

HAIGAZIAN UNIVERSITY

COPING STRATEGIES AGAINST BURNOUT IN SCHOOL LEADERS:  
A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SCHOOL LEADERS IN LEBANON AND UGANDA

by

LOKWANG KORYANG CASIMIRO

Beirut, Lebanon

April 2019

**COPING STRATEGIES AGAINST BURNOUT IN SCHOOL  
LEADERS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SCHOOL LEADERS  
IN LEBANON AND UGANDA**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of  
Haigazian University  
by Lokwang Koryang Casimiro  
for the degree of  
Master of Arts in  
Educational Administration and Supervision

Beirut, Lebanon  
April 2019

COPING STRATEGIES AGAINST BURNOUT IN SCHOOL LEADERS: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SCHOOL LEADERS IN LEBANON AND UGANDA

Thesis Release Form

I, Lokwang Koryang Casimiro,

authorise Haigazian University to supply copies of my thesis to libraries or individuals upon request.

do not authorise Haigazian University to supply copies of my thesis to libraries or individuals for a period of two years starting with the date of the defence.

Signature

---

Date

---



COPING STRATEGIES AGAINST BURNOUT IN SCHOOL LEADERS: A  
COMPARATIVE STUDY OF SCHOOL LEADERS IN LEBANON AND UGANDA

By

Lokwang Koryang Casimiro

is accepted by the Graduate Thesis Committee as satisfying the thesis requirements for the  
degree Master of Arts

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Thesis Committee Chairperson

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Thesis Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Thesis Committee Member

\_\_\_\_\_

Haigazian University

April, 2019

Copyright© 2019

This document is copyrighted material. Under copyright law, no parts of this document may be reproduced without the expressed permission of the author.

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

With joy and gratitude to God, I would like to acknowledge all those who, through their invaluable help and support, have seen me arrive thus far and made this study come to fruition. While the list is long, I would like to mention here a few persons and institutions.

Sincere gratitude to my thesis advisor, Dr. Hagop Yacoubian and committee members. Dr. Yacoubian's probing insights and feedback were very helpful throughout the writing of this thesis. In equal measure, my sincere gratitude to Dr. Yara Hilal Jurdi and Dr. Hanine C. Hout whose invaluable and constructive feedback, comments, insights and suggestions greatly improved my perspectives and writing beyond this thesis.

I would like to appreciate the administration of Haigazian University who, in the two years of my graduate courses, offered financial aid via graduate assistantship. Sincere thanks to all the respondents without whom this study could not have been possible. I would like to thank them for their availability despite the pressures of your jobs.

I would like to offer heartfelt gratitude to the Society of Jesus, and specifically to the community of St. Ignatius in Beirut, for their immeasurable support and for making me feel a part of them during my stay among them. And cordial gratitude to all my Comboni family, and especially the leadership, for this opportunity and all the support they offered.

To them all, my heartfelt thanks could not be expressed in simple words. Yet a simple "thank you" may be all that matters when we run short of words. May God bless you all.

## **ABSTRACT**

This study explores, compares and contrasts coping strategies used by school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda against risks of burnout. Typically, school leaders' work is stressful as it is characterised by multiple, undefined and often conflicting roles and expectations despite time, funding and staffing constraints; insufficient preparation; institutional interference; and lack of supports systems. These lead to emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and job dissatisfaction. Yet there are hardly any empirical and theoretical studies in Lebanon and Uganda that address burnout in school leaders. This study adopted a grounded theory approach to gauge coping strategies used by 16 school leaders selected using purposive and theoretical sampling. Data collection and analysis were simultaneously conducted, with data analysis determining what data to collect next until saturation was reached. Findings revealed few differences in coping strategies at the national context. However, personal and school contexts contributed to variations in coping strategies. Common coping strategies used by school leaders in both Lebanon and Uganda included: sharing leadership responsibilities, understanding school culture, adaptability, balancing work and personal life, building support and collaboration, time management, expertise and professional development. A coping strategy unique to few participants in Lebanon was building a culture of trust, and operating with a leadership team. In Uganda, schools had a leadership structure in which the school leader had two deputies. The leadership structure also gave some responsibilities to student leaders. The study recommends that school leaders adopt leadership styles and school culture that promote shared responsibility to offset stress, strain and possible burnout.

# CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	vi
ABSTRACT.....	vii
CONTENTS.....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	xii
LIST OF TABLES .....	xiii

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION.....	1
A. Overview of Burnout .....	1
B. Definition and Clarifications.....	2
1. Burnout. ....	2
2. Burnout in school leaders. ....	4
3. Coping strategies. ....	5
4. School leaders.....	6
5. Private schools.....	6
C. Study Context.....	7
1. Location and demographic characteristics. ....	7
2. Education system. ....	8
3. School leadership structure.....	10
4. Decentralisation in Uganda. ....	12
D. Factors Leading to Burnout in School Leaders.....	14
E. Coping Strategies against Risks of Burnout .....	17
F. Situation of Burnout in Lebanon and in Uganda .....	17
1. Control and autonomy. ....	18
2. Training and skills. ....	19
3. Balancing the different demands and expectations. ....	21
4. Stability on the job.....	21
G. Rationale .....	22

1.	Existence of empirical and theoretical gap.....	22
2.	Choice of study contexts.....	24
3.	Choice of methodology. ....	24
4.	Theoretical framework. ....	25
5.	Comparing Lebanon and Uganda.....	28
6.	Selection of schools.....	30
H.	Purpose of the Study .....	31
I.	Significance.....	31
J.	Research Questions .....	31
Chapter 2 LITERATURE REVIEW .....		32
A.	School culture .....	32
B.	School structure and its influence in the wellbeing of school leaders .....	35
A.	Models of Stress and Burnout in the Literature .....	42
1.	Demand-control model.....	42
2.	Demand-support-constraints model.....	44
3.	Person-environment fit model. ....	44
4.	Effort-reward imbalance model.....	46
5.	Effort-distress model. ....	47
B.	Factors Leading to Burnout .....	48
1.	Work overload resulting in job stress.....	48
2.	Managing relationships.....	49
3.	Lack of adequate preparation. ....	50
4.	Insufficient funding. ....	51
5.	Personal variables.....	51
6.	Organisational factors.....	52
6.	External environment. ....	52
C.	Coping Strategies against Burnout.....	52

1.	Revisiting the causes of stress.....	53
2.	Control-based interventions.....	53
3.	Provision of support systems, training and professional growth.....	54
4.	Distributed leadership.....	54
Chapter 3 METHODOLOGY.....		55
A.	Choice of Research Paradigm.....	55
B.	Choice of Methodology.....	56
C.	Overview of Grounded Theory.....	56
D.	Selection of Participants.....	58
E.	Data Collection.....	65
F.	Data Analysis.....	68
G.	Quality.....	77
H.	Ethical Concerns.....	77
Chapter 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS.....		79
A.	Challenges that Factor Burnout in School Leaders.....	79
1.	Work overload and time constraints.....	79
2.	Organisational structure and culture.....	83
3.	Autonomy and control.....	85
4.	Support and collaboration.....	87
5.	Government policies.....	88
6.	Funding constraints.....	88
7.	Prior training.....	89
8.	Coping with change.....	90
9.	Staffing constraints.....	91
10.	Personal factor.....	92
11.	Newness.....	93

12. Pressure from the Media.....	94
B. School Leaders Coping Strategies against Risks of Burnout.....	95
1. Lebanon. ....	96
2. Uganda.....	105
C. Comparisons Between Lebanon and Uganda .....	116
1. Similarity in coping strategies. ....	118
2. Issues unique to Lebanon. ....	122
3. Issues unique to Uganda. ....	123
References.....	154
APPENDIX I Participant information letter .....	178
APPENDIX II Participant consent Form.....	180
APPENDIX III First Set of Interview Questions.....	182
APPENDIX IV Examples of Second Interview Questions .....	184

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure		Page
1.	Representation of the leadership structure in Uganda's schools	13
2.	An Example of the First Coding Process	71
3.	An Example of How Initial Code Labels Were Assigned	72
4.	Job roles, expectations and challenges faced by school leaders	84
5.	Representation of the relationship between context and coping strategies	129

## LIST OF TABLES

Table		page
1.	Demographic characteristic denoting school location and gender	60
2.	Number of schools served by participants	61
3.	Further demographic characteristic of participants and their schools	63
4.	Examples of coding process	73
5.	Summary of challenges factoring burnout in school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda	96
6.	Summary of coping strategies of school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda	97
7.	How culture influences stress in school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda	103



## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Overview of Burnout

The pressure school leaders undergo in the exercise of their job roles can be overbearing. According to Klocko and Wells (2015) and Kaufman (2019), although modern school leaders still practise educational leadership as in the past, the increased expectations and demands for accountability by governments place more stress on them. Friedman (2002) further notes that the educational environment focuses much attention on school leaders as far as school success is concerned, placing on them an overwhelming plethora of responsibilities, information perplexity and emotional anxiety. As a consequence, the excessive job demands, external pressure and expectations school leaders experience, together with decreasing decision latitudes (control and autonomy), drive school leaders into stress, strain and into burnout if no buffers, support systems or coping strategies are put in place (Beausaert, Froehlich, Devos & Riley, 2016; Payne & Morrison, 2001). However, the consequences of stress, strain and burnout is not just a concern for school leaders' wellbeing only, but also for the wellbeing of the school and all its stakeholders since school leaders have to make decisions that affect the school and all involved in it very often (Kaufman, 2019).

