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LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Running Head: LOW ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Title: Causes Of Low Academic Achievement in the Official Exams in a Public School:

A Case Study

By

Hala Ahmad Itani

A Thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of Master of Arts

To the Department of Education

At the Lebanese American University of Beirut

Nov, 2004

Beirut, Lebanon

85212

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Date Of the Thesis Defense: Nov 10, 2004

Major emphasis: Management

## DEDICATION

For my mother Nahida and my Father  
Ahmad, who supported me in my hard times  
to pursue my goal. I want to thank you for  
everything you did to me.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to express my appreciation to all the people who supported me through this process. In particular, I would like to thank the following people:

My Mother for her unconditioned love, support, and patience.

My father who was of great help to me.

Mom and dad, I love you and I am proud of u

My sisters and brother for their encouragement and believing in me. \

My Brother Yasser who inspired me all through this process. I won't forget you. Even though you are not with us anymore but you are in my mind and heart.

I would like to thank Dr. Osta. She is a great advisor, loyal, and very dedicated to her students.

I am very grateful to Dr. Mona Nabhani, My adorable advisor in the Master program, for her patience, encouragement, and continuous assistance. Thank you for your guidance and wisdom.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Leila Harmoush, for the time and effort she shared with me.

I would like to express my gratitude to Dr. Ahmad Ouieni, for the time and effort he shared with me.

My friend Jamileh who stood by my side throughout this process day by day, guided me, and inspired me. Jamileh you are a true and a sincere friend.

My friend Rana who was of great help to me.

Jamileh and Rana, thank you.

## AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Hala Ahmad Itani for Master of Arts

Major Educational Management

Title: Causes Of Low Academic Achievement in the Official Exams in a Public School:  
A Case Study

The purpose of the research is to examine the effect of leadership style, teaching and testing strategies, and school culture on students' achievements in BLOM School, one of the public schools in Beirut area. This research study relied on qualitative methodology. The instruments for data collection are semi-structured interviews, structured observations, and field notes. Interviews were conducted with teachers and the school principal, and group interviews were conducted with students. Structured observations were conducted in five sections in the third secondary level in BLOM School for ten days. Findings showed that the studied three factors affected the students achievements in the Lebanese official exams.

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## Chapter One

### Introduction

This study presents an overview of the public educational system in Lebanon and focuses on one public secondary school to show how the problems in the system affect its operations in general and students' achievement in particular.

#### Research context

Lebanon is facing a serious problem with public schools. Parents have lost confidence and faith in the public schools because the educational outcomes of the private schools appeared to be better than the outcomes in the public school sector (Koubaissy, 1997). Koubaissy argues that this problem appeared due to several reasons. The government might not be spending enough money on the public schools in a way that attracts people to register their children in these schools. Other reasons for this decline of the public schools are the leadership style, absence of management, administration, and supervision in the public school sector. The government is playing two roles in the educational process in the public schools. The government supervises and administers the educational process with the help of the school principal and through the educational supervision.

The above researchers attribute some public school problems to the concentration of the decision making at the Ministry of Education (MOE). The Lebanese educational system is a centralized system. This appears in the hierarchy of the public sector. The principal of each school in the secondary level should report back to the Inspector who will report back to the coordinators committee. The coordinators committee then refers back to head of the National Center for Educational Research and Development (CERD) who reports everything to the Minister of education. The issue of centralization and decentralization taking place in most countries is affecting schools. Requests for practicing decentralization are taking place in order to activate the organizational and managerial work and in order to allow the local

power that is to say principal and teachers to share in taking care of its responsibilities and in taking their own decisions (El-Amine, 1997).

#### School principal

The school principal is one of the old teachers, who faces the same problems as they do. Due to the strict rules and regulations set by the Ministry of Higher education, the role of the school principal in the public schools of Lebanon is not effective. Due to the limitations set by the government, the role of the school principal became school keeping and sending reports to the departments. School Principals only follow the daily routine in the school (El-Amine, 1997).

Assigning school principals in Lebanon follows many political and personal considerations and is not based on educational qualifications (Yacoub, 2001). The Lebanese educational policies stated in Decree No. 590, 1974 that school principals are assigned by the Minister of Education after a suggestion submitted by the Director of Secondary Education. The Director of secondary Education Chooses the principal based on several conditions. First, the school principal should be a tenure secondary teacher in the public sector with at least 5 years of teaching experience. Second, the elected principal should be proficient in one of the foreign languages English or French. Third, the school principal should not be convicted of any crime from the second degree in the past 5 years. Fourth, he should have proved his dedication to the school when the principal was a teacher (Greenfield, 1998). The relationship between the school principal and the Director of the Secondary Education is a centralized one. Main decisions for secondary schools are communicated by the Director of Secondary Education. The Director of Secondary Education is responsible for making decisions for the secondary school concerning the education policies set by the Minister of Education, and communicates these decisions to school principals in various districts with respect to the hierarchy of the public sector.

### Role of public school principals'

The principal's powers are limited, and the principals perform routine tasks. The public school principal is preoccupied with following the Ministry's directions. The principal does not get involved in improving the curriculum or enhancing teachers' instructional strategies. Public school principals supervise teachers' attendance records and check their preparation books. This shows that Lebanese public school principals are not instructional leaders (Greenfield, 1998). Moreover, school principals don't have the right to choose and hire teachers for their school. The Ministry of Education sends teachers to the school of interest after they apply to the teaching positions in the Ministry of Education. Registering students in the school is not the principal's responsibility. The principal is forced to register all the students sent by the ministry to the school even if the student's age was inappropriate for their class, and even if students failed in the entrance exam.

The criteria and basics for choosing the school principal are not clear and are not based on educational theories. Also, the central administration constrains the principal's role, and paralyzes the principal's improvement strategies. On the other hand, the assigned principals in the public schools do not hold a degree in educational administration and some, as the statistics show, do not hold a college degree, and the majority did not join administrative training sessions (Yakoub, 2001). Some training sessions were held but some educators commented on the low quality of these sessions. They did not fulfill their objective (El-Amine, 1997).

Another problem is that the principal of a public school is not involved in teacher supervision. Thirty-three supervisors conducted supervision in the public schools in the year 1993. The supervisors were responsible for 850 thousand teachers, that is 850 teachers for each supervisor; whereas Koubaissy (1997) stated that private school teachers are supervised systematically and on regular basis by the school principal who is sometimes the owner of the

school. All these things made the people lose confidence in the public schools and feel forced to register their children in the private schools that are expensive (Koubaissy, 1997).

#### Teachers

The public school teachers are also accused of the decline of education in the public schools. The teacher became the one who is responsible for the success or failure of the educational process and in attaining the educational aims. The teacher is considered the most effective factor in the success of the educational process but at the same time the teacher alone cannot succeed without direct guidance from the management that is lacking development nowadays (El Hussami, 1991).

Teachers showed carelessness in their educational work, became unmotivated, and their performance was affected negatively by the mediocre social services offered to them, salary, and social and public appreciation. The government neglected teachers' opinion of innovational plans in the educational system. The teachers' committee was not allowed to share in the updating of the new curriculum, which affected negatively their performance (Rabetat Asatezat El Taalime El Rasmy fi Lubnan, 2000). Teachers are not consistently trained, prepared and equipped with educational qualifications that enable them to perform the job well. Koubaissy (1997) mentioned that public school teachers lack educational qualifications. On the other hand, teachers realized that the training sessions set for teachers are not serving the purpose, limited time is given to the training sessions, certain topics in the curriculum are only highlighted, and the trainers are not qualified enough (Rabetat Asatezat El Taalime El Rasmy fi Lubnan, 2000).

#### Purpose of this study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effect of leadership style, teaching and testing strategies, and school culture on students' achievement. Were these factors the main reasons for the decline of student's educational achievement in BLOM public school in Lebanon?

The case study is conducted in BLOM School, which is a public school located in Beirut Area. The main purpose of this research was to study the reasons for the low achievement of the third secondary students in the governmental official exams. The Baccalaureate results in the official exam were low in certain sections in the year 2002 and in the year 2003. Table 1 and table 2 illustrate the percentage success of applicants in BLOM School in each section for two continuous years.

Table 1.1

Baccalaureate results in the official exams in BLOM School for the year 2003

Sections	# of applicants in BLOM School	# of applicants passed in BLOM School	% Success in BLOM School	% Success of applicants in the public schools in Beirut Area
Life science	61	29	47.54%	69.6%
Humanities	25	8	32%	57.8%
Sociology and economics	82	42	51.22%	62.4%

Table 1.2

Baccalaureate results in the official exams in BLOM School for the year 2002

Sections	# of applicants in BLOM School	# of applicants passed In BLOM School	% Success in BLOM School	% Success of applicants in the public schools in Beirut Area
Life science	63	18	28.5%	72.2%
Humanities	-	-	-	
Sociology and Economics	29	22	75.8%	96.1%

Every year a new section is opened for students who failed in the governmental exam, which includes a minimum of 25 students. Many questions were raised in the researcher's mind to find a solution for this problem. But before finding a solution to such a problem the researcher had to analyze the factors affecting student underachievement. The first factor is the leadership style that the school principal practices. The second factor of interest was teacher's teaching strategies and assessment techniques to evaluate the students' educational achievement. The third factor was the school culture and the values adopted by students including the language used between students, teachers, and the principal.

#### Research questions

Three questions are asked to figure out the reasons for the decline of students' educational outcomes in the governmental exams in BLOM School (table 3). The researcher's three years of teaching experience at BLOM, and the researcher's interest in analyzing the educational level of students in BLOM public school, led to conducting the study at BLOM public school.

Table 1.3

#### Research objective and research questions

Research objective	Research questions
Reasons for the decline of students' educational outcomes in the governmental exams in BLOM School	Could it be the leadership style of the principal?
	Could it be the teacher assessment techniques and teaching strategies used?
	Could it be the school culture?

## Methodology

This research study relied on qualitative methodology. The instruments for data collection are semi- structured interviews, structured observations, and field notes. This study included one public school, BLOM School. The semi- structured interviews were conducted with 9 teachers. Moreover, an interview was conducted with the school principal. Group interviews were the method of choice with students of the third secondary levels. The researcher interviewed 10 students in the life science section, 15 students in the humanities section, and 20 students in each section A, B, C of the sociology and economics section. A tape recorder was used while conducting the interviews with the teachers, students and the school principal. The interviews with the school principal, teachers, and students ensure the validity of my research by comparing their answers to each other. The researcher observed in five sections in the third secondary level in BLOM School for ten days. Interviews and observations will clarify reasons for low students' performance in the official exams.

## Analysis of data

Based on the literature review, it is expected to find out reasons for students' low achievement. The research findings were analyzed through classifying the data collected from interviews into themes then comparing them with the data gathered from observations and field notes. Discussion of the findings was done through comparing the research findings to those in the literature review in order to examine whether the culture of the school, leadership style, and the teacher affected the students' achievement in the governmental official exams.

## Organization

The first chapter of this study includes the research context and goals. The second chapter includes the literature review. The third chapter includes the methods and instruments used

for collecting the needed data. Chapter four presents the data collected by the researcher. In chapter five, the data collected is analyzed and the results are compared to the literature review. Chapter six includes a summary of the case study findings, limitations, and recommendations for further study.

## Chapter Two

### Literature Review

Many studies were done on the principal's leadership style, teachers, and the culture of the school and their impact on the student's academic achievement. In Lebanon, the effectiveness of secondary schools is determined by the percentage of students who succeed in the official exams (Theodory, 1981). Theodory (1981) asserted that this scale is to measure the productivity of a school not its effectiveness since productivity is part of the effectiveness of any school. The school productivity is studied through the students' academic achievement so we should take into consideration the leadership style, teachers' methodology, and the school culture.

This chapter begins first by reviewing the literature on leadership styles throughout history in the United States of America and how it evolved. It reveals how supervision, monitoring students' progress, professional development of teachers, and enrollment regulations affected student's achievement. The second part of the literature review includes teachers' influence on students' achievement in the official exams. This part shows how teaching strategies, coordination, monitoring student's achievements, teamwork, and increasing instructional time affects educational outcomes. The third part of the literature review deals with the school culture and how it influences student achievement. The elements of school culture that this research deals with are student teacher relationship, student principal relationship, teacher principal relationship, student-student relationship, activities, classroom management, student council, type of students and their attitude towards the school, prizes, and the scale for success.

#### The significance of school leadership

Presence of excellent leadership is one of the main factors in high performing schools. The link between the quality of leadership and educational outcomes is documented. Bush and

Jackson (2002) who reviewed many research articles confirm the influence of principals in building and formulating the mission of the school, which is an important path used later on by principals to influence the students' achievement (Bush, 2002). Bush mentioned in his study that research explored the relationship between the quality of leadership and school effectiveness, which is affected by the presence of excellent outstanding, strong, firm and professional leadership. Research done by the commonwealth secretariat refers to the important role the head plays in establishing an effective school (Bush, 2002). Therefore, the issue of developing school leaders is of high priority across the world because researchers demonstrated the relationship between the leadership style and excellence of learning and teaching (Bush, 2002). One can deduce the importance of developing school leaders in order to have schools where students learn, and where learning and teaching are planned and delivered in a good way so that students achieve.

Another study (Tirozzi, 2001) considers leadership as an "art, belief, a condition of the heart, than a set of things to do". School leaders should be concerned about the school outcomes such as the academic achievement, the social, and the emotional well being of students (Tirozzi, 2001). However, the present study concentrates on one of the school leader's concern, which is students' academic achievement.

### *Leadership Style*

Educational leadership has undergone gradual modification over the last decade. In the 1980s the best type of leaders was the instructional leader. Instructional leadership was based on four key terms to insure improvement. First, these leaders had to define the mission statement of the school and set its goal. The school goals should include standards for student achievements that school principals communicate with the audience inside and outside the school. Second, they had to manage education functions such as the coordination of the curriculum, teacher evaluation, allocating and protecting instructional time, monitoring

student progress, and conducting supervision. Third, principals had to create an academic learning climate. Finally, principals had also to create a strong and healthy culture to insure orderly work environment, safety for student involvement, strong staff cooperation and cohesion, insuring sufficient outside school resources that support the school's goals, and initiating a strong bond between the school and home. Marsh (1997) explores the new role of the school principal over the next decade. This shift expands the leadership roles (Marsh, 1997). A different culture is created, and value is given to collaboration and expertise. The trend toward higher student performance will force the schools to change the way teaching and learning is taking place (Marsh, 1997).

Leadership styles may affect the school climate, the organizational environment, and the performance of the school. Goleman (2000) showed that effective leaders motivate, create a mission, and build culture. People and organizations are still eluded by the effective leadership style and the reason goes back to the lack of quantitative research that demonstrates the precise leadership behavior that gives positive results. As school principals' master more than one leadership style, the working climate improves. Goleman emphasizes the importance of the authoritative, democratic, affiliative, and coaching leadership styles. BLOM school principal does not exhibit any of these styles due to the centralization of the Lebanese system.

As a result, this study reviews only the two leadership styles for schools, the transformational and transactional (El-Amine, 1997).

#### *Transformational Leadership*

School principals need new educational views in order to be successful in the new decade. These views are of a transformational leader. Pielstick (1998) presented a profile for transformational leaders as creating a shared vision, communicating the vision, building

relationships, developing a culture, guiding implementation, exhibiting character, and achieving results (Pielstick, 1998). To him transformational leadership is highly effective.

After presenting this leadership style some of the roles of school principals are discussed.

#### *New roles for school principals*

The administrative role is one of the most important roles of a school principal and it forms the essential side of school leadership. Leadership style is distributed based on three dimensions (El-Amine, 1997). The first dimension is the administrative and technical dimension that includes planning, organizing, coordinating, and observing. Second, the humanistic dimension and it is concerned with the human communication skills, and skills for empowering the teachers and the staff. Third, the instructional leadership means principals should ensure professional development, improving teaching strategies, and continuous curriculum upgrading.

#### *Instructional Leadership*

Another role for the principal is the instructional leader. Tirozzi (2001) explains it as establishing a learning environment, setting a vision concerned with continuous improvement in student performance, and promoting excellence in teaching (Tirozzi, 2001). The principal also should ensure teaching strategies and establish a balance between student progress, teaching, and the learning process (Tirozzi, 2001). It is known that schools and classrooms, which bring excitement, challenge to students, and promote creativity support learning in positive way (Tirozzi, 2001). Principal as an instructional leader is considered as an important ingredient in a school that works (Christie, 2000). Researchers concentrate on the principal's role as an instructional leader especially in supervision and curriculum development (El-Amine, 1997).

Without an instructional leader, the school has no chance in systematic improvement and learning (Tirozzi, 2001). He also stated that principals will be accountable for their

managerial and their leadership practices such as setting the tone for their buildings, facilitating the teaching and learning process, providing leadership and direction to their schools' instructional programs and policies, spending more time evaluating staff and mentoring new teachers, sustaining professional development for themselves and their staff members, and nurturing personalized school environments for all students (Tirozzi, 2001). They will also be responsible for low expectations of students and poor achievement results (Tirozzi, 2001).

The fate of the school principal whether successful or not will be determined by the improvements in the academic achievement of all students, support and assistance provided to the whole faculty (Tirozzi, 2001). Quinn (2002) believes that principals can influence student's achievement in an indirect way through working on teacher's professional development. Quinn (2002) states that principals influence indirectly student achievement through his interaction with the teaching staff (Quinn, 2002). Silins (1999) explains the indirect effect of leadership styles on the students lives, but stresses its impact on teachers who in-turn influence directly the performance of students. He also states that a principal should develop his own support system so he can be able to concentrate on his instructional goal as a leader (Pierce, 2001).

Researchers consider that giving the schools the authority and power, as it is applied in the non-centralized system, will increase the pressures on the school principal, which will prevent him from practicing his role as an instructional leader. On the other hand, researchers consider that applying the non-centralized system will force the principal to bare more responsibilities and it will shift his leadership style to a principal who follows orders only (El-Amine, 2000).

