ATTRIBUTES AND ROLES OF SUBJECT LEADERS:

PERCEPTIONS IN TWO LEBANESE HIGH SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to identify the attributes and roles of subject leaders as they are set out in their job descriptions and other related documents, and as they are perceived by three categories of stakeholders (four administrators, eight subject leaders and 58 teachers) in two Lebanese Anglophone high schools. The research design is a qualitative case study using mixed methods. Data was collected through (1) semi-structured interviews with the administrators and subject leaders; (2) questionnaires for the teachers; and (3) document analysis of pertinent administrative official documents. The responses to all the instruments of data collection were synthesized to draw relevant inferences from the results. The findings reveal that subject leaders are selected on the basis of their academic qualifications; previous experiences; personal attributes and professional skills; and on their perceived ability to manage. All the subject leaders had learned their profession on the job. The professional development of subject leaders was found to be haphazard and unstructured. The roles subject leaders engage in fall into curriculum related activities; into maintaining a productive and collaborative department culture; and entail attending to all tasks related to improving standards of teaching and learning. The perceived attributes of subject leaders include interpersonal and communication skills; integrity; and being an effective manager and a leader. Differences in perceived importance to these characteristics and roles can be traced to the variable priorities and interests of the participants as well as to the different contexts of the schools. Finally all subject leaders are evaluated informally.
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<td>Subject Leader</td>
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<td>DoS:</td>
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<td>AD:</td>
<td>Academic Dean (School B)</td>
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<td>J. D. for HoDs:</td>
<td>Job Description for Heads of Departments (School A)</td>
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The attributes and roles of good teachers and, more recently, of good principals have been widely analyzed and researched. Paradigms expounding on the traits of exemplary teachers abound especially in western research literature, and many Lebanese schools are aware of the elements of good teaching and have evolved into adopting and/or adapting western models to their own contexts. This can be demonstrated by the fact that teachers are expected to be qualified before they enter the profession and the fact that several leading schools are already using, formally and/or informally, an appraisal procedure that ensures that their teachers are held accountable for their work.

The proliferation of several models of educational leadership attempting to identify the leadership skills and functions of successful leaders is more recent in western research and is only now gaining more attention in Lebanon. However, while would-be teachers are required to seek qualifications that equip them to become certified teachers, no such formal education or training is either required of, or available for principals in Lebanon (Yaacoub, 2001; Akkary & Greenfield, 1998) - and neither is this the case for middle managers whose roles and attributes have in the last two or three decades been gaining more prominence in the west (Brown & Rutherford, 1999).
Yet it is widely acknowledged that the role of middle managers, and specifically of subject heads of departments/coordinators, is pivotal to effecting positive change in the teaching and learning in schools – the technical core or "heart" (Lucas, 1994) of educational organizations (Gold, 1998; Turner, 2005; Robinson, 1996; Busher, 2006; Lunn & Bishop, 2002; Lamb, 1993; Turner & Bolam, 1998; Seagren, Creswell & Wheeler, 1993; Brown & Rutherford, 1998). As instructional leaders, they have the potential for the greatest impact on their institutions (Lucas, 1994); not only are they expected to manage and advance knowledge in their individual subject areas, but they also have a responsibility to lead and support their teachers to ensure effective teaching and learning and high academic pupil achievement. Some researchers contend that the role of academic heads or chairs should be taken more seriously especially in their capacity as "change agents" (Lucas & Associates, 2000; Turner, 2005; Lunn & Bishop, 2002).

Today's educational climate calls for leaders who are capable not only of preserving what is going well, but also of functioning as agents of change. And such leadership is crucial not only in senior administrators but also in department chairs (Lucas, 1994, p. 5).

This critical importance lately accorded in the west to heads of departments and/or coordinators or "subject leaders" - as they are now called in the UK (Turner, 2005) and as will be referred to them hereafter - has not been quite appreciated in Lebanon. The evidence suggesting that insufficient care is given to the selection and training of subject leaders (Lucas, 1994) holds true in Lebanon as well as in the west. Worse, as in many other areas, we lag at least a decade behind in embracing innovations aimed at improving our educational institutions and standards. While the political and economic instability of the country does, in part, explain this state of affairs, it is high time we
tried to catch up with the rest of the world if we are ambitious about ensuring our place in the 21st century’s competitive global environment.

The present research is an attempt to contribute to our understanding of the following educational issues in Lebanon: What criteria are used to select subject leaders (SLs) in schools that boast an international clientele and that aim to model themselves partly, if not wholly, on western models because of this clientele. What training and continuing professional development provision is provided for their roles? What are their actual attributes and what do their responsibilities on the ground actually entail? How are they evaluated? The latter question is equally valid for, like the teachers who report to them, SLs too, should be and are, in theory, held accountable to the stakeholders of their organizations.

In other words, the purpose of the present thesis is to identify the attributes and roles of SLs as they are perceived by different members of the educational profession in two private Anglophone high schools. The perceptions of the principals and administrators, of the SLs themselves, and of the teachers they supervise will be examined. The research will also attempt to determine whether the attributes and roles of SLs vary according to the subject or discipline of the department, or whether they are generic in nature.

The terms “attributes”, “roles”, “subject leaders”, “perceptions” and “private Lebanese high schools” are defined as follows:

“Attributes” is a general term used to refer to a cluster of qualities and characteristics, personal and professional. They include technical and work-related knowledge and skills (Busher, 2006); personal traits - such as “the attitude of the
individual Head of Department himself/herself towards the job itself” (Turner & Bolam, 1998. p. 381) – as well as interpersonal skills, qualities or characteristics. Eraut (1994) itemised 6 categories of knowledge which clarify the particular kinds of knowledge, skills and abilities that are thought to be desirable in SLs. These include possessing 1) knowledge of people, 2) situational knowledge; 3) knowledge of educational practice; 4) conceptual knowledge; 5) process knowledge; and 6) control knowledge. These help subject leaders perform their functions as expected by the stakeholders of an educational organisation.

“Roles” refers to the tasks, activities, functions, duties and responsibilities of subject leaders. According to Turner and Bolam (1998), the roles of subject leaders include “how a Head of Department might work in school to influence the quality of teaching and learning in their subject” (p. 373); “the ways in which effective departments operate” (p. 373), and the methods used to influence teaching and learning outcomes. Subject leaders’ purposeful actions also include “strategies to construct and implement policy and practice” (Busker, 2006, p. 145). According to Gmelch (2002) the roles and responsibilities that are needed to exercise academic leadership are unique. Also, each role played by SLs must be aimed at advancing excellence in teaching and learning (Robinson, 1996).

“Subject leaders” refers to the middle managers in an educational organisation in charge of implementing the curriculum of an academic subject or discipline in a school - such as the English, science or maths departments - and in charge of leading all the teachers of that subject, and of managing and coordinating their activities. They are heads of departments and/or coordinators depending on their official titles in different
educational institutions. Some schools may have an overarching “Head of Department” for each subject (e.g. English department for the whole school) with “coordinators” for different cycles (e.g. Intermediate or Middle Section English coordinator). The newer term, “subject leader” as it is used in the UK, is more general as well as being more specific of this category of academic middle managers; it seems that the change in name was coined by Ofsted (Office of Standards in Education), an education inspection and regulating body in the UK, in 1994 and was intended to add another dimension, a more proactive approach to the roles of heads of department and coordinators, since they were expected “to bring about the desired improvements in quality and standards” (Lunn & Bishop, 2002, p.2)

“Perceptions” refers to the points of view or perspectives of the different categories of participants chosen for this research, namely, the principals and administrators involved in the selection and appraisal of SLs, the SLs themselves, and the teachers they supervise.

“Private Lebanese high schools” would cover private intermediate (middle school) and secondary Anglophone schools run by a board independent of the Lebanese Ministry of Education.

Interest in the topic was sparked by a chance observation made by one administrator in the researcher’s school; the Director of Studies had complained to the researcher - previously a SL herself - that there seemed to be little research or information about the roles of heads of departments and about criteria used to evaluate their performance: What made a subject leader effective or ineffective? An initial search seemed to confirm the scarcity of the literature available, especially as related to international schools in
the Middle East. The present study is significant because of its potential to contribute to an understanding of the educational role of this category of middle managers. More particularly, the results will provide valuable information to the stakeholders of the specified schools that could potentially enhance the managing, teaching and learning occurring in them.

This thesis will be organized as follows: Chapter Two will summarize past research and review past and current theories pertaining to the attributes and roles of subject leaders in western educational institutions. The literature will provide both a background to and a framework for the study. Chapter Three will focus on the research design, data collection methods and data analysis procedures employed. Chapter Four will present the findings of the study from all the data collected, Chapter Five will compare the results of the investigation with the findings and theories found in the literature review in Chapter Two, and Chapter Six will present the conclusions drawn from the study, including limitations and pertinent recommendations. Finally, the Appendices added will include a sample of each of the instruments utilized as well as the tables used for part of the data gathered.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The following literature review reports on the findings of past and recent research related to the attributes and roles of SLs, on the conclusions drawn from their authors as well as on theoretical reviews and other pertinent information. The literature found encompasses material relevant to secondary schools in the UK, as well as to elementary and higher education colleges and universities mostly in the USA, Australia, and to a lesser extent, Canada. The researcher reviewed mainly secondary school studies, but also some higher education as well as primary school studies that were found to be relevant to attributes and roles of subject and/or instructional leaders in general. After a brief introduction that will outline the importance of the topic from the literature’s perspective, the review will use the research questions guiding this inquiry as a framework:

1) How are SLs selected, what preparation / training for their role and continuing professional development options are available to them?

2) What are the expectations and perceptions held in relation to their attributes and responsibilities, be they general or specific?

3) How are SLs held accountable, and what form does the evaluation of their performance take?
The Pivotal Role of Subject Leaders as Change Agents

The current worldwide concern to improve educational standards in order to better prepare young people to assume their roles as productive members of their societies in the 21st century is behind the recent drive to search for ever-better ways of maximizing their development, knowledge, understanding and skills. This in turn has led to the scrutiny of factors that contribute to the effectiveness of schools, universities, and by extension, to the leadership attributes and skills of successful educational leaders. The necessity to raise educational standards, to improve the effectiveness of schools and the pressure on educational institutions to embrace “change” and for “agents of change” to initiate and/or translate and implement it at the classroom level (Bennett, 1983; Bennett, Newton, Wise, Woods & Economou, 2003; Brown & Rutherford, 1999; Brown, Rutherford & Boyle, 2000; Busher, 2006; Busher & Harris, 1999; Glover, Miller, Gambling, Gough & Johnson, 1999; Lucas, 1994; Murray, 1995; Harris, Jamieson & Russ, 1995) have led to a recent shift of focus from the “whole school” and “head teachers” or principals, to academic departments, middle leaders and more specifically to SL roles. “These post-holders are said to be at the heart of efforts to improve the quality of teaching and learning in schools” (Busher, 2006, p. 134).

If SLs are indeed acknowledged to be at the centre of the teaching and learning of their subject in their institutions, it goes without saying that they are considered to be primarily instructional leaders in their capacity as subject experts, in the active role they play in building a productive departmental culture as well as in promoting the professional development of their colleagues. According to the elementary principals in
Mitchell and Castle's study (2005), essentially, "instructional leadership is all about improving instruction for students" (p. 416). Thus, since students are the main beneficiaries of secondary school SLs' ultimate efforts too, it can be argued that SLs are the "mini-principals" (Wettersten, 1992) of their own departments:

The department is the key focus for change within the school. Heads of departments...can enable successful change... and thus contribute to whole school improvement. In addition, because the heads of department and members of their departments share subject loyalty and expertise as well as "micropolitical" interests, they are the crucial agents of change within schools (Brown & Rutherford, 1999, p. 231).

Thus SLs are increasingly recognized to be key figures in an educational environment of constant change and turbulence, and the real potential for organizational improvement is acknowledged to be in their hands (Turner, 2005).

Coping with, and managing change especially in the context of inevitable resistance from teachers constitutes a real challenge to SLs whose success as change agents depends on their having a sense of timing, the ability to convince and motivate colleagues to change their practices and the patience to deal with resistance sensitively (Turner, 2005). According to Glover et al. (1999), most subject leaders tend to be implementers of change - mediating and translating whole school policy - rather than being initiators of change themselves. Only about a third of the SLs in their study (7 out of 24 schools) were believed to genuinely have the creativity to be proactive initiators.
The Selection, Training and Continuing Professional Development of Subject Leaders

According to Lucas (1994), not enough care is generally given to the selection of SLs. Promotion to the position is usually achieved on the basis of a teacher’s proven track record of successful classroom teaching (Turner, 2000). Other factors taken into consideration are seniority or status; subject expertise; energy; interpersonal skills; and potential or actual leadership skills such as having a clear vision about the subject; an understanding of micropolitics; and the ability to effect change (Gold, 1998).

Training teachers to fill the post of SL has also been inadequate (Lucas 1994; Bennett et al., 2003; Brown & Rutherford 1999; Glover et al., 1999; and Gmelch, 2002), with the result that any success experienced by SLs in leading and managing their departments is seen to be primarily due to a combination of intuition (Glover et al., 1999), trial and error (Seagren et al., 1993), and evolutionary on-the-job experience (Turner, 2000). Although the research found that learning on the job was undoubtedly valuable, by itself, it was judged to be insufficient in the light of the increasingly complex demands and higher expectations placed upon SLs to lead more effectively (Lucas, 1994; Gmelch, 2002; Turner, 2005).

According to Turner (2005), professional knowledge about subject leadership is acquired through a number of different avenues: one is through tacit knowledge, otherwise referred to by psychologists as implicit learning. This largely unplanned, unconscious, and haphazard form of learning is arguably acquired very early on in a teacher’s career through observing how members relate to one another in the department.
Another form of knowledge and skill acquisition is through *professional socialization*, “the process through which a person acquires the habits, beliefs and knowledge common to and accepted by members of a profession” (Hart & Weindling, 1996, p. 314), and where other SLs are used as role models. This form of apprenticeship can have positive or negative consequences – in the latter case, the SL learns *what not to do!* It occurs at the same time as *organizational socialization*, which is the way in which newly appointed SLs attempt to understand the prevailing culture in their subject department (p. 314).

The fourth form of knowledge and understanding that SLs as reflective practitioners gain is through *reflection-on-action* as well as *reflection-in-action*, that is, on lessons learnt through hands-on experience (Turner, 2005). Self-directed learning is also elaborated on by Seagren et al. (1993), Bennett et al. (2003), Moses and Roe (1990), and by Gmelch (2002): “Leadership development is an ‘inner journey’… Self-knowledge, personal awareness and corrective feedback must be part of [this] journey” (p. 6).

All the above ways of gaining professional knowledge and leadership skills are valid, but more is needed, and while the need to build subject leadership capacity is commonly acknowledged, there is less agreement on what exactly would constitute the best training or professional development for them. Gmelch’s (2002) list of skills includes communication, performance coaching, conflict resolution, negotiation, resource deployment, and strategic vision. Lucas and associates (2000) emphasize team leadership skills. For Moses and Roe (1990), development should focus on academic leadership including counselling, evaluative and negotiating skills rather than
management training per se. Bennett et al. (2003) noted skepticism about traditional models of professional development which were found to be "ineffective at changing fundamental attitudes and ways of working" (p. 10). This is echoed by Turner (2005) who found that management courses did contribute to a better understanding of the SL's role, but were perceived to have little impact on the SL's work to improve teaching and learning in his or her department. SLs were more interested in developing general managerial skills including school budgeting and financial matters instead. The benefits of learning from talking with other SLs from the same subject area were also highlighted, as was the need for SLs to be proactive and to ultimately take responsibility for their own professional development by using online materials; attending examination board meetings; and studying for a higher degree in education. Indeed being instructional leaders with the moral imperative to model lifelong learning (Ruff & Shohe, 2005; Turner, 2005), SLs need to avail themselves of every opportunity for personal and professional growth.

The Attributes and Roles of Subject Leaders

*Contextual Influences on Subject Leader Responsibilities*

How the SL functions and the leadership style he or she uses is influenced by a number of different contextual/situational factors all of which, together with his/ or her own attitude and personality, impact on the challenging task of leading and managing the department. External influences include national policy developments such as the
National Curriculum and the Ofsted inspection framework (2002) in the UK (Bennett et al., 2003).

Influences from within include among others organizational factors: the leadership style of the headteacher / principal and of the senior management team (e.g. autocratic / democratic) (Bennett et al., 2003; Moses & Roe, 1990; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner 2005); institutional culture (e.g. bureaucratic/ collegial / political); institutional structure (e.g. hierarchical or flat structures) (Bennett et al., 2003; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner 2005); departmental sub-culture, or the influence of colleagues / followers as well as the extent to which they are willing to be influenced by the SL is significant (Bennett et al., 2003; Glover et al., 1999; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner & Bolam, 1998; Turner, 2005).

Other impinging factors include the departmental structure - whether it is, for example, federal (science), or unitary (English or maths) (Turner, 2005; Busher & Harris, 1999); and subject distinctiveness (Bennett et al., 2003; Busher & Harris, 1999; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2005). Evidence about subject distinctiveness springs from differences in whether the subject is hard or soft, pure or applied, life or nonlife (Seagren et al., 1993) and depends on the subject’s status within the National Curriculum - whether it requires special facilities; relies on cumulative knowledge; or uses unique methods of teaching (Turner, 2005) - to name but a few.

Still other more immediate considerations affecting SL roles and leadership styles are department status and size in the school as well as department staff configuration (Busher & Harris, 1999; Turner & Bolam, 1998; Turner, 2005): the relative expertise and experience of staff; the ratio of full-time to part-time staff; the teaching commitments of full-time staff in other curriculum areas; and staff who have substantial
whole-school responsibility outside the department. The deployment of resources and resource power the department can lay claims on is also a significant factor (Bush & Harris, 1999; Turner, 2005).

Inevitably, all these variations make the job of each SL contextually different from that experienced by other SLs within the same school or in other schools. In fact, the importance of using ‘best fit’ approaches to suit the context of the work is widely recognized in the literature (Mitchell & Castle, 2005; Moses & Roe, 1990; Ruff & Shoho, 2005; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2000), as is the necessary flexibility of developing and using different styles of leadership at different stages of the department’s development.

Ruff and Shoho’s study (2005) on the instructional leadership of elementary school principals draws attention to these leaders’ mental models “as specific knowledge structures” which, when articulated and uncovered “reveal tacit assumptions that have the potential of expanding or limiting organizational capacity and [affect] efforts for successful student achievement” (p.574). Drawing also on the instructional role of elementary principals, Mitchell and Castle (2005) also argue rather persuasively that contextual factors should also encompass conceptualizations of instructional leadership:

We have come to see that context goes deeper than physical phenomena. It speaks also to the tacit agreements and implicit psychological contracts between principals and other members of the educational community. We hold that attempts to understand and construct instructional leadership are incomplete if they do not include an examination of the belief systems that shape behavior and influence relationships (p. 429).

