Profilling Student Leadership in Lebanese Public Secondary Schools: Perspectives of Principals, Teachers and Students

Samar Zeitoun, Norma Ghamrawi

Educational Leadership & Management, Faculty of Education, Lebanese University

Abstract
This study explored the perceptions of Lebanese public secondary schools principals, teachers and students pertaining to the profile of student leadership. The purpose was to examine the student leadership profile exemplified through the opportunities provided to the students inside and outside their schools and that can enhance their leadership skills. 62 Lebanese public secondary schools were investigated. The sample included one principal, 66 teachers and 66 students from each high school. The study was quantitative in nature and utilized three questionnaire addressed to principals, teachers and students. The questionnaire contained items related to students’ activities inside and outside school campus. Descriptive statistics was carried out using SPSS 18.0 for windows and frequencies, means and standard deviations were calculated. The findings revealed that the leadership profile of students at the researched schools was relatively unsatisfactory compared to international practice and as recommended in the literature. A very limited number of opportunities were made available to students allowing them to express their opinion, make decisions and be involved in school life. The study recommended exposing students to various activities and making their voices heard. These factors would lead to a better understanding of how a school might focus and further strengthen its commitment concerning the structured development of student leadership. The study highlighted the importance of encouraging all students to engage in developmental leadership experiences such as student government, club leadership, athletics, and community service so that they have the opportunity to gain leader efficacy and become motivated to engage in their own development.

Keywords
Student Leadership, Student Voice, Development, Skills, Profile.

Introduction
Leadership is often linked to school improvement (Bush, 2008) and making significant positive influence on schools and student outcomes (Leithwood & Levin, 2004; Bush, 2008; Day et al., 2009). Leadership development through student involvement has been a long-time goal of higher education, and as such, colleges and universities have oftentimes developed both formal and informal programs and activities that support leadership development opportunities for students. Student leadership within secondary schools is a critical issue worth investigating due to its dynamic nature and implications for the future, as well as to the striking dearth of literature associated with this subject (Archard, 2009; McNae, 2011). The preparation and establishment of a student leadership program at secondary school level is important for those involved in the educational process, as leadership experiences contribute positively to student development (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Myers, 2005), to the level of the school’s inclusion in the community (Hawkes, 1999) and to school culture (Freeborn, 2000).

B. Research Context
The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) has directed, in the context of developing and motivating creativity in education, a National Strategy for Education approved by the Council of Ministers that comprises a strategic plan that sets out a political framework consistent with a set of achievable goals for both public and vocational education as well as a detailed plan for each goal with a specific operational plan with leadership responsibilities to establish and implement all associated activities (MEHE, 2011).

One of the most prominent achievements in this area is the reformulation of a modern internal system of public education schools that allows them to operate within a broad area of decentralization and greater flexibility, particularly in the management of school affairs in all its components, school and civil society organizations. This aim was expected to be achieved through leadership development. The project aimed at achieving educational development and facilitating creative initiatives in education. Accordingly, amongst the major priorities set up were leadership development among the principals of public schools, and the capacity building of human resources to lead the school development process towards the development and promotion of intellectual skills of the learner. This study targeted public schools whose principals took part in the Leadership Development Program (LDP) that was implemented as part of achieving the National Strategy agenda.

B. Purpose of the Study
The purpose of this study was to explore how the leadership development for public schools principals has been cascaded to the level of students, and hence discern what kind of student leaders is being produced through its efforts. It was expected that a range of factors contributing to the development of student leadership would be elucidated from the study as well as how principals and teachers collaborated in enhancing students’ leadership potential development. It was also expected that the elucidation and consideration of these factors would lead to a better understanding of how a school might focus and further strengthen its commitment concerning the structured development of student leadership. The main research question was:

What is the profile of student leadership in the researched sample of schools?

This study was guided by the following research questions:
1. How do the perceptions of principals, teachers and students differ about how students serve their school community?
2. What are the students’ perceptions regarding opportunities offered to them inside and outside the school?

