) share who add that looking at teacher resistance from this lens could help “avoid the push-pull cycle where outsiders push for

reforms and teachers resist, leaving schools fundamentally unchanged” (p. 377). Based on this understanding, L3 succeeded in mitigating resistance in her department and was able to lead a relatively successful change process. This is particularly reflected in the following CBAM criteria discussed by Ford and Ford (2006): the perceptions and feelings of individuals are crucial to successful implementation.

By recognizing the root causes of resistance, leaders can take steps to address it in a productive manner. In this case, they can view it as a valuable signal to assess and improve the shortcomings in the reform, as suggested by Ford and Ford (2010). This notion is also supported by Jones-Bliss (2020) who stated that when you seek to understand why staff perceive a disconnect between changes and existing work practices, processes or systems, you gain insight into other adjustments needed to make new approaches work. Often, their resistance saves you from future problems.

### ***From the perspective of teachers***

The interview data indicates that teachers hold different views than leaders regarding the roles of leadership. Therefore, specific differences will be discussed in terms of support and guidance, personal initiative, communication, and professional development.

**Lack of guidance and support.** In terms of guidance and support, teachers believe that leaders should provide continuous guidance and efficient support to enable them to maneuver the complexity of the change.

Efficient support in the form of reflection meetings is a main urge that participants perceived as being key to help them navigate change. Further, this support is perceived essential for teachers, particularly when it comes to addressing students’ and teachers’

concerns. Teachers conveyed their requirements for reflective meetings to address their concerns, and to discuss all the relevant details pertaining to their needs. This is in line with Sannino's (2009) study that invite in its recommendations school leaders to build trust with their teachers, support dialogue, and facilitate the externalization of their concerns, as this would hold them accountable and able to report, explain, and justify change, which in turn would reduce resistance (Sannino, 2009)

Guidance according to teachers can take many forms, such as clear communication about expectations and goals, and on-going training and professional development.

**Communication problems.** In terms of communication, teachers highlighted the significance of clear communication in the change process. They expressed their desire to understand what was expected from them and mentioned that even the presentations offered at school by the leaders, or the AEFÉ were “not clear”. This reflects the absence of the leader role that should ensure training sessions clarifying the importance of change, its objectives, and the process of implementing, as this would alleviate the teachers concerns, which in turn would lessen resistance (Makdadi & Chrifat's, 2014).

Despite considering that it is the leader's role to provide clarification and build communication channels, teachers sought “peer support” to overcome the challenges they faced. This would fall in line with Fullan's (2016) study reporting the effectiveness of “peer support and pressure” (p. 243) in adopting innovation and approaching resistance. Fullan (2016) brings to light the fact that influential teachers not only support their peers in their struggles but can also influence their opinion by exerting pressure and convincing them with the novelty introduced in school (Fullan, 2016). Hence, promoting the culture of peer support in the school can benefit leaders and teachers and contribute to lessen resistance.

**Professional development.** In terms of professional development, teachers perceived the training offered by the school leadership as insufficient, inefficient and lacks follow up. This contradicts the CBAM guiding assumption stating that change facilitators must proceed systematically, assess regularly, and provide support continually to lessen the teachers concerns towards the given task, reduce resistance, and therefore ensure a successful change implementation (Hall & Hord, 2006).

Further, teachers expressed a desire for more professional development opportunities. They wanted access to training, coaching, and mentoring to help them develop their skills and expertise. This resonates with Zimmerman's (2006) study on the importance of promoting professional development and leadership support to enhance teachers' self-efficacy and guide them in the change process. Hence, improving teachers' self-efficacy can greatly empower them, making them more willing to accept change and view problems as challenges to overcome (Bandura, 1997). It also falls in line with the findings of Bryne and Prendergast (2020) who stressed the importance of teachers' professional development in change in the math curriculum process.

As such, literature asserts that efficient support and continuous guidance in terms of communication and professional development as viewed by the teachers are key components that support leading and overcoming the barriers to teachers' resistance to change. The value of professional development and its influence on promoting positive school climate was also highlighted by Sibahi (2020) when studying the Lebanese school context.

Finally, the study findings reveal a difference in perception between teachers and leaders regarding the type of support and guidance offered for the change process, which has led to frustration in some instances among the ranks of school teachers.



I will move now to discuss the third research question pertaining to the concerns of teachers in playing a role in implementing external changes. This will be discussed from both teachers' and leaders' point of views.

### ***Role of teachers in the change initiative***

The findings of the study reveal that the participants have a partial awareness of the role of teachers that needs to be present in the organization and that promotes a successful change implementation. All participants concurred that the responsibility of teachers in the change initiative was primarily focused on teaching, learning, and implementation rather than decision-making.

**Teachers' Role in Teaching & Learning.** Both leaders and teachers perceived that teachers' primary responsibility was focused on teaching and facilitating the learning process. When asked about their role in the change initiative, teachers emphasized their crucial involvement in planning the course, lesson, and activities. Leaders highlighted the teachers' contribution to measuring the impact of the reform (strengths and weaknesses). However, teachers felt excluded from the impact analysis process and expressed their concern about the potential impact of the reform on students' learning.

These findings insinuate that the limited involvement of the teachers in the decision-making and assessment processes led to the emergence of more concerns. In fact, we can observe in the light of the CBAM lens that teachers' concerns evolved from self to task-related to impact-related as they embrace and implement new approaches. Our results provide support for the hypothesis that teachers' concerns during the implementation process are developmental in nature, progressing from concerns about self, to task, and finally to impact,

and that neglecting the early concern stages can result in an escalation of resistance, which could impede progress towards higher levels of implementation (Hord & Hall, 1984). This replicates the results of Chaar's (2016) study and further establishes the robustness of the observed effect.