So just as contextual factors affect the roles of subject leaders, how subject leaders conceptualize their roles as instructional leaders also affects the context in which they work. It is a reciprocal influence. According to the Getzels model (Getzels, 1958), the
SL’s behaviour is a product of the interaction between personal needs and organizational expectations. Thus, whether they are formal or informal, organizational expectations, together with the personal needs or self-expectations of SLs affect his/her leadership style as well.

The belief systems that Mitchell and Castle (2005) refer to are actually part of the culture within which followers and leaders in general operate. Culture is defined as a set of values, ideals, beliefs, norms, basic assumptions, practices, traditions, and rituals that shape how people think, feel and act in schools and that work as a “glue” that holds the community together (Gorton, Alston & Snowden, 2007, p. 150). Hoy and Miskel (2007) also define culture as “the collective manifestation of tacit assumptions”, which are “abstract premises about the nature of human relationships, human nature, truth, reality, and environment” (p. 169). It is here worth underscoring the fact that contextual factors that greatly affect SL style and leadership thus include both organizational culture and departmental sub-culture.

The Role Ambiguity of the Subject Leader Position

According to Brown et al. (2000), the SL’s role ambiguity is common in the USA, in Canada and in the UK. Nevertheless, the dual responsibility of SLs to represent their department to the administration and vice versa is often a source of stress for them. In trying to mediate the concerns of one to the other, they can act as “facilitators, buffers, and intermediaries between the administration and the department thereby bridging two different but related bodies in the high school environment” (Wettersten, 1992, p.1). They filter the administration’s demands making them acceptable and practical to their
departments, and similarly advocate the needs, expectations and interests of their
department to the administration so that these are taken account of in whole school
policies and decisions (Bennett, 1983; Bennett et al., 2003; Wettersten, 1992; Tucker,
1984).

However, this role ambiguity causes divided loyalties, with the administration
regarding the SL as part of their management team, and similarly, with department
members expecting the SL to represent and support them. A telling example of this
conflict is the fact that SLs are expected to be both judge and advocate; as advocates
they uphold and represent the interests of their colleagues; as judge, they are assessing
these colleagues from the perspective of the administration (Moses & Roe, 1990).
Furthermore, some SLs see themselves “as teachers first and administrators second,
whereas others align themselves with administrative policies” (Wettersten, 1992, p. 8)
since, occasionally, the interests of the whole school are perceived to override those of
the department. Being pulled in two different directions often causes a conflict of
interest, and SLs sometimes run the risk of alienating one or the other and sometimes
both categories of stakeholders (Bennett, 1983; Lucas et al., 2000; Moses & Roe, 1990).

Turner (2005) also points out that if SLs prove unable to establish good working
relationships with higher management, they cannot adequately hope to represent their
departments effectively. Similarly, if they fail to build and maintain a healthy culture in
the department, not only will some teachers feel isolated and unsupported, but standards
of teaching and learning may also suffer as a result. Exemplary SLs, according to
Wettersten (1992), can bridge the distance between the administration and the teachers
in their department by trying to understand the needs and values of both groups and by
skillfully interpreting, communicating and facilitating them. When acting thus as a liaison between the two sides, the SL shows political leadership (Turner 2005), a dimension of his/her role which will be further elaborated on in what follows.

Subject Leader Authority and Political Leadership

Although SLs are in a position of authority formally conferred to them, in practice their position power is limited (Bennett et al., 2003; Glover et al., 1999; Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1984, Turner, 2005) - which is why they have to rely more on two other sources of power to carry out their responsibilities. One is their expert power - their subject knowledge and their competence and credibility as teachers (Bennett, 2003; Busher, 2006; Gold, 1998; Lucas, 1994; Turner, 2005). Another very significant source is the SLs' personal power which largely depends on their interpersonal skills. These include skills such as their ability to liaise with both departmental staff and the administration; to be team leaders enhancing social cohesion in their departments; to negotiate and develop trust with others; and when necessary, to build supportive alliances to exert pressure on senior staff to implement their policies and accomplish departmental goals (Bennett et al., 2003; Busher, 2006; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner, 2005).

The ability of SLs to increase their personal power and influence enables them to engage in political leadership, one of a variety of different kinds of leaderships that they can adopt to work in the best interests of their subject (Busher, 2006; Gmelch 2002, Gold, 1998; Moses & Roe, 1990; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2005). Exercising political influence is technically considered to be illegitimate because it is designed to
benefit the individual or group at the expense of the institution (Hoy & Miskel, 2007). However, despite the pejorative connotations of the word “political,” the use of political strategies by ethical SLs to promote the welfare of the department is not only legitimate, but also “eminently respectable” (Moses & Roe, 1990, p. 119). In fact, not only is politics for SLs ‘an inescapable fact of life’ (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 29) or of organizations (Hoy & Miskel, 2007) by virtue of the fact that they are both teachers and administrators, but the very nature of the educational environments in which they operate is such that the political dimension cannot altogether be dismissed. Hierarchical relationships creating problems of differing status between departments and individuals, tensions, conflicts and competition for scarce resources, together with a “heavy dependence on collaboration” and a “lack of ability to coerce” necessitate persuasion and negotiation skills which impel SLs into political activity whether they like it or not (Moses & Roe, 1990, p. 111). For Busher (2006), since micropolitical processes describe all the interactions of people in an organization, “being a successful leader or middle leader is synonymous with being an astute politician” (p.141).

Attributes

Subject leaders need both personal qualities and particular skills to be successful. The educational context, position and authority of SLs as middle leaders in the hierarchy of their institutions, and the multi-level interactions they engage in with their co-workers to carry out their duties dictate first and foremost that successful SLs have effective interpersonal and communication skills. Indeed these two attributes are referred to most in the literature. More specific related characteristics include tact,
diplomacy, persuasive and negotiations skills and especially the ability to motivate colleagues (Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Murray, 1995; Robinson, 1996; Seagren et al., 1993). Information processing skills (Moses & Roe, 1990; Robinson, 1996) are of equal importance, as is the necessity for SLs to be ethical, nurturing figures, sensitive to the needs of all those with whom they interact, to be good listeners and to have team leadership skills (Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Gold, 1998; Lamb, 1993; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Robinson, 1996; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2005).

Successful SLs also need to be more than competent teachers as they need to be credible professional role models in the eyes of members of their departments (Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Busher, 2006; Gold, 1998; Lamb, 1993; Robinson, 1996; Seagren et al., 1993; Stark, Briggs & Rowland-Poplawski, 2000; Turner, 2005). In order for their authority to be accepted, they need to be leaders in their discipline and to provide those they lead with a vision and direction (Moses & Roe, 1990). They need to have good time management and organizational skills (Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner, 2005) and practical know-how (Turner & Bolam, 1998). They need to be problem solvers ((Lamb, 1993; Robinson, 1996); to be able to prioritize among competing demands; and to make decisions in unstructured situations (Moses & Roe, 1990). Other desirable characteristics, such as assertiveness (Robinson, 1996), vigour, tenacity (Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2005), energy (Gold, 1998), and stress management (Lucas, 1994), were also mentioned, and are also important especially as adjuncts to the ability to effect change.

Stress management is, in fact, related to another set of essential SL skills: conflict resolutions skills. According to Bennett (1983), Lucas (1994) and Turner (2005), the
presence of conflict is inevitable and is not necessarily negative if it is well managed. Quoting Fullan (1993) “conflict is essential to any successful change effort” (p. 62), Turner (2005) explains that often, new insights emerge from the tension created by it. Bennett (1983) and Lucas (1994) also argue that creative responses to situations and more comprehensive decisions are sometimes reached as a result of conflict. It is undeniable, however, that conflict among staff can become excessive presenting a real challenge to SLs. Busher and Harris (1999) refer to research proving that dysfunctional relationships affect departmental culture and performance negatively. In such circumstances, Turner (2005) argues that it is more appropriate for SLs to act as transactional leaders, emphasizing negotiation and exchanging compliance with rewards and/or punishments.

Two more attributes already mentioned above contribute to the effectiveness of SLs: skills of introspection - being reflective practitioners with the ability to learn by observing their own and others’ behaviour on the job; and having the self-awareness to assess their own impact (Gold, 1998; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner & Bolam, 1998). Gold (1998) neatly sums up the main characteristic of successful SLs; it is the ability “to combine the practical with the philosophical and to be able to articulate the thinking behind the smallest practical detail” (p. xiv).

Roles

The literature stresses the necessity for SLs to be both managers and leaders. With reference to several primary sources, Gorton et al. (2007) elaborate on the differences between these two terms in the literature. Managers are concerned with maintaining
existing structures and procedures to achieve organizational goals or objectives. Their aim is to administer the school whilst maintaining the status quo, and to successfully handle routine daily jobs without necessarily questioning the validity of these jobs. In contrast, leaders are concerned with initiating and implementing change in established structures and procedures for the purpose of accomplishing and/or improving organizational objectives. Leaders must also have a vision to direct the organization into its future, as well as the ability to articulate this vision in order to inspire their followers to achieve desired ends. The literature stresses that management and leadership are both necessary as well as being complementary. SLs who adopt the role of leaders cannot afford to ignore giving due attention to managing their departments spending all or most of their time initiating new procedures. Equally, their departments will suffer if they devote all their time to maintaining the status quo without initiating improvements (Gorton et al., 2007).

*Vision and strategic planning.*

Although all the SLs in the literature are expected to be both managers and leaders, what seem to be currently giving the edge to effective subject leaders are precisely those roles that are more associated with leading than with just managing. However, “it is not the *position* that determines whether someone is a leader; it is the nature of that individual’s *behavior* while occupying that position” that defines him or her as a leader (Gorton et al., 2007, p. 6).
One leadership role is creating a vision through which they can develop an agenda for the department's current and future plans focusing on curriculum development, improving continuing professional development, and on the efficient and effective use of human and material resources (Bennett et al., 2003; Gmelch, 2002; Gold, 1998; Lucas, 1994; Tucker, 1984; Turner, 2005; Harris et al., 1995). "[Subject leaders] are able to persuade others to share their vision and to join in the task of translating intention into reality" (Seagren et al., 1993. p. 20). In fact, many SLs are attracted to this position of responsibility because of a vision for the subject which they want to put into practice (Lucas, 1994). This vision is translated down to the level of the classroom through a strategy, or the development of mid to long term plans, programmes, goals and policies for the department.

Turner (2005) differentiates between long-term planning from a whole school perspective and "the implementation of strategy at the departmental level" (p. 89), arguing that the latter is more concerned with short term procedures than with long term strategic planning. This is confirmed by Glover et al. (1999) whose study found that the extent to which SLs could contribute to whole school strategic vision depended on the willingness of the senior management team to establish procedures that involved them. Often though, despite the importance accorded to strategic planning by both administrators and SLs, the latter were in practice found to be so preoccupied with routine administration, crisis management (Brown & Rutherford, 1998) and examination results (Turner, 2005) that they had little time for strategic planning (Glover et al., 1999; Moses & Roe, 1990).
Teaching and learning.

Enhancing teaching and learning is universally acknowledged to be at the heart of all SLs' endeavours; indeed advancing excellence in teaching and learning is their raison d'être (Moses & Roe, 1990; Lamb, 1993; Lucas, 1994; Turner, 2005). As both instructional leaders and leading professionals, subject leaders are expected to be subject experts, skilled in using a range of appropriate teaching methods, and up-to-date with the latest developments in their discipline (Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner & Bolam, 1998; Wettersten, 1992).

As standard setters (Stark et al., 2000) or "custodians of academic standards" (Seagren et al., 1993, p. 4), they are responsible for the development, coordination, monitoring, evaluation, and revision of curricula within their academic areas, and for drawing up programmes of work matching student abilities, needs, and interests (Bennett et al., 2003; Harris et al., 1995; Moses & Roe, 1990; Stark et al., 2000; Tucker, 1984; Turner, 2005; Wettersten, 1992). Effective SLs also ensure the consistent application of a common and clear assessment policy recording and reporting on pupil progress (Bennett et al., 2003; Busher, 2006; Harris et al., 1995; Turner, 2005). In addition, effectively led departments have clearly established routines and consistent practices providing structure and ensuring the effective deployment of material and human resources. In fact, Harris et al. (1995) found that the common characteristics of effective departments in secondary schools in the UK are more linked to the effective organisation of teaching than to the inspirational leadership of the SL, or even to the presence of particularly able teachers. Coherence, in the sense of giving priority to
teaching and learning above all other competing agendas; and enabling structures, such as establishing grade-specific meetings to focus teachers' attention on teaching and learning, were also found to be critical and to facilitate instructional leaders' jobs (Mitchell & Castle, 2005).

Effective SLs not only make teaching effectiveness a high priority goal, but they also convey the message that it is a lifelong process (Lucas, 1994; Mitchell & Castle, 2005; Ruff & Shoho, 2005). They promote the professional growth of colleagues by encouraging innovation and risk-taking (Lamb, 1993; Lucas, 1994), by providing them with opportunities to observe each other teaching (Lucas, 1994; Turner, 2005) and to share good practice in faculty and/or departmental discussions (Mitchell & Castle, 2005; Moses & Roe, 1990; Ruff & Shoho, 2005; Turner, 2005; Wettersten, 1992).

*Deployment of staff and resources.*

The effective management of resources which include staff, equipment, materials, space and facilities is another dimension of the role of SLs (Glover et al., 1999; Gmelch, 2002; Gold, 1998; Harris et al., 1995; Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1984; Turner, 2005). Although the efficient and effective organisation and management of resources is one of Ofsted's key six features of the most effective departments (Harris et al., 1995; Turner, 2005), it is not one that is given quite the same value as other aspects of the SLs’ job - except perhaps for the selection of new staff members (Moses & Roe, 1990). This might well reflect the subject leaders’ tacit understanding that they are
always operating from a limited resources perspective and that the maximum they can achieve is the optimum allocation of the resources that are already allotted to them.

The lack of sufficient resources generally is perceived to be a challenge to SLs and is often the source of conflict between the administration and academic departments. Indeed, “competition for resources, more than anything else, is what impels heads into political activity, and is the headship activity where their colleagues most expect them to exercise political skills” (Moses & Roe, p. 127). Thus, beyond being seen to apportion available resources in the department equally and fairly, and apart from trying to capitalise on the strengths of departmental colleagues (Lamb, 1993), the most that SLs can do is be realistic in their bidding for limited resources (Turner, 2005).

Leading and managing staff.

Shaping a clear vision that is translated into teaching and learning goals for the subject necessitates a departmental culture based on shared basic assumptions and ideally also on high levels of trust. A major responsibility of - and a source of power for - SLs to implement their policies is to create social cohesion in their departments by building consensus and promoting team spirit. Most SLs hope to inspire, enthuse and motivate their colleagues (Moses & Roe, 1990). Furthermore, the literature consistently attributes the effectiveness of schools and/or departments to factors such as goal consensus, participative decision-making, collaborative norms, and nurturing professional relationships and climates, qualities ascribed to collegial cultures and transformational leaderships. Transformational leadership is in this context “about
building and sharing a vision of the characteristics of high-quality teaching and learning with the subject teaching staff and how that vision might be realized" (Turner, 2005, p. 16).

There are many common expectations of SLs in their roles as team leaders between senior staff and departmental staff in the literature albeit with varying degrees of emphases. Attitudes and practices that boost staff morale include supporting and motivating subject colleagues to maximise their productivity and performance (Bush, 2006; Lamb, 1993; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner, 2005), and dealing with especially difficult colleagues, mid-career faculty, and poor teachers who represent particularly important challenges to SLs (Lucas, 1994). Turner and Bolam’s (1998) research also underlined the importance of listening to the opinions of departmental colleagues and of valuing their contributions. Advocacy and serving the interests of the subject as well as giving recognition and visibility to deserving staff within the department (Bush, 2006; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Robinson, 1996) are also perceived to be critical, as is creating a positive, collaborative, and purposeful culture which, in addition to the above, means: treating all members equally and fairly; involving colleagues in participative decision-making; and generally fostering personal and professional growth (Bush, 2006; Lamb, 1993; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990, Turner, 2005).

Although, according to Bennett et al. (2003), there is a very strong rhetoric of collegiality to describe departmental culture, this is sometimes more aspired to than real. SLs ultimately need to balance their desire for collegiality in their departments with their line management accountability for the quality of teaching and learning in
their subject. SLs are also expected to mediate senior staff policy to departmental colleagues whose priorities need to be integrated with the priorities and values of the whole school (Bush, 2006; Brown et al., 2000). Another influence which militates against genuine collegiality, specifically in secondary schools in the UK, is that of the Ofsted inspection process which imposes a series of demands to guarantee what it considers to be quality teaching and learning: “This external influence has reinforced hierarchical processes and strengthened imbalances of power between leaders and followers amongst staff at whatever level in a school” (Bush & Harris, 1999, p. 314). Thus, although principles of collegiality are widely paid lip service to, most SLs tend to use a variety of pragmatic approaches, some of which might be classified as coercive transactional strategies whilst others might be deemed to be collegial transformational strategies - where action matches the situation (Glover et al., 1999; Bush, 2006; Lamb, 1993).

Raising educational standards requires that SLs attend to the training needs of all departmental staff, and most do recognise the importance of monitoring and evaluating their colleagues’ work (Bennett, 1983; Bennet et al., 2003; Mitchell & Castle, 2005; Moses & Roe, 1990; Ruff & ShoHo, 2005; Turner, 2005). According to the new Performance Management arrangements in the UK (DfEE, 2000, as cited by Turner, 2005) and Lucas (1994), SLs are now expected to help teachers set individual goals and create improvement plans that are aligned with departmental and school targets. They are also responsible for providing timely, objective and constructive feedback to colleagues; and to provide guidance, coaching and support to help improve their performance.
Evaluations need to be carried out in the right climate (Macdonald, 2006) and require consensus about departmental objectives as well as “some common understanding about professional standards and institutional expectations” (Bennett, 1983, p. 103). Also, the primary function of evaluation is to contribute to the collective learning of all stakeholders and is thus closely connected with improvement (Kelleher, Sommerlad & Stern, 1996). Nevertheless, the literature shows SLs to be very reluctant to assume this role especially when it involves observing their colleagues in the classroom. Observation is perceived to challenge the concept of collegiality (Bennett, 1983) and professional norms of equality and privacy (Bennett et al., 2003). Because it substitutes trust with surveillance (Bennett et al., 2003) thereby threatening professional autonomy, it is therefore felt to compromise professional relationships (Glover et al., 1999). Most studies found that SLs preferred to utilise informal methods such as checking assessment results and student records to indirectly supervise the teaching quality of their colleagues (Bennett et al., 2003) instead of more direct monitoring and observation.