C. Importance of the Study
This study addressed how the levels of awareness students, principals and teachers pertaining to the impact of external forces.
and people on students’ leadership and vice versa. It is based on the assumption that students benefit from exposure to the diverse perspectives of leadership theory and practice (Anderson, 2007) and hence investigate the opportunities provided within the Lebanese public secondary schools so as to foster leadership development.

This research study tackles the nature of student leadership in secondary schools, and how it is managed in order to identify the profile of student leadership in such schools in Lebanon. It is developed out of the experiences that principals and administrators, who were involved in LDP, provided to students. The implementation of LDP in public schools led the researchers to ask questions about the extent school’s perception of its student leadership tallied with the perceptions of the teachers and the students themselves.

The preparation and establishment of a student leadership program at the secondary school level is important for those involved in the educational process, as leadership experiences contribute positively to student development (Chapman & Aspin, 2001; Myers, 2005), the level of the school’s inclusion in the community (Hawkes, 1999) and school culture (Freeborn, 2000).

II. Review of Related Literature

A. Leadership Definitions and Theories

Leadership has been a topic of research and study for centuries and yet there is no generally agreed definition (Gill, 2011; Northouse, 2013). In fact, there are well over a thousand definitions demonstrating that, whilst it is a common term, it has diverse meanings (Gill, 2011). These definitions suggest several components central to the phenomenon of leadership:

1. Leadership is a process; It stresses that leadership is a two-way, interactive event between leaders and followers rather than a linear, one-way event in which the leader affects the followers but not vice versa. However, in this ‘process’ definition, one can question if it is derived from the personal qualities (i.e. traits) of the leader, or whether a leader induces followership through what s/he does (i.e. a social process) (Grint, 2004).

2. Leadership involves influencing others; This includes subordinates and peers in an organizational context. Hence, does the leader exert an intentional, causal influence on the behaviour of followers or are their apparent actions determined by context and situation or even attributed retrospectively? (Bussley & Welch, 2014).

3. Leadership happens within the context of a group; This means that leadership is about influencing a group of people who are engaged in a common goal or purpose. But, is leadership embodied in individuals or groups and is it a purely human phenomenon? (Grint, 2004).

4. Leadership involves goal attainment; and these goals are shared by leaders and their followers. Leadership includes the achievement of goals. However, the question to be asked is the leader in charge (i.e. with formally allocated authority) or in front (i.e. with informal influence) (Davis & Darling-Hammond, 2015).

Several unique theories and approaches share a general concept of leadership. For example, Rost (1993) labels it as post-industrial, for Danielson (2016) it is meaning making in a community of practice, for Hallinger & Heck (2010) it is collaborative, for Pearce & Conger (2003) it is shared, and for Komives, Lucas, & McMahon (2006) it is relational. Approaches to leadership that remained leader-centric have continued to evolve, including approaches such as transformational (Bass & Avolio, 1994), charismatic (House, 1976) and authentic (Avolio & Gardner, 2005).

Although many contemporary approaches might still be described as trait or skills theories (Rath & Conchie, 2008), they represent a revisited approach to traits such that everyone engaged with a group can make an important contribution to the leadership process, not just the positional leaders. Emphasis is now put on the diverse traits and skills that contribute to a good leadership process (Northouse, 2013).

B. Student Leadership

1. Definition of Student Leadership

Student leadership can be viewed from different perspectives. Leadership can be taught, learned, and students can develop as leaders in a “Formal Leadership Programs”. In this perspective, student leaders are appointed, selected, or elected; this implies a specific designated group, rather than leadership for all. Student leadership is hence seen as divisive, undemocratic (in the sense of being appointed and/or controlled by senior teaching staff, rather than reflecting the wishes of the student body) and counter-productive to the ideas of leadership-for-all and the preparation of all students for citizenship.

In an alternative view of student leadership, Hargreaves & Shirley (2009), state that all students must be partners for change and actively involved in the governance of the school as they all need the opportunity to develop leadership. Leadership is developed through enhancing students’ capacity and knowledge as part of their curricula. These programs tend to be comprehensive, large in scope, and integrative (i.e. concerned with developing holistic capacities in students leadership) (Komives et al., 2011). These programs are comprised of three key dimensions: students, strategies, structure. Cocurricular programs also provide students with the opportunity to develop as leadership competencies and knowledge outside the classroom environment (Komives et al., 2011).