**Teachers' Role in Decision Making.** Both teachers and leaders agreed that teachers do not have any involvement in decision-making, planning the reform, or assessing the impact of change initiatives. However, both leaders and teachers failed to recognize the need to have them involved in the decision making in order to have a successful implementation. Only leader 3 acknowledges the importance of integrating more the teachers in the evaluation meeting plans because as she said, "they are the front liners". The value of teacher engagement in decision making is also shared by Jones-Bliss (2020) who considered that leaders often attempt to enact new approaches without understanding employees' different perspectives on these changes, where successful implementation of change would require teachers' engagement and opinion to be considered.

Throughout their narratives, teachers mentioned the need for support and guidance and exhibited a belief in the potential role of leaders in the implementation process. It is worth noting that teachers did not mention during the interview their need to have a participatory role in the decision making. This reveals that teachers underestimate their abilities to be decision makers and weren't able to transcend the confinement of the beliefs prevailing in the Arab world that leaders are the sole decision makers (David & Abukari, 2019). Thus, the fact that teachers doubt their abilities in fulfilling the change requirements obstructed their

freedom and turn them into soldiers of the new system and not change agents (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2017).

Further, the results indicate that teachers repressed their concerns and are hesitant to voice their opinion regarding the change in the school. They said, “we are not encouraged to express our opinions about changes in the school because it is perceived as resistant behavior”. “We as teachers don’t participate in the decision making and were kind of raised to repress our concerns or opinion about any change that takes place in the school”. The verb “raise” refers to the way individuals grow up and develop in a culture or environment that can have a significant impact on their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. This leads us to reinforce the previously discussed deduction that the school culture that disfavors collaboration and participation in decision making shaped the teachers’ understanding of their sense of identity and abilities to be change agents (David & Abukari, 2019)

**Teachers as Implementers.** Both leaders and teachers perceive the role of the teachers as curriculum implementers. They all agreed that their role was confined to implementing the mandated requirements of the reform that the school council initiated and devised. This reveals a decision-making hierarchy in the form of a top-down approach that places the teacher at the bottom of the hierarchy and excludes them from decision-making. This approach, which diverges from the recommendations of literature and many studies in the same area (Makdadi & Chrifat’s, 2014), might be a breeding ground to many challenges particularly resistance. According to Starr (2011) it is human nature to resist change particularly when the people responsible to implement and live the change did not take active part in the decision making and appraisal process.

## **Conclusion**

This study examined the factors affecting the implementation of externally mandated changes in a Lebanese private school in Lebanon. It determined the role of school leadership in the implementation process and identified the concerns of the teachers in playing a role in implementing external change. Analysis of data collected from 8 interviews, 5 with teachers and 3 with school leaders, led to interesting findings. The study found that the role of the leader is central in implementing a successful change process. The study adds that equally important is how teachers perceive the role of leadership in the process. Perception can either promote or challenge the change process and therefore the success of the initiative.

In this respect, the study found that the perceptions of teachers and leaders could differ vastly with regards to the roles and processes of change. Teachers did not seem to acknowledge the role of school leaders beyond budget setters, while leaders failed to see the challenges teachers were facing and the reasons behind them. They felt that all was going well. This highlights the importance of proper communication two-way channels (Ornstein & Hunkins, 2013) to alleviate any concerns that might hinder the change process.

Finally, and what was of an AHA moment to the researcher is the paradigm shift in understanding teacher resistance. The study highlights a new strategy of approaching resistance that can be used as an asset in the change process. This leads the researcher to perceive resistance as a positive drive if harnessed properly. By understanding the specific reasons behind teachers' resistance, leaders can build on this understanding to create a more effective change process that addresses those concerns and build trust.

This paper concludes with limitations and implications for practice and future studies.

### **Limitations of the study**

The trustworthiness of qualitative research has always been challenged and many scholars have often questioned its validity and reliability (Heck & Hallinger, 1999). This study, like any other case studies, has its limitations. The main limitation emerged from the small and non-random sample adopted. This would limit the generalizability of the findings of this research which would in turn loom over its validity and reliability (Merriam, 2009).

The second limitation was related to the researcher's positionality which reflects her world view and their position within the social context (Holmes, 2020). Being the primary instrument for data collection and analysis and a teacher in the case school pushes the reader to question whether the researcher is a valid and reliable instrument and whether she is biased and just finding out what she expects to find (Merriam, 2015). To ensure the study reliability, the researcher kept a journal through which she documented her thought processes, decisions, and actions throughout the research process. By doing so, she was able to track her work progress and maintain a record of any changes made. This journal was continuously used by the researcher to verify the accuracy and consistency of the data and to provide transparency in the research process.

### **Implications on practice**

This study has several implications on practice in the context of change, particularly in Lebanese private schools. The study can: 1) help school leaders understand how their role is perceived from other school professionals in the curriculum change process, 2) help school

leaders understand how to deal with teacher resistance and harness it for a more effective change process, 3) help change facilitators identify the teachers concerns during the implementation of educational change to inform their choice about the types of interventions that facilitate the change process (Hall & Hord, 2006), and 4) inform schools undergoing change with respect of stakeholder engagement.

***Helping school leaders understand how their role is perceived from other school professionals in the curriculum change process***

The study recommends that school leaders need to understand how their role is perceived by other stakeholders within the school in relation to the change process. The study highlighted that teachers were not aware of the role of leadership, the principal in particular, beyond handling financials and budgets. This stance was a main source of frustration to teachers as they felt unsupported and not acknowledged as an integral part of the school in terms of vision and goal setting.