In addition to instructional leadership, Sergiovani (1991) added the symbolic and the cultural leadership. Symbolic leadership depends on the work done by the school principal

and the interest of the staff in imitating him. Cultural leadership is concerned with the values, norms, beliefs that a school principal holds (Sergiovanni, 1991). On the other hand, Chamley (1994) added a sixth dimension, which is the facilitator leadership of change process in any innovative plan (Chamley, 1994).

In conclusion, school principals should create a vision and organize the goals of the school then they should establish common grounds with the teachers in order to keep on improving the school. School principals should also build and develop good relationships with teachers and between teachers themselves. Moreover, principals influence the school culture as the following section explains.

### Culture

Culture is defined as a group of norms, values, beliefs, traditions, and rituals developing after a period of time as a result of people interacting with each other, solving problems, and confronting challenges (Peterson & Deal, 1998). Culture factors are among multiple factors related to student's low academic achievement (Dimmitt, 2003). Principals, teachers, and parents influence the culture of the school either positively or negatively. They may create a toxic culture which is an environment with low staff morale and commitment, and low students learning status (Peterson, 1998), or they can establish a positive culture in the school. It is the school leaders- principals, teachers, and parents who identify, shape and ensure the continuity of a strong, positive, students-focused culture. A positive school culture is a place where students learn, and staff is committed and caring (Peterson, 1998), and one finds underlying norms of collegiality, improvement, and hard work, shared vision, rituals and ceremonies celebrating students achievements, and parental commitment, and success (Peterson, 1998). It is the responsibility of everyone- principals, teachers and parents to shape and to maintain a strong culture.

*Teachers*

Teachers need a supportive environment in order to be more effective and enhance students' educational outcomes. According to Silins (1999), a good school supports teaching, which in turn supports students to achieve a common goal and successful achievement outcomes. Hilty (1998) mentioned the importance of collaborative culture to have effective teachers and more successful students. Teachers shape the culture of the school by reinforcing the values held by the school through their words and actions, while parents help especially when they reveal their interest in the school community, visit school, and participate in the school celebrations (Peterson, 1998).

*Self esteem*

Shapiro (1993) stressed the importance of positive culture in student's success. The way students and teachers perceive school gives us an idea of what the school climate seems to be. Teachers play an important role in enhancing students self esteem in the educational process and outcome (Anderson, 1970, Burnes, 1979, Collins, 2000). Developing student's self-concept helped positively in student's academic achievement (Shapiro, 1993).

*Motivation*

According to Anderson and Keith (1997) motivation is a noteworthy aspect in school achievement. As teachers establish relaxing classroom environment such as displaying students' work on the walls of the classroom, learning will be more effective (Dodd, 1997). Hilty (1998) argues that effective teaching is influenced by teachers' qualifications, job satisfaction, professional development, and knowledge of the subject.

*Classroom management*

Classroom management skills impact academic achievements, and produce an effective learning environment by enhancing student teacher relationship (Pigford, 2001). Hancock (2002) and Pigford (2001) stated the importance of positive phrases directed to students after

a definite or certain behavior. Shapiro (1993) also stressed the importance of positive social environment in order to establish a healthy learning climate. To establish a positive environment within the classroom, several elements had to be clearly stated and defined such as the classroom values, goals, and expectations (Shapiro, 1993). Teachers' experiences were not enough to fulfill those elements in order to create a positive social climate (Shapiro, 1993).

#### *Teaching strategies*

Assessment techniques used to evaluate students' knowledge strongly impacted student academic achievement (Dimmitt, 2003). Harris (2000) emphasized students' academic outcome as a criterion for school success. According to Harris (2000) if teachers focused on their teaching strategies, achievement will increase.

In conclusion, the presence of a positive culture is one of the important factors that are related to students' achievement (Dimmitt, 2003). To create a positive culture is the responsibility of the school principal, teachers, and parents. Each has several roles in maintaining a healthy environment. Teachers can excel and be effective when they are surrounded with a supportive environment. Teachers also impact students' academic achievement when they motivate, build students' self-esteem, have classroom management skills, create social relationships with students, work on their teaching strategies, and use assessment techniques to evaluate students' knowledge.

#### *Leadership and culture*

Leaders influence their school culture, and the school culture affects leaders. According to Peterson and Deal (1998), leadership has many sources. School leaders are considered very important shapers of the school culture (Reavis, 1999). The principal who is the school leader builds a positive culture through communicating core values in his everyday life (Peterson & Deal, 1998). The principal honors and appreciates teachers' work and innovations that serve

students (Peterson & Deal, 1998). The principal's also creates and supports the soul and heart for the school through observing rituals and traditions, recognize heroes and heroine accomplished work, empowers staff and students through celebrating their accomplishments, keep students' achievements on focus by recounting stories of success, and finally creates a mission for the school (Peterson, 1998). The principals values and beliefs influence the school environment (Goldman, 1998). School principals having effective leadership style succeed in building a sense of responsibility in students inside the classroom and help teachers in developing instructional programs (Goldman, 1998). They use their skills such as listening, responding and questioning to build a productive culture (Kapricke, 1996). They can initiate dialogue especially with teachers resistant to change and at the same time accept any change in their leadership style that suits teachers and students needs (Goldman, 1998). Leadership style will influence the school climate, teachers, educational performance, and teacher-student satisfaction (Dinham, 1995).

*Extracurricular activities verses students' academic achievement*

Motivation and academic performance among young people in the secondary level can be achieved through student engagement and meaningful participation in the learning environment (Wilson, 2002). Broh (2002) and Reavis (1999) argued that student's participation in extracurricular activities improves their educational outcomes. According to Moos and Moos (1973) teachers and students' participation in extracurricular and social activities also helps in establishing a good relationship between them. As a result unified culture paves the way for social and academic achievement. As a consequence of students' involvement in extra curricular activities, students will show more connectivity to school, and achieve higher (Dimmitt, 2003). A question rises here whether the absence of activities would affect students' schoolwork or not.

*Cutting classes and students' achievement*

Students cut classes because they dislike certain classes, consider certain subjects as easy and some subjects as hard, and for many other reasons. It becomes hard for students to pass because of skipping classes since they miss lessons and it becomes hard for them to follow (Fallis, 2003). To avoid this problem, students' voice and perceptions should be taken into consideration. Another solution is to engage students in the social life of the school working collaboratively with them (Fallis, 2003). Altenbaugh (1998) claimed that students' sluggishness and skipping school days are indicators of academic failure.

To improve matters, any cultural change should spring from within the school. It requires a long time, unclear procedures for this change, and it can take place by importing set of values, beliefs and practices (Reavis, 1999). Also changing behaviors, habits of thought, and feelings of the school principal and teachers can produce internal changes. Stolp (1994) and Kelly (1998) in their research studies assured the correlation between a healthy comfortable culture and student achievement. Stolp (1994) revealed how student achievement is strongly correlated with culture, and he showed the strong correlation between student motivation and teacher satisfaction and productivity with a healthy culture. Kelly (1998) assured how a comfortable environment has a strong and positive impact on creating a productive environment that in turn leads to positive student achievement (Kelly, 1998).

In this chapter, the researcher reviewed many research studies related to students' academic achievements. The researcher was interested in finding whether the leadership style of the school principal, teachers' methods and culture were the reasons for students' low achievement in the official exams at BLOM School. The researcher studied several leadership styles and described the role of the leader that positively affected students' academic achievement. In the second part of the literature review, the researcher stressed the effect of having a positive culture on the students' academic achievement. The literature

reviewed by the researcher also showed how teachers and the leadership style helped in building a healthy school environment that had an impact on students' academic achievement.

The next chapter will include the methodology used in gathering the necessary data and analyzing them for addressing the research questions.

### Chapter Three

#### Methodology

Ethnographic research deals with people describing their social-cultural activities. It describes the dynamics of social groups such as classrooms. It sheds light on the way students interact within their classroom environment, teachers' interaction, and the principal's effect on the climate of the school and students achievement. This method helps me evaluate school life, principal's style, and student-teacher interactions in their classes within the environment of the school. It incorporates many techniques to gather data such as participant observation, and interviewing followed by qualitative analysis after the researcher conducts the fieldwork in order to understand the events and behaviors being observed (Burns, 2000).

#### Case study approach

This ethnographic study is in the form of case study. A case study approach fits the purpose of this research study because it studies a real life problem in one context as a separated sample from a population (Robson, 1993). The problem in this study is student low achievement and its relationship with several factors in one school. A case study approach is a form of inquiry that investigates contemporary phenomenon taking place in real life especially when the boundaries between real life and context and the phenomenon are not clearly evident (Johnson, 1994). This approach gives us a deep understanding of the nature of the problems taking place. The researcher examined this problem through observing classes, interviewing teachers and students, and gathering documents in order to widen the scope of understanding the problem. In consequence to the investigation, some reasons for the high percentage of failure in the Lebanese Baccalaureate official examinations in BLOM School became known. This case study focuses on one public school, where the researcher is teaching. The focus is on the leadership style of the principal, the school culture, and teachers- student relationship.

### Reliability

Qualitative research does not claim to be replicable. It concentrates more on recording accurately the complexity of the changing situational context. Qualitative researchers view reliability as a fit between what they really collect as data and what is actually occurring in the setting under study (Burns, 2000). To increase the reliability of this study the researcher mentions the advantages and disadvantages of the methods to be used (Burns, 2000). The researcher also includes the data gathering procedure, timing of each observation, spatial arrangement of each interview; categories developed for analysis and relationship with teachers, director, and interviewed students (Bell, 1997).

### Validity

Establishing validity is a necessity. Validity is a judgment concerned in measuring what is supposed to be measured (Burns, 2000). To improve the internal validity, triangulation is used. Three methods are used to collect data: participant observation, interviews, and documents collected from the school to support the researcher's findings. Human behaviors are rich and complex to interpret so the researcher uses a variety of methods to plan out findings. The research findings will reflect at the end the reasons for students' low achievement.

### Triangulation

Triangulation is needed in ethnographic research because it is self-correcting procedure. Triangulation contributes to the validation of qualitative analysis by monitoring the consistency of findings generated through various data collection methods such as observation, interviewing, and official grade reports. Confidence in results is gained because the researcher relies on more than one source of evidence (Johnson, 1994), and interviewed the principal, 9 teachers, and 5 groups of students. Relying on one method for investigation might bias or distort the facts and data collected by the researcher.

### Sampling

The sampling in this research is purposive because it helped the researcher in fulfilling the research requirements. Purposiveness is a way to sample based on the researcher's needs. Robson (1993) mentioned that in case studies, when the research study is small, purposive sampling is used.

Data collection was on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday for ten teaching days. Observation took place in the third secondary level in the five sections of the highest secondary grade level present in the school. The third secondary level is divided into three categories, which are the Baccalaureate subdivisions: Humanities, Life science, and Sociology-Economics. In this school one section of Life science existed, one section of Humanities, and three sections of Sociology and Economics. All of these sections were observed. Later on, teachers were able to see the data in order to address their concerns that might arise from the data.

### Access and ethics

In order to gain physical access to classrooms the researcher had to gain permission to conduct observations from the director of higher education in Lebanon by writing him a letter in order to accept the request for conducting the research study at BLOM and move freely inside it and talk freely with its teachers. The principal of BLOM School warned the researcher of some problems the researcher might face with teachers especially when observation begins. Teachers believe that the researcher has no right of entering their classes even if the researcher submitted a signed paper from the director of higher education. So the principal recommended that the researcher write a memo explaining the aims of the research, and the research methods. This memo should be submitted to the teachers to decrease their fears that the researcher might misinterpret what would be observed (Foster, 1996). Bell (1997) stressed how crucial it is to have ethical principles set for research studies. The

researcher ensured confidentiality of data collected from the school of interest. The researcher took permission from teachers and students before data were collected from them (Bell, 1997). While interviewing, the researcher got introduced to the interviewee (Bell, 1997). The interviewer stated the purpose of the research although it was written in an official document submitted to the teacher. The researcher informed the interviewee of the confidentiality of the answers submitted to the interviewer and that anonymity of names. The researcher set a time for the interview and informed the interviewee of the duration of the interview. The interviewer was honest in reporting the data collected from the interview, and the interviewee was allowed to see the transcript of the interview (Bell, 1997).

#### Observation

Observation is used as a tool to record behaviors. It is considered to be the primary data collection method to record a certain situation, event, or a behavior because it provides accurate description of a situation. It gathers supplementary data or insights for other techniques, or provides interpretations to other sources of data (Johnson, 1994). Observation is a technique that has its own flaws. One of the disadvantages of observation is that it is time consuming and not easy to manage (Johnson, 1994). A logical problem is that the observer might inhibit the behavior of the group being observed or the group becomes accustomed to the presence of the observer (Robson, 1993). Observation has several advantages. It is a direct technique because people are not asked their views, feelings, or what they believe in. The researcher just watches what they do and listens to what they say. Observation is considered a suitable technique to record the real life situations and it is direct due to the lack of artificiality, which is rare in other techniques (Robson, 1993). Two broad forms of observation are used in educational research: structured and unstructured observation, and participant and non-participant observation (Johnson, 1994). These are explained in this study.

### Structured and unstructured observation

The researcher chose unstructured observation because it is the best method to record behaviors as they are (Johnson, 1994). In structured observation, the observer focuses on the intensity, absence, and presence of specific types of behavior (Johnson, 1994). It is a very systematic technique (Johnson, 1994). Structured observation is less time consuming than unstructured observation (Foster, 1996). On the other hand, it has many limitations such as the inflexibility of the observation, that is, the researcher cannot change the focus of the observation in case something interesting arises. Second, while observing, the researcher should avoid being biased. That means the researcher should avoid being selective on some aspects of the surrounding rather than others and avoid being selective while encoding and interpreting an event based on previous expectations (Robson, 1993). This means that the data collected might be distorted by researchers' own values and needs (Johnson, 1994). Third, single-handed researchers should decrease their reliance on structured observations due to the overloading of categories to be noted and this will lead to the observer's fatigue (Johnson, 1994).

Unstructured observation is used to record the behavior of a group in several situations such as, in a meeting, in less formal activities or to observe a way of life. To a certain extent, unstructured observation is considered systematic and a planned activity. Unstructured observation is best used for management meetings (Johnson, 1994) and has its own strengths and weaknesses. It is considered a useful technique because it records the behaviors as they are then the researcher can compare his observation with the result of the interviews he conducted. Second, observation records the behaviors that cannot be verbally translated through an interview or that the interviewee was unwilling to describe in words. Unstructured observation is considered a weak technique because the researcher might record superfluous information that is not relevant to the research study (Johnson, 1994). It is time consuming

for the researcher and least suitable to use in unpredictable situations because the observer might miss one of the events that would have been of the research interest. Moreover, some behaviors and occurrences might not be clear and accessible to the observer who aims for accuracy and correctness while observing. Selectivity and inaccuracy occur frequently when unstructured observation is used and this is due to the richness of the data acquired by the researcher (Johnson, 1994).

#### Participant and non-participant observation

The researcher chose participant observation as a method for observation because it is the finest technique to share life experiences with the observed groups, learning their social conventions and habits (Robson, 1993). The researcher is concerned with hypothesis generation rather than pre- formed hypothesis (Robson, 1993).

Social anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists considered participant observation as a "humanistic" rather than "scientific" approach (Robson, 1993). Although narrative accounts are used in qualitative approaches, they are also used exclusively in quantitative approaches in the stage before developing the coding schemes (Robson, 1993). Data are collected formally and informally: when collected formally, reliability and validity are easier to achieve but at the expense of losing completion and complexity of data when compared with the informal approach that gives freedom to the observer in the way the data are collected and recorded. Data can be collected through diary taking, note taking, and sometimes from informants, and that gives the data a sense of complexity and a need for synthesis and organization of the data. Participant observation means the observer is getting involved in the social and symbolic life of the observed group such as their language and way of communication (Robson, 1993).

Subjectivity can be treated through the observer's explanations of her experiences while observing. So reliability and validity can be attained. Objectivity is also attained when one deals sensitively with the issue of subjectivity and by justifying one's claims.

Participant observation is conducted through the involvement of the observer for 10 teaching days. The primary data collected by the observer is her interpretations of what happened around her while observing. It is known that in participant observation the data collection phase and the inquiry phase cannot be separated (Robson, 1993). Analyzing the data while observing may help a lot in shaping their development. The observer defined her role to the group observed from the beginning as an observer. Later on the observer formed links with the members of the observed group. Establishing relationships with the third secondary students was simple because the observer used to teach them. In addition to observing, the observer asked members of the groups about what was going on. So the observer here is playing a dual role: an observer and participator even though it is considered hard to maintain this duality (Robson, 1993).

The observer formed and kept good relationship with the group being observed. Being already a member of this group carried advantages and disadvantages. It was of a good benefit knowing extensive information about the group but achieving the objectivity was considered a problem. Attaining objectivity throughout observation did not create a problem for the researcher, because students behaved normally as if the observer was not a researcher. On the contrary, in certain situations they tried to turn the observer's attention to the attitudes and behaviors of their teachers and teachers did the same (Robson, 1993).

#### Conducting the observations

In this research study the researcher concentrated more on participant observation, which is the suitable technique to collect the needed data in this ethnographic study (Burns, 2000). A description of the whole setting of the school was recorded (Robson, 1993): location of the

school, entrance of the school, playgrounds, cleanliness, classrooms, location of the administration offices, teachers lounge, the time classes begin and end, and a description of the theater, library and laboratories. This technique was the appropriate one for getting a clear idea of real life in the real world. The researcher didn't ask teachers, principal, and students about their views, attitudes, or feelings; the researcher watched what they did and listened to what they said (Robson, 1993).

Two days before the observation date, the principal informed all faculty of the presence of a colleague who will be moving throughout the school. The principal notified teachers that the observer would be collecting information for her research project. The principal asked the researcher to write a memo that explains the purpose of his study to the teachers whom the researcher needs to enter their classes. This memo explained the research topic, aims, and methods to be used. The researcher noticed that the principal did not notify the teachers of the presence of the observer so the researcher had to notify the teachers again. The researcher showed them the governmental acceptance to enter the school and the memo approved by the principal. Teachers were encouraged to conduct classes as usual, ignoring the presence of the observer and without the observer interrupting what they would have normally been doing. Three teachers did not allow the researcher to enter their classes because they want to explain a new lesson and they don't want to waste their time. Also the researcher discovered that two part time teachers were not notified of the researchers' presence when the researcher entered their classes. Part timers come to school only during their teaching hours so it was hard for the researcher to meet them. Therefore, the researcher re-explained the purpose of the study to these two teachers.