Still, there is general consensus that monitoring standards of teaching in a systematic way and through lesson observation is a very important part of a SL’s role. To render the process less threatening, Turner (2005) and Lucas (1994) suggest encouraging colleagues to observe each other on a regular basis as a means of sharing good practice and to organise departmental meetings around pedagogical issues rather than just “administrivia” (Wettersten, 1992, p. 52), while Macdonald (2006) points out that the emphasis in the evaluation process should be on learning from mistakes rather than on assigning blame or praise.
Most SLs recognise the need to be proactive about the professional development of their colleagues, a natural outcome of the evaluation process (Busher, 2006; Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1984; Turner, 2005); however, it would seem that they see it primarily as providing remedial work for poor performance (Bennett et al., 2003) rather than as part of ongoing personal growth or lifelong learning. Furthermore, as already mentioned above, not only do SLs have a responsibility to be good role models for teaching and learning, but they are also expected to assume responsibility for their own continuing professional development (Turner, 2005). It would seem self-evident that SLs’ performance should be monitored and evaluated in the same way that appraising teachers’ performance is perceived to be important. Professional practitioners, whatever their status or level in the organisational hierarchy should, in theory, be continually evaluating what they do whether for accountability or for development purposes (Macdonald, 2006).

The Evaluation of Subject Leaders

Unfortunately, little research was found on whether SLs were formally evaluated, and if so, how. The formal expectations listed in their job descriptions serve by themselves as evaluative standards (Gross et al., 1958) against which their performance can be compared. Also, Gold (1998), Harris et al. (1995) and Turner and Bolam (1998) report on how the scrutiny of official examination results and the current availability of value-added information – scores which compare students’ performance in national tests at a certain level with their previous levels of achievement - allow the making of
comparisons between the performances of different departments and thus constitute a
means of holding SLs accountable. Nevertheless, Turner and Bolam (1998) warn about
making such judgements conclusive, especially as data needs to be collected over a
minimum of a three year period for such information to be reliable (Turner, 2005).

Turner (2005) reports on developments in the UK in the last decade aimed at
defining the nature of the roles and expertise expected of SLs. A document, the
National Standards for Subject Leaders working in schools in England and Wales was
produced by the Teacher Training Agency (1998) outlining what it considered the main
task areas of SLs to be: (a) providing strategic direction and development of the subject;
(b) managing teaching and learning; (c) leading and managing staff; and (d) efficient
and effective deployment of staff and resources - all aspects of the SLs’ job elaborated
on above.

Beyond a detailed discussion of what these tasks involve, Turner (2005) remarks
that “the best well-managed departments engaged in departmental self-review on a
regular basis” (p.36), which led the researcher to look into what makes departments
effective. This approach seemed appropriate since the first feature of effective
departments gleaned from the Ofsted (2002) school inspections is “the outstanding
leadership provided by the SL [subject leader], which can be inspirational for those
working in the department” (Turner, 2005, p. 25). The assumption here is that the
effectiveness of departments is usually attributed in great part to the success of their
SLs, especially if they have been leading the department for a reasonable period of time.

There is substantial consensus in the literature on the features of effective
departments. These include: a shared vision of what good teaching and learning in the
subject actually means in the classroom (Bennett et al., 2003; Lucas, 1994; Harris et al., 1995; Lucas et al., 2000; Turner, 2005); a central focus on teaching and learning conveying high expectations of pupil and staff performance and using a student-centred approach in the delivery of the curriculum (Bennett et al., 2003; Harris et al., 1995; Lucas et al., 2000; Turner & Bolam, 1998; Turner, 2005); effective monitoring and evaluation of staff performance culminating in whole department discussion of practice as well as appropriate professional development (Bennett et al., 2003; Harris et al., 1995; Turner, 2005); and good resource management which includes the effective organization of teaching in terms of material resources, departmental documentation, assessment, and record-keeping; and in terms of clear routines and practices in lesson structure and delivery (Bennett et al., 2003; Harris et al., 1995; Lucas et al., 2000; Turner, 2005).

The SL in an effective department is a team leader leading change in an ongoing quest for quality, and acting as a role model and facilitator (Lucas, 1994; Lucas et al., 2000; Turner, 2005). He or she should adopt a collegiate style of management which combines trust, integrity and good communications in an enabling culture with participative decision-making whenever commitment is necessary (Lucas et al., 2000). In addition, Harris et al. (1995) comment on the capacity of effective departments to either work with, or neutralize external influences, and on how even if subject leaders worked in broadly supportive schools, their success was largely due to their own efforts.

All these criteria have already been elaborated on in the sections on the attributes and roles of subject leaders. One cannot help wondering though if such a tall order would not be difficult if not impossible for any SL, however dedicated, to accomplish.
Can SLs realistically possess all of these attributes and assume all of these roles? Can they be both effective managers and visionary leaders as the literature seems to be implying they should? Glover et al. (1999) report on how senior staff expected SLs to take a proactive role in driving the school forward but then based their judgements of their effectiveness on criteria largely based on systems maintenance.

Moreover, although most if not all these common characteristics of effective departments can be said to be directly related to the actions and leadership style of the SL, the above-mentioned characteristics of effective departments should not become absolute measures of effective departmental leadership (Bennett et al., 2003) since so much of the SL’s job is a reflection of his/her interaction with his/her own variable context:

Almost two decades of research in school reform has demonstrated that practices with magical effectiveness in one school cannot be unquestioningly applied to another seeking similar results (Ruff & Shoho, 2005)

As for how SLs assessed their own effectiveness, they saw it as depending on their ability to sustain the “leading professional” role and on whether they were successful in motivating, inspiring and supporting staff to ensure effective teaching and learning (Bennett et al., 2003).

Although the literature highlights the leadership qualities of SLs and related aspects such as vision building and vision sharing, more often than not SLs, and middle managers in general, are so preoccupied with routine administration and crisis management, that they have little time for strategic planning (Brown & Rutherford, 1998). This is confirmed by the findings of Moses and Roe’s study (1990) in which
subject leaders admitted to devoting too little time to planning because it fell “into the ‘important but not urgent’ category which tends to be badly neglected” (p.138).

The Challenges and Rewards of the Subject Leader’s Job

Apart from being overwhelmed with the mundane but often urgent administrative demands of their jobs, the most difficult challenges SLs face are primarily related to staff problems: dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance (Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990), staff shortages, conflicts among staff and the difficulty of adequately stimulating them. Having insufficient resources and the lack of time are also both often mentioned in the literature.

Fortunately however, there are rewards which compensate for these challenges though not often it seems are they financial. Still, SLs derive satisfaction from several sources: one is the opportunity to provide curricular direction through influencing the priorities and productivity of the department and improving the quality of the discipline. Another source is personal growth, a sense of achievement in being a team leader and of having the ability to propagate one’s own ideas and values. Another is more altruistic: the ability to nurture the growth of others and to support projects of merit (Bennett et al., 2003; Moses & Roe, 1990). Finally other rewards include the status and prestige of the position itself and interacting with other academic leaders (Tucker, 1994).
Conclusion

In conclusion, the subject leader’s job is multi-dimensional and complex as the above-mentioned variety of tasks and responsibilities facing them shows. Tucker (1984) lists no less than 28 possible roles that chairpersons in universities assume to some degree at one time or another: “teacher, representor, decision-maker, mentor, communicator, problem solver, researcher, evaluator, recommender, leader, motivator, implementer, planner, supervisor, facilitator, manager, coordinator, entrepreneur, advisor-counsellor, anticipator, recruiter, mediator-negotiator, innovator, peer-colleague, delegator, peacemaker, advocate, organizer” (p. 4). Except perhaps for the “entrepreneur” and “recruiter” roles, SLs in secondary schools are - according to much of the literature found - expected to take on most of these roles at different times as the circumstances dictate, so “it is no exaggeration to say that the quality of an institution depends directly on the quality of its department chair” (Murray, 1995, p. 99).
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Research Design

A major concern of qualitative studies is “to capture the thinking of the participants from the participants’ perspective” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 431). As the primary goal of this research is to obtain information about the participants’ perceptions of the attributes and roles of subject leaders, it is mainly qualitative. One of this research assumptions is that there are multiple perspectives. For reasons that will be outlined below, the use mixed methods seemed to be the right choice for this investigation.

The purpose of the study is to uncover “normative patterns” (Burns, 2000, p. 395) in order to understand the pattern of behaviour that SLs engage in, not only within their immediate contexts (their educational organizations), but also within their larger social and political contexts. Thus, the research design that has been adopted is an “instrumental [combined] case study”. It is “instrumental” (Stake, 2005) because by itself, the case plays a secondary role in relation to its capacity to facilitate understanding of SLs in two Lebanese high schools. It is also combined because it focuses on two high schools; technically, it is neither a single nor a multiple case study and the word “combined” seems appropriate. School B was included in this investigation to provide a different perspective, an alternative to the picture the researcher already had of School A, and thus to enrich and enhance the value of its findings.
However, the case study method does focus on “a bounded system” or unit that has the potential to be “either very representative or extremely atypical” (Burns, 2000, p. 460). According to Burns (2000), the unit or entity size can vary from the “individual subject to the ethnographic study”, and as such, it allows researchers to describe the “socio-cultural activities and patterns” of a group of people, providing “a picture” (p. 391) of their context, of their perceptions and of their interactions. The present case study, therefore, examines the profession of SLs in the specified high schools, interprets their activities and contexts, and how these interact.

Schools A and B were selected for the combined instrumental case study because the researcher, being an employee in one of them, thought that they were the most accessible, the ones that she could spend most time in, and consequently “cases” she could learn most from. As Stake (2005) argues, “Potential for learning is a different and sometimes superior criterion to representativeness. Sometimes it is better to learn a lot from an atypical case than a little from a seemingly typical case” (p. 451). Still, the sample schools were neither chosen for being representative, nor for being atypical, but for having the potential to contribute data that will help address the research questions.

As Stake (2005) also notes, “Both researcher and reader bring their conceptual structures to a case” (p. 455). From the two selected high schools’ cases, a picture has been inductively constructed and conclusions drawn about SLs which could possibly, though not conclusively, apply in other similar establishments (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) in Lebanon. Any generalizations from the two cases about the roles of SLs in Lebanese high schools in general are, however, left up to the readers - and more specifically to interested practitioners in similar situations - to make (Burns, 2000). The
case study provides “experiential knowledge” of the work of SLs and an understanding of how the cases are related both to each other, and to other cases by how they are “like and unlike other cases we do know [from the literature], mostly by comparison” (Stake, 2005, p. 454). It is hoped that interested practitioners will, in their turn, “reconstruct the knowledge in ways that leave it differently connected and more likely to be personally useful” (Stake, p. 455).

Sample

A “purposive sample” is appropriate to this study since “it serves the researcher’s purpose and objectives of discovering, and gaining insight and understanding into a particularly chosen phenomenon” (Burns, 2000, p. 465) - the phenomenon being in this case administrators, SLs’ and teachers’ perceptions of the attributes and roles of SLs. Purposive sampling is also appropriate because the case selected is limited in scope (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006) to two private institutions in Lebanon that provide instruction in most subjects in English.

The two institutions were chosen from among those that are commonly known in the country and that are comparable in terms of student numbers, department sizes and curricula offered. They are both located in the Metn area, and both are Anglophone day and boarding co-educational schools. Both contain ostensibly teachers, members of staff, and students from all faiths and beliefs. School A was founded by Quakers in 1873, is currently governed by a board of governors that is ultimately accountable to QuIET (Quaker International Educational Trust), and thus has a Quaker ethos, while
School B is Catholic and belongs to its “mother” institution of the archdiocese of Beirut. Both schools cater to students from KG to Grade 12 and prepare them for the official Lebanese Brevet and Baccalaureate examinations as well as for the American High School Diploma. In addition, School A teaches and examines the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE), while School B offers and examines the International Baccalaureate (IB). Their tuition fees are also comparable and most of their students come from the middle and upper middle classes from the local Metn area. Both also cater to a relatively smaller proportion of international students, a good number of whom are Lebanese students having lived abroad for a number of years, and the rest coming from the Middle East and Gulf areas. The proportion of Lebanese to International students is respectively 60 and 40 percent. Between 900 and 950 students are currently enrolled in each of the two schools.

Participants

The sample of participants consists of three categories:

1) Four administrators: two administrators - hierarchically above the SLs chosen - from each of the schools’ organizations. They are either directly or indirectly (through their influence) involved in the selection, monitoring and evaluation of the SLs in their schools.

2) Eight intermediate/middle and secondary subject leaders: one from each school in each of the following four departments: English, Arabic, maths and science, commonly considered major or core subjects in each institution.
3) All the intermediate/middle and secondary teachers - excluding the researcher - teaching in the four subject departments (English, maths, science, and Arabic) were asked to participate: a total number of 58 (29 in each of Schools A and B) were given the questionnaire, but only 38 (22 from School A and 16 from School B) responded.

The perceptions of all three categories of participants were sought after permission was granted by their respective principals. The first two categories of participants (the administrators and subject leaders themselves) were interviewed in semi-structured but open ended interviews. The teachers, the last category of participants, were asked to complete a two-page questionnaire seeking their perceptions of the attributes and roles of their subject leaders.

The principals of these institutions were contacted and they nominated themselves and one other administrator responsible for selecting, monitoring and evaluating the SLs in their respective institutions for the interviews. It must be noted here that although both were officially given the title of “principal”, the principal in School A was effectively the headmaster of the whole school, whereas the principal in School B was more of a section division, the high school division head. School B was and still is in turmoil - being in the throes of major changes in the way it is administered and staffed - so it was made clear to the researcher that the real person in charge and ultimate decision-maker, a priest, would be inaccessible.

Again, what the researcher refers to as “subject leaders” - a more inclusive, ambitious and modern term to refer to this category of academic middle managers (Lunn & Bishop, 2002) - was differently defined as “heads of department” in School A,
and “coordinators” in School B. Whether the different titles of these participants are indirectly indicative of the scope and/or limits of their roles and responsibilities as perceived by, or expected by their superiors will be later discussed.

Procedures

Burns (2000) contends that triangular techniques are used in the social sciences because the complexity of human behaviour can be more fully captured and better understood when it is studied from different points of view, or when a variety of methods, including sometimes the combination of both qualitative and quantitative methods, are employed. This case study uses mixed methods and seeks multiple perspectives to construct a picture of the attributes and roles of subject leaders in the two Anglophone high schools selected.

Data was collected first through semi-structured interviews with the principals, administrators (Appendix 1), and with the SLs of the two schools (Appendix 2). The “standardized open-ended interview” format (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 457) - in which the wording and order of questions were determined in advance and used with minor variations of language - was adopted for the same category of the sample. The open-ended questions focus on the crucial issues of the study, but also permit greater flexibility of individual expression of differences or emphases to provide a more valid participant response – his/her perception of reality (Burns, 2000). The standardized open-ended interview format is also more likely to increase comparability of responses without constraining the naturalness of each participant’s responses or the specificity of
his or her individual context. Similarly, the open-ended method helps reduce interviewer/researcher effect and bias by ensuring not only that the perspective of the informant is provided, but also that it is communicated in language that is natural to him or her (Burns, 2000).

The interview timings were also open-ended; except for one individual interview which was relatively rushed as a result of the participant being in a hurry, care was taken to ensure that the interviewees had ample time to reflect upon and answer the questions in as much detail as needed or to even digress from the matter at hand. Most of the interviews were conducted after school hours during term time, or during the summer holidays, and spatial arrangements for the interviews included either the private office of the interviewee (in the case of the administrators), or the interviewee or interviewer’s homes, a factor which enhanced rapport between them. Finally, all the interviews were tape recorded and transcribed to preserve the raw data, and to check and recheck responses, if and when the need arose.

The second source of data collection was based on questionnaires for the teachers that the subject leaders supervise or lead (Appendix 3). Teachers’ perceptions and expectations of the ideal attributes of SLs and their roles both within the department, and vis-à-vis the whole school, were also sought “to try to assess the generality of observations made” (Burns, 2000, p. 397). Using a questionnaire for teacher responses is a suitable and expedient method since the teachers constitute the larger category of the sample population. The questionnaire focuses more on teachers’ expectations or perceptions of what should be, rather than on their judgments on what is currently the case with their SLs [the researcher’s emphasis] in Lebanon. The questions target
generic attributes and roles of subject leaders and avoid eliciting detailed responses based on actual individual subject leaders. Of course, the responses may well have sprung from a frame of reference based, in the minds of the teachers at least, on individual SLs, and this cannot be helped; nevertheless, the questionnaire method was intended to generate greater uniformity of responses by virtue of its nature. In addition to seeking information from a greater number of participants, the questionnaire method provides a contrast to the more intensive and more deeply probing interviews, thus creating the potential for a greater balance of responses obtained through the methods adopted and enhancing, in the process, their validity and reliability.

After a few background questions, the questionnaire required respondents to rank a set of 32 attributes and functions/roles in order of priority with 1 being most important, 2: important, and 3: least important (Appendix 3). Items were grouped in the following clusters: A. Strategic direction and development of the subject; B. Promoting effective teaching and learning; C. Leading and managing staff; D. Administrative responsibilities, and E. Personal attributes.

Respondents were then asked to rank the above-mentioned clusters in order of importance with 1 being the most, and 5 being the least important in their perception. This was partly done to check the consistency and reliability of the responses to the set of 32 attributes and functions of SLs. The last question asked respondents to indicate items that would describe what their perception of the nature of the relationship between the SL and the teachers in his/her department should be. This last question was also given to the interviewees (The principals, administrators and SLs) to complete for
triangulation purposes. Lastly, respondents were given the opportunity to comment, elaborate or clarify their responses in an open-ended question.

The questions for both the standardized open-ended interviews and for the questionnaire were derived from a combination of sources. Issues related to the ambiguous roles of SLs were derived from the literature which widely elaborated on the tension created by their middle management role. Closely related questions on the quality of relations between subject leaders and teachers, on the one hand, and between subject leaders and administrators on the other, also address highly important factors impinging on the daily realities of SLs’ work: the culture and norms within which they operate and the extent of decision-making power they possess. Again these are widely reported in the literature.

Questionnaire items were mostly derived from a combination of the following sources: School A’s Job Description for Heads of Departments (see below); Lucas (1994); Moses and Roe (1990), and Turner (2005). Items were grouped in clusters under subheadings partly taken from Turner (2005), for example: Teaching and Learning; and Leading and managing staff; and partly under subheadings inspired by School A’s Job Description for Heads of Department. Again individual items such as leading, supporting, inspiring and motivating staff; and dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance effectively or establishing common values and setting standards for all were derived from Lucas (1994) and Moses and Roe (1990).