Understanding how their role and actions are perceived through the eyes of others would allow school leaders to better interact with teachers which would help create effective practices (Dimmok, 2011) that promote the reform. Such interaction would improve the quality of communication which leads to a more impactful and successful curriculum reform process (Gouédard et al., 2020).

***Inform schools undergoing change with respect of stakeholder engagement***

The study recommends including school professionals, regardless of their position in the organizational structure, in ideating and implementing the curriculum change initiative. This can be applied in both cases where the change is internally designed based on the

school vision, or externally mandated. The study clearly showed that teachers felt marginalized because they were not engaged in the curriculum development process. They shared that they saw themselves present in the planning process knowing that this would have required effort and time on their behalf, keeping in mind that they were not too keen on offering them when they found themselves perceived as mere implementors.

For professionals to be instrumental in the change process ideation and implementation, professional development and capacity building are essential (Keiny, 1993). This has been reflected through the feedback of the teachers who considered themselves to be in need of such opportunities. Such professional development would in turn lead to higher efficacy (Ross & Bruce, 2007) which in turns lessens resistance in the change process. This is why such professional development has been pivotal in the efforts of school improvement initiatives such as TAMAM which places capacity building in the core of their development model (tamamproject.org, 2023).

### **Recommendations for research**

This study presents a platform for future research in the Lebanese private school context. First, the study was conducted in a one school undergoing change based on the French Baccalaureate mandates. Considering that there are many schools which have undergone several changes, the study could consider participants from those schools to further understand the barriers to change and teacher resistance. Additionally, the study opens the way to further understand the difference in perception between teachers and leaders to how each plays their role in the change process. Finally, further research on how resistance can be utilized to promote successful change is recommended in light of the gap in literature in

this area both locally and internationally. Helping school leaders understand how to deal with teachers' resistance and harness it for a more effective change process.

The study recommends that more study should be done to inform leadership on how to be more mindful and purposeful in understanding teacher resistance towards curriculum change and thinking of methods to utilize the energy behind resistance to promote the change process. As shown from the approach of the three leaders, only L3 was mindful in addressing teacher concerns that she felt were manifesting in resistance. The strategies she followed in terms of showing interest to their worries and working on addressing them paid dividend in the change process where she managed to lead her department through the change process with minimal disruptions.

The positive impact of the leader's action remains influential till this date which is reflected in the high level of functionality and minimal absences on behalf of teachers. Such actions are instrumental to effective leadership which has proven to be a positively influential factor in promoting a successful change process (Niesche & Jorgensen, 2010).



## APPENDIX A

### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH THE LEADERS

The interview begins with a general overview to clarify its goals, procedures, and usage of the generated data. The consent of the coordinator and two heads of departments will be taken to record the interview. The duration of the interview will last around 45 to 60 minutes.

The following set of questions guided the interview:

- 1- Please describe the latest change initiative your school has undergone.  
Possible probes.
  - How were the plans constructed?
  - Who contributed to them?
  - What were the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders (teachers and leaders)?
  - What were the strategies used to implement, monitor, and assess the initiative?
  - Was the initiative aligned with the school vision and mission?
- 2- From your perspective, how successful was the implementation of the change in terms of achieving its objectives?
- 3- In your experience, was the transition smooth? If yes, describe the factors that enabled it to be so, if not, describe how would you go about.
  - Did u play any role in making it smooth?
- 4- What were the barriers encountered during the implementation process?

Structural barriers:

- Were there any communication channels built to listen to the teachers' concerns, negotiate, and reflect with them?
- Were there any training sessions to prepare the teachers for the change? (Before, during and after the implementation)

Psychological barriers

- How did the teachers experience the change? What were their concerns?
- How did you help the teachers navigate through those concerns?

- How was that manifested in their professional life? Examples.
- 4- How did you deal with those barriers in the process of a successful change implementation?
  - 5- What was the role of the principal and formal leaders in the implementation process? please elaborate on this point with examples.

## APPENDIX B

### INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW PROTOCOL WITH THE TEACHERS

The interview begins with a general overview to clarify its goals, procedures, and usage of the generated data. The consent of the practitioners will be taken to record the interview. The duration of the interview will last around 45 to 60 minutes.

The following set of questions guided the interview:

- 1- From your perspective, what does the French baccalaureate reform that is being implemented in your school over the past years consist of?  
Possible Probes
  - What are its objectives?
  - Do they align with the school vision? / With your teaching philosophy?
  - What change did it engender? (Instructional methods, assessment methods, grading system, curriculum content?)
- 2- What role did you play as a teacher in this change initiative?  
How involved were you in decision making and planning?
- 3- What were the challenges you faced in this reform?
  - Awareness of the innovation /Learning problems? Learning the routine of the new task.
  - Adequacy to meet the demands of the change/ your role.
  - Resources availability.
  - Impact of the innovation on the students' learning/ evaluation/ outcomes.
- 4- Structures of change: What were the strategies and activities adopted to facilitate the implementation process?
  - Were there any training sessions to clarify the core goals of this reform and its alignment with the school vision and the students benefits?
  - Was there any support system whether internal or external built to help the teachers understand and implement what is required?
  - Was there any monitoring plan to measure the implementation success or failure? and to identify the gaps during the process? Modify if needed?
  - Were there any reflection meetings to discuss the modifications?
- 5- Is there anything else you would like to add that I did not ask?

