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The effect of teacher empowerment on job satisfaction

A research project by

Maya J. Tamim

Submitted to the Lebanese American University

in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of

Master in Education

June 2006



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Approved by:



Dr. Leila Harmoush, Advisor



Dr. Rima Bahous, Second Reader

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*To my mother and father,
My brother Ashraf and my sister Rana,
Grandma Sophie and Grandpa Moustapha,
And to P.M. Rafic Hariri, may God rest his soul*

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ABSTRACT

The growing number of research in school leadership is calling for a move from autocratic top-down leadership to a more democratic leadership style based on shared responsibility, increased teacher autonomy, and higher collaboration and teamwork to enhance professional growth and insure teacher commitment and satisfaction.

This case study was conducted in a school in Beirut to examine an empowering leadership style in practice and find out what is its effect on teacher satisfaction. It addresses the issue of empowerment by integrating theory and practice using field-based data. Participants were twelve teachers chosen from the elementary, intermediate, and secondary divisions, the principals of each school division, and 2 subject coordinators. Interviews with all participants and a questionnaire addressing a sample of 154 teachers were used to collect data. Results showed that the school adopts an empowering leadership philosophy which is positively affecting the school climate and resulting in teacher satisfaction.

Chapter One

Introduction

Context of the study

In this new era of rapid change, teachers are required to play various roles and handle many responsibilities in order to cater for various school functions. These functions go beyond classroom teaching to encompass class management, curriculum development, mentoring, research, and life long learning. In order to fulfill these functions effectively, teachers must be empowered and must have a say in the decision-making process which enables them to develop a sense of ownership and commitment towards any attempt for change. In this light, school principals must come to value the importance of shared responsibility since it influences teachers' perception of the meaningfulness of their work and consequently affects their sense of satisfaction and commitment.

This project explores the effect of an empowering leadership style on teacher job satisfaction. Researchers have recognized a positive relation between empowerment and satisfaction based on the assumption that teachers' responsibilities are growing and with this comes a need for commitment and high expertise in order to cater willingly and skillfully for such demands (Diwan, 2003; Wynne, 2001).

Reitzug (1994) posits that the concept of leadership has long been grounded in the belief that a leader's job is to influence, direct, and guide followers' actions toward the achievement of goals, assuming that teachers can be influenced or controlled to blindly follow 'leader-determined goals'. Yet, a change in this conception is essential and employees' sense of self-efficacy has to be enhanced. According to Conger & Kanungo

(1988), to empower means to strengthen employees' sense of self-efficacy because everyone has a need for self determination and a need to control and cope with organizational demands.

Therefore, teachers must be engaged in various types of decision making in order to develop a commitment to any task (Rhodes, Nevill, & Allen, 2004). When teachers feel valued and involved, they get a sense of satisfaction derived from a high feeling of self esteem and self worth (Carless, 2004).

White (1992) conducted a study that focused on how teachers respond to opportunities for more influence in decision making and how such opportunities affect their teaching, work life, and sense of efficacy. Results showed five major benefits being: improved teacher morale, better informed teachers, improved communication, improved student motivation, and increased incentives for teacher retention.

Trust in teachers' proficiency is necessary if teachers are to be empowered. It is expressed in granting them autonomy in their classrooms. Apple & Jungck (1990) argue that depriving teachers from determining what they do in their classrooms results in 'de-skilling' teachers, turning them into 'technicians' carrying out instructions. The autonomy in determining what's best for their students communicates to teachers that their expertise and knowledge are valued, giving them more confidence in their practice (Razik & Swanson, 2001). Klecker & Loadman (1997) identify professional autonomy as a major correlate of job satisfaction.

In the light of shared responsibility in decision making, Starratt (1991) talks about the 'ethics of caring', that is, "a willingness to acknowledge the right of all individuals to

be who they are, honoring their right to differ in opinion, and their right to critique in order to bring the best in each other" (p.195).

Still delegating more authority does not automatically cause empowered behavior. It is rather the employees feeling of choice, meaningfulness, competence, and progress in their job that determine the existence of an empowering environment. When those feelings are experienced, employees will find their job satisfying and intrinsically rewarding (Thomas & Tymon, 1994).

Nevertheless, for teachers to be part of the decision making process and to be granted autonomy in their classrooms, they have to engage in constant and various professional development opportunities. When teachers take part in professional growth, they feel positive about the process and result (Munthe, 2003). Teacher empowerment involves the establishment of a culture that fosters learning and growth through collaborative team work based on trust and effective communication (Harris, 2002).

To test the hypothesis, interviews with teachers, principals, and subject coordinators as well as a questionnaire addressing teachers were used to measure the degree of empowerment at the school and its effect on teacher job satisfaction. An analysis of the data indicated that teachers experienced high feelings of empowerment and consequently a high degree of satisfaction. Results of this study indicated that there was a positive correlation between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction. These findings were consistent with the literature.

Purpose of the study and research question

The purpose of this study is to provide a comprehensive view regarding the association of job satisfaction with teacher empowerment. It aims at studying an

empowering leadership style based on sight-based examples. The study also aims at answering the following *research question*:

What can be learned by studying an empowering leadership style that might have implications regarding the behavior of teachers in terms of satisfaction?

Statement of the problem

Research studies are in agreement on the relationship of teacher empowerment and job satisfaction, meaningfulness, and commitment; however, no research studies in Lebanon have been conducted to examine the Lebanese teachers' satisfaction and the empowering factors related to it. The lack of research in Lebanon about this issue makes the purpose for conducting such research valid. Moreover, this research provides a path for further investigation on how to empower teachers and in turn create a healthier organizational atmosphere built on trust, respect, and shared responsibility.

Statement of the Hypothesis

There is a positive correlation between job satisfaction and teacher empowerment.

Variables

Independent variable: Teacher empowerment

Dependent variable: Job satisfaction

Operational definitions of variables

Job satisfaction: refers to the teachers' attitude toward the job and the sense of gratification they get from their job. It's measured through a questionnaire survey and interviews.

Teacher empowerment: refers to giving teachers the right to participate in the determination of school goals and policies and to have a say in what and how to teach. It's measured through a questionnaire survey and interviews.

Rationale and significance of the study

The rationale for this qualitative study is based on a growing need for reform in Lebanese schools. The reform is guaranteed once schools relinquish their bureaucratic systems and start acknowledging teachers' abilities. Once teachers feel valued and involved, they would develop more confidence and commitment towards their job and feel more satisfied in the process. Consequently, change starts to take place on different levels of a school system. In that light, more research on investing in teachers is necessary. It's the most solid guarantee for reform; thus, examining the relationship between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction is imperative.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

Teachers' role in the twenty first century is moving beyond classroom practices to encompass a variety of responsibilities that includes curriculum planning, research, and professional development. These responsibilities can be a source of great pressure on teachers. Therefore, it is essential for leaders to provide teachers with the satisfying conditions to grow professionally. It is crucial that teachers feel satisfied in order to cope with the increasing responsibilities. If satisfied, teachers can play a major role in being a catalyst for change and improvement since satisfaction is the base for commitment. Research on improvement and reform suggests a number of elements necessary for promoting teacher effectiveness, one of these elements being job satisfaction. This literature review provides a comprehensive review of articles and books examining the relation between teacher empowerment and the level of satisfaction teachers develop towards their profession.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined by Knoop (1994) as "the discrepancy between what an employee values and what the situation provides. It indicates an individual's general attitude toward the job" (p.683).

Improving teachers' job satisfaction is becoming one of the major concerns in education regarding the high drop out rate of teachers (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). Its importance lies in the fact that it predicts teacher retention, affects teacher commitment, and consequently, contributes to school effectiveness (Woods & Weasmer, 2002; Stockard & Lehman, 2004).

Studies show that one major source of job satisfaction for teachers is an empowering leadership style (Woods & Weasmer, 2002; Stockard & Lehman, 2004; Razik & Swanson, 2001).

Razik and Swanson (2001) discuss the human relation school that fosters empowerment and puts a major emphasis on making employees feel like contributors to meaningful and important tasks. The human relation view of educational administration consists of the fusion of two schools of thought. The first being John Dewey's 'democratic administration' and the second consisting of notions about 'democratizing schools' combined with 'humanistic studies'. They show how empirically, the human relations theory proved that teachers' morale and productivity are raised by humanistic leadership practices. When principals treat teachers as competent and committed people by delegating important tasks and involving them in important decisions, teachers will be affected by a self-fulfilling prophecy which adds to their feeling of self-worth and satisfaction, leading ultimately to a better commitment and performance. Moreover, motivation is at the heart of the human needs, and the bases for understanding motivation lies in understanding the needs that motivate the behavior of people in the organization and providing opportunities for teachers to satisfy these needs. This is achieved when leaders 'build motivators' such as a supportive climate, opportunities for growth, training programs for professional learning, and involvement in decision-making. In the same line Short, Rinehart, & Eckley (1999) studied how teacher empowerment is impacted by principals' leadership styles. Results indicated that teachers believe they are more empowered in schools where principals 'frame' the organization as human resource and operate accordingly.

