LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Teacher Agency and Professional Identity Negotiation amid a Curricular Change: A Case Study

By

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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in Education (Management and Educational Leadership)

School of Arts and Sciences
May 2023

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Program: M.A. in Education

Department: Social and Education Sciences

School: School of Arts and Sciences

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DEDICATION

Remarkable effort, energy, and time were invested into this thesis, often at the expense of being with my loved ones. This thesis is dedicated to them.

Mom and Dad, you have always been my pillars of strength and inspiration. Your unwavering support and love have been the driving forces behind all my accomplishments. I am forever grateful for your endless sacrifices and hard work, which have enabled me to pursue my dreams.

My dear husband, Ghassan, you have been my rock, confidante, and constant encouragement. I am forever grateful for your patience and understanding, which have allowed me to dedicate my time and energy to my studies.

To my wonderful children, Shadi, Tala, and Syma, you are my biggest motivation, and I dedicate this thesis to you. I hope this accomplishment inspires you to pursue your own dreams with passion and dedication.

To my twin sister Lina and brother Mohammad, you have always believed in me and encouraged me to pursue my goals.

To the Hariri Foundation and my cherished school Hariri High School II, I want to express my sincere appreciation for your support throughout my journey and for believing in me.

To my special friends, I am grateful for your guidance and encouragement. Your words of wisdom have been invaluable to me. You have inspired me to pursue my Master's degree with passion and dedication. I am thankful for your friendship and for being a part of my life.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I am humbled to acknowledge that the successful completion of this thesis would not have been possible without the contribution of several individuals, whose support I am sincerely grateful for. Among these individuals, I owe a great debt of appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. Diane Nauffal, and committee members Dr. Mona Nabhani and Dr. Ketty Sarouphim for their valuable scholarly guidance and support throughout my study. I am profoundly thankful to Dr. Nauffal for her counseling, constructive feedback, patience, and support during the entire process of developing my thesis. I am thoroughly impressed by her expertise in research fields. In addition, I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Nabhani for her exceptional teaching in all the courses related to my Master's emphasis on Educational Leadership. She has been an outstanding role model throughout my academic journey.

I am thankful to my school for its cooperation and professional assistance in collecting data for this study.

I am also thankful to the teachers-colleagues who willingly participated by truthfully completing the questionnaire, and who were part of my interviews, hence their valuable contribution to this study.

I appreciate my family and friends for their unwavering support, love, patience, understanding, and encouragement.

Despite the fact that this research study is the result of my diligent work, it would not have been possible without the generous support of all those individuals mentioned above. Therefore, I believe that this accomplishment is not mine alone but rather a collective success that we can all celebrate together!

Teacher Agency and Professional Identity Negotiation amid a Curricular Change: A Case Study

Lamis Adada

ABSTRACT

Teacher agency in the context of a curriculum change pertains to teachers' ability to make autonomous decisions, adapt and implement new curricular policies, and draw upon their beliefs, values, and professional knowledge and skills to fulfill the specific needs of their students and classroom contexts. This research study investigated teacher agency in the context of a new curriculum in a Lebanese private school that launched the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) as an alternative to the National Lebanese Curriculum. The study aimed to answer three research questions that revolve around the ways teacher agency is exhibited in the context of curricular change, the factors that support teachers' enactment of agency, and how teacher agency influences teacher identity negotiation. The research design adopted a case study approach, using both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, including a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and observation. The results indicated that teachers demonstrated agency through their positive stance toward the new curriculum, involvement in decision-making and new work practices, and negotiation of professional identity. The study highlighted the importance of personal, relational, and contextual factors in supporting teacher agency and identity negotiation. The findings also suggested that teachers felt empowered, creative, and energized while working collaboratively in a supportive environment that facilitated their mission and allowed them to operate effectively and efficiently. Ultimately, the study concluded that teacher agency plays a vital role in successful curricular change, allowing teachers to regulate the curriculum to best meet the needs of their students and make significant contributions to the development and implementation of the novel curriculum.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ATL…………………………………. Approaches to Teaching and Learning

CAS ………………………………… Creativity, Activity, Service

DP ………………………………… Diploma Programme

DPC ………………………………. Diploma Programme Coordinator

ESI ………………………………. Employee Satisfaction Index

IB ………………………………… International Baccalaureate

IBDP …………………………………. International Baccalaureate Diploma Program

IRB ………………………………... Institutional Review Board

LAU ………………………………… Lebanese American University

OSTES ……………………………… Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale

PISA ……………………………… International Student Assessment

PT ………………………………… Participant

SCAI-S-G ……………………………… Secondary School Climate Assessment
Instrument- General

TCAS …………………………………Teacher Change Agent Scale

TIMSS ……………………………. International Mathematics and Science Study

TSES ……………………………… Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale

WTMST ……………………………….. Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Societal, economic, value-based changes, technological developments, increased local and global competitions, and market-oriented reforms necessitate a continuous change in the field of education. Education must evolve, for it is unavoidable. Schools and school leaders find themselves pressed to think more strategically and competitively to alter their organizational procedures and enhance productivity to prevent students and parents from looking elsewhere (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014). However, transformation in educational practices does not occur easily (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014). In response to the changes, teacher agency becomes a vital component. Teacher agency has become an important paradigm in the literature on educational reform because it shapes all the stages that pertain to the implementation of new educational policies and plans (Robinson, 2012). Simply defined, teacher agency is "the capacity of teachers to shape and influence their work and the work of others through their autonomous actions and decisions. It involves an active and reflective stance towards professional practice, and a willingness to challenge and change established practices when they do not serve the best interests of students or the teaching profession" (Campbell, 2012, p.95). Teachers in this sense are viewed as active actors and not just passive recipients of the school reform. Primarily, individual agency is manifested in the way "agentic" teachers take a stance and engage in

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the change process, sustain that change, and influence one's work. Creating new ways of working, controlling one's actions, participating in decision-making, and having the will and the power to act independently and pursue their goals of transforming their work communities constitute the ground through which teachers practice professional agency (Biesta & Tedder, 2006; Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

In the course of educational reform, specifically a curricular change, those who are tasked with enacting and implementing the changes in education are the teachers (Oolbekkink-Marchand et al., 2017). "It is the teachers who are responsible for passing on the changes through their teaching to their students" (Lyons & Poveda, 2009, p.25). In fact, the novelty of any shifting situation elicits responses from teachers (Eteläpelto et al., 2015). These responses (agentic choices and behaviors) are found to be directed by teachers' professional identity. As such, teachers practice agency in line with "who they think they are" (Lasky, 2005, p.912; Sloan, 2006). Watson (2006) argues that "the way teachers perceive themselves influences their choice of action and judgment" (p.510). Agentic teachers consider themselves professionals and agents of change who can bring about the academic and social improvement aspired. Therefore, during any educational change, the teacher identity becomes a necessity to adapt, strive, and succeed in implementing and sustaining the change (Hökkä & Eteläpetlo, 2014).

But what components pertain to teacher identity? Research on teacher identity contends that it encompasses various aspects of a teacher's professional life, including their current professional interests, perspectives on teaching and learning, and future

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aspirations (Beijaard, et al., 2004). On a parallel note, teachers' motivation and effectiveness during a change are influenced by their professional identity (Avalos & Aylwin, 2007; Lasky, 2005). This is due to the "self" shaping how individuals interact with the environment and make decisions in specific situations. As a result, researchers started to consider identity as a dynamic, ever-changing, and active process that evolves throughout time as a result of interactions with events and with others in certain contexts (Kelchtermans, 1993; Watson, 2006). According to Vähäsantanen (2006), teacher agency has a significant impact on negotiating and reshaping professional identity. Teachers' responses to educational reforms can be examined from two different perspectives: first, their mental stance or position towards the reform, as identified in studies by Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto (2009) and Imants et al. (2020); and second, their practical activities and engagement with the reform during its enactment, as studied by Ballet and Kelchtermans (2009). To fully appreciate how complicated and successful reforms are, teacher agency can therefore be analyzed from these two angles, for it is important to examine how teachers become involved in these two aspects. However, there are temporal and relational dimensions regarding the achievement of agency (Eteläpelto, et al., 2013): It does not solely depend on the individual agentic capacity. "The achievement of agency will result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources and contextual structural factors as they come together in unique situations" (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p.137). According to Vähäsantanen and Eteläpelto (2011), agency in teaching is closely connected to the past, present, and future. Teachers draw on resources from their

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past work experiences, school climate, and power relations, as well as their present professional interests and their expectations for the future. As demonstrated in studies by Emirbayer and Mische (1998) and Priestley et al. (2013), teachers' agency is reflected in their choices regarding their stance towards educational reforms, particularly in the early stages of implementation, and how this agency is sustained over time.

From a subject-centered, socio-cultural approach, personal, relational, and contextual factors may constitute affordances or constraints toward the achievement of teacher agency (Jääskelä et al., 2017). Teachers' beliefs and attitudes, power distribution in educational settings, the professional tasks they must complete, the material resources they have access to, leadership support (empowerment - maintaining autonomy - allowing creativity), training, collegial collaboration, peer relationships, workload, allotted work time, and feeling in control of the decisions they must make are some of these factors (Chaaban et al., 2021; Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011; Priestley et al., 2013). This image helps in understanding how people can be reflective and creative while acting outside of social guidelines, as well as how their social and environmental contexts both support and impose limitations on them.

1.1 Research Context

1.1.1 The Launching of the IB Programme

The immediate context for this research is the launching of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Program (IBDP) as an alternative curriculum to the National

Lebanese Curriculum adopted at the secondary level in a Lebanese private school X in Beirut.

School X is a reputable, private co-educational school that offers the Lebanese program only. To trigger change and enhance the learning environment, the school administration and teachers constantly requested that new educational programs be adopted to maintain current students and attract others to join the school. In response to this, the Director General of the school invited International Baccalaureate (IB) representatives in 2018 to meet with school subject coordinators and administrators. The purpose of the meeting was to provide the team with information regarding the IB. The Director General was certain that school X should take a step forward towards gaining IBDP authorization due to the demand of parents, and the competition among private schools in Lebanon.

The Director General assigned the head of middle and secondary school to take the lead in preparing for the application to the IBDP candidacy. The IBDP coordinator (designate) held meetings with secondary school teachers and introduced the IBDP and its requirements. Teachers were selected based on their interest to join a team that had the will and showed enthusiasm to work collaboratively to better understand the requirements of applying for IBDP candidacy and gain authorization later on. Thirteen highly motivated teachers and staff members joined the IBDP team and have been working collaboratively and devotedly since the school was granted candidacy in May 2019.

The main objective behind applying for the IBDP is to enhance students' learning in a program that prepares students on all levels. Also, adding an international program will

have a positive impact on the Lebanese Program in terms of updating the teaching techniques and practices that cater to all students' needs. The IBDP is well-recognized and respected worldwide. It is a rigorous and balanced program that helps candidates develop their critical thinking skills, communication skills, study skills, and an enhanced ability to adapt and contribute to university life. Candidates will develop the knowledge, skills, and motivation needed to be successful not only in university, but in life beyond schooling. The IB teaches students *how to think, not what to think*, and it gives them the skills and knowledge necessary to confidently embrace and overcome challenges in our complex 21st century world (International Baccalaureate, 2017b).

A call for change was necessary to pave the way for the students at school X to experience a new approach to teaching and learning in a program that enhances their cognitive, social, emotional, communication, and physical skills.

1.1.2 The Lebanese Context and Curricular Change

Why are teachers in the Lebanese context demanding change in the curriculum? The Lebanese society went through several conflicts- civil war, religious sectarianism, political and economic instability- which had an adverse effect on the education sector. Despite several reform attempts to improve the Lebanese National Curriculum, this curriculum failed to satisfy the needs of teachers, students, and parents (AlJaafil & Beyhan, 2021). That is why many Lebanese schools in the private sector were seeking change to enhance their effectiveness.

The formal starting point for the education reform process in Lebanon came with the adoption of the Taef Agreement which put an end to the civil war in 1989 (Frayha, 2009). In 1997, new curricula were created with the goal of strengthening the nation's identity, which had weakened as a result of the war. Although these changes were essential, they were not effectively implemented and did not have a lasting impact (Akkary, 2014).

Many factors can explain the failure of these curricular change efforts. Firstly, the top-down method of change is prevalent in the Lebanese context. This has led to a learned passivity where teachers no longer see a need to act as proactive change agents in their institutions. Teachers believe that policymakers should be in charge of enacting change since it "happens to them" rather than "they initiate change." This is a serious issue that is worsened by teachers' perceptions that it is risky to take the initiative and introduce new ideas because doing so might offend those in positions of power and bring about retaliation (Akkary & Rizk, 2012). Secondly, the curriculum is mainly perceived as adhering to textbooks' content. This prevailing perception commercialized curriculum creation and stripped teachers of their agency (Shuayb, 2019). Moreover, the number of subject matters taught at school excessively rose without proper teacher training programs. Lastly, the national curriculum is decontextualized from current social and political issues. To illustrate the outdated nature of education in some schools, it has been reported that certain secondary classes are still using textbooks published in 1968, while primary and

intermediate classes are using books published in 1970. This can lead to a sense of disconnection and detachment from the current environment among students (Frayha, 2009).

In addition, the dramatically low academic results of Lebanese students in the The Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS) and the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) provided evidence that the Lebanese curriculum is obsolete and not yielding positive results nor meeting expectations (Karam, 2020). The purpose of TIMSS and PISA is to compare student performance on a certain body of knowledge to a predetermined set of criteria. These criteria-referenced tests offer crucial information about how well-educated students are in a country relative to students from other countries (Huitt, 1996). There are two basic TIMSS assessments. Students of 4th and 8th grades are targeted in the first assessment, whereas TIMSS Advanced is intended for seniors graduating with advanced topics in mathematics and physics.

Lebanon took part in the TIMSS Advanced in 2008 and 2015. The average score for Lebanese students dropped by 13 points in 2015 from that in 2008 (Mullis et. al., 2016a). Students in Lebanon performed the best globally in calculus in 2015, but their performance was not as well in algebra and geometry. Additionally, they had comparative strengths in knowledge, and comparative shortcomings in reasoning and problems that dealt with real-life situations. (Mullis et. al., 2016a).

Lebanon has participated in two PISA assessments since 2000. PISA evaluates the cognitive and problem-solving abilities of 15-year-old pupils in the subjects of math,

science, and reading. Lebanon's PISA scores are significantly lower than those of other Middle Eastern nations. When compared to students from other regional and international countries, Lebanon's students perform poorly (Shehayb, 2017).

The struggling Lebanese educational context motivated some of the Lebanese teachers, especially those affiliated with the private sector, to actively engage in any attempt or initiative that seeks to adopt a new curriculum that fulfills their professional goals; one of which is having better teaching and learning opportunities for their students.

1.2 Research Purpose

This research investigated teacher agency in the context of a new curriculum to account for the complexities of transformation processes. It explored how instructors involved in the curricular change enacted agency through their actions and behaviors. The effect of agency on identity negotiations was a topic of particular interest. Identity negotiation, according to Ruohotie -Lyhty (2013), has traditionally been linked to taking on new challenges and responsibilities, as well as career development. The novelty of new working conditions is thought to have an impact on teachers' professional identities (Chaaban et al., 2021). Furthermore, the study investigated how teachers were able to put their agency into action by examining various personal, relational, and contextual factors.

1.3 Research Questions

This case study aimed at answering the following questions:

1- In which ways is teacher agency exhibited in the context of curricular change?

2- What personal, relational, and contextual factors do the participating teachers perceive as supporting to their enactment of teacher agency?

3- How has the enactment of teacher agency influenced teacher identity negotiation?

1.4 Definition of Terms

Below are listed the definitions of the terms that are used throughout this study:

Agency: according to Bandura (2001), to be agentive means "to intentionally make things happen by one's actions" (p.1). Agency is associated with teachers' actions and choices and their influence during the stream of change. According to Eteläpelto et al. (2013) "agency is a complex and multifaceted construct that involves the interplay of individual, relational, and contextual factors and refers to teachers' ability to make choices, take actions, and exert influence in their work and professional lives" (p.51). It is seen as a kind of professional freedom, autonomy, decision-making capability, and opinions that can affect decisions (Ann O'Brien, 2016). Within a stream of change, agency can be described as "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgments among alternative possible trajectories of action in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Vaillée & Dupriez, 2015, p. 971).

Teacher professional identity is an identity that can be understood as the set of beliefs, values, and commitments that distinguish an individual as a specific type of teacher, as opposed to any other profession (Beijaard et al., 2004). Identity is dynamic which means One's identity as a teacher can be subject to change as a result of various

personal, external, and contextual factors that come into play over time (Beauchamp &

Thomas, 2009).

The sociocultural approach: The foundation of this theory can be traced back to

the ideas of psychologist Lev Vygotsky, who proposed that the development of higher-

order functions is the product of the influence of parents, caregivers, peers, and the

broader cultural context. Vygotsky's perspective posits that learning is founded on

interactions with others, and human development is an outcome of a dynamic interplay

between individuals and society. As per Kayi-Aydar (2015), individuals' beliefs and

thought processes are shaped by sociocultural practices that are grounded in social

circumstances, people, and tools.

The subject-centered sociocultural approach integrates the individual

contributions and "intentionality" surrounding professional agency (Bandura, 2001).

An affordance is when an individual can make use of a resource or support

provided by their environment. However, this requires the individual to have the ability to

recognize and effectively utilize affordance (Merriam Webster, 1981).

A constraint is a constraining condition, agency, or force. It is a repression of

one's own feelings, behavior, or actions (Merriam-Webster, 1981).

1.5 Rationale & Significance of the Study

Teacher agency is a trending topic in the education community right now. There is

an emerging worldwide acknowledgment of the importance of teachers' agency for the

overall quality of education. It is also needed for the success of any initiative for educational reform at school and on national levels (Vähäsantanen, 2015).

Today's educators have a wide range of responsibilities as they are required to create a relevant, inspiring, and positive environment for their students, themselves, and their colleagues (Toom et al., 2015). Individuals need to learn in a creative way, adapt to the various requirements of their workplace, negotiate with managers and coworkers, make independent choices, and strike a balance between their individual and shared understandings (Campbell 2012; Toom et al., 2015). This renewed vision of teachers as developers or influencers of curriculum at school level, as agents of change, is quickly spreading among practitioners and policymakers (Campbell, 2012; Fullan, 2003; Leander & Osborne, 2008). In order to improve teachers' agentic behaviors and actions in educational settings, this study holds the promise of identifying some features of the teacher agency construct from a sociocultural perspective and producing practical outcomes. Furthermore, the premise is that teacher agency should be considered an essential attribute rather than a mere slogan for supporting student learning, ongoing professional development, collaborative teacher learning, and school reform. (Toom et al., 2015). The study's noteworthy aspect is its emphasis on the dynamic character of agency and on the interrelation between agency and teacher identity transformation.