The purpose of this research study was to explore, understand and describe coping strategies that sixteen school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda used (or continue to use) to address risks of burnout based on their personal, school and societal contexts, and to compare the different coping strategies according to personal cultures (Blumer, 1969; Carter & Fuller, 2015; Davis & Davis, 2006), and organisational and societal cultures (Dimmock & Walker, 2000). According to Valsiner (2009), although personal culture is derived from collective

culture, it still remains highly autonomous of collective culture. Personal culture herein refers to an individual's system of beliefs, values and convictions. On the one hand, organisational culture refers to the culture of a group of individuals occurring at the school level (Dimmock & Walker, 2000) and it consists of a system of shared norms, values and basic assumptions (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). On the other hand, societal culture occurs at the national level (Dimmock & Walker, 2000).

Thus, the first chapter introduces burnout, and school leadership in Lebanon and Uganda; the second chapter explores briefly school cultures, school structure, the factors leading to burnout and possible coping strategies according to the existing literature; and the third chapter deals with the methodology for the study; the fourth chapter presents the research findings; and the fifth chapter presents the discussions and conclusions.

## **Definition and Clarifications**

### **Burnout.**

Studies on burnout have their origins in social psychology rather than clinical psychology although this field is today torn between social and clinical standpoints because burnout shares many characteristics with the clinical syndrome of depression (Leiter, 1993). According to Schaufeli, Leiter and Maslach (2009), the term burnout was first introduced to psychological literature and social discourses about forty-five years ago, and (by the year 2009) they estimated a figure of over 6,000 books, journal articles and dissertations on burnout. It was Freudenberger who first adopted the term in 1974 from commonplace use in reference to the destructive impact of chronic drug abuse (Iacovides, Fountoulakis, Kaprinis & Kaprinis, 2003; Schaufeli et al., 2009). Freudenberger then appropriated the term to describe the progressive emotional drainage, reduced motivation and decreased commitment

among volunteers of St Mark's Free Clinic in New York that provided services for drug addicts and homeless people (Schaufeli et al., 2009, p. 205). It was about the same time that Maslach and her colleagues independently, while interviewing social services workers, learned that these workers experienced emotional exhaustion, developed negativity about their clients, and began to doubt their professional competence - a phenomenon which practitioners referred to as burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2009, pp. 205 - 206).

There are many definitions of burnout. However, the common characteristics of burnout revolve around an individual's response (Friedman, 2002; Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Valcour, 2016; Whitaker, 1996) to chronic emotional strain-making stressors (Friedman, 2002; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Whitaker, 1996) that overwhelm an individual's ability to cope as a result of addressing the needs of others (Friedman, 2002; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Valcour, 2016) leading to emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation, feelings of personal and professional unaccomplishment (Friedman, 2002; Iacovides et al., 2003; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Valcour, 2016; Whitaker, 1996). However, emotional exhaustion is the central symptom of burnout (Iacovides et al., 2003; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Valcour, 2016).

Basically, emotional exhaustion involves a drop in work energy and feeling of being emotionally drained; depersonalisation entails a mental detachment from the job and/or people involved in the job; and unaccomplishment implies feelings of incompetence and dissatisfaction over task accomplishment (Beusaert et al., 2016; Schaufeli et al., 2009). Some of the consequences of burnout include reduction in productivity and effectiveness in work (Beusaert et al., 2016; Valcour, 2016), presenteeism and absenteeism, illness, mental

and behavioural disorders, and deterioration in social and family relationships (Beausaert et al., 2016, p. 348).

In this thesis, burnout in school leaders refers to the physical and emotional exhaustion, depersonalisation and feelings of personal and professional unaccomplishment resulting from excessive job-related demands, expectations and pressures from the school's internal and external environments. Therefore, in an attempt to identify school leaders' coping strategies, the interview questions in this thesis paid attention to the presence of stressors, strain, emotional exhaustion, feelings of depersonalisation, role-specific alienation, inefficacy and feelings of unaccomplishment (Friedman, 2002; Maslach & Leiter, 2016; Maslach et al., 2001; Schaufeli et al., 2009; Whitaker, 1996), and how the respective school leaders interviewed dealt with these features.

### **Burnout in school leaders.**

Although this thesis concerns itself with burnout in school leaders, burnout is by no means limited to school leaders only. Burnout is a phenomenon that can occur in any of the professionals such as doctors, nurses, teachers, school leaders or social workers, who are in daily contact with people (Iacovides et al., 2003; Leventis, Papakitsos, Karakiozis & Argyriou, 2017; Schaufeli et al., 2009) or any other profession that demands creativity (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

The connection between the experience of the volunteers of St Mark's Free Clinic and social service workers (mentioned on p. 4) on the one hand, and school leaders on the other hand, is that their job demands involves dealing with and providing services for people on a daily basis. Similar to the observation of Freudenberger and the findings of Maslach and her colleagues, Maxwell and Riley (2017) found that because the school leaders' job involves

social human interactions, the emotional labour accentuated by emotional demands results in burnout and job dissatisfaction much higher than that of managers in other fields.

Existing literature illustrates that school leaders are often at risk of burnout due to excessive demands, expectations and pressure from the external environment and/or from the multitude of tasks they have to fulfil within the school internal environment (Copland, 2001; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Leventis et al., 2017; Whitaker, 1996). According to Bedi and Kukemelk (2018), there are a lot of policies and goals that put high expectations on school leaders to provide quality education. However, policy makers are ever silent when it comes to strategies for achieving these goals and demands, as well as being silent on issues of job stress in school leaders who are the key policy implementers (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018). This places excessive administrative stress and, consequently, emotional stress on school leaders who have to devise their own means of coping (Poirel & Yvon, 2014).

### **Coping strategies.**

Coping entails a variety of strategies aimed at altering or avoiding job-related stressors (De Rijk, Le Blanc & Schaufeli, 1998). Scheier, Weintraub and Carver (1986) and Demerouti (2015) described coping strategies from two angles: problem-focused coping, and emotion-focused coping. According to Scheier et al. (1986), problem-focused coping strategies involve actions aimed at eliminating or sidestepping the source of stress (p. 1258); while emotion-focused strategies aim at reducing or effacing “the emotional distress associated with, or cued by, the stressful situation” (p. 1258).

In this thesis, the term coping strategies refers to specific behavioural and psychological efforts, buffers and support systems that school leaders employ in active or

avoidant response to antecedents of burnout or burnout itself (Beausaert et al., 2016; Friedman, 2002; Payne & Morrison, 2001).

### **School leaders.**

The term school leaders is used in this thesis in reference to school principals (as used in Lebanon) and headteachers or headmasters/headmistresses (as used in Uganda). In the case of Lebanon, it also includes heads of sections, namely, elementary school principals and secondary school principals. Uganda has a school structure in which primary and secondary schools have separate physical and operational administrative structures, that is, primary schools are always detached from secondary schools.

### **Private schools.**

This study focused on school leaders in private schools. According to Harma (2011), the nature of private schools can take many forms depending on the actors operating it. Such actors may be commercially oriented private individuals or groups of individuals, local communities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), or faith-based organisations, with respective actors having their own rationale or motive for their interest in education.

In many countries, schools financed through taxes and administered directly by the state are often identified as public schools in contrast to private schools that are run and financed by private individuals or organisations. In Uganda, the term use to describe state run schools that are financed using public taxes is government schools as opposed to private schools. Government schools in Uganda are in reality only government-aided since schools fully funded by the government hardly exist (Hallam, Hite, Hite & Mugimu, 2010) even after

the introduction of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007.

According to Hamdan (2013), there are three types of schools in Lebanon as identified by the Educational Centre for Research and Development (ECRD) that is attached to the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). These are state (or public) schools, free-private schools and private schools (Hamdan, 2013). State schools are free of charge public schools run by the MEHE, and learners in such schools pay only a registration nominal fee that is used to cover unforeseen expenses (Hamdan, 2013). As the term denotes, free-private schools refer to schools run by the faith-based organisations, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), private individuals or local communities, and are in principle supposed to be free, not for profit institutions because they are subsidised by the Lebanese MEHE (Hamdan, 2013). Private schools refer to the schools run by faith-based organisations, private individuals or groups of individuals or local communities and charge fees that are not regulated by the government (Hamdan, 2013). An additional category of schools is the UNRWA schools in Palestinian camps (Hamdan, 2013).

## **Study Context**

Just for purposes of situating, characterising and understanding the physical location, demographic background and education systems of the study contexts for those unfamiliar with the two countries, below is brief information about Lebanon and Uganda.

### **Location and demographic characteristics.**

Lebanon is a Mediterranean country located in the Middle East. To the West of Lebanon is the Mediterranean Sea, and to the South of it is Palestine, and with Syria

enclosing Lebanon from the north to the south east. The United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) (2011), estimated the Lebanese population to be about 4,228,000, with the proportion of children aged 0 - 14 years old at 24.8%.

According to Yacoub and Badre (2012), 32% of the total population of Lebanon during the academic year 2009 - 2010 were pupils and students, with school children accounting for 5 times the number of university students.

Uganda is a landlocked East African country that lies along the Equator. It is bordered by South Sudan in the north, Kenya in the east, Tanzania in the south, Rwanda in the south west and The Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. It is in Uganda, at Lake Victoria, that River Nile (White Nile) begins its northerly course ending at the Mediterranean Sea in Egypt. According to the 2014 Population and Housing Census, Uganda had a total population of 34.6 million people, of whom 55% were below 18 years old and 23% from 18 - 30 years old (Uganda Bureau of Statistics, 2016). Thus, over half of Uganda's population are of school going age (The Republic of Uganda, 2018). In 2017, over 8.6 million pupils were enrolled in primary school and about 1.5 million in secondary school (Ministry of Education & Sports, 2017).