## APPENDIX C

### FIGURES

**Figure 1**

#### *Initial Coding*

Code	Quote
Change in teaching material	it's just a constant change that we are having year after year periods of, of school or new subjects, sometimes it's the Spanish sometimes it's the sports,
Unclear objectives <b>[Preparation of teachers]</b> <b>[Leadership support]</b>	Not really <u>no</u> , it was ambiguous [objectives of French Baccaalaureate reform]
Unclear objectives Change in teaching material <b>[Preparation of teachers]</b> <b>[Leadership support]</b>	it was ambiguous enough that even when, when <u>when</u> they come to tell me about certain presentations, it was not clear, no
Change in student outcomes	Ok, because I was asked to adjust my grades according to the reform,
Preparing students for official exams	they need to prepare for the oral presentation and for the exams of bac1 and the bac2, so I just needed to pave the road for them through my oral discussion in the class, it was <u>apart</u> of the process and apart from this not pretty much
Limited decision making	in decision making, not really <u>much</u>
Teachers' role in T&L	in planning on a personal level, yes I was involved, because I had to catch up with a pace and I had to be, <u>ehh..</u> I had to upgrade the methods, the approach itself.
Teachers' role in T&L	The planning of course, the planning, the lesson, the activities, everything in the classroom
Teachers' role in T&L Teacher Agency <b>[Preparation of teachers]</b> <b>[Leadership support]</b>	<u>No</u> I took the initiative, myself. In <u>fact</u> I took the initiative myself and of course when it was time to be discussed on a wider range among groups, I proposed and ideas were welcomed and of course at the same time I, I benefited from the other opinions.
Teacher professional identity <b>[Preparation of teachers]</b> <b>[Resource Readiness]</b>	I wouldn't wait for the workshops, I wouldn't wait, it would be like ah... I would be left behind. Yes, and this is something I wanted to avoid. For the sake, for my own sake and for the students' sake.

*Note:* Table showing the initial coding conducted based on the transcribed interview of one of the participants.

**Figure 2**

*Thematic coding process*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J
1	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5			L1	L2	L3
2	Change in teaching material	Work readiness	Curriculum change	Impact of change	Change effect			External policy	External influence	Curriculum change
3		Work readiness	Students' higher education	Teacher philosophy	Teaching and learning			Curriculum change	Affiliation	Student level
4	Unclear objectives	Vision	Student centeredness	Curriculum change	Professional identity			External accreditation	Adoption of external plans	
5	[Preparation of teachers]	Student knowledge	Teacher overload	Contextual challenge	School vision			Education reform	School vision	Student support
6	[Leadership support]	Higher education readiness	Lesson preparation	Student readiness	Educational philosophy			Curriculum change	Curriculum change	Academic progress
7	Unclear objectives	Curriculum change	Curriculum change	Curriculum impact	Impact of change			Curriculum change	School background	[Covid]
8	Change in teaching material	Higher education readiness	[Preparation of teachers]	Student interest	Teacher role in change			External accreditation	Educational vision	[Economic crisis]
9	[Preparation of teachers]	Curriculum change	[Preparation of teachers]	Teaching and learning	Teacher as implementer			Education reform	Monitoring and assessment	Student integration
10	[Leadership support]	Curriculum change	[Leadership support]	Teacher role	Curriculum change			Reform reference	Decentralization	Career readiness
11	Change in student outcomes	Choose specialization	[Resource readiness]	Unclear objectives	Teaching and learning			Role of school leaders	School responsibility	University readiness
12	Preparing students for official exams	Limited decision making	Teacher overload	Teacher contribution	Educational philosophy			Reform initiative		Curriculum change
13	Limited decision making	Teaching skills	Lesson preparation	Teacher motivation	School vision			Role of teachers	Successful reform	Student development
14	Teachers' role in T&L	[Preparation of teachers]	[Preparation of teachers]	Bureaucratic decision making	Teacher role in change			External bodies influence	School readiness	Academic achievement
15	Teachers' role in T&L	Teaching skills	[Leadership support]	Teacher motivation	Teachers as implementers			[preparation for teachers]	Competency in school	Vision of education
16	Teachers' role in T&L	[Preparation of teachers]	[Resource readiness]	Teacher role	[leadership support]			[leadership support]	Internal staff readiness	Student development
17	Teacher Agency	Teaching skills	Teacher challenge	Bureaucratic decision making	Impact of change on students			Teacher readiness	Barriers	University readiness
18	[Preparation of teachers]	Teacher experience	Lesson preparation	Teacher role	Negative impact			Evaluation	Teacher workshops	Career readiness
19	[Leadership support]	[Preparation of teachers]	[Preparation of teachers]	Teacher motivation	Lack of teacher support			Impact assessment	Challenge of commute to workshops	Impact measurement
20	Teacher professional identity	Teaching skills	[Leadership support]	[Preparation of teachers]	[leadership support]			success	[Covid]	Coordinator role
21	[Preparation of teachers]	Teacher experience	[Resource readiness]	[Leadership support]	School environment			Success criteria	[Preparation of teachers]	Student level
22	[Resource Readiness]	Student centeredness	[Covid]	[Resources readiness]	School culture			Impact assessment	Resistance to the reform	Teacher role
23	Lack of school readiness	Curriculum level	Unclear objectives	Teacher role	Teacher role			External support	Challenge to adapt	Curriculum reform
24	Teachers not settled		Curriculum change	Teacher motivation	Role of management			Impact assessment	Lack of enthusiasm	Reform

Note: Figure showing the process the researcher followed as a step to producing themes based on the emergent codes.

