J Educ Change (2016) 17:337–354
DOI 10.1007/s10833-015-9267-z

Teachers' concerns towards change in Lebanese private schools and their relationship to gender, experience and type of change

N. Yehya Chaar[1] · V. Khamis[1] · R. Karami Akkary[1]

Published online: 25 January 2016

Abstract The purpose of the study was to explore the nature and stages of concerns that teachers at Lebanese private schools underwent as a result of the change initiative they implemented (whether organization-based or curriculum-based accreditation), and to find out the relationship that existed between these concerns and other variables like gender, the experience of the teachers, in addition to the type of change they experienced. The sample of the study included nine schools and 234 teachers. Statistical methods included descriptive statistics, multivariate analysis of variance, and univariate analyses using the post hoc Scheffe test at a confidence interval of 95 %. The results showed that teachers at Lebanese private schools displayed different types of concerns at various stages. The concerns were related to the Self, the Task, and the Impact. They also showed concerns at the awareness, informational, personal, management, consequences, collaboration, and refocusing stages. These concerns varied depending on the teachers' total years of experience, years spent at the current school, years of involvement in the change initiative, and the type of change they underwent, but not according to their gender.

Keywords Change initiative in schools · Gender · Teachers' concerns · Types of change · Years of experience

Introduction

The private schools in Lebanon are responsible for educating more than sixty percent of students in Lebanon and for placing the country at high ranks regarding good education in the Middle East and North Africa region (Oxford Business Group

✉ N. Yehya Chaar
ntc01@mail.aub.edu

[1] Department of Education, Faculty of Arts and Sciences, American University of Beirut, Bliss Street, P.O. Box 11-0236, Beirut, Lebanon

2009). They date back to the seventeenth century and as of recently, more than 50 % of the total number of students in Lebanon were found to be attending private schools (Najjar 2008). Due to the non-restrictive education system in Lebanon, private schools are given the freedom to have their own curriculum, school culture, and external management. As this is not the case when it comes to the public government-owned schools, this increasingly motivated parents and encouraged them to enroll their children in private schools (Najjar 2008). As a result, and since the education sector started to become very competitive, private schools began to seek continuous improvement and distinction. Consequently, school improvement efforts and change became the natural outcome of this quest.

Nowadays change has become very important and necessary for any educational institution in our global world (Glickman et al. 2007). Many researchers have studied change as a process in an attempt to understand what it takes to be successful (Fullan 1993, 1999, 2001; Hord and Hall 1984; Owens and Valesky 2011). Change is a process and not an event; it requires time as well as genuine effort from both individuals and societal agencies (Fullan 1993, 1999; Hord and Hall 1984). It is also very dependent on the quality of support and capacity-building received by those in charge of implementing the change. Hence, when teachers are supported and encouraged to be involved in the process they would greatly improve the effectiveness of the change. They would become increasingly committed to their organization and provide it with resilience and creativity, moving the change forward (Owens and Valesky 2011; Louis et al. 1999).

While change consists of great rapidity, nonlinearity and a potential for creative breakthroughs, it does not come easily (Fullan 2001). People may appreciate efforts to change on the cognitive level, but on the emotional level they may resist them because of misunderstandings, mistrust, or simply due to their low tolerance for change (Sarafidou and Nikolaidis 2009). However, teachers' resistance to change is considered as an impediment that can impact the flow of the change process and slow it down (Glickman et al. 2007). Thus it can definitely be considered as an educational issue.

Concerns like feelings of uncertainty, anxiety, and frustration as well as internal conflicts and common discomforts among teachers are considered as inevitable root causes resulting in their resistance to change efforts (Fullan 2007).

Hence, change leaders need to take the human and affective issues into consideration when introducing any kind of change initiative into schools (Fullan 1993). Much research was done to understand the sources of resistance and to investigate the nature of the concerns that seem to impede the change process. Fuller (1969) conducted many studies to find out what teachers are concerned about and concluded that the nature of teachers' concerns is divided into three types: concern for the Self—where teachers are concerned with self-adequacy, concern for the Task—where teachers worry about what they are required to accomplish, and concern for the Impact—where teachers are concerned with the Impact of their teaching on the learning of their students. Hall et al. (1973) built on Fuller's work and developed an innovation adoption process called the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM); an empirically-based conceptual framework that focuses on understanding the developmental stages that people experience as they adopt and

implement a change initiative. In this model, they extended the three types of concerns into seven developmental stages of concerns that teachers must go through during the adoption of a change initiative at their schools. The seven stages of concerns are: (1) awareness—where the teacher has little or no concern with the change initiative; (2) informational—where the teacher adopts a general awareness and interest in the change; (3) personal—where the teacher is concerned about the demands of the change initiative, whether he/she is able to meet those demands, and the role he/she will play in the change initiative; (4) management—where the teacher is concerned with the tasks and requirements of the change initiative; (5) consequence—where the teacher's attention focuses on the impact of the change initiative on student learning, evaluation, and outcome; (6) collaboration—where the teacher starts focusing on coordinating and cooperating with others; and lastly (7) refocusing—where the teacher focuses on exploring more universal benefits from the change initiative (Hall and Hord 1987). According to Hall et al. (1973), the awareness, informational, and personal stages constitute the concern for the Self, the management stage of concern comprises the concern for the Task, and the consequence, collaboration, and refocusing stages make up the concern for the Impact.