Teacher Empowerment

Empowerment is defined by Short and Rinehart (1993), as “the opportunities an individual has for autonomy, choice, responsibility and participation in decision-making” (p.592). According to Pugh and Zhao (2003), it is “the confidence in personal knowledge and in the ability to make decisions and take actions based on personal knowledge gained through inquiry” (p.187). They identify two domains of empowerment: a technical and a managerial one. The technical domain of empowerment refers to teachers’ control of the curriculum and instruction. The managerial domain of empowerment refers to teachers’ participation in school decisions and management (Pugh & Zhao, 2003).

Sherrill (1999) reports that the recognition of a connection between job satisfaction, teacher empowerment, and teacher leadership is supported by many research groups like the Holmes Group, the National Commission on Excellence in Education, and the National Commission on Teaching and America’s Future who call for reform that enhances teacher empowerment and leadership. Many other research studies show that the benefits of teacher empowerment include increased teacher job performance and productivity, improved teacher morale, improved teacher communication, increased teacher competence, and higher student motivation (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Keiser & Shen, 2000; Woods & Weasmer, 2002; Carless, 2004; Rice & Schneider, 1994; Wang, 2005; Short, Rinehart, & Eckley, 1999; and White, 1992).

In an empirical study showing relations of empowerment to outcome variables being job satisfaction and stress symptoms, Thomas and Tymon (1994) argue that an empowerment intervention, such as delegating more authority, does not automatically cause empowered behavior. Rather, it is the attempt by leaders to determine what

employees need to believe or feel that determines the effectiveness of such interventions. Therefore, they developed a motivational approach to empowerment that consists of a model of four judgments called task assessments. The approach posits that employees play a major role in their own empowerment and disempowerment through their interpretation of events. Thomas and Tymon (1994) state, "because the task assessments generate intrinsic rewards associated with the job, they should be positively related to job satisfaction" (p. 2). Therefore, employees must experience high levels of task assessments in order to find their job intrinsically rewarding and as a result generate positive feelings towards their work effort. These judgments or task assessments are choice, competence, meaningfulness, and progress.

- Choice is the opportunity felt in selecting tasks that make sense and to perform them in ways that seem appropriate. It reflects autonomy in the decision-making processes.
- Competence is the accomplishment felt in skillfully performing a task. It stems from the work of Bandura (1977) on self-efficacy which hypothesizes that an individual's expectations for success determine the behavioral response; it indicates a strong relationship between perceived self-efficacy and actual performance. That is people with high sense of self-efficacy are more likely to engage in behaviors leading to a goal and tend to show more perseverance in facing obstacles than people with a low sense of self-efficacy (cited in Lampe 2002).
- Meaningfulness is the opportunity felt when pursuing a purposeful task that is worthy of one's time and effort.

- Progress is the accomplishment felt after achieving a task that is progressing and making a difference.

Results of this study show that leaders need to push high the levels of choice, competence, meaningfulness, and progress in employees if they want to empower them. Furthermore, taking inventory of these feelings through questionnaires and discussions with the employees helps reveal empowerment deficiencies that need attention. In this light, Thomas and Tymon (1993) set the steps allowing leaders to direct their attention to 'areas of actual need'. That is, if in a certain case low feelings of choice are the main obstacle to empowerment, leaders can focus on granting more authority, trusting members' judgment, informing, and clarifying purpose. If feelings of competence are low, leaders can provide training, positive feedback, skill recognition, growth opportunities, and non-comparative standards. In case of low meaningfulness feelings, leaders must provide a supportive and comfortable climate, clear values, relevant task purposes, whole tasks, and a meaningful vision.

Based on Thomas and Tymon (1994) motivational approach, Carless (2004) finds a relationship between psychological climate (one's perception of the work environment as it pertains to: role clarity, supportive leadership, participative decision-making, professional interaction, appraisal and recognition, professional growth, and goal congruence) and job satisfaction. She proves in her study that empowerment mediates the relationship between the psychological climate and job satisfaction.

In the same light, Laschinger, Finegan, Shamian, and Wilk (2004) conducted a longitudinal analysis to test the effect of empowering environments on job satisfaction. The results showed that fostering work environment that enhances employees'

perceptions of empowerment is strongly linked to job satisfaction, commitment, trust, and reduced job stress, and therefore, can have remarkable and long lasting effects on employees' satisfaction in their work. They posit that empowerment is a tool to encourage employees to think for themselves and take the initiative instead of blindly following instructions. In this perspective, Kanter (1993) uses the idea of an electrical circuit to highlight the importance of empowerment, saying:

Power is 'on' when employees have access to lines of information, support, resources, and opportunities to learn and grow. When these lines or sources of power are unavailable, power is off and effective work is impossible (p. 210).

Wynne (2001) believes that the power for change must come from the bottom. He says that teachers will stop feeling powerless if they get the encouragement from their principals to perceive themselves as active contributors. Empowering teachers to participate in leadership roles raises their self-esteem and job satisfaction, which consequently affects their motivation and performance. It also predicts a higher retention rate. It is a better proof of job satisfaction than any other variable (Mujis & Harris, 2003; Kanter, 1993; Rinehart and Short, 1994).

Shared Leadership

Teacher empowerment is a complex process that involves a move from top-down management to shared leadership (Wynne, 2001; Carless, 2004). Short and Rinehart (1994) add that researchers advocate the idea of empowering teachers through shared decision-making because of a belief that "those closest to the existing problems have the

expertise to solve them” (p.571). Barth (2001) explains that principals who want to share responsibility must remember to include teachers as partners and professionals, and therefore (1) express high expectations for teachers to lead; (2) relinquish solo power; (3) trust teachers’ decisions; (4) empower teachers to solve problems; (5) include teachers in issues they are passionate about; (6) protect teachers to take reasonable risk; and (7) recognize teacher accomplishments.

According to Woods and Weasmer (2002), moving towards shared leadership or decision-making increases teachers’ commitment and enhances their effectiveness and satisfaction. In the same line, studies by Dee, Henkin, and Duemer (2003) indicate that high levels of organizational commitment are associated with lower levels of absenteeism and turnover.

Lampe (2002) considers that having a voice or choice through shared decision-making is a very powerful emotional reward. “It will lead to desired outcomes like flexibility, creativity and self-efficacy” (p.351). In a questionnaire study of the effects of participation in decision making, Le Var (1998) found that it promotes: comfort, ego satisfaction, higher self-esteem, higher moral, feeling valued, increased motivation, improved school climate, job satisfaction, improved teamwork, and faculty unity.

A study conducted by Leithwood, Bullough, Bennett, & Lecompte (1988) showed that the schools where teacher’s voices are heard and acknowledged are the schools that have been successful (cited in Gratch, 2000).

Studies indicate that as a result of involvement, teachers start seeing more meaningfulness in their work and feel more committed and involved in implementing

new decisions effectively and gradually developing a sense of shared responsibility (Davis & Wilson, 2000; Lampe, 2002; Woods & Weasmer, 2002).

Woods and Weasmer (2002) emphasize that engaging teachers in curricular review and implementation of innovative practices enhances their job satisfaction and commitment as it positively affects their image as “valued contributors” who have an impact.

Nagel and Brown (2003) explain that shared decision-making allows teachers to be active members who participate in important matters rather than just “coerced subordinates” obliged to implement top-down decisions. Consequently, Wiley (2000) considers seeking teacher input in decision-making and allowing teachers to get involved in goal setting as major steps in any method for reducing stress.

Lampe (1997) argues that the most satisfying emotional reward that motivates teachers to work is shared decision-making. It’s the satisfaction of having a real voice in the work place.

Diwan (2003) and Wynne (2001) point to a pressing need at the present times for shared decision-making as teachers’ responsibilities are increasing. They add that unless teachers feel that their participation is welcomed and their input is valued they would always be reluctant to work. According to Munthe (2003), job satisfaction was found to be higher in supportive schools where teachers collaborate and take part in decision-making, consequently, a stronger commitment to teaching and to remain in the profession were stronger. Le Var (1998) reports that teacher participation in decision-making seems to come from three sources: The first is political, based on the democratization of institutions. It posits that those who are affected by the decisions should participate in

making them. The second is managerial and is based on the human relations approach. The third is professional and posits that professional teachers should make decisions about important issues in teaching and learning.

Collegial Relationships (Collaboration and Trust)

Shared leadership depends greatly on the collegial relationship among members of a group. Without collaboration and trust on different levels of the organization, little is ever realized (Short & Rinehart, 1993). Collegiality is essential for teachers' self-improvement, can enhance teacher retention, and has a positive impact on school culture (Hope, 1999).