### **Education system.**

In both Lebanon (Chaaban & El-Khoury, 2015; Shuayb, 2016) and Uganda (Hallam et al., 2010), education is provided by both the private and public sectors. Lebanon's education system is based on the French education system, though private schools are very much influenced by the American education system (Vlaardingerbroek, Al-Hroub & Saab, 2017; Vlaardingerbroek & Shehab, 2012). However, Uganda follows an education system inherited from the British, and English remains the only language of instruction in schools

except in primary 1 and 2 (Hallam et al., 2010; TISSA, 2014) while Lebanon has a possibility of Arabic, English and French (MEHE, 2016; Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2017).

In terms of structures of education, both Lebanon (MEHE, 2016) and Uganda (Hallam et al., 2010; TISSA, 2014) offer non-compulsory pre-primary education (for 3 – 5 year olds in Lebanon, and 3 – 6 year olds in Uganda – provided by private schools). However, their education structures differ a little as per basic and secondary education. In Lebanon (MEHE, 2016), primary education (grades 1 – 6) and intermediate education (grades 7 – 9) is compulsory for 6 – 15 year olds. At the end of grade 9, students who successfully pass the Lebanese official national examinations – the Brevet – can either continue with secondary education consisting of three years (grades 10 – 12) or enrol in vocational/technical education (Bashshur, 2009; MEHE, 2016; Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2017; Vlaardingerbroek & Shehab, 2012). In Uganda, primary education consists of 7 years (primary 1 – 7), after which successful students who pass the mandatory national Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) either enrol in a 6 year secondary education or otherwise enrol in vocational education (Hallam et al., 2010; TISSA, 2014).

Successful students who pass the state required Lebanese Baccalaureate examinations at the end of grade 12 enrol in tertiary education (Bashshur, 2009; MEHE, 2016; Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2017; Vlaardingerbroek & Shehab, 2012). Inspired by the British education system (Hallam et al., 2010), secondary education in Uganda consists of four years of ordinary level (O-Level) and two years of advanced level (A-Level) making it six years of secondary education (TISSA, 2014). Successful students who pass the required state administered Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) examinations at the end of O-Level (senior 4) have options to enrol in A-Level or join other institutions of learning, such as Primary Teachers' College (PTC), Uganda Colleges of Commerce (UCC), nursing school, or

technical/vocational school that offer certifications equivalent to A-Level certificates (TISSA, 2014).

Like secondary schools (especially the last two years of secondary) in Lebanon (Bashshur, 2009; Vlaardingerbroek et al., 2017; Vlaardingerbroek & Shehab, 2012) and other Arab states (Bashshur, 2009) that prepare students for university entry, Uganda's A-Level narrows students' interests to a combination of three subjects that basically limits the kind of course a student may study at university (Hallam et al., 2010; TISSA, 2014). Students in Uganda have to pass the Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) examination administered at A-Level to progress to university or any other tertiary institution of learning (Hallam et al., 2010; TISSA, 2014).

### **School leadership structure.**

In both Lebanon and Uganda, at the top of administration and management of education are ministers. In Lebanon, the education sector is under the Minister of Education and Higher Education under which fall three directorates, namely, (1) General Directorate of Education, (2) General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education, and (3) General Directorate of Higher Education (MEHE, 2016). The General Directorate of Education further comprises of (i) Directorate of Primary Schools, (ii) Education Regional Offices, and (iii) Directorate of Secondary Schools (MEHE, 2016). Under the General Directorate of Education are the Departments of Orientation and Guidance (DOPS) tasked with the assessment of school and teacher performance during the academic year (MEHE, 2016). Overall, the hierarchical channels flow down the leadership system through directorates, departments, sections and finally to the school level (MEHE, 2016).

At the helm of the administration and management of education in Uganda is the Cabinet Minister of Education assisted by three state ministers, namely, State Minister for Primary Education, State Minister for Higher Education and State Minister for Physical Education and Sports (TISSA, 2014). These ministers are merely political heads whose task is to oversee the implementation of government goals and objectives in education while the actual technical responsibilities and accountability fall under the Permanent Secretary (PS) (TISSA, 2014). Under the PS are ten commissioners, each heading one of the following departments: (1) Pre-primary and Primary Education; (2) Secondary Education-Government (3) Private Schools and Institutions (4) Business, Technical and Vocational Education; (5) Higher Education; (6) Special Needs and Inclusive Education (7) Career Guidance and Counselling; (8) Teacher /Tutor Instruction Education and Training; (9) Education Planning and Policy Analysis; and (10) Physical education and sports (TISSA, 2014). The support sections of Accounts, Procurement, Personnel and Administration that operate under the Secretariats of Finance and Administration also report directly to the PS of education (TISSA, 2014).

The Lebanese (Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) also oversees the activities of the Project Management Unit (PMU), an emergence unit set in response to the Syrian refugee crisis (MEHE, 2016). There also exists the autonomous Centre for Research and Development (CERD) that is responsible for curriculum revision, teacher performance standards and monitoring procedures, textbooks for public schools, teacher training packages, education data and drafting contents for annual examinations (MEHE, 2016). Similarly in Uganda, there are ten other semi-autonomous institutions which fall under supervision of the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) and are supervised by the Directors of Education under the PS include among others: National Curriculum

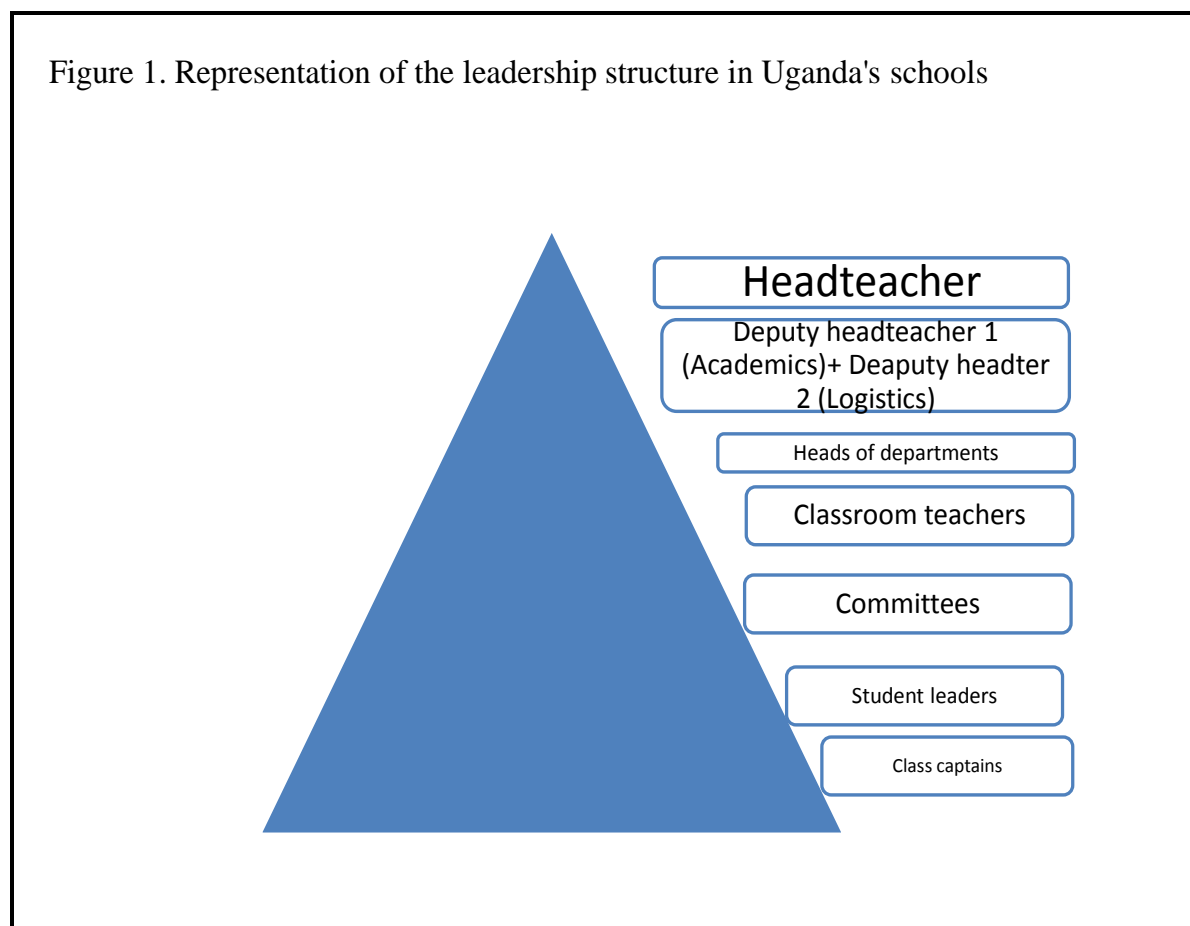
Development Centre (NCDC), Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEBC), National Council for Higher Education (NCHE), Directorate of Education Standards (DES), National Council of Sport (NCS), Education Service Commission (ESC), and public Universities (TISSA, 2014).