The third source of data collection was through document analysis, an examination of a variety of the institutions’ pertinent administrative documents. Content analysis is, according to Fraenkel and Wallen (2006), “a technique that enables researchers to study
human behaviour in an indirect way, through an analysis of ... the usually, but not necessarily, written contents of a communication” (p. 483). This analysis is carried out through systematically arranging and organizing the information (coding) in such a way as to allow “comparisons, contrasts and insights” (Burns, 2000, p. 430) to be made. In fact content analysis was used in analyzing interview data for this study as it was used for scrutinizing the following documents which were made available to the researcher:

School A

1. Job Description for Heads of Departments (J. D. for HoDs)
2. Criteria for the Evaluation of Heads of Departments (Ev. Cri. for HoDs)
3. General Guidelines for Heads of Departments (Gen. G. for HoDs)

School B

1. Teacher’s Evaluation Form (T. Ev. F)
2. Job Description for Subject Coordinators (J.D. for S. Coordinators)

These documents present the “manifest” official expectations of these institutions’ administrations and serve to check their descriptions and perceptions. Through their “latent” content, they also serve to shed light on the specific contexts within which subject leaders operate (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p.488 - 489).

School B is apparently going through accreditation, and is therefore still working on producing such documents as part of the process. Two documents only were, therefore, supplied one of which is more relevant than the other (the Job Description for Subject Coordinators). The difficulty of obtaining such resources in School B was compounded by the recent resignation of the high school principal, one of the researcher’s main interviewees and her only initial contact in the school.
Validity and Reliability

The fact that the study seeks responses from three different categories of participants – principals / administrators, SLs and teachers – whose perspectives and realities are different constitutes one form of triangulation serving to compare as well as to verify the validity and reliability of the inferences drawn from the data.

Validity as “refers to the appropriateness, meaningfulness, correctness, and usefulness of the inferences a researcher makes” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, p. 150), and reliability, which refers to the “dependability, stability, consistency, predictability, accuracy” (Burns, p. 336) of results, need to be ensured. However, a commonly acknowledged major premise of qualitative studies is that generalizability in the positivist sense can never be absolute (Stake, 2005; Burns, 2000; Altheide & Johnson, 1994; Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). As Altheide and Johnson (1994) remark, “All knowledge and claims to knowledge are reflexive of the process, assumptions, locations, history, and context of knowing and the knower. From this point of view, validity… will be quite different for different audiences” (p. 487). Similarly, according to Burns (2000), “Reliability cannot be established in the traditional sense, and external validity with a single case is also unavailable” because the aim of a case study approach is not to generalise; rather, “generalizability is often left up to the reader, who may ask, ‘To what extent can I relate what is in this study to my own situation?’” (Burns, 2000, p. 477). The picture of the attributes and roles of SLs that will emerge from the present study will certainly invite interested practitioners to compare its findings and
interpretations to their own perceptions and assumptions, and to examine its validity in the light of their own experiences.

As for internal validity, it is assessed through “triangulation, peer judgement and re-checking with participants” (p.479). Denzin and Lincoln (1994), however, draw attention to the fact that “Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation” (p. 2) [the researcher’s emphasis]. Furthermore, in qualitative studies, since “objectivity can never be captured” (p. 2), “terms such as credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability replace the usual positivist criteria of internal and external validity, reliability and objectivity” (p. 14). Inferences drawn from qualitative studies thus need to be credible or plausible; they need to be transferable, dependable and confirmable in the sense that results and interpretations can be checked under the same conditions or in similar contexts.

Triangulation as “a process of using multiple perceptions to clarify meaning, verifying the repeatability of an observation or interpretation” (Stake, 2005, p. 454) and as a means of checking out the consistency of findings has been employed to ensure that any inferences made are both as “reliable” and “valid” as possible. As outlined above, this was implemented through using both multiple methods (interview, questionnaire and document analysis) and multiple perspectives (SLs, administrators, and teachers). Additionally, the same questionnaire was administered to all the teachers within each of the four departments (English, maths, science, and Arabic) and the same semi-structured open-ended interview protocols were used for each of the other two categories (SLs and administrators) in each of the two schools.
Although all data collection and their interpretations were carried out by the researcher, consistent patterns from a variety of perspectives were sought to limit, if not to eradicate researcher bias. Technically, the researcher is currently a teacher in one of the major departments in School A, and was previously a head of department herself in the same school. Despite being part of the setting, context and culture she is trying to understand and describe, she acknowledges the need to take account of her own biases by attempting to remain as critical as possible. Audio taping interviews, reporting explicitly steps and procedures taken, documenting sources and bases for inferences, being “ever-reflective” (Stake, 2005) are all measures which were utilised to reduce subjectivity and to enhance the validity and reliability of the inferences drawn from the data collected (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, pp. 462-463).

Another method used to limit researcher bias is the attempt to uncover in both researcher and participants, and whenever possible, what Altheide and Johnson (1994) call “tacit knowledge,” or “what actors know, take for granted, and leave unexplained in specific situations, things that may have been ‘learned’ in some formal or semi-formal sense at some earlier time, both substantively and procedurally” (p. 492). An attempt was made to uncover underlying assumptions by what was left unsaid during interviews and by observing gestures, expressions, and the general demeanour of participants. Similarly, attention was paid to what was unwritten or left out in the case of the documents. Thus, through the maintenance of this critical stance, the researcher was able to maximise the validity as well as reliability of the findings and of their interpretations.
Ethics

It goes without saying that the participants were treated with the utmost respect and integrity. None were coerced into participation. As mentioned previously, the research is more concerned with effective SL practices in the two Lebanese high schools than with the SLs themselves. Care was taken not only to ensure confidentiality of all the participants’ responses, but also to guarantee that they were neither “physically nor psychologically harmed” (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006, pp. 441-442).

Data Analysis

The interviews of all eight subject leaders (one from each of the two schools in each of the following four departments: English, Arabic, maths and science) and all four administrators (two principals and two academic administrators) were audio-taped and transcribed. The responses of each category of participants to each question or issue were later combined for comparison and contrast within each category: all the administrators’ responses in both schools were compared to each other, as indeed happened with all the subject leaders together. This was done by systematically organising and arranging the information in a manner that would help generate meaningful insights (Burns, 2000) – first, by comparing responses to the themes and issues that emerged from the interviews between participants from the same category (the two principals and then the two administrators), and then by combining and comparing these responses to the same themes and issues between the different
categories of participants (the principals and administrators' responses to those of the subject leaders).

Only 38 (66%) out of a total of 58 teachers responded to the survey questionnaire (22 teachers from School A and 16 from School B), but this is an acceptable rate according to Burns (2000). The same method of comparing all the teachers' responses to each other first was applied in compiling the results of the questionnaire. The results are presented in Table 1 (Appendix 4) which was constructed by tallying the scores given by every teacher to every category/question/item. 3 points were given to items marked 1: most important; 2 points to items marked 2: important; and 1 point to items marked 3: least important. These were added up using Microsoft Office Excel 2003 and subsequently ranked according to their relative importance/scores in descending order. Relevant items were selected and then compared to corresponding themes generated for the other categories of participants (the principals/ administrators and subject leaders) where applicable.

Where the different categories of participants had to rank attributes, skills, or functions and roles in order of importance, the results were computed and tabulated also mostly using Microsoft Office Excel 2003, and were then classified according to their relative importance from the perspectives of the participants. All the categories of participants, for example, were asked to tick from a list of adjectives, items that would describe their perceptions of the nature of the relationship between the head of department and the teachers in his/her department ought to be (see Appendix 1 item 17; Appendix 2, item 9; and Appendix 3, item 8). The frequency of ticks was computed for each category of participants first, then these were ranked in order of importance; and
then the order of importance accorded to each item was compared across the categories to determine the priorities of each of the categories (See Tables 2 and 3 in Appendix 4).

The content analysis of the five documents listed above provided another source to identify themes and to compare perspectives. Being officially issued by the administrations of the schools and used to formally clarify roles and procedures, they mostly supplied another dimension to the institutions' administrative structures and contexts, and were used to check out "formal" expectations against perceptions held by the administrators and the subject leaders.

The next stage involved synthesizing and comparing the responses of each category of participants to a particular question with the other two categories in order to highlight similar or different perceptions and perspectives to the same issue. This was also done systematically with the aid of the computer by juxtaposing the different responses together. Again where relevant, these were compared to the codes and themes analyzed in the documents provided by each school. Major themes or issues emerged as a result of combining the data in this manner, and these formed the basis of the findings, their interpretations and the inferences drawn from them in the following chapter.
CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATIONS

Introduction

The results and interpretations that are detailed in this chapter are based on all the data that address the research questions. The sources of data include the interviews conducted with the subject leaders of the four major departments (Arabic, English, maths, and science) in each of the two schools and their administrators (the principals and academic administrators); a questionnaire completed by the teachers in the selected departments; and a content analysis based on documents provided by the two schools. The research questions are:

1) How are subject leaders selected, what preparation / training for their role, and continuing professional development options are available to them?

2) What are the expectations held in relation to their attributes and responsibilities, be they general or specific?

3) How are subject leaders held accountable, and what form does the evaluation of their performance take?

After an introduction that will present the participants’ profile and the nature of the documents analyzed, the findings will be presented in a structure that will roughly follow the order of the research questions.
Participants’ profile

*The Subject Leaders*

Most of the following information was gleaned from the interviews conducted with the SLs and administrators of the two schools. This was supplemented with knowledge only on School A acquired by the researcher as a result of working there for the last nine years.

Eight intermediate/middle and secondary SLs participated in the study: one from each school in each of the English, Arabic, maths and science departments. SLs in School A are called “Heads of Department,” and they are theoretically responsible for overseeing the teaching and learning of their discipline from KG to Grade 12. In practice, however, although they meet with the “coordinators” of their subjects in the lower school (Grades 1 – 6) at regular intervals, they are mainly responsible for the oversight of their subjects in the upper school (Grades 7 to 12). Because of their positions, their seniority, and the higher level classes they teach, the title “Head of Department” in School A thus tends to carry with it greater prestige than the title of “coordinator.” Although the coordinators in the lower school are by no means necessarily less knowledgeable or less experienced than their counterparts in the upper school, they are in School A assumed to have less responsibility than the heads of departments.

All SLs in School B are given the title of “coordinators,” primarily, according to the Academic Dean, because it is a direct translation from the French “coordinateur.”
Apart from the maths coordinator, who seems to have a greater load in the range of grade level responsibility (Grades 4 to 12), the coordinators in School B have more restricted roles and responsibilities covering a narrower range of grade levels: the science coordinator is responsible for grades 4 to 8; the English coordinator is responsible for grades 9 to 12; and the Arabic coordinator is apparently responsible for the infants, Grades 1, 8 and 9 only. As might be expected, the size of each subject leader’s department varies; some supervise as few as four teachers and others as many as 13 in one school, or 17 in two different schools since they teach and/or manage a department in other schools as well.

The Administrators

Four administrators: two administrators - hierarchically above the subject leaders - were chosen from each of the schools’ organizations. They are either directly or indirectly (through their influence) involved in the selection, monitoring and evaluation of the SLs in their schools. As mentioned previously, the principal in School A is the headmaster in charge of leading the whole school, whereas the principal interviewed in School B was in charge of managing only the high school section, Grades 9 to 12. The first is a maths PhD graduate and has 24 years’ experience as an administrator, 7 of which are in School A. The second qualified as an industrial engineer, was at the time of the interview in the process of pursuing an MA in Education, and had 12 years’ experience as an administrator. The discrepancy in qualifications, experience as well as in position and scope of responsibility means that they are not of quite the same
category, the principal in School B being practically more of a middle manager than the top person in charge in School A.

The principal in School A appointed about 11 SLs (upper school heads of department and lower school coordinators), not to mention other academic (the director of studies) and non academic middle managers (heads of sections) in the school during his 7 years of principalhood. He has the final word in appointment decisions. In contrast, the principal in School B interviewed and recommended 6 coordinators who, after a second interview, were subsequently appointed by “higher management”.

The next administrators in line - in academic/curricular affairs in the school hierarchy - are the Director of Studies (hereafter referred to as DoS) in School A and the Academic Dean (hereafter referred to as AD) in School B who are more comparable than the above two principals in terms of qualifications, experience, responsibility and influence. Both are MA graduates and both were SLs themselves before being promoted to their current positions which they have occupied for the last three years. Both had contributed to the appointment of three SLs - though how influential their input was on these appointments is not clear. They had not disagreed with the decisions, but these “were taken anyway” (DoS in School A).

The Teachers

A total of 38 teachers from both schools (12 male and 26 female) whose ages varied between 23 and 60 answered the survey part of this research. Only eight out of the 38 are in their twenties, which reveals this teaching population to be more mature than
might perhaps be expected in other institutions. All are or have taught what would be considered major subjects to intermediate and secondary classes. Nine of the 38 have less than seven years’ teaching experience whilst eight have 25 or more years of experience, so it is a fairly diverse but more or less balanced group.

Analysis of Documents

The three documents provided by School A have substantially more information and detail regarding official expectations of SLs than the two provided by School B. The differences were considered meaningful and indicative of the two different administrations’ perceptions of the roles of subject leaders. Attempting to combine findings from both sets of documents - and lumping them together without acknowledging the differences between them - to triangulate with other data collection methods would therefore be misleading. This explains why the researcher felt it appropriate to compare the two sets of documents provided with each other first, before triangulating with the other methods of data collection employed. The same method of comparing all the perceptions of the participants in each category to each other first, before comparing them to those of the other categories of participants was also adopted as will be shown below.

A comparison between one set of documents and the other shows School A to be more clearly structured and established than School B - not a surprising phenomenon given that it is older than School B. In School B, the two documents provided were shown to the researcher, and as they had been newly revised and had not, as yet, been
given to any existing or recently appointed subject leaders, the researcher was permitted
to take notes on their contents only on the premises. Again this may have been partly
due to the fact that the school is preparing for accreditation from the USA.

School A has a more thoroughly detailed but also possibly more prescriptive Job
Description document for Heads of Departments dating from 2004. In addition to this, a
list of Criteria for the Evaluation of Heads of Departments was compiled and shown to
the SLs at the beginning of the 2006-2007 academic year. This list had been started by
previous administrators and refined by the current DoS. However, as confirmed by both
the administrators and the SLs of School A, it has so far not been formally used since no
official evaluation actually took place as planned by the end of that same year. The SLs
in school A, however, expect to be held accountable for their performance against these
evaluation criteria since, according to the DoS, she shared and discussed these with
them all, and indeed the interview data collected by the researcher confirm this
assumption.

When asked if a document outlining evaluation criteria existed in School B, the
academic dean (AD) implied that it was too early to introduce the idea to the
coordinators at this stage, and that they would not be receptive to the idea of being
evaluated. The researcher was left wondering if the process of accreditation that the
school was supposedly going through would not eventually demand that all staff
members be evaluated for their performance in their respective fields.

Nevertheless, a comparison between the J. D. for S. Coordinators in School B and
the J. D. for HoDs, together with the Ev. Cri. for HoDs in School A, reveals common
expectations as well as some differences which will be presented in the findings below.
Findings

*The Documents: Formal Expectations*

*Common attributes and roles of subject leaders.*

According to these documents, SLs need to have good communication skills: generally, the ability to express themselves clearly and “persuasively,” and more specifically, the ability to set “clear expectations and performance standards to staff members,” the ability to “share knowledge and information,” and the ability to “negotiate and solve issues.” At all times they are expected to interact with others in a positive, “professional and courteous manner” (Ev. Cri. for HoDs in School A), and to maintain good links and cooperate with other departments as and when necessary (J. D. for HoDs, School A; J. D. for S. Coordinators in School B).

SLs are also expected to maintain an overview of the programmes of study by monitoring and evaluating “the continuity and delivery of the syllabus” (Ev. Cri. for HoDs, School A). Naturally, they are expected to support all their subject teachers (old and new) in the delivery of these syllabi to ensure high academic standards, as they are also responsible for checking and approving all examinations and everything related to them (e.g. setting clear guidelines for examinations, and for all forms of assessment).

In all three documents too (J. D. for S. Coordinators in School B; J. D. for HoDs; and the Ev. Cri. for HoDs in School A), SLs are expected to maintain close links with their direct line managers (the DoS in School A and AD in School B), and with the
Principal (both schools): they regularly communicate with them, and report on
departmental progress and issues such as staff performance and their professional
development needs, programme implementation and evaluation, and special activities.
In both schools they are expected to be committed to the school’s vision and to work
closely with their line managers to continuously improve the quality of teaching and
learning. Finally, in both they are expected to perform other duties as requested by the
school management.

*Differences in expectations between the two schools and their implications.*

There are also a number of expectations that seem to be held in one school but not
in the other. SLs in School A, for example, have these responsibilities:

- being a member of the Curriculum Committee
- interviewing new students and assisting with student admission placement
- assisting in reviewing staff applications and interviewing candidates
- being responsible for the departmental inventory and proposing and managing
  an annual budget for the department in co-operation with the Bursar (the person
  in charge of managing the financial affairs of the school).

Thus it would seem that SLs in School A have extra responsibilities that are not
conferred to SLs in School B.

A third document entitled “General Guidelines for Heads of Departments,” (Gen. G.
for HoDs) recently devised and written by the DoS in School A (Sept 2, 2007) sheds
further light on this seeming disparity of status. The purpose of these guidelines is to
elaborate on the “unofficial expectations of the HoDs’ professional performance that are
not clearly spelled out in the job description.” The document contains a comprehensive
list of the skills “outstanding Heads of Departments have possessed.” A number of items reveal higher expectations of SLs, and indeed, seem to encourage them to become better leaders, not just good managers. Examples of leadership functions, expectations, and skills from this document include the following:

- Set a vision for the department in tune with the mission of the school and supplement [this] vision with clear strategic planning and steps and timeline for implementation.
- Differentiate between departmental decisions which should be arrived at democratically and decisions to be taken by Head alone. Make it clear to staff which decisions are to be made as a department, which by the Head alone but after consulting the department, and which decisions were taken by the Curriculum Committee.
- Propose innovation in teaching methodology to administration to keep the school at the cutting edge of developments in the subject
- Look for gaps and repetitions in curricular issues and curriculum mapping, and propose changes
- Prepare departmental handbooks which specify all policies and guidelines that new members of department will need to understand the functioning of the department, the curriculum, and the assessment policy. The handbook will clearly state the department’s mission, its general philosophy, and its goals.
- Act as role model for staff in the department, as exemplary teachers in terms of knowledge of their subject, adoption of new teaching methodology, classroom management, fairness in dealing with students, attention to diverse student needs, and application of the curriculum in a timely manner. HoDs also present a positive image of the school and administration to students and their parents.
- Initiate in-school but out-of-class events and/or seminars, presentations, clubs, and plays, etc. as well as off-campus events/activities.

Indeed, verbs such as “initiate,” “propose,” “set,” “differentiate,” and nouns such as “vision,” “mission,” “goals,” “innovation,” “rationale,” and “role model” all testify at least to this particular administrator’s perception (the DoS in School A) that SLs should be more proactive and forward looking than is expected of them by either the current SLs’ job description or the criteria against which their performance is evaluated.