**Figure 3**

*Thematic coding*

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K
1	<b>Original Themes</b>										
2											
3	<b>Covid/Pandemic</b>	<b>Supporters to change</b>		<b>Teacher role</b>		<b>Curriculum Reform</b>		<b>Impact of change</b>		<b>Barriers to change</b>	
4											
5	<b>Economic Crisis</b>	Teacher Agency		Preparing students for official exams		Curriculum change		Change in student outcomes		Unclear objectives	
6		Teacher professional identity		Teachers' role in T&L		Curriculum impact		Impact of change		Lack of school readiness	
7	<b>Resource Readiness</b>	Guidance from workshops		Work readiness		Curriculum reform		social impact		Teachers not settled	
8		Peer support		Student knowledge		Curriculum level		Influence of change		continuous change	
9	<b>Leadership Support</b>	Professional identity		Higher education readiness		Curriculum impact on students		Focus on data collection for M&E		Students' levels	
10		External support		Student readiness		change in teaching material		Impact analysis		teacher challenges	
11	<b>Preparation of teachers</b>	Teacher effort		Role of teachers		change effect		Impact measurement		Teacher compensation	
12		Professional reflection		Teacher contribution		educational reform		negative impact		teacher experience	
13		Teacher philosophy		Teacher motivation		reform initiative		Impact assessment		teacher readiness	
14		Educational philosophy		Teaching and learning		curriculum reform process		Positive feeling about change		school readiness	
15				Lesson preparation		decentralized approach		successful change		teacher overload	
16				Perception to teacher role		reform reference		Motivational change		unclear goals	
17				Limited decision making		reform		Monitoring and assessment		curriculum challenges	
18								Impact assessment		reform suitability	
19								Curriculum impact on students		bureaucratic decision making	
20								Impact of change on students		student readiness	
21								Work readiness		Continuous change in school	
22										Contextual challenge	
23										resistance	
24										Teacher motivation	
25										Bureaucratic decision making	
26										Limited decision making	
27										Teacher perception to change	
28										Teachers as implementers	
29										Lack of teacher support	
30										Decision making	
31											
32											
33		External policy		Role of educators		reform		Success criteria		Teacher hesitation	
34		External accreditation		Role of teachers and coordinators		curriculum reform		Impact measurement		Teacher resistance	
35		Adoption of external plans		Teaching and learning		change		Impact assessment		Teacher fear	
36		External bodies influence		Role of teachers		curriculum change		Student outcomes		Teacher challenges	
37		External support		Teacher role				Evaluation		Barriers to change	
38		Leadership in change		Role of teacher				Student outcomes		Miscommunication	
39		Role of leadership		Role of coordinator				Student results		Resistance to the reform	
40		Communication with teachers		Coaching teachers				student progress		Challenge to adapt	
41		Role of leadership		Collaboration				Evaluation strategy		Lack of enthusiasm	
42		Meetings with teachers		Teacher communication				Teacher resistance to reform		Financial hardships	
43		Teacher training		Parent communication				Teacher resistance		Resistance to change	
44		Teacher Readiness		Parent engagement				Successful reform		Indifference to reform	
45		External training sessions		School strategy				Local assessment of impact		depression	
46		Peer to peer learning		Teacher training				Teaching and learning		Teacher impatience	
47				Teacher support				University readiness		Parents resistance	

*Note:* Figure shows the thematic coding process where codes were joined under themes to facilitate producing findings. On the left are the structural codes the researcher relied on before transcribing

## REFERENCES

- Abi Raad, D. (2018). Future of Lebanon's Catholic Schools at Risk under New Salary Rules. Catholic News Service.
- AEFE. (2022). Etablissements. L'AEFE au Proche-Orient. Retrieved August 25, 2022, from <https://aeфе-liban.fr/etablissements/>
- AEFE. (2022). L'homologation et le suivi d'homologation. AEFE. Retrieved August 25, 2022, from <https://www.aefe.fr/reseau-scolaire-mondial/lhomologation-et-le-suivi-dhomologation>
- Akkary, R. (2013). The role and role context of the Lebanese school principal. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 42(5), 718-742. doi: 10.1177/1741143213510503
- Akkary, R. K. (2014). Facing the challenges of educational reform in the Arab world. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(2), 179-202. doi:10.1007/s10833-013-9225-
- Ansoff, I.H. (1990), *Implanting Strategic Management*, Prentice Hall International, Ltd.
- Au Bo du 19 juillet 2018 : Les Baccalauréats général et technologique à partir de la session 2021 de l'examen. Ministère de l'Education Nationale et de la Jeunesse. (n.d.). <https://www.education.gouv.fr/au-bo-du-19-juillet-2018-les-baccalaureats-general-et-technologique-partir-de-la-session-2021-de-l-2831>
- Bandura, A. (1997). Self-efficacy. *Harvard Mental Health Letter*, 13(9), 4-6. Retrieved from <http://web1.epnet.com>
- Beer, M. Eisenstat, R.A. and Spector, B. (1990) "Why Change Programs Don't Produce Change", *Harvard Business Review*, 68 (6), pp. 158-166.
- Beer, M., & Walton, A. E. (1987). Organizational change and development. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 38, 339-367. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.ps.38.020187.002011>
- Bell. D. & Ritchie. R. (2002). *Towards-Effective Subject Leadership primary School OUP*.
- Jones-Bliss , B. (2020). LEADING DESPITE UNCERTAINTY. *AgriMarketing*, 58(9), 13. Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/trade-journals/leading-despite-uncertainty/docview/2478618845/se-2>