### **Decentralisation in Uganda.**

In principal, the 1998 decentralisation process in Uganda under the 1997 *Local Government Act* devolved administration and management of (primary and secondary) schools to local governments (districts) with the aim of reducing unnecessary bureaucratic procedures, increasing flexibility, boosting transparency and financial accountability, and increasing creativity by seeking local solutions to unique local issues (Namukasa & Buye, 2007; TISSA, 2014). The local governments were tasked with ensuring proper spending, accounting, planning and budgeting and successful implementation, supervision and evaluation of government educational programmes and policies, leaving the Ministry of Education with the primary responsibilities of policy formulation, curriculum development and national examinations, maintenance of standards and teacher training (Namukasa & Buye, 2007; TISSA, 2014).

At the district level, the district education officer (DEO) heads the administration and management of (especially public) schools and all principals report to him/her, and alongside the DEO is the district inspector (DIS) of schools whose task relates to monitoring standards of all schools in the district (Namukasa & Buye, 2007). Private schools are mainly governed by the founding bodies or by boards of directors (BOD) that provide vision and direction for the school (Hallam et al., 2010; Namukasa & Buye, 2007). For private schools the BOD hires a principal, often promoted from the ranks of the teaching staff and without any formal

training in school leadership, whose responsibility is the daily management of the school (Hallam et al., 2010). Within the school, the principal is the overall school administrator, assisted by two deputy principals: deputy principal one (in charge of academics) and deputy principal two (in charge of personnel and non-academic services) (Hallam et al., 2010) and the leadership structure filters down hierarchically through departments and classroom teachers to student leaders as shown in Figure 1<sup>1</sup>.



With the exception of a few of private schools, nearly all schools in Uganda have a board of governors (BOG) composed of (1) a principal (as chairperson), (2) a teacher, (3) a

---

<sup>1</sup> I had initially designed this figure for a PowerPoint presentation for this thesis defence using SmartArt. I later copied and pasted it to here.

community leader, (4) a politician, (5) a representative from the district education office, and (6) parent (Hallam et al., 2010). Although the influence of the BOG is much more obvious in public schools than in private schools where the BOD tends to make its influence felt, the general tasks of the BOG include: ensuring the implementation of government policies and interests as stipulated by the MoES, aiding the principal in making decisions, and handling teacher-related issues (Hallam et al., 2010).

### **Factors Leading to Burnout in School Leaders**

Burnout is a concern that faces school leaders globally. Factors that could lead to burnout in school leaders have been widely reported in the literature in several countries all over the world. The bulk of the available literature on burnout in school is from northern America. For instance, in the United States, many scholars argue that because school leaders are expected to be everything in the school from rigid managers of physical buildings and organisational structures to flexible and creative risk-takers capable of initiating change, they experience medium to high levels of stress (Boyland, 2011; Copland, 2001; Friedman, 2002; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Kaufman, 2019; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Whitaker, 1996). Kaufman (2019) further argues that the high expectations of rapid response, increasing habits of continuing with job responsibilities even at home, growing expectations of accountability by authority and general work overload are some of the pressures that characterise the job of the school leader.

In Estonia, Bedi and Kukemelk (2018) argue that the high demands by policy makers for quality education without providing the necessary resources and strategies for implementing policies and achieving such quality education places great stress on school leaders. Iacovides et al. (2003) and Leventis et al. (2017) argue that some of the factors that

contribute to stress and burnout in school leaders in Greece include: inadequate human and financial resources; time constraints; poor working conditions; lack of infrastructures; financial constraints; simultaneous teaching and administrative duties; difficult staff; frequent changes and reforms in education; lack training in school management; difficult student indiscipline; the mismatch between financial rewards and the excessive nature of the job responsibilities; poor interpersonal relationships with staff and their lack of support; excessive expectations of society; additional obligations outside working hours; centralised administrative system; interference by parents in the school leaders' work especially in relation to the behaviour of students; lack of meaningful professional development among other factors.

In Italy, Guglielmi, Simbula, Schaufeli and Depolo (2012) stepping out of the traditional investigation of external factors leading burnout, examined how in addition to job demands and resources, school leaders' personal resources and personal demands factored burnout and engagement. Their investigation found out that school leaders with an obsessive and compulsive inner drive to work hard a positive correlation with burnout (Guglielmi et al., 2012). On the positive side, school leaders' self-efficacy had a positive correlation with work engagement which is an antithesis to burnout. In Belgium, Devos, Bouckenooghe, Engels, Hotton and Aelterman (2007) focused their study on school leaders' wellbeing (which is in a way a positive approach to studying burnout) and found that school leaders' self-efficacy and achievement mindset, the role of school boards and the actions and policies of the central government significantly influenced school leaders' job satisfaction and job engagement. However, their study suggested a negligible correlation between school culture and structural characteristics with school leaders' cynicism and personal accomplishment.

Some of the factors leading to burnout include: (1) ever-increasing demands for accountability in terms of performance (Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Maxwell & Riley, 2017); (2) funding constraints (Lovely, 2004; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Smith & Holdaway, 1995; Whitaker, 1996); (3) idealised role expectations, role ambiguity, role conflict and work overload (Copland, 2001; DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2003; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Whitaker, 1996); (4) time constraints (Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Lovely, 2004; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Smith & Holdaway, 1995); (5) institutional interference (Lovely, 2004; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Smith & Holdaway, 1995; Stoelinga, 2011); (6) top leadership directives and changing mandates (Klocko & Wells, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Smith & Holdaway, 1995; Stoelinga, 2011); (7) staffing constrains (Lovely, 2004; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Smith & Holdaway, 1995; Stoelinga, 2011); (8) inadequate or lack of preparation for school leaders (Lovely, 2004; Stoelinga, 2011); (9) managing relationships with staff (Lovely, 2004; Maxwell & Riley, 2017; Stoelinga, 2011); (10) coping with change (Copland, 2001; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lovely, 2004; Stoelinga, 2011).

According to Edwards and Van Harrison (1993), when there is a mismatch between the demands and requirements of a job environment and an employee's skills and abilities, the resultant effect is psychological, physiological and behavioural strains that eventually culminate in burnout and morbidity. Here, strains comprise of diverse deviations from normal functioning that include dissatisfaction, boredom, anxiety, hypertension and depression among others (Cayirdag, 2016; Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993; Klocko & Wells, 2015).

### **Coping Strategies against Risks of Burnout**

Given the presenting risk of burnout, what possible strategies could be used to address the antecedents of burnout numerated above? In the literature, some of the suggested coping strategies include: (1) restructuring and redefining the job of principals (Copland, 2001; Friedman, 2002); (2) focusing on the problems that lead to stress (Poirel & Yvon, 2014); making cognitive efforts to cope with psychological stress (Friedman, 2002; Poirel & Yvon, 2014); (3) putting in place buffers and support systems such as training in problem solving skills, communication skills, mentoring and time management (Beusaert et al., 2016; Boyland, 2011; Whitaker, 1996); (4) debunking the myth of super-principals or hero principal (Copland, 2001) in favour of shared leadership (Lambert, 2002, 2006); (5) rewarding school leaders well enough to match their demanding work roles (Whitaker, 1996); and (6) use of distributed leadership through assignment of some administrative tasks to teachers (Boyland, 2011; Harris, 2004; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Whitaker, 1996) and fortifying leadership in teachers as a shared of responsibility that involves collaborative and collective learning and construction of meaning and knowledge (Lambert, 2002).

### **Situation of Burnout in Lebanon and in Uganda**

Although the literature that typically deals with burnout in school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda is lacking, there exists some literature that mentions factors leading to burnout among school leaders in the two countries. For instance in Lebanon, some of the pressures that school leaders face include the institutional interference by school owners and staff quality (Frayha, 2009). Ghamrawi (2013) as well notes that the variation in policies and different conceptions of national identity associated with school ownership, especially with

schools whose foundation is based on religious confessional identities, shape and exert pressure on the roles expected of school principals in Lebanon.

### **Control and autonomy.**

According to Karami-Akkary (2013), school leaders in Lebanon are predominantly more preoccupied with the implementation of directives from superordinates and trying to survive under the constraints of rigid bureaucratic systems, which limit them from developing a vision for the schools they lead; prevent them from critiquing the systemic barriers they face in the performance of their responsibilities; and often reduce them into either minimalist or reactive performers in the exercise of their job responsibilities. In fact, Najjar (2008) in her doctoral thesis argues that the most distinguishing aspects between private and public schools in Lebanon had to do with the external control of the school and internal authority patterns and relationships, with school leaders and teachers in private schools exercising greater freedom in decision making. The implications of such freedom is more efficient school functioning, and more conducive and less punitive culture for learning which in turn influenced parental choice of school for their children (Najjar, 2008).

While the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) tightly controls public schools and loosely controls confessional-based schools (Ghamrawi, 2013; Karami-Akkary, 2013; Najjar, 2008), nearly all public and private schools in Uganda follow directives and the same curriculum given by the Ugandan Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES) albeit with a little degree of freedom given to private schools. This exception particularly applies to schools following international programmes, but which still have to abide by certain regulations for the sake of licensing (Hallam et al., 2010).

Uganda's centralised system of governance devolves administrative power to lower levels of administration (Namukasa & Buye, 2007) giving more administrative authority to school leaders. In principle, this would have meant that school leaders could make better administrative deliberations and implementations according to the specific needs of their schools. Yet in reality, there still exists a void between the schools and district educational offices that disempowers school leaders from meaningful administrative service (Namukasa & Buye, 2007). Moreover, while Uganda's constitution grants district leaders legislative powers, decision making powers and policy implementation powers remain the preserve of the central government which renders district educational leaders and school leaders powerless, and have to take directives from the central government much like their counterparts in Lebanon (MacOpiyo, 2011).