Nevertheless, nowhere are the terms “lead”, “leader” or “leadership” actually
mentioned; what would be categorized as leadership qualities in the literature seems rather, to be subsumed in this document from School A under headings entitled “Managerial,” “Academic” or “Departmental and Staff Management”. Furthermore, the extent to which these “leadership” expectations are realistic or achievable in the context of the schools and of their wider community is debatable. Interestingly, this document was given only to the recently appointed English SL in School A.

*The Selection, Training and Professional Development of Subject Leaders*

*The procedures for selecting subject leaders.*

Procedures for selecting SLs are similar to those applying to other staff members in both schools, and follow the same pattern within each school. These procedures, according to the administrators’ interview feedback, are not set out formally in written policies, but are part of the norms that are particular to each of the schools: “There are procedures, but we don’t always comply with them; we don’t always go by the book… There are times when we make quick decisions and when we feel they’re right” (DoS, School A).

Unlike School B where potential candidates are first interviewed only by the principal, in School A, an interview panel consisting of the Administrative Officer, of the DoS, and of the relevant Heads of Section, usually interview candidates. The Principal is sometimes present during these interviews and if so, gives his first impressions. At other times the Principal relies on the panel recommendations. If the
candidate is successful, a second interview is arranged with only the Principal after which time he makes the final decision to accept or reject the candidate.

When it comes to appointing a subject leader, both institutions prefer to promote a deserving member of staff to fill the vacant post – someone who is already familiar with the school’s special requirements, who has already been observed in action formally and informally, and who has demonstrated leadership qualities and/or skills. When such a person does not happen to exist in the department, the school then attempts to employ someone from outside.

However, the administration in School B is, in principle, reluctant to employ outsiders for the position of subject leader unless they are recommended by reliable and trustworthy individuals or institutions: “We don’t advertise. Usually a university professor or department recommends these people to us. Not having to wade through piles of applications and telephone calls saves us a lot of time” (Principal in School B). The J. D. for S. Coordinators confirms the preference to appoint SLs from within the school as “knowledge of school policies and operations of administrative unit” is listed as one of the “Needed Attributes”.

The administration in School A uses a more open and pragmatic approach in selecting an outsider as a SL if none is found within the institution. School A does advertise for teacher and SL positions, and the Administrative Officer (Human Resource Officer) does wade through piles of applications all year long.
The criteria for selecting subject leaders.

The administrators in both schools agreed about the most important factors to be considered in the selection of subject leaders. All four rated qualifications and personality traits as being the highest of priorities followed grudgingly by seniority, all other things being equal:

Seniority is more significant when you have a department that is shaky, where the teachers do not trust each other and do things the way they want to. In this case, hiring an experienced person who has a good reputation and who would be an authority and reference in the field is a good method (Principal in School B).

Seniority, however, can be a hindrance to the department as the following quote from the Principal in School A shows:

Sometimes you purposely bring someone from outside if the previous head who, no matter how popular he/she is, cannot keep up with the demands of change or curricula. Our previous SST Head, for example, was a highly respected HoD, but when we adopted an international programme demanding knowledge and expertise beyond his scope, he found it difficult to keep up or to drive his department to embrace the changes. So when it was time for him to retire, we had to hire an outsider to fill the post. One needs to be mindful of the special requirements of one’s school.

When asked about the specific criteria that motivated them to appoint existing SLs in their schools, the administrators of both schools also agreed on the following:

1. Qualifications: subject expertise; being at the cutting edge of developments in their own discipline and pedagogical knowledge.

2. Experience: their previous work backgrounds and track records as successful teachers.

3. Personal attributes and skills: the ability to interact professionally and positively with others and to tailor the manner of such interaction to diverse individuals in
order to bring out the best in them. This is also related to what one principal also considered important in the selection of subject leaders: “political influence” - or more specifically in this context - the ability to inspire and persuade:

You need managers who are capable of getting people in their departments to respond to their ideas. The world is full of examples of good people with well-intentioned excellent ideas, but who nevertheless were unable to bring about any changes because others did not respond to them... In the current culture, people will resist to do extra work unless you bring someone who has the political savvy to bring them on board (Principal in School A)

SLs were also selected as a result of proven or potential ability to manage - i.e. being purpose-driven individuals with the ability to follow up teachers, curricula, students, in order to accomplish desired departmental, institutional as well as teaching and learning goals.

The interviews of the SLs revealed that seven of all eight SLs have at least a first degree (BA, BS, or equivalent) in a subject directly related to the discipline they teach. Only the English SL in School A has a BA in Law and Economics, a degree not strictly relevant to the subject she is in charge of; however, this is compensated for with an English teaching diploma from the UK and with 33 years of teaching experience. Again, slightly more than half have, or are pursuing a Master’s degree, not primarily because it is required or encouraged by their schools – though this may well be the case - but because of personal ambition, the current competitive global market and of the generally held expectation that one must engage in ongoing professional development to enhance one’s performance and future career prospects.

All eight SLs have extensive teaching experience ranging between 11 and 36 years. Experience as SL varies between 4 and 34 years with the maths SLs (in both schools) taking the lead, followed by the Arabic SLs, and then the science SLs. When
interviewed, the English SL in School A, who had previously been holding the same position in School B for four years, had only been in School A for three months. The English SL who replaced her in School B had been a teacher in the same department and had therefore only just been appointed to her position. When interviewed, she had only had about one month’s experience as a SL.

*Training and professional development of subject leaders.*

All SLs had learned on the job - through observing other SLs in action, informal apprenticeships, sheer trial and error, or a combination of all these. Only two of the eight SLs attended brief workshops specifically on leadership and/or school management. The administrators in both schools acknowledged that most of their SLs had learned the ropes of their jobs without the assistance of special training in leadership or in how to manage a department. It was thus tacitly assumed that newly appointed SLs would largely rely on their intuition and the observation they had accumulated working as teachers under other SLs. This sink or swim approach is common in both schools, if not in most of Lebanon.

Continuing professional development is provided in the same way for SLs as it is for teachers in both schools. The teachers’ professional development is also part of the SLs’ responsibilities in both schools. However, the professional development provision for both teachers and SLs is rather unstructured and haphazard since it relies mostly on externally run workshops, and these may not necessarily target the needs of all teachers
or SLs at any given time. Also, it is usually initiated by the administration since the information and flyers on workshop offers are usually addressed to them.

Nevertheless, both teachers and SLs are in theory always urged and expected to seek to improve their practice, and some SLs allot some departmental meetings to discuss innovations in subject specific content or in pedagogical methods and strategies. Others attend some workshops with their teachers to set an example, and to convey the message that they too are ambitious to grow professionally "like them". But whereas SLs are expected to recommend particular workshops or courses tailored as far as possible to teachers' perceived individual needs, SLs tend to agree with their administrators assumptions that it is up to them to take responsibility for their own professional development as they see fit: "ideally, if they are reflective practitioners, the onus is on the HoDs themselves to suggest and take the initiative to provide for their own professional development" (Principal in School A). All are aware of the need to constantly update themselves in their disciplines/fields in order to maintain their expertise.

This expectation that SLs attend to their own development needs is not stated explicitly in any of the documents provided by the two schools except for the implications of the following: that subject leader keep abreast of the latest developments in their subjects (J.D. of HoDs, School A); that they act as role models for the members of their departments (Gen. G. for HoDs, School A); and that they help in developing their teachers’ skills according to their individual needs (Gen. G. for HoDs, School A; and J. D. of S. Coordinator, School B).
What SLs did individually to improve their leadership skills varied. All mentioned that they tried to be ever reflective, evaluating their performance and self-consciously learning from their experiences as they went about their daily responsibilities. Some attended more or less intensive workshops on leadership and school management (2 out of 8). Others were pursuing or had completed postgraduate degrees/diplomas in an attempt to upgrade their skills and qualifications (4 out of 8). Others still, simply read a lot, or used the Internet to research and update their knowledge. In addition, working in “international” schools demands that SLs be knowledgeable beyond the limited confines of the Lebanese Curriculum requirements. The International Baccalaureate (School B) or the International General Certificate of Secondary Education (School A) programmes also provide an opportunity for SLs in the two schools not only to broaden their perspectives but also to become experts in international programmes.

Thus the documents provided by the two schools corroborate both the administrators’ and the SLs’ perceptions. If SLs are to preserve their credibility as leaders in the eyes of their superiors and colleagues, they need to maintain their expertise and professionalism through ongoing professional development.

The Roles and Attributes of Subject Leaders

The subject leaders’ perceptions.

The tasks and roles that SLs perform as described in the interviews with the SLs themselves can be divided into three major common categories.
The first category includes curriculum related activities: developing, implementing, evaluating and revising programmes of study that incorporate clear goals and objectives; that match the needs of all students; and that promote their ability to cope with the demands of society. Tasks include planning, teaching and learning strategies, assessment, managing appropriate departmental resources and integrating technology.

The second category revolves around creating and maintaining a productive, collaborative, and professional department culture. Responsibilities emphasized include: supporting teachers in the delivery of programmes to students; acting as liaison/conduit between teachers and the administration (mediating and implementing whole school policies at the departmental level and representing teachers to the administration); involving teachers in decision-making related to departmental matters and in the formulation of departmental policies, guidelines, and procedures; and encouraging collaboration among individual members, enhancing team spirit and managing conflicts.

The third category entails working on improving standards of teaching and learning which involves following up on and appraising teachers’ performance and making recommendations to meet staff training needs as well as mentoring and training new teachers.

This description of the tasks SLs engage in periodically or on a daily basis is consistent with the formal expectations listed and elaborated on in greater detail in both schools’ job descriptions. These, in turn, also reflect the expectations held by the SLs’ respective administrations, which are expounded on and stated even more explicitly in the General Guidelines for Heads of Departments from School A.
To perform their responsibilities effectively, SLs need certain skills and special attributes some of which are essential and generic, whilst others are context dependent and/or are desirable in particular departments because of the nature of the subject.

The perceptions of the SLs in both schools on what generic characteristics are needed to do their jobs effectively have shown the importance attached to the following qualities and skills:

1. Interpersonal / Social / Communication Skills:
   - being diplomatic: knowing how to interact with others
   - patience, adaptability / flexibility
   - being firm but not too dogmatic
   - having democratic values and behaving accordingly: showing respect for others; valuing others’ opinions; encouraging others and being supportive
   - ability to listen, to share, to persuade and inspire
   - ability to manage / resolve conflicts

2. Integrity: being trustworthy, even-handed, credible, reliable and sincere

3. Being a leader:
   - a good decision-maker
   - a problem solver
   - a good teacher and role model with expert subject and pedagogical knowledge
   - seeking continuous personal and professional growth

4. Being a manager:
   - good time management and organizational skills: knowing what to do and when
- ability to follow up matters
- promoting collaboration and teamwork in their departments

*The administrators’ perceptions.*

The perceptions of the administrators are, on the whole, very consistent with the SLs’ perceptions. Other attributes and skills not specifically mentioned by SLs include traits such as (1) having a vision and the ability to inspire and motivate others to bring them on board; (2) striving for excellence and the ability to model what they expect of others; (3) the ability to rise to challenges and to manage conflicts and disagreements through negotiation, problem solving and without excessive reliance on the administration; in addition to (4) self-accountability and commitment to the school.

The Job Description of the Subject Coordinator in School B lists SL attributes as:

- Good communication skills
- Experienced and dependable
- Knowledge of school policies and operations of administrative unit
- Respected and respectful
- Cooperative; a team player

The last attribute is telling in the sense that a SL is not considered a team “leader” but a team “player” [the researcher’s emphases] from this school’s administration point of view.

In an attempt to assess whether the above-mentioned ideal qualities of SLs existed in the schools’ actual settings/contexts, the four administrators were asked who in their schools they currently considered to be their top SLs. The administrators of both schools reiterated more or less the same generic attributes to describe their top SLs. In
short, some SLs have improved their own department and the quality of education provided by their subject. However, two of the four administrators admitted that these characteristics did not necessarily all exist in one SL; “not all have the same package for a variety of reasons” (Principal in School A). Some have relatively small departments and therefore their impact is not felt as much as SLs heading larger departments. Others did not devote as much of their time to the job as others because of different circumstances. The AD in School B’s “ideal coordinator does not currently exist” because of several factors:

To me a coordinator is someone ...who is confident about making the integration between two subjects possible, someone who is so knowledgeable about his subject and about other subject matters that he/she can sell his/her subject to others and be very convincing in this. It is not only because they are too loaded that most coordinators cannot do this, it is also because of their specialized training or formation which has not prepared them to broaden their perspective. This is also what contributes to the lack of integration between different subjects..... They need more time to work on this, to meet regularly as a think tank and discuss educational issues and what is common to all their subjects... It will make the institution more coherent academically to the students at least. They will not be taught simultaneously one thing and its opposite in two subject matters because they’re perceived in different ways. That would be the purpose of the think tank, to think out loud, brainstorming, but this takes a long time and the right team of people...

In an attempt to judge the relative importance accorded to the various SL responsibilities and roles, both the SLs and their administrators were also asked to rank these in order of priority. The results are presented in Table 2 (Appendix 4).

Leading, supporting, inspiring, and motivating staff was perceived to be the most important role of a subject leader by both the SLs themselves and their administrators. The two categories of participants also agree on the least important role, managing school resources such as budget and other materials. The difference in the ranking of
the other roles is, however, interesting and indicative of the differing priorities of the two categories.

The greater importance attached by subject leaders to *maintaining positive and collegial staff relations*, and to *being a good listener* - ranked second and third respectively - shows the SLs' awareness of the crucial importance to be attuned to needs of both their teachers and their administrators and to have good relations with both, as is attested by the importance (also ranked third) attached to *working on accomplishing institutional goals*. *Fostering good teaching and learning* was ranked fourth followed by *monitoring student progress*.

The administrators, on the other hand, perceived *fostering good teaching and learning* and *working on accomplishing institutional goals* (both ranked second) as being more important than *maintaining positive and collegial staff relations* (ranked third), or *being a good listener* (ranked fourth), and this is consistent with the fact that all four administrators believe that subject leaders should be assertive and firm when necessary; therefore, maintaining positive and collegial relations may not always be a realistic expectation.

As for *monitoring student progress*, it was ranked third by the administrators who see it as inextricably tied up with *fostering good teaching and learning*; and fifth by the subject leaders who, in contrast, see it as more of a shared responsibility with other administrators: unlike SLs, the Head of Section (School A) or the Division Head (School B) and, indeed the DoS (School A) and AD (School B) have the advantage of having an overview of the students' overall achievement performance in all subjects.
The teachers' perceptions.

The questionnaire teachers were asked to complete required them to rank a set of 32 attributes and functions/roles in order of priority, with 1 being most important, 2: important, and 3: least important. Table 1 (Appendix 4) presents the findings. It was constructed by tallying the scores given by every teacher to every category (3 points to items marked 1: most important; 2 to items marked 2: important; and 1 to items marked 3: least important), and then by ranking these according to their relative importance/scores using Microsoft Excel. The importance ranking of functions and attributes decreases in descending order with some functions rating the same.

It is interesting to note that the following managerial and interpersonal and communication skills ranked among the top five items, confirming the importance given to these attributes/skills by both the SLs and the administrators:

1. Having a clear sense of what needs to be done, how and when.
2. Being an exemplary teacher, consistent, and self-accountable.
4. Having good organizational and time management skills.
5. Maintaining good communications and collegial relations within the department and among the wider school community.

Equally conspicuous is the very low importance accorded to budget and resource functions, ranked last:

21. Proposing and managing an annual budget for the department.
22. Taking responsibility for the departmental inventory.

The discrepancy between the 19th function - reducing, resolving and preventing conflict among staff members; and the 20th - submitting progress reports on staff and programme to administration, representing a sudden drop of 16 points, demonstrates the teachers' disapproval of this evaluative role of SL. It is clearly perceived to be at odds
with their supportive role as departmental advocate (rated 12th). Proposing and managing an annual budget for the department (ranked 21st) is perceived to be even less important.

The low significance attached to managing school resources, financial or material, is also paralleled in the perceptions of both the SLs and their administrators. The above mentioned two items (numbers 21 and 22 in Table 1) are mentioned in the J. D. of HoDs in School A as being administrative responsibilities, but they are the last two items mentioned in the document. In contrast, the J. D. of S. Coordinators in School B mentions resources under the heading “Minimum office equipment facilities” only in terms of what facilities SLs can rely on having, not in the sense of managing a budget or taking responsibility for an inventory. According to this document, SLs are only entitled to “regular equipment provided in classrooms, labs, theatre and teachers’ lounge”... No such subheading or clause is mentioned in any of the documents for School A.

A comparison of the relative importance accorded to the various SL responsibilities and roles from the two tables 1 and 2 for triangulation purposes places fostering good teaching and learning (as shown by items E31, A4, and C14, respectively taking 2nd, 3rd, and 4th place in Table 1) first in priority ranking from the teachers’ perspective; followed by maintaining positive and collegial staff relations (item C13, ranking 5th in Table 1) and being a good listener (assumed to be a necessary condition of collegial relations) in second place; followed by leading, supporting, inspiring, and motivating staff (item C17, ranking 7th in Table 1) in third place; followed by monitoring student progress (item B10, ranking 15 in Table 1) in fourth
place; and finally by \textit{working on accomplishing institutional goals} (items A2 and D23, both ranking 17th in Table 1) as shown in Table 3 (Appendix 4).

Again, this ranking is predictable from the teachers’ perspective. Teaching and learning is what they do. Working in a congenial environment (as shown by the items rated 2nd and 3rd in importance) is also perceived to be highly desirable. \textit{Monitoring student progress} in the subject is seen as their own responsibility first, which is why it is not given as much importance for SLs, and \textit{working on accomplishing institutional goals} as well as \textit{managing school resources} are somewhat removed from the teachers’ daily realities and are therefore of secondary importance to them.

\textit{The Ambiguity of the Subject Leader’s Role}

The significant importance given by the three categories of participants to the last three roles of SLs in Tables 2 and 3 (leading, supporting, inspiring, and motivating staff; maintaining positive and collegial staff relations; and being a good listener), highlights the importance of having healthy relations between SLs and teachers, on the one hand, and SLs and administrators on the other. Through these can be gauged the extent to which departmental cultures in the two schools can be collegial. By extension, the degree to which SLs could be leaders in addition to being managers or administrators can also be assessed.