- BouJaoude, S., & Ghaith, G. (2006). Educational reform at a time of change: The case of Lebanon. *In Education Reform in Societies in Transition* (pp. 191-209). Brill.
- Byrne, C., & Prendergast, M. (2020). Investigating the concerns of secondary school teachers towards curriculum reform. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 52(2), 286-306. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2019.1643924>
- Byrd, B. (2013). Teacher resistance to educational change in the United Arab Emirates. *Int. J. Res*, 2, 25-36.
- Campbell, S. (2015). Conducting case study research. *American Society for Clinical Laboratory Science*, 28(3), 201–205. <https://doi.org/10.29074/ascls.28.3.201>
- Carlopio, J. (1998). *Implementation: Making workplace innovation and technical change happen*. Synergy Books International.
- Charmaz, K. (2006). *Constructing grounded theory*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Chaar, N., Khamis, V., & Karami Akkary, R. (2016). Teachers' concerns towards change in Lebanese private schools and their relationship to gender, experience and type of change. *Journal of Educational Change*, 17(3), 337 - 354.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., & Morrison, K. (2007). *Research methods in education* (6th ed.). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Courpasson, D., Dany, F., & Clegg, S. (2012). Resisters at work: Generating productive resistance in the workplace. *Organization Science*, 23(3), 801–819. <https://doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1110.0657>
- CRDP. (2021). *CRDP Lebanon*. التّشيرة الإحصائية 2019-2020 | المركز التربوي للبحوث والإنماء - CRDP Lebanon. Retrieved August 30, 2022, from [https://www.crdp.org/en\\_test\\_crd/statistics-bulletin/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%91%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%91%D8%A9-2019-2020](https://www.crdp.org/en_test_crd/statistics-bulletin/%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%86%D9%91%D8%B4%D8%B1%D8%A9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%A6%D9%8A%D9%91%D8%A9-2019-2020)
- Cronbach, L. J., & Meehl, P. E. (1955). Construct validity in psychological tests. *Psychological Bulletin*, 52(4), 281–302. <https://doi.org/10.1037/h0040957>
- David, S. A., & Abukari, A. (2019). Perspectives of teachers' on the selection and the development of the school leaders in the United Arab Emirates. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 34(1), 56-69.



- DeJonckheere, M., & Vaughn, L. M. (2019). Semi structured interviewing in primary care research: A balance of relationship and rigor. *Family Medicine and Community Health*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.1136/fmch-2018-000057>
- Dent, E.B., & Powley, E.H. (2002). Employees Actually Embrace Change: The Chimera of Resistance.
- Dimmock, C. (2011). *Leadership, capacity building and school improvement*. Hoboken, NJ: Taylor and Francis.
- Drago-Severson, E. (2004). *Helping teachers learn: Principal leadership for adult growth and development*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Doucette, W. R., Nevins, J. C., Gaither, C., Kreling, D. H., Mott, D. A., Pedersen, C. A., & Schommer, J. C. (2012). Organizational factors influencing pharmacy practice change. *Research in Social and Administrative Pharmacy*, 8(4), 274-284.
- Education Under Covid-19 Lockdown: Reflections from Teachers, Students & Parents Mai Abu Moghli and Maha Shuayb CLS 19 July 2020
- Ferreira, J. A., Ryan, L., & Tilbury, D. (2007). Planning for success: Factors influencing change in teacher education. *Australian Journal of Environmental Education*, 23, 45-55.
- Fielding, N. (1993). Interviewing. *Researching social life*, 245-265.
- Flamholtz, E., & Randle, Y. (2008). *Leading Strategic Change: Bridging Theory and Practice*. ew York: Cambridge University Press.
- Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case-study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 12(2), 219–245. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1077800405284363>
- Ford, J. D., & Ford, L. W. (2009). *Resistance to change: A reexamination and extension*. *Research in organizational change and development*, 17, 211-239. Emerald Group Publishing Limited. Retrieved from <https://laurieford.com/wp-content/articles/2009.Resistance%20Reexamined.pdf>
- Ford, J. D., & Ford, L. W. (2010). Stop blaming resistance to change and start using it. *Organizational Dynamics*, 39(1), 24-36. Retrieved from <https://laurieford.com/wp-content/articles/2010.Blaming%20Resistance.pdf>

- Ford, J. D., Ford, L. W., & D'Amelio, A. (2008). Resistance to change: The rest of the story. *Academy of management Review*, 33(2), 362-377. Retrieved from <https://journals.aom.org/doi/pdf/10.5465/amr.2008.31193235>
- Fullan, M. (1992). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. Falmer Press.
- Fullan, M. (2015). *The new meaning of educational change*. Teachers college press.
- Fullan, M. (2016). The change leader. *Educational Leadership*, 59(8) 16-20.
- Fullan, M. (2020). *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Fullan, M., & Ballew, A. (2004). *Leading in a culture of change: Personal action guide and workbook*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass
- Fullan, M. G., & Miles, M. B. (1992). Getting reform right: What works and what doesn't. *Phi Delta Kappan*, 73, 745-752.
- Fuller, F. 1969. Concerns of teachers: A developmental conceptualization. *American Educational Research Journal*, 6: 207–226.
- Gall, J. P., Gall, M. D., & Borg, W. R. (2010). *Applying educational research: How to read, do, and use research to solve problems of practice* (6th ed.). Boston: Pearson.
- Gall, J., Gall, M. & Borg, W. (2005). *Applying educational research, a practical guide* (5<sup>th</sup> ed.) Boston: Pearson Education.
- Gall, M.D., Gall, J.P. & Borg, W.R. (2010). *Applying educational research* (6th ed.). USA: Pearson Education, Inc
- Gitlin, A., & Margonis, F. (1995). The political aspect of reform: Teacher resistance as good sense. *American journal of Education*, 103(4), 377-405.
- Glickman, C., Gordon, S. & Ross-Gordon, J (2007). *SuperVision and Instructional Leadership* (7th ed.). USA, Pearson Education, Inc.
- Goldstein, J. (1988) "A Far-from-Equilibrium Systems Approach to Resistance to Change", *Organizational Dynamics*, (Autumn), pp. 16-26.