The researcher observed the third secondary class (5 sections) over ten teaching days. Each instructional setting was observed for a whole teaching day, 7:30 am till 1:30pm or from 1:10pm till 6:30pm with respect to the observed day. The researcher's observations

were recorded as field notes. Also a diary of informal conversations with students and teachers was recorded. The educational strategies used by teachers and student interaction with teachers was recorded by the use of field notes. The data recorded were in the form of narrative accounts. While recording, the researcher distributed attention evenly. The observer sat in the back in order to observe all the student behaviors and reactions. If the observer sat in the front, the students would have wasted their time talking to him and not behaving in a normal way and this act would ruin the researcher's data.

In the classroom, the organization of the board during lesson explanation was recorded, student teacher interaction, number of students listening and cooperating with the teacher, language used by the teacher, tone of the teacher, number of students solving problems on the board, and student attendance. The researcher recorded the data while observing in the classroom and directly after the event otherwise the report would be poor, incomplete and inaccurate (Robson, 1993). Observations were recorded every 5 to 10 minutes, for each observed category of behavior. Description of the school helped in understanding the school environment (Foster, 1996); such as, relaxation rooms for students, teachers lounge, and free movement of students in and out of school during break and free periods, and the way students are treated and the way students behave.

#### Field notes

Notes were taken during the observation that was conducted in the classrooms. Field notes provide a detailed record of the observed behavior, situations, or events in the social context under study. To take field notes, it needs experience and more time. The observer might fall under preconceived ideas and prejudices, also the observer might be selective while recording the data, and the observer might record relevant information while they are not. The observer becomes subjective when recording data, and the longer the time lapse between observing and recording the data the more detailed information is lost from the researchers memory

(Johnson, 1994). On the other hand, field notes are considered flexible. While observing, the researcher who was the observer recorded data during each session in order not to lose any information. Nonetheless, the observer did not record data in two classes.

### Interviews

Interviewing is the second instrument used for collecting data. Semi structured interviews have many advantages like following up ideas, probing responses, and investigating motives and feelings, which the questionnaires never do. The response made by the interviewee can provide us with information that a written response conceals (Bell, 1997). Interviews also have disadvantages. First, they are time consuming, highly subjective, and therefore there is a danger of bias (Bell, 1997). Before beginning the interview, the researcher introduced and explained the purpose of the research study. Time and place of the interview was decided with the interviewee. Also, the interviewee was informed of how long the interview will last.

The researcher should distinguish between the different types of interviews; the structured interview, semi-structured, and the unstructured interview. The structured interview is based on predetermined set of questions, questionnaire like, and the interviewer records the responses with reference to a schedule. In the semi-structured interview, the interviewer had previously prepared a set of questions but while interviewing she was free to change their order based upon their importance or relevance in the context of the conversation. The interviewer can even re-word them, give explanations, or omit irrelevant questions while interviewing. The unstructured interview is related to a topic of interest to the interviewer but the sequence of the interview is free to develop or take its own path while interviewing (Robson, 1993). The interview then remains with no direction. Interviewers should allow the speaker to talk freely and openly. This can be achieved by listening more than speaking, preparing clear and non threatening questions, and writing them in a straight forward way. They develop questions without the use of cues that will lead the interviewee to answer in a

particular way, and give a positive image while interviewing and take a full record of the interview (Robson, 1993).

To study the reasons of the low achievement of the students in this public school, the principal, group of teachers, and groups of students were interviewed. Semi-structured interviews were used because they are more appropriate in the context of conversation (Robson, 1993). The researcher had freedom in sequencing questions, wording, and more attention was given to a certain topic (Robson, 1993). Sets of questions were prepared by the interviewer to study the real reason behind this failure. A small tape recorder was used while conducting the interviews with the principal, teachers, and the students. The interview with the principal and the teachers was on one to one basis. It took place in the principal's office and it lasted 30 minutes. The interviews with teachers took place in the teachers lounge. Each interview lasted 20 to 30 minutes.

Group interviews were used because students would be more frank and open in their answers. Group interviews with students took place in the student's classrooms during a free period. The group interviews lasted 60 minutes per each class. The researcher interviewed 10 students in the life science section, 15 students in the humanities section, and 20 students in each section A, B, C of the sociology and economics section. Group interviews have many disadvantages such as the difficulty in following up with all the individual responses within the group. Two or more students might dominate not allowing others to contribute. While interviewing students, problems of students dominating each other did not exist. Students were glad about those interviews because they had the right to say their opinion. Students were laughing and saying jokes especially when certain teachers are mentioned. Students sometimes shouted at each other, because each one of them wanted to express his opinion or wanted to tell his story with one of the teachers or with the principal. Students were talking freely without being afraid of anybody communicating their answers to the administration or

to the teachers. The atmosphere of the interview was encouraging for each student to state clearly his opinion about everything in the school. Students were so enthusiastic about the whole study and stated everything they knew.

Semi structured interviews were used for the sake of collecting the data to be analyzed after tape recording the interview.

#### Data analysis

The data collected were categorized from interviews, observations, and field notes into themes over several steps. First, principal, teachers', and students' interviews were transcribed into files. Second, the researcher read the transcribed files and wrote the notes on the margins. Notes were related to repeated concepts that are relevant to the research questions. Third, the researcher re read the files and gathered the common notes from each file and classified them into themes. For example, information about the theme discipline was gathered from the transcribed files of the teachers and combined together in one table under the theme discipline. The same procedure was then repeated for the transcribed files of students' interviews and the principal's interview. Common themes were combined together in one table. For example, information about discipline was gathered in one table from three sources: the principal interview, teachers' interviews, and the students' interviews. This categorization helped the researcher to analyze and compare the data collected from the observations and field notes with the data collected from interviews. It also helped in addressing the research questions that are stated in chapter one (Wolcott, 2001).

In conclusion, this chapter summarizes the type of this study and its approach. The chapter also discusses includes the sampling technique, reliability and validity of this study and presents the tools used for collecting the data such as participant and unstructured observations, and semi-structured interviews. Then the researcher shows how these data are analyzed.

## Chapter four

## Presenting the Data

This chapter presents data that the researcher collected by conducting interviews with the principal, teachers, and students and by observing in five sections of the secondary third level. The researcher projects the interview results then states the observation results to show if there was a contradiction in the findings.

## Leadership style

*Student-Principal relationship*

According to the principal's interview, the principal motivates the students by giving them prizes and books, and by guiding them in choosing their future career. The principal takes the students' point of view and tries to satisfy all parties (Appendix D, table 4.1).

According to teachers' interviews, teachers believe that the principal is not playing his role in motivating students. Some teachers mentioned that the principal is not motivating his students while one of the teachers thinks that the principal is motivating students to follow rules. One teacher considers the principal is motivating his students when the principal passes by his classroom once every year (Appendix D, table 4.1).

According to students' interviews, the relationship between students and the principal is bad due to the following aspects:

## Communication problems with the principal

No communication is established between the principal and the students. Students refer to the principal if they are facing a problem with their teachers, but the principal never helped the students. The principal records students' objections and opinions, but never takes their opinions into consideration. The principal has no power in this school, and his opinion is not taken into consideration. The relationship between the students and the principal is negative

because when they face a problem with their teachers, the principal stands by the teachers although the teachers are the ones to be blamed (Appendix D, table 4.1).

#### *Distrust and discouragement*

Students assured in their interviews that there is no trust between the students and the principal. The principal discourages the students and doesn't create a motivational plan to enhance students' educational outcomes. He never keeps his promises to students in helping them with the problems they face with their teachers or in the classroom. According to students' opinions, the principal has no role as an instructional leader. The principal only reports to the Ministry Of Education what is happening in the school (Appendix D, table 4.1).

According to the researcher's observation, the principal of BLOM School did not establish a good relationship with students. Although students can enter his office anytime they want, they leave his office disappointed. There is no supervision in the courtyard during recess, which gives students the freedom to do whatever they want. The observer also heard comments about the principal's appearance, personality and behavior. Students are disrespectful of the principal.

#### *Supervision*

According to the principal's interview, the contract that the teachers sign forces them to cooperate with the coordinators and the school administration. The principal doesn't supervise the coordinators' work due to time constraints. The principal supervises the performance of the new teachers to make sure they are teaching well but later on, the principal stops attending after making sure that the teachers are teaching in the correct way (Appendix D, table 4.2).

According to the teacher's interviews, the chemistry full time teacher and the part time teachers assured that the principal is not doing his job in supervision. One said that the principal never checked if the teachers and the coordinators are meeting.

The principal holds no meeting with them. As a result, no communication is established and students sensed that there is no communication, which leads them to behave the way they want. The chemistry tenured teacher stated that the principal did not enter the classroom to observe his performance (Appendix D, table 4.2).

The biology part time teacher does not like the principal to interfere in the biology team, although he admits the importance of the principal's role in supervising the teachers. The biology tenured teacher assured that the principal never entered the class during instruction (Appendix D, table 4.2).

The principal never entered the physics session to observe the teacher's performance or teaching strategies. The physics teacher hopes and looks forward for such visit but says that the principal is not playing the role of a supervisor (Appendix D, table 4.2).

The sociology teacher informed the interviewer that the principal passes by the class when a disciplinary problem takes place. Three months after the school begins, the principal checks the preparation book of each teacher (Appendix D, table 4.2).

According to the students' interviews, the school principal does not apply supervision. One group stated that the principal passes through their class daily and sometimes every period looking through the small window in the door. Another group stated that the principal passes only when there is noise and disturbance inside the classroom, or when the teacher calls for help in calming the students down. The principal enters another class only when submitting the report cards, but the principal does not suggest or apply any plan to improve the students' grades on one math test. Two students out of 30 passed the exam with averages of 50 and 40 out of 80, but no action was taken. Another example is the students' failure in history. The principal admitted that the teacher is not good but the principal couldn't do anything for the students and everything remained as it is (Appendix D, table 4.2).

According to the researcher's observation, no supervision was conducted for any teacher by the principal including the researcher who is a teacher in this school for four years. Teachers sitting in the teachers lounge mentioned that neither the principal nor the coordinator entered their classes for supervision. Also the inspector sent by the government never attended any class. The governmental inspector only checks the administrative process. New teachers are not supervised. Only if the case was serious and the students submitted a petition or complained about one teacher, the principal attends that teacher's class.

The principal arranges two faculty meetings within the school year. The first meeting is held at the beginning of the school year, and the second one at the end of the school year to point out the mistakes done by teachers the year before. The principal writes on the regulatory book what the coordinators and teachers need to know. This book is placed at the entrance of the administration office. Moreover, if the principal admits that there is an unqualified teacher in his school, the principal has no authority to fire or exchange any teacher. There is no follow up with the teachers whether they finished the program or not.

#### *Monitoring students' progress*

According to the principal's interview, the principal tries to find a solution when there is a great percentage of failure in the student's results. If the principal was not able to solve it, he refers to the teaching staff or to the Ministry of Education (Appendix D, table 4.3).

The principal has no role in monitoring students' progress. The principal never discussed students' test results with any teacher. Some teachers inform the principal of the students' educational levels but the principal never took the initiative to enhance students' educational outcomes because he is not a professional in this field. Other teachers mentioned that the principal never asked them about the reason why their grades are low although it is his duty to monitor students' educational level in BLOM School. Some teachers discuss their test

results with the coordinator who is more knowledgeable than the school principal (Appendix D, table 4.3).

According to the students' interviews, the principal does not monitor student's progress. The principal advises students to improve, or directs comments to the failing students. Sometimes the principal tries to hire a math teacher to teach students extra hours in order to improve students' achievements (Appendix D, table 4.3).

As an observer and a teacher the researcher noted that the principal did not check students' results or evaluate them after midterm, final, or monthly exams. Results are submitted monthly to the director of the floor to be kept in the records. In the midterm and final exams, a high percentage of students of the third secondary class did not sit for the exams. The principal did not take any action regarding this issue, which is repeated yearly.

#### *Upgrading teachers strategies*

According to the principal and teachers' interviews, the principal has no role in upgrading the teacher's teaching strategies. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education that assigns the teachers who will go to workshops (Appendix D, table 4.4). The Ministry then informs principals about the workshops and they in turn inform their teachers of the existing workshops. Teachers either depend on other sources to enhance their performance or wait till the ministry sends them to a workshop. One of the teachers believes that enhancing teachers' strategies is not necessary. Other teachers' request from the principal teaching aids but due to the budget, the principal ignores their requests (Appendix D, table 4.4).

According to the students' interviews, no good teachers are found in the school. Teachers are the main factor in determining the success of a school, but teachers of this school are not qualified and not trained to teach third secondary classes (Appendix D, table 4.4).

According to the researcher's observation, the Ministry of Education upgrades teachers' teaching strategies. The principal only informs the teachers of the date and place of the workshop.

*Teacher- Principal relationship*

According to the principal's interview, teachers' opinions are taken into consideration especially when the case is important (Appendix D, table 4.5).

The majority of the interviewed teachers agreed that the principal does not take their opinions into consideration in any issue. One teacher stated that if there is an innovational plan, the Ministry of Education imposes everything on the school principal. Two teachers mentioned that the principal took their opinions into consideration when the principal wanted to enhance the educational level of students in one of the classes (Appendix D, table 4.5).

The interviewed students gave no comments concerning the relationship of the teachers with the principal (Appendix D, table 4.5). The observer realized variation in the relationship of the principal with the teachers. Some teachers have good relationship with the principal, while others don't. They talk in a sarcastic way about the principal. One of the teachers informed her colleague in the teacher's lounge about an incident when the principal shouted at her in front of all the students for being 5 minutes late. The teacher felt offended and told the principal he is dealing unprofessionally with the case.

According to the researcher's observation, the principal's office is open for all the teachers any time they want. The principal forms good relations with some teachers who are close to him, but has a bad relation with other teachers. Some teachers avoid talking to him because they believe it is useless. The observer noted from the teachers' comments in the teachers lounge how unfair the principal is with them.

*Enrollment regulations*

According to the principal's interview, Students are accepted in this school if there is a place for them, and then they should sit for an entrance exam and pass it and submit their grades and previous school certificate (Appendix D, table 4.6).

According to the teachers' interviews, students have low educational standards. The school is forced to accept the students that apply to the school and if many of them failed, students enroll by a supreme order. The school is not free to accept and reject students (Appendix D, table 4.6).

According to the students' interviews, there are pitfalls in the enrollment regulations in the system. Students enroll in BLOM School whether they passed or failed the entrance exam. The test results are not taken into consideration. Students also get intervening forces to get registered in the school (Appendix D, table 4.6).

According to the observer, students sit for an entrance exam. It is unofficial test because the school is forced to accept students when it has shortage in the number of students enrolled, and the Ministry of Education forces the school to accept students when the school has vacancies for them. One of the teachers was asked to correct the entrance exam for 6 students with the request to allow them to pass regardless of the grade they get. After the teacher corrected the exams, all the students failed but a passing grade was given for those students because the school needed more students.

In conclusion to this section on leadership, the interviews and observation revealed the leadership style of the school principal. First, the relationship between the students and the school principal is characterized by lack of communication, discouragement, distrust, and disrespect. Second, the school principal does not play the leader's role in supervising coordinators and teachers' work, upgrading his teachers' strategies according to the Ministry of Education regulations, and monitoring students' progress. Concerning the teacher-school

principal relationship, the nature of the relationship varied between teacher and another. Moreover, the school principal, as a manager, obeys the rules set by the Ministry of Education related to the enrollment regulations.

The next section studies teachers' role in monitoring students' progress, teaching strategies used, coordination between teachers, official exams, and teamwork.

#### Teachers

##### *Teachers monitoring students' progress*

According to the principal's interview, the principal did not comment whether teachers monitor their students' progress or not (Appendix D, table 4.7).

According to the teachers' interviews, teachers use many methods to monitor their students' progress. Some teachers review with their students their mistakes, re-teach them and then re-do the test. Other teachers provide proper guidance, advise students to work harder, and stress on their weak points in class. Some teachers evaluate the level of students and guide them to improve themselves. The problem that is affecting the students' educational outcomes is the students' carelessness and weakness in language in addition to teachers' failure in guiding the students. Teachers mentioned that students need follow up and motivation by giving them extra grades, which will give them the incentive to improve (Appendix D, table 4.7).

According to the students' interviews, teachers do not monitor student's progress. Some teachers do not administer tests for students. Other teachers do not correct the tests directly and keep the tests with them so students receive late feedback. Some teachers submit to the administration the highest grade. One teacher refused to do a make up test for one of the students although the student had a medical report. The teacher gave the student a passing grade without administering a test for that student. However, the math teacher corrected

students' tests. If the average of the class was low, one math teacher retests to get a higher average (Appendix D, table 4.7).

According to the researcher's observations, teachers are not consistent in monitoring students' progress and in giving direct feedback in the classroom. The educational process is hindered by the disciplinary problems taking place inside the classrooms.

#### *Teaching strategies*

The interviewed principal did not mention anything about the methodology used by the teachers during instruction (Appendix D, table 4.8).

According to the teachers' interviews, solving problems on the board is used by some teachers to make sure that students understood the lesson but other teachers do not allow students to solve problems on the board due to time constraints so they solve it on their own on the board. One of the teachers stated that the program does not include solving problems. One teacher mentioned that teachers should choose suitable teaching strategies to help students understand (Appendix D, table 4.8).

According to the students' interviews, teachers rely on the old methodology. Students do not perform experiments in the lab. There is no group work, activities, or field trips. Some teachers apply the problem -solving technique but others do not. The chemistry teacher does not use this method because the content requires memorization, but sometimes the teachers ask one of the students to copy the solution of the chemistry exercise from his copybook. The biology teacher copies the answers of the activities from the teachers guide on the board. The math and physics teachers in two classes use the board to solve the exercises on their own, while in one of the classes two students go to the board to solve the exercises, which helps the students understand the lesson more. The economics teacher is the only teacher that allows students to solve all the exercise on the board. The math, sociology, and economics teachers use the discussion method. Some teachers such as the chemistry teacher explain the

lesson without informing the students where in the chapter they are explaining, and some teachers do not check students' understanding. Only the economics teacher uses group work (Appendix D, table 4.8).