In fact, Muwanga (2000) in his doctoral thesis argues that with the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in Uganda in 1997, the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government literally usurped control over education which had hitherto remained under the influence of parents and religious institutions. By claiming financial responsibility over schools, the NRM government under the guise of offering equal access to education appropriated political influence over learning institutions and placed itself favourably in an environment that was increasingly opening political space to multiparty politics (Muwanga, 2000).

### **Training and skills.**

The Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) in a 2011 annual report recognised the importance of empowering school leaders to plan and develop the schools they lead based on their knowledge, skills and the participation of other school

personnel. The MEHE (2011) further stated that it had drafted laws clarifying school leaders' administrative functions, and had already decreed (as of 03/12/2010) to ensure that school leaders possess prior training and knowledge in educational management, and possess specialised certificates proper to their jobs. Other than this, there is also an existing Law 320 as from 5/4/2001 (Al-Chibani & Hajal-Al-Chibani, 2013) that stipulated that the appointment of school principals only takes effect once they take and pass a course of educational administration at Lebanese University. However, the reality is that [some] schools are run by school leaders who do not have degrees in educational administration (Al-Chibani & Hajal-Al-Chibani, 2013).

Furthermore, Karami-Akkary (2013) states that the roles expected of school leaders in Lebanon are varied, complex, multitudinous, all encompassing, ever evolving, time demanding, often unwritten and informally learned. Where written role expectations do occur, they are usually sketchy, unspecific and internally contradictory, yet the school leaders never receive proper training or no training for the job (Karami-Akkary, 2013). Even then, school leaders are still expected to lead in school improvement despite time, financial, staffing and decision-making constraints (Karami-Akkary, 2013).

In Uganda, school leaders face similar challenges albeit with some variations. Karami-Akkary (2013) writes that in Lebanon, school leaders have to: deal with insufficient funding; often continue teaching despite their administrative responsibilities; manage staff and students, and also manage school-parents relationships; deal with recruitment systems (especially in public controlled schools) schools beyond their control; and receive limited or no preparation for their roles. Hallam et al. (2010) point out similar issues faced by school leaders in Uganda. For instance, Hallam et al. (2010) point out that financial constraints; staffing constraints; managing relations within the internal school environment as well as

managing relationships with the external environment; lack of control over the recruitment processes (especially for public schools) as part and parcel of the challenges school leaders in Uganda face; and lack of preparation for school leaders.

**Balancing the different demands and expectations.**

Furthermore, Hallam et al. (2010) also write that school leaders in Uganda are faced with the challenge of creating an equilibrium among the needs and demands of school ownership (profit), teachers (salary) and parents (fees) – especially with regards to private schools; ensuring quality academic performance despite limited resources at their disposal; administrative role ambiguity characterised by role overlaps and confusion; and misaligned goals and unclear expectations.

**Stability on the job.**

Another distinctive challenge faced by school leaders in Uganda is that, while school leaders in Lebanon may stay on the same job until retirement (Karami-Akkary, 2013), school leaders in Uganda are plagued by frequent transfers with the accompanying inherited administrative problems especially for novice headteachers, as well as the succession politics which are in constant play (Hallam et al., 2010). Hallam et al. (2010), Molyneaux (2011) and Jingdong, Najjuko & Ochwo (2017) note that in Uganda, headteachers are often faced with challenges such as ensuring the survival of their schools in a highly competitive environment, low and sometimes untimely remuneration for teachers and teacher turnover. Additional problems emerged with the implementation of Universal Primary Education (UPE) in 1997 and Universal Secondary Education (USE) in 2007 that resulted in unprecedented high student enrolment leading to a big student to teacher ratio, especially in public/government run schools (Busingye & Najjuma, 2015; Molyneaux, 2011).

As noted above, school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda do experience excessive, undefined (and often conflicting) workload, and are under pressure to perform under various internal and external constraints. According to Karasek (1979), excessive job demands coupled with less autonomy and less control on part of an employee (decision latitude) result in strain that eventually leads to burnout. As noted earlier, Edwards and Van Harrison (1993) state that when job demands exceed an individual's capacity to perform, the individual is stressed, strained and eventually burnt out. Siegrist (1996, 2010, 2012, 2015) states that stress, strain and eventually burnout result from an imbalance in the reciprocal exchange between effort and reward, that is to say, when too much effort is spent on work yet the rewards gained is less, then individuals get stressed, strained and burnt out. This is particularly the case in Uganda where salary seems to be an issue (Hallam et al., 2010; Jingdong et al., 2017; Molyneaux, 2011).

## **Rationale**

### **Existence of empirical and theoretical gap.**

This thesis seeks to, first of all, address the existing gap in the literature, and then through comparisons and contrasts, delineate features that are common and/or unique to different school leaders' coping strategies according school and societal culture.

As far as addressing the existing gap is concerned, burnout among school leaders (especially in Northern America and Western Europe) has drawn much attention, for instance Beusaert et al. (2016); Boyland (2011); Friedman (2002); Federici and Skaalvik (2012); Karakose, Kocabas, Yirci, Esen and Celik (2016); Klocko and Wells (2015); Poirel & Yvon (2014); Siegrist (1996, 2010, 2012, 2015); Whitaker (1996), and so many others, with some literature dating as far back as 1986 (Schwab, Jackson, & Schuler, 1986). However, there is

still general scarcity of theoretical and empirical literature on burnout among school leaders in both Lebanon and Uganda.

In the case of Lebanon, Karami-Akkary (2013) notes that other than students' unpublished Masters' theses, there is general scarcity of theoretical and empirical literature on school principals (let alone the much narrower topic of burnout). The closest that could be found in relation to the topic of this thesis in the context of Lebanon is a study on teachers' perceptions about the causes of their burnout done by El Helou, Nabhani and Bahous (2016), a Master's thesis by Baalbaki (2016) on the causes of burnout among special education teachers and Kebbi's (2018) thesis on stress and coping strategies used by special education and general classroom teachers. However, besides these studies not directly addressing burnout among school leaders, a follow up on their references also reveals that all the references on burnout are from studies that have been conducted outside Lebanon (save for Baalbaki reference to El Helou's 2014 thesis).

With limited empirical and theoretical literature on burnout in Lebanon, a search on Shamaa also shows that limited studies have been conducted in other Arab countries about teachers' burnout but there is still limited studies on burnout among school leaders. For instance, in Jordan (Al-Khalaileh, Al-Shayeb & Saleh, 2012; Alkhateeb, Kraishan & Salah, 2015), in Saudi Arabia (Alaraideh, 2016), in the Sultanate of Oman (Aldhafri, 2016), and in Qatar (Al-Mohannadi & Capel, 2007) are all related to burnout in teachers' or special education teachers. While aware that every society has its unique issues, solutions and application of concepts (Karami-Akkary, 2013), awareness of empirical and theoretical literature in other Arab countries is relevant to this study because of their ecological and linguistic closeness to Lebanon (Karami-Akkary, 2014).

However, in the case of Uganda, a search in the literature could not reveal any available studies that explicitly support or deny such scarcity. Yet looking at the general literature on education and school leadership, for instance, looking at issues raised by Hallam et al. (2010), MacOpiyo (2011), Molyneaux (2011) and Jingdong et al (2017), it becomes apparent that factors that lead to burnout do exist among school leaders in Uganda.

### **Choice of study contexts.**

The choice to do a comparative study between Uganda and Lebanon is built on my personal affiliation to the two countries albeit variedly. On the one hand, Uganda is my country of origin and I have done much of my education in Uganda. This gives me much familiarity with the nature and culture of education in the Ugandan context. On the other hand, the choice of Lebanon as a country to compare with Uganda is based on the fact that I am doing this study in Lebanon, and I have to some extent got introduced to the nature and culture of education in the Lebanese context.

Additionally, though I will be working in schools in Egypt and Sudan, the two countries have Arabic as the language of instruction in schools. However, Lebanon has many private schools with English as a language of instruction, which bodes well for a comparative study with Uganda whose sole language of instruction in schools is English.

### **Choice of methodology.**

Due to scarcity of empirical and theoretical literature, I found it more appropriate to use a grounded theory methodological approach to help generate a conceptual framework that could possibly assist in future research. To the best of my knowledge, not only is there an existing gap in the literature in the two contexts of this study, but a grounded theory approach

has not been used before in such a study (if any). Therefore, the methodological framework for this study will be built on Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (1990) grounded theory model as it will be explicated further in Chapter 3 of this study.

### **Theoretical framework.**

In line with the grounded theory approach, this study adopted Blumer's (1969) theory of symbolic interactionism and a consideration of studies on cross-cultural leadership such as Walker and Hallinger (2015) review on several studies on school leaders in East Asia. Blumer's (1969) symbolic interactionism is built on four principles, namely: that (1) individuals' actions and behaviours arise in response to meanings that individuals give to physical objects and persons, (2) social and cultural contexts influence and define human interactions based on the meanings individuals attach to physical objects and persons, (3) meanings arise as individuals interact with others and the society at large, and (4) meanings are not inherently present in the physical objects and persons but are continually created and recreated through interpretation during the interaction processes. Adoption of symbolic interactionism in this study, and in conjunction with grounded theory, facilitated the conceptual understanding of individuals in the study, and the interpretation of their contexts and why they choose specific strategic responses to their contexts. Thus, the intersection between symbolic interactionism and grounded theory is in the understanding that knowledge construction arises from within social situations and interactions as well as interpretations of these situations and interactions (Blumer, 1969; Charmaz, 2008).