Unfortunately, the reality of the workplace tells another story. Through four years of work with teams of K-12 teachers, their school administrators, and a local college professor, Hoyt (2001) learned that most teachers work alone and have little interaction with their colleagues. Yet, they are aware that teaching would be more productive, more fun, and better for students, when working together as a team. Through his observation of teachers, administrators, and professors working together, he gathered that:

Until we work in one another's world, walk in one another's shoes,
and really get to know one another, the idea of teamwork is just
rhetoric. Teamwork involves risk and faith (p.4).

In a study about factors that contribute to empowerment, Dee, Henkin, and Duemer (2003) discuss four teamwork functions based on collaboration and trust.

- The first function is 'team teaching' which involves small groups of teachers who collaborate to form a teaching/learning environment. They are characterized by

high levels of trust and open communication as well as a low level of fear since they do not relate to administrative direction.

- The second function is 'the curriculum development'. It involves teams that function as a curriculum strategy group. They examine new textbooks and methods. According to Graham (2001), when teachers work collaboratively, they enhance their skills in making 'curricular choices'.
- The third function is 'school governance' where teachers develop budgets, set curriculum goals, and discuss policies in collaboration with administrators.
- The fourth function is 'community-related teamwork' that involves connections with parents and other community members.

The results of the study showed that team teaching has the strongest effect on teacher effectiveness since it offers 'forums of ideas and opinions' in a safe and nonjudgmental environment where all members have a sense of mutual trust. Such an emphasis on trust stems from it being a key element in maintaining sound communication and organizational effectiveness.

In a study conducted by Hoy, Smith, and Sweetland (2002), on school climate and trust, it was found that trust is a critical element for developing a healthy school environment conducive to learning on all levels and therefore essential if teachers are to work collaboratively. Olson (2003) states, "the effectiveness of teams is dependent on an underlying network of social relationships and trust is its most important ingredient" (p.236). Principals play a major role in building morale by showing more trust in teachers' abilities (Cowdery, 2004).

Furthermore, collaboration should not only happen among experienced teachers and between teachers and administrators. It must go further to include mentoring efforts. Such efforts consist of helping new teachers adjust to the school environment, enhance their learning, and become self-reliant. This will help enhance collegiality and lower dropout rate of new teachers who usually feel ineffective and leave the profession in the very early years (Bunting, 2002). Wiley (2000) considers the development of mentor relationships one important step in any stress reduction method.

In addition, the benefit of mentoring is reciprocal. It provides the beginning teacher with clearer awareness of school culture and what is expected in terms of planning, evaluation, and teaching. As for the mentors, they benefit from fresh perspectives in recent practices. So, in both cases, mentoring efforts contribute to teacher effectiveness and professional development (Woods & Weasmer, 2002). Some even believe that mentoring should begin before the new teachers' first entrance to school (Boreen & Niday, 2000) since it was documented that around 40 percent of all new teachers choose to leave the profession within the first five years of teaching because of two major reasons among others, the little or lack of support and proper orientation as well as isolation from colleagues (Hope, 1999).

Moreover, studies showed that collaborative work and interaction in a collegial and trustful environment play a major role in helping old and new teachers cope with stress. Results showed that it helped reduce absenteeism and increase job satisfaction and involvement since it helps teachers establish a personal connection that increases teacher morale (Conley & Woosly, 2000; Nagel & Brown, 2003).

Effective Communication Skills

Although teacher empowerment through shared leadership and collaboration is positively linked to teacher satisfaction, it cannot be implemented in the absence of appropriate communication. Empowering teachers may result in tension and conflict due to differences in views, expertise, backgrounds, and practices. Therefore, teachers must be trained in effective communication skills of group dynamics as well as problem-solving skills (Rinehart & Short, 1994). Olson (2003) considers conflict as natural and that adequate assertiveness in conflict management is required in order to turn conflict into cooperative planning.

Effective communication is essential for the functioning of any organization and serves three purposes. It allows members to 'coordinate actions, share information, and satisfy social needs' (Blase & Blase, 1999).

A very essential element for effective communication is listening. Members of a group must listen to reflect and learn before any decision is made (Dunklee, 2002). Dunklee (2002) advises leaders to use 'careful listening' in order to help teachers cope. He explains that by careful listening, effective principals can also gain teacher's trust. Well-led conversation based on effective listening and reflection can be an effective development strategy for learning and growth for both teachers and leaders (Healy, Ehrich, Hansford, & Stewart, 2001).

According to Nagel and Brown (2003), communication is considered to be an effective approach in providing ways to prevent or minimize stress. They explain that if teachers are 'stressed out' they will transmit it to students. Eventually it will be a cycle

that will be negatively reflected on classroom dynamics, a condition that will be negatively reflected on teachers' job satisfaction.

Creating a Professional Learning Community

According to Harris (2002), when school personnel work collaboratively and invest their time and effort in taking risk, relating, reflecting, and mentoring, the school becomes a learning community for teachers, leaders, and students. The term 'professional learning community' is about "the establishment of a school wide culture of personal connections, trust, and communication, involved in teacher empowerment" (p. 64). Harris (2002) adds that the basic building block for creating a professional learning community is 'building capacity' among teachers by providing them with opportunities to learn how to do things together in 'partnership rather than in competition'. According to Graham (2001), one must act as a lifelong learner in order to develop as an effective professional and help colleagues do the same, and this needs training in interpersonal skills (Short and Rinehart, 1993).

In a study done by Fernandez and Stevenson (2001), findings show a high correlation between the amount of professional development through workshops and in-service training that teachers engage in, and teachers' feeling of competence. It has strong positive effects on teachers' self-perceptions, energy, enthusiasm, and satisfaction (Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004). They recommend that professional development should be a key factor at the core of leadership training programs since they consider it an 'agency of motivation, empowerment, and satisfaction' (p. 71).

Munthe (2003) adds in the same light that teachers' collaboration in professional development set the grounds for critical discussions, reflection, and continuous learning among teachers which leads to more professional certainty and work meaningfulness lowering the level of role ambiguity considered as a predictor of teacher burnout. Moreover, the importance of professional development in enhancing teacher satisfaction and retention was advocated by the UK government White Paper *Schools achieving Success* / DfES, 2001 (cited in Rhodes, Nevill, & Allan, 2004).

In another study conducted by Andrews and Lewis (2002) on implementing an innovative change process called IDEAS in a secondary school, findings showed that shared understanding that is developed through professional collective learning had a positive impact on teachers' effectiveness in the classroom and a stress level reduction effect.

Ma & Macmillan (1999) point out that because job satisfaction can be a sign of a teacher's commitment or disconnectedness to the school, principals should come to realize the importance of professional competency as a factor that influences teachers' satisfaction. Teachers consider themselves competent when they are given the opportunity to participate in important decisions and carry them out. According to Bass (2000), teachers' sense of professional competency is derived through an empowering leadership style that focuses on teachers' sense of self-worth.

Autonomy

Pearson & Moomaw (2005) found autonomy to be the common link between teacher motivation, job satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. If teachers are

to view their job as a true profession and stay committed to it, they must have the freedom or autonomy as other professionals to operate in their own classrooms since they know their students' needs best. They report a 1997 study by the National Center for Education Statistics that demonstrated how the degree of autonomy perceived by teachers is indicative of their job satisfaction, adding that constraints on autonomy proved to cause 'tension, frustration, and anxiety' among teachers. Wang (2005) defines autonomy as the ability to control daily schedules and to have the freedom to make certain decisions on curriculum, textbooks, and instructional planning. According to Jung's 'Feeling of Control Approach' (1978), if people feel in control of the situation, they are motivated to work. Allowing teachers greater 'autonomy' in decision-making and allowing them to use their knowledge and expertise motivates them to develop more effective teaching strategies (Laud, 1998). Davis and Wilson (2000) add that the more teachers see that they have a choice in managing their work the more intrinsically motivated they will be to increase their efforts. To insure autonomy, principals have to open a way for critique so teachers would be able to communicate their ideas and receive the support and the resources needed to realize their goals. Reitzug (1994) explains that school principals can lead without violating the rights and professionalism of those whom they work with. To realize this, a leader's empowering behavior must be based on 'support, facilitation, and possibility'. He explains that support is described as creating a supporting environment for critique. Teachers have to feel free to speak and give their opinion. But support has to be backed with facilitation, a proactive way of stimulating critique. The principal asks questions, requires justification of practice, directs attention to certain issues, and works on staff development. Then, principals have to make it possible for teachers to act on

their critique by providing resources otherwise the autonomy would be just rhetoric if the means are not made available.