The nature of the SL’s role as a middle manager representing the administration to the teachers and vice versa causes them occasionally to experience divided loyalties. In both schools was the expectation that SLs, being part of the management team of the
school, would be supportive of their administrations and that they should represent the administration to their departments in the same way that they represent the department to the administration:

We expect you...even if you do not agree with a particular decision, [to] go out there and present it as though it were your decision. You would sell it as though it came from you... It's just a way of expediting things, and of instilling in the staff the confidence that we all have the same vision; we're all moving in the same direction. (DoS in School A)

The Gen. G. for HoDs (School A) also states the administration's point of view explicitly. With reference to the liaison role of SLs, for example, this document specifies that when representing the administration to the department, SLs are expected to:

...explain rationale behind policies and procedures adopted by the administration and by the curriculum committee. The Head of department is part of the curriculum committee; thus we expect that all decisions made by the committee to be fully endorsed by the HoD.

With reference to decision-making, the administration's point of view and hierarchical organization structure is made very clear. SLs are urged to:

Differentiate between departmental decisions which should be arrived at democratically and decisions to be taken by Head alone. [subject leaders should] make it clear to staff which decisions are to be made as a department, which by the Head alone but after consulting the department, and which ... were taken by the Curriculum Committee (Gen. G. for HoDs, School A).

The administration thus considers that SLs' loyalty to the administration (or in this case, to the Curriculum Committee in School A) and the interests of the whole school should override those of the department, a view which conflicts with the teachers', as well as some SLs' perception.

In case of conflict between the teachers and the administration, and on a continuum between the opposing sides, 3 out of the 8 SLs see their loyalty as residing primarily
with their teachers. They would defend and advocate their cause against not just the administration, but also other school stakeholders such as parents for example. Four said they would try to be fair and see both points of view, and would try to negotiate and compromise except in curricular and subject specific matters, or in matters threatening the students’ best interests. Only one SL of the 8 said that she would “stay out of it” and not intervene unless a teacher in her department has been treated unjustly.

As for the teachers, they certainly expect their SLs to represent their views and advocate their cause, above all other consideration, as shown by the discrepancy of their ranking of role C16 in the questionnaire (Acting as departmental advocate) in the 12th position; and of role D28, submitting progress reports on staff and programme to administration, in the 20th position.

Nevertheless, most of the time successful SLs are able - through their political skills of mediation, negotiation, and persuasion - to bridge the needs of both categories of stakeholders as will be demonstrated in what follows.

_relations between subject leaders and teachers._

All three categories of participants (the SLs, administrators and teachers) agree that the nature of the relationship between the SL and the teachers in his/her department should be _supportive, respectful, and collaborative_. The SLs and administrators also believe that SLs need to be also _tactful and diplomatic_ with certain individuals in order not to alienate them, as they also need to be _assertive and firm_ at times.
Most of the SLs qualified their responses saying that often, the relationship or approach they adopted towards their teachers depended both on the situation or context, and on the teachers' degree of professionalism: "If you have teachers who are professionals, you would respect their professionalism and you wouldn't have to be assertive or firm with them... [but] you couldn't be nice to some people because they would walk all over you and then you'd end up feeling exploited" (English SL, School A). This was echoed by the administrators:

I have difficulty answering this question because of the gap between what the situation should be ideally, and what the reality is. Of course if all members of staff have reached a certain level of professionalism and collegiality...they can be open and friendly with one another, with the HoD and vice-versa. But some need to be told in no uncertain terms what is wanted from them; these people would get lost if left to their own devices and because they are used to this approach, you may need to be authoritarian and hierarchical with them. Others are highly respected professionals ..., they get easily offended, so you have to be tactful and diplomatic with them...However, if you feel the need to be assertive and firm, ... this implies that there is a problem in the department: it can be either the teacher who lacks professionalism - for want of a better word – or it can be a difficulty that the HoD has in getting people to respond... so you cannot adopt a common policy ...for all. I may be very respectful of all people, but I may adopt a different approach to get what I want from you than I might use for someone else. So a leader needs to know how to deal with each person according to their particularities (Principal in School A).

Ten teachers out of 38 agree too that there would be occasions when the SL needs to stand his/her ground and when he/she would be expected to show leadership and decisiveness. Eleven teachers out of 38, and 4 SLs out of 8 believe that the relationship could be *open and friendly*. The latter group qualified their response, however, by saying that such treatment could only be reserved, again, to the few trustworthy professionals who responded positively to such treatment.

Neither the SLs nor the administrators believe that *authoritarian and hierarchical* or *formal and businesslike* approaches are appropriate. "You're dealing with your peers in
terms of educational ability.” (DoS in School A) and “because you want them [teachers] to be comfortable in order to reach the students… A formal and businesslike approach would work in a bank or industry, but not in a school” (Principal in School B). In contrast, three teachers said that the relationship should be formal and businesslike, and a further two teachers surprisingly selected authoritarian and hierarchical, not appreciating perhaps the negative connotations nowadays associated to these words in the English language. It must be noted here that some teachers’ limited proficiency in English may explain the small number of seemingly idiosyncratic responses in the questionnaires.

_The Relationship between the subject leaders and the administrators._

As shown previously, maintaining positive relations with the administrators in their schools is perceived to be almost as important for SLs as it is for them ideally to have collegial relations with their teachers:

For things to work smoothly in the department, I need to have a good relationship with the bursar and with the principal. If I want something and I find that the time to ask for it is not appropriate, I leave it for another time. The principal or the bursar may not be in a good mood or receptive to my request, so I postpone it to a more favourable occasion. Most of the time, this strategy has worked… But I also know what I can ask for and when to ask for it… I usually provide justification for every request anyway, [and] I try to present anything I want for the department in a way that will be acceptable to the administration. (Science SL in School A)

But when asked about the extent of “political maneuvering” SLs engaged in in order to obtain what they needed for the department, a few of them squirmed uneasily and said that they didn’t like the term “political” to describe what they do, lending support to Moses and Roe’s (1990) remark that the word was perceived to be pejorative. It is
undeniable, however, that all SLs engage in some form of political maneuvering for the welfare or betterment of their departments. Some have more political “pull” or influence than others. They are more persuasive, more powerful, or seem to have greater influence over the administration, in addition to having the confidence and perseverance to keep trying to obtain what they want. Others, when faced with outright refusal or an intractable attitude, seem in contrast, to lack the energy and the will to persist: “I have to accept slow changes because of the financial constraints we are operating under” (Science SL in School A), or “If the budget doesn’t allow it, there isn’t much I can do” (Science SL in School B).

This doesn’t mean, of course, that the former more influential SLs always manage to obtain what they need; simply that they seem to have better prospects of achieving their ends, as the following quotations demonstrate:

My case is a very special case. The principal is a --- teacher [of the same subject]. He shares our meetings and I make use of his, err... “the common understanding” we share. He usually understands our needs, and especially when he listens to our discussion before we reach a decision, he can sometimes convey to us the administration’s point of view beforehand; also we are lucky because he was exposed to the American system for ages, and he can always offer valuable advice, and explain things, so we can find out in advance how things will fare. Usually things run smoothly. (Maths SL in School A)

In the school, there is an extracurricular enrichment activity which the grade 6 students and their teachers are required to prepare every year. It is usually a big project about some topic.... I can’t tell you how much teachers resent and complain about such activities saying that...they don’t have time to work on them... I told them, “Listen, whether we want to or not, we have to work on this project and we want to make a good job of it... And I promise in return to try to help you in some way.” I had in mind to ask the principal to reduce the hours of those teachers in order that they may have time for such activities... And he accepted, so I was able to help them teach two classes instead of three, and now they have no excuse whatsoever not to commit to these activities. I was lucky to rely on my excellent relations with both the administration and the teachers. (Arabic SL in School B)
These examples testify primarily to the good relationships existing in general between the SLs and administrators on the one hand, and between the SLs and their team of teachers on the other. Tact, persuasion and diplomacy are also evident in these interactions showing the SLs to be consummate political agents in the service of their departments.

When asked about what conflicts and/or obstacles originating from the administration have hindered their work in any way, half the SLs (from both schools) complained about the impact of insufficient financial resources and of budget constraints on the achievement of their goals and/or on their ability to run their departments efficiently. Two (one from each of the two schools) out of the eight SLs mentioned the hierarchical and autocratic way in which the administrations interact with their staff. Two SLs both from School A deplored the excessive bureaucracy and paper work. Two SLs also from School A mentioned the negative effects of the lax and inconsistent student promotion policy on the credibility of the school and of the teachers. Finally one SL from School B criticized the high turnover of administrative staff. This, she added, threatened the stability of the school and hindered the continuity of the students’ educational experience, not to mention the resulting feeling of insecurity felt by members of staff, whatever their status in the organization.

When SLs were asked whether they felt empowered, supported, constrained or undermined by the management structure/organization of the school, all said they felt “generally supported,” or “very supported.” None felt “empowered,” which is not surprising given the hierarchical nature of the schools’ top-down management structures.
As for the administrators, two out of the four mentioned that SLs should “have authority”; nevertheless, “We might give authority to a HoD but this doesn’t mean that they can be authoritarian” (AD in School B). Thus, the administration in both schools was perceived to be benevolently authoritarian at best and unpredictably or arbitrarily autocratic at worst.

Managers, Leaders or Both

The administrators’ perception.

All four administrators expect a SL to be both a manager and a leader, and to have the ability to switch from one to the other depending on the demands of the situation. However, the interpretation and importance accorded to each of the two roles differed as the following quotations show:

Leadership is what would make the difference between a good HoD and a not so good one. It’s the ability to see the big picture, to formulate some long-term goals that would be in the interests of all parties involved - being able to remove yourself from the daily nitty-gritty, to distance yourself and to see the global picture. It involves... a lot of creativity, the ability to sell your ideas, the ability to inspire and persuade others to adopt and implement and ensure the success of your ideas, because in the end, a leader is not necessarily an implementer; somebody else will do the implementing. This person just throws the ideas. So, it’s that element of creativity and an awareness of the mission of the organization... The leader is an educator who is interested and involved but yet who can rise above things as they are (DoS in School A).

Both the Ev. Cri. for HoDs (School A), and the Gen. G. for HoDs (School A) mention the expectation that SLs should set/demonstrate a vision for their departments in line with the mission/vision of the school. The latter document also mentions that
they should “supplement your vision with clear strategic planning and steps and timeline for implementation”. Also both documents require SLs to ensure that teaching methods “are constantly updated, varied and consistent with the latest developments in educational research” (Ev. Cri. for HoDs, School A), in order “to keep the school at the cutting edge of developments in the subject” (Gen. G. for HoDs, School A).

No such information was mentioned in any of the documents supplied by School B.

A leader is a dreamer; a manager is a... down-to-earth person. It should be both because if an HoD is just a leader, he/she might forget about the constraints of his/her job. You have to be realistic and down-to-earth. He/she should [be]...flexible enough yet be realistic to propose improvements that are applicable, not only dreams, so I expect a subject leader to give me his/her suggestions for improvement, but also ways to implement those suggestions (Principal in School B).

Not only are these different perceptions indicative of the different expectations held of SLs in the two schools, but they also reveal their different administrative structures and management approaches. Although both schools are essentially authoritarian and hierarchical, School A seems to be slightly more liberal than School B in its perception of the role of SLs as well as in its manner of interacting with staff members. However, whether the SLs are allowed to be leaders ultimately depends on whether their superiors give them the autonomy, confidence and the scope to maneuver as leaders in practice...

_The subject leaders’ perception._

As for the SLs, they seem to agree with their respective administrations in that they should be managers first - “otherwise the department would disintegrate,” (Maths SL in School A) - and leaders second. But so far, the hierarchical organizational structure in
both schools makes it rather difficult for them to be autonomous decision-makers beyond areas strictly related to the curriculum; and for some SLs, even this privilege was/is meddled with whenever the interests of other departments or of the whole school are perceived to be more important.

All the SLs interviewed consider themselves, however, to be potential leaders if not already effectively so. Like their administrators, all acknowledge the need to be both managers and leaders depending generally on their contexts and on the particular situation they happen to be in at any given time. One of the SLs, for example, a “coordinator” in two different schools one of which is School B, noted that she could not be a leader in School B since the department is not yet fully organized with established procedures and routines. Imposing some kind of structure through devising departmental guidelines and policies and “managing” the day-to-day responsibilities is currently more of a priority than being a “leader” and seeking to make long-term strategic plans:

Every place and circumstance demands a different response. Certainly in [School X], I consider myself to be a leader, whereas in [School B], I’m more of a manager. In [School X], everything is well organized and runs smoothly; everyone knows what they’re doing and what is expected of them. The procedures are clear to everyone, and this is why I have time to think ahead and plan for the future. This is not the case in [School B] where we’re still working on setting up policies and procedures (Arabic SL in School B).

Furthermore, all the SLs mentioned the constraints imposed by limited resources, and the fact that their visions or the changes they wanted to instigate, though desirable in themselves to the administration, had to be postponed or put on hold until more favourable conditions - financial or otherwise - were available.
Another factor affecting the extent to which the SLs themselves felt up to the task of being leaders in their fields is their experience as SLs per se. One teacher who had recently been appointed did not feel adequately prepared or ready to even think about long-term goals for the department:

For the moment, because I’ve just started in this new position, I would consider myself to be mostly a manager. I try to change things a little; for example, I want the department to change their methods of assessments to include more open-ended questions... But these changes are on a small scale (English SL in School B).

In contrast, a SL who had been heading her department for many years was keen to emphasize the need to strike a balance between preserving traditions that were valuable and innovative approaches and methods of delivery in keeping with the times.

As mentioned above, although the documents from School A mention leadership roles such as creating a vision and making long and short term plans for the department, the terms “leadership” or “lead” are never referred to. To assess whether SLs knew the difference between being leaders and managers, they were asked if they had a vision for the place of their subject department within the whole school and what their most immediate goals were. All claimed to have a vision translated into long-term goals, but that this was consistent with the vision of the school. As for short term priorities for their departments, these “tend to arise from our needs at any given time” (Maths SL in School B).

Long term goals for both schools are presently to obtain validation for their international programmes/curricula. This means for School A, securing approval from the board of trustees and sufficient funding to adopt the International Baccalaureate programme, a very expensive undertaking for the school especially in the context of the
current political and economic instability of the country. For School B, it means earning accreditation from the USA for their American Programme.

A closely related issue the SLs were questioned about, was their beliefs about the purpose and value of education, and the extent to which these beliefs were consistent with their schools’ missions. Different responses were given from the very general to the very specific; the most general being that the purpose of education was “to achieve self-satisfaction and a happier and more secure life.” (Maths SL, School A). Less general was the perception that the aim of education was to encourage individuals – students and teachers alike – to engage in lifelong learning with the ultimate goal of attaining ever higher levels of civilization. More specific and consistent with both schools’ missions were the beliefs that every child has the potential to learn and that the cultural diversity of students and teachers was an asset to the schools’ communities (Several SLs from both schools). As both schools are non-selective, meaning that they don’t select students based on their academic achievements levels, both attempt to cater to all students’ needs. Practically this means providing extra classes or special instruction for special needs (School B) or EFL students (School A), remedial or reinforcement classes, summer school, etc.

The teachers’ perception.

The teachers too seem to value the practical and managerial roles above the leadership skills and roles of subject leaders. Questionnaire items E30 (having a clear sense of what needs to be done, how and when), and E29 (being an exemplary teacher,
consistent and self-accountable) are rated more highly (1st and 4th respectively) than items C17 (leading, supporting, inspiring and motivating staff) and A1 (drawing up departmental development plans setting out goals for improvement (7th and 8th). And these are in turn rated even more highly than items A2 (developing departmental policies in line with whole school policies) and D23 (implementing whole school policies and guidelines) both ranked 17th down the list of their priorities. The teachers' loyalty to the department in each of the two schools seems to be greater than their loyalty to the whole school, and their expectations that their SL feel the same reflects their desire for autonomy from any perceived external influence (such as that of the administration or that of any other category of the schools' stakeholders) on their work as a unified department.

Specific Attributes and Roles

Added to the generic attributes and skills sought or expected of SLs are some specific ones related to individual subjects and dependent on the context of the school and the kind of staff one is working with: The PE and Art Departments in School A, for example, contain a smaller number of often part-time staff and, whereas:

The Department of English contains mostly full-timers and a good number [of them] hold administrative positions in addition to being teachers, so whoever leads them needs to have a very strong personality and to be very efficient to get respect from the staff... [Also, the English subject leader] can be expected to be able to inject some artistic input, such as theatre, and creative writing, producing a documentary, a play, a poetry magazine, etc... In social studies, I can see a lot of room for interaction with the community. I can see speakers coming, discussing and talking about various political and environmental issues. You don't do this in maths, so if the maths department doesn't reach out to the
community, it's not necessarily a shortcoming, but it would be in the social studies department (DoS in School A).

The case of the science department in School A is different from that in School B. It is difficult for the science SL, whose specialty is Physics, to be expert in Chemistry and Biology as well. This somewhat limits his position since he cannot contribute to Chemistry and Biology in the same way that the individual teachers of those subjects can in the department. He is consequently more of a manager than an instructional leader as such, and the emphasis is more on his having "people's skills" than on his expert knowledge beyond his own specific field. School B doesn't have an overall science SL coordinating the work of the different sciences at the high school level. Coordinators for each of the three sciences (Biology, Chemistry and Physics) manage their own small teams of teachers.

To sum up, all four administrators, eight SLs and teachers in both schools largely agree on the generic characteristics and roles of SLs mentioned above, even if these are given variable degrees of importance. However, SLs also need more specific attributes and roles dictated by the nature of their different disciplines, as well as by the organizational structures and contexts of their schools.

*The Evaluation of Subject Leaders*

The administrators in both schools are more or less directly involved in the evaluation of their SLs. In School A, a procedure has been set up for an official evaluation to take place and a document (Ev. Cri. for HoDs) was produced, but although this was explained and announced to the SLs at the beginning of the academic
year, none were officially or formally evaluated. The DoS, who is primarily responsible for the evaluation, justified this lack of follow-up by saying:

It's not a very hard and fast system and this is consistent with the way we do things at this school; it's like the evaluation procedure of the teachers; it is somewhat vague and leaves a lot of room for maneuvering... The idea is if I'm following up the work of the heads and meeting and talking to them regularly, I would be collecting my information throughout the year; every meeting, conversation and interaction is an opportunity to observe and assess.

The Ev. Cri. for HoDs in School A is very consistent with the J. D. of HoDs in School A, especially the items under the subheadings “Management of Department” and “Academics”. What seems to have been added is a paragraph entitled “Working Relationships / Communication” containing a mixture of items describing attributes as well as roles consistent with the attributes and roles mentioned above. The only other two items listed in the Ev. Cri. for HoDs and not specifically mentioned in the J. D. for HoDs, are one leadership and one managerial role:

- Demonstrates a clear vision of future development of department
- Able to maintain schedules and meet deadlines

In fact, references to timeliness are frequent in this document emphasizing the importance of time management and good organization, highly valued attributes of SLs.

School B too does not have a formal, but a “continuous informal assessment procedure” (Principal in School B). The administration have been revising and updating all job descriptions as part of the accreditation process they are currently undergoing.