As a response to the international calls for continuous improvement in the last decade, leaders of some large Lebanese private schools whose primary language of instruction is English, led multiple initiatives to induce change in their schools with the aim of improving to keep up with the change initiatives taking place in the field of education in other parts of the world. Among these initiatives, accreditation gained center stage and was seen by those leaders as the strategy of choice to improve their schools by following Western trends (mainly the United States of America) in educational reform. However, there were two kinds of accreditation that the Lebanese private schools were interested in. The first is designed in a more organizational way primarily to distinguish schools adhering to a set of educational standards—rigorous protocols and research-based processes for evaluating a school's organizational effectiveness. It examines the whole institution including the programs, the cultural context, and the community of stakeholders to determine how well the parts work together to meet the needs of students ("what is accreditation"). This type of accreditation process asks institutions and systems to critically evaluate their vision, strategies, priorities, leadership programs, and resources. On the other hand, the second kind of accreditation focuses more on a comprehensive change in the curriculum and is offered by the International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO). The International Baccalaureate organization provides three kinds of programs: The IB Diploma Program, the Primary Years Program (PYP) and the Middle Years Program (MYP). The IB Programs focus on the development of the child as an inquirer both in the classroom and in the outside world. Although these programs are academically challenging, they are balanced in such a way that they broaden the educational experience of students and guide them to achieving a successful application of their knowledge and understanding ("IB Education Programmes").

The Lebanese private schools had to undergo changes as they worked for any of the two kinds of accreditation and the school personnel, leaders and teachers had to

commit themselves to this process of change necessitating changes in their roles, relationships, tasks, schedules, report-writing, documentation as well as continuous professional development practices. Hence, it was expected that the teachers of these schools would have concerns or show some kind of resistance due to the novelty of the process. Therefore, this study explores the nature and stages of concerns that teachers at the Lebanese private schools had towards both kinds of accreditation as a change initiative at their schools, and investigates the differences in these concerns among the teachers with respect to a particular set of variables like gender, experience, and the specific type of change that the schools underwent.

Many international studies investigated teachers' concerns as a function of gender, experience and/or type of change (Mukama and Andersson 2008; Sarafidou and Nikolaidis 2009; Meyer et al. 2009) and, as a result, recommended models and approaches that could be used by supervisors or principals to manage teachers' resistance or concerns. Other studies used the concerns-based adoption model (CBAM) for evaluating teachers' concerns towards adopting different kinds of change in schools (Hargreaves et al. 2003; Christou et al. 2004; Leung 2008). However, no studies have been made yet in Lebanon neither on the private schools seeking to attain one of the two kinds of accreditation programs, nor on the teachers' concerns towards these changes. If accreditation, in the form of standardization as per the international accrediting bodies' protocols or in the form of a comprehensive curriculum change like any of the IB programs is considered by the Lebanese private schools as a necessary step towards school improvement, then the change process that these schools underwent is by all means worth investigating. Therefore, the purpose of this study is twofold: Firstly, it aims to explore the concerns that arise among teachers at Lebanese private schools as a result of their schools' adoption of the organization-based or curriculum-based accreditation programs. Secondly, it seeks to find out the relationship that exists between these concerns and certain variables related to the teachers like their gender, total years of experience, years of experience at the current school, years of involvement in the change initiative, or type of change undergone by using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (CBAM) in an attempt to assist school leaders better manage resistance.

Methods

Sample selection and characteristics

The population of the study comprised all the Lebanese private schools that received accreditation; be it organization-based or curriculum-based. The criteria for selection required that the schools be private schools, have English as the main language of instruction, and be accredited during the years 2008–2013. Furthermore, the participating teachers had to be employed by the school during the change process and have participated in it.

Nine schools out of a total of fourteen agreed to participate. Therefore, the sample of the study included the nine schools and their teachers who fit the criteria of selection and who agreed to be a part of the study.

Seven of the participating schools were organization-based accredited schools and two were applying an IB Program. Out of 677 questionnaires that were distributed to the school principals, only 234 questionnaires were answered and returned, constituting a return rate of 34.46 %. Selected demographic variables are presented in Table 1.

Instrumentation

Teachers' data sheet

The questionnaire secured demographic and background information about the teacher. The teacher variables considered for this study were gender, total years of experience, years of experience at the current school, years of involvement in the change initiative, and the type of change undergone.

The "Stages of Concern" questionnaire SoC-Q

The SoC-Q was used (Hall et al. 1977, 1998; George et al. 2006) in this study. It was developed to examine teachers' concerns regarding the adoption of an innovation or change initiative, and to assess and measure the seven stages of concerns, and consequently, the natures of the concerns.