In conclusion, the aim of this literature review was to show the relation between empowering teachers and job satisfaction. The literature supports the idea that schools should move beyond bureaucratic systems and acknowledge teachers' capabilities and support them. To do so, more research on investing in teachers and leaders is necessary since it is the most solid guarantee for reform. School leaders must embrace leadership styles that foster human relations, and graduate programs must move beyond the training of managers, to the preparation of empowering leaders who would create a work climate that enhances teachers' satisfaction and sense of self-worth, consequently, strengthening their commitment to the profession.

Chapter Three

Methodology

The main purpose of this study was to provide field-based examples of an empowering leadership style and its effect on teachers. The study was based on a qualitative framework backed by a quantitative survey in order to gain more insight and make use of the strengths found in both methodologies. Robson (1993) emphasizes the 'virtues of multi-methods enquiry' since all methods have their strengths and weaknesses; 'therefore, it's best to match the strengths of one to the weaknesses of another, and vice versa' (p. 304).

The semi-structured interviews addressing different sources bring the researcher closer to the situation under study, allow modification while data is being collected, and facilitate communication and interaction in a natural setting (Sarantakos, 1993; Gay, 1996; and Robson, 1993). The importance of studying things in their natural setting is highly emphasized by Denzin and Lincoln (2000) since it allows qualitative researchers to interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings individuals bring to them.

On the other hand, the use of the questionnaire survey allows the researcher to study a larger sample representing the whole teacher population at the school. This is considered by Sarantakos (1993) as the most important quality of quantitative research since the findings it produces reflect the attributes of the whole population.

Robson (1993) explains that there is asset in multi-method approaches which produce both quantitative and qualitative data, but the use of qualitative data and its analysis need to be thorough and unbiased. Reitzug (1994) goes further to argue that reliability and validity are inappropriate standards in qualitative research and that

trustworthiness is 'the relevant standard of rigor'; therefore, trustworthiness of enquiry based on qualitative data was established in the present study by triangulation of data sources; data collected from teachers were compared to data collected from principals; and data collected from teachers and principals were compared to data collected from coordinators. Moreover, data collected from individual teachers were compared to data collected from the whole teacher population by a questionnaire survey.

Participants

Subjects for this study are twelve teachers from grade one through grade 12, as well as the principals of the elementary, middle, and secondary divisions and two subject coordinators (Heads of the English and Social Sciences departments) in a private school in Beirut Lebanon. The twelve teachers were chosen as follows: four teachers from the elementary, four teachers from the intermediate, and four teachers from the secondary. Moreover a questionnaire was distributed on all teachers of the above mentioned school. A sample of 154 teachers out of 168 responded to the questionnaire. The sample is limited to this group in order to acquire a holistic, in-depth understanding of the work techniques and the factors to be studied.

Description of the instrument

1- The Empowerment and Satisfaction Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in this qualitative study was developed by combining items from two different tests. The first is *The Empowerment Inventory* (1993) developed by K. W. Thomas & W. G. Tymon, which is one of the most widely used measures of employee empowerment. The authors requested 'If the Empowerment Inventory gets used in a dissertation study, it is preferable not to reproduce the entire set of 24

questionnaire items'. Upon their request eight items were used and eight other items were added by the researcher. As such, it was equally divided into four items for each of the four feelings of empowerment being meaningfulness (items 4-10-14-16), competence (items 2-8-23-24), impact (items 1-11-19-25), and choice (items 5-7-13-21); The other test was *The Job Satisfaction Survey* (1994) developed by P.E. Spector and used to measure job satisfaction. It originally consisted of 36 items from which 10 items (3-6-9-12-15-17-18-20-22-26) relating to satisfaction with coworkers, supervision, communication, and operating conditions were selected to be added to the empowerment items. The outcome was an *empowerment and satisfaction questionnaire* consisting of 26 items designed to measure feelings about one's job as it pertains to empowerment. All items are in the form of statements describing the feelings of empowerment and satisfaction one might have about his or her job (refer to Appendix B).

2- Interviews

Three different sets of *open-ended questions* (addressing teachers, principals, and coordinators) served as a guide during the interviews (refer to Appendix C). Interviews were tape recorded and subsequently transcribed. The interviews averaged ten minutes in length and were done in one-on-one sessions. It is important to mention that the anonymity of the school and participants was protected.

Design and procedures

Data collection was in the form of a *questionnaire* for teachers, *interviews* with the principles and subject coordinators, in addition to interviews with teachers from all the elementary, intermediate, and secondary divisions, in order to guarantee the validity and reliability of data. To insure trustworthiness, data collected from teachers were

compared with data collected from principals and coordinators; also data collected from individual teachers were compared with data collected from other teachers.

To conduct this study, a letter to the Principal of each division, explaining the importance and purpose of the study was presented along with an advanced thank-you-note for facilitating the research process. It formally asked their permission to interview them, their teachers, and coordinators as well as to distribute the questionnaire to all teachers. The principals were informed that they could have access to the study results if interested. They were also assured of the anonymity of the school and participants.

Many visits to the school were made to set appointment dates with the principals, teachers, and coordinators. The principals showed great cooperation in setting an interview schedule insuring that teachers can be available and informing teachers of the time and place of the interview. The interviews were recorded after taking the permission of all the interviewees, and they all lasted between 10 to 12 minutes. Interviews took place in the offices and the teachers' lounges.

The questionnaire was distributed by the principals. A letter to the teachers was attached to the questionnaire giving them instructions and asking them to respond to all items as well as an assurance of confidentiality to enhance honest replies. The questionnaires were collected at the secretary desk where teachers were asked to leave them. It is important to mention that collecting the questionnaires was the most challenging since not all teachers were cooperative in that respect. This demanded going many times to the school. Being the case, out of 168 teachers, only 154 responded.

After collecting the responses and the averages, the researcher computed the correlation among the variables using teacher satisfaction as a dependent variable and

teacher empowerment as an independent variable to address the research question and hypothesis.

Data analysis methods

The interviews were recorded, and the tapes were transcribed. A list of categories was developed from the initial research questions. Transcripts were analyzed and coded. Themes and topics that represent labeled categories were sorted and synthesized. Consequently, conclusions were drawn and reviewed on ongoing bases as the study progressed.

The analysis of data gathered by questionnaire was conducted using the statistical software (SPSS) where descriptive statistics, means and standard deviations were computed for the variables in the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was computed to answer the research question of the study.

To insure the validity, reliability, and trustworthiness of the data collected, triangulation of data sources, methods, and data collection strategies was done in order to have more confidence in the insight to be gained. Robson (1993) states, "Triangulation is an indispensable tool in real world enquiry. It is particularly valuable in the analysis of qualitative data where the trustworthiness of the data is always a worry and provides a means of testing one source of information against other sources" (p. 383). Therefore, the principals of each school division, twelve teachers, and two subject coordinators were interviewed to detect inconsistencies; and in case the three sources gave same messages, they would cross-validate each other. The transcripts were also analyzed in the light of the data collected by a questionnaire survey.

This chapter discusses the participants and the design of the research. It outlines the research instruments used and the measures taken to ensure trustworthiness as well as reliability and validity of the study. The chapter also explains the procedures used to collect data and how data was analyzed. The following chapter includes the results of the analyzed data collected through different sources and by different methods.

Chapter Four

Results

The school under study is one of the prominent schools in Lebanon that is known to foster the spirit of collective work and encourages collaboration and shared decision making on all its levels. After interviewing 12 teachers from the elementary, middle, and secondary divisions, the principals of each school division, and two subject coordinators (head of English department and head of the Social Studies Department), results showed how the leadership style in the school operates and its effect on teachers' level of satisfaction. Three sets of open-ended interview questions were prepared. They differed for teachers, principals, and coordinators respectively (see Appendix C).

Importance of job satisfaction

It was made very clear by teachers that what makes them remain at that particular school least to say the profession goes beyond monetary rewards. It is their satisfaction with the work environment, collegial relations, relaxed and trusting atmosphere, as well as the chance for professional advancement and improvement that constitutes their major source of satisfaction with their jobs. One intermediate teacher said:

This school is home to me, I consider myself lucky to work at this school. Most of the time we are overloaded with work, but it's worth it especially when we get to the goals we have in mind and feel supported.

Another teacher who has been in the teaching profession for 19 years claimed that it's only at this school that she was able to teach for 13 years nonstop and never thought of leaving, while she has had changed three schools at the beginning of her career life. When asked about the reason, she simply said, 'The way things work here makes me feel

committed. It's a mix of factors starting with the relaxed atmosphere, the respect we get, and the involvement'. This comes in agreement with the literature that proves that the importance of job satisfaction lies in the fact that it predicts teacher retention and affects teacher commitment.

In congruence with the human relations theory that proved empirically that teacher morale and productivity are raised by humanistic leadership practices, an elementary teacher states:

Teaching doesn't always seem rewarding, but it's the harmony among the staff that helps us keep going. We actually work harder when we feel that we're appreciated and valued by the administration.