The usefulness of grounded theory for this study rests in its social constructionist approach and analytic procedures in which theory unfolds from this social construction as well as in its long tradition of responding to not only the *what* and *how* questions but also the

*why* questions while maintaining complexity of social life at the same time (Charmaz, 2008). Grounded theory is useful when one needs to generate a new “broad theory or explanation of a process” (Creswell, 2012, p. 423) in which the existing theories do not address the issues at hand. Creswell (2012) notes that grounded theory suits to situations, it is practical, suitable for studying processes and explicating individuals’ actions, feasibly sensitive and representative of all complexities present in the process, systematic and self-correcting in nature. Therefore, in trying to understand (what to the best of my knowledge is an unexplored area of) how coping strategies used by school leaders in Lebanon compare to those used by their counterparts in Uganda, a grounded theory approach suits the most as it unfolds theory from what participants construct. In grounded theory, the concurrent collection and analysis of data are done inductively with the intention of generating middle-range theories (Charmaz, 2008; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2012; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Furthermore, this thesis tries to establish how coping strategies employed by school leaders in Lebanon compare with strategies used by their counterparts in Uganda by through the perspective of studies done by Walker and Hallinger (2015) and Ng, Nguyen, Wong and Choy (2015). Walker and Hallinger (2015) reviewed several studies on school leaders in East Asia with their studies revealing that personal and contextual factors had greater significance on school leadership. The implication of this is that, while some leadership strategies may be successfully applicable in some environments, they may not work in others urging that contextual factors must be taken into consideration when trying to understand what school leaders do, and why they act thus. *Personal factors* is seen to include elements such as religious background and personal introspection and self-mastery. While religious background instilled a dimension of dedication in school leaders, personal introspection and

self-mastery instilled an element of positivity in school leaders' practices and perceived success.

A review of studies on school leadership in Singapore by Ng et al. (2015) also indicate that personality traits such as self-confidence, consideration, open-mindedness, empathy and high in ethical values; cognitive skills such as personal mastery and self-reflexivity; motivational qualities such as ability to inspire and trustworthiness; and social skills such as good listening skills, willingness to trust and ability to build and maintain mutual trust influence the leadership experience of school leaders. Most of these are similar to qualities of school leaders elsewhere.

When it comes to contextual factors, the socio-cultural and political contextual factors played a great role in school leadership. The socio-cultural context may positively or negatively influence school leadership practices in varied ways in a sort of continuum ranging from practices that empower stakeholders in shared leadership to traditional paternalistic practices of high power distance (Walker & Hallinger, 2015). Ng et al. (2015) categorised contextual factors into: organizational influences such school culture, ethos, staffing and structure; local community influences; national influences such as government policies and national culture; global trends such as globalisation. Within the context of East Asia, school leaders in Mainland China have to bear with contradictions, tensions and ambiguities much more than their counterparts in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Singapore which have had more exposure global educational reforms (Walker & Hallinger, 2015, p. 559).

Furthermore, political context may also bear on the leadership practices of school leaders, for instance, in Vietnam and China. In Vietnam, school leaders still hold the title of "government officers" (Walker & Hallinger, 2015, p. 560). While successful school leaders

in Singapore is perceived to be high in both consideration and initiating structure (Ng, et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015), the centralised political system in Vietnam does not allow decision making to transcend marshalling a collective understanding rather than empowering school leaders with the flexibility to adapt practices that meet contextual needs (Walker & Hallinger, 2015). In Singapore, the meta-strategic centrality of school leaders made them hesitant to involve teachers in school change decisions (Ng et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015). School leaders in Singapore were actively engaged in mentoring potential school leaders. Again in Singapore adopted a system wide approach to preparation of school leaders in the 1990s, while the government controls the ideological basis for school leaders' preparation programmes in Mainland China (Walker & Hallinger, 2015).

### **Comparing Lebanon and Uganda.**

According to Dimmock and Walker (2000), the relevance of comparative studies in education centre around the globalisation of educational policy and practice with countries frequently borrowing policies and practices without considering cultural boundedness and suitability. On this note, both Lebanon and Uganda have education systems inherited from their respective former colonial countries. Lebanon adopted the French education system (Vlaardingerbroek & Shehab, 2012) while Uganda adopted the British education system (Namukasa & Buye, 2007; TISSA, 2014). Until today, for instance, Uganda still emphasises on preparing “students to pass rigorous compulsory national examinations” (Hallam et al., 2010, p. 51) according to the inherited British education system without due consideration of how such testing affects the population's practical and creative application of their learning. Therefore, international comparative studies in education enable us to delineate contextual factors that allow (or impede) successful borrowing and application of educational policies and strategies.

The onset of this comparative study began with impressions in which I perceived during class discussions that private schools presented a challenge to unity in Lebanon. For instance, we discussed in one of our classes an article by Munir Bashshur entitled *The Role of Education: A Mirror of a Fractured National Image*. Although it is an old article published in 1988, it still seems to have a bearing in contemporary Lebanese society (Frayha, 2009). Like in Lebanon, the role of the private sector in education in Uganda is undeniably significant, yet religious and political overtones that create friction in national unity in today's Uganda are supported by other factors (tribal or ideological) which hardly get a formal expression in schools. Therefore, the rationale for choosing a comparative study between Lebanon and Uganda is built on the similarities and differences that exist in the educational profiles of the two countries. For instance, Both Lebanon (Chaaban & El-Khoury, 2015; Karami-Akkary, 2013; MEHE, 2016; Shuayb, 2016) and Uganda (Hallam et al., 2010) have a dual collaboration between the private and public sectors in the provision of education with most of the schools in the private sector having religious affiliation.

However, although a majority of schools in Uganda were founded by Christian missionary institutes, the churches play a marginal role in most of those schools today, and only a few (especially those founded in recent decades) are under the direct administration of religious (Christian and Muslim) organisations (Hallam et al., 2010; Namukasa & Buye, 2007). This is in contrast to the situation in Lebanon where religious groups still own many schools and have much influence in education including the adoption of a common curriculum for teaching history (Frayha, 2009; Ghamrawi, 2013; Karami-Akkary, 2013; Najjar, 2008). Besides religious affiliated schools, there also exist schools owned by enterprising individuals in both Lebanon (Chaaban & El-Khoury, 2015; Karami-Akkary, 2013) and Uganda (Hallam et al., 2010; Namukasa & Buye, 2007).

In terms of school leadership, school leaders in both Lebanon (Karami-Akkary, 2013) and Uganda (Hallam et al., 2010) are commonly promoted from among the ranks of teachers with little or no preparation for their tasks. Additionally, the school leaders in both Lebanon (Karami-Akkary, 2013; Najjar, 2008) and Uganda (Hallam et al., 2010) do not often have full control and autonomy in the exercise of their job responsibilities. As for public schools, Lebanon's MEHE holds tight control over them (Karami-Akkary, 2013; Najjar, 2008) unlike Uganda's schools where there exists an apparent decentralised system in the running of public schools (Namukasa & Buye, 2007).

Other than these few immediately recognisable similarities and differences, there are certainly many variations in the demographic, cultural, historical and geographical profiles of the two contexts (Lebanon and Uganda), such as populations size, political climate, religious and ethnic compositions and locations. It is my belief that such variations necessarily offer a much bigger and diversified picture for transnational comparisons, capable of maximising the scope of coping strategies against burnout. Most important in this study puts the diverse range of presenting variations into context according to the principles of grounded theory.

### **Selection of schools.**

This study focused on school leaders in private schools (in Lebanon and Uganda) in which English is the language of instruction. Although Lebanon is blessed with possibilities of choice of either Arabic, English or French, the only language of instruction in schools in Uganda is English. Therefore, restricting this study to school leaders in schools where English is the medium of instruction limits the disparity of the two contexts for appropriate comparison. This study is also limited to school leaders in private schools to reduce the disparity in the leadership structure of school leaders under study given Uganda's practice of

a decentralised form of leadership (Namukasa & Buye, 2007) which adds variations to leadership structures in public schools in Lebanon and Uganda. Nevertheless, though the focus of this study is school leaders of private schools, three Ugandan respondents in this study (one current and two who have quit) have worked in both private and public schools. Therefore, the interviews with the three respondents had some overtones of their experience in public schools.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study aimed at (1) exploring, understanding and describing some of the coping strategies that school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda use to address risks of burnout; (2) comparing and contrasting the different coping strategies according to school and societal cultural contexts based on a qualitative study that carried out in Lebanon and Uganda; and (3) developing a theoretical basis for future research.

### **Significance**

This study is significant in that: (1) it helps gain insight and understanding of the existing coping strategies used by school leaders; (2) it facilitates the generation of hypothesis for further research; (3) it aids in framing coping strategies for new school leaders; and (4) it also adds to the theoretical and empirical literature.

### **Research Questions**

1. What coping strategies do school leaders in Lebanon use to deal with risks of burnout?
2. What coping strategies do school leaders in Uganda use to deal with risks of burnout?
3. How do the coping strategies of school leaders in Lebanon compare to coping strategies of school leaders in Uganda at individual, school and societal levels?

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this chapter, I will briefly give an overview of factors that lead to burnout and the possible coping strategies to address the originating factors of burnout. The chapter begins with (1) an overview school culture, as well as an overview of school culture situated within Mintzberg's organisational structure, and how they relate to the experience of school leaders; and (2) a summary of some of the major models that associate stress, strain and burnout to excessive job demands, administration constraints, lack of autonomy and control, inadequate resources, lack of buffers and support systems, and excessive efforts in addressing stress.