From another angle, this study highlights the important role of policymakers and leaders in shaping educational contexts, that is, the cultural and social frameworks that shape teacher preparation programs and the environment in which teachers work since

sometimes, "contexts may serve to disable individuals with otherwise high agentic capacity" (Priestley, et. al, 2013, p.60).

Lastly, various international researchers have explored teacher agency amid curricular changes. Unfortunately, no research has been done on the topic that the current study aims to investigate. Since teacher agency is gaining global popularity, this study in the Lebanese educational context will add to the existing literature on the topic.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the following section, the literature pertaining to the enactment of teacher professional agency amid curricular change and professional identity was reviewed. The purpose of the literature review chapter is to provide a comprehensive background for the current study, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of existing research in the field. This chapter serves as a reference for the discussion of the results of the current study, allowing for a deeper understanding of the research question and its significance in the broader context of the field. As Merriam (2009) notes, a thorough literature review is essential for conducting rigorous research and ensuring that the current study builds upon existing knowledge in a meaningful way.

The following sections were incorporated: Teacher agency, teacher agency amid curricular changes, the subject-centered socio-cultural approach to teacher agency, the temporal nature of teacher agency, affordances of teacher agency, and teacher identity.

2.1 Teacher Agency

Research to conceptualize teachers' agency was conducted to understand what agency is and how it is achieved. According to Bandura (2001), to be agentive is "to intentionally make things happen by one's actions" (p.1). Teachers may be active participants, that is, people whose actions and opinions count in determining the substance, design, and organization of educational transformation. Agency is associated

with teachers' actions and choices and their influence during the stream of change. According to Eteläpelto et al. (2013), "agency is practiced when teachers in schools influence, make choices, and take stances in ways that affect their work and their professional identity" (p. 50). It is also described as "the potential of teachers to critically shape their responses to problematic situations (Biesta & Tedder, 2006, p.11). In other words, it is seen as a kind of professional freedom, autonomy, decision-making capability, and opinions that can affect decisions (Ann O'Brien, 2016). Within a stream of change, agency can be described as "the capacity of actors to make practical and normative judgements among alternative possible trajectories of action in response to the emerging demands, dilemmas, and ambiguities of presently evolving situations" (Vaillée & Dupriez, 2015, p. 971).

Agency is linked to intentional action, implying a degree of control and power. It refers to individuals' perceptions of their ability to control their own actions, rather than simply letting things happen to them. (Eteläpelto et. al, 2013). For the most part, agency has typically been seen favorably, boosting teachers' autonomy, motivation, creativity, and self-fulfillment (Chaaban & Sawalhi, 2020; Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

2.1.1 Teacher Agency amid Curricular Changes

In a study project carried out by Priestley and his co-researchers (2012), the different ways in which Scottish teachers in three subject areas within two institutions enacted the newly introduced prescribed curriculum were investigated. These multiple case studies showed that the teacher's intentional role was essential to the curriculum's

successful implementation. In a similar research, Gayle Jenkins (2019) conducted a longitudinal qualitative case study in which she investigated techniques of 12 educators who teach Economics in response to the Great Curriculum change in Queensland, Australia. She found out that teachers enacted the new curriculum in a "reactive" manner: Teachers' reactive agency is evident when they respond to a requirement for curriculum change by actively participating in the curriculum development process and effecting modifications at the classroom, department, or school level. In other words, when teachers react to leadership decisions from above, their agency is referred to as reactive. Instructors were found to have control over what happens in their departments and classes by planning and implementing the necessary changes. In this case, the motivation to make the curricular modifications a success was strong.

Similarly, Katja Vähäsantanen (2015) investigated in a qualitative meta-study the Finnish vocational teachers' professional agency amid an educational reform. Disparities were found in the way instructors were able to control their work, how they responded to the change, and how they identified as professionals. Teacher agency was manifested by the ways the vocational teachers negotiated content and the new pedagogical practices, and made decisions on one's way of working. A different perspective regarding professional agency pertained to the choices and decisions made by teachers regarding their engagement with educational reform while it was being implemented. The researcher concluded that agency is largely individual, and resourced both at a social and an individual level.

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The decisions and actions of teachers during an educational reform can be analyzed through two distinct approaches, specifically by (i) adopting a particular stance towards the reform that reflects their conscious mental disposition (Imants et al., 2020; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2009), and (ii) engaging with the reform, which involves practical activities carried out during the implementation of the reform (Ballet & Kelchtermans, 2008). By exploring teacher agency through these two perspectives, the complexity and effectiveness of changes can be better understood.

2.1.2 The Subject-Centered Socio-Cultural Approach to Teacher Agency

Vygotsky's social-cultural theory views human development as socially embedded (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). The sociocultural approach is based on the notion that society and culture influence cognition. In other words, a person's sociocultural background influences how they think.

According to the socio-cultural approach, teacher agency is shaped by social circumstances, tools, and people (Kayi-Aydar, 2015). This suggests that an individual's beliefs, thoughts, and actions are influenced by historical and sociocultural practices, such as curriculum guidelines, cultural norms, and social directions and resources (Lasky, 2005). Additionally, Bandura (2001) highlights that the subject-centered perspective views individuals as "agents of action who can initiate, regulate, and sustain behavior in the service of goals and standards" (p. 5). This perspective emphasizes the individual's capacity to actively engage with their environment and influence their own behavior through their thoughts, beliefs, and values.

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A contemporary subject-centered socio-cultural approach emphasizes that it is important to incorporate both the societal and individual aspects to professional agency (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). From this perspective, intentionality is considered the core aspect of agency (Bandura, 2001). Therefore, professional agency is always utilized with specific intentions and is limited or facilitated by sociocultural and material circumstances (Lasky, 2005; Fullan & Council, 2003). "The achievement of agency will result from the interplay of individual efforts, available resources, and contextual structural factors as they come together in unique situations" (Biesta & Tedder, 2007, p.138). However, educators possess the potential and ability to act as agents, both in alignment with and in resistance to the socio-cultural and material conditions that exist within their workplace (Hökkä et al., 2017). Nevertheless, it is not always the case. Kayi-Aydar (2015), in her narrative inquiry study, described the experience of a teacher candidate majoring in Spanish who failed to achieve her dream of becoming a Spanish teacher due to social and environmental constraints. No one showed interest in joining her class, rather, everybody preferred to join English classes. The Spanish teacher ended up shifting her career path to becoming an English teacher. Moreover, Sue Lasky (2005) conducted a longitudinal mixed-methods study in the schools of Orlando to understand the impact of the school reform context on teacher agency. The findings indicated a misalignment between teacher identity and the anticipated outcomes of the newly introduced reform mandates. The increasing accountability pressures and the augmented focus on academics affected teachers' vulnerability toward students. That is, teachers' ability to build desired rapport

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with students became increasingly diminished and teachers found themselves deprived of their agency. Hence, the findings suggest that teachers' actions are mediated by the structural elements of their setting such as available resources, school norms, and mandated policies.

To show the interrelation between agency-related manifestations and the social-cultural context, Katja Vähäsantanen and her colleagues (2009) conducted a qualitative narrative study over one year to compare the professional identity negotiation of 24 Finnish teachers employed in two distinct organizations, each representing distinct management cultures and forms of control over the work of teachers: a vocational institution and a university department of teacher education. A data-driven qualitative analysis of the narrative interviews addressing teachers' work, professional development at work, the work organization, and the professional community was applied. According to the authors' results, different work organizations offered various resources for teachers negotiating their professional identities. Teachers' commitment to their work organization would increase if they had enough agency and the chance to implement their professional orientations, and if significant changes were not imposed on their work practices from outside.

2.1.3 The Temporal Nature of Teacher Agency

The attainment of agency can be comprehended as a configuration of the impacts from the past (habits), aspirations for the future (envisioning alternative possibilities), and involvement in the present (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto,

2011). The achievement of agency is always informed by past personal and professional experience. Some aspects that contribute to teacher agency are personal capacities such as skills and knowledge, beliefs (personal and professional) and values. Professional agency involves a forward-looking perspective, with a combination of goals and values in the short and long term. The desire for establishing a future distinct from the past and the present is related to the accomplishment of agency. Teachers with higher positive work aspirations achieve greater levels of teacher agency (Chaaban & Sawalhi, 2020; Vähäsantanen, 2015). Vähäsantanen (2015) observed that during an educational reform, vocational teachers' professional agency had a temporal nature that was demonstrated in the following manner: teachers drew on resources from their past (work experiences), present (such as professional interests), and future (expectations for the future) when making decisions about their stance towards the reform.

2.2 Professional Teacher Identity Negotiation

The concept of identity is utilized by professionals as a means to understand themselves and their place in various contexts, as well as their relationships with others. This is supported by research from Akkerman and Meijer (2010), Beijaard et al. (2004), and Day et al. (2006). It includes teachers' values, ethical considerations, convictions, ideals, and goals (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014). To put it in another way, it incorporates what instructors feel to be critical to their profession and their perceptions of themselves as the teacher they aspire to be (Beijaard, 2009).

According to Eteläpelto et al. (2014), professional identities play a mediating role in determining what individuals desire to learn, how they make decisions and choices, and how they influence work-related matters. Davey (2013) has offered a comprehensive definition of professional identity, described as a synthesis of "becoming," which encompasses the initial reasons for selecting a specific profession and career aspirations; "being," which relates to professional values and interests, "knowing," which pertains to professional knowledge and skills, and "doing," which refers to professional activities and primary tasks.

From a subject-centered socio-cultural perspective, the relationship between professional agency and identity is given even more emphasis (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). Because agency is defined as intentional efforts to influence and make a difference, and so affect workplaces and cultures, "identity renegotiations in the face of changing work conditions are unavoidable, if not required, for adapting, striving, and succeeding at work" (Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014, p.51). Teachers' identities are not directly affected by changes in their contexts and situations. Instead, it is their choices and actions that can provoke a reconfiguration and development of their identity. Therefore, identity renegotiations are inevitable and sometimes necessary for teachers to adapt, strive, and succeed at work. (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). According to Ruohotie-Lyhty (2013), professional growth and development have been linked to accepting challenges and responsibilities through identity renegotiation. As part of an active research project with preservice teachers in Finland, Ruohotie- Lyhty and Moate (2016) conducted a study that aimed to better

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understand the forms agency takes in the identity development of eight preservice teachers over a two-year period, and to better understand the interplay between individuals' identity development and the social context as well as how identity is linked with individuals' professional agency within a community. The study was conducted at the Department of Teacher Education at the University of Jyväskylä, specifically focusing on the newly developed JULIET programme aimed at preparing future class teachers specializing in foreign language pedagogy in lower comprehensive schools. The study analyzed 40 written accounts from the programme's first two years and revealed a sense of "motion" among the participants, who actively negotiated their identities as preservice teachers and future professionals by either moving towards or away from certain ideas or options. The researchers described this form of agency as an "expansive agency" which involved questioning former beliefs, identifying new goals, taking a new direction as a professional, and orienting oneself towards future learning. The researchers concluded that agentic professional identity negotiations can lead to maintained, strengthened, shaped, or transformed professional identities.

Following the subject-centered life course agency, Biesta (2010) argues that adult learners and workers are not just passive recipients of new knowledge and skills for their jobs, but active agents who make conscious choices and prioritize what is important and meaningful for their lives and futures. They act as feeling and willing subjects, practicing agency in their lives. With respect to this, Vähäsantanen (2015) conducted a similar meta-analysis on Finnish vocational teachers where she explored their professional agency amid

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educational change. She considered professional agency from three perspectives: teachers' ability to impact their own work, including negotiating work conditions and reform practices, along with making decisions on how to approach their work; teachers' choices and decisions regarding their participation in an educational reform during its implementation; and the connection between professional identity and changing circumstances. The study gathered data from interviews and re-interviews with 16 vocational teachers over a two-year period. Participants, who were experienced teachers teaching different vocational fields, were selected on a voluntary basis and were at the lead of the implementation of the reform. Findings showed that during the initial stage of the educational reform, vocational teachers took different positions towards it, including resistant, inconsistent, and approving positions. Those who took a resistant position openly positioned themselves as opponents of the reform, while those who took an approving position were positively inclined towards the reform and positioned themselves as its wholesale supporters.

Regarding the negotiation of the teacher's professional identity during the reform, it was thought of as a process where the teacher's current professional identity clashes with a new identity that emerges from shifting social suggestions. In cases where the vocational teachers were fully focused on teaching the students inside the school, the teachers discovered that their identities clashed with the new social expectations resulting from altered educational practice. The identities of some teachers, particularly those who themselves were oriented toward working outside the educational structure, were in

harmony with the social recommendations they encountered at the same time. Therefore, the process of identity renegotiation in response to educational change is not solely driven by social demands, for active teacher agency is necessary for meaningful identity reform. These findings underscore the importance of professional agency and highlight the relational nature of identity construction which is shaped by social context (Beijaard et al., 2004; Lasky, 2005).

To emphasize this interrelationship between identity negotiation and the practice of agency, Ketelaar et al. (2013) investigated how teachers become acquainted with a new pedagogy, specifically the implementation of coaching in vocational education, through their daily practice. For this purpose, 11 teachers from 2 secondary vocational schools in the Netherlands reported their learning experiences. Data were collected by means of digital logs, where each teacher had to write a rich description of 4 learning experiences in a story-like manner. A learning experience was defined by the authors as any event or situation that caused a change in thinking or behavior of the participant. These learning events were viewed via the lens of the identity perspective. The amount of which instructors used this new pedagogy to learn, the ways in which they made meaning of their learning experiences, and the degree to which they exercised agency in those experiences were carefully examined. Data analysis comprised two phases through reading and coding using ATLAS.ti 5.2, followed by an explorative and descriptive phase. These teachers were categorized into two groups based on their initial stance regarding their ownership, sense-making, and agency: one group was enthusiastic and involved, while the other was

more cautious and reserved. Compared to reserved teachers, engaged teachers were thought to introduce innovations more frequently. The authors concluded that teachers do not simply accept or reject innovations when they are presented with them in the workplace. Rather, they appear to intentionally position themselves in connection to an innovation by contrasting their individual beliefs, priorities, and goals for their careers with the attributes and requirements of the proposed innovation.

In conclusion, the implementation of educational innovations can have a reciprocal effect on a teacher's identity, as it is influenced by the way teachers respond to innovations and at the same time innovations can affect their identities (Beijaard et al., 2004; Day et al., 2007).

2.3 Affordances of Teacher Agency

Hargreaves (1994) considers teachers as learners who are shaped by the social environment they work in, and he highlights their ability and willingness to change. He suggests that these desires for change arise from personal tendencies, incentives, and obligations, and they form an essential aspect of effective teaching. Professional agency is seen as a practice and expression that occurs within a specific social and material environment, which can either provide resources or limitations, according to a socio-cultural, subject-centered approach. Since agency is always acted out in the present and in a concrete situation, judgments taken must be practical; thus, shaped by the affordances and constraints of the educational setting (Lasky, 2005; Biesta et al., 2015). During educational reforms, teachers' agency can be influenced by personal, relational, and

contextual factors that either support or constrain them within their organizational contexts (Eteläpelto et al., 2014; Lasky, 2005; Priestly et. al, 2012). These scholars consider that agency is resourced by a relational interaction between social and material conditions such as physical artifacts, work cultures of collaboration, and power relations on one hand, and between individual beliefs, motivations, interests, professional knowledge, competencies, and work experience on another hand.

Jääskelä, Poikkeus, Vasalampi, Valleala, and Rasku-Puttonen (2017) investigated the various aspects that enable teacher agency achievement and divided them into three categories: individual agency, relational agency, and contextual agency. Interest and motivation, self-efficacy, competence beliefs, and participatory activity all influence individual agency. Fair treatment and assistance from those in positions of authority, peer support, and trust all influence relational agency. Finally, contextual agency includes the ability to influence and the ability to make decisions. The school environment and administration have the largest influence over relational and contextual agencies of the three categories.

Similarly, Youmen Chaaban and her colleagues (2021) found that there were personal, relational, and contextual factors that shape, support, and influence teachers' agency during the disruption to education during Covid-19. The suddenly imposed change necessitated new work practices, interaction and collaboration with colleagues, professional learning opportunities, professional autonomy, and leadership support. Prior to this study, Chaaban and Sawalhi (2020) explored 13 novice teachers' development of a

leadership stance during their initial years of teaching in Qatari governmental schools. On the personal space, teachers enacted agency based on their background knowledge, skills, experiences, university degree, and subject specialization, in addition to them catering to students' interests. Within the relational space, teachers enacted agency by influencing their colleagues, providing support, and integrating technology in their curriculum planning. In addition, they allowed students to participate in projects and extracurricular activities. Finally, within the contextual space, these teachers regarded the bad relationship with the coordinator, demotivated colleagues at work, hectic paperwork, and strict hierarchal structure to constitute hindrances to achieving their agency.

Not far from this prospect, Gayle Jenkins (2019) explored the ways teacher agency of home Economics teachers was manifested during the introduction and implementation of the Queensland school curriculum initiative—the Queensland Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Framework (QCAR). In the study, teacher agency was observed to be expressed in three ways - proactive, reactive, and passive, with contextual factors playing a determining role in shaping these expressions. The successful implementation of curriculum changes was found to be largely dependent on school leadership, relationships with colleagues, and personal motivation. Reactive agency was noted when teachers responded to decisions made by higher authorities. Despite the top-down approach, teachers retained their agency by planning and implementing the required changes in their own way; thus, controlling the proceedings in their departments and classes. Motivation to make the curriculum changes successful was high and teachers were motivated to make

changes and were supported by a number of contextual factors: administrative support, such as positive collegial environments, and good quality professional development support, such as engaging with peers in a collegial environment, to plan for and implement changes.

Recently, Tinn and Ümarik (2021) conducted a large-scale mixed-methods study of the professionalism of Estonian teachers in the context of educational reform to explore the contextual hindrances and affordances present for the growth of agency. Their findings emphasized the role of collegial coherence and collaborative effort for the growth of agency. The study also highlighted the crucial role of school leadership in providing support for teachers in organizing their workload and creating opportunities for collaboration with colleagues to develop their program and contribute to the school community. This approach is preferred over a centralized curriculum reform control, which may limit teacher agency. Additionally, the researchers concluded that bureaucratic responsibilities, strict management control, accountability measures, and excessive workloads serve as constraints to the achievement of agency.

Conclusion

Teacher identity denotes teachers' values, aspirations, goals, interests, knowledge, and qualities (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011). Nevertheless, its formation is a dynamic, ever-changing process that develops through time as a result of interactions between a person and the context (Collins, 2009).