Table 1 Demographic distribution of participants

	Number of teachers	Percentage
Gender		
Male teachers	24	10.3
Female teachers	210	89.7
Total years of experience		
Less than 5 years	48	20.5
5–15 years	137	58.5
More than 15 years	49	20.9
Years of experience at current school		
Up to 2 years	45	19.2
3–5 years	57	24.4
More than 5 years	132	56.4
Years of involvement in the change initiative		
Less than 2 years	78	33.3
3–4 years	80	34.2
5–6 years	76	32.5
Type of change		
Organization-based accreditation	182	77.8
Curriculum-based accreditation (IB Program)	52	22.2

The SoC-Q's instrument consisted of a two-page list of 35 statements to which the participants responded. A demographic page was used to gather information about the respondents for sample description and correlation purposes (George et al. 2006). The 35 statements of the questionnaire represented the seven stages of concern about the change with each expressing a certain concern (George et al. 2006). Participants indicated the degree to which each concern was true for them at the time they answered the questionnaire by marking a number next to each statement on a 0–7 Likert-type scale. High numbers indicated high concern, low numbers indicated low concern, and a zero indicated very little or no concern (George et al. 2006). The questionnaire was scored—as recommended by George et al. (2006)—by calculating the raw scores for each of the seven stages. Then the respective raw scores were added to provide the data for the nature of the concerns—namely the Self, the Task, and the Impact.

The questionnaire was approved for content and internal validity by expert judges. It was tested for its internal reliability and a test–retest reliability was also administered. The alpha coefficients of internal consistency for each of the seven stages of concern ranged from 0.64 to 0.83. The test–retest correlations ranged from 0.65 to 0.86. The Cronbach alpha was calculated for the sample of this study and was found to be 0.90. The wording of the content in this questionnaire, and the order in which the statements appeared, were left unchanged and were exactly as recommended by George et al. (2006).

Procedure

The questionnaire was translated from English to Arabic and then back to English by two professors from the Education Department at the American University of Beirut specialized in Teaching English as a Foreign Language. Questionnaires in both languages were kept with the school principals to hand to the teachers who fit the criteria and who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Another meeting was scheduled with each school to collect the answered questionnaires.

Data analysis

Descriptive statistics were carried out to compute the means and standard deviations for each of the seven stages of concerns and, consequently, for the three natures of concern.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was employed to investigate the difference in the teachers' natures and in the stages of concern as a function of gender, total years of teaching experience, years spent at the current school, years of involvement in the change initiative and the type of change undergone. Further univariate analyses using the post hoc Scheffe test at a confidence interval of 95 % were employed to investigate the differences among the various groups of teachers. As for the missing data or item responses, they were handled by estimating the response to any skipped item as being the average of those that were marked for that scale (George et al. 2006).

Analyses were conducted in PASW Statistics 21.0.

Results

Nature of teachers' concerns

Teachers at the Lebanese private schools displayed concerns for the Self, the Task, and the Impact. The concerns for the Impact were the highest, while the concerns for the Task were the lowest (see Table 2).

The teachers' concerns for the Self were mostly of a personal nature; in other words, teachers were concerned about: (1) the time and the energy that would be required from them to succeed in the change initiative; (2) how their role was going to change; and (3) how their teaching and management skills were going to be different as a result of the newly implemented initiative. They were also concerned about the effect of that change on their professional status (see Table 2). The other nature of their concern for the Self was informational as the teachers were anxious to know what the change initiative required from them exactly and what resources would be available for that purpose. Furthermore, they worried about whether the new change would actually be better than what they currently had (see Table 2).

On the other hand, the teachers displayed—though to a lesser extent—concerns of a different nature, which pertained more to the task itself and the management skills required. Teachers were distressed about the time they were spending on non-academic issues related to the implementation of their initiative, and the long hours they were dedicating to coordinating tasks and meetings with other people involved in the process. They were concerned about how to divide their time fairly between their interests and their responsibilities, and some of the teachers even doubted their ability to effectively carry out the tasks required by the change initiative (see Table 2).

The third type of concerns that the teachers displayed were the most prominent and of a different nature. The teachers were concerned about the consequences that the change initiative could result in with respect to the students' achievements. They were anxious about how to motivate their students regarding the new approach, and were interested in using the feedback of their students to make the needed modifications (see Table 2). In addition to that, teachers showed concerns of a

Table 2 Means and SD for each nature of concern

Stage	Stages and equivalent nature	M	SD
1	Awareness	2.79	1.14
2	Informational	4.58	1.25
3	Personal	4.80	1.36
	Self	**4.05**	**0.99**
4	Management	3.02	1.29
	Task	**3.02**	**1.29**
5	Consequences	4.47	1.30
6	Collaboration	5.04	1.33
7	Refocusing	4.17	1.21
	Impact	**4.55**	**1.07**

collaborative nature. Most of them were concerned with how to coordinate efforts with other teachers in order to maximize the change initiative's effects. Additionally, they wanted to know what each teacher was doing in this regard so as to develop good working relationships with their colleagues and help each other in the integration of the newly introduced practices by informing other teachers about the progress of the implementation of the initiative (see Table 2). Teachers also showed great concern with respect to revising the new approach and modifying their implementation based on the way they monitored its effects on the students' learning experiences. They were also worried about how they could devise new methods to modify and improve the procedures and actions related to the change initiative and its implementation process (see Table 2).

Analysis of the nature of the teachers' concerns

The following section will compare each of the natures of concern against the following variables: gender, total years of teaching experience, years of teaching at the current school, years of involvement in the change initiative and the type of change.