According to the observer, teachers mainly use the lecturing method; some use the discussion method, and questioning, and two teachers allow students to work in groups. In general, the atmosphere of the classroom did not allow teachers to use different instructional strategies. Teachers were barely explaining the lesson. Others remained shouting all the period to control the students.

#### *Coordination between teachers*

According to the principal's interview, the contract that the teachers signed forces them to cooperate with the coordinators and the school administration. The principal does not supervise the coordinators' or the teachers' work due to time constraints (Appendix D, table 4.9).

The interviewed teachers said that coordination is not applied consistently and in an organized way. The coordinator is one of the teachers. In biology, the coordinator meets with the teachers once at the beginning of the school year to decide what is included in the program. They prepare tests together and discuss the subject matter. The part time biology teacher assured that the coordinator rarely attends the class to observe the instructional process and recently the coordinator is not attending the biology sessions to supervise. On the other hand, in chemistry the coordinator assured that the teachers are highly cooperative when any remark is directed to them concerning the methodology. However, the part time chemistry teacher stressed the fact that the chemistry department has no coordinator and that the school principal has assigned a coordinator who refused to do the job. The chemistry teacher mentioned that they are working on their own with no supervision and that neither the principal nor the coordinator has attended the chemistry classes in the past 4 years. The

sociology teacher stated that there is no coordinator for sociology in the school. In physics, teachers don't face any problems. The coordinator and the teachers meet on weekly basis. They discuss subject matter issues and the coordinator is glad to help the novice teachers. The coordinator attends the physics teacher classes to supervise the instructional process but with no feedback regarding the teacher's performance (Appendix D, table 4.9).

According to students' opinions, there is no coordination and teamwork between teachers (Appendix D, table 4.9).

Regarding the interviews done with the principal and the teachers, they contradict each other. The observer noted that the majority of coordinators are not doing their jobs except the physics coordinator and partly the biology coordinator. They meet weekly in the teachers lounge. The other coordinators take the issue of coordination lightly. One of the coordinators refuses to coordinate due to his bad relation with the principal.

#### *Official exams*

The interviewed principal commented that follow up of students' progress, application of the rules and regulations at the school, and follow up of the teacher's efficiency in finalizing the programs on time do influence the students' official exam results (Appendix D, table 4.10).

According to the teachers' interviews, teachers play a very important role in influencing students' grades in the official exams. Teachers are responsible for checking the students' understanding, following their progress, assessing them, and re-teaching them. Other teachers mentioned that they are responsible for students' participation in class, motivation, and guidance in how to study. One of the teachers stated that students' results in the official exams could be estimated from the school results. The principal complains when students get low grades but neither the principal nor the teachers are able to enhance students' educational outcomes (Appendix D, table 4.10).

*Teamwork*

The principal and the students did not give comments concerning teamwork among teachers (Appendix D, table 4.11). According to the teacher's interviews, teamwork is not established in BLOM School except in physics and in chemistry where the coordinator states that cooperation is established with the colleagues when taking decisions concerning students' performance. The part time teacher disagrees because she rarely sees others and talks to them. In sociology, teachers rarely meet and discuss issues but they are planning to work as one team next year. In physics, teachers cooperate and work as one team except while preparing exams. One of the teachers refuses to prepare any exam and depends on other teachers due to difficulties in language. In biology, teachers prepare their tests alone, while the coordinator mentions that test preparation is done by working as one team (Appendix D, table 4.11). According to the researcher's observation, not all the teachers are working as one team except the physics, biology, and math teachers. Chemistry teachers never meet. They barely talk to each other. Each teacher is working alone.

In conclusion to this section the majority of teachers are not doing their job. First, some teachers are not consistent in monitoring students' progress whereas others don't monitor students' progress. Second, disciplinary problems inside the classrooms limit the teachers' teaching strategies. The main strategy that teachers used was lecturing, while some teachers used the discussion method, and few teachers used group work. Third, coordination between teachers and the coordinators is not applied except in Physics where the physics teacher meets weekly with the rest of the physics teachers. Fourth, students accuse the principal and the teachers for being responsible for their low achievement in the official exams due to the principal's inefficiency and the irresponsibility of many teachers. Fifth, teamwork is established between physics, math and biology teachers only.

After discussing teachers' role in BLOM School, the next section reveals the culture of BLOM School. It describes the school environment, activities done, teachers and students' attitudes towards the school, prizes given to distinguished students, instructional time and discipline.

## Culture

### *Prizes*

According to the principal's interview, Prizes given to students are symbolic. According to the teachers' interviews, elite students receive several prizes such as laptops, books, and golden coins. One of the teachers doesn't know if students receive gifts. According to the students' interviews, the elite students did not receive any prizes this year, and one group said that last year the elite students received a golden coin (Appendix D, table 4.12). The principal, teachers, and the students contradicted each other. According to the researcher's observations, elite students were not given any prizes except for the year before when elite students were given golden coins.

### *Students' council*

According to the interviewed principal, student council for students hasn't been established since the civil war but students formed several clubs such as the arts, and sports councils. Eight teachers agreed that there is no student council in this school while one teacher stated that student council exists at the school without knowing its activity. According to the students' interview, students of five classes stressed the fact that there is no student council established in the school. One group mentioned that the school principal chooses one student to take the absence only (Appendix D, table 4.13). According to the researcher's observation, there is no students' council in the school. Any activity that is prepared is done as a personal effort from the students. Thus, there was an agreement that there is no students' council in the school.

*Students and teachers' attitudes towards the school*

The interviewed principal did not express any feeling towards the school. The interviewed teachers differ in their attitude towards the school. Some didn't feel they are at home when they come to school especially when they face immoral and troublesome students, others stated that they come only to do their job, and the rest felt relaxed especially when they see their headmaster and their colleagues. One teacher mentioned that it is the teacher's responsibility to feel at ease when coming to the school. Students are troublesome, but the school is forced to accept the students that apply to the school and if many of them failed the entrance exam, students enroll by the intervention of an important individual in the society (Appendix D, table 4.14).

According to the interviewed students, their friends are troublesome, and affect negatively the classroom atmosphere. Students in BLOM School misuse the school tools such as stealing materials from the lab and damaging others (Appendix D, table 4.14).

According to the researcher's observations, teachers and students don't like the school. Some teachers arrive late to the school; others waste the instructional time inside the classroom joking and telling students' personal stories, while others avoid seeing the principal. Students' attitude to the school is revealed when the observer entered their classrooms. The walls and desks are covered with students' comments, emails, and bad words. Students have no work to be hung on the walls of the classroom. Also students broke doors and windows. Students run away from school and leave the classes whenever they want.

*Activities*

According to the interviewed principal, a party for teachers is given on Teachers' Day. In religious ceremonies sweets are distributed. Students perform several activities, such as

sports tournaments with other schools, language activities, going to the museum, and drawings (Appendix D, table 4.15).

According to the interviewed teachers, the school does not arrange activities for students. Students arrange activities on their own such as the sports team, and the music concert. The principal does not indulge in school activities. Only an art show was made twice within several years. One of the chemistry teachers showed no interest in school activities because she is a chemistry teacher. On the other hand, a breakfast party was made for teachers, with a group of students volunteering to do a play. There are no extracurricular activities arranged for students due to lack of time, and administration discouragement. Ceremonies are not celebrated in BLOM School. Even when the Independence Day was once celebrated, no one showed any interest in it. Students took it a day off and left the school (Appendix D, table 4.15).

Students in the five classes agreed that no activities are done in the school. Students in one class mentioned that students arrange for trips as a personal effort, and one group of students in one of the classes arranged for a concert on a personal basis and at their expense. Students also have no sports teacher even though they formed a football team that played against one of the prominent schools in Beirut and won. The school does not celebrate any occasion whether national or religious or related to the school occasions (Appendix D, table 4.15).

The principal's opinion contradicted the teachers and the students' opinion concerning ceremonies done at the school. However, according to the observer, ceremonies were not held at BLOM School even the religious ones. Concerning other extra curricular activities, students are the ones who arrange for the music concert in the school. Students leave their classes to go to the training with their friends in the playground because they are not allowed to stay after the school day ends. Some students escape from the school to attend the tournament done and the rest stay in the school because they were not allowed to go to attend

the game. Students of BLOM School won the trophy but it was due to their personal efforts. Concerning class activities, teachers did not do any extracurricular activities for the students due to time constraints. Only the sociology teacher asked students to do interviews with educated people in the society as part of a project.

#### *Instructional time*

The school principal did not comment on the instructional time of students and how important it is. According to the teachers' interviews, BLOM School is a failing school due to the high number of vacations and due to the high number of students who are kicked out of the class during instruction. The interviewed students consider the instructional time is wasted, because they have many free periods. Students are facing difficulties when solving homework due to the morning and evening shifts of the school schedule such as on Monday, Tuesday, Saturday the instructional day begins at 7:30 and ends up at 1:00, and on Wednesday, Thursday, Friday the instructional day begins at 1:10pm till 6:30 pm. Students also need extra sessions in Math but the principal is not supporting them (Appendix D, table 4.16).

According to the researcher's observation, the instructional time is wasted especially when students from all grade levels skip classes and are found in the playground eating, playing football and smoking. The inattentiveness of the headmasters of each floor and the principal to the students sitting in the playground is bewildering. The researcher once asked one of the headmasters about them and the answer was that these students are troublesome and it is better for them to stay in the playground. Also, the observer noticed several classes leaving the school early and no one checking on them. While the observer attended the classrooms for ten teaching days, the instructional time was useful with teachers X, Y, M, O, F, and A during instruction in all of the sections. In the rest of the periods, students were making fun of teachers and not paying attention. On the other hand, students are not benefiting from the

school day due to the morning and afternoon intervals. Student's time is being wasted and their mode for studying is being shifted daily.

### *Discipline*

The principal says he plays the role of a disciplinarian and deals respectfully with students and makes sure that they are applying the rules. The principal deals in a mean way with students but is not tough with them. The principal listens to the teachers' complaints and understands the problem of the students then finds an appropriate solution for their problem. If the problem is related to the teachers' dignity, the student is transferred directly to the disciplinary council that sets punishment and the student might be suspended from the school. The principal calls the students' parents to solve the problems but if a physical injury was found a punishment will be administered (Appendix D, table 4.17).

According to the teachers' interviews, student-student disciplinary problems take place inside the classrooms. A majority of teachers send students to the principal when students have a fight with each other. Some teachers do not because the principal never helped in solving any problem; other teachers do not know the principal's role in such circumstances. One teacher mentioned that the student will be dismissed of the class directly. Two teachers gave proper guidance to students in order to solve the problem that was initiated between them. One of the teachers relied on the relationship that exists with students. No specific criterion for punishment is followed in BLOM School. Sometimes the student is sent to the principal who sends the student back to the class or is suspended for several days but comes back later. Students don't care any more because they know they will return back to the class after that punishment. Teachers solve disciplinary problems between the students and themselves by guiding students, sending them to the principal's office, without punishing the student after receiving the proper guidance, or by referring to the parents. Some teachers try not to create problems with students and ignore silly problems. Teachers refer to the principal

when they face a disciplinary problem with their students but one teacher mentioned that the principal never helped in such cases. One of the teachers mentioned the importance of the role of the principal as a disciplinarian. Even though the principal has minimum interaction with students, students make fun of the principal. One of the teachers assured that the principal has no role in enforcing discipline because the principal never helped the teacher in any problem (Appendix D, table 4.17).

According to the interviewed students, classroom management varies among teachers. Some teachers shout to control the class while others have no ability to control students in the classroom. Other teachers such as the chemistry teacher can control the class. There are troublemakers who make use of teachers' nervousness. Students who create problems will be expelled from the school for a period of time. Students mentioned that there is no orderly atmosphere in the classroom and in the school. Students smoke in the playground without being noticed by the administration and teachers. Students do not stand up in line when the bell rings. They leave the class whenever they want. They even jump from the first floor to the playground if the school keeper locked the door of the playground.

Concerning the atmosphere of the classroom, it is not good. One teacher enters the classroom smoking, joking, and chatting all the time with students about his personal life without explaining anything during the session. Students' relationship with each other is good. Even if they face problems with each other they solve it on their own without referring to the principal or to the teacher (Appendix D, table 4.17).

According to the researcher's observation, the principal, teachers and students were contradicting each other. When the researcher observed in the third secondary classes, many things were discovered. Not all what the teachers mentioned was true concerning dealing with the students' disciplinary issues, while students projected the real atmosphere in their classrooms.

Discipline in one section, which consisted of 28 girls, was well established. The economics teacher X just taps with a pen on the desk to calm them down. When students don't answer in turn, the teacher turns her face to them and tells them "Please girls". The teacher only mentions the name of the talkative girl to keep her quiet. The sociology teacher M does not make any effort to calm the class. As the teacher pronounces Bekaa Valley, two students started laughing from the way the teacher pronounced the word. The teacher turned her back and told them "what is going on?" "Nothing" was the answer of the two students. They calm down and their friends continued reading.

The civic education teacher K was subjected to students' games. Students around the researcher were laughing, and talking. The teacher asked Hanan to change her place because she was talking with her friends. The civic education teacher stares only at girls to be quiet. Then the teacher looks at one girl and asks her what is wrong with her. The student is massaging her friend's hand. Hanan starts talking in a loud voice with the teacher so one of her friends shouts at her and asks her to cool down. Sometimes the teacher whistles so students stop talking. The students did not face any disciplinary problem with the Arabic and English teacher.

In another section, 27 male students are subjected to the Biology teacher's discouragement and disrespect. The Biology teacher R comments and says, "you are all a hopeless case" to a group of students sitting in the back. They swear to her in a joking manner. The teacher says "Thank you and pay attention". One of the students said that the teacher is talking Italian English. The teacher shouts at him "get out" and the student's response was "sorry". The student meant it then the teacher allowed him to stay in the class. At the end the biology teacher shouted at a group of students sitting in the back talking and making noise "I understood that you don't want to concentrate and interact...shut up". Students also try to make fun in the class by playing with cell phones. The teacher comments sarcastically, the

students started joking but the teacher did not lose her temper and she continued explaining the lesson.

The civics education teacher K tried his best to be calm and respectful with the troublesome students when they tried to joke and make fun in the classroom. Teacher K also stared at the talkative student to make him quiet. Economics teacher N uses different methods in dealing with students. One of the students jumps over his desk to open the door, so the teacher smiled back questioning him if anything was wrong. Teacher N stares at students especially when they start making noise. The teacher also directs a remark to students who are making fun of the subject matter. The students are continuously talking so at the end she shouts and tells them to stop. Teacher N informed them that anyone who doesn't want to listen, he has to go out. One student got excused and left the classroom. Teacher N then told them that if anyone will talk, she would send him outside the class. The teacher asks one of the students to leave the class. The student refuses to go out so the teacher decides to leave the class to call the director. The teacher comes back and tells the student to come with him. Two boys then leave the class. Students in the economics period tried to disturb the class but the teacher tried her best not to allow them to do so. Sometimes the economics teacher N ignores the students' remarks and sometimes the teacher does not.

In another section, the physics teacher O did not face any disciplinary problem with the students. Biology teacher H faced disciplinary problems in her period and was unable to manage the students who took advantage of the teacher's weakness and were in a state of chaos. The teacher was unable to start the lesson. Teacher H shouted all the time in a high voice and the students replied, "Cool down, everything can be solved in a calm way". Students started making fun of the teacher "Miss raise your voice, miss lower your voice". Students are talking especially the students in the back seat, while some are copying but not paying attention. Only the students in the first row are paying attention. The teacher started

reading a question and tried to raise her voice, but the researcher couldn't hear. The class is making a big fuss and the researcher was not able to hear the teacher and what the students were saying. Students are walking in the classroom without permission. One girl is checking her hair with a mirror and the teacher is shouting all the time. One student starts joking with the teacher and she responded sarcastically. The session continues like this. The teacher is unable to solve any exercise or sometimes solve the exercise alone. The students are not concentrating in class and are affecting the teacher's nerves. The teacher did not go back to the director or the principal.

This class was taught Arabic by teacher P. This teacher also has no skills in controlling the class. The students ignore the teacher who stands near her table helpless doing nothing. The students considered this period as a break for them. Students are playing with papers and throwing them in the trashcan as if playing basketball. Other students are eating, talking, and laughing. One student goes to the board and writes Eminem. The teacher even does not call the director of the floor. The researcher heard this teacher saying while they were in the teachers lounge that her students are excellent and she is not facing any problem with them.

Civic education teacher Q teaches this section. This teacher loses his temper quickly when students try to make fun. As the teacher enters the classroom, the students start making noise. The teacher says, "I will start throwing students outside the class. The one who does not want to learn go out". The teacher orders one student to read and establishes eye contact with him and forgets about the rest of the class. The teacher talks to a group of talkative students and tells them "if you continue talking I will kick you outside of the class. The boys answer, "Ok sir we are going out." The rest of the students are talking and the teacher ignores them. One student is sitting on the chair with both legs crossed on the chair. Students in the back are sitting with their legs on the chair. The teacher tells the students at the back that they can leave the class if they want. One boy is holding a mirror. Not all students have books. The

teacher calls a student by clicking his fingers, "Go and call the director". The teacher does not know the name of the director. The two boys leave the class because they are talking and have no books. The rest are hanging their bags waiting for the bell to ring, others are talking, and the rest are studying other subjects. More students are asked to leave the class because they are talking.

The math teacher Y did not face any disciplinary problem with the students. Few cases happened but the teacher dealt with them easily such as when one of the students walked in the classroom without permission, the teacher told him "What sir, where are you going?" The student told him I want to put the calculator in my bag". "Did you take permission?" the student told the student. The student felt embarrassed and replies, "You are explaining and I don't want to stop you".