Professional agency and professional identity are interrelated in a reciprocal manner. When teachers negotiate their professional identity, they engage in an agentic process in which they construct their perception of their professional identity in relation to changing work conditions and practices. According to Vähäsantanen (2015), the exercise of agency plays a significant role in forming and transforming professional identity. Meanwhile, professional identity affects how teachers respond to educational reforms and their actions during the reform. It also influences their motivation, commitment to work, and sense of meaningfulness at work, which are all related to what teachers want to learn (Ruohotie-Lyhty & Moate, 2016; Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

Nevertheless, this interplay between teacher agency and professional identity negotiations cannot be separated from social affordances whether the contextual, personal, and relational ones that influence their development.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLGY

The following chapter outlines the methodology used in a case study that aimed to investigate teacher agency within the context of a curricular change in a private school in Lebanon. This section presents the study's research design, sampling approach, data collection, and analysis methods, as well as factors that may impact the study's results, including validity and reliability considerations, potential researcher bias, and ethical considerations.

The purpose of this study was to investigate how instructors involved in the curricular change enacted agency through their actions and behaviors, following three dimensions: taking a stance toward the change, influencing the work through decision-making and new work practices, and negotiating professional identity. The effect of agency on identity negotiations was a topic of particular attention. In addition, this study explored the personal (existing professional identity, professional knowledge, and work experience), relational (power relations and collaborative work with peers), and environmental aspects (material circumstance, physical resources, etc…) that aided their enactment of teacher agency.

This case study sought to answer the following questions:

1- In which ways is teacher agency exhibited in the context of curricular change?

2- What personal, relational, and contextual factors do the participating teachers perceive as supporting to their enactment of teacher agency?

3- How has the enactment of teacher agency influenced teacher identity negotiation?

3.1 Research Design

This research employed a case study design, which is an empirical approach that enables researchers to conduct a comprehensive analysis and description of a specific system (Creswell, 2014; Merriam, 2009). The case study approach is grounded in natural and real contexts and can be applied to programs, events, activities, or individuals (Yin, 2018). Therefore, it is practical and offers a high degree of reality, allowing for the transferability of findings to similar situations (Cohen et al., 2011; Yin, 2018). As the objective of this study was to investigate how teachers in a private school in Lebanon exercised agency during a curricular change and to gain a profound understanding of this complex phenomenon, a case study was an appropriate choice given the limited number of participants, who were not necessarily representative of all schools in Lebanon.

This case study adopted both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, that is, a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and observation. This design was used to address the study's research questions and results. Through this integration, the researcher hoped to gain a more detailed understanding of the manifestation problems under study from the views of people who lived the experiences and from the scientific modeling of figures (Fraenkl, et al., 2012; Creswell, 2014).

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A variety of data collection methods are used in case studies (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). The variety of data collection tools allows for triangulation and improves validity of results. Three data collection instruments were used and were further discussed in the next sections.

3.2 Sampling

This research was conducted at the secondary level of a mid-socioeconomic private school in Beirut. The choice of the school was based on the convenience sampling method due to its convenience and availability (Merriam, 2009; Creswell, 2014). Convenience sampling, which is also referred to as availability sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique that relies on the willingness of individuals from the population who are readily available to participate (Merriam, 2009; Yin, 2018). The school where the case study is conducted was a 'convenient' sample because negotiating access was not difficult, for the researcher is a teacher in that same school.

Purposive or purposeful sampling technique was used for the choice of participants. The developed questionnaire was addressed to all 11 female and male secondary teachers involved in the development and implementation of the newly introduced curriculum. The technique of purposeful sampling is commonly employed in qualitative research to identify and select cases that are rich in information in order to make the most efficient use of limited resources (Patton, 2002). Observation of all the participants during collaborative meetings was done. A criterion-based selection of five interviewees was then applied.

3.3 Procedure & Instruments

Before conducting this case study, approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) of the Lebanese American University (LAU) was secured (Appendix B). Next, an email was sent to the school principal of the private school where the researcher works to gain access and approval (Appendix A). The letter or email sent to the principal included details of the case study such as its purpose, design, instruments, data collection, and analysis methods. Additionally, the letter invited IB teachers to participate in the study and requested permission to conduct the research (Appendix C).

In this case study, three instruments for data collection were used: Observation of the weekly IB team meetings, survey-based questionnaire, and individual interviews with teachers and with the IBDP coordinator. The aim was to gain a deep understanding of the phenomenon under study rather than generalization of results. The use of different procedures and instruments to collect data helps in the triangulation of results and enhances the validity and reliability of the study (Patton, 2002).

3.3.1 Observation

The first strategy used was observation. Observation is the action of monitoring closely (Creswell, 2014). Researchers can use observation methods to identify nonverbal expressions of emotions, observe social interactions among participants, understand communication patterns, and track the amount of time devoted to different activities (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012).

Participant meeting observation was conducted. This procedure was used since the researcher is part of the IB team. Participant observation allows researchers to observe situations participants have described in interviews, to check inaccuracies in description (Marshall & Rossman, 2016). By employing participant observation, researchers can gather diverse data while being present on location for an extended period, thereby reducing the likelihood of participants altering their behavior when aware of being observed. This method also allows for a more comprehensive understanding of the culture being studied; thus, enhancing the credibility of the researcher's interpretations of their observations (Bernard, 1994).

Observation of 3 IBDP staff collaborative weekly meetings was conducted. The duration of each observation was around 40 minutes. During these meetings, teachers' interactions and engagements with each other and with the DP coordinator were mainly observed. The purpose of the observation was also to analyze the participants' verbal and non-verbal cues during meetings. Non-verbal cues are vital because they can indicate how the person is genuinely feeling during the meetings. Yet, participants were not informed they had been observed to maintain their normal behaviors and not change them due to anxiety. Moreover, the participants' personal space and privacy were not intruded upon during the process of the observation as suggested by Cohen and his colleagues (2011). The notes taken helped the researcher dig deeper into the behaviors and words of the participants while analyzing data.

In order to conduct the observation, a meeting observation protocol (Appendix D) was used. The protocol was reprinted from Minnesota's Vision Project. It includes several parts that enabled data collection:

1- Who is attending the meeting?

2- Location of the meeting with its description

3- The meeting format

4- Meeting agenda

5- Topics discussed

6- The functioning of team members

7- Participation

8- Organization and structure

9- Communication mode

10- Results and actions

It must be noted that not all parts of the protocol were relevant to this study. So, some were skipped. Sections related to "the functioning of team members", "participation", "organization and structure", and "communication mode" were emphasized (Appendix E).

3.3.2 Survey-based Questionnaire

In this case study, a questionnaire was used to gather quantitative and qualitative data about the teachers' perceptions of their role and professional identity during the

curriculum change. This questionnaire depicted their actions and behaviors during change, and their views of the factors that enabled or disabled their agency.

Questionnaires are widely used research tools that comprise a set of questions or items to elicit information from participants. They are similar to written interviews and are useful for collecting data on a range of topics such as behavior, preferences, intentions, attitudes, and opinions. Questionnaires can be conducted through various methods, including face-to-face interactions, telephone conversations, or online platforms. (Cohen et al., 2011; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012).

Most IBDP teachers, a total of 11 teachers, were invited to participate in an online questionnaire (Appendix F). For accessibility, it was conducted using Google Forms. Thus, teachers were able to fill out the survey at their convenience.

On the opening page of the questionnaire, an outline of the study was provided for the participants, along with an explanation of the ethical aspects of the research, such as the importance of voluntary participation and the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. Moreover, the teachers had the full right to refuse to fill out certain parts of the questionnaire. This strategy allowed for higher comfort and trust levels. The questions of the questionnaire were all derived from the themes of the literature review and were aligned with the research questions.

The questionnaire was comprehensive and made up of two parts. In the first part (Part I) the questions sought demographic information regarding the teachers' educational background, years of experience, and gender. The second part (Part II- section A)

consisted of 52 questions derived from the literature with some adaptation. The questions were used to explore the manifestation of teacher agency during the curriculum change and affordances of teacher agency. The researcher did not explain the concept of "agency" itself and none of its subscales to participants. The questionnaire included a few open-ended questions (Part II- section B) to allow participants to freely express their views. The survey could be completed in 15 to 20 minutes.

Questions of part II-section A were answered on a Likert Scale. The Likert Scale is a widely used tool in research for measuring people's attitudes and perceptions towards different subjects. Typically, researchers employ this survey scale to obtain information about the degree of agreement or disagreement on a particular topic from respondents (Cohen et al., 2011; Dodou & De Winter, 2010). Participants are required to indicate the extent of their agreement with each statement or question by choosing from a range of responses on the scale (Keown & Hakstian, 1973).

Questions 1 to 35 of part II pertained to the three dimensions of teacher agency and were rated on a 4-point scale as follows: 1(Strongly disagree), 2 (Disagree), 3 (Agree), and 4 (Strongly agree). Questions 1 to 4 were used for the first subscale (initial stance towards the change), questions 5 to 18 were used for the second subscale (influencing at work), and questions 19 to 35 were used for the third subscale (professional identity negotiation).

Questions pertaining to teacher agency were adapted from several sources: 12 questions were taken from an instrument developed by Katja Vähäsantanen and her

colleagues (Vähäsantanen et al., 2018). The researcher received permission to use the latter tool from the authors by email (Appendix G). This instrument was constructed by the authors as a multidimensional quantitative scale meant to determine the structure of professional agency in working life. Three dimensions of professional agency were targeted: Influencing at work, developing work practices, and negotiating professional identity. The reliability and validity of the instrument was explored using exploratory structural equation modelling and explanatory factor analysis (EFA) implemented in SPSS 24.

Five questions were adapted from the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES). The Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale, sometimes referred to as the Ohio State Teacher Efficacy Scale (OSTES) was created by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001). It is a self-assessment tool created to help teachers better understand the kind of challenges they face while carrying out tasks at school, the extent to which teachers believe they can affect students' learning, and the personal agency with respect to pedagogical tasks. An extended form with 24 components and a short version with 12 items make up the final instrument. Three distinct studies were used to assess the component structure, reliability, and validity of this instrument as well as the suitability of the new scale for both preservice and in-service teacher populations. Three subscales were found using factor analysis: effectiveness of instructional strategies, effectiveness of classroom management, and effectiveness of student participation. The analysis findings show that the OSTES can be regarded as having a fair amount of validity and reliability. The extracted items in the

current study fall under the instructional strategies subscale. In fact, teachers' level of aspiration, the goals they establish, and the amount of work they put into teaching are all impacted by efficacy. Teachers who feel very effective typically display higher levels of organization and planning (Allinder, 1994).

Moreover, 4 items were selected from the survey created by Michael Hull's (2020) "Teachers' Perceived Agency". This instrument was devised to measure teachers' feelings of control over what is taught and how it is taught. The validation of the survey was ensured by five survey validation interviews and was reviewed by a panel consisting of 10 experts. In addition, during the construction of this scale, it was repeated twice at different time intervals to ensure its reliability.

Furthermore, 5 questions were taken from the Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) developed by Fernet et al. (2008). This scale was crucial in determining the optimal human functioning in the workplace, for it measures workers' level of motivation and engagement in the given tasks. Structural equation modeling (EQS) was used to assess the adequacy of the model, and multiple indicator course models (MIMIC) provided a more stringent test of the construct validity.

From the "faculty relations" subscale of the Secondary School Climate Assessment Instrument-General (SCAI-S-G), 12 items were taken. The SCAI's main purpose is to act as a mirror for people within a particular school to evaluate the atmosphere of that particular school. It offers a scoring system that enables an indicator of the level of school atmosphere quality across eight dimensions. The fact that there are enough items on the

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instruments to collect a wide variety of the fundamental characteristics of the school accounts for a large portion of the validity. The face, construct, and predictive validity of the SCAI instruments are areas where their validity is shown. As determined by Cronbach's Alpha reliability test, the instrument also exhibits extraordinarily high levels of reliability in use (0.97). The Cronbach's alpha reliability measure for each SCAI sub-scale is 0.73 or above. For each instrument and data set, the total Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.97 to 0.98.

For the identity negotiation subscale questions, three items were borrowed from the Teacher Change Agent Scale (TCAS) developed by Lukacs (2009) to assess experienced teachers' ability to initiate change in their schools and the impact of this ability on their identity. To ensure content validity, a panel of 12 expert teachers was involved in the development process, and the participant selection was based on five attributes: ownership, empowerment, confidence, community membership, and activism. The scale's reliability was verified through item-scale correlations and exploratory factor analysis. The reliability of each subscale was determined using Cronbach's alpha, with the following results: Factor 1, $\alpha = 0.71$; Factor 2, $\alpha = 0.73$; and Factor 3, $\alpha = 0.72$. Since nearly all of the correlations between items of the same factor were statistically significant at either $p < 0.05$ or $p < 0.01$, the level and the statistical analyses conducted for this study demonstrated that the TCAS is a reliable instrument for assessing teachers' "willingness to initiate change in their schools" (p.2).

Three other questions were extracted from a survey adopted by Xiong1 and Xiong1 (2017) who assured that the questionnaire is credited with fine reliability. In addition, three questions were extracted from an instrument developed by Susan Starr and her colleagues (2006). The latter instrument focuses on 7 elements of professional identity of clinical educators. The overall Cronbach's alpha for the overall scale and subscales are high. Piloting of the scale and focus group discussions with experts were done to ensure its validity. "As a scale, it can be considered to have good potential to measure identity" (Starr et al., 2006, p.123). Lastly, three items were adapted from the instrument of Vähäsantanen and her colleagues mentioned in the section about agency (Vähäsantanen et al., 2018).

Five items were also adapted from a proposed model by Canrinus et al. (2011) to investigate the extent of the indicators being relevant to teachers' sense of their professional identity (one of these indicators is job satisfaction). This model was tested with structural equation modeling (SEM) and refined with the participation of 1,214 Dutch teachers who completed the questionnaire. Moreover, all items of the questionnaire were submitted to a principal component analysis (PCA) to purify the latent variables. The six items used pertained to the job satisfaction subscale extracted from the job satisfaction index (ASI) of Vander der Ploeg and Scholte (2003).

The last 17 questionnaire items of section II aimed to explore the affordances of teacher agency, questions were divided into 3 subscales (personal, relational, and

contextual, and were mainly taken from the sum of the scales previously mentioned and

from the literature. A summary of all the questionnaire's items is found in *Table 1*.

Table 1- Questionnaires used to explore teacher agency and its affordancesQuestionnaire and authors	no. of items	Example item	Criteria
A multidimensional instrument on the professional agency by Vähäsantanen et al. (2018)	12	I can make decisions regarding my own work. My views are taken into consideration in the work community. I can realize my professional goals in my work.	Agency: taking a stance toward the change Agency: influencing the work through decision-making and new work practices Agency: negotiating professional identity
A survey created by Michael Hull (2020) "Teachers' Perceived Agency"	4	I prefer a curriculum that tells the teacher exactly what to do so that I don't risk making the wrong decision.	Agency: influencing the work through decision-making and new work practices
Work Tasks Motivation Scale for Teachers (WTMST) developed by Fernet et al. (2008) (with adaptation)	5	I joined the IB team because the school obliged me to do so. I joined the IB team because I liked doing this task	Agency: taking a stance toward the change
Secondary School Climate Assessment Instrument-General (SCAI-S-G)	12	Teachers are cooperative and supportive of each other. The DP coordinator is very active in securing resources to facilitate the planning of instructions.	The affordance of teacher agency: Relational dimension
Teacher Change Agent Scale (TCAS; Lukacs, 2009)	3	I value working collaboratively with other teachers.	Agency: influencing the work through decision-

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			making and new work practices
		I am known as a person who is not afraid to take risks.	The affordance of teacher agency: Personal dimension
A survey adopted by Xiong1 & Xiong1 (2017)	3	I feel pleased when committing myself to the work.	Agency: negotiating professional identity
An instrument developed by Susan Starr & her colleagues (2006)	3	It is important to develop my teaching skills	Agency: negotiating professional identity
Taken with adaptation from the Teacher Sense of Efficacy Scale (TSES) created by Tschannen-Moran and Hoy (2001) (Instructional activities)	5	I think I can get the instructional materials and equipment I need I think I can be very creative in my work with instructional activities.	The affordance of teacher agency: Personal & Contextual dimensions
Job Satisfaction Index (ASI) Van der Ploeg and Scholte (2003) taken from a questionnaire created by Canrinus et al.(2012)	5	I am given a large amount of freedom in the work I do.	The affordance of teacher agency: Relational & Contextual dimensions

3.3.3 Interviews

Direct one-on-one interviews were the final strategy utilized. They were conducted using Zoom online conferencing platform. Interviews are described as purposeful interactions with the aim of gathering data and asking relevant questions (Merriam, 2009; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2012). The questions asked during the interviews allowed the participants to share their views on their professional identity as a teacher, the ways in which they acted and exerted agency, and the different factors that facilitated their agency.

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Semi-structured interviews with 5 teachers that were selected based on specific criteria were conducted. The selection of the interviewee was based on the following criteria: 1) must have joined the IBDP team since the beginning of the authorization phase (3 years ago in 2019), 2) the Language of instruction is English (to avoid translation), 3) must be representatives of different subject matters taught. These criteria were adopted to gain various perspectives of teachers of different disciplines. Therefore, interviews were carried out with the biology teacher, the physics teacher, one of the two English language teachers (using a draw), one of the two math teachers (using a draw), and the CAS (Creativity, Activity, Service) teacher. It is worth mentioning that only a limited number of courses, 9 in total, will be taught as a start.

The interview consisted of questions related to their initial stance about their engagement in the program, their beliefs, values, and aspirations (Appendix H). Other questions inquired about factors that enabled their agency. Questions were comprehensive and targeting all aspects of the case study and they were derived from the reviewed literature. The interview questions were derived from an interview protocol developed by Balgopal (2020) and another one developed by Chaaban and Sawalhi (2020). Another interview was conducted with the DP coordinator to inquire about her role to support teacher agency and her perceptions of the enacted agency of the IB team during the preparation phase (Appendix I).

The purpose of the one-on-one interview was to give teachers the confidence to talk without judgment or peer pressure. Open-ended questions were used to ensure that

new ideas or opinions could also be discussed. Therefore, besides developing the main interview questions, probing questions were developed to elicit the participants' viewpoints, collect deeper information, and give them a chance to express their opinions. Moreover, these probing questions were used to make sure that the major themes that emerged from the questionnaire were covered in order to gain a better understanding of the case under study.

The online interviews were recorded with the participant's consent to ensure that all information provided was accurately transcribed and analyzed. An interview guide, which included a list of questions, was also utilized during the interviews.