Gender and the nature of concerns

Multivariate analysis indicated that there was no statistically difference between males and females in their concerns for the Self $F(1, 233) = 0.14$, $p = 0.71$, the Task $F(1, 233) = 0.16$, $p = 0.69$, and the Impact $F(1, 233) = 1.48$, $p = 0.23$. Males and females displayed a similar nature of concerns.

Total years of teaching experience and the nature of concerns

The multivariate analysis indicated that there was a statistically significant difference among the concerns of beginning teachers, mid-career teachers, and senior teachers only with respect to the Self $F(2, 232) = 3.02$, $p = 0.04$. Conversely, there was no statistically significant difference among the three groups respectively, regarding their concerns for the Task $F(2, 232) = 0.15$, $p = 0.86$ and the Impact $F(2, 232) = 0.67$, $p = 0.52$. In addition, further univariate analysis showed that there was only a statistically significant difference between beginning and mid-career teachers with respect to the Self. However, the group of beginning teachers showed a higher concern for the Self.

Years of teaching at the current school undergoing change and the nature of concerns

A multivariate analysis revealed that there was no statistically significant difference in the concerns for the Self, the Task, or the Impact among the different groups of teachers with respect to their years of teaching at the current school undergoing the change. In other words, the number of years that the teachers had been teaching at the school undergoing the change proved to have no impact or relevance to any

concerns that might have arisen since the introduction of the change initiative at the Lebanese private schools.

Years of involvement in the change initiative and the nature of concerns

The multivariate analysis indicated the presence of a statistically significant difference in the concerns for the Self $F(2, 233) = 4.99$, $p = 0.01$ and the concerns for the Impact $F(2, 233) = 4.75$, $p = 0.01$ among teachers who had spent up to 2 years in the change initiative, those who were involved with it for three to 4 years, and those who had been a part of it for 5–6 years. No statistically significant difference was noticed among the three groups of teachers with respect to the concerns for the Task $F(2, 233) = 1.35$, $p = 0.26$. Further analysis showed that there was a significant difference in the concerns for the Self between the first and the second group of teachers ($p = 0.02$) and between the first and the third group ($p = 0.03$). The group of teachers with less than 2 years of experience in the change initiative displayed the highest concerns for the Self. On the other hand, there was a significant difference between the second and third group regarding their concerns for the Impact ($p = 0.01$). The teachers who had been a part of the change initiative for 5–6 years displayed a higher concern for the Impact of change on the students.

Conclusively, the less experienced the teachers were in the change initiative, the more concerned they were for the Self. However, the more experienced the teachers were in the change initiative, the more concerned they became with the Impact of that change on their students. The teachers showed no substantial difference in their concerns for the requirements to manage the new change.

Type of change and the nature of concerns

Multivariate analysis showed that there was a statistically significant difference in the concerns for the Self $F(1, 233) = 19.13$, $p = 0.04$ and the concerns for the Impact $F(1, 233) = 4.50$, $p = 0.0001$ between teachers in schools that recently received organization-based accreditation and teachers in schools that were recently authorized to apply an IB program. Conversely, there was no significant difference between the two groups of teachers regarding their concerns for the Task $F(1, 233) = 0.04$, $p = 0.84$. Teachers in organization-based accredited schools displayed higher concerns for the Self than teachers in curriculum-based IB accredited schools, while the IB teachers displayed higher concerns for the Impact.

Stages of teachers' concerns

Teachers at the participating schools, in response to the change that took place at their schools, displayed varying concerns of different intensities at all of the seven stages; namely the awareness, informational, personal, management, consequences, collaboration and refocusing stages of concern. The collaboration stage caused the highest levels of concern—followed by the personal stage, while the awareness stage caused the least levels of concern—followed by the management stage (see Table 3).

Table 3 Means and SD for each statement and stage of concern

Item	Statement	M	SD
3.	I am more concerned about another change initiative	3.05	2.26
12.	I am not concerned about this change initiative at this time	2.72	2.25
21.	I am preoccupied with other things other than this change initiative	2.84	2.21
23.	I spend little time thinking about this change initiative	2.85	1.96
30.	Currently, other priorities prevent me from focusing my attention on this change initiative	2.53	2.06
	Awareness	**2.79**	**1.14**
6.	I have a very limited knowledge of the change initiative	2.59	1.89
14.	I would like to discuss the possibility of using the change initiative	4.44	2.04
15.	I would like to know what resources are available if we decide adopt the change initiative	5.31	1.76
26.	I would like to know what the use of the change initiative will require in immediate future	5.32	1.49
35.	I would like to know how this change initiative is better than what we have now	5.06	2.02
	Informational	**4.58**	**1.25**
7.	I would like to know the effect of the change initiative on my professional status	4.65	2.01
13.	I would like to know who will make the decisions in the new system	4.03	2.40
17.	I would like to know how my teaching or administration is supposed to change	4.88	1.78
28.	I would like to have more information on time and energy commitments required by this change initiative	5.40	1.55
33.	I would like to know how my role will change when I am using the change initiative	4.96	1.96
	Personal	**4.80**	**1.36**
4.	I am concerned about not having enough time to organize myself each day	2.54	2.21
8.	I am concerned about conflict between my interests and my responsibilities	2.80	2.03
16.	I am concerned about my inability to manage all the change initiative requires	2.78	1.90
25.	I am concerned about time spent working with nonacademic problems related to this change initiative	3.64	2.02
34.	Coordination of tasks and people is taking too much of my time	3.27	2.08
	Management	**3.02**	**1.29**
1.	I am concerned about the students' attitudes towards the change initiative	3.86	2.19
11.	I am concerned about how the change initiative affects students	4.31	2.09
19.	I am concerned about evaluating my impact on students	4.25	2.20
24.	I would like to excite my students about their part in this approach	5.22	1.67
32.	I would like to use feedback from students to change the program	4.71	2.03
	Consequences	**4.47**	**1.30**
5.	I would like to help other faculty in their use of the change initiative	4.50	1.95
10.	I would like to develop working relationships with both our faculty and outside faculty using this change initiative	4.90	1.88
18.	I would like to familiarize other departments or persons with the progress of this new approach	4.86	1.91
27.	I would like to coordinate my effort with others to maximize the change initiative's effects	5.61	1.44
29.	I would like to know what other faculty are doing in this area	5.14	1.79