- Graff, C. S., & Vazquez, S. L. (2013). Family resistance as a tool in urban school reform. *Ability, equity, and culture: Sustaining inclusive urban education reform*, 80-106.
- Greener, S. (2008). *Business research methods*. Frederiksberg, Denmark: Ventus Publishing ApS.
- Guba, E. G., Lincoln, Y. S. (1994). Competing paradigms in qualitative research. In Denzin, N. K., Lincoln, Y. S. (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 105–117). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Gouëdard, P., Pont, B., Hyttinen, S., & Huang, P. (2020). Curriculum reform: A literature review to support effective implementation.
- Haddad, D.M. (2006). *Good schools, bad schools: Principals motivating Lebanese Teachers* (Doctoral dissertation). Available from ProQuest LLC. (UMI No. U205067). 51.
- Harb, S.J. (2014). *Identification and alignment of Lebanese Teachers' and Principals' perspective of effective school leadership* (Master's dissertation). American
- Hall, G. E., George, A., & Rutherford, W. L. (1979). Measuring stages of concern about the innovation: A manual for use of the SoC Questionnaire (Report No. 3032). *The University of Texas at Austin, Research and Development Center for Teacher Education*. Retrieved from ERIC database. (ED147342)
- Hall, G. E., Wallace, R. C., & Dossett, W. A. (1973). *A developmental conceptualization of the adoption process within educational institutions*. Austin, TX: Research and Development Center for Teacher Education, University of Texas.
- Hall, G.E. & Hord, S. M. (2001). *Implementing change: patterns, principles and potholes* (2nd ed.). Allyn and Bacon, Boston
- Hall, G.E. & Hord, S. M. (2006). *Implementing change: patterns, principles and potholes*. Allyn and Bacon, Boston.
- Hallinger, P. (2003). Leading educational change: Reflections on the practice of instructional and transformational leadership. *Cambridge Journal of Education*, 33(3), 329-352.
- Harb, S., & Karami-Akkary, R. (2021). Lebanese conceptions of effective school leadership: A cross-cultural analysis. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 24(1), 126-144.

- Hargreaves, A. (2005). *Extending Educational Change*. Dordrecht: Springer.
- Heck, R. H., & Hallinger, P. (1999). Next generation methods for the study of leadership and school improvement. *Handbook of research on educational administration*, 2, 141-162.
- Hicks, S. (2011). Technology in today's classroom: Are you a tech-savvy teacher? *Clearing House*, 84(5), 188–191. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00098655.2011.557406>
- Holmes, Andrew Gary Darwin. "Researcher Positionality - A Consideration of Its Influence and Place in Qualitative Research - A New Researcher Guide." *Shanlax International Journal of Education*, vol. 8, no. 4, 2020, pp. 1-10.
- Hord, S. & Hall, G. (1984). Principals use research-based techniques for facilitating school effectiveness. Paper presented at The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.
- Israelsson, J. (2016). What are the minimum requirements of numbers used in a good case study? Halmstad University, Sweden
- Karami Akkary, R. (2014). Facing the challenges of educational reform in the Arab world. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15, 179-202.
- Karami-Akkary, R. (2019). Evaluating teacher professional learning in the Arab region; the experience of the TAMAM project. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 85, 137-147.
- Keiny, S. (1993). School-based curriculum development as a process of teachers' professional development. *Educational Action Research*, 1(1), 65-93.
- Khalil, S. M. (2013). From resistance to acceptance and use of technology in Academia. *Open Praxis*, 5(2), 151. <https://doi.org/10.5944/openpraxis.5.2.5>
- Lebanon - educational system-overview. StateUniversity.com. (n.d.). Retrieved August 25, 2022, from <https://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/827/Lebanon-EDUCATIONAL-SYSTEM-OVERVIEW.html#ixzz7cfuvJhUt>
- Lewis, L. (2019). Organizational change. In *Origins and Traditions of Organizational Communication* (pp. 406-423). Routledge.
- Lucas, B. (2017). *Principals as partners in change: Insights on common core state standards implementation* (Order No. 10681947). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (1973273699). Retrieved from

<https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/principals-as-partners-change-insights-on-common/docview/1973273699/se-2>

- Lukk, K., Veisson, M., & Ots, L. (2008). Characteristics of sustainable changes for schools. *Journal of Teacher Education for Sustainability*, 9(2008), 35-44.
- Mouchantaf, M. (2021). Lebanese Catholic schools: past achievements and contemporary challenges in times of economic distress and COVID 19 pandemic. *International Studies in Catholic Education*. DOI: [10.1080/19422539.2020.1858636](https://doi.org/10.1080/19422539.2020.1858636)
- McKenna, S., Richardson, J., Manroop, L. (2011). Alternative paradigms and the study and practice of performance management and evaluation. *Human Resource Management Review*, 21, 148–157.
- MEHE. الموقع الرسمي لوزارة التربية والتعليم العالي. (2021). Retrieved August 25, 2022, from [https://www.mehe.gov.lb/en/Pages/Transactions/FrenchBac.aspx#:~:text=A%20protocol%20which%20was%20signed,labeling%20of%20school%20years\)%3B](https://www.mehe.gov.lb/en/Pages/Transactions/FrenchBac.aspx#:~:text=A%20protocol%20which%20was%20signed,labeling%20of%20school%20years)%3B)
- Mekdadi, M. H., & Chrifat, S. S. (2014). Teachers resistance to change: Reasons and strategies to reduce it from al mafrag borough directorate teachers viewpoints. *Revue Académique Des Études Sociales Et Humaines*, (12), 65-79. Retrieved from <https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.aub.edu.lb/docview/1892985649?accountid=8555>
- Merriam, S. B. (1988). *Case study research in education: A qualitative approach*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Merriam, S. B. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice: Examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco CA: Jossey-Bass Publishers.
- Merriam, S. B. (2009). *Qualitative research: A guide to design and implementation*. San Francisco CA: John Wiley & Sons
- Niesche, R., & Jorgensen, R. (2010). Curriculum reform in remote areas: The need for productive leadership. *Journal of Educational Administration*.
- Ornstein, A. C. (1991). The principal — As Leader. *American Secondary Education*, 20(2), 16–21. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41063985>
- Ornstein, A., & Hunkins, F. (2017). *Curriculum: Foundations, principles and issues* (7th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education.