#### **School culture and school leaders' identities**

Every school has a distinctive culture that gives it a unique character and which offers individuals in it a sense of organisational identity and sense of mission (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). According to Benoliel and Barth (2017), school culture influences a great deal in the contents of leadership prototypes. Depending on environmental constraints, strong school cultures can either foster or hinder school effectiveness (Benoliel & Barth, 2017; Carpenter, 2015; Hoy & Miskel, 2013). According to Balkar (2015), the essential characteristics of empowering school cultures are teacher efficacy, job satisfaction, strong social relationships and the leadership of the school leader. He argues that school leaders need to be more willing to share responsibilities with teachers.

School culture becomes manifest through a system of shared beliefs, values, norms, basic assumptions and behaviours of the various stakeholders in the school (Carpenter, 2015; Hoy & Miskel, 2013). School culture can be recognised through analysis of its symbols, artefacts, myths, heroes, legends, rituals and ceremonies (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Like in any

other organisation, school culture boosts stability in the school by providing the social glue that binds the school together (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). According to Hoy and Miskel, school cultures can be conceptualised in terms of efficacy, trust, control and academic optimism.

In a *culture of efficacy*, the most important components are shared beliefs of capacity and ability of teachers and the school leadership (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). At a collective vantage point, culture of efficacy is a set of beliefs that give the school a unique identity, and whose use strengthens them rather than expending them (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Because all stakeholders collectively view success and failures as a shared experience, a school culture built on a resilient sense of collective efficacy assumes a collective experience in overcoming difficulties through persistent effort to avoid discouragement and feelings of unachievement (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

In a school, a *culture of trust* plays a great and valuable function due to the interdependence among its different stakeholders, for instance, teachers need a dependable school leader, and the school leader needs reliable teachers; school leaders need the trust of parents and the boards yet the boards and parents equally need a reliable school leader (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). Trust represents shared beliefs of stakeholders built on interdependence such that the interests of one party depend on the benevolence, honesty, openness, competence and reliability of another party (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). This implies that the trusting party makes himself/herself vulnerable to the trusted party in confidence that the trusted party will not act in ways detrimental to the trusting party (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). As such, a culture of trust promotes ( and also benefits from) cooperation, openness, group cohesion, professionalism and collective achievement (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Van Maele & Van Houtte, 2015). According to Van Maele and Van Houtte (2015), trust can act as a buffer for different stakeholders, especially teachers. This means

that, when teachers trust the school leader, they reflect their willingness to be vulnerable to the school leader based on their confidence in the benevolence, reliability, competence, honesty and openness of the school leader.

School culture can also be conceptualised as a *culture of academic optimism* of stakeholders, and it is a function of efficacy, trust and academic emphasis of the school (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Academic optimism is a shared set of beliefs about the capabilities of a school where positivity becomes an all-embracing and uniting factor between trust and efficacy with academic emphasis (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). A culture of academic optimism represents collective beliefs and norms depicting the capability of school leaders and teachers, willingness of students, supportiveness of parents and achievability of academic success (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

A school *culture of control* is understood as collective dominant beliefs of school leaders and teachers about controlling students (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). With regards student control, there arise two subcultures, namely, custodial culture and humanistic culture. Custodial culture puts emphasis on an autocratic and rigid hierarchy among individuals in the school while humanistic culture perceives the school as a democratic educational community in which students learn in a two-way cooperative interaction and experience (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). In a custodial culture, students are viewed with mistrust and are strictly controlled while humanistic culture emphasises self-discipline rather than teacher control (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

The implication of these conceptualisations of school culture is in the interaction between school culture and school structure, and their influence on school leadership experience. For instance, Crow, Day and Moller (2017) assert that school leaders construct

their leadership identities within time, space and place, and that their emotions mirror the multifaceted leadership identities contextualised within social hierarchies which form a part of wider structures and social relations of power and control. Carpenter (2015) also argues about how a collaborative culture compares to a culture which maintains power distance in terms of their influence on leadership styles. In general, cohesive positive school cultures built on trust, transparency and authenticity foster leadership effectiveness with the advantages that come with it (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Conversely school cultures with divergent values, norms and beliefs can contribute to a sense of helplessness, leadership problems and paralyse stakeholders (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

### **School structure and its influence in the wellbeing of school leaders**

Organisational structure refers to the nature of formal distribution and coordination of tasks, responsibilities and authority among individuals and groups working in it (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). Schools are organisations (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). According to Lunenburg (2012), an organisation's strategy influences its structure by indirectly determining variables such as the organisation's tasks, technology, and the internal and external environments. According to Mintzberg (1979), bureaucratic schools tend to be externally controlled and more centralised as the most powerful decision makers in the school are held accountable by an external authority through the imposition of specific standards in the form of rules and regulations (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Mintzberg, 1979).

In a similar vein, Hoy and Miskel (2013) attribute the strain and tension between administrators and the operating core (teachers) in the school to the fact that often, professionals (operating core) possess more technical expertise and competence than the administrators who occupy higher positions in the school. As such, the decisions made by top

administrators may not be in harmony with the perspectives of the implementers on the ground (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018). Following Mintzberg's organisational framework (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979), administrators consist of the top administrators and the school leaders (principals/headteachers). Top administrators can be boards of directors/governors (in the case of private schools), and district superintendents and their assistants or district education officers (in the case of public schools). To understand the nature of these strain and tension (Hoy & Miskel, 2013), an understanding of Mintzberg's organisational framework may be of some assistance.

In Mintzberg's organisational framework, organisations can be identified on three essential dimensions, namely, (1) five key components, (2) five coordinating mechanisms and (3) five configurations (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). The five key components are (1) the *operating core*, that is, the teachers (with teaching and learning being the outcomes); (2) the *strategic apex* consisting of top administrators, such as, district education officers or boards of directors; (3) the *middle line* consisting of school leaders (principals /headteachers); (4) the *technostructure* consisting of people charged with planning, such as, curriculum coordinators and instructional supervisors; and (5) the *support staff* consisting of specialised units such as, maintenance department (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979).

Coordinating mechanisms include (1) *mutual adjustment* which consists of a very basic and direct process where coordination is achieved through informal communication, informal discussions and adjustments; (2) *direct supervision* which consists of one individual monitoring, commanding and controlling the work of others; (3) *standardisation of work* where the content of the work is specified, planned or programmed (for instance, job description); (4) *standardisation of output* in which outcomes of the work are specified, and

the fundamentals of the product or levels of performance are set (for instance, prescriptive learning objectives) without outlining the means for achieving the set levels of performance; and (5) *standardisation of skills* in which the kind of training required is specified, for instance, the kind of certificates for one to qualify as a mathematics, physics or chemistry teacher (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979).

The combination of the five key parts and the five coordination mechanisms gives rise to five configurations, namely, simple structure, machine bureaucracy, professional bureaucracy, divisionalised form and adhocracy. In *simple structure*, the strategic apex (top administrators) is the key part that possesses accumulated power (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). Simple structure is highly centralised and operates using direct supervision (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). A school operating with a simple structure has hardly any middle line (principals/headteachers), hardly any technostructure, and has a relatively small number of support staff having overlapping responsibilities (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). Simple structure can be of different forms. For instance, an autocratic organisation is a form of simple structure in which the leader hoards power and rules by fiat (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). A charismatic organisation is also a form of simple structure in which followers willingly lavish power on the leader (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Schools that employ simple structure are highly dependent on the expertise, imagination and energy of the leader and are, therefore, highly susceptible to leadership succession problems and growth renders their direct supervision ineffective (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

In *machine bureaucracy*, the organisation is standardised, formalised and very much adjusted to routinely operate as a regulated and coordinated bureaucratic machine (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). The key part of machine bureaucracy is the technostructure that includes

analysts who standardise work processes (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). In machine bureaucracy, there is job specialisation, formalisation, limited horizontal decentralisation, little lateral coordination, and decisions are centralised with a narrow span of management where there exist many levels of chain of command from top management to the bottom (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). With a goal of attaining internal efficiency, the internal environment of a machine bureaucracy is characterised by stability (Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). Very rarely are schools purely machine bureaucracies since they lack elaborate administrative structures, large middle line and elaborate technostructure. However, schools that exhibit formalised behaviour, extensive sets of rules, procedures, job descriptions, and authority is concentrated at the apex and flows downwards possess characteristics of machine bureaucracy (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Mintzberg, 1979).

*Profession bureaucracy* refers to an organisational structure that allows both decentralisation and standardisation (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). The key part of professional bureaucracy is the operating core, and its primary coordinating mechanism is standardisation of skills (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). With a goal of providing innovation and excellent service to its clients, professional bureaucracy functions with both horizontal and vertical decentralisation, with a small strategic apex and a large support staff to provide maintenance support to the operating core (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). While it is relatively formalised, it nonetheless offers autonomy to its professional workforce that provides nonroutine services (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). It is not uncommon to find coordination problems in a professional bureaucracy (Lunenburg, 2012). In schools where the work is too complex for direct supervision, professional bureaucracy may be exhibited in formalised behaviour,

professionalism, job standardisation, structural looseness, and the operating core (teachers) has considerable autonomy in monitoring their own work, and engage in team work, collaboration and shared instructional leadership with colleagues (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979).