Table 3 continued

Item	Statement	M	SD
	Collaboration	**5.04**	**1.33**
2.	I now know of some other approaches that might work better	4.03	2.18
9.	I am concerned about revising my use of the change initiative	3.05	2.06
20.	I would like to revise the change initiative's instructional approach	4.66	1.82
22.	I would like to modify our use of the change initiative based on the experiences of our students	4.62	1.81
31.	I would like to determine how to supplement, enhance, or replace the change initiative	4.35	1.94
	Refocusing	**4.17**	**1.21**

Teachers who displayed concerns in the awareness stage were indifferent and had little concern with the change initiative at the time they answered the questionnaire, as they were preoccupied with other matters rather than the change initiative. Thus, they did not give it much attention because they had different priorities preventing them from focusing their main efforts on the change initiative. However, these constituted the least identified concerns in the whole study (see Table 3).

Additionally, teachers showed a general awareness and interest in the change at the informational stage. The teachers were concerned with wanting to know what the use of the change initiative required from them, what resources would be available for that purpose, and if the change was going to make the situation better than the way it currently was (see Table 3).

The teachers were also concerned with the demands of the change initiative and their adequacy in meeting those demands as well as the role they had to play in the change initiative during the personal stage. They were concerned with wanting to know the time and the energy that was required from them to succeed, how their role as teachers would be different, and how their teaching and management was expected to change. They were also concerned about the effect of that change on their professional status (see Table 3).

In the management stage, the teachers were concerned with the tasks and requirements of the change initiative and the needed resources. Although this stage was not reported with high intensities among the teachers, they mainly seemed concerned about: (1) the time they devoted to non-academic issues; (2) the long hours they spent coordinating tasks and meetings with other people; (3) not being able to manage their time between their interests and their responsibilities; and (4) whether they would be able to meet the requirements of the change initiative (see Table 3).

Conversely, teachers displayed higher intensities of concerns in the last three stages of concern; namely: (1) the consequences stage—where the teachers' attention focused on the impact of the change initiative on student learning, evaluation, and outcome; (2) the collaboration stage—where the teachers focused on the coordination and cooperation with others regarding the change; and (3) the

refocusing stage—where the teachers were interested in exploring more universal benefits from the change initiative (see Table 3). In the consequences stage, teachers were concerned about how to motivate their students regarding the new approach, use the feedback of their students in order to make the needed modifications, and realize the effect and the impact that the change had on the students (see Table 3). In the collaboration stage, which received the highest concern among all the other stages, teachers were concerned about how to coordinate efforts with other teachers in order to maximize the change initiative's effects, know what each teacher is doing in this regard, develop good working relationships with colleagues using the change initiative, help each other in the implementation of the new change, and familiarize other teachers with the progress of the change initiative (see Table 3). In the refocusing stage, teachers showed great concern with respect to revising the new approach, modifying their use of the change initiative based on the students' experiences, and devising new methods in order to supplement, enhance, or replace the change initiative (see Table 3).

Variations of teachers' stages of concerns

Below is a comparison of the different stages of concern with regards to the following variables: gender, total years of teaching experience, years spent at the current school undergoing change, years of involvement in the change initiative, and the type of change undergone.

Gender and the stages of concern

A multivariate analysis of data showed that there was no significant difference between males and females in all the stages of concern; namely the awareness, informational, personal, management, consequences, collaboration and refocusing concerns.

Total years of teaching experience and the stages of concern

There was a statistically significant difference in the informational stage of concern among the beginning, mid-career, and senior teachers $F(2, 232) = 3.05$, $p = 0.04$. On the other hand, there was no statistically significant difference among the three groups of teachers in their awareness, personal, management, consequences, collaboration, and refocusing stages of concern.

Moreover, there was only a significant difference in the informational stage of concern between the beginning teachers and the mid-career ones ($p = 0.04$), with the beginning teachers displaying the most concerns.