- Othman, Z., & Abdul Hamid, F. (2018). Dealing with Un(Expected) Ethical Dilemma: Experience from the Field. *The Qualitative Report*, 23(4), 733-741. <https://doi.org/10.46743/2160-3715/2018.3050>
- Owens, R. & Valesky, T. (2011). *Organizational Behavior in Education: Leadership and School Reform* (10th ed.). USA, Pearson Education, Inc.
- Palmer, I., Dunford, R., & Akin, G. (2009). *Managing Organizational Change: A multiple perspective approach* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Boston, Ma: McGraw-Hill
- Park, J. & Jeong D. W. (2013). *School Reforms, Principal Leadership, and Teacher Resistance: Evidence from Korea*. *Asia Pacific Journal of Education*, 33:1, 34-52.
- Patton, M. Q. (2000). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publishing.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative Evaluation and Research Methods* (2nd Ed.).
- Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Per, D. (2004). *School development: Theories and strategies*. Portland: Continuum International Publishing Group.
- Piderit, S.K. (2000) "Rethinking resistance and recognizing ambivalence: a multidimensional view of attitudes toward an organizational change", *Academy of Management Review*, 25 (4), pp. 783-794.
- Pogodzinski, B. (2014). Collegial support and novice teachers' perceptions of working conditions. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15(4), 467-489. doi:10.1007/s10833-013-9221-x
- Purkey, S. C., & Smith, M. S. (1983). Effective schools: A review. *The elementary school journal*, 83(4), 427-452.
- Robbins. S. P & DeCenzo. D. A. (2001). *Management*. Prentice Hall.
- Rogers, E. (1983). *Diffusion of innovations*. New York: The Free Press.

- Ross, J., & Bruce, C. (2007). Professional development effects on teacher efficacy: Results of randomized field trial. *The journal of educational research*, 101(1), 50-60.
- Sannino, A. (2010). Teachers' talk of experiencing: Conflict, resistance and agency. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 26(4), 838-844. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2009.10.021
- Scapens, R. W., & Roberts, J. (1993). Accounting and control: a case study of resistance to accounting change. *Management Accounting Research*, 4 (1), 1-32.
- Schipull, D. (1990). A study of the validity and reliability of the teacher concerns checklist. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Southern Mississippi
- Le Secrétariat Général des Ecoles Catholiques au Liban*. Sectariat Gnral des Ecoles Catoliques au Liban. (n.d.). Retrieved April 29, 2023, from <http://www.sgec-l.org/>
- Sibahi, S. M. (2020). The lived experiences of 10 effective lebanese public secondary schools' principals (A phenomenological study in beirut & mount lebanon) (Order No. 29209196). Available from ProQuest Central; ProQuest Dissertations & Theses Global. (2681458783). Retrieved from <https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/lived-experiences-10-effective-lebanese-public/docview/2681458783/se-2>
- Snyder R., (2017). *Resistance to Change among Veteran Teachers: Providing Voice for More Effective Engagement*. *International Journal of Educational Leadership Preparation*
- Stake, R. E. (1995). *The art of case study research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Starr, K. (2011). Principals and the politics of resistance to change. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 39(6), 646-660
- Stenhouse, L. (1978). Case study and case records: Towards a contemporary history of education. *British Educational Research Journal*, 4(2), 21-39. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192780040202>
- Stenhouse, L. (1980). The study of samples and the study of cases. *British Educational Research Journal*, 6(1), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0141192800060101>
- Strauss, A., and Corbin, J. (1990). *Basics of qualitative research: Grounded theory procedures and techniques*. London: SAGE.

- Terhart, E. (2013) Teacher resistance against school reform: reflecting an inconvenient truth. *School Leadership & Management*, 33:5, 486-500, DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2013.793494
- Troudi, S., & Alwan, F. (2010). Teachers' feelings during curriculum change in the United Arab Emirates: Opening Pandora's box. *Teacher Development*, 14(1), 107-121. Retrieved from <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/pdf/10.1080/13664531003696659>
- Tschannen-Moran, M., & Hoy, A. W. (2007). The differential antecedents of self-efficacy beliefs of novice and experienced teachers. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 23(6), 944-956. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2006.05.003
- Tusting, K. (2009). I am not a. *Literacy and Numeracy Studies*, 17(3), 6. Retrieved from <https://search.informit.com.au/documentSummary;dn=595370514247872;res=IELAPA>
- Weick, K., & Quinn, R. (n.d.). Organizational change and development. *Dynamics of Organizational Change and Learning*, 177-196. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9780470753408.ch10>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. SAGE.
- Zimmerman, J. (2006). Why some teachers resist change and what principals can do about it. *NASSP Bulletin*, 90(3), 238-249. doi:10.1177/0192636506291521