On the same point, a secondary teacher adds:

The pay check is important, but not as important as being appreciated by your colleagues and your principal. You feel like you can give more if you are acknowledged.

A satisfied teacher implies positive classroom climate and improved learning. The intermediate principal states, 'If the ultimate goal is student's learning, we must make sure of the well being of the mediator'. The elementary principal explains that she was a teacher once and this would always be part of what she's become. She states, 'I always make sure that everyone is supported and acknowledged'.

Both subject coordinators (heads of departments) are also teachers, and they were giving their opinion from both perspectives. As the English head of department puts it:

It is being satisfied with the conditions at this school that makes me go on for eight years now. I consider myself lucky to be in such a positive atmosphere. There are no barriers among us. I'm not looked at as a supervisor, we all make a team. Even when I observe, my job is

not to evaluate, it's the principal's job. I'm there to share ideas and expertise.

Existence of an open-door policy

Teachers have to feel welcome to share their concerns with the principal. The open-door policy helps them feel at ease in their relation with the principal. It communicates respect to teachers' concerns and ideas and teachers feel valued. One elementary teacher said, 'We can go to the principal to discuss any topic and communicate any complaint'. Another teacher added, 'It is good to be heard and given the freedom to express your concerns, sometimes the problem cannot wait'. The intermediate principal said, 'I am available for my teachers and I'm always around, if I'm not, my door is always open and teachers know that I'm on their side'. The secondary principal pointed out, 'Teachers test the level of trust they can have with their principal, once it's found things work much more smoothly'. Establishing relaxed and safe grounds among teachers and their principal is essential for effective work dynamics. This involves a high degree of trust between teachers and administrators that goes both ways; otherwise, the open door policy is just rhetoric. To do this the intermediate principal simply claimed, 'I care and I keep cheerful. They know that for me there is always a solution that we can reach together, so they have trust in coming to me to discuss any issue that might arise'. The secondary principal explains the importance of trusting teachers' abilities and treating them as professionals. He explained, 'Teachers are recruited according to high credentials and experience, therefore they are treated as colleagues and professional people, not as subordinates'. The elementary principal said:

Trust is essential. We will not have a well functioning organization if there is no trust. It is established by consistency. I'm absolutely

predictable in the way that I behave. I try to be honest, fair, and just. I show value in every human being regardless of their status and through that consistency of building a belief system you do get trust.

A secondary teacher expressed her appreciation saying: 'We are never put on the defensive'. Another teacher stated, 'We don't feel that we're on opposite sides; it's more like team work. If we can give the right reasons for doing something, he supports it'. An elementary teacher simply said, 'Our principal doesn't talk down from a higher level'.

All principals mentioned the fact that they move around most of the day. This helps them get more in touch with teachers and students. The elementary principal said 'I stop and ask questions, sit for few minutes in classrooms, and direct attention to things'. To the intermediate and secondary principals, it is an opportunity for informal conversations with teachers and students. One teacher mentions the principal's walks saying, 'She is everywhere and really knows everything that's happening'. Teachers didn't seem to be bothered by the principal's frequent short visits. Most took it as a sign of interest.

Moreover, an open door policy makes communication easier. An intermediate teacher explained, 'It facilitates communication with the principals. We keep on changing methods, fixing techniques, and evaluating performance. Teachers get constant and fast feedback'.

Establishing effective communication

Being aware of problems faced by teachers shows the degree of an administrator's involvement, care, and availability for the staff. In fact all interviewees believed that one way of maintaining closeness and reaching everyone is effective communication since it plays a role in the development of teachers. According to the literature, effective

communication among teachers and between teachers and administrators is a key to working harmoniously and creating an atmosphere conducive to teaching and learning on all levels (Rhinehart & Short, 1994; Blase & Blase, 1999). All interviewees agreed with the literature stating, 'Effective communication involves good listening skills'. Most teachers said, 'There is nothing more rewarding than being heard'. The secondary principal explains:

Most of the feedback we receive from teachers is oral. I will alienate teachers if I'm a bad listener. I try to acknowledge their concerns and get back to them as soon as possible.

According to Snowden and Gorton (2002), schools that have an empowering leadership style 'encounter frequent conflicts although minor' because as more people participate in making decisions, more opinions are given. They also add that disruptive conflicts lessen as empowerment increases because the more the staff is involved in decision making the more they tend to overlook minor conflicts. A secondary teacher claimed, 'We have lots to do during a school day, we don't have time to dwell on trivial issues and with time you learn to compromise'. An intermediate teacher talked about the importance of having a sense of humor, 'Humor helps lessen the tension in the other person. It solves a problem and helps me get the message through'.

Since team work is the base of all functions at the school, people need to reach each other on constant bases; otherwise, work is hindered and tension could arise when some team members are not getting together or communicating enough. An intermediate teacher pointed to the importance of technology in making everyone accessible and in accelerating the communication process and insuring the reception of the message especially that everything works on team bases. He said, 'Email made communication

much more effective in terms of response pace and time saving'. An intermediate teacher expresses her delight with the fact it's easier to reach others since no one is sitting at his desk all the time. Another says, 'It was like a hide and seek game, since everyone is on the run. Now there is no way of not getting a reply and work does get done'.

Existence of shared leadership

Taking part in discussing major issues with the administrators and having a voice in all decisions taken creates a sense of partnership and belonging. According to Thomas & Tymon (1994), teachers develop a sense of ownership for any plan, project or curriculum, when it's meaningful to them and when they feel that they had a choice in it. Only then there will be a guarantee that it will be put into use. An intermediate teacher proudly said, 'Nothing is preset before our consent'. Another teacher adds, 'We discuss everything in teams or committees and then decisions are made'. A secondary teacher pinpointed:

My goal is not to be a leader; what's important to me is being treated as a competent person who knows what's best for the students. It gives me a sense that my expertise and knowledge are acknowledged.

Another teacher said, 'Taking a decision is a responsibility. If you're given part in making this decision, it means you're an important member'. An intermediate teacher mentioned how draining teaching can be and that one of the things that lifts her spirit is being on a committee where she is heard and treated as an expert whose opinion matters. Another teacher explains, 'When working with a team to come up with decisions, I feel I'm a part of a team. It motivates you to work. It's good to feel that what you think matters'. Teachers' belief that any decision is more meaningful when they are part of it

was congruent with the literature. The intermediate principal explained that teacher involvement in decision making is a motivator by itself. 'They come to respect the decisions more and adopt them when they're given a choice'. He stressed on the importance of understanding authority or power as being a great responsibility and not just a privilege. 'It is not a battle for power. It's more a shared responsibility among team members all working for the best interest of the students'. On this point, the secondary principal drew the attention to the democratic nature of the school by mentioning the voice given not only to teachers but even to parents and students through the Parent Involvement Committee and the student counsels. He said, 'When you empower, you give people more responsibility and in the process everyone feels responsible to carry out the decisions taken by the group'. This is explained by the intermediate principal as sharing the problem-solving responsibility, where it's shifted from the principal to the teachers and sometimes teachers shift it to students giving them the responsibility to solve problems. He shares one experience where teachers were given the responsibility to solve the problem of hallway noise, but then these teachers saw that it was better to involve the students since it's directly related to them. Shifting the decision to the people directly involved in the issue gave positive results.

All three principals mentioned that all decisions at school are taken in coordination with specific task committees of teachers where leadership rotates periodically among all members. In these committees, teachers work together in teams. These committees are: The curriculum committee, the character education committee, the team building committee, the admission committee, the faculty meeting committee, the interest groups committee, the parent involvement committee, the project approach

committee, the scope and sequence committee, and the school improvement team. The elementary principal describes these committees as 'a strong decision making body'. She explains that the leaders of the committees, who are teachers, hold a Team Leaders Meeting once a month, each representing its team and they tackle a lot of problems. Then, they sit with the principal and reach a final decision. An intermediate teacher said, 'It is not about who imposes a decision. It's more about what's best for the students'. She adds, 'I believe through all the meetings that we have, there's an opportunity for teachers to impact the school'. A secondary teacher stated, 'No one is fighting for a position or trying to prove who's the boss. There is work to be done and the best way is to consult with each other'. An elementary teacher said, 'We all need each others' expertise'. The intermediate principal pointed to the shallowness in understanding shared leadership as a war over power. He said:

With empowerment comes the advantage of collaboration and learning, the feeling of responsibility and commitment, as well as a goal congruence with school objectives and goals.

The secondary principal explained shared leadership saying:

Teachers come to understand that relinquishing solo power and sharing it serves one purpose, that is professional growth, students learning, and school improvement.

A secondary teacher said, 'It is my right to take part in decisions concerning my students learning'. Another rhetorically asked, 'Who would know better than me about my student's needs'? An intermediate teacher jokingly said, 'I wouldn't be very pleased to be told what to do because I have to. I don't deal this way with my students either'. Another

teacher added, 'I might not be filling an administrative position, but this doesn't mean that I have limited knowledge or experience'.