Other researchers admitted that the concept of a more comprehensive leadership model as opposed to the elected/selected student leaders, created new challenges for schools (Lavery, 2003). They argue for the false dichotomy between the two strands of student leadership. Woods (2005) contended that what might seem like a true, democratic student voice might be highly influenced by professional control. He pointed out that most School Councils, while supposedly being democratic organisms within a school’s organisational structure, are in fact designed and set up “for students, but not by students” (p.65). He stated his belief that students need free space for the facilitation of independence, confidence and creativity, while accepting that there is a perpetual tension between the desire of the school to hold on to what it feels is fixed, and allowing the students the free space to challenge and question. Fielding (2006) stated that student leadership interface tends to be formal and traditional. He argued that it merely replicates hierarchy and the culture of excellence has an impersonal orientation and is purely functional.
2. Student leadership and leadership types

Student leadership development programs meant to result in more ethical leadership behaviors and decision-making post-graduation. They are also meant to enhance distributed leadership through shared roles and decisions, as well as other aspects such as transformational and transactional leadership. Table 1 summarizes how the study benefitted from different perspectives of leadership to investigate student leadership.

Table 1: Types of leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Leadership</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Items in questionnaires</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ethical (Ariely, 2012)</td>
<td>Behavioral ethics postulates that ethical/unethical behavior and decision-making are a result of both internal forces (e.g., the leader’s intentions and moral character) and external forces (e.g., the norms and social influence of the leader’s organization)</td>
<td>Students participating in discussions, about peer support</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic leadership</td>
<td>Self-awareness, acting in accordance with values, balanced and unbiased decision-making and building trust-based relationships (e.g., Ilies, Morgeson, &amp; Nahrgang, 2005)</td>
<td>Students participating in societal acts,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Servant leadership</td>
<td>Focus on follower’s growth and empowerment, a sense of community stewardship, and further emphasis on ethics, humility and moral behavior (van Dierendonck &amp; Nuijten, 2011) Such leaders demonstrate care for and nurture those within a group, organisation or society (Greenleaf) in their attempts to express unlimited liability for others, build community, and to use power and persuasion ethically</td>
<td>Students participating in school cleanliness, hygiene, school routines, cafeteria, volunteering in parents meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distributed (Spillane et al., 2001; Harris, 2008)</td>
<td>Spillane et al. suggested that distributed leadership is best understood as “practice distributed over leaders, followers and their situation and incorporates the activities of multiple groups of individuals” (p. 20). Additionally, this practice implies a social distribution of leadership (Harris, 2008) where the leadership function is “stretched over the work of a number of individuals and the task is accomplished through the interaction of multiple leaders” (Spillane et al., p. 20). Leadership capability and capacity is not fixed, but can be developed and extended (Harris, 2008)</td>
<td>Students meet with decision makers regarding clubs, class delegates, suggest ideas pertaining to school rules</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transactional</td>
<td>Transactional leadership maintains the status quo (Locke, 1999), is task and relationship oriented (Tuohy, 1999), and “involves an exchange process between leaders and followers, whereby followers get immediate, tangible rewards for carrying out the leader’s orders” (Locke, p. 5).</td>
<td>Students represent school, community service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transformational</td>
<td>Transformational leadership was described as leadership that seeks to change the status quo (Locke), involves leaders motivating followers to improve present attitudes and assumptions (Friedman, 2004; Yukl, 1994), and is principally concerned with the notions of purpose and vision (DuBrin, 2007).</td>
<td>Students participate in discussion about career goals…</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
III. Methodology

A. The Sample

Only secondary schools constituted the population of the study as they were the schools whose principals were trained through LDP. A random sample of 62 secondary schools who successfully completed LDP training was created. This accounts for 1 principal, 66 teachers and 66 students from each school. The 62 secondary schools identified for this study through random sampling share quite similar backgrounds with regard to their school facilities, funding models, and more importantly, their performance patterns as this is defined and controlled by the Ministry of Education (MEHE). The random sample increased the validity and accuracy of leadership development can occur in a wide variety of settings, such as service learning, volunteering . . . and other social activism, which would not be included in traditional leadership development programs.