Years of teaching at the current school and the stages of concern

There was only a statistically significant difference in the awareness $F(2, 232) = 4.21$, $p = 0.02$ and collaboration $F(2, 232) = 3.26$, $p = 0.04$ stages of concern among teachers who had up to 2 years of experience at the current

school, those who had been there for three to 5 years, and those who had been teaching there for more than 5 years. Teachers who had been at the school for up to 2 years showed little or no interest in the change initiative compared to others who had been there for a greater number of years. Furthermore, teachers with more than 5 years of experience at the current school were more interested in collaborating with their colleagues and developing working relationships with others.

Further post hoc analysis showed that there was a significant difference between the awareness stage of concern for the teachers who had been at the current school for up to 2 years and those who had been there for more than 5 years ($p = 0.01$). The same applied for those had been there for 3–5 years and those who spent more than 5 years at the current school ($p = 0.04$). As for the collaboration stage of concern, there was only a significant difference in the means of concerns between teachers with three to 5 years of experience at the current school and those with more than 5 years of experience ($p = 0.02$). Teachers who had been teaching at the current school for more than 5 years displayed the highest concerns for collaboration.

Years of involvement in the change initiative and the stages of concern

Multivariate analysis showed that there was a statistically significant difference between the years of involvement in the change initiative and the awareness $F(2, 232) = 8.03$, $p = 0.0001$, informational $F(2, 232) = 5.41$, $p = 0.01$, collaboration $F(2, 232) = 9.67$, $p = 0.0001$ and refocusing $F(2, 232) = 10.14$, $p = 0.0001$ stages of concern. In other words, teachers who had been newly involved in the change demonstrated the highest concerns in the awareness and informational stages, followed by those who had been involved in the change initiative for a greater number of years. The latter group, on the other hand, were more interested in assisting their colleagues and teaching them how to use the new system in order to familiarize them with the requirements and to coordinate their efforts so as to develop good working relationships with each other.

Further Post Hoc analysis showed that there is a significant difference in the awareness stage of concern among teachers who had up to 2 years of experience in the change initiative, those who had up to 3–4 years of experience in the change ($p = 0.01$), and those who had up to 5–6 years of experience in the change ($p = 0.0001$). However, no significant difference was found between teachers with 3–4 years of experience in the change and those with 5–6 years of experience in the change initiative ($p = 0.21$). Teachers with up to 2 years of experience in the change initiative had the highest awareness concerns, followed by those with 3–4 years of experience in the change. On the other hand, there was only a significant difference in the informational stage of concern between teachers of the first group and those of the second group ($p = 0.001$). Teachers with less than 2 years of experience in the change initiative had the highest informational concerns, followed by those who had spent up to 5–6 years in the change.

As for the collaboration stage of concern, there was a significant difference in these concerns between teachers with 5–6 years of experience in the change initiative and those with 2 years of experience ($p = 0.0001$). Additionally, there

was also another significant difference between the former group and those with 3–4 years of experience ($p = 0.0001$). The group of teachers who had up to 5–6 years of experience displayed the highest concerns for collaboration, followed by the group of teachers who had 3–4 years of experience in the change initiative.

Furthermore, the Scheffe tests proved that there was a significant difference in the refocusing stage of concern between teachers with 3–4 years of experience in the change initiative and those with less than 2 years of experience in the change ($p = 0.004$). Additionally, there was also a significant statistical difference between the former group and those with 5–6 years of experience in the change ($p = 0.0001$). Teachers with 5–6 years of experience in the change initiative displayed the highest refocusing concerns, followed by teachers with less than 2 years of experience in the new change.

Type of change and the stages of concern

There was a significant difference between the means of the teachers in schools that recently received organization-based accreditation, and the means of teachers in schools that were recently authorized to apply an IB program. This difference was displayed in the awareness $F(1, 233) = 4.54$, $p = 0.03$, informational $F(1, 233) = 5.01$, $p = 0.03$, collaboration $F(1, 233) = 13.18$, $p = 0.0001$, and refocusing stages of concern $F(1, 233) = 18.48$, $p = 0.0001$. Teachers in organization-based accredited schools displayed higher awareness and informational concerns than teachers in the IB schools, while the latter group displayed higher collaboration and refocusing concerns than the former group.

To sum up, teachers at the Lebanese private schools displayed concerns of different natures and at various levels or stages. The nature of concerns was related to the Self, the Task, and the Impact. Moreover, they showed concerns at all the stages of concerns; namely, the awareness, informational, personal, management, consequences, collaboration, and refocusing stages. These natures and stages differed as a function of experience and type of change, but not as a function of gender. The less experienced the teachers were, the shorter was the time that they spent at the current school and the less they were involved in the change initiative, the more concerned they became for the Self, and the more they showed concerns in the awareness, informational, and personal stages. Conversely, the more experienced they were, the more concerned for the Impact they became, and the more they displayed concerns in the consequences, collaboration and refocusing stages. The concern for the Task, which constitutes the management stage, showed the least variation among all the different groups.