On involvement in school policies, the principals explained that policies cut across divisions and that even they as principals don't have a say in them as the Head Master of the school. The intermediate principal offered, 'The Head Master is trying to build a more collaborative system, trying to get more teachers to serve on policy committees'. But when teachers were asked about their involvement in school policies, none showed much interest in the subject, 'There is nothing major that we want to fight over'. One teacher added, 'There is the school improvement team. Anyone can submit suggestions to that committee'. In agreement with that statement comes another teacher's optimistic addition, 'There are minute things that we are working on and eventually they will change'. Those two teachers showed confidence in both their influence as teachers as well as their trust in the administration. Both comments were given with a calm and stress free tone.

Importance of autonomy

According to Pearson & Moomaw (2005), autonomy was considered the common link between teacher motivation, job satisfaction, empowerment, and professionalism. Here the intermediate principal said, 'It has to be agreed on, that teachers are professionals. On that base they would be given the freedom to choose the best techniques, methods, and so on'. The secondary principal said, 'They don't need to be doing the same thing. What's important is that teachers justify and explain what they're doing'. The elementary principal stated:

There is a lot of autonomy, let's say within clear boundaries.

We have a curriculum which is standards driven, so we know

what we have to teach. The freedom comes in the how. You can't go in and do a bad job. You have to teach within clear perimeters'.

The elementary principal's talk about 'clear boundaries' draws the attention to the importance of role clarity talked about in the literature. A secondary teacher said, 'Expectations are always made very clear for us. As teachers we have clear professional responsibilities'. All interviewed teachers met on one point, the work objectives are well defined. The method is up to them, but at the end teachers, teaching the same subject at the same grade level, have to meet the same goals. When asked about who sets the work objectives, all interviewees gave the same answer: Teachers work with their principal in committees to set or review the curriculum, scope and sequence, objectives, and skills at the end of each year in preparation for the next academic year. They also hold grade level meetings once a cycle to discuss any issue related to the curriculum, objectives, teaching strategies, and students' learning. An elementary teacher proudly said, 'We have a say in everything we do'. Another added, 'Being forced to come up with a uniform lesson plan for all sections doesn't seem logical; it limits teachers' creativity and overlooks differences in students' needs. What might work in my class might not work in another'. An intermediate teacher said, 'I have to be trusted with my students'. Another stated, 'With autonomy comes a variety of methods and ideas that could be shared'. A secondary teacher added, 'Our principal encourages us to be creative as long as we can prove that a certain method works. We are free to teach the way we feel comfortable teaching'. When asked about the level of autonomy given to teachers, both subject coordinators' answers came to confirm what was said by the teachers and principals. The English coordinator pinpointed, 'I am not there to impose. If I do, I would be killing teachers' initiative'. I'm

a teacher too, so we coordinate as teachers and discuss students' learning among us as colleagues and benefit from each other's expertise. I work as a team leader just making sure things get done on time and objectives are met'. The Social Studies coordinator added, 'It's important to respect teachers' professional freedom. As a teacher myself, I want to have the say or the choice in choosing instructional methods as long as I can prove their feasibility'.

Collegial Relationships (collaboration and trust)

With empowerment comes team work and collaborative work with all what it involves in terms of collegiality and trust among staff members. Collegiality is essential in teachers' work at the school. They work in teams on major issues. It helps them collaborate efforts for a better and richer outcome. An intermediate teacher said, 'We always discuss and share methods and techniques with each other'. Another said, 'It is more fun to work as a team even if we might not agree on everything, but we always get somewhere'. An elementary teacher explained, 'When you share an idea with a colleague it evolves and becomes a better idea'. A new teacher added, 'It's always more reassuring for me to be part of a group. Many times I rely on my colleagues for assistance'. Another teacher stated, 'We can have a difference in opinion and still respect each other'. Another teacher added, 'I don't see myself working alone. In the process of working together we become friends. It makes the work place more appealing'. A secondary teacher offered, 'Anyone is welcome to try my strategies'. Feeling at ease with colleagues affects the quality of work. In case of being a novice or an experienced teacher, it is essential to work in harmony with others.

According to the literature, empowering teachers may result in a minimal level of conflict due to differences in views, expertise, and practices (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). Therefore it is essential to train teachers in group dynamics in order to minimize stress (Pearson & Moomaw, 2005). The elementary principal says:

We are people. Wherever you have people you have to have conflict, but we aim for a way of settling those conflicts in a respectful way. We actually have a professional code called The Covenant. We made it together as a group development for teachers and it's all about how we work and deal together. It's very powerful. (See Appendix D).

An elementary teacher agreed saying:

Of course you don't get along with everybody. There's always a time where tension may occur and that will hinder your performance because you'd dwell on the situation. We also have the covenant that sets things straight and works as prevention.

The secondary principal said, 'Effective communication is essential for maintaining a relaxed atmosphere and healthy collegial relations. Tension and stress burns you out'. A secondary teacher stated:

We're not in a profession where we just administer paper work. Our profession is all about human contact and communication. Personally if I'm stressed out on that level, I can't function or be myself.

It is also important for novice teachers to feel that they're among friends and to find help when needed (Boreen & Niday, 2002). A new teacher said, 'I feel accepted by others at school. We constantly collaborate throughout the day'.

Even in the absence of a mentoring program, experienced teachers lend a helping hand. A new elementary teacher said, 'the principal gives a more global view. My

colleagues guided me at the beginning and we always coordinate'. An old timer in elementary explained, 'It is better done as a team. It's the responsibility of the team to show the new teachers what to do'. Another new teacher in intermediate added, 'As a new teacher, everybody was so helpful, willing to assist in any way possible. I had a very nice introduction'. A secondary teacher explained how the nature of work at the school necessitates team work and therefore one never works in isolation being old or new. A secondary part timer had a different view, 'It is not easy for old timers to find time to guide you especially when you are a single specialist and working on part time bases. The atmosphere in the department is very welcoming, but they can't be available all the time. Usually I seek the assistance of the principal or his assistant'. When asked about the process of integrating new teachers, the elementary principal explained:

I find this a challenge more than anything else. It's only because I get so busy that I sometimes forget. I constantly remind myself that they need guidance. Part of working it out is through colleagues. Every new teacher joins an already existent group by grade level. Those grade level teachers are a great help. The harder ones are the single specialists like music teachers, so you have to be very careful because they are alone. So I try to pay attention.

The intermediate principal also mentioned the same concerns and added an additional one, 'Grade level teachers become mentors for the new ones, but those individuals are a bit of a problem because some don't have that already thorough nucleus and they can't be available all the time'. The secondary principal had a different problem, a big part of the secondary teachers are part timers giving specific courses. These teachers change a lot and are single specialists. Therefore, he relies on an assistant to keep things on track, 'I have a new assistant principal for the first time. I've given him the assignment. His job is

to make sure every one is oriented, supported, and feels good about joining us'. Still in general there wasn't much complaining from the teachers on the issue. They seemed satisfied with their colleagues' cooperation.

Creating a professional learning community

The school provides teachers with various learning opportunities. Teachers constantly attend workshops and are also required to present workshops to other schools. This demands that they do lots of readings to come up with the material. Teachers mentioned that twice a year, one week before school starts and one week after school ends, they prepare and present workshops. They also hold a conference, called Building Knowledge Together, where teachers from other schools are invited to attend workshops presented by the school teachers. In addition, there are opportunities to go to universities or even travel to attend workshops. The coordinators talked about the enthusiasm most teachers show in participating in those workshops. The English coordinator states, 'If they weren't sent by the school, many ask for a leave to attend workshops on their own expenses. We encourage such initiatives and provide substitute teachers during the period of their leave'. One teacher said, 'You feel more competent after training. There are lots of new ideas that you can apply in the classroom'.

Most interviewees also mentioned the Near East and South Asia Conference (NESA), which was held in Bangkok this year, as an example of professional development involved in the process of empowering teachers and the high motivational benefit it creates. Usually, after presenting their workshops at school, the best four are selected to be sent with full expenses paid to present their work in NESA. The enthusiasm about participating in that conference was clear in teachers' responses. One

teacher said, 'Being chosen among the best four is a great reward. Your work is acknowledged and this is the biggest motivation'. Another added, 'When I was chosen a couple of years ago I felt so good, it was the nicest experience for me as a teacher. It's so motivating and beneficial at the same time. We usually work really hard to prepare for the workshop and in the process we benefit a lot'. Another teacher pointed out, 'We're an active part of students' learning and this gives the message that we have a lot to give. Nothing is more satisfying than being acknowledged for your knowledge'.