As for the interview with the IBDP coordinator, it gave additional information about her perceptions of the enactment of teacher agency of the involved teachers during the past three years of engagement. If her perceptions were similar to those of teachers, it would reinforce what teachers were saying. In addition, this interview gave insights to her role in supporting the enactment of teacher agency. Data collected were used to triangulate and validate the findings.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data to be analyzed were collected from the following three instruments: Meeting observations, interviews, and the questionnaire. Data from interviews and meeting observations were analyzed qualitatively, while data from the questionnaire was analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

After obtaining consent from the participants, the interviews were recorded and transcribed. The transcriptions were then analyzed and organized into themes for the purpose of descriptive data analysis, which preserves all the relevant information for interpretation (Merriam, 2009). The transcribed files contained a verbatim account of the interviews conducted with the participants (Cohen et al., 2011). They were read, and the key ideas that addressed the study's research questions were highlighted to demonstrate their importance to the study. When the main themes were identified, data were revised and reread to determine how these themes pertained to the enactment of teacher agency, affordances of teacher agency, and negotiation of teachers' professional identity (Gibbs, 2007). Data from the interviews were manually categorized under the appropriate themes. A file was created for each theme and data was organized in each one according to its relevance to the theme. This kind of organization or raw data manipulation allowed for the transformation of data into a form that made it easy to understand and associate with the study's research questions to be analyzed. For example, data relevant to reasons that pushed teachers to participate in the IBDP team was placed under the theme "initial stance toward the change". The following themes were identified from the literature review and used in the analysis: Initial stance toward the change, influencing the work, personal affordances to teacher agency, relational affordances to teacher agency, contextual affordances to teacher agency, and negotiation of professional teacher identity.

For the questionnaire, the open-ended questions were "content analyzed" (Gibbs 2007; Merriam, 2009). For the closed questions and demographic information of the participants,

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descriptive statistics including frequency distributions were used to analyze the data. Percentage frequency distribution is a method of data presentation that illustrates the percentage of observations for each data point or group of data points. This technique is useful in representing the relative frequency of survey responses and other types of data. Percentage is appropriate when it is important to know what proportion of the participants gave a particular answer (Burns, 2000; Creswell, 2014).

Each closed-question item was scored on a Likert Scale that included statements in which the participants indicated their agreement or disagreement with each statement along a four-point scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree (Burns, 2000; Yin, 2018). Participants filled in the questionnaire indicating their agreement or disagreement with the statements by making checks (de Winter & Dodou, 2010). The percentage for a particular item was calculated by dividing the frequency of a given value by the total number of respondents and then multiplying the ratio by 100. The results were tabulated to identify patterns. A value of 75% and above was set as an acceptable value for an item to be considered verified. For example, if there is a sum of a minimum of 75 % on agree and strongly agree for a question item, this would signify that there is a collective consensus on the described behavior, attitude, or affordance.

As for the observations done, specific cues and patterns, and behaviors that are attributed to teacher agency according to the literature, were carefully examined to triangulate the findings. In addition, the interview with the IBDP coordinator provided additional information about her perceptions of the enactment of teacher agency of the

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involved teachers during the past three years of engagement. If her perceptions were similar to those of teachers, it would reinforce what teachers were saying. In addition, this interview gave insights into her role in supporting the enactment of teacher agency.

3.5 Validity and Reliability

Trustworthiness or rigor of a qualitative research should be considered while conducting research. It refers to the level of precision and confidence in the techniques used for data collection, analysis, and study quality assurance (Pilot & Beck, 2017). In qualitative research, more care is allocated to the precision, credibility, and transferability of findings. Since findings were derived from real-world settings, the reliability of the research depended on its quality. This quality was related to the researcher's effort to explain the phenomenon and ensure its credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Gibbs (2007) proposed a number of procedures for ensuring the reliability of qualitative data, such as reviewing transcripts to ensure that they are free of obvious errors made during the transcription process.

The strength of qualitative research lies in its validity, which is determined by the accuracy of the findings from the perspective of the researcher, the participant, or the readers of the account (Cohen et al., 2011). Content validity is enhanced when the research instruments adequately address the study questions (Walonick, 2005). By deriving the interview questions and questionnaire items from the research questions and the reviewed literature, the validity of the research study was improved. Gibbs (2007)

suggested several qualitative reliability procedures, such as checking transcripts to ensure they do not contain obvious transcription errors.

But mainly, the credibility of the research may be ensured through the data triangulation of the different instruments used (Patton, 2002; Cohen, et al., 2011). When various techniques of data gathering and multiple sources of data were used, triangulation was developed. To collect data for this study, three different approaches were taken: observation, interview, and survey. The disadvantages of each method were minimized and the results were cross verified, ensuring greater confidence in the results.

Moreover, to establish the validity of qualitative research, Gibbs (2007) recommended using respondent validation or member check. This technique involves verifying the initial results with the participants to determine if the findings still align with their experiences. This technique was applied in the current study.

Since it is a case study, the findings cannot be generalized. However, in qualitative research, transferability (external validity) is considered in terms of the reader, who assesses if the study's findings are appropriate to his or her circumstance (Merriam, 2009). To accomplish this, the researcher provided a full account of the study's setting and procedures, allowing the reader to compare the findings to his or her own circumstance. As a result, the findings were presented in a holistic and fully descriptive manner to ensure their transferability to similar situations.

3.6 Researcher's Bias and Assumptions

Conducting biased research is both morally and ethically inappropriate since it can lead to deceptive and incorrect judgments. In this case-study design, extra care was taken to avoid or to reduce researchers' bias for two reasons: First, the researcher is part of the IBDP team. Second, qualitative research was undertaken, which is more reliant on the researcher's expertise and judgment, and the sort of information gathered is individualized and specific to the individual or circumstance.

To resolve this issue, the following measures were taken:

1. Doing a member check, where the participants who provided the data were asked whether the researcher's interpretations seem to be representative of their beliefs.

2. Maintaining a still posture and neutral facial expressions throughout the interviews.

3. Keeping detailed records to avoid making mistakes. (Transcriptions, video-recordings, notes…)

4. Using a questionnaire which helped reduce bias since respondents completed it individually.

5. Giving respondents ample time to think and not rush answers.

6. Being honest when reporting the results and with the limitations of the study.

7. Triangulating data sources to verify answers.

8. Writing reflexive journals to help the researcher identify and acknowledge self-biases and assumptions, and to critically evaluate how these biases may be influencing the research findings. (Appendix J).

3.7 Research Ethics

The study upheld ethical considerations such as participant protection, informed consent, and privacy during the data collection and analysis processes. Prior to data collection, the participants were given an informed consent form (appendix C) to ensure their safety, confidentiality, and right to withdraw from the study if they felt uncomfortable. Moreover, the interview and questionnaire scripts included a brief introduction explaining the procedures, confidentiality and anonymity measures, and the right to withdraw at any time (including the use of video recording during the interview).

Moreover, all the instruments were checked by the IRB and they were edited according to the given comments. It is important to mention that the school's permission to conduct the study and the teachers' approval to participate in the study were prime considerations.

Furthermore, the researcher gathered and analyzed data with exceptional honesty and precision. Data that contradicted the researcher's beliefs and did not meet the goal of the data analysis were not excluded; therefore, all data were reported truthfully.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS

The study aimed to investigate teacher agency in the context of a curricular change and how instructors involved in the curricular change enacted agency through their actions and behaviors, and whether this enactment affected their professional identity. In addition, this study explored the personal, relational, and environmental aspects that aided their enactment of teacher agency. A questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and meeting observations were used to explore how eleven secondary teachers who were part of the team responsible for the implementation of the new curriculum enacted agency.

The researcher analyzed the findings of the questionnaire, interviews, and observations based on the themes that are present in the literature review and revolve around the research questions: 1) In which ways is teacher agency exhibited in the context of curricular change? 2) What personal, relational, and contextual factors do the participating teachers perceive as supporting to their enactment of teacher agency? 3) How has the enactment of teacher agency influenced teacher identity negotiation?

The subtitles in this chapter are relevant to the themes as presented in *Table 2* and are as follows: Initial stance toward the change, influencing the work, personal affordances to teacher agency, relational affordances to teacher agency, contextual affordances to teacher agency, and negotiation of professional teacher identity. A discussion of the results is provided in the last chapter of this paper.

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Table 2- *Emerged themes based on research questions and literature*

Research Questions	Themes
In which ways is teacher agency exhibited in the context of curricular change?	1. Initial stance toward the change 2. Influencing the work
What personal, relational, and contextual factors do the participating teachers perceive as supporting to their enactment of teacher agency?	1. Personal affordances 2. Relational affordances 3. Contextual affordances
How has the enactment of teacher agency influenced teacher identity negotiation?	1. Professional identity negotiation

The results are presented in the following manner. First, a general definition of the theme and the context is provided. Second, the results of the questionnaire and key findings are presented in a clear and concise manner. This is followed by interview data to back up the questionnaire results in addition to key themes, such as quotes and other relevant information. Moreover, the DP coordinator's thoughts are shared to support the results along with observations from the IBDP meetings. A list of interviews with their durations and dates is shown in *Table 3*.

Table 3 - Duration and dates of the interviews with the IB teachers (n=5) and the IBDP coordinator (n=1)

Number of Participants	Subject	Date	Duration
Participant 1 (PT 1)	Physics	November 25, 2022	22 min.
Participant 2 (PT 2)	English	November 27, 2022	24 min.
Participant 3 (PT 3)	Math	November 27, 2022	20 min.
Participant 4 (PT 4)	Biology	November 28, 2022	25 min.
Participant 5 (PT 5)	Art	November 28, 2022	24 min.
Interview with DP coordinator		**Date**	**Duration**
DP Coordinator (DPC)		December 2, 2022	21 min.

4.1 Initial Stance toward the Change

The change process began when the school's General Director decided that school X must gain IBDP authorization due to the high student demand for the program in Lebanon. After assigning a coordinator for the new program, meetings with secondary teachers were held in the school to introduce them to the program and its requirements. Eleven teachers willingly declared their interest and showed enthusiasm to work collaboratively to better understand the requirements for applying for IBDP candidacy and gain authorization later on. These teachers constituted the IBDP team.

These eleven teachers had a positive initial stance toward the new curriculum by voluntarily participating in the team of teachers that will embrace and implement the new curriculum. This participation meant that these teachers must discuss the goals of the curriculum, review the content, and share successful teaching strategies. Voluntary participation in the team entailed that teachers must work together and provide support to each other to create an effective and engaging learning experience for their students.

In the closed questionnaire, all teachers agreed that they voluntarily joined the IBDP team. Joining the team was not mandatory and there was no financial return to do so. Most were enthusiastic about being part of the team that will be working on the new curriculum. *Table 4* and *Figure 1* reflect the levels of agreement and disagreement on items in the questionnaire pertaining to the initial stance toward the change.

Table 4- Levels of agreement or disagreement (n=11) on items in the questionnaire pertaining to the initial stance toward the change

Initial Stance toward the Change	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
Being part of the IB team was mandatory or conditioned to years of experience.	36.36	63.64	0.00	0.00
Being part of the IB team was voluntary.	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00
I joined the IB team because I was paid to do it.	100.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
I am enthusiastic about this work.	9.10	0.00	36.36	54.54

Figure 1- Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items in the questionnaire pertaining to the initial stance toward the change

Initial Stance Toward the change

I am enthusiastic about this work.	(Disagree ~10%, Agree ~90%)
I joined the IB team because I was paid to do it.	(Disagree 100%)
Being part of the IB team was voluntary.	(Agree 100%)
Being part of the IB team was mandatory or conditioned to years of experience.	(Disagree 100%)
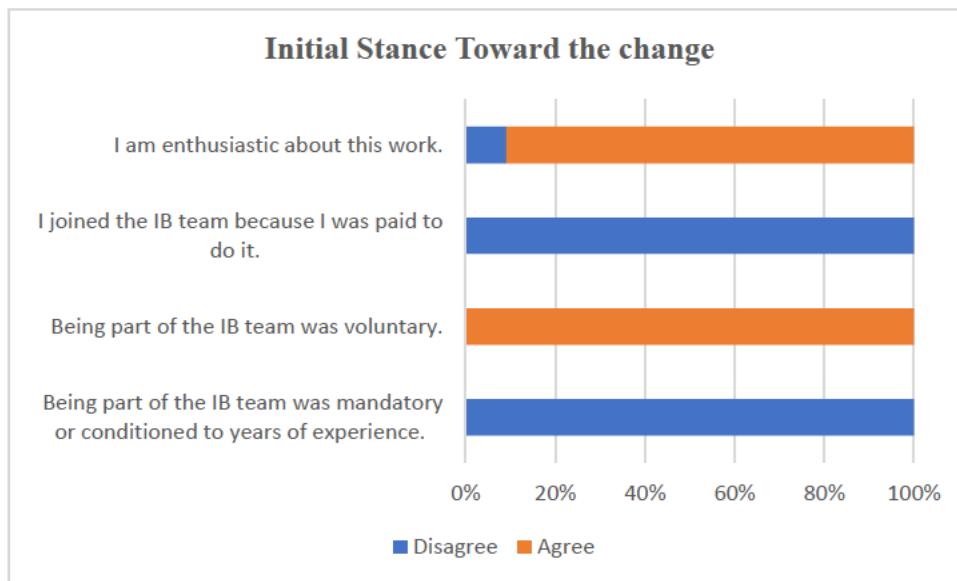
Note. Agree = Agree + Strongly Agree   Disagree = Disagree + Strongly Disagree

The DP coordinator has explained that her priority issue was forming a team of teachers who showed motivation and willingness to join a new program, and this wasn't that difficult because when the candidacy phase started, a good number of teachers volunteered.

They joined the program to accept the challenge and to try something new, and they exhibited certain qualities of the learner profile actually from the very start. Teachers came willingly, and they really showed motivation and a high level of professionalism (DPC, personal communication, December 2, 2022).

Several reasons led teachers to have a positive initial stance toward the new curriculum and be motivated to join the team. Some stated that they were seeking a change since the Lebanese curriculum was outdated (last reviewed in 1999) and not serving the

best interest of the students in a rapidly changing world. They believed that the IB

program would expose students to global contexts and allow them to acquire a variety of

skills that prepare them for the real world. "We have to shift, maybe because the main

problem is that the Lebanese program is outdated and is more teacher-centered and not

student-centered (PT 1, personal interview, November 25, 2022). Participant 4 agreed as

well on the importance of having the IB program at school, "The program allows the

development of students' personalities and helps in developing their research and

communication skills. The program also requires the students to learn skills related to

technology that are valuable in today's world" (PT 4, personal interview, November 28,

2022). Moreover, participant 3 considered the shift to the IB program an important step for

students:

> The math national program has not been reviewed since 1999 although it was
>
> planned to be reviewed every three years. However, the math IB program is
>
> reviewed every five years. Students will acquire an international mindset through
>
> the program and not their environment since we do not have diverse nationalities at
>
> school. Students will be equipped with critical thinking skills and complex
>
> problem-solving skills…. They will know how to manage their time and become
>
> lifelong learners (PT 3, personal interview, November 27, 2022).

In addition, all IB teachers shared one common reason behind joining the IB team:

They were all seeking professional development and growth. Teachers did not want to

remain stuck in their places. They wanted to try something new and unleash their

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professional skills to new boundaries: "I was seeking a change and mainly I was seeking professional development" (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "I am in continuous pursuit of opportunities that provide self-development and self-growth" (PT 5, personal interview, November 28, 2022). "I participated in the IB program because it is a challenging program that provides me with professional development and helps me provide a comprehensive education for my students…My primary reason is for professional development and growth" (PT 1, personal interview, November 25, 2022).

Moreover, some believed that being an IB teacher would enrich their CVs with experiences that are recognized and valued internationally. "Teaching in the IB program is a chance to work in a unique global environment while building my education career with experience that is recognized and valued internationally" (PT 3, personal interview, November 27, 2022).

An additional reason that motivated teachers to participate was their unique character of being risk-takers and choosing to be agents of change. "I think I am well known, maybe by my character. I am enthusiastic and I have the passion to try new things. I like the change" (PT 3, personal interview, November 27, 2022).

This motivation and passion to work were also reflected during the team meetings that were held on a weekly basis with the DP coordinator. The researcher's main observation is that participants were actively engaged in the various activities and discussions taking place. No signs of boredom or restlessness were shown. That was also affirmed by the DP coordinator when asked about the DP meetings taking place:

"Teachers are motivated, professional, and concerned. I never had a meeting where I found teachers sitting bored…. They are there to contribute, give their ideas about issues, and share ideas with others… They are present with full hearts" (DPC, personal interview, December 2, 2022).

4.2 Influencing at Work

When undergoing a curricular change, influencing at work can be demonstrated by taking an active role in the process. When teachers have the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to the development and implementation of a new curriculum and take an active role in developing effective teaching practices, and when teachers are given the autonomy to adjust the curriculum to best meet the needs of their students, then teachers have an influence at work. *Table 5* and *Figure 2* show the levels of agreement on items in the questionnaire reflecting teachers' influence at work.