B. The Research Instrument

Structured questionnaires were devised and constituted the research instrument for this study. The literature review as well as the exploratory phase, were used to construct three different questionnaires, one for principals, another for teachers, and a third for students. The purpose of the questionnaires was to obtain information about participants, ranging from their demographic information including the background of their schools, principals and teachers qualifications, to the opportunities provided to student leadership. The questionnaires covered several variables adopted for this study. Each of the variables consisted of sub-questions with a three or four point Likert scale to determine the extent to which the participants agreed to the statements proposed. Since the purpose of this study was to investigate the impact of a leadership program for principals on nurturing students’ leadership in secondary schools, the content and aims of the leadership in schools in general and LDP in particular were obtained from the literature review, and analysis of the leadership training program LDP for principals. The students’ leadership characteristics were determined from the literature review. Three relatively parallel questionnaires were created by the author to collect the necessary data. The questionnaires contained categories related to distributed leadership practices at schools, including leadership decision-making and leadership behaviour, students’ leadership and challenges.

Table 2: Previous Studies on Student Leadership

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author(s)</th>
<th>Aim of study</th>
<th>Results of study</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wielkiewicz et al. (2005)</td>
<td>validate the Leadership Attitude and Belief Scale (LABS-III) against a measure with a more traditional, position-based definition of leadership</td>
<td>leadership development can occur in a wide variety of settings, such as service learning, volunteering . . . and other social activism, which would not be included in traditional leadership development programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dugan (2006)</td>
<td>leadership development as well as the role of involvement in leadership learning, using a social change model</td>
<td>leadership is a relational, transformational, process-oriented, learned, and changed directed phenomenon.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schneider, Erhart and Erhart (2002)</td>
<td>identify potential school student leaders</td>
<td>student leaders are appointed, selected, or elected, but that again implies a specific designated group, rather than leadership for all.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hargreaves &amp; Shirley (2009)</td>
<td>view of student leadership</td>
<td>all students must be partners for change and actively involved in the governance of the school as they all need the opportunity to develop leadership.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghamrawi, Ghamrawi &amp; Shal (2018)</td>
<td>Student Leadership through the Lens of Lebanese Public School Students</td>
<td>students’ perception of leadership around 5 areas: 1) modeling the way; 2) inspiring a shared vision; 3) challenging the process; 4) enabling others to act; and 5) encouraging the heart.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghamrawi (2013)</td>
<td>potential of a professional development model in terms of inaugurating student leadership when they get involved in professional development activities of teachers</td>
<td>When they observe leadership in action, they probably tend to acquire related skills.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
During development of the questionnaires, close attention was paid to the alignment of the questionnaires, the research questions and the theoretical perspectives of this study. Grix (2004) emphasized the importance of this approach.

"One common mistake in students’ projects is a lack of connection between the theoretical section, the purpose of which is to shed light on the empirical reality, and the actual research undertaken, with the result that both sections could, in fact, stand on their own." (p. 102)

The questionnaire clearly explained that participants’ participation was completely voluntary and that there were no incentives to participate and no punishments for declining. The participants may have chosen to quit the survey and return to class at any time they chose. Additionally, participants were not asked to enter any specifically identifying information, thereby ensuring their anonymity.

The nature of the study did not require parental consent be obtained for students under the age of 18. Principals were notified in advance through each school that a study was going to be conducted and a random sample of students would be included. Principals have the mission and authority of informing parents. The questions in the survey were not controversial or sensitive and the researcher did not anticipate any significant problems obtaining permission to conduct the study.

As for the distribution and collection of the questionnaires, the researcher approached MEHE as the system in Lebanon is highly centralized and approval should be obtained from the ministry. The directors in each school do not have discretion to approve surveys that meet guidelines without MEHE approval. Including participants from a wide range of public school settings (the six different directorates in Lebanon) widened the applicability of the results.