Both schools gather their information or seek feedback on the performance of SLs from various sources. Apart from the quality of their performance on tasks required by the administrators themselves, one source is the teachers - though all four administrators were careful to emphasize that this was done “indirectly” through informal chats or
through observing the quality of interactions between a SL and the teachers in his/her department: “There is consistency between what I think of a head and what his/her staff think…If the teachers think highly of their head, it’s very likely that the head is doing a good job leading the department” (DoS in School A). Another source might include comments from students or parents. Yet another source consists of the quarterly and/or end of year reports that are submitted to the principals. Surprisingly too, School B mentioned the students’ achievement results in the subject leaders’ particular subjects/departments, or what the AD called “the value added element,” which is based on the progress and improvement of the students over time rather than on their grades per se.

All the SLs in both schools were aware, however, that they were being evaluated informally all the time, and judging by whatever feedback had been given to them in the form of public recognition or of individual praise, they were under the impression that their evaluation had been on the whole positive. In fact, the satisfaction of a job well-done confirmed by expressions of appreciation from stakeholders was one of the rewards mentioned by SLs when asked about what made their job meaningful or worthwhile.

Challenges and Rewards

The SLs expressed a number of ongoing challenges facing them: developing a curriculum that met all students’ needs and abilities was mentioned most often. Next was the difficulty of mediating staff conflict. Surprisingly, one subject leader’s concern
was to improve the critical thinking of students as well as of staff. Another subject leader’s challenge was improving the status and image of the discipline and of the department.

Aspects of the SLs’ positions that were least rewarding and that were often a source of stress and frustration to them include: the excessive workload coupled with a low salary; the excessive paper shuffling and form filling required by the bureaucracy of the school; insufficient resources or funds to achieve one’s goals and vision; and dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance.

The rewards of the job were perceived to be most often the students’ enthusiasm and success; one subject leader mentioned “moments of epiphany” (English SL in School A). Both of these rewards are more related to the joys of teaching than of leading a department. Some SLs, however, did refer to the satisfaction derived from the success and growth of their department or of their colleagues.

Conclusion

The findings from all sources of data collected show on the whole much consistency in the perceived generic attributes and expected roles of subject leaders in the two schools, notwithstanding their relative inequality of status. What differences were found were attributed to the different priorities, interests and perspectives of the different categories of participants, as well as to the different contexts within which these schools operate.
CHAPTER FIVE
SYNTHESIS AND DISCUSSION

The aim of the present thesis was to define the attributes and roles of SLs in two private Anglophone high schools as they are perceived by the principals and administrators of these schools, by the SLs themselves, and by the teachers in their departments. The research has also attempted in the process to determine whether the attributes and roles of SLs vary according to the subject or discipline of the department, or whether they are generic in nature. This chapter summarizes the results and addresses the research questions of the study. It also compares the findings to issues, theories and results noted earlier in the literature review (in Chapter Two).

The Selection, Training and Professional Development of Subject Leaders

The criteria used for the selection of subject leaders in the two schools are very consistent with those found in the literature (Gold, 1998; Turner, 2005). These include subject expertise, successful teaching experience, interpersonal and communication skills, perceived potential ability to manage and lead as well as “political savvy” (Principal in School A), or what the literature calls an understanding of micropolitics (Gold, 1998; Busher, 2006). The term “micropolitics” here refers to the strategies used by subject leaders to capitalize on the authority and influence they possess to further their own and their departments’ interests (Turner, 2005). “Political savvy” is associated with specific interpersonal skills defined in the literature (Busher, 2006; Lucas, 2000;
Moses & Roe, 1990; Seagren et al., 1993) as persuasion, tact, diplomacy, negotiation, compromise, and mediation. More importantly, it also refers to knowledge of how and when to use these skills to produce desired effects.

The ambiguity inherent in the subject leaders' role caught between the demands of their administration and those of their departmental staff (Bennett, 1983; Bennett et al., 2003; Lucas et al., 2000; Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1984; Wettersten, 1992) - also common in the investigated schools - demands that subject leaders use their political skills to best advantage. The allegiances of the subject leaders in the study are similar to those found in the literature with some aligning themselves with one, the other or both parties. The more successful subject leaders according to the administrators' interviews are considered to belong to the latter category, as indeed was stated in the research literature (Wettersten, 1992). Effective SLs act as facilitators between the administrators and their departmental colleagues mediating the concerns and demands of each to the other in a way that is acceptable to both. Not many SLs are aware of this fact; many tend to fall too easily into the trap of taking sides in a fruitless tug of war instead of trying to creatively “find uncommon solutions to uncommon problems” (Principal in School B).

The preference, common in both schools in principle, to appoint SLs from within the institution is another example of the perceived importance of the political dimension of a SL's role. The newly appointed SL is usually a competent and experienced teacher who has already been professionally and organizationally socialized (Eraut, 1994; Turner, 2005), who is familiar with the micropolitical processes of the school and who has demonstrated the potential ability to manage and lead a
department. Only when such a person is not available in the institution, is an outsider with the potential to fulfill its specific requirements then sought. There is a risk, however, that this person may not turn out to be a good fit especially as candidates’ interpersonal and political skills are not always easy to spot in interview settings. Moreover, it usually takes a newcomer around two years to learn the political skills to operate effectively in a new setting (Moses & Roe, 1990). One particular SL was cited by the principal in School A as someone who had failed to build social cohesion in the department or to earn the respect of both his administrative and departmental colleagues; he had to resign at the end of his two year probation.

As for the formal training of potential SLs, it is practically non-existent in the two schools in the sense that they learn how to manage and lead their departments on the job, often using their “gut” feelings together with what the literature refers to as reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action (Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Gmelch, 2002; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2005). Although the situation was similar in the west about a decade ago, steps have been taken in some countries such as the UK, to remedy the situation: Educational bodies, such as the Teacher Training Agency, was in the late 1990s charged with the responsibility to formulate standards such as the National Standards for Subject Leaders whose aim was to define expertise and to describe the knowledge, skills and attitudes desirable in SLs (Turner, 2005). Needless to say we lag far behind in this and other initiatives, partly because of our different contexts and current priorities. Also in some secondary schools in the UK, a “second in the department” is nominated to assist the subject leader or to act as deputy when necessary. This person would have the opportunity to work more closely with the
subject leader whilst gaining experience as an “apprentice subject leader” [the researcher’s emphasis] at the same time. This practice does not however exist in the schools under study.

Professional development provision for SLs in the west is certainly better than that provided in Lebanon. However, it is still perceived to be sketchy if not inadequate with various individual researchers/writers suggesting knowledge and skills they see as a priority to develop SL leadership capacity (Gmelch, 2000; Lucas et al., 2000; Moses & Roe, 1990; Bennett et al., 2003; Turner, 2005). In contrast, what professional development is provided for SLs in schools A and B once they are selected is left to their own discretion. They are encouraged to attend relevant available courses and to pursue postgraduate degrees, and many do so, but much of this development is self-initiated; there is no particular framework, or programme tailored to their needs nor is any assistance, financial or otherwise, provided for them. Professional development in general is not taken seriously enough in the two schools and budgets devoted to it are minimal. SLs are mostly in the position of having to help themselves, but they do not seem to question this state of affairs. In fact, it seems as if it is almost a matter of pride for them to be given the autonomy, as self-directed individuals, to attend to their own professional development.

This does not mean, however, that all the subject leaders in the study rise to this implicit challenge. Nevertheless, the more successful ones are as aware of the need to be lifelong learners (Ruff & Shoho, 2005; Turner, 2005), to maintain their expertise and to develop their professional practices, as they are of the need to attend to the professional development of their colleagues in the department. One particular subject
leader (Maths Subject Leader, School A) wished that more time were allotted in
department meetings to discuss pedagogical issues specifically related to their own
discipline. Indeed the benefits of sharing good practice in department meetings and of
learning from talking with other subject leaders ideally from the same, but also from
other subject areas were emphasized in the literature (Lucas, 1994; Turner, 2005).

The Attributes and Roles of Subject Leaders

The research literature and findings from the study concur in the requisite
attributes and skills of SLs. These can be summed up as: interpersonal and
communication skills (Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Murray, 1995; Robinson,
1996; Seagren et al., 1993); organizational and problem-solving skills (Lucas, 1994;
Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner & Bolam, 1998; Turner, 2005); integrity/credibility;
instructional leadership (Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Busher, 2006; Gold, 1998; Lamb,
1993; Robinson, 1996; Seagren et al., 1993; Stark et al., 2000; Turner, 2005) and finally
versatility - which here refers to the ability to adopt different approaches in dealing with
others and/or to adapt methods and strategies to fit the context faced (Moses & Roe,
1990). This ability to tailor one’s responses to the situation at hand has been expressed
in different ways by the different categories of participants and by the literature, but it is
also related to the political skills or know-how, already mentioned above. More specific
attributes and skills related to SLs’ different contexts, including aspects related to
subject distinctiveness were also widely acknowledged to be necessary for them to carry
out their responsibilities effectively.
Another desirable skill articulated by the literature (Gmelch, 2002; Moses & Roe, 1990; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2005) and tacitly acknowledged by one of the administrators and by the more experienced SLs in the study is introspective skills, or the ability to reflect on and assess one’s impact and experiences.

What the literature (Brown et al., 2000; Busher & Harris, 1999; Gold, 1998; Harris et al., 1995; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner, 2005) and administrators also agree on but was specifically mentioned neither by the SLs nor by the teachers is the importance for SLs to articulate a vision or a sense of direction for their departments. This could be either because the department vision is tacitly taken for granted, or because it is a feature that does not figure in their constructions of the role of SLs. Ruff and Shoho (2005) have demonstrated in their study how the attempt to uncover tacitly understood mental models of instructional leadership is a worthwhile undertaking since these assumptions have been shown to unconsciously either limit or expand leadership capacity in an educational organization. Not enough articulation of vision happens in either of Schools A or B, whether on the whole school or departmental levels.

Despite differing priorities and perspectives, the findings also reveal the different categories of participants to be in agreement as to the relative importance of the various roles of SLs. There was general consensus that the most important roles of SLs revolve around (1) leading, supporting, and motivating staff; (2) maintaining positive and collegial staff relations; and equally, (3) fostering good teaching and learning together with their implications for maximizing both teacher and pupil performance. Similarly, there was also agreement in the way the participants
downplayed the significance of the SL role regarding resource deployment especially as it was often perceived to be a major source of conflict in their organizations.

These priorities are compatible with what was found in the literature (Harris et al., 1995; Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner, 2005), and so is the perceived importance for subject leaders to be both managers and leaders. However, the literature seems to attach greater prestige to being a leader than to being a manager for at least two reasons. One is because managerial/administrative tasks, considered more humdrum, routine and time-consuming, are inevitable for the smooth running of the department and are therefore to a certain extent taken for granted. Another reason is that managerial functions spring from impersonal bureaucratic values that are more associated with the material interests of the organization than with the less tangible but more worthy interests of the students and/or stakeholders of educational institutions. In contrast, leadership functions and endeavours such as building and sharing a vision, engaging in strategic planning, and/or working to enhance social cohesion and collegiality in the department are perceived to have greater value because of their potential to achieve more fundamentally embracing and long-lasting educational change. The ability of subject leaders, for example, to inspire their followers to achieve desired ends ultimately matters more than the operational ability to meet deadlines.

Nevertheless, the findings of several studies in the literature report that subject leaders spend in practice much less time on strategic planning and vision sharing than they would like because of the excessive administrative demands of their jobs and because the urgent often displaces the important (Bennett et al., 2003; Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner, 2005; Wettersten, 1992). Similarly,
Glover et al. (1999) found that in practice the leadership values espoused by senior staff were not taken into consideration in assessments of subject leader effectiveness.

The findings of the present study with regard to this issue are also variable if not contradictory. The administrators in both schools agree in principle that leadership qualities are just as important as managerial skills. As testified by the interviews as well as by documentary evidence, the administrators in School A actively encourage the exercise of leadership skills at least in theory. The administrators in School B agree that leadership skills are desirable but acknowledge that the day-to-day realities in schools mean that solid managerial ability matters more than “dreams” - as the principal put it. The teachers in both schools clearly favoured the managerial role of subject leaders over their leadership capacities in view of its more direct impact on their work. As for the subject leaders, they too agreed that leadership qualities were just as important as managerial ones. Their perception of being leaders, however, had more to do with being “first among equals” [the researcher’s emphasis] in their departments than with initiating sweeping changes, or engaging in strategic planning and vision sharing.

It was clear, ultimately, that managerial qualities and skills were perceived to be pre-requisite to the ability to engage in a leadership role – which to a certain extent validates Harris et al.’s finding (1995) that characteristics of effective departments were more linked to the effective organization of teaching and learning than to the leadership of the SL or to the presence of particularly able teachers in the department.

Also, the extent to which subject leaders can exercise leadership roles depends on factors embedded in the contexts of each school. Besides the fact that any departmental vision is expected to be aligned with the vision of the whole school, one
factor is whether senior management teams involve subject leaders in whole school
decision-making and strategic planning or whether they are only expected to implement
decisions in their respective departments. All of the SLs in the two schools are
“implementers” rather than “initiators” of change (Glover et al., 1999)

Other factors include constraints imposed by limited resources; by the presence
of enabling or disabling school and/or departmental structures; and by the confidence
and/or experience of the subject leaders themselves.

In fact, as stated in the literature (Bennett et al., 2003; Busher & Harris, 1999;
Glover et al., 1999; Moses & Roe, 1990; Seagren et al., 1993; Turner & Bolam, 1998;
Turner, 2005) contextual factors and influences infiltrate every aspect of the SLs’ work
and daily realities; their impact simply cannot be overestimated. Both schools are led by
essentially top-down authoritarian management structures. School A is slightly more
liberal than school B, but it is also more bureaucratic. In both, the hierarchical structures
and the leadership of the senior administration are at times experienced to be autocratic.

Other contextual factors greatly affecting the leadership style and impact of the
SLs in the two schools include department sizes, status, staff configuration, resource
allocation, subject distinctiveness and whether the subject leaders themselves are full or
part-time, whether they lead other departments in other schools too, not to mention their
individual experience as a SL and/or self-confidence. Most of these factors were also
stated by the literature found.

Departmental sub-cultures were perceived to be on the whole more or less
healthy, with some experiencing more conflicts among staff than others (Arabic
Departments in both schools); they were described to be fairly collaborative, with a few
achieving some level of relative collegiality (Maths Department in School A; Middle School Science Department in School B) in spite of the predominantly hierarchical management structures of the schools.

Just as was also reported in the literature (Turner, 2005), the SLs’ desire for collegiality in the two schools has to be balanced with their accountability for the standards of teaching and learning in their departments. Furthermore, some SLs felt that they could not be too open and friendly with some department members because they would be taken advantage of.

The ability of subject leaders to exercise leadership in the sense that is emphasized by some administrators and in the literature is, in short, more aspired to than real in the contexts of the two schools in this study. Both the literature and the findings ultimately show that high-flown notions of vision building/sharing, of being proactive and engaging in strategic planning do not always match the reality (Bennett et al., 2003; Brown et al., 2000; Brown & Rutherford, 1998; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner, 2005; Wettersten, 1992) of the SLs in the west and in the present study.

The Evaluation of Subject Leaders

The ultimate aim of the present study is to contribute to existing knowledge and understanding of the roles subject leaders play in educational institutions, especially as they are manifested in the cases of the two selected Lebanese Anglophone high schools. If the identification of the attributes and roles of SLs is the first step towards an assessment of their impact on the teaching and learning occurring in their subjects, an
evaluation of their effectiveness is a natural outcome of this process. The findings reveal that School A is ahead of School B in this regard since it has two documents elaborating on the functions of heads of department excluding the job description, whereas School B has none. The SLs in School A were aware of these criteria set out for their evaluation even if they had not been formally evaluated against them.

By themselves, job descriptions can be used for evaluative purposes (Gross et al., 1958). In fact, Gorton et al. (2007) recommend that job descriptions, be regularly reviewed with “the occupant of the position and with those groups who are likely to hold expectations for the role” (p. 126) as a way of clarifying expectations and of preventing potential conflicts.

The literature seems, otherwise, to focus on the evaluation of departments as an indication of a SL’s success (Bennett et al., 2003; Harris et al, 1995; Turner & Bolam, 1998) and to encourage individual or department self-evaluation based on student outcomes as well as on other externally set accountability measures rather than on internally formulated criteria as is the case in School A. It must be noted though that Lebanon has not yet evolved the advanced and complex national and regional educational frameworks that western countries can boast of. This partly explains why Lebanese international educational institutions feel the need to seek accreditation from overseas bodies to validate their curricula and to enhance their authority and standing as Lebanese and international schools.

The fact that Lebanese schools in general, and Schools A and B in particular, offer a bilingual education is a source of strength as well as source of worry for them. How to provide an increasingly diverse group of students with a thorough Lebanese and
international education that is matched to their particular needs, contexts and to the requirements of a global economy in the 21st century is perceived to be a challenging task to schools and to some SLs. The Lebanese curriculum requirements provide a frame of reference for the 60 percent Lebanese student body in both schools, but there is no unified authority to dictate international standards for the remaining 40 percent or so international students acquiring an education in the two schools. The finding that one of the most challenging tasks facing some SLs since being appointed to their positions has been the development and implementation of an appropriate curriculum to meet the needs of all students in these schools comes, therefore, as no surprise.

Otherwise, the challenges mentioned by the SLs in the schools, which include staff problems (such as staff shortages, recalcitrant mid-career or older faculty, poor teachers); conflict among staff; lack of time; insufficient resources and low salaries, were found to be very consistent with the research literature (Lucas, 1994; Moses & Roe, 1990; Turner, 2005).

The rewards too, namely improving the quality of the teaching and learning in departments and nurturing the growth of students and colleagues, were also reported in the literature (Bennett, 1983; Moses & Roe, 1990; Tucker, 1984). The SLs in the study did not mention explicitly such incentives as providing direction, influencing priorities or the prestige associated with the position of SL itself - all also mentioned in the literature. But then they may not admit to such seemingly self-serving rewards. Some SLs did acknowledge, however, that they were gratified by stakeholder expressions of appreciation or by public recognition of their efforts.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS

The results of this study suggest that there is a good deal of consistency between the perceptions of subject leaders’ attributes and roles in the two selected high schools and western theories and findings of similar studies in the literature. Of course, we lag behind in many aspects, but the discrepancies are not as wide as one would expect. Granted a spell of political and economic stability, and the will and initiative to genuinely improve educational standards to come closer to western models, the gaps can certainly be narrowed. This chapter concludes the study by presenting recommendations, limitations and suggestions for further research in the field.