Table 5- Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items in the questionnaire reflecting the influence at work

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I prefer a curriculum that tells the teacher exactly what to do so that I don't risk making the wrong decision.	0	54.55	45.45	0.00
I feel powerful and energetic while working.	0	9.09	36.36	54.55
I develop my ways of working.	0	0	45.45	54.55
I can make decisions regarding my own work.	0	0	36.36	63.64
I can participate in the preparation of matters in my unit.	0	0	36.36	63.64
I think I can be creative in my work with instructional activities.	0	0	27.27	72.73
My opinion is taken into consideration in my unit.	0	0	36.36	63.64
I am heard in matters relating to my own work.	0	0	18.18	81.82
My views are taken into consideration in the work community.	0	0	63.64	36.36
I think what my students learn in my class will be useful for them in other courses.	0	0	54.55	45.45
Once I choose a textbook, I will just use it, at most, as a guide. I will not hesitate to skip sections or point out.	0	18.18	45.45	36.36
In my course, I will combine textbooks and other materials, taking the best from each source.	0	0	27.27	72.73
The other members of the team inspire me.	0	0	45.45	54.55
I actively collaborate with others in my unit.	0	0	45.45	54.55
I make developmental suggestions regarding collective work practices.	0	0	81.82	18.18
If I feel it is necessary, I will speak out and express my views to my colleagues.	0	0	63.64	36.36
Teachers in the IB team seek new ways of teaching and learning.	0	0	36.36	63.64
I work collaboratively with other teachers to develop curricular material.	0	0	36.36	63.64

Figure 2 - Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on the items in the questionnaire reflecting the influence at work
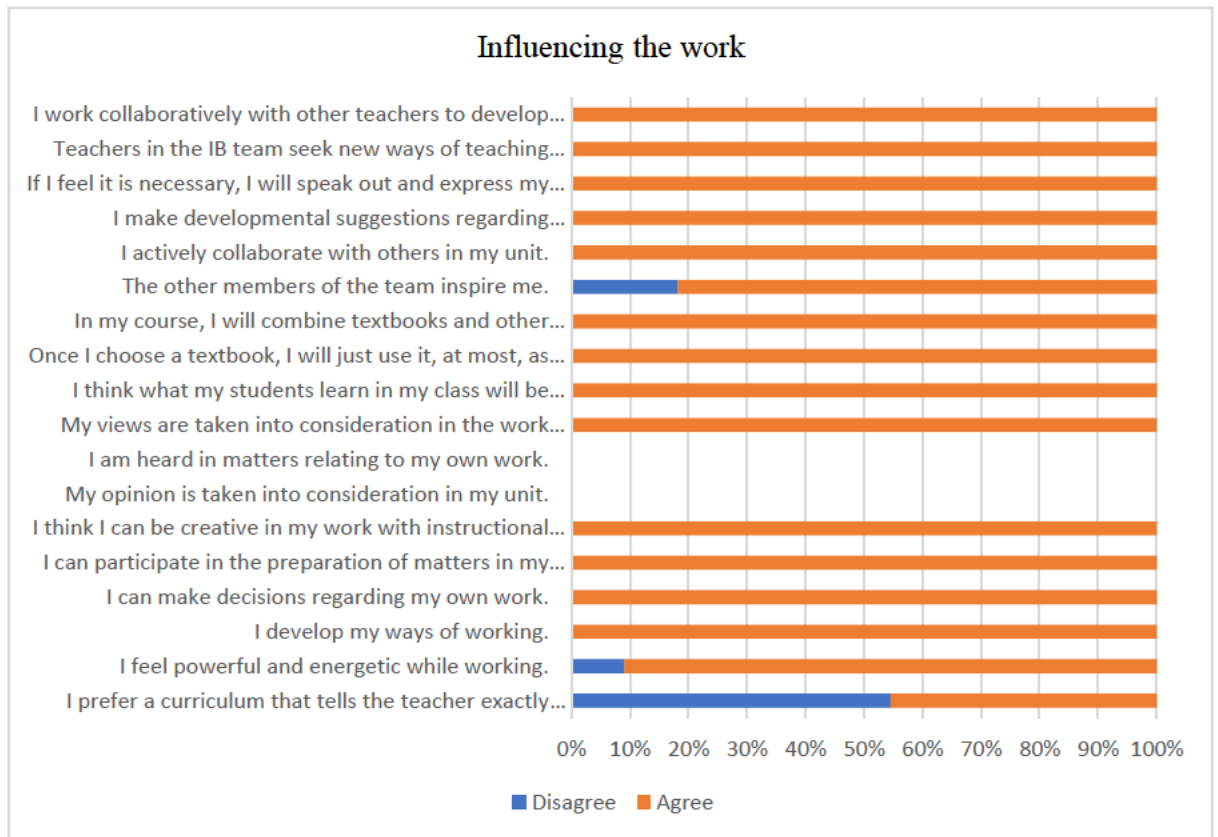
Note. Agree = Agree + Strongly Agree   Disagree = Disagree + Strongly Disagree

In the closed questionnaire, most respondents agreed that they feel empowered and energetic while working. They developed their own ways of working, took decisions, and were creative in preparing curricular materials for their units. Moreover, they were able to voice their opinions, and their views were taken into consideration by the team. In addition, teachers agreed that they combined textbooks and other materials, taking the best from each resource, and they sought new ways of teaching and learning. However, some teachers expressed a preference to work using a prescribed curriculum where they are told

what to do exactly. Nevertheless, teachers acknowledged that they participated in professional development activities and collaborated with colleagues on developing effective instructional material and teaching strategies.

In the interview with the DP coordinator, she talked about the major contribution of teachers and the support they provided so that the school earned the IB authorization.

The authorization was built on teachers' support… a major part of the authorization is based on the curriculum and course outlines developed by teachers. I received minor remarks on the submitted work by teachers from the external IB facilitator. It was impressive…Teachers challenged themselves and worked really hard to reach their goals (DPC, personal interview, December 2, 2022).

When interviewed, teachers focused on the collaborative work they had done during the authorization phase. When referring to the IBDP team, all teachers mentioned the term "family" to describe the collegial and supportive atmosphere prevailing in the team. "It is a great relationship. We always ask for help from each other… We are more than colleagues, we are one family" (PT 1, personal interview, November 25, 2022). "There are strong relationships among teachers and positive collaboration" (PT 4, personal interview, November 28, 2022). "We are not just colleagues, we are one family, a real family" (PT 3, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "We help each other. Whenever we face any difficulty or any problem, that's why, since we are a family; everyone is here to help each other" (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "The relationship with

colleagues can be described more as a friendship based on mutual respect and collaboration" (PT 5, personal interview, November 28, 2022).

When asked about ways to develop instructional materials for their courses, teachers answered that they created their own presentations and their course outlines and guides after doing lots of readings and using IBO resources and other resources. "I have created my own guide" (PT 5, personal interview, November 28, 2022). "I had lots of readings that helped me in the preparations" (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "We, as science teachers, prepared lab equipment lists needed to perform all the practices and activities" (PT 4, personal interview, November 28, 2022).

The researcher's observation of the DP weekly meetings reinforced the above-mentioned statements: Participants freely voiced their thoughts and ideas about teaching strategies and time breakdown and proposed sequence for the different topics. All listened to other speakers with respect and interest. Moreover, teachers were given opportunities to prepare themselves and present to colleagues Approaches to Teaching and Learning (ATL). The DP coordinator always took into consideration their propositions and asked for their opinions. Teachers felt they were in a safe environment with no signs of anxiety or cautiousness.

4.3 Affordances to Teacher Agency

4.3.1 Personal Affordances to Teacher Agency

Personal affordances to the teacher agency refer to the individual resources and abilities that teachers possess, which influence their ability to make decisions and act in

their professional roles (Eteläpelto et al., 2014; Vähäsantanen et al., 2018). A teacher's experience and expertise in a particular subject area are personal affordances to the teacher agency. For example, a teacher who has a degree in science or mathematics may have a better understanding of the material they are teaching than someone who does not (Chaaban et al., 2021). This expertise can help them better explain concepts to their students and provide them with more accurate information (Vähäsantanen et al., 2018).

The demographic information collected from the questionnaire showed that all teachers in the team have a minimum of a bachelor's degree in the subject they teach and they possess a minimum of 10 years of experience in teaching. *Table 6* provides demographic information of participants.

Table 6- Demographic information of the participants including degrees and years of teaching experience (n=11)

Gender	Age	Educational Level	Employment Status	Years of Experience	Subject Area
Female	Between 35 and 45	Bachelor's degree in visual arts	Full-time	17	Arts
Female	Between 45 and 55	Bachelor's degree in math	Full-time	30	Math
Female	Between 35 and 45	Master's degree in physics	Full-time	11	Physics
Female	Above 55	Bachelor's degree in biology	Full-time	35	Biology
Female	Between 45 and 55	Bachelor's degree in English literature	Full-time	20	English
Female	Above 55	Master's degree in English Literature	Full-time	30	English
Female	Between 35 and 45	Bachelor's degree in English literature	Full-time	22	English
Female	Above 55	Bachelor's degree in the French language	Full-time	30	French
Male	Above 55	Doctoral Degree (Math Education)	Full-time	40	Math
Female	Between 35 and 45	Bachelor's degree in Arabic literature	Full-time	19	Arabic
Female	Between 25 and 35	Bachelor's degree in biology	Full-time	13	Biology

The DP coordinator also commended how hard teachers worked without complaining during the whole phase of authorization, and part of it was during the lockdown period of Covid-19. She described how interested they were to meet deadlines because they were really working to develop material that served the best interest of students. "…When everyone was at home during Covid, the team was working and we were meeting online, and they never complained… they were working during those

difficult times… teachers were highly supportive…they showed how much they care for their students" (DPC, personal interview, December 2, 2022).

A personal affordance to teacher agency is related to the autonomy of teachers who have control over their work, as well as the freedom to make decisions and the ability to develop their own materials and teaching styles. All teachers agreed that they were given free space to work on their course outlines and instructional material. This agreement was documented in the questionnaire and the interviews.

In the questionnaire, respondents agreed that they believe they have skills in teaching and are not afraid to take risks. In addition, they have a sense of pride in doing the work and possess the freedom and autonomy to develop their work. *Table 7* and *Figure 3* show the levels of agreement and disagreement on items related to personal affordances.

Table 7- Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items related to personal affordances

Personal Affordances	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I have knowledge and skill in teaching.	0	0	27.3	72.73
I am known as a person who is not afraid to take risks.	0	0	54.5	45.45
It is important to me to develop my teaching skills.	0	0	36.4	63.64
I have a sense of pride in doing my work	0	0	36.4	63.64
I am given a sufficient amount of freedom in the work I do.	0	0	54.5	45.45
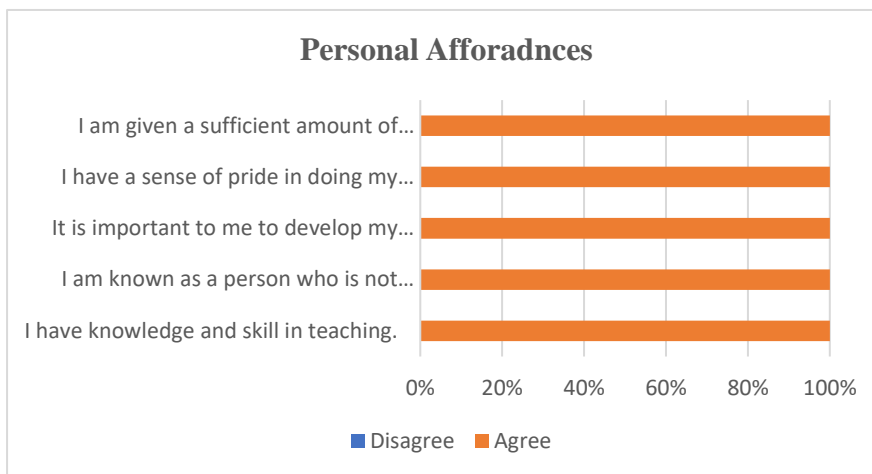
Note. Agree = Agree + Strongly Agree   Disagree = Disagree + Strongly Disagree

The DP coordinator asserted that the team of teachers working on the new curriculum are all "professionals". Moreover, PT 1 saw herself as having "great experience in teaching the Lebanese program and having a good background in the IB program from private tutoring" (Personal interview, November 25, 2022). On another hand, PT 4 expressed great interest in the program because "it is a challenging program that provides me with professional development and helps me provide a comprehensive education for my students" (PT 4, personal interview, November 28, 2022). Moreover, from her own perspective, PT 2 believed that teachers in the team are professional since "they are well organized, and they collaborate with colleagues and parents, to face all challenges" (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022).

Moreover, teachers were enjoying their time during the preparation because they were doing something they were interested in and doing so for their own sake and the sake

of their students. "We prepared our own course outlines that include all the required information in accordance with the IB requirements and philosophy. And of course, this took a lot of time and effort but we were enjoying our new preparation" (PT 1, personal interview, November 25, 2022).

4.3.2 Relational Affordances to Teacher Agency

A relational affordance to teacher agency is the ability to build relationships with colleagues and administrators. Through building relationships, teachers can foster open communication and collaboration, which is essential to a successful implementation of a new curriculum (Emirbayer, & Mische, 1998; Eteläpelto et al., 2014).

In the questionnaire, the majority of teachers agreed that they feel they are working not with colleagues, but with "family" members. They acknowledged the important role of the collegial and collaborative atmosphere prevailing in the team, the thing that made their work more fruitful and efficient. In addition, there is a shared kind of leadership in the team where all decisions are taken after consultation between the DP coordinator and the teachers. There is no top-down decision-making, but rather decisions were made by consensus. Findings on relational affordances are reflected in *Table 8* and *Figure 4*.

Table 8- Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items related to relational

affordances

Relational Affordances	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I like the people I work with.	0	0	36.4	63.6
Teachers are cooperative and supportive of each other.	0	0	45.5	54.5
There is a "we" spirit in the IB team.	0	0	45.5	54.5
Important decisions taken by the diploma coordinator are made with the agreement with teachers.	0	0	18.2	81.8

Figure 4 - Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items related to relational

affordances
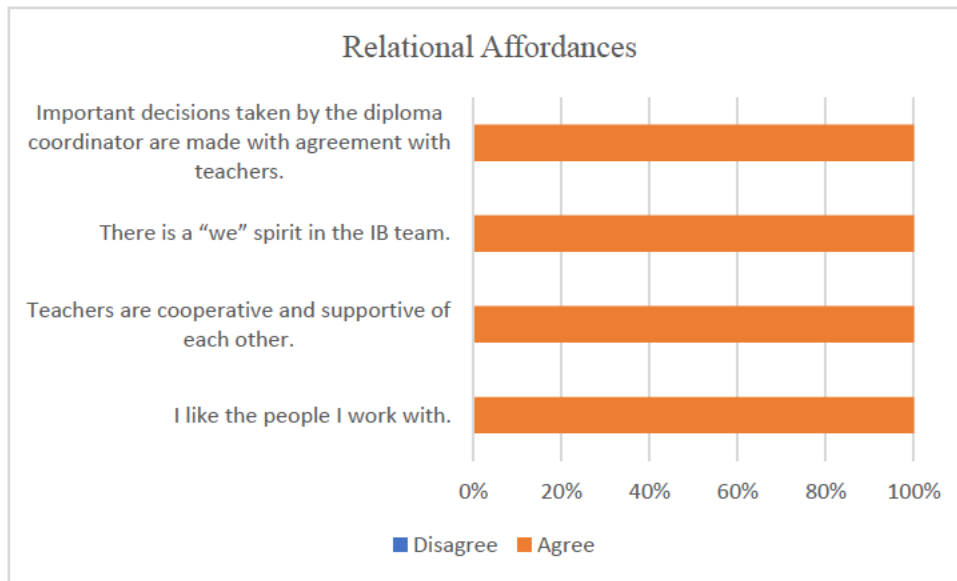
Note. Agree= Agree + Strongly Agree   Disagree= Diasgree + Strogly Disagree

Some excerpts from the interviews emphasize this strong bond among teachers and between teachers and the diploma coordinator. Starting with relationships among colleagues: "At school, we work as a family. We always collaborate. We help each other whenever we face any problem" (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "The collaborative work between teachers created a positive environment for work and this helped us to overcome any difficulties" (PT 4, personal interview, November 28, 2022). "We are a collaborative team. We are more than colleagues; we are one family" (PT 1, personal interview, November 25, 2022). "The relationship with colleagues, I see it more as a friendship based on mutual respect and collaboration" (PT 5, personal interview, November 28, 2022). "We are not just colleagues, we are one family, a real family. We all care for each other and help each other. We share ideas and experiences" (PT 3, personal interview, November 27, 2022).

As for the relationship with the DP coordinator, teachers described how much they respect and trust her and how much she assisted them in the work they were doing. "The IB coordinator played a very important role during the preparation phase. She was supportive of teachers in the planning phase" (PT 3, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "The role of the IBDP coordinator was essential…She was dedicated, supportive, and open-minded" (PT 5, personal interview, November 28, 2022). "The IBDP coordinator was helping a lot… she provided us with all updates on the program, she helped us in getting resources needed" (PT 3, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "The DP coordinator played an important role by holding regular meetings" (PT 4,

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personal interview, November 28, 2022). "The DP coordinator helped a lot… She helped

us understand the standards of IB, and the requirements, and she did workshops and

involved us as teachers also to do workshops. She kept us involved in the whole process

and took our opinions into consideration" (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022).

Even the researcher felt this climate of comfort, collaboration, collegiality, trust,

and respect during the meeting observations.

4.3.3 Contextual Affordances to Teacher Agency

Contextual affordances consider the conditions and circumstances in the teachers'

environment, and how these conditions and circumstances can provide opportunities for

action and interaction (Campbell, 2012; Calvert, 2016; Hökkä & Eteläpelto, 2014). The

data collected from the questionnaire gave evidence that the IBDP teachers worked in a

very supportive environment that facilitated their mission and allowed them to operate

effectively and efficiently. The majority of the teachers affirmed that they were provided

with all the needed educational resources and equipment to have a comprehensive

implementation of the new curriculum. Moreover, teachers received professional

development opportunities during the preparation phase and time was allotted on a weekly

basis to allow teachers to work collaboratively and individually. In addition, teachers

worked in a safe environment where freedom of expression and thinking prevailed. These

findings are reflected in *Table 9* and *Figure 5*.

Table 8- Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items related to contextual affordances

Contextual Affordances	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
The DP coordinator talks with us frankly and openly.	0	0	18.2	81.8
The DP coordinator showed trust in the teachers' professionalism.	0	0	18.2	81.8
Teachers are given a sufficient amount of freedom in the work they do.	0	0	27.3	72.7
Teachers can get the instructional materials and equipment they need.	0	0	27.3	72.7
The Diploma coordinator is very active in securing resources to facilitate the preparation of instructional materials.	0	0	27.3	72.7
Professional development opportunities offered were of good quality.	0	0	63.6	36.4
Adequate time was allocated for the team to regularly meet.	0	0	36.4	63.6
Adequate time was allocated for individual teachers to work.	0	0	54.5	45.5

Note. Agree= Agree + Strongly Agree   Disagree= Disagree + Strongly Disagree

When interviewed, teachers assured that they were receiving the necessary support from the DP coordinator to better engage in the process of curricular change, and implement the new curriculum effectively. They are provided with the proper resources and adequate time needed for the preparation and planning. Resources include textbooks, technology, and other materials. Furthermore, all teachers attended many workshops that helped them better understand the requirements of the new curriculum and they were having weekly team meetings to discuss the work progress and updates of the program. All of these elements created an environment in which teachers felt empowered and thrilled to work and be creative.

I think, as teachers, that we have room at school to pursue our goals… We

participated in workshops and the school helped us financially by subscribing to

many online platforms to get resources such as *inThinking*, *ProQuest*, *the IB*

Question Bank, and others… The school provided us with books that were

extremely helpful in the preparation of the curriculum… Moreover, we attended

several meetings to collaborate (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022).

Participant 4 shared a similar thought: "We attended many workshops with

excellent trainers in addition to having weekly collaborative meetings to work on applying

approaches" (PT 4, personal interview, November 28, 2022).

Participant 1 enthusiastically enumerated the resources and opportunities provided

by the school during the authorization phase:

The school supplied the labs with the latest high-tech equipment … The labs got

totally renewed. The school library was also renewed and lots of new resources

were purchased. Moreover, all classrooms planned to be used for the IB were

equipped with computers, interactive boards, and Wi-Fi connection … The school

paid all the expenses to send all the team to Dubai to attend the IB category 1

workshop (PT1, personal interview, November 25, 2022).

From her side, the DP coordinator talked about her role "to empower teachers", "to

allow them to gain more experience and insights", and "to instill leadership skills in

teachers" (DPC, personal interview, December 2, 2022).

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She also expressed her belief that when teachers grow, she grows with them, since she is learning from them too.

4.4 Negotiating Teacher Identity

Identity negotiation amid a curricular change is adjusting one's self-perception and identity to fit the changes. Identity negotiation provides the space for teachers to adjust their expectations, goals, and practices to accommodate the new curriculum so that their professional identities evolve and fit the new realities (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009; Beijaard, 2009).

In the questionnaire, most teachers agreed that they participated in the team to become part of the IB teachers' community since they find personal value in this issue. Becoming an IB teacher fulfilled teachers' personal goals to professionally grow and serve the best interest of students as well. On the other hand, teachers perceived themselves as professionals and acknowledged the importance of collaborative work to have successful outcomes in the change process. Most teachers perceived their embarking on the reform process as a positive experience for them. Levels of agreement and disagreement on items pertaining to professional identity negotiation are shown in *Table 10* and *Figure 6*.