In the light of professional development, all teachers mentioned the voluntary Book Reading Club where they can meet at a coffee shop or sometimes in someone's house and discuss a book they have read and share the information with others. Usually they discuss it with others during faculty meetings where everybody in the division gets together twice a month. An elementary teacher explained, 'During faculty meetings, we work on professional growth topics. Like if we have new ideas or readings that we like to share with others'. A secondary teacher stated, 'In faculty meetings you get to benefit from each other and get new ideas. As teachers we listen to each others' concerns. It's a time we have to find solutions'. An intermediate teacher added, 'You grow as a teacher with each opportunity for faculty to come together and share ideas or views'.

All principals explained that faculty meetings constitute a huge menu of topics like teaching strategies, curriculum, student learning, teachers' concerns, as well as business items that deal with everyday issues of running a school and classroom that they have to coordinate among each other. The elementary principal claimed, 'We focus a lot on staff development and best practices'. The Social Studies coordinator considers faculty meetings as 'a great opportunity to share ideas, readings, and expertise'.

Another opportunity for professional learning is done in the form of staff development meetings that most interviewees mentioned. In these meetings they have early release afternoons. So that teachers don't have to stay after school to attend the meetings. One principal simply said, 'It is simply a meeting where we work on preparing ourselves to teach better. It's not about decisions, it's all about discussing techniques and issues that pertain to students' learning'.

Teachers are also required to read two books during the summer vacation. These books are then discussed in a general meeting for the whole school faculty when school starts.

The principals also mentioned the importance of constantly observing teachers in the classroom since it allows them to work on improving their teaching. The principals explained that it's done constantly. Principals sit for 15 minutes, take notes, then send a note with what they saw, ask teachers to come by to discuss things, and coach when needed. The elementary principal explains that they observe the application of new strategies, and teachers know beforehand what is being observed. An elementary teacher said, 'I used to feel nervous about the principal's presence, with time I started feeling more comfortable. She never criticizes, but talks on a personal level'. An intermediate teacher agreed saying, 'Our principal never talks down from a higher level and is very enthusiastic and always starts by saying *consider this* or *what do you think if*'. Another teacher pointed out, 'He is there for a purpose and it's the way he communicates his views, that makes me feel comfortable in his presence, but it must be clear that it's not always our performance that is observed. The principal comes in mostly to see the feasibility of new strategies and techniques'. A secondary teacher confidently said, 'I

sometimes invite the head of the English department or the principal to come and observe in my class when we don't agree on a certain thing. The best way is to see how things work on the ground'.

Results from the questionnaire

Data gathered from the questionnaire was analyzed using the SPSS program. The means and standard deviations were calculated for the variables teacher empowerment and job satisfaction.

*Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the dependent and independent variables ($M=4.66$, $M=4.4$, $SD=.3$, $SD=.23$) respectively. The mean scores indicate a high degree of empowerment and satisfaction. The results summarized in table 1 indicate that teachers were highly empowered and experienced a high degree of job satisfaction.

Table 1
Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Empowerment & Job Satisfaction

Variable	M	SD	N
Teacher Empowerment	4.6684	.3004	154
Job Satisfaction	4.4084	.2332	154

* Results summarized in table 2 indicate ($r = .669$, $p < .01$). That is, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Test revealed that there is a significant moderate positive correlation between teacher empowerment and job satisfaction.

Table 2
Correlations between the influence variable teacher Empowerment and Job satisfaction

Pearson Correlation	Teacher Empowerment	Job satisfaction
Teacher Empowerment	1.000	.669**
Job satisfaction	.669**	1.000

** correlation is significant at the 0.01 level

The results from the questionnaire reveal a significant correlation between the two variables indicating that teacher empowerment does have an effect on job satisfaction. The results obtained from the survey questionnaire come to support the results that originated from the interviews.

This chapter provided a narrative report of the findings and interpretations deducted on the light of the data collected throughout the study. The following chapter will include the researcher's discussion of the results and the limitations of the study in addition to the implications for future research.

Chapter Five

Discussion

The information gathered from the interviews and the questionnaire conforms to the readings. The teachers' enthusiasm for their work and their sense of ownership for any decision made stems from being empowered as teachers. The fact that the teachers are involved in major decisions is reflected on their morale as teachers and consequently on their commitment. Teachers are allowed great autonomy to use their knowledge and expertise in developing more effective teaching strategies. They feel in control of the situation. Therefore, they view their work as meaningful.

Findings showed that teachers' commitment to the profession is explained by their satisfaction with the work environment, collegial relations, relaxed and trusting atmosphere, as well as the chance for professional development. This comes in agreement with the literature that proves a relation between job satisfaction and teacher retention. There is also an agreement with the human relations theory that calls for humanistic leadership practices found to enhance teacher morale and productivity (Razik & Swanson, 2001).

The existence of an open-door policy proved to bridge the gap that exists in traditional top-down leadership styles between administrators and teachers. The fact that the principals are always around and in contact with their surrounding puts them in the middle of their context, making them aware of all what's happening. At the same time, teachers also expressed their satisfaction with the fact that it helps make communication easier with the principal and guarantees a fast feedback. Such accessibility helps enhance effective work dynamics. It encourages teachers to visit their principals on regular basis

and encourages principals to walk freely into teachers' classrooms, without any apprehension from teachers.

Effective communication among staff and between teachers and administrators is given high importance. Good communication is well maintained and its importance upheld. Trust is by all defined as a major element for reaching effective communication. It is established by showing value in every human being and building a belief system through consistency (White, 1992; Reitzug, 1994). Administrators' involvement, care, and availability for the staff is done through an open-door policy as well as emailing in order to facilitate communication and help maintain closeness. This was clearly voiced by teachers in expressing their concern for being heard. Moreover, since teamwork is the base of all functions at school, it is made possible for people to reach each other constantly though an effective emailing system established to accelerate the communication process and reduce conflict. According to the literature, maintaining effective communication is key to working harmoniously and creating satisfying work conditions conducive to better teaching.

Findings also showed that teachers are autonomous in choosing their teaching techniques and this has given them a great sense of efficacy. Their participation on committees helped open up communication among themselves and their administrators as well as faculty from other divisions. Teachers are satisfied with the amount of input they have in curriculum decisions. They have a sense of ownership over their instructional practices and put high value on having a choice. Reitzug (1994) argues that the development of teacher proof materials deprives teachers from the opportunity to use their professional knowledge and experience by prescribing a teaching behavior and

instructional content and methods. Teachers associated their participation in curriculum committees and in determining instructional methods and techniques with a greater sense of self esteem and professionalism. The spirit of war for power proved to be absent. Work is considered a shared responsibility where involvement adds to their motivation. Moreover, increased opportunities for shared decision-making proved to increase self-esteem by enabling teachers to discuss and carry out their views. Teachers also have a strong feeling of belonging to the organization and express a sense of school ownership.

According to the literature, empowering teachers involves shifting the problem-solving responsibility to involve teachers. This approach is followed at the school where it is seen to place the locus of responsibility for developing solutions and resolving conflicts upon those involved in them rather than imposing principal-developed solutions upon problems.

Findings showed that trust is the base for the healthy relations among teachers as colleagues and between teachers and their administrators. It helps them work in harmony and therefore, benefit from each other's knowledge and expertise. Communicating trust proved essential to create a supportive environment for taking initiative and putting one's knowledge into use. Blase (1990) argues that providing teachers with autonomy to make professional decisions, but then showing a lack of trust in their decisions and 'overturning' them when they do not agree with the leaders' viewpoint is disempowering. Starratt's (1991) explains under what he calls 'an ethics of caring' that it's important to trust and give autonomy, respecting the right of others to have their own opinions. This would encourage risk taking 'without fear of repercussions for unsuccessful attempts' (Reitzug, 1994).

Yet to be given the authority or autonomy in the classroom is to be granted a right to make decisions within limitations (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). According to most interviewees, teachers have to convince their principal of the feasibility of what they're working on, using research based arguments and practical knowledge.

According to the literature, professional autonomy carries with it the responsibility to enhance professional practices. This was highly seen in the type of professional development opportunities provided at school. Teachers are engaged in staff development and workshops, and they are also required to do their own readings and present workshops to others. Opportunities for professional development are widely provided. The school 'builds capacity' among teachers by providing them with opportunities to learn how to do things 'together in partnership'. This is supported by Reitzug (1994) who argues that principals must provide opportunities for learning to insure that teachers have 'additional frameworks of teaching' through the use of staff development opportunities and sharing professional readings.

It was clear that team work is at the base of all activities done at the school, and collegiality among staff is a major factor that adds to their effectiveness as a team. Sharing expertise through team work on committees and staff development opportunities served to build teacher confidence and professionalism and encourage self-improvement. Sharing ideas proved to reduce isolation and foster cooperation. Being the case, new teachers are never isolated. They are well integrated in the system. They get the orientation and constant help by the fact that they join an already existent group by grade level.