On the second day of observing this class, the philosophy teacher S faced disciplinary problems with students. The teacher tells them "Anyone who does not want to study can leave the class". Two students are listening to music. Only four students are interacting. Few students are copying from the board. Students are calm but not listening to the teacher's lecture except three to four students. Students are singing and tapping on the table, but the teacher continues lecturing ignoring students' acts. The teacher addresses one student "stop talking", the student replies impolitely "Me, don't talk to me because I am not talking". Students become noisy again and the teacher talks to them "guys you should be more responsible". Students sitting in different parts of the class are talking, not paying attention, and laughing. The teacher is trying to get their attention without being able to. Students are playing war with pens, mirrors and throwing papers, and talking. The teacher starts shouting then the students calm down. As soon as the teacher turns her back students start talking again. Students are moving freely in the class. The bell rings and a paper ball game starts between the students.

The biology teacher H is also unable to control the class. The teacher enters the classroom and starts shouting at the students because they were too noisy. The students calm down but the teacher is really angry. One student wants to make fun but the teacher with a furious face and a really frightening voice shouts, "look in front of you". On the second day, students behave in a better way because they want to. The teacher is reading and shouting at the same time at a student, but the whole class is laughing. The teacher is explaining a graph but students are playing, singing, laughing, and throwing papers. The teacher shouts at them "You stupid students, this comes in the official exams". Everybody is quiet again. The teacher stares at the students to be silent but no one looks at her. The teacher tells them to open their books but they do not listen to her. Students want to play and have fun in the class. The teacher does nothing concerning this issue.

In the humanities section, disciplinary problems took place between 25 students and teachers. This class is composed of females and males. They faced problems with the philosophy teacher T. The teacher did not try to control the class. Three boys out of seven were chewing and talking, the rest were copying and only one student was listening, and ten girls out of 18 are talking, laughing, cutting papers, and collecting money for a trip. One of the girls was sleeping, and three girls were only copying. The teacher directs a remark to one of the students "lama, stop talking", the student in a denial tone "what am I doing". One girl is filing her nails, nine girls are talking, two girls are eating peanuts, and a girl was raising a puppet every once in a while making faces with it to cheer me up. The teacher was talking to himself because he was looking at students and no one was looking at him. He did not bother to gain their attention. The students were making fun, drawing, joking, talking, and sleeping as if no one was in class. One of the boys was singing, the other was playing the violin, and the rest of the students were hearing cell phone records plus drumming on the tables. One of the girls refuses to write on the board because it is hot. The teacher couldn't control them

because the observer was present. In the normal days the teacher directs bad comments to them.

On the other hand, the English teacher A controlled the students in a professional way. One of the students tried to answer without turn, but the teacher scolded her, "it is not your turn". The teacher addressed a group of boys "be quiet". The teacher is applying the management rules in the classroom. When Aliscar was answering a spelling question, another student interfered; Aliscar's responded impolitely, but the teacher told Aliscar to behave. One look from him is enough to make students quiet.

The chemistry teacher S talks in a furious slang with boys. The teacher wants them to sit in the middle of the table, and does not want anyone to sit with his back to the wall. The teacher shouted at one student "Shut up, it is not your business". They got used to the teacher's style in dealing with them. Students are sending messages to each other by cell phones. One student is throwing his bag to make noise. Boys are not concentrating and are making fun especially when they are answering questions in turn. Seven boys did not have books. They are passing the same book that contains all the answers for each boy in his turn with a joke and laughter. One student is talking so the teacher asks "What are you doing?" The student replied, "Talking". The teacher told him "get out and talk outside". Then she also clicks her fingers "you". "Who is this smart guy who answered?" One student answered "me"; the teacher's response was "Where is your book"; the student answered "not with me"; the teacher ordered the student to leave the class because he didn't have his book.

The Arabic teacher E also faced disciplinary problems with the students. She shouts and says rude phrases to the students to control the class. The session starts with a problem with one of the students. The teacher says in a loud voice "I don't accept you as a student in my class", the student answers in a loud voice too "I don't accept you as a teacher in the whole school". In order to make students silent he knocks continuously on the table. An argument

takes place between the teacher and one of the students. "Randa sit in the front, I don't want you to sit in the back", the teacher said. Randa starts arguing so the teacher replies, "Randa don't argue with me". Randa didn't listen to the teacher so the teacher kicks her out of the class. The teacher commented on how Randa behaved "I am not teaching monkeys and chimpanzees. If you don't want to learn, leave the class". The boys are talking in a low voice while the teacher is explaining. One of the girls leaves the class for no reason and the teacher does not even ask her where she is going. Students behaved as if there is no teacher in the class. Boys sat in three on each table talking and making fun. The situation is chaotic. The teacher is doing nothing about it. The Arabic session was also unorganized. The teacher spent his lesson arguing with students. The Physics teacher L deals with students' disciplinary problems with a joke. The teacher argues with one of the students in a humorous way and all the class laughed. The teacher gets angry with the noisy class and tells them "stop it, if anyone wants to leave he can." The teacher shouts at another student "stop it, it is enough, I can't stand it anymore from you." The student replies in a calm way "as you order. I am astonished why all teachers are picking on me". The geography teacher F is very strict with students. In a real frightening voice, the teacher shouts at one student. The teacher snatches a newspaper from the student and tears it because she was reading it. While the teacher is explaining, the girls are arranging for a trip. Boys are laughing and singing.

In the civic education period, teacher Q keeps arguing with the students, threatening them that he will expel them from the class. Students are talking, eating, lying down on the chairs. One boy goes to buy food for his friend, while the teacher is busy explaining to one student ignoring the whole class. The teacher then sees four girls eating so he tells them "Aren't you going to stop eating, four of you, out". The students tell him "Sir we stopped". Two boys change their places so the teacher starts shouting at them "Go out". The students say, "No sir we already stayed the previous hour outside, No". The teacher then closes harshly the door.

These students start playing games on the teacher by giving him wrong information. The teacher without noticing what they are doing starts saying "yes".

Twenty-eight male students formed the economics B section. Teachers also faced disciplinary problems with these students. The Arabic teacher B only directs remarks to the troublesome student. One of the students entered the class making faces and making everybody laugh. The teacher does not allow that student to enter the class and asks for a permission paper from the director of the floor to allow him in. The teacher also orders students to change their places without talking to them. The teacher only clicks his finger to be obeyed. The teacher also controls his class by not allowing anyone to eat in the class. Students started making fun of the teacher "How did you see the chewing gum, do you have a camera". Three students left the class and the teacher did not mind at all. The teacher is serious with them and scolds the students when they try to make fun and noise in the classroom.

The economics teacher X did not face any disciplinary problem with the students. The teacher deals with them in a kind way. Two students try to joke but the teacher succeeds in stopping them. Teacher X claps sometimes so that the students are quiet.

The math teacher Y forces all students to stand up for greeting him. One student did not stand for long so the teacher shouted at him and informed the student that if he did not stand up he has to leave the class. The teacher applies the same classroom management rules. He orders students to raise their hands before answering any question. The cell phone of the teacher rings in the class so the teacher closes it. The students start laughing because the teacher did not notice they are the ones calling him to waste the instructional time of the period.

The Sociology teacher Z deals with the students' disciplinary problems in a calm way such as taking papers from two students who are playing and tearing them without looking at

them or commenting. Teacher Z also applies the classroom management rules. She does not allow any student to talk without raising his hand. Teacher Z also ignores certain behaviors. In a courageous way the teacher orders a student to leave the class without commenting. The student joked with the teacher telling her that he will be bored outside the classroom.

In the civics education period teacher K dealt calmly with the students. Students in this period became sleepy and bored so they did not misbehave with this teacher. Teacher K only gave remarks to the talkative student in order to become quiet. The English teacher was absent and the students left the school in the sixth period. In the physics period, teacher L couldn't control the class. The teacher became helpless since students were not paying attention. The teacher did not ask for the principal or the director's help.

Concerning the school atmosphere, students do not stand in line, they smoke in the playground, leave the classes whenever they want, and leave the school early due to the bad organization of the schedule.

In conclusion, the classroom atmosphere was affected by the teachers' inability to control their classes and the presence of troublesome students. Teachers' management skills varied between one teacher and another, but the majority of teachers used to shout, direct impolite and rude phrases to students, remain silent all the period leaving the classroom in a chaotic situation, and kick students outside the class, whereas others ignored students' acts, took everything with a joke. Few teachers were able to control students in class and gain their attention. On the other hand, students did not leave a chance to enrage the teachers, leave the class whenever they wanted, sing, eat, and make noise. The instructional time was wasted due to the disciplinary problems created between students and teachers, and the irresponsibility of some students. The atmosphere of the school as a whole was chaotic with no organization.

*Scale for success*

The principal considers the school as successful according to many factors such as applying discipline, success of students in the official exams, parental satisfaction of student's results and performance, the great insistence of students to apply to this school, and the school evaluation done by the principal (Appendix D, table 4.18).

The school was considered successful by some teachers and a failing one by others for many factors. The first factor is language; the students of BLOM School are failing due to their weakness in language. Second, the presence of a caring and good administration shows how this school is successful. Third, parents are not helping the school in doing any effort to help their children in passing. Teachers considered parents' involvement in their children's work and behavior at school would help the school to do better. Teachers' collaboration will also determine whether this school is successful or not. Finally, student's academic achievement decides whether BLOM School is successful or not but the students' grades in the official exams are below average (Appendix D, table 4.18).

Students perceived that their school would be successful if there is a good administration, but does not exist. No organization is established especially in distributing students in the classes. Low achieving students are put together. Trials are not done for the third secondary classes while in private schools the administration provides trials for their students to train them before the official exams. The grades decide if this school is successful or not and the students grades in the official exams are low and the number of students passing it is also low (Appendix D, table 4.18).

According to the researcher's observation, BLOM school students had high percentages of failure, which shows the school as a failing one.

*Communication between students and teachers*

The principal did not give his opinion concerning the communication between teachers and students. According to the teachers' interviews, there is student teacher communication. Teachers discuss several topics with students such as hygiene, parental respect, medical problems, and issues related to the subject matter. Teachers motivate students by encouraging, inspiring, guiding, communicating, and filling them with sense of success (Appendix D, table 4.19).

According to the interviewed students, two teachers motivated students and made them interested in the subject matter. They teach because they are respectful and respected the students. Two teachers encourage students by giving them advice, reminding them that they have to pass, and cooperating with them. Communication between students and teachers is established especially when the teachers are respectful. Students feel relaxed and intimate with teachers who respect them and they discuss many issues with them (Appendix D, table 4.19).

Teachers and students contradicted each other as the researcher interviewed them. According to the observation done over 10 teaching days, few teachers dealt respectfully with students and discussed different topics in class. Communication was established with the economics teacher X who respected students and encouraged them. The teacher also joked with them when solving problems. Students also worked happily and the teacher thanked them after they solve each exercise.

Sociology teacher M dealt respectfully with the students, showed care for their success, and used humor with them. English teacher J respected students, praised them whenever they said a correct answer, and joked with the students. Civics education teacher K is a respectful person, deals respectfully with students, and cares for their success but students in his class

try to be troublesome and make fun of him. Students at the same time respected the teachers that cared for and respected them.

*Communication problems between teachers and students*

The principal did not give any opinion concerning problems between his teachers and his students (Appendix D, table 4.20). The interviewed teachers did not talk about the nature of their relationship with their students (Appendix D, table 4.20).

According to the students' interviews, the student-teacher relationship is negative. Students are discouraged all the time by teachers' verbal remarks "your grades will be lower in the official exams" till the students believe that they will fail. Teachers show students their carelessness by telling them that they come only to get paid. They even explain the lesson without making sure that students understood the lesson. Teachers discourage students by putting them in a fearful atmosphere and do not respect students and their feelings. Teachers insult students all the time by telling them "you better sell cakes, you better go to the army, and you are dreaming of success". Also some teachers use bad expressions when speaking with students, which forces students to reply in the same way. Also some teachers insult students who give their opinions. According to students, teachers who help them to learn should have good manners. Teachers do not behave politely with the students although teachers behave well with the students in the private schools. Students and teachers deal disrespectfully with each other such as the philosophy teacher who uses impolite expressions and hits students (Appendix D, table 4.20).

According to the interviewed students, communication is not established between students and teachers when they face problems. No dialogue takes place, and students stop attending the classes of that teacher. Students and teachers say bad words to each other when a problem is initiated. When a teacher is nervous, students are not able to deal with that teacher. Justice for students is not attained and this appears when one teacher threw one of the student's

books out of the window. The teacher ordered the student to buy another one after the old book was stolen. The student refused and was referred to the principal who did not help, and the student was not allowed to enter that session again. The physics teacher hit one of the students with a book because that student was talking in the class. The female student pushed the teacher as a reaction then the teacher slammed the door, which caused the classroom window to break (Appendix D, table 4.20).

While observing the third secondary classes, the observer noticed communication problems with the majority of the teachers. Students couldn't establish communication between civic education teacher Q, biology teacher H, physics teacher L, Philosophy teacher T, and the Arabic teacher P. On the other hand, students bothered the sociology teacher Z, civic education teacher K, biology teacher R, economics teacher N, and Geography teacher F to make them angry and nervous. When disciplinary problems took place no dialogue was established between the students and the teachers. Some of the phrases said to the students were:

"Shut up, it is not of your business."

"I am sure you will not pass this year, I bet."

"I don't accept you as one of my students in my class, get out."

"I am not teaching chimpanzees, if you don't want to learn go out"

"I will start kicking students outside the school."

"Please don't get motivated and let me do the explanation."

"You are all a hopeless case. No one will pass."

"We have a stupid student in the class"

As the observer noticed, the above teachers directly lose their tempers and say un-respectful expressions. They also send the student outside the classroom before talking to him in a kind way. In these teachers' classes, chaos was created inside the classroom. Students

totally ignored the presence of the teachers. The students talked, played, ate, sang, and left the classroom. Some students leave the class at specific periods because there is no communication with the teachers. The researcher noticed that students did not accept those teachers to teach them. Those teachers also shout all the time whenever they interacted with a student. When they order a student to do a job they click their fingers and talk with them in an arrogant way. On the other hand, students took advantage of those teachers by creating fuss inside the classroom to bother them and put them on their nerves.

In conclusion, interviews and observation indicate that the principal's role is limited to the managerial part of the school. The school principal has no role in teachers' supervision, upgrading their teaching strategies, and enrolling students. The relationship between students and teachers varied from one to another while the relationship between the principal and the students was negative. On the other hand teachers didn't cooperate effectively with each other. There was no teamwork among the majority of teachers, and no monitoring for students progress. A majority of teachers limited their use of teaching strategies to the lecturing method, whereas other teachers' teaching strategies were hindered by the disciplinary problems they faced in their classes. Finally the school culture is negative due to the negative relationship between teachers, students and principal. Also, the school atmosphere was toxic because of the lack of communication between teachers and students, disorganization of the school day and schedule, inconsistency in the punishment regulations, and absence of activities in the school.

The next chapter includes an analysis of the findings by comparing them to the reviewed literature on discipline, communication, motivation, culture, role of the principal, and the importance of teachers' methodology and coordination.

## Chapter Five

### Discussion of Findings

In this chapter the researcher compared between the research findings and the reviewed literature. The researcher was concerned about the low achievement of students in BLOM School and tried to understand whether it was the responsibility of the leadership style, teachers, the culture of the school, or the impact of these three factors together. The researcher reviewed many studies related to the leadership style, teacher's assessment techniques and teaching strategies used, and the culture of the school, and conducted interviews and observations related to them, to study their impact on BLOM School students' educational outcomes in the governmental official exams. In this chapter, the researcher addresses the three questions posed at the beginning of this research study.

Hoes does the principal's leadership style influence students' achievement at BLOM?

First, leadership style affected students' academic achievement in an indirect way. The school principal's leadership style was not clear because the educational system for the public schools is a centralized system that forces the principal to bear more managerial responsibilities and shifted leadership to a principal who only follows orders (El-Amine, 1997). In revealing the effect of principal's leadership style on students' academic achievement, the research findings were contradictory to those of Bush and Jackson (2002) who showed a link between leadership style and educational outcomes. The leadership style was related to the excellence in teaching and learning.

Second, data also showed that BLOM's principal did not manifest coaching, authoritative, democratic, and affiliative style as suggested by Goleman's (2000) findings. Data shows that BLOM principal is not transformational because the principal does not create shared vision (Pielstick, 1998). Third, Marsh (1997) listed four key terms that instructional leadership is based on in order to insure improvement. An instructional leader should define the mission

statement of the school and set its goal whereas the school principal in BLOM School is not responsible for defining the mission statement and setting the goals because the Ministry of Education is in charge of building it due to the centralized system. Therefore BLOM School principal plays no role in the professional development of teachers and upgrading their teaching strategies even though research showed that an instructional leader should ensure professional development of teachers and improving their teaching strategies (El-Amine, 1997). The role of BLOM School principal is to report to the Ministry of Education the overall condition of the school. The main role for the public school principal is school keeping whereas research stressed the importance of mastering more than one leadership style to have a better working climate (Goleman, 2000).

Fourth, according to Marsh (1997), the instructional leader should monitor students' progress, conduct supervision, protect the instructional time, and evaluate teachers' performance. In BLOM School, the principal did not monitor students' progress (Appendix D, p. 88, table 4.3). The schoolteachers and students agreed on the fact that the school principal has no role in monitoring the student's success or failure (ch. 4, p.39, line 18-25; p. 40, line 1-11). The school principal did not conduct supervision (Appendix D, p. 87, table 4.2; ch. 4, p. 37, line 16-25; p. 38; p. 39, line 1-18). This is contrary to Marshall (1993), who shows that teachers have to be evaluated by the instructional leader. In addition the school principal does not protect the instructional time. First, the students' attendance during the lecturing hours is not monitored so students skip classes. Second, the instructional day schedule has many free periods. Third, a high number of students is thrown out of the class. Finally the instructional school day starts in the afternoon for three days, which tires students, wastes their time and shifts their mode in studying (Appendix D, p. 96, table 4.16; p. 51). This is contrary to Marshall (1993) who argues that instructional leaders should be ready to intervene in students' disciplinary problems and decide with teachers what would happen if a

student broke the rules. They should work hard to create positive relationships with parents, teachers, and students in order to create an atmosphere of belonging to the school.