Discussion

The results of the study left us researchers in a state of ambivalence. The fact that the teachers' concerns persisted, in all their natures and at all the different stages, was surprising since at the time that this study was conducted, all the participating schools had already received their accreditation and had reached the end of the

implementation phase. Furthermore, the prevalence of the teachers' concerns indicates that the schools' administration might have directed their efforts towards holding the teachers accountable for achieving the task rather than addressing the human and affective concerns that teachers could have been experiencing. This result is also unexpected since some of the participating schools included private schools in Lebanon that were greatly reputed for their high educational standards and good working conditions for their teachers. From this observation, we can infer that by so doing, the school administrators were simply enacting a norm that undervalued the importance of attending to the affective states of teachers.

However, the results were not very surprising given the context of Lebanese educational institutions where teachers experience extreme feelings of concern that can be attributed to the lack of a general sense of job security. In fact, teachers in Lebanese private schools are not tenure teachers and do not have the job security that their international colleagues working in the public sector have. Rather, they tend to sign short term contracts [most often on a yearly basis]. Therefore, any change in their daily routines (induced through school improvement initiatives) that might cause the arousal of concerns pertaining to the Self in the awareness, informational, and personal early stages of concerns, could also make these teachers constantly afraid of being laid off the moment they feel they are not able to meet the school's expectations. Hence, this might explain why the concerns for the Self—and their related stages—were more intense among all teachers.

Furthermore, the unstable economic, social and political situation in Lebanon aggravates the challenges that teachers face within the organizational setting. The preoccupation with the general safety and security in the country and communities exposes teachers to unpredictable crisis situations as they often have to take emergency measures to safeguard the continuous operation of their school. These conditions hinder the teachers' ability to focus more on the change initiative and remain open to facing the concerns that might they feel; thus, it is expected that any additional change in their work environment would automatically cause them to have concerns, especially those pertaining to the Self.

Consequently, the cumulative effect of these concerns, coupled with other concerns that may surface since even earlier stages, pose additional risk. As such, addressing the teachers' concerns requires going well-beyond measures related to the change initiative itself. This is because these concerns are likely to persist if the current organizational policy is not altered in a way that offers teachers more job security. In other words, the effectiveness of initiatives for change will always remain questionable if such disabling organizational conditions remain in place. Substantial empirical evidence seems to suggest that unless these early concerns are addressed and dealt with, they are likely to persist. This would make it even harder on teachers to overcome the cumulative effect of the concerns and challenges that may emerge in the later stages of the change process—something that scholars insist is more likely to impede the successful implementation of the change initiative (Fuller 1969; Hall et al. 1973).

Moreover, the results of the study that indicate the prevalence of a wide range of teacher-concerns reinforce what the literature on effective change advocates; namely, the significance of the human dimension of change insofar as it is

considered the major element in the process of change initiative and change (Fullan 1993, 1999, 2007; Owens and Valesky 2011; Louis et al. 1999). Recent studies have also shown the crucial role of teachers when it comes to any change initiative at school as they are expected to be the architects of transformation when given the opportunity to be involved in the change process (Vetter 2012). Furthermore, if teacher quality is considered to be the main factor related to student learning, then all teachers are also expected to own the change (Santos 2012).

Conclusion and recommendations

In conclusion, the results of the study indicate that there is good reason to doubt if school leaders and educational policymakers in Lebanon understand their teachers' affective reactions. This, in turn, makes us wonder if these leaders were even aware of this important factor during the process of change. It also raises the question as to whether or not these leaders took any measures to address the expected rising levels of anxiety (especially among the teachers directly involved with implementing mandated change initiatives) or if they only were concerned with holding them accountable for completing the task.

Moreover, the results of the study align with the widespread understanding that it is inevitable and common across all cultures that those involved in the implementation of any change process would feel concerns while dealing with the change and addressing its challenges. These concerns seem to be prevalent in all cultures despite the different socio-economic factors and conditions of teachers. Thus, with the increasing worldwide focus on improvement and life-long learning, it becomes critical for educational researchers and practitioners to gain more insight into the dynamics of the implementation process—especially its affective dimension. Therefore, in their quest for reform and improvement, our Lebanese private schools' leaders must continue seeking initiatives for reform that would help their schools achieve higher standards of effectiveness. However, they also need to become fully aware that change never has been, and never will be, easy; it is rather complex, messy, and chaotic. More importantly, leaders of change need to realize that their initiatives are more likely to result in the emergence of different affective concerns among the people involved—especially the teachers (Fullan 1993; Owens and Valesky 2011; Louis et al. 1999). Therefore, if the Lebanese schools aspire to achieve an effective change initiative in such a way that it comes with a minimum set of challenges and obstacles, they must attend to the human dimension of change by addressing the affective needs of their teachers.

The results of this study, nevertheless, contribute to the growing literature, highlighting and adding to our understanding of the role that teachers play in the implementation process of change. Nonetheless, this study has some limitations that should be considered. First of all, the data used in the study were cross-sectional; thus, causal interpretations could not be inferred from the results. Second of all, some of the teachers' demographics that could be considered personal were not considered (such as marital status and level of education) although it is possible that

some or all of these factors may have had an impact on the way these teachers dealt with change.