Once MEHE gave approval for the research to be conducted, the researcher contacted the school principals in each high school to arrange for sampling and testing. The administration at each school was involved to provide a complete listing of students. A random sample increased the validity and accuracy of the data collected (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007). The validity and accuracy of data collected from a truly random sample is preferred over other methods.

C. Methods of Data Analysis

The questionnaires were translated into Arabic. Translation was verified to ensure the consistency of the terms between English and Arabic. This was done to ensure that “the wording is understandable and verify [that] the meaning attributed to them corresponds to the meaning that the researcher has (meaning validation)” (Pourtois and Desmet, 2007, p. 194). A readjustment of the terms in English and Arabic was made.

The first steps for analysing the quantitative data from the three questionnaires included converting the raw data to meaningful scores using Statistical Program for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted including mean and standard deviation to determine the general trends in the data. The data collected was explored for each questionnaire separately and trends were also examined across the three questionnaires.

IV. Results

A. Demographic Data

1. Principals’ Demographics
Fig. 1 indicates that most of the principals were females, and had a prior experience as teachers. Most of the investigated principals had less than 10 years service as principals, and have between 11-20 years work experience at schools. The sample chosen was from the different governorates in Lebanon but the highest percentage was from north Lebanon. This is consistent with the fact that North Lebanon accounts for the largest number of public schools in Lebanon.

2. Teachers' Demographics

![Teachers' Demographics](image1)

Fig. 2: Teachers' Demographics

Fig. 2 indicates that most of the teachers investigated were females, they have less than 10 years experience; the majority teach languages.

3. Students' Demographics

![Students' Demographics](image2)

Fig. 3: Students' Demographics

The sample contained almost equal number of males and females. They were chosen from the theregades in secondary level: 10, 11 and 12.
B. Research Question 1:
How do the perceptions of principals, teachers and students differ about how students serve their school community?
To answer the first research question, the main categories from questionnaire were related to the opportunities provided to students to take decisions at the school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students meet with the principals to discuss their matters</td>
<td>78% No</td>
<td>91% No</td>
<td>98% No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in decisions related to clubs</td>
<td>81% No</td>
<td>89% No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students could represent school outside it</td>
<td>78% No</td>
<td>81% No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enjoy peer support</td>
<td>82% No</td>
<td>89% No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enjoy leadership roles</td>
<td>71% No</td>
<td>81% don’t know</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students complete questionnaires that are used to inform change</td>
<td>71% No</td>
<td>92% No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students inform a myriad of options to carry out projects</td>
<td>81% yes</td>
<td>74% No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enjoy options to carryout community service</td>
<td>53% yes</td>
<td>84% No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students enjoy school guidance system in school</td>
<td>53% yes</td>
<td>91% No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Opportunities to Take Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students are allowed to suggest ideas pertaining to their T/L</td>
<td>56.5% No</td>
<td>86% No</td>
<td>99% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students are allowed to suggest ideas pertaining to school rules</td>
<td>88% yes</td>
<td>87% No</td>
<td>81% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in the selection of class delegates</td>
<td>83% yes</td>
<td>81% do not know</td>
<td>85% no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Interpersonal skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Helping in organizing parents’ meetings</td>
<td>100% No</td>
<td>99% No</td>
<td>100% No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in improving school setting</td>
<td>58% No</td>
<td>87% No</td>
<td>93.7% No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in discussions that emphasize the importance of achieving educational goals: success, future careers</td>
<td>69.5% No</td>
<td>99% No</td>
<td>100% No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participating in personal goals achievement discussions, group work, Peer Support &amp; Guidance Programs</td>
<td>69.5% No</td>
<td>93% No</td>
<td>87% No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principals, teachers and students agreed that students do not participate in parents meetings, improving their school settings, and in discussions about guidance future careers, school cleanliness, hygiene, cafeteria... Whereas teachers assured that students are provided opportunities for extracurricular activities, students and principals disagreed.