Fifth, the instructional leader has to create an academic learning climate and a healthy culture to assure strong staff cooperation (Marsh, 1997). In BLOM School, classrooms did not have an academic learning climate due to disciplinary problems. Also there was no cohesion and cooperation between all teachers (Appendix D, p. 93, table 4.11).

Therefore, the BLOM School principal did not contribute to the students' academic achievements in the official exams due to his limited role and to his passiveness in performing his duties. This is contradictory to Marshall (1993) who found that effective schools should have an instructional leader. Marshall (1993) argues that principal as an instructional leader should reveal and communicate the importance of teaching and learning. The principal should exert effort to give instruction primary importance. Second, an instructional leader should make things easier on teachers by insuring the presence of supplies and materials necessary for teachers, computers for classrooms, social workers to help troubled students, and to hire substitute teachers when teachers are sick or attending workshops (Marshall, 1993). This was contradictory to what is taking place in BLOM School, because the school has a limited and restricted budget, which prevented the school principal from insuring teachers' needs. Also the school principal doesn't have the authority to hire teachers.

Moreover, according to Marshall (1993), a school principal should communicate and share with teachers important research results and some practical wisdom through meetings or memos distributed through the school everyday. This was contradictory to the BLOM School principal's role which was limited to managerial tasks. In BLOM School, the principal waits for the Ministry of Education to set a date for workshops to send teachers to. This is contradictory to Marshall's (1993) recommendations that teachers attend workshops and

remain up-to-date. Meetings with the staff members should be held to discuss recent and important issues such as cooperative learning, and hands on science and math techniques (Marshall, 1993). This point is contradictory to what the principal in BLOM School does.

According to Marshall (1993), an instructional leader should also create a caring and positive culture by many practices such as appreciation of teachers' efforts and contributions through praise, and celebrations and regular parties. All these actions and many others help in breaking the isolation of teachers in their classrooms. Also, weekly meetings should be held with team teachers that would later on meet with all the teachers to compare notes and comments on various issues, deal with thorny issues such as discipline. This study shows, neither a caring and positive culture was created nor weekly meetings were held.

How do the teacher's assessment techniques and teaching strategies influence students' achievement at BLOM School?

Teachers also played a role in impacting students' academic achievements in BLOM School (Appendix D, p. 93, table 4.10). In BLOM School, there was inconsistency in assessing students' knowledge that led to students' failure because teachers did not check whether students had understood or not (Appendix D, p. 90, table 4.7). This is contrary to Dimmitt's (2003) finding that shows assessment techniques used by teachers to evaluate students' knowledge because they impacted students' academic achievements.

In BLOM School, teachers mainly used the lecturing method, while others used the discussion method, and few used group work in the classroom. Teaching strategies were not effective due to the disciplinary problems occurring in the classrooms and leading to wasting the instructional time (Appendix D, p. 96-98, table 4.17; ch. 4, p. 52-62; Appendix D, p. 96, table 4.16; p. 91, table 4.8). This is not in harmony with Harris's (2000) findings that linked teachers' improved teaching strategies and students' achievement. She showed that as teachers enhance their teaching strategies, students' achievement increases.

How does the school culture influence the students at BLOM?

Culture is one of the factors that impacted students' academic achievement in BLOM School. The school culture is negative because of students' low status of learning, low staff morale and commitment. These factors define a toxic culture as indicated by Peterson (1998). Peterson stated other factors that define a positive culture such as finding norms of collegiality, rituals, traditions, and ceremonies celebrating students' achievements. In BLOM School these factors were absent. Students' academic and social achievements were not celebrated and elite students were not granted prizes as an encouragement for their work (App. D, p. 94, table 4.12). Teamwork was also not established between all teachers, and school and extracurricular activities were ignored (App. D, p. 95, table 4.15) even though Broh (2002) and Reavis (1999) found that students' engagement in such activities improves students' educational outcomes. Also such activities will enhance teacher student relationship as Moos and Moos (1973) mentioned which would result in having a unified culture that will pave the way for social and academic achievements (Dimmitt, 2003).

According to Silins (1999), successful educational outcomes are achieved when the school supports its teachers and teaching. Also, Hilty (1998) stressed having a collaborative culture that will promote successful students and effective teachers. But in BLOM School, results showed that teachers are not receiving support due to their relationship with the school principal (App. D, p. 89, table 4.5). Teachers' work is also not appreciated by the principal who never supervised a teacher during instruction. Collaboration between majority of teachers, students and teachers, and the school principal with students was not effective (App. D, p. 92, table 4.9; p. 93-94, table 4.11; p. 86, table 4.1; p. 88, 89; p. 99-100, table 4.20) due to the students and teachers' attitudes towards the school (App. D, p. 94, table 4.14; p. 49) and due to the disciplinary problems that took place inside the school (App. D, p. 96, table

4.17; p. 52-62). Concerning students and teachers' attitudes towards the school, Shapiro (1993) emphasized the relationship between having a positive culture in the school and students' success. He noted that having a positive culture could be known through knowing students and teachers' attitudes towards the school. However, the culture in BLOM School was negative due to the teachers and students' attitudes towards the school. Students and some teachers disliked the school and a sense of discouragement was recognized (App. D, p. 94-95, table 4.14; p. 86, table 4.1).

In BLOM School, students' work is not displayed in their classrooms. Students are not required to do projects to be displayed in the classroom. It was observed by the researcher that the classroom walls were covered with impolite and silly phrases, nick names, and email addresses of students. Whereas Anderson and Keith (1997) pointed out that motivating students is an important aspect in school achievement. Students can be motivated through displaying students' work on the walls that will make learning more effective (Dodd, 1997).

The classroom environment in BLOM School was not healthy due to negative teacher student relationship. This relationship allowed teachers to direct negative, disrespectful, impolite, and discouraging phrases to students that negatively affected the environment of the class (Appendix D, p. 99-100, table 4.20, Ch. 4, p.63-67). This contradicts findings by Anderson and Keith (1997) who stressed the important role of teachers in creating a relaxing environment so that learning would be more effective.

In BLOM School, teachers were not skillful enough to manage their classes. Disciplinary problems created in the third secondary classrooms hindered the learning process in BLOM School (App. D, p. 97, table 4.17, Ch. 4, p. 52-62). On the other hand, research revealed the importance of classroom management skills in academic achievement (Pigford, 2001). In BLOM School observation and interviews showed a negative relationship between students and teachers. The majority of teachers directed rude and impolite phrases that affected

students negatively (App. D, p. 99-100, table 4.20, Ch. 4, p. 64-67). Pigford (2001) stressed the importance of establishing a good teacher- student relationship to have an effective learning environment. The importance of directing positive phrases to students after a certain behavior was noted too by Pigford (2001) and Hancock (2002). Finally in BLOM School students are skipping classes because they dislike certain teachers, and subjects. Research conducted by Althenbaugh (1998) considers students' sluggishness and skipping classes are indicators of academic failure. Fallis (2003) suggested a solution for this problem such as engaging students in the social life of the school.

In BLOM School, it was noticed that communication between the students and the principal was negative. Students do not trust the school principal anymore regarding any issue. Students did not also have a student council in BLOM School even though it would have helped in building a sense of responsibility in students inside the classroom. Moreover, communication between the school principal and his teachers varied with teachers. The majority stressed the fact that their opinions are not taken into consideration (App. D, p. 87, table 4.1) which was contradictory to Kapricke (1996) who noted that effective leaders should use their listening, responding, and questioning skills to build a productive culture. Also, research stressed the importance of the school leader in appreciating teachers' work and innovations that serve the students and establishing a positive culture through communicating values to students and teachers (Peterson & Deal, 1998).

In conclusion, data showed that problems in the school culture, teachers' assessment techniques and teaching strategies used, and the leadership style of the school principal contributed to students' low academic achievement. The school principal did not fulfill his role in the administrative, humanistic, instructional, cultural and symbolic dimensions of leadership. These three factors impacted the achievement of BLOM School students in the official exams. Teachers are not the only ones to be blamed, because the school principal

controls supervision, coordination, professional development, and students' progress.

Solutions for the problems found in BLOM School are suggested below.

## Chapter six

### Conclusion

Data collected from the Ministry of Education showed that the academic achievement of the third secondary students in the governmental official exams in BLOM School, a Lebanese public school in Beirut area, was low compared to the percentage success of all applicants in the public schools in Beirut area. These results led the researcher to conduct a study to analyze the causes of this decline. The researcher studied three factors that could have affected students' educational outcomes such as the leadership style of the principal, teachers, and the school culture.

The researcher relied on qualitative methodology in this study. It is written in the form of a case study. The instruments used for the research included semi-structured interviews, observations, and documented analysis. This study included one public school, BLOM School. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine teachers and the school principal. Group interviewing was the method of choice with students of the third secondary levels. The researcher interviewed 10 students in the life science section, 15 students in the humanities section, and 20 students in each section A, B, C of the sociology and economics section. The interviews were taped and transcribed then analyzed. The interviews conducted with the school principal, teachers, and students enhance the validity of my research by comparing their answers to each other. The researcher observed for ten days in five sections in the third secondary level in BLOM School. Interviews and observations clarified reasons that affected the student's performance in the official exams.

Interviews and observation indicate that the school principal role is limited to the managerial part of the school. The school principal has no role in teachers' supervision for upgrading their teaching strategies, or in enrolling students. The relationship between students and teachers varied from one to another while the relationship between the principal

and the students was negative. On the other hand teachers didn't cooperate effectively with each other. There was no teamwork among the majority of teachers, no monitoring for students' progress, and no coordination. Most teachers limited their use of teaching strategies to the lecturing method, whereas other teachers' teaching strategies were hindered due to the disciplinary problems they faced in their classes. Finally, the school culture is negative due to the negative relationship between teachers, students and the principal. Also, the school atmosphere was toxic because of the lack of communication between teachers and students, disorganization of the school day and schedule, inconsistency in applying punishment for breaking rules, and the absence of activities in the school. The researcher then compared the findings to the reviewed literature on discipline, communication, motivation, culture, role of the principal, and teachers' methodology and coordination.

The researcher faced several problems while conducting the interviews and observing the classes. Several teachers refused to be interviewed by the researcher, and others gave vague answers. While observing, the principal did not cooperate with the researcher. The school principal was supposed to inform all the teachers of the presence of the researcher and the objective of the study, but the researcher found out later that the teachers didn't know of the presence of the researcher. In addition, some teachers didn't allow the researcher to enter their classrooms.

### Limitations

This research has also several limitations. First, the researcher should have observed more than ten teaching days, and interviewed more than nine teachers. But the researcher couldn't because observations were conducted in the second term at the end of the school year. Also not all the teachers cooperated with the researcher while conducting the observations and interviews. Second, the level of achievement in BLOM School may be a function of a larger number of factors that the researcher did not take into consideration. A third limitation is that

the study cannot be generalized to a wider population which means the findings of this case study can not be generalized to all of the public schools in Lebanon. The findings are only limited to BLOM Public School.

#### Recommendations

The researcher recommends further research to widen the sample. Researchers could take more than one school to study the reasons for the low academic achievement of public school students in the official exams. Researchers could also study the academic low achievement of students by analyzing several other factors such as the leadership style of the teacher, teachers' qualification, teachers' empowerment, students' socioeconomic state, and parental involvement.

## Appendix A

### *Interview with the principal*

#### *Leadership style*

1. How were you assigned to be the principal?
2. How often do you enter the classes to control the educational process? How often you provide feedback to the teacher regarding the classroom performance?
3. After an important exam, how often do you meet with your teachers to discuss and interpret the test results? And what other ways do you use to evaluate the achievement of your students?
4. What is your influence as a principal and as a leader on the school results in general and on the Baccalaureate results in specific?
5. If you have a great percentage of failure in your student results, how do you solve this problem especially if it was repeated?
6. What is your role as an instructional leader in upgrading your teachers teaching strategies?
7. How often do you send your tenure and novice teachers to workshops or training sessions especially teachers who need to upgrade their teaching strategies?
8. Since your teachers work as one team, if a teacher is not cooperating with the other teachers, how do you deal with this issue?
9. What is your role as a disciplinarian in teaching discipline and morals to students?  
What makes you sure that these students have acquired those values?
10. If a student is facing a certain problem with a teacher, what is your role?
11. If a teacher is facing a discipline problem with a certain student, how do you deal with that student?
12. What precautions do you take when students have a fight?

*Culture*

13. What is the scale for success and failure in your school?
14. Do you have student council in your school? How are these students elected? How do they help other students educationally?
15. What type of students do you have in your school and on what basis do they enroll in this school?
16. If you want to enhance your school educational outcomes do you take into consideration your students and teachers' opinion?
14. Knowing that you have students from different backgrounds, how do you deal with student conflicts?
16. What are the prizes you offer to the elite students?
17. How do you inspire your students and fill them with sense of success?
18. What are the traditions of your school such as the daily activities you and your students do each day? What extracurricular activities do students do during the year?
19. How do your students celebrate Independence Day, Teachers day, first day in school, end of the year, religious ceremonies?

## Appendix B

### *Interview with the teachers*

#### *Leadership style*

1. How were you assigned as a teacher in this school?
2. How often does your principal enter your class to observe you? How often does he provide feedback regarding the classroom performance and your teaching strategies?
3. If you have great percentages of failure in student results, how do you solve this problem? Do you ask the principal for help?
4. As a teacher, what is the role as a disciplinarian in teaching discipline and morals to the students? What is your principal's role? What makes you sure that these values are transmitted to students?
5. What is your influence as a teacher on the school results in general and on the Baccalaureate results in specific? What is the principal's influence in your opinion?
6. After an important exam, how do you assess your student's work? Does your principal discuss your test results with you or with the other teachers in a meeting?
7. What is the role of the school principal in upgrading your teaching strategies?
8. How often does your principal send you to workshops or to training sessions? If you feel you need to enhance your teaching strategies, do you ask your principal to send you for workshops? And what is his response to your request?
9. If you are facing a disciplinary problem with your students, how do you face it?  
What is your principal role?
10. What are the precautions or actions you take when two students have a fight? What is your principal role?

#### *Teachers*

11. When you are taking decisions concerning your student's performance,

preparing a lesson, and preparing a test, do you discuss them with your colleagues or you prepare your lesson on your own?

12. Since you work as one team, if the coordinator or the other teachers are not cooperating, how do you face this problem? What is the role of the school principal in that case?
5. What is your influence as a teacher on the school results in general and on the Baccalaureate results in specific? What is the principal's influence in your opinion?
6. After an important exam, how do you assess your student's work? Does your principal discuss your test results with you or with the other teachers in a meeting?
9. If you are facing a disciplinary problem with your students, how do you face it? What is your principal's role?
10. What are the precautions or actions you take when two students have a fight? What is your principal role?
18. What are the daily activities done by the principal, teachers, and students at the school? What are the extracurricular activities your students participate in?
13. When solving an exercise on the board, do you prefer to solve it in order to save time?

#### *Culture*

14. In your opinion, what is the scale for success and failure in your school?
4. As a teacher, what is the role as a disciplinarian in teaching discipline and morals to the students? What is your principal's role? What makes you sure that these values are transmitted to students?
15. How do you inspire your students, and how do you fill them with sense of success? What is the role of the principal in motivating the students?
16. If the principal is working on a new plan to enhance the school educational

outcomes. Does he take your opinion into consideration?

17. How you and your students celebrate Independence Day, first day of the school, end of the year, religious ceremonies, and Teacher's Day?
18. What things make you feel at home when you come to school?
19. What are the issues your students discuss with you?
20. Do you have student council in your school? How are these students selected?  
What is the role of this council?
21. What are the prizes the school or the principal offer to the elite students? How is civic education taught in your school?

## Appendix C

### *Interview with the students*

#### *Leadership style*

1. On what basis were you accepted in this school? What are the requirements for enrollment?
2. What are the procedures used by the principal and your teachers when your test results are below the average? What are the actions taken when this problem is repeated?
3. What is the influence of your principal on the school results in general and on the Baccalaureate results in specific?
4. How do you solve a problem you have with your friends? Do you ask for help from your teacher and principal or do you solve it on your own?
5. How often does the principal enter your classroom or pass by it?
6. What are the daily activities your principal, teachers, and you do during the school day? What are the extracurricular activities you participate in during the year?

#### *Teachers*

7. What strategies do your teachers use in the explanation of any lesson?
8. During a chemistry, physics, mathematics lesson, how often do you solve an exercise on the board? Do you feel you understand more the lesson?

#### *Culture*

11. When a new project is initiated at your school, does the principal take your opinion?  
Does the principal take your opinion in certain issues?
12. What is the scale for success and failure in your school?
13. How do your principal, teachers, and you celebrate the first day at school, Independence Day, Teachers Day, end of the year, and religious ceremonies?

14. What things make you feel at home when you come to school?
15. What topics and issues do you discuss with your teachers and principal?
16. Do you have student council in your school? How are these students elected? What are the services offered by the student council to the other students?
17. What are the prizes given by the principal to the elite student?
18. How do your teachers and principal inspire you and fill you with the sense of success?