It is recommended that further studies be conducted on teachers' concerns. In those studies, more demographic factors could be examined (like the teachers' marital status, their highest level of education received, and the university they received it from) in order to investigate if any of these factors have an impact on the nature and level of concerns. Other studies might be carried out on schools undergoing different types of change or simply on schools that are not undergoing any change at all, in order to examine if teachers still have concerns of any nature or level despite the nonexistence of any change initiative. Further comparative studies among various types of schools (private, public, parochial, etc.) are recommended to examine whether structural variations have an impact on the nature and level of teachers' concerns. Case studies with qualitative data could also be done on teachers at schools undergoing change as it would help in giving a more detailed and complex perspective on the nature and levels of teachers' concerns.

Scholars around the world agree that teachers are the most important human resource of any school organization as they would greatly increase the effectiveness of a change and make it more powerful and significant (Vetter 2012; Santos 2012). Accordingly, these scholars insist that teachers need to be active participants rather than powerless, submissive and manipulated individuals, especially during the implementation of change initiatives (Owens and Valesky 2011). Teachers must be looked after and heard, and must also participate in the vision of the school for improvement. School leaders should get to know their teachers, understand what they go through, and address their fears to be able to better discuss their concerns with them (Vetter 2012; Santos 2012). Hence, we recommend that our policymakers, school leaders, and administrators in Lebanese private schools be aware of the importance of the teachers' role in the process of change, and the natural existence of concerns as a result of the introduction of change. In short, open communication with teachers becomes a must if strategies for improvement are to succeed.

References

Christou, C., Eliophotou-Menon, M., & Philippou, G. (2004). Teachers' concerns regarding the adoption of a new mathematics curriculum: An application of CBAM. *Educational Studies in Mathematics, 57*, 157–176.

Fullan, M. (1993). *Change forces: Probing the depths of educational reform*. London: The Falmer Press.

Fullan, M. (1999). *Change forces: The sequel*. London: The Falmer Press.

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Fullan, M. (2007). *The new meaning of educational change* (4th ed.). New York, NY: Teachers College Press.

Fuller, F. (1969). Concerns of teachers: A developmental conceptualization. *American Educational Research Journal, 6*(2), 207–226.

George, A., Hall, G., & Stiegelbauer, S. (2006). *Measuring implementation in schools: The stages of concern questionnaire*. Austin, TX: SEDL store.

Glickman, C., Gordon, S., & Ross-Gordon, J. (2007). *Supervision and instructional leadership* (7th ed.). Boston, MA: Pearson Education Inc.

Hall, G., George, A., & Rutherford, W. (1977). *Measuring the stages of concerns about the innovation: A manual for use of the SoC questionnaire*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Hall, G., George, A., & Rutherford, W. (1998). *Measuring the stages of concerns about the innovation: A manual for use of the SoC questionnaire*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. M. (1987). *Change in schools: Facilitating the process*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Hall, G. E., Wallace, R. C., & Dossett, W. F. (1973). *A developmental conceptualization of the adoption process within educational institutions*. Austin, TX: University of Texas Press.

Hargreaves, L., Moyles, J., Merry, R., Paterson, F., Pell, A., & Esarte-Sarries, V. (2003). How do primary school teachers define and implement "interactive teaching" in the National Literacy Strategy in England? *Research Papers in Education, 18*(3), 217–236.

Hord, S., & Hall, G. (1984, April). *Principals use research-based techniques for facilitating school effectiveness.* Paper presented at The Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans, LA.

IB Education Programmes. Retrieved from http://www.ibo.org/en/programmes/.

Leung, W. L. (2008). Teacher concerns about curriculum reform: The case of project learning. *The Asia-Pacific Education Researcher, 17*(1), 75–97.

Louis, K., Toole, J., & Hargreaves, A. (1999). Rethinking school improvement. In K. Louis, J. Toole, & A. Hargreaves (Eds.), *Handbook in Research in Education Administration* (pp. 251–276). New York: Longman.

Meyer, M., Macmillan, R. B., & Northfield, S. (2009). Principal succession and its impact on teacher morale. *International Journal of Leadership in Education, 12*(2), 171–185.

Mukama, E., & Andersson, S. B. (2008). Coping with change in ICT-based learning environments: Newly qualified Rwandan teachers' reflections. *Journal of Computer Assisted learning, 24*, 156–166.

Najjar, D. (2008). *Effectiveness of management in private schools in Lebanon* (Doctoral dissertation). Retrieved from http://eric.ed.gov/.

Owens, R., & Valesky, T. (2011). *Organizational behavior in education: Leadership and school reform* (10th ed.). Boston: Pearson Education Inc.

Oxford Business Group. (October, 2009). *Lebanon: Class act needed*. Retrieved from http://193.92.37.201/evepimages/EmpNL13279_F21195.pdf.

Santos, A. (2012). Considerations for education reform in British Columbia. *Canadian Journal of Educational Administration and Policy, 138*.

Sarafidou, J. O., & Nikolaidis, D. (2009). School leadership and teachers' attitudes towards school change: The case of high schools in Greece. *The International school of Learning, 16*(8), 431–440.

Vetter, A. (2012). Teachers as architects of transformation: The change process of an elementary school teacher in a practitioner research group. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, *39*, 27–49.

What is accreditation. Retrieved from http://m.advanc-ed.org/what-accreditation.