Table 9- Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items pertaining to professional identity negotiation

Professional Identity Negotiation	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I joined the IB team to be part of the community of IB teachers.	0	9.1	54.5	27.3
I joined the IB team because it is important for me to carry out this task.	0	0.0	54.5	45.5
I find personal value in becoming an IBDP teacher.	0	0.0	63.6	36.4
I joined the IB team to realize my professional goals.	0	0.0	54.5	45.5
Being part of the team was significant to me since it contributed to my personal growth.	0	0.0	36.4	63.6
I participated in the team since I am concerned with the best interest of my students.	0	0.0	54.5	45.5
I feel pleased when committing myself to this work.	0	0.0	54.5	45.5
Becoming an IB teacher affected how I perceive myself as a professional.	0	9.1	54.5	36.4
Becoming an IB teacher affected how others perceived you as a professional.	0	18.2	63.6	18.2
I believe that in order for change to be successful, teachers must work together.	0	0.0	27.3	72.7
I value working collaboratively with other teachers.	0	0.0	27.3	72.7
Embarking in the reform process was a positive experience for me	0	0.0	54.5	45.5
My self-professional identity as a teacher has changed over the years of engagement.	0	0.0	63.6	36.4

Figure 6 - Levels of agreement and disagreement (n=11) on items pertaining to professional identity negotiation
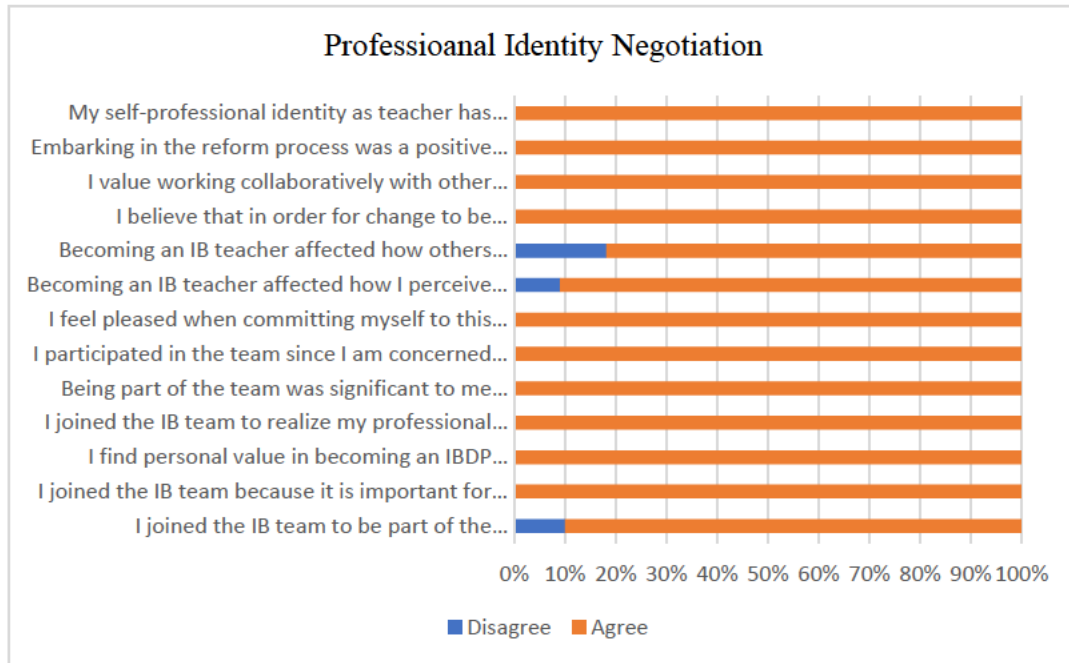
Note. Agree = Agree + Strongly Agree   Disagree = Disagree + Strongly Disagree

And when asked to describe themselves after this preparation phase to be granted the IBDP authorization using an open-ended question in the questionnaire, all responses reflected an evolvement or addition that happened to their identity as teachers: open-minded, creative, more experienced, more aware of teaching processes, proud, confident, and more knowledgeable. A list of their responses is shown in *Table 11*.

Table 10- Teachers' own description of themselves after the authorization phase (n=11)

Theme: Professional Identity Negotiation
I became more open-minded, more confident, and more ambitious.
Open-minded
Open-minded and critical thinker
Aware of teaching through the cycle of inquiry, action, and reflection
open to different subjects
Aware of new concepts, more knowledgeable about different issues, more enthusiastic about
accomplishing the task successfully
experience when it comes to teaching, learning, and assessing my students.
responsible, open-minded, creative, and enjoy teaching
Confident and proud
distinguished for the material I deal with
reflective and resourceful

And when asked to use their own words to describe this engagement period, they all described the experience as being thrilling, exhausting but fun, challenging, fruitful, rich in knowledge, inspiring, motivating, amazing, informative, etc. The answers of all participants are tabulated in *Table 12*.

Table 11 - Teachers' own description of their engagement period in the curriculum change

Thrilling, motivating, and promising
A big challenge to move from the Lebanese program to the o IB program so that students will be independent Learners that know how to manage their time.
Awesome but challenging because the learning process starts with "us the teachers"
Insightful
Hectic and fruitful
Exhausting but fun, inspiring, and pleasing
The most efficient experience since I have had the chance to develop my profession.
Rich in knowledge, it allowed me to know my abilities to create new teaching methods to make the task easier
Fruitful, rich, and amazing

Purposeful
Satisfying and informative

The DP coordinator also touched on a noticeable change in teachers amid this process:

I felt the change because I was the head of secondary for a long period of time, and I dealt with the same teachers. Now when I see them in the IB program, I see them totally differently. I see them as more confident, caring towards one another and toward the students, and more willing to learn and share ideas. I feel them having the tendency to voice their thoughts without any barriers. I see motivated and enthusiastic teachers in the team. I see the smiles on their faces most of the time. They have definitely changed… (DPC, personal interview, December 2, 2022).

Teachers elaborated more on this side when interviewed. They elaborated on how much they have professionally developed after passing through many stages in the preparation phase. They became more confident and open-minded and perceived added self-value with their accomplishments. Moreover, they acquired new skills and qualities. Even some perceived themselves as researchers and inquirers rather than teachers since they were always reading and looking for novelty in their teaching practices. "I perceive things differently… I now consider myself a researcher, seeking new things that serve the best interest of my students and at the same time that fulfill my interests and goals" (PT 2, personal interview, November 27, 2022). "I feel I am a different teacher now" (PT 1, personal interview, November 25, 2022). "To be honest, I have more value for myself now. I am now a more professionally developed person. I have been exposed to people

with different backgrounds and rich experiences. We shared the same goal. Now I look at myself as a person with much dedication and commitment to the role I have been assigned to do. This brings me satisfaction and confidence" (PT 5, personal interview, November 28, 2022).

In conclusion, this chapter showed common findings from the data collected from the questionnaire, interviews with teachers and with the DP coordinator, and observations of the DP meetings. The findings of the study showed that all 11 teachers involved voluntarily joined the IB team and participated in the development of instructional materials and teaching strategies. Moreover, the results suggest that these teachers had a positive initial stance toward the change, were motivated to join the team to seek professional development, growth, and the best interests of their students, and were given personal, relational, and contextual affordances to exercise their agency. The teachers were also able to negotiate their professional identity through collaborative work and shared leadership, and they worked in a supportive environment that facilitated their mission.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

This study aimed to investigate teacher agency in the context of launching a new curriculum, the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), as an alternative curriculum to the National Lebanese Curriculum adopted at the secondary level in a Lebanese private school X in Beirut. It explored how teachers enacted agency through their actions and behaviors as well as the personal, relational, and environmental aspects that aided their enactment. The focus of the study was on the impact of agency on identity negotiations, with specific attention given to three factors: work influence, reform involvement, and self-realization.

This chapter discusses the results of the study aligned with the research questions and their connections to reviewed literature. The research questions are:

1- In which ways is teacher agency exhibited in the context of curricular change?

2- What personal, relational, and contextual factors do the participating teachers perceive as supporting to their enactment of teacher agency?

3- How has the enactment of teacher agency influenced teacher identity negotiation?

Eleven secondary teachers who were part of the team responsible for gaining the IBDP authorization after the school was granted candidacy participated in this study. The data collected from a questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and observations of team

meetings were used to answer and discuss the research questions. Results were compared with those of research papers from the literature.

This study used the subject-centered, socio-cultural approach to teacher agency. This approach refers to the ability of teachers to actively participate in creating and implementing curricular changes that align with the subject-specific goals, values, and practices of the community they serve (Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). In this approach, teachers are viewed as knowledgeable practitioners who deeply understand the subject matter they teach and the social and cultural contexts in which they teach. They are seen are active agents who have the ability to shape and adapt the curriculum to suit their students' needs and interests. While doing so, they must also ensure that they meet the standards and expectations of the wider academic community (Biesta & Tedder, 2007; Hökkä et al., 2017; Lasky, 2005).

5.1 Interpretation of Findings

The responses to three research questions—how teacher agency is implemented in the face of a curriculum change, how that implementation is supported, and how this implementation affects professional teacher identity—were the focus of the current study. The findings of the research and their interpretations are presented in the following section.

5.1.1 Teacher Agency

There was a general consensus that all eleven teachers have joined the IBDP team on a voluntary basis. They were motivated to embark on the reform process and had an initial

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positive stance toward it. These teachers were mainly seeking professional growth and change. They perceived change as a necessity due to the presence of an obsolete national curriculum which they perceived as not serving the best interest of their students anymore in a rapidly changing world. They believed that the new curriculum would allow students to be exposed to global contexts and to gain various skills that they need to strive for in real life. This is consistent with the research where a number of academics have linked teacher agency to involvement in decision-making, a favorable attitude toward the change, and a greater commitment to implementing the new curriculum than teachers who felt the change was forced upon them. In a study on teacher agency in the context of professional development conducted by Eteläpelto and Vähäsantanen (2017), it was argued that teachers who had a sense of agency were more likely to engage in professional development activities and take ownership of their learning. These teachers were also more likely to apply their learning to their practice and to share their knowledge with colleagues. The authors concluded that teacher agency is an important factor in promoting ongoing professional development and improving teaching practice. Moreover, Imants J. and Van der Wal (2018), in their study about teacher agency in the context of educational reforms, found that teachers who had a sense of agency were more likely to take initiative in implementing the reforms in their classrooms. These teachers were also more likely to adapt the reforms to fit their own teaching style and the needs of their students. The teachers' choice to participate in the IBDP team and their supportive attitude toward the reform initiative reveals a significant desire for professional development and change in

the Lebanese setting. This discovery is especially important in light of the existence of an obsolete national curriculum that is thought to no longer serve Lebanese students' best interests in a fast-changing and evolving world. The teachers in this study recognized the value of the new curriculum in exposing students to global contexts and equipping them with the necessary skills for real-life success. This aligns with the needs of Lebanese students who require a curriculum that prepares them to thrive in a globalized society. Moreover, by embracing the new curriculum, teachers can enhance their skills, collaborate with peers, improve career prospects, and fulfill their intrinsic motivation as educators. This makes them more relevant and adaptable in an ever-changing educational landscape.

All teachers likewise achieved teacher agency through their active engagement in the process of curricular change. Findings showed that teachers were given the autonomy to adjust the curriculum to best meet the needs of their students and the opportunity to make meaningful contributions to the development and implementation of the new curriculum. Moreover, they had an active role in developing instructional materials and teaching strategies and designing learning experiences that they thought would serve their learning objectives. In addition, they participated in professional development activities and collaborated with colleagues to develop effective instructional strategies. These teachers demonstrated leadership by modeling best practices, providing constructive feedback, and promoting a culture of professional respect and collaboration. In other words, the results reflected the great influence these teachers had at work. In schools,

teachers exert agency by exerting influence, making decisions, and adopting positions that impact their work (Eteläpelto et al., 2013).

These results are in line with several studies reported in literature. Synthesizing the findings of previous studies, it was found that influencing at work, such as decision-making, being heard at work, developing work practices, collaborating with colleagues, and having opinions taken into consideration, give evidence of teacher agency (Calvert, 2016; Campbell, 2012; Chaaban & Sawalhi, 2020; Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Imants & Van der Wal, 2020; Jenkins, 2019; Kayi-Aydar, 2015; Lipponen & Kumpulainen, 2011; Priestley et al., 2012; Vähäsantanen, 2015; Vähäsantanen & Etelpäleto, 2011; Vähäsantanen et al., 2018). Fostering teacher agency in the case of Lebanon, where there is a need for comprehensive educational reform, can enable teachers to actively participate in molding the curriculum and instructional strategies to suit the unique needs of Lebanese students, and to prepare them to succeed in their careers.

Furthermore, the research points to a critical role of teacher agency in curriculum creation (Campbell, 2012; Priestley et al., 2012), teacher leadership (Biesta, & Robinson, 2013; Chaaban & Sawalhi, 2020), and professional development (Imants & Van der Wal, 2020).

5.1.2 Affordances to Teacher Agency

Teacher agency is closely linked to the concept of affordance, which refers to the various opportunities and resources available to teachers for exercising their agency within their professional environments (Biesta et al., 2015; Campbell, 2012). Personal

affordances are particularly important in relation to teacher agency, as they provide individuals with the necessary resources and skills to shape their own learning and professional growth (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998). The findings of the survey showed that all teachers involved in the IBDP team have extensive experience in teaching and a good educational background in the subject they teach. Most have more than just a bachelor's degree in their area of specialty. Furthermore, when interviewed, participants expressed a high level of confidence in their professionalism and their capacity to take decisions in developing curricular materials that are suitable for the new curriculum and are in favor of its emphasized approaches to teaching and learning. Moreover, all teachers and the DP coordinator affirmed that there is open communication and collaboration among colleagues and administrators. These findings are consistent with findings in several educational research.

Lasky (2005) argued that a growth mindset can increase a teacher's sense of agency and capacity to have a positive impact on students' learning since it makes people more receptive to new ideas and willing to take risks in their teaching. According to Jääskelä et al. (2016), teacher agency is influenced by interest and motivation, self-efficacy, competence beliefs, and interactive engagement. Moreover, in their recent study, Tinn and Ümarik (2021) emphasized the role of collegial coherence and collaborative effort for the growth of agency.

Relational affordances refer to the social and professional relationships that support teacher agency (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). The findings from the questionnaire and the

interviews as well as from the meeting observations show that there is a high level of collegiality and collaboration among teachers. When developing curricular materials, teachers shared ideas and sought help from each other. They listened to each other's ideas. Moreover, the DP coordinator was resourceful and showed trust in her team's professionalism. There was mutual respect between her and the teachers. In fact, teachers expressed their happiness to be working in such a cooperative and familial atmosphere. These findings are aligned with many research studies. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012) emphasized the importance of supportive relationships and collaborative cultures in fostering teacher agency, arguing that "teachers who work in collaborative cultures with supportive colleagues and leaders are more likely to experience high levels of agency" (p. 11). Moreover, Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, and Hökkä (2013) also discussed the role of social interactions in shaping teacher agency. They argued that teachers' participation in social and professional communities can provide them with opportunities to develop their agency and identity as teachers. According to Campbell's study (2012), teacher communities can be very helpful in promoting teacher agency. Teachers who are members of strong communities feel more in control of the curriculum and the choices they make regarding how to instruct their students. This shows that relational affordances can increase teacher agency and give teachers the opportunity to play a more active role in defining their professional identities and practices.

The opportunities and resources made available by the institutional, social, and cultural environments in which teachers operate are referred to as contextual affordances

(Kayi-Aydar, 2015). Results showed that participants accredited the presence of a school culture that provides them with enough space to work with a certain level of autonomy and freedom, in addition to leadership support. Teachers were allotted time in their weekly schedule to collaborate and develop instructional material suitable for the new curriculum. In addition, the school offered training and professional development opportunities to teachers to aid in the successful implementation of the new curriculum. Similar findings from the literature indicated that contextual affordances could support teachers' enactment of professional agency (Hargreaves, 2013; Kayi-Aydar, 2015). A supportive and empowering school culture may enhance teachers' sense of efficacy and agency, while a negative or unsupportive culture may undermine their sense of efficacy and agency (Bandura, 2001). Ketelaar et al. (2014) found that instructors' perceptions of their own agency were improved when they had access to contextual affordances including time, resources, and helpful coworkers. Because they had set aside time for collaborative work and had access to a variety of materials, teachers felt more in control of the content and structure of the curriculum. The promotion of teacher agency also benefited from the assistance of supportive coworkers like teacher leaders and administrators. These findings collectively suggest that contextual affordances can be crucial in promoting teacher agency amid curriculum development, and this is the case in this study.

This study underscores the significance of personal, relational, and contextual affordances in supporting teacher agency. Lebanese teachers need to have access to

resources and opportunities for professional growth to exercise their agency effectively. The extensive teaching experience and good educational backgrounds of the teachers in the study indicate that Lebanese educators possess the potential to contribute significantly to curriculum development and implementation. However, it is essential to provide them with ongoing professional development opportunities, collaborative platforms, and supportive school cultures that value their expertise and contributions.

5.1.3 Teacher Identity Negotiation

Findings from this study revealed that teachers worked to create a sense of self that is grounded in their values, skills, and experiences while also meeting the demands of the new curriculum. This included building relationships with colleagues, taking on new responsibilities, and making decisions that aligned with their personal goals of professional growth and their students' best interest, and organizational goals of instilling a new program at school to increase effectiveness and maintain a good stand among competitor schools. Teachers were trying to create and maintain a professional identity that met their own expectations and those of the school. During the implementation of the new program, these teachers experienced tension between their existing practices, such as what they used to do in the old curriculum, and the new demands of the program. This tension led to a process of negotiation in which the teachers evaluated and redefined their professional identities in light of the novelty of a new curriculum. They are now facilitators of student learning rather than traditional "sage on the stage" instructors. Among the cores of the IB program are the Approaches of Teaching and Learning (ATL),

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which focus on students' acquired knowledge and skills and are not based on dictating information to students as mostly suggested in the national program. Teachers also acknowledged the presence of an interdisciplinary approach in the new curriculum which is not targeted in the existing curriculum. Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) explored how four primary school teachers negotiated their professional identities during a curricular change that introduced a new program in environmental education. The study found that the teachers' identities were influenced by their beliefs about the purpose of education and the role of teachers in promoting sustainable development.

Moreover, the engagement of teachers in several professional development opportunities and peer collaboration assisted teachers to create new teaching practices to accommodate the new curriculum which accelerated teachers' professional identity negotiation. Teachers developed a new understanding of their professional identity as facilitators of student learning and became members of a global community of teachers, the IB teachers. In her study, Arvaja (2018) explored how an academic negotiated her professional identity in the context of changing demands and expectations within academia. Peer collaboration and professional development opportunities were shown to have supported teacher identity negotiation by providing opportunities for reflection, learning, and collaboration.