## Appendix D

### Themes

#### 4.1 Principal- student relationship

Principal's interviews	<p>"Students are motivated by giving them books, prizes, and guiding them in choosing good future career."</p> <p>"Also, what requires student's participation, I don't hesitate to ask students their point of view, and then we analyze these ideas with the coordinators so that all parties are convinced."</p>
Teachers' interviews	<p>"I am not sure if our principal is doing his motivational role in school."</p> <p>"I don't notice as a part timer, the principal's role in motivating students."</p> <p>"The principal makes one visit to my classes every year, so he has a minor role in motivating students."</p> <p>"The principal motivates students to stick to school rules, and coordinates teachers' actions and proper teaching. This has indirect effect on students."</p> <p>"The principal doesn't do that at all."</p>
Students' interviews	<p>"The principal just gives us advice with no real improvement plan."</p> <p>"The principal is useless because he has no personality and can't apply the rules in the school."</p> <p>"The principal does not care. He tells us that he cares for our success in the official and final exams; while in reality we don't feel it in certain procedures or teaching strategies or improvements. He is a liar. He says this is for your benefit. He considers himself on our side while in reality he supports his bad and disqualified teachers. He never fulfills his promises. He has no self-respect."</p> <p>"All students failed in history. He didn't do any arrangements or actions to improve or know the reasons of failure."</p> <p>"No encouragement and no trainers available for playing sports."</p> <p>"The principal does not trust his students. He causes a lot of discomfort to us."</p> <p>"When we go to the headmaster, students are blamed and kept outside the classroom. Even when we go to the principal, he doesn't react. So it is useless. I had an ethical problem with my philosophy teacher; I brought my parents to school. The administrator blamed me because I gave the chance to the teacher to behave badly with me."</p> <p>"Another teacher threw my book from the window to the ground floor. She did not allow me to get it back. When the period was over I went looking for my book but I did not find it, it was stolen. She ordered me to buy another one but I refused. I informed the principal about the incident even though the teacher is not allowing me to enter her class."</p> <p>"We discuss with our principal our teachers' bad attitude, and bad teaching strategies. Unfortunately nothing can be done. No educational inspectors visit the school to help us in this school."</p> <p>"Sometimes the principal records our opinion but does not take it into consideration."</p> <p>"Concerning the school costume he made fun of us."</p> <p>"The principal has no communication channels with us."</p> <p>"Not only students are not consulted but also teachers are not consulted. Ministry sends a certain issue without consulting even the principal of the school. For example to decide for a new outfit they consulted us marginally but the outfits were already bought. We felt happy when we gave them our opinion, but when</p>

	<p>we saw the outfits we felt we are nothing and we are not respected.”</p> <p>“Sometimes we refer to the principal, but still the problems will not be solved. We refer to the headmaster, but they don’t convince us of their judgment.”</p> <p>“I go and solve it by my self.”</p>
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#### 4.2 Supervision

Principal’s interviews	<p>“If a teacher is new in my school, I attend that teacher’s class more than other teachers. I will try during that teacher’s first year of teaching to adjust any wrong performance. This supervision will be less by time because the teacher will have better teaching experience.”</p> <p>“Based on ministry regulations, the coordinators do their job with their teachers, and prepare exams and analyze results. I don’t have enough time to do this extra work, because I have a lot of responsibilities. If there is anything serious, the coordinator discusses this issue with me.” “By contract, it is the duty of the teacher to attend meetings held by coordinators, and cooperate with the school administration as much as possible to keep the teaching level of the subject the teacher is teaching at a good standard.”</p>
Teachers’ interviews	<p>Chemistry part time teacher: “The school principal doesn’t even check if we are meeting. He just assigned an hour for coordination and he never checked if we are meeting or sat with us while we are meeting.”</p> <p>“The principal holds no meetings with teachers except at the beginning of the year.”</p> <p>“Well I think the principal’s role is in the supervision of the teachers and staff work because if supervision is not found things will be a mess for us and this is what is happening in this school. Students sense that there is no organization and this triggers them to do whatever they want.”</p> <p>Chemistry tenure teacher: “The principal never enters my classes to make observation. May be once a year. He provides no feedback regarding my classroom performance and my teaching strategies.”</p> <p>Biology part time teacher: “I don’t like the principal to interfere in my biology team.”</p> <p>“The principal’s influence on the official exams is great if he made the necessary follow up with all teachers and students.”</p> <p>Physics tenure teacher: “The principal does not do any supervision. Usually the principal doesn’t attend my classes to observe my performance or to provide feedback for teaching strategies. I hope that the principal attends my classes, because this motivates and makes me feel satisfied with the great job I am doing.”</p> <p>Biology tenure teacher and the physics part time teacher mentioned that the principal never supervised their teaching strategies and never entered their classes.”</p> <p>“The principal has a great influence on students’ results if he supervised teachers’ performance and their teaching strategies, checking every teacher’s results in official exams, giving remarks to teachers for better performance. Unfortunately this is not taking place.”</p> <p>Sociology part time teacher: “The principal’s role is mainly a managerial one.”</p> <p>“He does not visit me, but I see him passing by my class when there is a disciplinary problem in my class. He does not let us feel if he is passing by to check whether we are teaching well or not. The principal in the governmental schools asks for the teacher’s preparation books after 3 months from the time the school begins to check teachers’ work and whether they are late in the required program and their methodology.”</p>
Students’ interviews	<p>“The history teacher was to be blamed for our failure. After the principal attended our history period, he admitted that, but he can’t change this teacher. He told us if you have</p>

	<p>any question I will be glad to help.”</p> <p>“In reality the administration should take several procedures when tackling our test results grades. The administration checked our midterm exam in math. Only two students passed with an average of 50 and 40 out of 80, while the rest of the students got grades between 6 and 28 out of 80. These results should turn the red alarm of the administration since we are 30 students, but nothing was taken into consideration.”; “When our test results are below average, nothing is done about the test results.” “The principal passes by our class when teacher calls him, when he is making a tour, when he hears noise and trouble or when submitting term records.”</p>
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#### 4.3 Monitoring students' progress

Principal's interviews	<p>“Every case has its causes. If we are capable of finding a suitable solution for these issues we do our best for that. If not, we ask for support from some experienced personnel in the ministry or among our teaching staff.”</p>
Teachers' interviews	<p>“The principal does not play any role in monitoring his students' progress. I am wondering why he doesn't participate, because this is his duty.”</p> <p>“In solving the problem of failure in student results, the coordinator is more effective than the principal.”</p> <p>“No I don't ask for the principal's help because he never helped me in any issue I referred to him.”</p> <p>“I don't discuss anything with my principal. The principal never asks me to discuss my students' results with him. The principal holds no meetings with teachers except at the beginning of the year.”</p> <p>“The principal has no time to find a solution to the % of failure in Baccalaureate exams.”</p> <p>“Students don't study. I inform the principal about the students' educational problems, but he can't help me because he is not professional. He is not able to solve this problem.”</p> <p>“The principal does not evaluate every teacher separately. He never asks a teacher the reason for students having low grades.”</p>
Students' interviews	<p>“When results are submitted to the students, the principal gives comments to students who have low average. That is all what the principal concentrates on concerning this issue.”</p> <p>“The principal added an extra hour in math given by an additional teacher, but he does not respond politely to our questions.”</p> <p>“Our parents get informed about our failure then the principal gives us the advice to improve.”</p> <p>“All students failed in history. The principal didn't do any arrangements or actions to improve or know the reasons of failure.”</p>

#### 4.4 Upgrading teacher's strategies

Principal's interviews	<p>“The Ministry of Education plays a very important role in upgrading teaching strategies and training sessions of teachers, it's not the principal's role. Decisions are usually taken by the</p>
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	Ministry of Education then they assign teachers from several schools to attend workshops.”
Teachers’ interviews	<p>“The role of the school principal in upgrading my teaching strategies doesn’t exist. If the minister of education informed the principal about any workshop or training sessions, he usually plans with schoolteachers to attend such workshops. We ask him regularly to assign a lab instructor for this school, so that we can use the chemistry, physics, or biology laboratory as a teaching aid in these sciences, the principal does not make any effort to do that saying we have to wait for the ministry to send us these personnel.”</p> <p>“He asks us to attend training sessions arranged by the educational center. The principal has no role in improving my teaching strategies.”</p>
Students’ interviews	<p>“Teachers are not qualified to teach humanities class. The principal informs us we didn’t have this class last year and we won’t open it next year. Teachers are not enough, not well prepared or trained.”</p> <p>“No good teachers”</p>

#### 4.5 Teacher- Principal relationship

Principals’ interviews	“Improving educational outcomes requires teachers’ participation.”
Teachers’ interviews	<p>“The principal imposes things on us. We have no role in decision making.”</p> <p>“Sometimes we talk about certain issues and he takes my opinion into consideration, but I don’t know if he takes other teachers’ opinions.”</p> <p>“It happened once to improve one class. There was a meeting for class teachers with the principal to improve the level of the students of this class. Our opinions were taken into consideration. Sometimes the principal calls for a general meeting. Teachers are particularly more aware of their student problems and difficulties than the principal.”</p> <p>“If principal is working on a plan to enhance school educational outcomes, he doesn’t take my opinion into consideration because the Ministry of Education decides this enhancement.”</p> <p>“The principal in this school doesn’t take teachers’ opinions into consideration.”</p>

#### 4.6 Enrollment regulations

Principals’ interviews	“According to an entrance exam, students are accepted in school. Students are from various areas of Lebanon. According to their grades, previous school certificates, and passing an entrance exam. Also availability of places in various classes is essential.”
Teachers’ interviews	<p>“Choosing good students, which is not applied here since it is a government school, decides if this school is successful or not.”</p> <p>“Students are not good. Students enrolled are group of low achieving students that are expelled from their schools, but having a passing grade certificate. They also failed many times in our school entrance exams even though they are accepted by a supreme order.”</p>
Students’ interviews	“Unofficial entrance exam. Even if students failed in the entrance exam, they can enroll in BLOM School. Many students did not sit for entrance exams and they

	<p>were accepted in the school.”</p> <p>“By the intervention of an important person, I got the acceptance. I was expelled from my previous school, so I needed an outside help to get accepted.”</p> <p>Student two: “I failed three times in the entrance exam then I wrote a petition to the Ministry of Education and I was accepted. Age limit is not a problem in acceptance in school with a permission letter from the ministry.”</p> <p>“There are many documents requested by the administration from my previous school such as grades. Later on I am assigned to do an entrance exam. I joined this school in the second intermediate but the entrance exam was for the fifth elementary level. The test was symbolic.</p> <p>“When I applied to this school, they asked for the official Brevet certificate and I was assigned to do an entrance exam which I passed. Both exams were only in scientific subjects. My friends failed and got accepted, but my brother was not accepted because he failed.”</p> <p>“There is a certain average to be achieved in class so that we will be enrolled in the next class. For new students there is an entrance exam to be passed. We did not face any problems in registration because we joined the school after we passed in the Brevet official exams. This certification allowed us to enter the school without entrance exam.”</p> <p>“By intervention of important people. I made an entrance exam and failed, so I had to enter in an illegal way to get acceptance that is I had to make someone intervene to get registered.”</p> <p>“I brought my relatives and visited the minister of education to get acceptance.”</p>
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#### 4.7 Teachers monitoring student's progress

Teachers' interviews	<p>“In biology we assess students according to the new skills the new program. Three types of skills: applying knowledge, scientific method, and communication. We use these skills in every exam. Sometimes students pass in one skill and fail in another. We don't have time to correct the exams in class, also no time for laboratory activities.”</p> <p>“If I had a great percentage of failure in one test, I solve this problem myself. I look for the reason of this failure. It is mainly due to students' language. Students need extra support.”</p> <p>“What I do is discuss my students' mistakes with them and guide them to improve themselves.”</p> <p>“After any exam, I evaluate every student's improvement. I don't discuss exam results with the principal.”</p> <p>“When I have great % of failure in student test results, I solve this issue by giving proper guidance and advice to my students to work harder for their own benefit. I stress on their weak points but unfortunately students are careless.”</p> <p>“The issue of great % of failure in students' results is mostly found in schools having students below average. This weakness is due to the carelessness of teachers who don't take action against low achieving student's right from the beginning. These students need follow up and encouragement and motivation by giving them a push up grade if they improve. Most of these improved by these procedures.”</p> <p>“If I have a great percentage of failure, I review my students' mistakes and re-teach them. Then I will do another exam to check if they acquired the concept well.”</p> <p>“We report to the principal about the students who fail. I also give guidance to these students, and I give others some punishment. The students are not at the actual class</p>
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	<p>level. More than 70% are below class level.”</p> <p>“Student’s work assessment is done through test results, class work, H.W., exams.”</p> <p>“Personally after every exam, I report to the principal the failing students, and the test items level of difficulty. If I had any complaint or any mistake I have made I report to the principal because it will be reflected by the exam results. I consider this as my duty, besides finishing the program, to report what is going on in the class concerning exams and student evaluation and interactions. This teaching job requires honesty because it is a very delicate job that deals with a group of human beings and their life and destiny.”</p>
Students’ interviews	<p>“We should have regular tests for every chapter. Certain teachers don’t keep their promise to make a test, so students don’t study their subject.”</p> <p>“No trials done for students. Even the exam sheets remain with the teacher for a long time.”</p> <p>“No exams made in Arabic. So far, there is no learning environment available.”</p> <p>“Math teacher gives us answers to exam problems. Most teachers care for finishing the required curriculum. Some teachers submit the highest grade of more than one exam. If the average is low, tests are usually repeated to get a higher average.”</p> <p>“In my midyear exams in history and civics, I was in the hospital. I was told to bring a medical report to be allowed to do the two tests again. The teacher refused to give me the tests and recorded on the grading book a passing grade without doing these tests.”</p>

#### 4.8 Teaching strategies

Teachers’ interviews	<p>“What should be done is that students should mainly participate in solving problems on the board, but practically speaking the teacher should have special methodology to transfer the idea to students allowing them partially to participate, otherwise class control will be lost if more participation takes place “</p> <p>Physics: “When solving an exercise on the boards, if the problem is difficult, I usually solve it, but students solve on the board most of the exercises.”</p> <p>“Most of the time I solve the exercise personally so that they acquire the correct method of solving these exercises in official exams. There are special basic rules in solving problems that I repeat regularly but unfortunately students repeat their mistakes because most students are below class level.”</p> <p>“I prefer students to solve it on the board because they will feel that their presence is important, they will feel that they are part of this educational process and they will understand more. Sometimes I become obliged to solve the question on my own on the board due to time constraints.”</p>
Students’ interviews	<p>“He says you solve problems at home. Good teachers help us in solving problems on the board, other teachers give lectures only.”</p> <p>“Physics and math teachers solve problems themselves on the board. Surely if we were allowed to go to the board to solve problems we could understand the lessons better.”</p> <p>“In physics, the teacher solves the problems on the board and we copy the solutions. In biology, the teacher writes the solution of the activities on the board directly from the teachers guide”</p> <p>“None of us solve exercises on the board. Sometimes I copy the solution of the chemistry homework from my copybook on the board.”</p> <p>“Yes, we both go to the board especially in math. We really feel we understood the lesson better because we write the formula and apply all the related theories and data.”</p> <p>“Economics teacher makes us solve exercises on the board. Math teacher uses the method of solving problems on the board.”</p>

	<p>"Physics and math teachers solve problems themselves on the board. Surely if we were allowed to go to the board to solve problems we could understand the lessons better."</p> <p>"Teachers are relying on the old curriculum methodology. We don't enter the lab, and no group work in the classroom. Our teachers do not apply the new methodology at our school. Students sit down and listen to the teachers lecture with no activities done afterwards, no lab activities, or fieldtrips. This is the problem we are facing in all science subjects. We use only our books."</p> <p>"The information in the book is the only information our teachers stick to. For example, we face difficulty in reading the books. The biology and the chemistry teachers don't read the lesson. We never go to the lab with our chemistry teacher."</p> <p>"He should use different methodology in teaching and making his class more enjoyable. Also, he should have the talent to transfer the subject matter to students."</p> <p>"Some teachers such as math, sociology, and economics write the main ideas of their lesson on the board then start the discussion."; "Economics teacher uses group work."; "The chemistry teacher explains the lesson but we can't recognize which chapter he is talking about."; "They explain the subject matter in their own way without making sure that students have comprehended the lesson."; "Lecturing technique is the method our teachers depend on."</p>
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#### 4.9 Coordination between teachers

Principal's interviews	<p>"Based on Ministry of Education regulations, the coordinators do their job with their teachers, and prepare exams and analyze the results. I don't have enough time to do this extra work, because I have a lot of responsibilities. If there is anything serious, the coordinator discusses this issue with me."</p> <p>"By contract, it is the duty of the teacher to attend meetings held by coordinators, and cooperate with the school administration as much as possible to keep the teaching level of the subject at a good standard."</p>
Teachers' interviews	<p>Part timer biology teacher: "The coordinator cooperates at the beginning of the year and during exams."</p> <p>"The coordinator rarely attends my classes. But nowadays nobody is coordinating and supervising my work in the classroom."</p> <p>Part timer chemistry teacher: "In fact we don't have a coordinator for Chemistry although the school principal assigned one for us, but he refused to take over this mission. Every one of us works on his own with no feedback."</p> <p>"This year we didn't have a coordinator for sociology."</p> <p>"The problem of no cooperation does not exit. The physics coordinator coordinates with me, and we discuss different points of view. Finally we reach a common understanding."</p> <p>"Usually the coordinator attends my classes and gives me some remarks but he doesn't give any feed back regarding my performance and teaching strategies." "Unfortunately some teachers refuse to attend coordination meetings and don't cooperate."</p> <p>Chemistry tenure teacher: "The teachers are quite cooperative and they are ready to receive remarks from the coordinator concerning methodology and teaching strategies."</p> <p>"As a Biology coordinator I meet with my colleagues to choose subjects to be given at the beginning of the school year. Also we prepare tests as a team after discussing subject matter covered."</p> <p>"As a physics coordinator, I usually sit with my colleagues to discuss issues concerning subject matter and I give guidance to new teachers in the subject matter to be given later to students. I am happy for doing my supervision and coordination as such."</p> <p>Chemistry part time teacher: "The coordinator and the supervisor of Higher Education</p>

	did not observe me. Four years ago I was notified once that the principal and the coordinator are willing to visit my class but they have never showed up till now."
Students' interviews	"There is no team work among teachers, no body cares about the status of every student in this final class, and no body cares about the reputation of the school. While in our previous school all of the staff cared. Regular meetings take place among teachers of same class analyzing level of each student, putting strategies for his needs and improvement. There is no cooperation among teachers. They just place difficult tests that no student can solve. So you feel the great difference between teachers in private schools and those in governmental schools."