Table 5: Participation in School Decisions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Principals</th>
<th>Teachers</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Extracurricular Activities</td>
<td>55% no</td>
<td>90% yes</td>
<td>69% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food choices</td>
<td>83% no</td>
<td>87% no</td>
<td>97.3% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Cleanliness</td>
<td>84% no</td>
<td>96% no</td>
<td>100% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Hygiene</td>
<td>84% no</td>
<td>95% no</td>
<td>100% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School Clubs offering</td>
<td>84% no</td>
<td>90% no</td>
<td>95% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting school routines &amp; decisions</td>
<td>87% no</td>
<td>90% no</td>
<td>100% no</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions about the Canteen or Cafeteria Matters</td>
<td>87% no</td>
<td>94% no</td>
<td>97% no</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Principals, teachers and students did not have the same perspective regarding the students participating in selecting class delegates, and about students suggesting ideas pertaining to school rules. They all agreed that students are not allowed to suggest new ideas and choices. Principals and teachers agreed that students cannot meet principals to discuss their own matters, their participation to clubs, being provided opportunities to enjoy peer support, give their opinions through questionnaires. However they had different opinions regarding opportunities provided for projects, community service and school guidance. This raises a concern about to what extent teachers are involved in decision making at school and are involved in the school life.

C. Research Question 2:
What are the students’ perceptions regarding leadership opportunities offered inside and outside the school?

Students were asked for detailed answers about what exactly secondary schools provide to them inside and outside campuses. The data tables revealed that students are not provided activities such as scouts, press clubs, trainings, whether inside or outside campuses. Inside and outside campus, they can participate in sports related activities and volunteering, environmental. Inside campuses they mostly participate to celebrations for national days.
Opportunities offered by school to students inside campus...

### Table 6: Students’ participation in activities inside school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Scout Activities-in (99%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Environmental Activities-in (53%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Sports Clubs-in (86%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Academic Clubs-in (94%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Press Clubs-in (86%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Art Clubs-in (67%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students participate in Literacy Activities-in (86%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Celebration Activities-in (97%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Students participate in Leadership tasks-in (88%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 7: Students’ participation in activities outside school campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Art Clubs-out (82%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Environmental Activities-out (90%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Press Clubs-out (92%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Scout Activities-out (88%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Literacy Activities-out (86%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Academic Clubs-out (89%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Leadership tasks-out (92%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Collective Activities such as Protests –out (96%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in training-out (93%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 8: Students’ perspectives about leadership opportunities offered by school

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Never</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Frequently</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in Societal acts (ex. boycotting) (94%)</td>
<td>Students participate in National Discussions (91%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Discussions about global issues (82%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students participate in public communication (officials-newspapers..) (88%)</td>
<td>Students participate in Societal Acts (ex. Sign petition) (82%)</td>
<td>Students participate in SCCC's Social Activities (90%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding awareness, the national curricula provide students to make discussions about global issues, discussions of society related matters and cultures and habits. However, no or little opportunities are provided regarding societal acts, public communications, …

### V. Summary and Conclusion

There are two main strands that are prevalent in the literature on student leadership. The first looks mainly at students still in a full or quasi prefectship role. The other strand, regards student leadership in the context of student voice, which is much more in alignment with the UNICEF (1990) belief of the student’s right to speak and be listened to. The differences in types and amount of leadership activities also suggest that the context of leadership may be but one variable that impacts the leadership experience (Hallenbeck et al., 2004). Hence the current study investigated leadership as a complex concept due to the complexity of the Lebanese context.

The above study revealed that students believe that several skills should be developed during their instruction (Anderson, 2016). These skills are categorized into technical knowledge (Stronge, 1998) such as specialized knowledge (e.g. learning about cultures), human skills such as the ability to work with and through others (peer support, group work..) time management skills, and public-speaking skills (class delegates…) (Gallagher, Golin, & Kelleher, 1992) and conceptual skills such as judgment and ability to see the big picture (Stronge, 1998). The results indicated that students are trained on specialized knowledge related to their curricula, but lack training on ability to work together, peer support, as well as public speaking skills since they are not allowed to represent school in events, carry out community service. Students also are not trained on making judgments since they are not given questionnaires to inform changes at school.