Furthermore, findings from the study showed that teachers' professional identity is not stable and keeps on evolving. When interviewed, teachers perceive themselves as "new" teachers with added professionalism. Previous research suggests that a teacher's

identity is not fixed, but rather dynamic and evolving. It is argued that a teacher's identity is shaped by teachers' experiences, including their formal education and professional development, their interactions with colleagues, students, parents, and their personal beliefs and values (Akkerman & Meijer, 2010; Beijaard et al., 2004). Therefore, the shift towards a facilitator role and the emphasis on approaches to teaching and learning that focus on student engagement and interdisciplinary approaches align well with the aspirations of Lebanese teachers to provide quality education and promote critical thinking and creativity among students.

On the flip side, this case study notably supported the argument that teacher agency and teacher identity are interrelated. Teachers who think strongly about who they are and are confident in their abilities are empowered to take control of their professional development and make decisions that align with their beliefs and values. Meanwhile, teacher agency has shaped teachers' identities. Teachers who are empowered to make decisions and take actions that are consistent with their values and beliefs have developed a stronger sense of identity and commitment to their profession. According to Vähäsantanen (2015), teacher agency and identity are intertwined and have an effect on one another when curricula are changed. She states that teachers' decisions and behaviors are influenced by how they view themselves and their duties in the classroom. Moreover, she contends that teacher agency and identity are crucial during periods of curricular transition, when instructors may have a sense of ambiguity or doubt regarding their roles and responsibilities. To manage the change and come to decisions that are consistent with

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their values and beliefs in such circumstances, teachers may rely on their sense of identity and agency. Additionally, according to Beauchamp and Thomas (2009), "teacher agency is rooted in a sense of identity that is both personal and professional" (p. 59), and that teachers are empowered by this feeling of identity to take ownership of their work and make significant contributions to the curriculum creation process.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to examine teacher agency in the context of curricular change, the social, relational, and personal aspects that enabled it, and how it influenced teacher identity negotiation. The study involved eleven secondary teachers who voluntarily joined the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) team. Findings revealed that these teachers joined the team on the quest of professional development and change as a result of an outdated national curriculum, and had a positive, open-minded attitude toward the curriculum change. These results were consistent with earlier research associating teacher agency with involvement in decision-making and commitment to change. Participating teachers demonstrated agency by engaging actively in the curriculum development process, being given the freedom to adjust the curriculum to best meet the needs of their students, taking part in professional development activities, as well as collaborating with coworkers to create effective instructional strategies that fit with the new curriculum. Moreover, there was a high level of collegiality among teachers, which supported the promotion of teacher agency. Findings also emphasized the crucial role of the existing contextual factors that supported the enactment of teacher agency and curriculum development. Finally, a significant result of this study was teacher identity negotiation. Teachers faced tensions as a result of the new program's implementation since they had to balance their current practices with the demands of the new curriculum.

With the emphasis on student-centered learning and the IB program's Approaches to Teaching and Learning (ATL) framework, this negotiating process resulted in a change in the role that teachers play. This change in professional identity was noteworthy because it illustrated the agency of teachers in steering their own professional development as well as how teacher practices evolved in response to changing curricular demands. Therefore, teachers worked to create and maintain a professional identity that aligned with their values, skills, and experiences, and concurrently met the demands of the new curriculum.

6.1 Limitations

At the completion of this research, the above findings should be understood while taking some limitations into consideration. Although the researcher tried to present a rich and in-depth analysis of a particular phenomenon, one case study cannot produce insights that are generalizable to other contexts. The results might not apply to other schools or teachers because of the study's particular location and circumstances. The transferability of results to similar situations should be done with care as cultural and social contexts are important factors to consider. Moreover, the sample size in this case study is limited to only 11 teachers who volunteered to take part in the program. The findings may not be applicable to teachers who did not choose to participate in the program due to the small sample size and its potential underrepresentation of the overall teacher population. It is also challenging to distinguish whether any changes seen were brought about by the new curriculum or other factors, such as teacher motivation or school culture because there was no control group of teachers who did not take part in the program.

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The researcher's bias was one limitation too. Many measures were taken to make sure that transparency, objectivity, and rigor were maintained throughout the study process in order to reduce any potential biases that might result from the dual role of the researcher as a researcher and a member of the IBDP team. In the study's methodology section, the affiliation of the researcher with the IBDP team was acknowledged, and how it might have an impact on the study's findings was described. Second, in order to avoid any potential conflicts of interest or bias toward specific participants, the participants' identities and confidentiality were maintained. Moreover, the results from several data sources, such as a survey, semi-structured interviews, and observations of group meetings, were triangulated to give a thorough picture of the phenomenon, assuming that the interviewees were truthful in their responses to the questions. This strategy enabled the researcher to cross-check the information and viewpoints from many sources and to decrease the possibility of subjectivity. In addition, the findings were presented in a transparent and impartial manner, without any attempt to promote or criticize the program. Finally, a reflexive journal was maintained to document thoughts, emotions, and reflections, aiding in awareness of potential biases and adjustment of the approach accordingly.

6.2 Conclusions

To have agency as a teacher means having the ability to make decisions and engage in actions that impact their personal and professional development. High levels of agency allow teachers to actively participate in implementing curriculum changes and customizing them to their classroom's unique contexts and needs. Also, a high level of

agency may boost teachers' motivation and engagement, which in turn may improve students' outcomes (Eteläpelto, et al., 2014; Jenkins, 2019).

This study was the first attempt to explore the enactment of teacher agency amid a curricular change in a private school in Lebanon, the personal, contextual, and relational affordances to that enactment, and how teacher professional identity has changed due to that enactment. The findings of this study revealed that teachers participating in this study have high levels of teacher agency. To understand more about the new curriculum and how it may be modified to fit their specific teaching context, they looked for professional development opportunities. They collaborated with colleagues to share resources and ideas and to create creative methods for implementing the new curriculum. In order to modify the curriculum to match the needs of their pupils, they also relied on their own expertise and understanding of their students. They remained flexible and receptive to feedback throughout the process, reflecting on their work frequently and making necessary changes to make the program useful and interesting for their students. They were empowered and given the freedom of choice and action in their work, in addition to having their opinions heard and respected.

For teachers to exercise their agency in curriculum change, teachers need relational, personal, and contextual affordances. To develop and administer the curriculum, teachers must work with their coworkers and build positive relationships with school administrators. They also call for personal qualities including a strong sense of professional identity, a dedication to learning, and a readiness to take chances. Policies,

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resources, and school cultures are examples of contextual elements that can either support or impede teacher agency (Priestley et al., 2013; Priestley et al., 2012). The findings of this study showed that teachers involved in the IBDP team were privileged with several affordances that enabled them to enact their agency. These included collaboration with colleagues, drawing on one's own expertise and knowledge of students, experimenting with new technologies and pedagogies, taking risks, remaining flexible and open to feedback, exchanging ideas, having allotted time in the weekly schedule for developing curriculum material, and attending workshops.

Teachers usually experience significant challenges in negotiating their professional identities during an educational reform. They usually struggle to adapt to the new curriculum and new teaching approaches, as well as feelings of uncertainty and insecurity about their professional identities and new roles. Teachers should draw on a range of resources and strategies to negotiate their professional identities during this phase (Vähäsantanen & Eteläpelto, 2011). Teachers involved in this study experienced a successful and smooth identity negotiation characterized by clarity and confidence in their professional roles amid the curriculum change, an alignment between their personal and professional values, adaptability, and flexibility in response to changing circumstances and new challenges, and engagement in ongoing professional development to enhance their knowledge and skills.

6.3 Implications and Recommendations for Further Practice

Based on the results of this investigation, the subsequent recommendations for policy and practice can be proposed:

1. Curriculum and resource developers must provide opportunities for teacher agency by allowing teachers to have input into the curriculum change process and providing professional development opportunities that allow for experimentation and innovation.

2. Policymakers should acknowledge and encourage teacher agency as a crucial element of effective curriculum innovation. This can be done by developing a cultural context that supports and encourages teachers to participate actively in the process of developing and implementing curricula.

3. School administrations must foster a culture of collaboration and support among teachers to encourage relational affordances that can enhance teacher agency during the curriculum change process.

4. School administration must support teachers during curriculum change by allocating appropriate time through the organization of the school day and by providing resources.

5. Administrators must encourage and recognize the contributions of experienced teachers during curriculum changes by tapping on their knowledge and expertise.

6. Teachers should advocate for change at the policy, school, and classroom levels. Individuals can exercise their agency by questioning presumptions, challenging the status quo, and putting forth fresh concepts and methods that will be advantageous to their students and colleagues.

7. Teacher education programs must be tailored to develop the personal capacities of prospective teachers, such as skills and knowledge, to foster teacher agency.

Overall, this study suggests that teacher agency is essential for successful curriculum change and that educational institutions and governments should take action to value and support teacher agency. Opportunities for professional development, teamwork, and focus on the contextual affordances that enable teacher agency can all help achieve this. The effect of curriculum changes on teachers' identities should also be taken into consideration, and assistance should be given to teachers as they work through this process.

6.4 Perspectives for Future Research

This study is a case study in a private school in Beirut where the IBDP was newly introduced to add an international perspective to the national curriculum adopted. Future research could include doing a comparative analysis to examine how teacher agency and professional identity are negotiated in various contexts during curriculum change, and to shed light on the factors that support or hinder teacher agency. Comparing teacher agency across private and public schools, between different regions or countries, or between various initiatives to reform the curriculum could be part of this.

Another perspective could be using instruments other than surveys and interviews when conducting research. Consider using pre/post data collection methods, for instance, to track changes over time in people or groups or to determine the effects of interventions. Insights into causal linkages can also be gained from experimental designs that include control and experimental groups. Future research might also examine the role that teacher agency and professional identity negotiation can play in teacher education programs. This could entail looking into how teacher education contributes to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to support teacher agency in contexts of curriculum change. Last but not least, further research could explore the role of school leaders in supporting teacher agency during curriculum change initiatives. This could involve investigating how school leaders can create an environment that evaluates teacher agency and provides the necessary supplies and support to develop it.

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APPENDIX A: LETTER TO PRINCIPAL

LAU
الجامعة اللبنانية الأميركية
Lebanese American University

Chartered in the State of New York

To: Hariri High School II,
    Beirut, Lebanon

August 31, 2022

Permission to collect data for an LAU research study entitled **"Teacher agency and professional identity renegotiation amid a curricular change: A case study"**.

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to request permission for my student to be able to collect data from your employees. Lamis Adada is a graduate student at the Lebanese American University (Department of Social and Education Sciences) and would be visiting your facility only in order to complete a research project related to "Teacher agency and professional identity renegotiation amid a curricular change: A case study". The targeted population is the IBDP school teachers.

Ms. Adada would like you to electronically share the web link of the questionnaire which is prepared using Google Forms . It should take between 15 minutes or so of the participants' time.
In addition, semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 5 teachers of the team [The selection criteria of the interviewee will be the following: The teacher must have joined the IBDP team since the beginning (3 years ago in 2019). Instructors of subjects taught in English will only be interviewed to avoid translation Moreover, the participants will be representative of the various subject matters that will be taught.]

The data collected will be kept anonymous and will not be used for any other purpose.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need any additional information.

If you have any questions about this study, or you want to talk to someone outside the research, please contact the: IRB Office, Lebanese American University 3rd Floor, Dorm A, Byblos Campus. Tel: 00 961 1 786456 ext. (2546)

Sincerely yours,

[signature]

Diane Nauffal, Thesis supervisor   110

Diane Nauffal, Ph.D.
School of Arts and Sciences
Department of Social and Education Sciences
Tel. 01-786456 ext.1232
P.O.Box: 13-5053, Beirut, Lebanon

Acknowledgement
Name:
Signature:
Date:

Institutional Review Board
Lebanese American University
13 SEP 2022
APPROVED

APPENDIX B: IRB APPROVAL OF RESEARCH

LAU
الجَامِعَة اللبنانية الأميركية
Lebanese American University

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

لجنة الأخلاقيات

NOTICE OF IRB APPROVAL

To: Ms. Lamis Adada
Dr. Diane Nauffal
Assistant Professor
School of Arts & Sciences

NOTICE ISSUED: 19 September 2022
EXPIRATION DATE: 19 September 2023
REVIEW TYPE: EXPEDITED – Initial

Date: September 19, 2022
RE: *IRB #:* LAU.SAS.DN1.19/Sep/2022
Protocol Title: Teacher Agency and Professional Identity Renegotiation Amid a Curricular Change: A Case Study

The above referenced research project has been approved by the Lebanese American University, Institutional Review Board (LAU IRB). This approval is limited to the activities described in the Approved Research Protocol and all submitted documents listed on page 2 of this letter. **Enclosed with this letter are the stamped approved documents that must be used.**

APPROVAL CONDITIONS FOR ALL LAU APPROVED HUMAN RESEARCH PROTOCOLS

LAU RESEARCH POLICIES & PROCEDURES: All individuals engaged in the research project must adhere to the approved protocol and all applicable LAU IRB Research Policies & Procedures. PARTICIPANTS must NOT be involved in any research related activity prior to IRB approval date or after the expiration date.

PROTOCOL EXPIRATION: The LAU IRB approval expiry date is listed above. The IRB Office will send an email at least 45 days prior to protocol approval expiry - Request for Continuing Review - in order to avoid any temporary hold on the initial protocol approval. It is your responsibility to apply for continuing review and receive continuing approval for the duration of the research project. Failure to send Request for Continuation before the expiry date will result in suspension of the approval of this research project on the expiration date.

MODIFICATIONS AND AMENDMENTS: All protocol modifications must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation.

NOTIFICATION OF PROJECT COMPLETION: A notification of research project closure and a summary of findings must be sent to the IRB office upon completion. Study files must be retained for a period of 3 years from the date of notification of project completion.

IN THE EVENT OF NON-COMPLIANCE WITH ABOVE CONDITIONS, THE PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR SHOULD MEET WITH THE IRB ADMINISTRATORS IN ORDER TO RESOLVE SUCH CONDITIONS. IRB APPROVAL CANNOT BE GRANTED UNTIL NON-COMPLIANT ISSUES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED.

If you have any questions concerning this information, please contact the IRB office by email at irb@lau.edu.lb

BEIRUT CAMPUS		BYBLOS CAMPUS		NEW YORK OFFICE	
P.O. Box: 13-5053 Chouran	Tel: +961 1 78 64 56	P.O. Box: 36	Tel: +961 9 54 72 62	475 Riverside Drive	Tel: +1 212 870 2592
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Lebanon	Fax: +961 1 86 70 98	Lebanon	Fax: +961 9 54 62 62	New York, NY 10115	Fax: +1 212 870 2762 www.lau.edu.lb

Dr. Joseph Stephan
Chair, Institutional Review Board

DOCUMENTS SUBMITTED:

LAU IRB Exempt Application	Received 29 August 2022
Research Proposal	Received 29 August 2022
Letter to School: Hariri High School II	Received 29 August 2022, amended 31 August 2022
Informed Consent for interviews	Received 29 August 2022
Interview Questions	Received 29 August 2022
Informed consent for survey	Received 29 August 2022, amended 31 August 2022
Interview Questions	Received 29 August 2022
Meeting Observation Checklist	Received 29 August 2022
Permission to use instruments	Received 29 August 2022
Link to online survey	Received 29 August 2022, amended 31 August & 2 September 2022
IRB Comments sent: 30 August 2022 1 September 2022	**PI response to IRB's comments dated:** 31 August 2022 2 September 2022
NIH Training – Diane Nauffal	Cert.# 2034545 Dated (17 March 2016)
CITI Training – Lamis Adada & CV	Cert.# 44589560 Dated (21 April 2022)

Institutional Review Board
Lebanese American University
19 SEP 2022
APPROVED
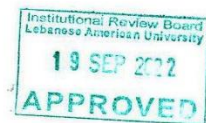
APPENDIX C: CONSENT LETTER TO TEACHERS

Dear participants, thank you for your cooperation in our research study that aims to investigate teacher agency in the context of a new curriculum, the IBDP, to account for the complexities of transformation processes. It explores how instructors, who voluntarily joined the IBDP team, enacted agency through their actions and behaviors, as well as the personal, relational, and environmental aspects that aided their enactment, and consequently influenced their professional identity renegotiations. Please read each statement and select the answer that best describes you. This survey is very short and will only take 20 to 25 minutes of your time. Please be sure to answer every question, and rest assured that all information will remain confidential and will only be used for research purposes. Research conducted by Lamis Adada, a student at LAU. Please click on the following link to access the survey: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfTGfzD0SboBvbDyUouGtXJonoZusXl loTnOGGKwmodIanogA/viewform?usp=sf_link

APPENDIDX D: MEETING OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Faribault, Martin and Watonwan Counties SHIP
Council/Coalition Meeting Observation Protocol

Council/Coalition:		
Date:	Start Time:	End Time:

Members

Number present/in attendance:
Description of who was at the meeting:
Meeting leader and role/title:

Location/Facilities

Location of Meeting:
Location Description:
Meeting Room/Space Description:

Meeting format

Describe the meeting format (one person leads, group shares facilitation responsibilities, group conversation, etc.):
ncy and duration of meetings:

Meeting Objectives

List objectives of the meeting as you are aware of them

Objectives	Was this objective accomplished?
	Yes No
	Yes No
	Yes No
	Yes No
	Yes No
	Yes No

	Yes No

Discussion Topics

Describe what was discussed during meeting

Discussion Topic	Was agreement reached in this discussion?	Were action steps decided or planned?	What was the length of the discussion?
	Yes No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	

I. Team Functioning	
Leadership	**Comments:**
Is there a clear leader?	
Is the leader's authority apparent?	

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Does the leader have members' respect?	
Do members take on different roles and responsibilities in the meeting?	
Does the leader ensure that task assignments are evenly distributed?	
Do members give recognition and feedback to each other?	
Additional Leadership comments:	

Participation & Representation	**Comments:**
Do all members actively participate?	
Are multiple viewpoints represented?	
Is conflict counterproductive?	
Does the meeting setting encourage participation and interaction?	
Are members are willing to take on assignments?	

Have members have followed up on action items from previous meetings?	
Do members actively support decisions?	

Additional Participation & Representation comments:

Organization & Structure	**Comments:**
Does the meeting start on time?	
Is there a clear agenda?	
Is the meeting organized and well- planned?	
Are the objectives appropriate for time allowed?	
Does the meeting have clear outcomes?	
Do the members stay on the agenda?	
Does the meeting end on time?	

Additional Organization & Structure comments:	
Communication	**Comments:**
Is communication directed to the whole group, not to one or selected members?	

Are the members open and say what they think?	
Does the group address conflict rather than ignore it?	
Do members refrain from interrupting each other?	
Do members encourage and support each other?	
Do members listen to each other?	

Additional Communication Comments:

Results & Actions	Comments:
Was the team updated on results of actions taken on problems previously discussed?	
Is an agreed upon decision-making or problem-solving method used?	
Does the group check for consensus before making decisions?	
Are the results relevant?	
Are the next steps and action items clear?	