Stress was found to be diminished when collegiality, effective communication, autonomy, and an open-door policy were established. It is diminished by the fact that the principals are good mediators. Trust among staff members also contributes to lowering the level of stress. It creates a relaxed atmosphere and is reflected on teachers' performance in the classroom. Still, according to the literature, empowerment may result in a minimal level of conflict due to differences in views and practices. Therefore, involving teachers in putting guidelines for group development had a positive effect on facilitating smooth work dynamics.

Conclusion and implications

Consequently, it can be concluded that such conditions made it possible for teachers to be constantly learning and developing their skills through workshops, discussions, and reflections. Such opportunities seem to increase their feeling of competence and satisfaction. The sense of responsibility and ownership is enhanced at every level of the school especially at the bottom where students are served. Teachers have a feeling that their knowledge is valued and consequently they show dedication to the profession by choosing to remain in it.

There must be a move in educational management towards sharing the responsibility with the people doing the core work in order to guaranty their commitment to the organization and to any attempt for change and improvement since it influences teachers' perception of the meaningfulness of their work and consequently affects their sense of satisfaction, motivation, and self-efficacy.

Limitations of the study and recommendation for future research

This study stressed on teachers', principals', and coordinators' opinions concerning empowerment and its effect on teacher satisfaction in one school. Future research should be done with a larger sample encompassing more than just one school. Studying other examples where empowerment has positive effects on teacher satisfaction would help support the findings in this study. Therefore, it is important for future research to investigate such possibilities by studying empowerment at various schools.

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Appendix A

Letter to the principal

I am a graduate student at the Lebanese American University in the Masters of School Management program. In order to complete the final stage of this program, I am required to prepare a Masters Project that addresses an issue affecting the management of schools. The topic I selected is an analysis of the effect of an empowering leadership style on teacher job satisfaction.

There is increased recognition that a teacher's responsibilities go beyond classroom teaching to include class management, curriculum development, mentoring, research, and life long learning. There is also greater awareness that these additional duties can be a source of employment-related stress when teachers are not involved as competent professionals in the decision-making process. A long line of research is beginning to encourage educational management to seek the input of those doing the core work of delivering education to pupils because they believe it will strengthen teachers' sense of meaningfulness in what they're trying to achieve and in the process develop more commitment to the academic institution and its goals. Consequently, it is believed that when teachers feel like a valued member of the education profession it positively affects their sense of job satisfaction, motivation, and self-efficacy.

Knowing that your school is one of the prominent schools in Lebanon that involves teachers in shared decision-making and encourages team work and collaboration, I would like to request your permission and cooperation in allowing me to collect data from yourself and your teaching staff through confidential interviews and questionnaires. I would like to meet with staff members during or after school. This process should not take longer than 12 minutes in total per staff member. Once my project is complete and approved I am more than willing to share the results of my findings with you.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions or comments regarding my research. I look forward to speaking with you and arranging a convenient time for me to meet with you and your staff in the near future. Thank you for your support.

Sincerely,

Maya J. Tamim

Appendix B

Questionnaire

Effect of empowerment on teacher satisfaction

Questionnaire addressing school teachers

The aim of this study is to evaluate the effect of empowerment on teacher satisfaction. This survey is conducted by a student in the MA Education Program and is addressed to school teachers.

Your feedback is important for us in order to assess the relationship between empowerment and job satisfaction. It will take approximately 10 to 12 minutes to complete as was determined by a pilot trial.

Please fill in this questionnaire and place it in your supervisor's office/ secretary desk.

P.S.: Your feedback will be kept confidential.*

***Please do not skip any of the items. Although some of the statements appear to be similar, your answer to each of them is important.**

The following statements describe different feelings you might have about your job. For each statement please circle the number, from 1 to 5, that best describes how strongly you disagree or agree with that statement.

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1- My job provides me with an opportunity to advance professionally.	1	2	3	4	5
2- I am good at my job.	1	2	3	4	5
3- My efforts are fairly recognized.	1	2	3	4	5
4- I care about what I'm doing.	1	2	3	4	5
5- I do not have the freedom to make my own decisions.	1	2	3	4	5
6- We have a positive school climate.	1	2	3	4	5
7- I feel free to select different approaches in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
8- I am proficient at what I am doing.	1	2	3	4	5
9- I work with a supportive principal.	1	2	3	4	5
10- My work serves a valuable purpose.	1	2	3	4	5
11- I am accomplishing my objectives.	1	2	3	4	5
12- My work is demanding but enjoyable.	1	2	3	4	5
13- I am encouraged to develop new methods.	1	2	3	4	5
14- What I am trying to accomplish is meaningful to me.	1	2	3	4	5
15- There is a tense atmosphere at work.	1	2	3	4	5
16- The work I'm doing is important.	1	2	3	4	5
17- I would change my profession in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
18- The work of a teacher is pleasant.	1	2	3	4	5
19- I seek growth in my profession.	1	2	3	4	5
20- Working conditions at my school are comfortable.	1	2	3	4	5
21- My job provides me with the opportunity to use a variety of skills.	1	2	3	4	5
22- I feel a sense of pride in doing my work.	1	2	3	4	5
23- I am doing my work capably.	1	2	3	4	5
24- I consider myself competent.	1	2	3	4	5
25- I have a sense that things are moving along well.	1	2	3	4	5
26- I do not feel that my work is appreciated.	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix C
Interview 1- addressing teachers

- 1-For how long have you been teaching?
- 2- How often do you meet with your supervisors?
- 3-Is there an open-door policy at this school?
- 4-How do you describe your relation with your principal?
- 5-What types of meetings are they? (faculty, class, staff development)
- 6-What do you discuss during those meetings?
- 7-Do you have a say in the curriculum and instructional content or method?
(What degree of autonomy are you given as it pertains to curriculum, planning, and instruction).
- 8-On average how many times were you sent to workshops?
- 9-Have you participated in planning for and presenting any workshops done at school?
- 10-How often do you engage in collaborative work with colleagues or superiors?
- 11-Have you worked with new teachers?
- 12-What do you think of assigning mentors to new teachers?
(tell me about your experience)
- 13- Do you want to have a say in major issues like school policies and budget?
- 14- Do you feel that you belong to the school?
- 15- How would you describe a motivating leader?
- 16- How would you describe your school climate? What in your opinion makes it so?
- 17- If you were to choose again would you choose teaching as a profession?

Interview 2
Addressing Coordinators

- 1-You are the coordinator for which subjects?
- 2-How long have you been filling this position?
- 3-How often do you meet with your teachers?
- 4-What do you discuss during those meetings?
- 5- What degree of autonomy do you believe teachers should be given as it pertains to curriculum, planning, and instruction?
- 6- How do you describe the degree of collaboration among teachers?
- 7-How is professional development maintained?
- 8-How often do you plan for workshops at school?
- 9-Do teachers get the chance to plan and present workshops to colleagues?
- 10-On average, how often are teachers sent to workshops or in-service-training?
- 11-How often do you observe teachers?
- 12-How are new teachers integrated in the system?
- 13-Do you attend class and faculty meetings?
- 14-What type of issues is discussed during these meetings?
- 15-How are decisions made?
- 16-How do you motivate teachers to work?
- 17- What in you opinion would frustrate a teacher most?

Interview 3
Addressing Principals

- 1-How often do you meet with your teachers?
- 2-How often are class and faculty meetings held?
- 3-What issues are discussed during those meetings?
- 4-How are decisions made?
- 5- What is the role of teams or committees?
- 6- What degree of autonomy do you believe teachers should be given as it pertains to curriculum, planning, and instruction?
- 7-To what extent do teachers have a say in major issues like school policies and budget?
- 8- Do teachers need to have a say in all these?
- 9- How is professional learning maintained at school?
- 10-Do teachers get the chance to prepare and present workshops to colleagues?
- 11-How often do you plan for In-service training?
- 12-Do you observe teachers after those sessions?
- 13- How do you make yourself accessible to teachers?
- 14-How would you describe the relations among teachers?
- 15-In case of conflict, when do you interfere?
- 16-How are new teachers integrated in the system?
- 17-What motivates teachers in your opinion?
- 18-What helps teachers develop trust in their administrator?

Appendix D

The Covenant

(The school's) adult environment is a friendly community where professional standards, common work goals and ethics are upheld.

Where.....

- Cooperation
 - Responsibility
 - Respect of differences
 - Honesty
 - Humor
 - Optimism
 - Trust and
 - Professional growth
- Are valued

WE.....

- Take responsibility for problems and solutions.
{...can only complain when we can show we are willing to work positively on the problem.”
- Show respect for treating ourselves and others as we deserve to be treated.
- Respect differing opinions.
- Listen to understand and communicate honestly and tactfully.
- Work together and support each other.
- Are trustworthy in word and deed.
- Are learners.
- Express a positive attitude.
- Share and have fun.

THEREFORE WE.....

Show integrity by working to live the principles of this covenant.