#### 4.10 Official exams

Principal's interviews	"Application of rules and regulations, regarding discipline, and follow up of student's results regularly is a very important issue which influences school results. If students do not respect regulations, there will be no learning or teaching atmosphere inside the classes. Also, I make sure that teachers are finalizing the required program on time."
Teachers' interviews	<p>"Sure, the teachers have a basic influence on students result in official exams. Since every teacher has direct influence in his subject matter in Baccalaureate exams so the teachers determine the exact level of their students who qualify for the Baccalaureate exams."</p> <p>"It is a team influence on school results. As a teacher, I am doing my best for my students to succeed."</p> <p>"My influence as a teacher on school results is great. I should evaluate myself if I am qualified in the subject matter, transmitting values, and controlling students. I keep my eyes on every student as a follow up to concentrate well and not to waste time. I usually motivate them to acquire more information daily and participate in discussion and even to reorganize at home what was acquired in school. I make every student feel that his teacher is paying attention to him, so that he can work hard and get best results in official exams. Even I spent much time with students to show them how to study, and set a schedule for their general exams."</p> <p>"Teachers should play their role well in teaching and guiding to students."</p> <p>"The principal has a great influence on student's results if he supervised teachers' performance and their teaching strategies, checking every teacher's results in official exams, and giving remarks to teachers for better performance. Unfortunately this is not taking place."</p>

#### 4.11 Team work

Teachers' interviews	<p>Chemistry part time teacher: "I don't consider my self and the other colleagues as one team because I rarely meet with them and I barely talk to them."</p> <p>Sociology teacher: "I rarely discuss preparing a lesson or a test with my colleagues. But next year we are planning to work as a team."</p> <p>Physics tenure teacher: "Due to certain teacher's ignorance in language, they refuse to prepare tests for their classes, but rely on other teachers to prepare it for him since they teach the same class but different divisions."</p> <p>Physics part time teacher: "We usually as physics teachers prepare physics tests together as a team. But concerning lesson plans, every teacher prepares his lesson plans by himself."</p> <p>Chemistry tenure teacher: "In taking decisions concerning student's performance, I usually discuss these decisions with my colleagues, taking their points of view and reaching common decisions."</p> <p>Chemistry part time teacher: "I don't take the opinion of my colleagues because</p>
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	<p>they think they are superior and professionals who don't have to help and mingle with the new teachers. I prepare everything on my own. I rarely see the coordinator and my second colleague."</p> <p>Biology part time teacher: "In preparing a lesson I depend on myself and some references, but I might talk with my colleagues about some questions. Test preparation is also done alone. No team work."</p>
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## 4.12 Prizes

Principal's interviews	"Symbolic prizes."
Teachers' interviews	<p>"Prizes for distinguished students are distributed such as gold ounces; books were given twice in this school to elite students."</p> <p>"Prizes for distinguished students were given at the end of the year."</p> <p>"Prizes for elite students were given once."</p> <p>"Usually some prizes are given to elite students such as stories books."</p> <p>"Prizes for elite students: I don't know."</p> <p>"The principal used to give a golden coin to the elite students."</p> <p>"Computers, lab tops, golden pounds were given for best students at all levels. I don't have an idea about civic education book."</p>
Students' interviews	<p>"Nothing this year."</p> <p>"Not available in our class."</p> <p>"Last year, he gave a golden coin"</p>

## 4.13 Students council

Principal's interviews	"Before the civil war (1975-1992) student's council was available but during the civil war it was stopped due to political reasons. We have other councils such as the social, arts, and sports councils."
Teachers' interviews	<p>eight teachers agreed that: "Student council is not available in this school."</p> <p>"There is a student council in this school, but I don't know much about its activity."</p>
Students' interviews	<p>"No student council is available at our school."</p> <p>"Not available because of too many religious sects. Students organize alone football games, trips."</p> <p>"No. Student council is symbolic, no activities, and useless."</p>

## 4.14 Attitudes towards the school

Principal's interviews	
Teachers' interviews	<p>"Nothing makes me feel at home when I come to school."</p> <p>"Nothing makes me feel at home when I come to school due to immorality most students have."</p> <p>"I don't feel that. I feel that I am coming to do a certain job."</p> <p>"It is the teacher himself who can accommodate to feel at home when he comes to school."</p>

	<p>"When I see my colleagues, and headmaster I feel at home."</p> <p>"I will meet my students only."</p> <p>"This is my work. I have normal feeling."</p>
Students' interviews	<p>"If new ideas are proposed, they are not considered serious because of the presence of troublesome students who come to school to waste time and not to learn causing great harm to others."</p> <p>"Quality of students is a serious issue. They cause damages to labs, steal material etc."</p> <p>"We are living in a fearful atmosphere you don't feel sympathy, brotherhood and parenthood from administration and the teaching staff."</p> <p>"We feel at home in the school because of our friends and we play football."</p>

## 4.15 Activities

Principal's interviews	"Wall posters, magazines, drawings, sports tournament with other schools. Language activities such as visiting the museum."
Teachers' interviews	<p>Two teachers stated that: "We don't celebrate anything at the school."</p> <p>"Last year students made a party for teachers."</p> <p>"Celebrate Independence Day: we hang a small paper flag in the playground, and one student makes a speech but no one cares. Nothing else exists. Students take a vacation on that day and leave the school."</p> <p>"Celebrations do not occur in the school but we should do that."</p> <p>No extracurricular activities are made due to lack of time because in biology the program is so condensed.</p> <p>"I encourage my students to make extracurricular activities, research etc...agriculture, environment control, but unfortunately there is no administrative encouragement."</p> <p>"Students don't participate in any extra curricular activities."</p> <p>"The principal doesn't participate in any activity, that is, he remains in his office and some times he walks around looking through every class window. Students do not stand up in lines in the morning and during breaks. They once formed a football team that won over the IC school team. They did not have any coach to train them. They used to escape from their classes to train themselves in the school playground. The principal did not do anything for those running out of their classes although he saw many students playing in the playground. The principal and the teachers don't walk in the playground among the students. If the principal organizes an activity he would discover that many students are smoking, hurting each other and even see that his students are on drugs. Also a group of students in the third secondary tried once to organize a music concert. They took the permission of the school principal on one condition that they will pay for everything. Students organized a concert from their own money but what is shameful is that only 9 teachers attended that concert."</p> <p>"Some students have certain hobbies. This year students got a trophy in football on personal level."</p> <p>"Arts show was made twice in school several years ago in this school as an activity."</p> <p>"A breakfast party for teachers is done once a year, or a play prepared by an interested student."</p> <p>"Sports, drawing may be done by students. I have no idea about this issue since I am a chemistry teacher."</p>
Students' interviews	<p>"We don't celebrate any occasion in our school." "No extra curricular activities."</p> <p>"We go home."</p>

	<p>“Lecturing technique is the method our teachers depend on. Students sit down and listen to the teachers lecture with no activities done afterwards, no lab activities, or fieldtrips. This is the problem we are facing in all science subjects. We use only our books. We will understand more if we participate in activities and perform lab experiments in the lab.”; “No training for sports. Personal effort made us establish a sports team that won a trophy. No encouragement, no trainers available.”</p> <p>“Nothing, no clubs, no yearbook, no camera allowed. We smoke, and we don’t even stand in line when the bell rings.”</p> <p>“Students themselves plan for certain activities on their expense and responsibility. In the football finals, students were not allowed to attend, so they sneaked out to attend it and our team won over IC school in the game.”</p>
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## 4.16 Instructional time

Teachers’ interviews	<p>How frequent we see students kicked out of class shows how successful is the school.”</p> <p>“Another reason for student failure is high number of vacations, and this affects the weak students mainly.”</p>
Students’ interviews	<p>“We have no time to study due to the attendance in school that’s to say afternoon intervals. Also we have a lot of free periods in our weekly schedule which the principal is not making use of. We need extra periods in many subjects but unfortunately the principal is not supporting us especially in math.”</p> <p>“Concerning school time shift, when we have an after noon session, it will be impossible to do our H.W for the next morning shift.”</p> <p>“The physics teacher sold us a booklet that includes solutions for exercises.”</p>

## 4.17 Discipline

Principal’s interviews	<p>“I communicate with the students in a respectful manner without harming them. I make sure that students are sticking to rules and regulations listed in the internal school discipline book. We have to be strict when dealing with students and not tough.”</p> <p>“We have to know the nature of this problem, then we listen to the teachers complains and know what is the problem the student is facing. Finally we can find a suitable and fair solution accepted by the student and that keeps the teacher respectful.”</p> <p>“Moral problems are dealt with seriously without any mercy especially if it is related to teacher’s dignity and respect. We refer students to a disciplinary council who has clear punishment for every bad and moral behavior. If students improve in their behavior, they will be allowed to attend classes, but if not, they will be expelled from school.”</p> <p>“We call parents to come to school to discuss their child’s behavior and analyze the problem to find a suitable solution for the welfare of the school and the students at the same time. If there is a body injury, we have to take a disciplinary act against the suspected student.”</p>
Teachers’ interviews	<p>“Sometimes the case would be dangerous so I refer back to the headmaster but he never helped me then I refer back to the principal but he never helped me. He only tells me give me the names of the students to kick them out of the class, which I find of no use because my philosophy of education is against kicking students out of the class.”</p> <p>“If there is a moral problem, I make sure that it is not wide spread and solved in a proper way with the help of the administration and students parents.”</p>

"If I face a moral problem with my students, I usually ask for help from the principal."

"I usually solve any disciplinary problem with my students peacefully and friendly with proper guidance. No punishment or sending him to headmaster."

"If I face a disciplinary problem with my students, I usually solve it personally in class. I give proper verbal punishment then guidance to these students. If there is a moral problem, I make sure that it is not wide spread and solved in a proper way with the help of the administration and students parents."

"If the problem is basic coming from student environment I transfer it to the principal to deal with it since he is familiar with all environments of students. Before sending him to principal, I show the student his problem and tell him to verify it to principal. If it aims at insulting me as a teacher, student should know that he will bear the consequences of his behavior. So, he should change his wrong behavior or bear the consequences."

"I depend on myself, my skills in communication. Sometimes the case would be dangerous so I refer back to the headmaster but he never helped me then I refer back to the principal but he never helped me. We have to help students to become better persons."

"If there is a serious problem I expel the student from the class."

"If two students have a fight in class, I usually punish them, then send them to the principal to take administrative actions and make their parents sign a conduct notice."

"Most of the time, I strongly interfere when two students have a fight I show them that I am strongly upset, then I try to solve the problem that caused the fight and give proper guidance which makes the students feel as one family."

"I usually guide students as a friend showing how their intimate relation should be instead of being hostile to each other. Students should consider their colleagues as brothers spending much time together, having common goals."

"I depend on myself and on the quality of the relationship I have with my students which help me a lot. If I face a problem I do not refer to the principal because he has no role and I lost hope in him helping me. I can tell you stories of me referring to him but with no use. He never cooperated."

"There are no criteria for punishment when students behave in a bad way. They either kick the student out of the school for one week or turn him to the "Disciplinary council" for punishment. Students don't care for such punishments. They will tell you that they will take a break for one week."

"Well the principal never interfered in such teachings even when I ask him. He is of no use. All the students take him for granted too. They even won't listen to him if he talks to them. They will only make fun of him."

"The principal is the sheriff in school. He is the supreme power who has the greatest influence on students. He symbolizes the parent's image in front of students. He has direct effect on students. It is necessary that students acquire the basic morals and values, if not applied at once by students, but it will be of great help for them in future."

"The principal has minimum interaction with the students. His role is mainly with teachers and application of rules and regulations in general."

"The control is very limited in this school. The school has a council for punishment and reward. I am a member of this council. We look for the reasons that cause wrong behaviors by students."

"Occasionally, The principal gives some guidance to students who make trouble in class. I am not sure that morals and values are transmitted to students because for certain reasons students reject discipline."

	"I have no idea about principal's role in teaching discipline and morals to students."
Students' interviews	<p>"We don't face problems with our classmates."</p> <p>"I solve my problems on my own without referring back to the teacher or principal because they won't help."</p> <p>"Our math teacher shouts to control the class."</p> <p>"There are some trouble makers in the class causing harm to other students because of the roughness and nervous state of the teachers."</p> <p>"There is a rule in the school. Both students will be fired from school in case of trouble." "Some teachers have no strong personality to control the students. Other teachers can control it such as the chemistry teacher. She is respected."</p> <p>"We leave the class whenever we want. If they lock up the playground we jump from the first floor to the playground."</p> <p>"When the teacher enters the class, he smokes a cigarette. He tells us some jokes he memorizes, some tricky questions, what he has eaten today, and how he spent his day. Sushi food he eats."</p> <p>"We smoke, and we don't even stand in line when the bell rings."</p> <p>"So far, there is no learning environment available. No students' participation. Students are always responsible."</p>

## 4.18 Scale for success

Principal's interviews	"The general discipline application, %success of students in the official exams, parental satisfaction of students' results and performance, great insistence of students to apply to this school and school evaluation show the success of the school."
Teachers' interviews	<p>"Language is a main problem among students causing a lot of failure."</p> <p>"Another reason for student failures is high number of vacations, and this affects the weak students mainly."</p> <p>"Parents are asked to come to school to be aware of their children behavior and educational standards."</p> <p>"Parents are not making any effort to communicate with teachers or administration."</p> <p>"Administration is strict and caring."</p> <p>"The degree of success for my school is based on the presence of a good administration."</p>

## 4.19 Communication between students and teachers

Teachers' interviews	<p>"What I do is really giving true guidance to my students about the importance of their hard work to their future."</p> <p>"I let them feel responsible by showing them how much effort I am exerting for their sake."</p> <p>"Students are not the same since they are from different environments and have different ways of thinking. We have to study every case separately so that we can motivate them in a proper way."</p> <p>"By motivation, guidance, and encouragement. I keep on telling my students that I wish them to be engineers, lawyers, doctors, and university professors. I keep on telling them: "you Lebanese are more intelligent than any other nationals"</p> <p>"I motivate my students by clarifying what is going on in society. If an educated person is really qualified, he can get a good career and a good job. While others will be jobless."</p> <p>"In the beginning of the school year I draw their attention to the three skills to be taken into consideration. To succeed, we give them hopes for success but</p>
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	<p>sometimes they are careless.”</p> <p>“I inspire them and motivate them through encouraging them, giving them chances and by communicating with them.”</p> <p>“They discuss issues related to the situation in our country, about certain disease, pollution, etc... and health problems related to them because I am biology teacher.”</p> <p>“Personal, academic, social and sometimes political issues are discussed with students.”</p> <p>“I prefer students to discuss their issues. But since I am a lawyer they usually discuss issues concerning lawyers, courts in generals.”</p> <p>“Nothing.”</p> <p>“Teacher behavior, and the principal behavior are discussed with students.”</p> <p>“Personal look, behavior, hygiene parental respect, and medical problems are also discussed.”</p> <p>“Issues students usually discuss with me are mostly social activities such as going to movies.”</p> <p>“Issues related to subject matter.”</p>
Students’ interviews	<p>“The Arabic teacher on the opposite side encourages us regularly. The math teacher cares a lot about our success. While solving the exercises he keeps asking us to pay attention reminding us that we have to pass the official exams.”</p> <p>“I had a personal problem. The philosophy teacher helps me a lot. The advices given were suitable. Some teachers are helpful and cooperative.”</p> <p>“Some teachers have deep respect so we can easily discuss many issues with them”</p> <p>While with other teachers only the subject matter issues are discussed.”</p> <p>“Some teachers discussed with us general topics such as, comparison between Arabs and western civilizations, and war in Iraq.”</p> <p>“Intimacy is important to us as a strategy.”</p> <p>“Economics teacher has good qualities that make students interested in the subject discussed. She respects students and shares in discussion.”</p> <p>“My Arabic teacher has some qualities that make us understand the subject very well. He is a good mannered teacher.”</p>

#### 4.20 Communication problems between teachers and students

Students’ interviews	<p>“Most teachers discourage us saying that we will not pass this year. Every one of us believes that he will fail in the official exams”; “You don’t seem to be passing students. Your grades will be lower in the official exams”; “We don’t advice any student to join this school. No motivation available.”</p> <p>“Teachers say: “You better go and sell cakes, you better go to the army, and you are dreaming of success, we bet if you would pass”.”</p> <p>“In this public school teachers are careless and have no feelings for the students. They say we are here to get our salaries at the end of the month. They explain the subject matter in their own way without making sure that students have comprehended the lesson.”</p> <p>“Teachers put us in a fearful atmosphere regarding the official exams. So as a reaction we get a feeling of discouragement and distress. No motivation. No exams are made in Arabic. In general teachers don’t care about our problems.”</p> <p>“If a student tries to give his opinion in class, the teacher curses and insults him. This is against the rules and the general discipline. The Lebanese law respects the freedom</p>
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of speech and opinions. Some teachers use bad words such as sit down monkey. Other teachers give a lecture and uses group work."

"Our teachers mostly don't have the qualities that help us to learn better." "The substitute teacher does not respond politely to our questions."

"We have a teacher in our school that teaches also in IPS, a private school. He behaves in a different way there as my friends tell me. They tell me all about his good behavior. While here he shouts and curses us, and he is always nervous. He is our chemistry teacher."

"We students of this class don't accept insults. So when a teacher says to a student sit down monkey, the student replies directly "You are the monkey".

"Concerning the philosophy teacher, he is well qualified but he is very nervous, impolite, have no manners. He is also boring and students don't respect him."

"The philosophy teacher behaves impolitely with female students such as throwing her bookcase out of the classroom. He enters the classroom with a nervous mood, which has a direct influence on student's behavior. Finally students apologize for their disobedience to teachers' orders. "

"We are not allowed to discuss issues." "No dialogue takes place. We are always mistaken. They send us outside the classroom when there is a problem. Even when we go to the headmaster, students are blamed and kept outside the classroom."

"We face communication problems especially if the teacher is nervous. We talk to her in a cool way but unfortunately she becomes more nervous. Another teacher threw my book from the window to the ground floor. She did not allow me to get it back. When the period was over I went looking for my book but I did not find it, it was stolen. She ordered me to buy another one but I refused. I informed the principal about the incident even though the teacher did not allow me to enter her class."

"If I face a problem with my teacher, I talk to the principal then I talk to him, but if the teacher doesn't cooperate, I don't attend his/her classes."

"If the teacher respects me I will respect her/him. Our philosophy teacher is a disrespectful teacher. He grabbed my hand heavily because I was talking in the class. I told him to release my hand, but he refused so I had to push him away from me."

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