Are the objectives of the meeting accomplished?	
Additional Results & Actions comments:	

APPENDIX E: MEETING NOTES SAMPLE

Faribault, Martin and Watonwan Counties SHIP

Council/Coalition Meeting Observation Protocol

Council/Coalition: **IBDP Group Meeting (Observation 1 – Complete Participant)**
Date: **Sep 2021**   Start Time:**11:00 am**   End Time: **12:30 pm**

Members

Number present/in attendance: **13**
Description of who was at the meeting: **The IBDP coordinator with all 12 members of the IBDP team**.
Meeting leader and role/title: **Ms. X, the IBDP coordinator**

Location/Facilities

Location of Meeting: **High School Conference Room**
Location Description: **Conference Room located on the third floor of the High School Division facing the library and away from classes.**

Meeting Room/Space Description:

A spacious, well-lighted room that is equipped with an LCD projector, and desktop connected to Wi-Fi.

A large oval table with comfortable chairs is allocated to attendees.

In addition, air conditioning and a whiteboard are available in the room.

Meeting format

Describe the meeting format (one person leads, group shares facilitation responsibilities, group conversation, etc.):

The IBDP coordinator led the meeting and allowed for ample discussions to take place smoothly and orderly among group members.

She delegated the tasks and explained the procedure to be followed. All attendees were enthusiastically participating in the discussions.

Frequency and duration of meetings:

On weekly basis.

Duration: 2 sessions (around 100 min.)

Meeting Objectives

List objectives of the meeting as you are aware of them

Objectives	Was this objective accomplished?
Explaining the new updates of the authorization process.	**Yes** No
Checking the progress of the course outlines developed by teachers of the different courses.	**Yes** No
Hearing the opinions of teachers about putting criteria for students' acceptance into the program to take a decision and adopt an admission policy.	**Yes** No
	Yes No
	Yes No
	Yes No
	Yes No

Discussion Topics

Describe what was discussed during the meeting

Discussion Topic	Was agreement reached in this discussion?	Were action steps decided or planned?	What was the length of the discussion?
Criteria of students' acceptance into the program (Admission policy)	**Yes** No	Yes No	15 min.
The next steps to be followed in the authorization process.	**Yes** No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	

	Yes No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	
	Yes No	Yes No	

I. Team Functioning	
Leadership	**Comments:**
Is there a clear leader?	Yes, the DP coordinator was the person who moderated the meeting and put the agenda.
Is the leader's authority apparent?	Yes, but she was not authoritarian, there was mutual respect between her and the teachers.
Does the leader have the members' respect?	Yes, it was very apparent. There was a cordial atmosphere too which showed by some pleasantries thrown from time to time. Everybody seemed to be relaxed.
Do members take on different roles and responsibilities in the meeting?	Yes, they were not just listeners or recipients. They were actively involved in discussions and decision-making. One of them was taking minutes.
Does the leader ensure that task assignments are evenly distributed?	Yes, indeed. She delegated tasks on equal footage. Each DP group was assigned one of the ATL's (Approaches to teaching and learning in IB) to present about.
Do members give recognition and feedback to each other?	When a member proposes an idea, others either agreed or disagreed by giving reasons. Mutual respect prevailed during discussions.
Additional Leadership comments:	
Participation & Representation	**Comments:**
Do all members actively participate?	Yes, all members were actively and enthusiastically participating in discussions.

Are multiple viewpoints represented?	**All members were carefully listening to what others had to say.**
Is conflict counterproductive?	**No major conflicts were detected.**
Does the meeting setting encourage participation and interaction?	**Yes, members were sitting facing each other around an oval table. They could clearly see each other.**
Are members willing to take on assignments?	**All members without exceptions showed a willingness to take assignments with no fidgeting. Everyone knew exactly what was expected of him/her to do.**

Have members followed up on action items from previous meetings?	Yes, when asked by the DP coordinator about their work progress, each member by turn described where he/she reached.
Do members actively support decisions?	Decisions were taken by consensus.

Additional Participation & Representation comments:

No signs of boredom or carelessness were shown during the meeting.

Organization & Structure	Comments:
Does the meeting start on time?	Yes, it started sharp at the scheduled time. All members showed up to the meeting ahead of time even.
Is there a clear agenda?	The meeting agenda was sent by mail to all members by the DP coordinator a week ago.
Is the meeting organized and well-planned?	Yes, there was no time loss. Everything took place according to the set plan.
Are the objectives appropriate for time allowed?	Yes, in fact, the 2 sessions were enough to cover the objectives.
Does the meeting have clear outcomes?	Yes, an agreement about the admission policy was almost agreed upon. In addition, every DP group was assigned one of the ATL's to present about for later sessions.
Do the members stay on the agenda?	Yes, but sometimes a little digression occurred.
Does the meeting end on time?	Yes, it ended on time and as planned.

Additional Organization & Structure comments:
Everything was well organized. No chaos was detected.

Communication	Comments:
Is communication directed to the whole group, not to one or selected members?	**Directed to the whole group.**

Are the members open and say what they think?	They were very at ease to say whatever came to their mind. There were no signs of anxiety or hesitation.
Does the group address conflict rather than ignore it?	Not observed.
Do members refrain from interrupting each other?	Members refrained from interrupting each other. They were carefully listening to each other. They were raising their hands in case they had something to say or to add.
Do members encourage and support each other?	Yes, indeed, they were supporting good ideas.
Do members listen to each other?	Yes, they were listening to each other with interest.

Additional Communication Comments:
The meeting atmosphere is super pleasant.

Results & Actions	Comments:
Was the team updated on results of actions taken on problems previously discussed?	Yes the DP coordinator updated the whole team on the results of her meeting with the IB consultant.
Is an agreed upon decision-making or problem-solving method used?	Yes, all decided on an admission policy for new students to the program.
Does the group check for consensus before making decisions?	Of course. It was discussed earlier.
Are the results relevant?	Of course.
Are the next steps and action items clear?	Yes, the following steps were clear to all.

Are the objectives of the meeting accomplished?	**Yes, they were accomplished.**
Additional Results & Actions comments:	

APPENDIX F: QUESTIONNAIRE

I am Lamis Adada, a graduate student at the Lebanese American University.

You are kindly asked to complete the below survey as it is part of my thesis. This questionnaire aims to investigate teacher agency in the context of a new curriculum, the IBDP, to account for the complexities of transformation processes. It explores how instructors, who voluntary joined the IBDP team, enacted agency through their actions and behaviors, as well as the personal, relational, and environmental aspects that aided their enactment, and consequently influenced their professional identity renegotiations.

Completing the questionnaire will take no more than 20-25 minutes of your time.

By continuing with the questionnaire, you agree with the following statements:

1. I have been given sufficient information about this research project.

2. I understand that all responses I provide for this study will remain confidential. When the results of the study are reported, I will not be identified by name or any other information that could be used to infer my identity. Only researchers will have access to view any data collected during this research however data cannot be linked to me.

3. I understand that I may withdraw from this research any time I wish and that I have the right to skip any question I don't want to answer.

4. I understand that my refusal to participate will not result in any penalty or loss of benefits to which I otherwise am entitled.

5 I understand that if I have any additional questions, I can ask the research team listed below.

6. I have read and understood all statements on this form.

7. I voluntarily agree to take part in this research project by completing the following survey.

IRB tracking number "LAU.SAS.DN1.19/Sep/2022"

If you have any questions, please contact: Lamis Adada

Part I – Demographic Information

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1. Gender:
a. Female
b. Male

2. Age: _____

3. Educational level:
   a.   Doctoral degree
   b.   Master's degree X
   c.   Bachelor's degree
   d.   High school degree
   e.   Other
          Please specify

4. Do you have a teaching diploma?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. Employment status as a teacher:
   a. Full-time
   b. Part-time

5. How long have you been working as a teacher? _____ years.

5. How long have you been working at this school? _____ years.

6. What subject matter do you teach? _____

7. How many grade levels do you teach? _____

8. What are your weekly teaching hours? _____

9. Estimate the number of hours you spend on tasks in and out of school other than teaching

  (Planning- coordination -preparing lessons- correction- paperwork, etc...) _____

Part II

Section A

This section consists of **52 questions** about the manifestation of teacher agency in the context of a curricular change, the implementation of the IBDP, in a Lebanese private school and the personal, contextual, and relational affordances to that enactment.

Use the following scale for items 1-4:

1- Strongly Disagree   2- Disagree

3- Agree   4- Strongly agree

	1 = Strongly Disagree	2 = Disagree	3= Agree	4= Strongly Agree
1. Being part of the IB team was mandatory or conditioned to years of experience.				
2. Being part of the IB team was voluntary.				
3. I joined the IB team because I was paid to do it.				
4. I am enthusiastic about this work.				
5. I prefer curriculum that tell the teacher exactly what to do, so that I don't risk making the wrong decision.				

6.	I feel powerful and energetic while working.				
7.	I develop my ways of working.				
8.	I can make decisions regarding my own work.				
9.	I can participate in the preparation of matters in my unit. (I take part in the development of my unit's actions.)				
10.	I think I can be creative in my work with instructional activities.				
11.	My opinion is taken into consideration in my unit.				
12.	I am heard in matters relating to my own work.				

13. My views are taken into consideration in the work community.				
14. I think what my students learn in my class will be useful for them in other courses.				
15. Once I choose a textbook, I will just use it, at most, as a guide. I will not hesitate to skip sections or point out to students which parts I think are confusing.				
16. In my course, I will combine textbooks and other materials, taking the best from each source.				
17. The other members of the team inspire me.				

18. I actively collaborate with others in my unit.				
19. I make developmental suggestions regarding collective work practices.				
20. If I feel it is necessary, I will speak out and express my views to my colleagues.				
21. Teachers in the IB team seek new ways of teaching and learning.				
22. I work collaboratively with other teachers to develop curricular material.				
23. I joined the IB team to be part of the community of IB teachers.				
24. I joined the IB team because it is				

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important for me to carry out this task.				
25. I find personal value in becoming an IBDP teacher.				
26. I joined the IB team to realize my professional goals.				
27. Being part of the team was significant to me since it contributed to my personal growth.				
28. I participated in the team since I am concerned with the best interest of my students.				
29. I feel pleased when committing myself to this work.				
30. Becoming an IB teacher affected how I perceive myself as a professional.				
31. Becoming an IB teacher affected how others perceived you as a professional.				
32. I believe that in order for change to be successful, teachers must work together.				
33. I value working collaboratively with other teachers.				
34. Embarking in the reform process was				

a positive experience for me				
35. My self-professional identity as teacher has changed over the years of engagement.				
36. I have knowledge and skills about teaching.				
37. I am known as person who is not afraid to take risks.				
38. It is important to me to develop my teaching skills.				
39. I have a sense of pride in doing my work.				
40. I am given a sufficient amount of freedom in the work I do.				
41. I like the people I work with.				
42. Teachers are cooperative and supportive of each other.				
43. There is a "we" spirit in the IB team.				
44. Important decisions taken by the diploma coordinator are made with agreement with teachers.				

45. The DP coordinator talks with us frankly and openly.				
46. The DP coordinator showed trust in teachers' professionalism.				
47. Teachers are given a sufficient amount of freedom in the work they do.				
48. Teachers can get the instructional materials and equipment they need.				
49. The Diploma coordinator is very active in securing resources to facilitate the preparation of instructional materials.				
50. Professional development opportunities offered were of good quality.				
51. Adequate time was allocated for the team to regularly meet.				
52. Adequate time was allocated for individual teachers to work.				

Section B

This section consists of open-ended questions*:*

1- What was the prime motivation for participating in the curricular change taking place at your school?--

2- Complete the following statement to describe yourself after this preparation phase to be granted the IBDP authorization:
As a teacher, I became more-------------------------------------

3- Use your own words to describe this engagement period:
For me this experience was -----------------------------------

APPENDIX G: PERMISSION LETTER AND CONSENT

I am a master's student at the Lebanese American University LAU completing a thesis in the educational leadership and management program. I am writing to ask written permission to use Council/Coalition Meeting Observation Protocol in my research study. My paper is about the manifestation of teacher agency during a curriculum change. My research is being supervised by my professor, Dr. Dianne Nauffal, Assistant to the President for Institutional Research & Assessment.

In addition to using the instrument, I also ask your permission to reproduce it in my thesis appendix. The thesis will be published in the LAU Repository at https://libraries.lau.edu.lb/research/laur/ and deposited in the ProQuest Dissertations & Theses database.

I would like to use your observation protocol under the following conditions:

- I will use the observation protocol only for my research study and will not sell or use it for any other purposes
- I will include a statement of attribution and copyright on all copies of the instrument. If you have a specific statement of attribution that you would like for me to include, please provide it in your response.
- At your request, I will send a copy of my completed research study to you upon completion of the study and/or provide a hyperlink to the final manuscript

If you do not control the copyright for these materials, I would appreciate any information you can provide concerning the proper person or organization I should contact.

If these are acceptable terms and conditions, please indicate so by replying to me through e-mail at lamis.adada@lau.edu

Reply Received:

Dear Lamis Adada,

I am happy if you utilize our instrument in your research. Thus, I will give the permission to use our instrument presented in the paper " A novel instrument to measure the multidimensional structure of professional agency. You can also reproduce it in your thesis.

Have a great research journey!
All the best, Katja

APPENDIX H: TEACHERS' INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Can you please describe your educational background and your teaching experience?
2. What other roles other than teaching do you take at your own school?
3. How are curricular decisions made at your school? (Can you elaborate?)
4. Have you ever talked to your administration about the importance of having an international programme at school?
5. Why do you think it is important to shift to new curricula in the Lebanese context?
6. What motivated you to participate in the teachers' team that will be developing and enacting the new curriculum?
7. What were your personal and professional reasons to join the team and become an IB teacher? To what extent do your personal goals align with those of school?
8. To what extent do you feel that there is room to pursue your own goals in your work?
9. How much time, effort, or financial resources have you invested in achieving your goals?
10. How did you go about developing the instructional materials for this course? Can you describe your role during that phase?
11. What does it mean to you to be a professional teacher?
12. Do you think teachers are perceived as professionals?
13. What kind of professional development activities did you receive during this phase? How do you feel about these professional experiences?
14. How do you perceive the role of diploma coordinator during the preparation phase?
15. How do you perceive your relationships with your colleagues in the team?
16. When things get difficult at your work, to what extent can you rely on your co-workers to help you?
17. How do you feel your professional self-identity has changed over the past few years?

APPENDIX I: DP COORDINATOR'S INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. When and how were you assigned as a DP coordinator?

2. What are the top job responsibilities of a IBDP coordinator? Explain what tasks you've completed when tracking the progress of the implementation of this new curriculum

3. IBDP coordinators have to keep the team on schedule, sometimes within a very tight time frame. How can you describe teachers' responses to meet the urgency of frequent program demands and changes and meeting upcoming deadlines?

4. How do you provide regular project updates to the team members?

5. How can describe the team members level of motivation:

   a. to join the team?

   b. to work on assigned tasks?

6. Were you comfortable working with your team in pursuit of a common goal?

7. How can you describe the team members level of professionalism?

8. What steps, opportunities, or needs have you provided as a project coordinator for your team to ensure a successful implementation of the curriculum?

9. As a DP coordinator, did you allocate a certain level of autonomy and decision-making to the team members? Can you elaborate in explaining how do you think this is important?

APPENDIX J: REFLEXIVE JOURNAL

Date: 1/27/2021
Journal

I recently attended a meeting of the IB DP team, of which I am a part, as well as a researcher who is looking at teacher agency in connection to the new curriculum. I became aware during the conversation that I had some preconceived views about the program's efficacy, which may have affected how I interpreted the talk.

I believed that I was more inclined to emphasize the benefits of the program and minimize any potential drawbacks or unfavorable results. I was therefore afraid that my own prejudices might have an impact on the study's objectivity and legitimacy.

I spent some time thinking about my presumptions and biases and how they could influence the research in order to address this worry. I reminded myself of the significance of maintaining objectivity and impartiality during the study, and I understood that this might be difficult given my dual responsibilities as the researcher and a member of the IB DP team.

I made the decision to add a reflexive portion in my methodology section where I would talk about my role as a member of the IB DP team and how it would affect the research in order to maintain transparency.

Overall, this experience served as a reminder to me of the value of reflexivity in qualitative research as well as the necessity of always examining my own biases and preconceptions during the research process.

Date: 4/10/2022
Journal

I spoke with several teachers who agreed to take part in the IB DP program in semi-structured interviews today. I was surprised to discover that as I listened to their comments, I felt more empathy for their difficulties and worries.

I worked on the program's creation and execution as a member of the IB DP team, and I was enthusiastic about its potential advantages. I was startled to learn about some of the challenges the instructors faced, such as increased workload and inadequate assistance, during the interviews.

I concluded that my initial enthusiasm for the program might have made me oblivious to some of its possible drawbacks and difficulties. I also came to the realization that the questions I asked and the way I read the answers might have been impacted by my membership on the IB DP team.

I spent some time thinking about how my personal prejudices and presumptions would influence the research in order to address this. I reminded myself to keep a critical eye on my analysis and presentation of the findings and to make sure that both the program's positive and bad features are reported fairly.

I also reminded myself how crucial it is to maintain objectivity and impartiality during the research process and to be receptive to all viewpoints and experiences. So doing will perhaps help me comprehend the phenomenon more thoroughly and increase our grasp of this subject.

Date: 27/5/2021
Journal

I joined my coworkers in a collaborative IBDP meeting today to get ready for IB authorisation. I found the conference to be both instructive and difficult as a team member and researcher looking into teacher agency in the face of curricular change.

Two approaches to teaching and learning (ATL) were discussed at the meeting's opening session, which I considered to be informative. I valued the chance to learn more about these strategies, and I could see how we could use them in our IB curriculum.

I also observed the conference as a researcher, taking notes on how teacher agency was being implemented in the face of curricular change. I worried how this may affect the program's performance after observing that some teachers appeared to be more at ease with the modifications than others. I also noticed that I was experiencing a range of emotions, including enthusiasm about the possible benefits of the new program and worry about potential difficulties.

I thought that as a team member, I made a valuable contribution to the conversation. I felt that my coworkers were attentive and gave insightful answers when I shared my ideas and posed thoughtful questions. I acknowledged that I occasionally found it difficult to strike a balance between my responsibilities as a team member and as a researcher, and I questioned whether this might have a negative impact on my neutrality.

I thought the meeting was a good experience overall. I gained more knowledge about the many approaches to teaching and learning, and I had the chance to see directly how teacher agency was being implemented in the face of curricular change. I'm looking forward to advancing my research and helping our IB program succeed.

A reflexive journal is a tool used by researchers to reflect on their own experiences, thoughts, and biases throughout the research process. The role of a reflexive journal is to help researchers identify and acknowledge their own biases and assumptions and to critically evaluate how these biases may be influencing the research findings.