Studies on leadership of school leaders who promote distributed leadership revealed that the prominent skills are to build rapport with others, deal with change and find and utilize the resources, as well as manage their work and build skills and confidence in others (Lieberman, Saxl, & Miles, 1988). The important leadership skills for school leaders include supporting important ideas and value, inviting others to reflect and inquire, making the lives of others more sensible and meaningful and promoting positive interactions among school staff, students, and parents. All participants agreed that students are not allowed to suggest ideas pertaining to teaching and learning, school rules. Even class delegates are appointed.
To succeed in their schools, students need to be challenged in order to solve the problems reactively. This requires the ability to reason critically, and express themselves fluently, flexibility in thoughts and actions and to motivate others. The activities inside and outside the school campus must be designed to develop students’ leadership potential (Hensel, 1991). Educating to promote these skills is not obvious in the above results. “Many students are offered the opportunity to participate in extracurricular activities, but it is typical to see no formal instruction on leadership concepts and skills in school” (Bisland, Karnes, & Baker Cobb, 2004, p. 51). Activities such as scouts, academic clubs, press clubs, and environmental activities can enhance their potential.

Furthermore, leadership development programs for youth have the potential to produce increased self-confidence and responsibility, a sense of pride, motivation to start activities, better communication skills, interpersonal skills, and time management skills. Gardner (1990) argues that “opportunities for students to experience the shared responsibilities of group action and to learn the skills required to make a group function effectively” are needed (p.168).

For secondary students, Cress et al. (2001) identified the hallmarks of high school leadership in students as experiential education and social development. Research shows that involvement in student organizations appears to have positive effects on students’ total academic experience. Early leadership experiences provide individuals with the tools they need to succeed academically in the workforce and in other social arenas (Cooper et al., 1994).

The study revealed mediocre efforts by principals and teachers to build personal relationships with students, enhancing their ability to communicate ideas and values, their listening and problem-solving skills, and their involvement in student organizations or clubs. All the aforementioned have a positive effect on the students’ overall academic experience (Cooper et al., 1994).

Institutions around the world are becoming more and more conscious of the new requirements for graduates profile, and thus design programs to promote graduates’ leadership skills. The value of leadership development is nowadays recognized in schools as a means of student development. It has been documented that participation in leadership activities has high impact on student development. This has been associated with gains in practical and interpersonal competence (Kuh, 1993), intellectual development (Baxter Magolda, 2004), development of altruism, and commitment to common social purposes. Hence, programs to promote leadership development have taken both curricular (Riggio, Ciulla, & Sorenson, 2003) and cocurricular forms.

B. Limitations

Three factors limited the designed scope of the study. First, the research was confined deliberately to public schools in Lebanon whose principals were trained with LDP. Consequently, the researcher is not in a position to generalise the findings to other public schools or to different contexts such as private schools.

Second, the research design was quantitative based on survey analysis. So the results cannot always represent the actual occurring, in a generalized form. Also, the respondents had limited options of responses, based on the selection made by the researcher. More detailed answers could have been provided through a qualitative study to investigate how students perceive their leadership skills.

Finally access to secondary schools required approval from the MEHE to have access to principals, teachers and students. This step was time consuming due to bureaucratic constraints; this might have affected the number of schools investigated.

C. Recommendations

The above results revealed the need to enhance the student leadership profile at the schools by providing opportunities for students to contribute in a positive way to their school and providing them more voice, strengthening the accountability culture within the school for all members to ensure shared responsibility for student engagement. This requires students to become responsible for their learning and be connected to the school and the community.

Strengthening ‘student voice’ can be done through engaging, enabling, encouraging and empowering students to be active in their learning journey and displaying consideration, tolerance and empathy towards others. The results revealed also that students must be given a role in enhancing the physical learning environment to support their learning, and wellbeing.

Rewarding and acknowledging students are for the contribution they make, allows strengthening the accountability culture within the school for all members to ensure shared responsibility for their engagement.

References