Recommendations

_The Selection, Training and Professional Development of Subject Leaders_

Although the importance of SLs as instructional leaders is recognized in the schools under study, their potential to act as crucial agents for organisational improvement (Bennett, 1983; Bennett et al., 2003; Brown & Rutherford; 1999; Busher, 2006; Lucas, 1994; Seagren et al., 1993; Busher & Harris, 1999; Brown et al., 2000) is not quite as widely appreciated. More needs to be done to raise awareness of this particular function of SLs that is largely unacknowledged by both the SLs themselves and by their administrations. SLs also need to be better trained, and their continuing
professional development needs to be more systematically and purposefully provided for.

Although the desirable knowledge, skills, attitudes and expectations are, to a greater or lesser extent, formally stated in the SLs’ job descriptions, these documents are usually read once at the time of appointment and forgotten about. Newly appointed SLs need to be better guided and followed up in the first couple of years of working in the department. They need to be given opportunities to set individual and departmental goals and to be held accountable for them.

Their professional development provision can take different forms: They can be required to attend appropriate management courses. They can be encouraged to build networks with other SLs in similar establishments, and to meet with them informally, but on a regular basis to discuss specific cases, issues, and problems experienced as well as to exchange information on the most recent pedagogical or subject specific developments. In larger, stable and well-staffed departments, appointing a “second” or “assistant” SL to a seasoned SL would also be beneficial to both. The experienced SL would be able to act as mentor and share and delegate tasks; the assistant SL would have the opportunity to observe, learn and experience how to manage and lead slowly but surely.

*The Attributes and Roles of Subject Leaders*

Definitely more needs to be done to build leadership capacity in the SLs in the two schools. Most are very competent managers and carry out the daily and periodical
tasks required of them by the administration and their departments effectively, but if
they are to be encouraged to become leaders as well as managers, and if their
administrations are genuinely serious about requiring them to be more proactive, then
there are a number of initiatives that need to be taken to help them come as close as
possible to the ideal.

The first initiative is to raise the SLs' awareness that more is required of them
and therefore that they need to play an even more active role in driving the school
forward than they have. It is up to the administrators to make these expectations very
clear. Not only do SLs, in their turn, need to identify the role expectations of others in
their organizations, but they also need to assess the intensity of these expectations and
act accordingly (Gross et al., 1958).

The importance of articulating and sharing a vision and of giving a sense of
direction for their subject departments, of implementing this vision through long and
short term planning, of reviewing their progress at timely moments, and of self-
evaluating against the goals and objectives they have set themselves should not only be
verbally emphasized or made coherent; to make this vision a reality that is translated
into the classroom, these tasks need to be facilitated and tangibly enabled through the
establishment of system and school structures (Mitchell & Castle, 2005) (such as
employing a professional development coordinator to follow up on progress made at
regular intervals, or scheduling special meetings and/or deadlines in the school calendar
for the implementation of these initiatives). In fact, it is recommended that the senior
management team schedule more regular departmental meetings that are devoted only
to discussing pedagogical issues and various methods and strategies of enhancing the
learning of pupils in departments (Lucas, 1994; Turner, 2005). If they fail to do this, then the SLs themselves should take the initiative to set a number of meetings only for that purpose.

Subject leaders could also benefit from participating more actively in whole school decision and policy making. The system is in place in School A through what is called curriculum committee meetings; however, from some of the SLs’ feedback on the outcome of these meetings, it would seem that more often than not, whole school decisions are not arrived at collaboratively; many decisions are seemingly rather handed down to be implemented at the departmental level without proper consultation. Ensuring proper consultation and truly giving SLs a voice in final decisions would enhance feelings of ownership and commitment, and would give these decisions a better chance of being implemented effectively.

The Evaluation of Subject Leaders

Thus SLs need to be more empowered, but they also need to be held more accountable for the work that they do. The “General Guidelines for Heads of Departments” document from School A, which mentions all the “leadership” attributes and skills expected of SLs, needs to be discussed and shared with all the SLs, just as was done with the “Evaluation Criteria for Heads of Departments”. As already mentioned, this document was only shown to the most recently appointed SL this year.

SLs could also be required, for example, to compile a departmental handbook, containing the department mission, vision, strategic planning, curricula, assessment and
other standard procedures and policies. This handbook would be updated every year and would serve as a reference for all departmental members, old and new. All the evidence in the research literature (Harris et al. 1995; Turner, 2005) suggests that such handbooks were found to be extremely useful. In fact, the “Gen, G. for HoDs” (School A) mentions this task of preparing a departmental handbook too, but with the exception perhaps of the Science Department in School A who mentioned having all such documentation on their computer, no other department seems to have such a document.

Data for evaluation could be collected from a number of different sources, including all those mentioned in the literature (standards derived from job descriptions; student outcomes and value-added data; externally set accountability measures or accreditation standards; internally formulated evaluation criteria; stakeholder feedback; observation of professional and social interactions, etc.) and could be aggregated together with the self-evaluation that departments would engage in to determine the extent of the SLs’ effectiveness, and to evaluate their departments’ overall performance.

The rhetoric and documents are present, at least in School A, and so is the theoretical mental model in School B, but they need to be articulated and to be made more coherent in addition to being seriously implemented; they need to be made into a priority so that the change hoped for and the leadership capacity built can begin to take effect.
Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

There are several limitations to this study. One is the fact that the researcher, being a teacher in School A, had access to more material and information from her school (School A) than from School B. One advantage was that she was able to distribute and follow up on the teacher questionnaires personally in School A; in School B, she had to rely on and pester the busy administrators to distribute and collect them, and this was executed rather more randomly than she would have liked. Fewer questionnaires were answered by the teachers in School B (16 respondents out of 29) in comparison to School A (22 respondents out of 29).

Although the questionnaire was piloted and amendments to clarify some items were accordingly made, some teachers still faced problems responding to it. The researcher was able to explain some questionnaire items to the teachers who did not understand her meaning in School A, whereas teachers in School B did not have this privilege. As was noted above, some questionnaire responses were idiosyncratic and were obviously the result of misunderstandings due to some teachers’ limited proficiency in the English language. The fact that the research was conducted in English caused some difficulties for a couple of Arabic teachers and SLs in School A, but the researcher was at hand to translate and explain. The distinction between a manager and a leader as defined by the literature was such an example. The difficulty of the data collection procedure was compounded by the resignation of the principal of School B in the middle of this year. Luckily the interview was conducted with him before his departure.
The research focused on the major department SLs (those that teach the English, Arabic, maths and science core subjects) which were - with the exception of perhaps the Arabic department - all perceived to be high status subjects. If including all the SLs in each of the two schools were within the scope of this case study and the way it was constructed, SLs of departments perceived to be more marginal would have added another dimension and would have further enriched the picture of SLs in the two schools.

There were also other questions to which the researcher would have liked some answers, but the opportunity was missed at the time. One of these questions would have elicited answers to how SLs perceived the expectation and requirement for them to evaluate their colleagues. Another would have asked them what they thought about having teachers in their departments visit each other’s classes informally and frequently as a basis for openly discussing and sharing practice in the department. This was what was recommended in the literature (Turner, 2005) as a way to reduce the perceived threat of evaluations in general.

The present study cannot claim to generalize its findings to other private Anglophone schools in Lebanon, and much less so to private Francophile schools or even to Lebanese public schools for that matter. There is, therefore, much scope for further research on the attributes and roles of SLs to be conducted in these establishments. Despite their many similarities, the two schools were found to be different in their perceptions of SLs and in the way that the SLs themselves could enact their roles in their individual contexts. A similar diversity of perceptions and contexts will probably also be found in future similar investigations. Nevertheless, it is hoped
that the present study, despite its small scale investigation, will contribute to what
knowledge and understanding in the topic may already be possessed by interested
practitioners especially those who might be involved in the training and or professional
development of future subject leaders.
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APPENDIX 1

Interview Schedule for Principals / Administrators

1. How many years' experience have you had as a school administrator?

2. How long have you been principal / administrator in this institution?

3. Are there standard procedures for selecting heads of departments in your school? Please explain.

4. How many academic heads of departments / chairs / coordinators have you personally appointed since you took up this position?

5. Did you select your appointees from within the institution or from without? Did other staff members recommend them? Please explain.

6. What specific contextual factors (SES, race, gender, seniority, qualifications, personality traits, political influence) did you have to take into consideration in each case?

7. Think of each of these subject and teacher leaders; what specific attributes have motivated you to appoint them? What qualities distinguish them from other teachers or potential candidates? What skills do they need to possess besides their qualifications, subject expertise and experience?

8. Please rank the following roles of the subject head / coordinator in your institution on a scale of 1 to 4 (1 = very important; 2 = important; 3 = somewhat important; 4 = least important) according to your priorities:

   a) Fostering good teaching and learning
   b) Monitoring student progress
   c) Managing school resources such as budget and other materials
   d) Working on accomplishing institutional goals
   e) Leading, supporting, inspiring, and motivating staff
   f) Maintaining positive and collegial staff relations
   g) Being a good listener

9. How should the nature of the relationship between the subject leader and the teachers in his/her department be?

   □ Supportive
   □ Authoritarian and hierarchical
   □ Respectful
   □ Formal and businesslike
   □ Collaborative
   □ Tactful and diplomatic
   □ Open and friendly
   □ Assertive and firm
10. Do you expect the subject leader to be a manager, a leader or both? Please explain.

11. Who is your top subject leader, and why?

12. Do you look for different characteristics in the heads / chairs of different disciplines? Are the criteria you use to evaluate a math department head different from those you would use for an English department head? In which way? Please give examples.

13. Are you responsible for evaluating the academic or subject heads / coordinators in your institution? If not, who does?

14. What steps or system in evaluating your subject leaders do you follow? Do you evaluate them all the same way?

15. Where do you gather your information (from specific criteria, forms of evaluations, job descriptions, rating scales, etc.)? Please give examples.

16. Have these academic leaders lived up to your expectations so far? Please give specific examples.

17. What do the teachers they oversee think of their subject leaders? How do you know? Please give examples.

18. Do you consider teachers' views in the selection or evaluation of subject leaders? How do you do that?

19. How do you provide for your subject leaders' continuing professional development?
APPENDIX 2

Interview Schedule for Subject Leaders

School: _______________  Date: ___________  Time: _____

1. What subject do you head? ___________________________

2. What are your educational qualifications?

3. How many years’ experience as a teacher and as Head of Department have you had?

4. How did you come to be appointed to this position in this school?

5. Did you have any managerial formal training prior to applying or being appointed to this position? Please explain.

6. How many teachers do you supervise?

7. Can you describe the tasks that you do as subject leader?

8. What is your teaching load?

9. What personal attributes and skills are needed to do your job effectively? Are you satisfied with your current performance? Please explain.

10. What is your school’s mission? What are your beliefs about the purpose and value of education? To what extent are your beliefs consistent with the school’s mission? How do you apply the school mission/your personal philosophy of education in practice?

11. Do you have a clear vision of the place of your subject department within the whole school? What are your most immediate goals/priorities for the department?

12. Is there a tension/conflict between what you would like to implement in your department and administrative considerations/obstacles beyond your control? Please give an example.

13. How do you reconcile the wishes and priorities of the teachers in your department with those of the administration when they conflict? Please give an example.
14. Do you feel, empowered, supported, constrained, or undermined by the 
management hierarchy of the school? How?

15. Do you consider yourself to be a manager, a leader or both? Please explain.

16. How important in your view are the following roles of the subject head /
coordinator in your institution? Please rank the following items according to 
your priorities, number 1 being your top and 7 being your lowest priority:
   a) Fostering good teaching and learning
   b) Monitoring student progress
   c) Managing school resources such as budget and other materials
   d) Working on accomplishing institutional goals
   e) Leading, supporting, inspiring, and motivating staff
   f) Maintaining positive and collegial staff relations
   g) Being a good listener

17. How should the nature of the relationship between the subject leader and the 
teachers in his/her department be? Please tick all that apply and elaborate on
your choices.

☐ Supportive  ☐ Authoritarian and hierarchical
☐ Respectful  ☐ Formal and businesslike
☐ Collaborative ☐ Tactful and diplomatic
☐ Open and friendly ☐ Assertive and firm

18. What are the most and least rewarding aspects of your job?

19. What have been your greatest challenge(s) since assuming your current
position?

20. To what extent do you engage in political maneuvering in order to obtain what
you need for the department? Please give specific examples.

21. Is teachers' professional development part of your responsibilities? How do you
attend to it?

22. How does the Senior Management Team attend to your continuing professional
development? What do you do individually to improve your leadership?

23. Have you been evaluated in your present position? How? What was done with
the evaluation results?
APPENDIX 3

Questionnaire for teachers

Please answer the questions below to the best of your knowledge.

1) Gender: □ male □ female
2) Age: __________
3) Subjects and classes taught: __________
4) How long have you worked in this institution? Record whole years. __________
5) How many years of teaching experience do you have? Record whole years. __________

5) Does your school have a formal system of evaluation for your subject head of department?
   □ Yes □ No □ don’t know

6) For each statement below, write the appropriate number according to the following scale:
   1 = most important  2 = important  3 = least important

| Rank the following tasks/roles and personal attributes of a head of department in general according to your priorities. |

A. Strategic direction and development of the subject
   1. Drawing up departmental development plans setting out goals for improvement
   2. Developing departmental policies in line with whole school policies
   3. Ensuring the implementation of agreed departmental policies
   4. Monitoring and evaluating the delivery and continuity of the curriculum
   5. Checking and approving all departmental examinations
   6. Setting targets for staff

B. Promoting effective teaching and learning
   7. Meeting the needs of students of all abilities
   8. Staying abreast of the latest methodologies and curriculum changes and updating programmes accordingly
   9. Monitoring standards of teaching and learning
   10. Monitoring and evaluating progress of students and using data to set appropriate targets for improvement
   11. Guiding curriculum development and implementation
   12. Stressing effort, achievement and promoting excellence

C. Leading and managing staff
   13. Maintaining good communications and collegial relations within the department and among the wider school community
   14. Encouraging teamwork, the sharing of ideas and materials, and teaching techniques
   15. Involving members of department in decision-making on departmental matters
   16. Acting as departmental advocate
17. Leading, supporting, inspiring and motivating staff
18. Recognizing and celebrating achievement and effort
19. Reducing, resolving and preventing conflict among staff members
20. Dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance effectively

D. Administrative responsibilities
21. Proposing and managing an annual budget for the department
22. Taking responsibility for the departmental inventory
23. Implementing whole school policies and guidelines
24. Assisting in the selection of new department members through reviewing staff applications and interviewing candidates
25. Recommending allocation of staff to specific classes
26. Evaluating staff performance through class visits and timely feedback
27. Organizing professional development to meet staff training needs
28. Submitting progress reports on staff and programme to administration

E. Personal attributes
29. Having good organizational and time management skills
30. Having a clear sense of what needs to be done, how and when
31. Being an exemplary teacher, consistent, and self-accountable
32. Establishing common values and setting standards for all

7) Now, please rank the above major groups of functions of a subject head of department in order of importance with 1 being the most, and 4 or 5 being the least important in your estimation.

A. Strategic direction and development of the subject
B. Promoting effective teaching and learning
C. Leading and managing staff
D. Administrative responsibilities
E. Personal attributes

8) How should the nature of the relationship between the head of department and the teachers in his/her department be? **Tick three items that apply.**

1. Supportive
2. Respectful
3. Collaborative
4. Open and friendly
5. Authoritarian and hierarchical
6. Formal and businesslike
7. Tactful and diplomatic
8. Assertive and firm

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire. Please feel free to elaborate or clarify any of your responses in the remaining space below.
Subject Leaders’ Attributes and Roles According to Teachers’ Priority Ranking

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. (E30) Having a clear sense of what needs to be done, how and when.</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. (E31) Being an exemplary teacher, consistent, and self-accountable.</td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. (A4) Monitoring and evaluating the delivery and continuity of the curriculum.</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. (E29) Having good organizational and time management skills -</td>
<td>101</td>
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<td>(C14) Encouraging teamwork, the sharing of ideas and materials, and teaching techniques.</td>
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<td>5. (C13) Maintaining good communications and collegial relations within the department and among the wider school community.</td>
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<td>6. (C15) Involving members of department in decision-making on departmental matters.</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. (C17) Leading, supporting, inspiring and motivating staff.</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. (A1) Drawing up departmental development plans setting out goals for improvement -</td>
<td>95</td>
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<tr>
<td>(B7) Meeting the needs of students of all abilities.</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. (A3) Ensuring the implementation of agreed departmental policies -</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(C20) Dealing with unsatisfactory staff performance effectively.</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. (E32) Establishing common values and setting standards for all -</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(B8) Staying abreast of the latest methodologies and curriculum</td>
<td></td>
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</table>
changes and updating programmes accordingly.

11. (B11) Guiding curriculum development and implementation.

12. (C16) Acting as departmental advocate.

13. (B9) Monitoring standards of teaching and learning -

   (D25) Recommending allocation of staff to specific classes.

14. (D24) Assisting in the selection of new department members through

   reviewing staff applications and interviewing candidates.

15. (D26) Evaluating staff performance through class visits and

   timely feedback -

   (B10) Monitoring and evaluating progress of students and using

   data to set appropriate targets for improvement.

16. (D27) Organizing professional development to meet staff training needs -

   (B12) Stressing effort, achievement and promoting excellence -

   (C18) Recognizing and celebrating achievement and effort.

17. (A5) Checking and approving all departmental examinations -

   (A2) Developing departmental policies in line with whole school policies -

   (D23) Implementing whole school policies and guidelines.

18. (A6) Setting targets for staff.

19. (C19) Resolving and preventing conflict among staff members.

20. (D28) Submitting progress reports on staff and programme

    to administration.

21. (D21) Proposing and managing an annual budget for the department.

22. (D22) Taking responsibility for the departmental inventory.
Table 2

*Priority Ranking of Subject Leader Role.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Subject Leaders</th>
<th>SLs’ Ranking</th>
<th>Administrators’ Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fostering good teaching and learning</td>
<td>4th</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring student progress</td>
<td>5th</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing school resources such as budget and other materials</td>
<td>6th</td>
<td>5th</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on accomplishing institutional goals</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>2nd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading, supporting, inspiring, and motivating staff</td>
<td>1st</td>
<td>1st</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining positive and collegial staff relations</td>
<td>2nd</td>
<td>3rd</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a good listener</td>
<td>3rd</td>
<td>4th</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3

*Priority Ranking of Subject Leader Role Triangulated*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Roles of Subject Leaders</th>
<th>SLs’ Ranking</th>
<th>Administrators’ Ranking</th>
<th>Teachers’ Ranking</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fostering good teaching and learning</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring student progress</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing school resources such as budget and other materials</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>6&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working on accomplishing institutional goals</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leading, supporting, inspiring, and motivating staff</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maintaining positive and collegial staff relations</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being a good listener</td>
<td>3&lt;sup&gt;rd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>4&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>