*Divisionalised form* is an organisational structure where decision making is decentralised at the divisional level, and its key part is middle line (Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). In divisionalised form, the primary coordinating mechanism is standardisation and it operates with limited vertical decentralisation (Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). With each division being relatively centralised, minimal coordination exists among divisions presenting a semblance of machine bureaucracy (Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). As the technostructure is located at the corporate headquarters to provide services to all divisions, corporate-level personnel offer coordination to some extent (Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979).

*Adhocracy* refers to an organisational structure in which the key part is the support staff, the coordination mechanism is mutual adjustment, and it operates with selective patterns of decentralisation (Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). As it has a small technostructure and a large complex support staff that supports the complex structure, adhocracy is low in formalisation and decentralisation, and its technical specialists are part of the operating core that employs sophisticated technology and engages in nonroutine tasks (Lunenburg, 2012; Mintzberg, 1979). Its main goal is innovation, swift adaptation to change, and efficient use of resources. Adhocracy can be seen in schools that are highly innovative.

The common configurations that are most commonly associated with schools are simple structure, machine bureaucracy and professional bureaucracy (Hoy & Miskel, 2013),

all of which may be influenced by the age and size of the school. As schools grow with time and size (Hoy & Miskel, 2013), they may move from simple structure (with informal relations and direct supervision) through machine bureaucracy (with formalisation, routine and bureaucratic control) to professional bureaucracy (with complex decentralised processes, individualised teaching and learning, and multiple changing administrative strategies, all under the charge of a highly professional workforce).

### **School structure and Conflict in schools**

Schools are often characterised by a tension between top administrators, on the one hand, who want more formalisation, more centralisation, less professionalisation and more developed technostructure, and school reformers on the other hand, who advocate school structures that are more open to competent, professional and skilled workforce (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). This tension prompted scholars to propose *loose coupling*, a concept that maintains that two events or components can operate side by side while preserving their unique identities and elements of physical or logical separateness (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Loose coupling theorists promote the need for structural looseness in schools to give school leaders and teachers broad discretionary authority over such functions like curriculum, teaching methods and teacher recruitment and selection among other functions (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). At the same time, they also promote the need for uniformity in product which requires standardisation and routinisation of activities and therefore, bureaucratisation of schools (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

In this regard, Hoy and Miskel (2013) conclude that two organisational domains, that are in conflict, exist in a school, namely, the bureaucratic domain and the professional domain. The bureaucratic domain is a rigid, tightly linked and cohesive structure that

represents the institutional and managerial functions, links the school and the community, implements laws, runs the internal affairs, procures and allocates resources and mediates between teachers and students (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). The professional domain is a more loosely linked structure that performs the actual technical processes of teaching and learning (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Conflict arises in a formal organisation when professional values (of professionals) such as autonomy in decision making, colleague oriented reference group and self-imposed standards clash with bureaucratic expectations such as disciplined compliance hierarchical orientation and subordination to the organisation (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). Because it is loosely linked, too much independence often results in confusion, coordination problems, reduced productivity and conflict (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). One way in which school leaders have been seen to balance between these two conflicting domains is by buffering.

### **Buffering**

According to the literature, one of the functions of school leaders is buffering. Buffering refers to when school leaders protect or insulate school processes, functions and entities, as well as individuals (especially teachers), from undesirable effects of environmental uncertainties (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; LeChasseur, Donaldson, Fernandez & Fenc-Bagwell, 2018; Rutledge, Harris & Ingle, 2010; Wenner & Settlage, 2015). The concept of buffering presumes that when the external environment is perceived as a threat to school operations, isolating the technical core, for instance, ensures that teaching and learning is not upset by environmental uncertainties and dependencies, thereby maximising efficiency in the school despite the instability in the external environment (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Hoy & Miskel, 2013; LeChasseur et al., 2018; Rutledge et al., 2010). This implies that school leaders have to absorb environmental disturbances and demands by directing, limiting or even suspending

environmental interaction by acting as some sort of shock absorbers. School leaders buffer the school's internal environment in two ways, namely, decoupling and managing the image.

*Decoupling* is a useful strategy in conflict environments because it allows school leaders to intentionally neglect adequate control of institutionalised bureaucratic structural processes, thereby encouraging more professional autonomy and at the same time veiling inconsistencies, poor task performance and irrationalities that might weaken public confidence in the school (Hoy & Miskel, 2013; Wenner & Settlage, 2015). *Managing image* entails casting a positive impression of school structures and actions in a manner that amasses approval for the school (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). It involves showcasing school success and rationalising its failures in a manner that impresses the perception that the school meets the demands of the external environment (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). According to Maxwell and Riley (2017), the emotional demands generated in dealing with such buffering processes leads to burnout.

### **Models of Stress and Burnout in the Literature**

Below are a summaries of five models (out of many) that relate work stress to strain and burnout. An understanding of this models is vital in understanding how the factors given later in the chapter are linked to burn out in school leaders. These models include: demand-control model, demand-constraints-support model, person-environment fit model, effort-reward model and effort distress model.

#### **Demand-control model.**

This model was first proposed by Karasek (1979) suggesting that job demand by itself is not harmful, but it has to be moderated by corresponding decision latitudes. The model is

built on the interaction between job demands and decision latitudes (control and autonomy). It underpins the concept that greater job demands require greater ability to freely exercise control and authority over the decision making processes (Karasek, 1979). This means that in high-strain jobs where an individual faces excessive or high job demands yet he/she does not have the necessary autonomy and control (low decision latitude) in the exercise and execution of the expected job demands, he/she faces mental strain and job dissatisfaction (Bakker, van Veldhoven & Xanthopoulou, 2010; Karasek, 1979). On the contrary, when high job demands are mediated by high job control, the individual experiences task enjoyment, and personal growth (Bakker et al., 2010; Hwang & Ramadoss, 2017; Karasek, 1979).

However, Karasek's job demand-control model faced a lot of criticism for poor conceptualisation of the control dimension and neglect of the personal characteristics of individuals (De Rijk et al., 1998). For instance, Bakker, van Veldhoven and Xanthopoulou (2010) believe that there is need to transcend the job demand-control model thereby proposing a model they called job demands-resources model. According to them, the control element should include all the job resources such as use of skills, support of stakeholders, performance feedback, learning and career opportunities, autonomy, participation in decision and policy making, and many other resources that an individual needs to perform his/her job roles. Hu, Schaufeli and Taris (2013) sought to further extend the job demands-resources model by linking the mediation effect of equity-based cognitive evaluation processes on job demands and job resources - thus explaining the psychological processes that associate job demands and job resources on the one hand, and burnout and engagement on the other hand.

### **Demand-support-constraints model.**

According to this model, first proposed by Payne in 1979 (Payne & Morrison, 2001), when job demands as well as constraints are high and support is low, the resultant effect is psychological distress. This means that support must be provided where there exist constraints in an environment of excessive job demands (Payne & Morrison, 2001). However, when an individual is faced with constraints yet lacks the necessary support and resources to address those constraints, the resultant effect is strain. However, some scholars think that the job demand-control model proposed by Karasek and the job demand-constraints-support model proposed by Payne are better when combined. For example, Sargent and Terry (2000) in their study found evidence of the moderating effect of supports from superiors, colleagues and other individuals on Karasek's job demand-control model. Payne and Morrison (2001) also see a great deal of similarity between the two models, for instance, by comparing the similarities and dissimilarities between Karasek's *control latitudes* and Payne's *constraints*.

### **Person-environment fit model.**

Su, Murdock and Rounds (2015) trace the origins of person-environment fit model to traditional trait-factor approach that thrived on the basis of vocational selection in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century until the rise of the developmental theories in the 1950s. Like many other personality researchers unwilling to give up on trait-factor approach, in 1968, Lawrence A. Pervin came up with a description of performance and satisfaction as a function of a dynamic process of individual–environment fit (Su et al., 2015), thus paving way for the person-environment fit model of understanding the person and his/her work environment. One of the basic assumptions of person-environment fit model is that the extent to which people fit their

work environments has considerable consequences, such as job satisfaction, stress, burnout or turnover (Edwards, Caplan & Harrison, 1998; Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993; Su et al., 2015). Whereas better person-environment fit could lead to better outcomes, poor person-environment fit was associated with dire outcomes. Furthermore, person-environment fit underscores the reciprocity in which people shaped their environment and vice versa in an ongoing process (Su et al., 2015).

Therefore, this model proposes that either (1) there needs to be a harmonious fit between the job demands of the environment and an individual's capacity to cope with the required demands; or (2) the rewards and supplies provided by the environment have to match an individual's needs and preferences (Edwards et al., 1998; Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993). A misfit between the two (person and environment) results in job-related psychological, physiological and behavioural strain such as job dissatisfaction, elevated serum cholesterol and smoking. The ultimate consequence of the imbalance between job demands and the individual's capacity is burnout (Edwards et al., 1998; Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993).

In the first main proposition, it is important to note that central to this model is the distinction between the person and the environment Edwards et al. (1998). However, Edwards et al. (1998) and Edwards, Cable, Williamson, Lambert and Shipp (2006) further make a distinction between the subjective person (attributes as perceived by the person himself/herself) and the objective person (the actual existing attributes of the person), and the between the subjective environment (events and situations as perceived by the person) and objective environment (the actual physical and social situations and events independent of the person's perceptions). Therefore, the emphasis in this model is on the congruence of both the person and environment (Edwards et al., 2006; Edwards et al., 1998). Furthermore, this

model underscores the fit between the demands of environment (such as job requirements, role expectations, group and organisational norms) and the person's abilities (such as aptitudes, skills, training and time).

In the second main proposition, Edwards et al. (1998) and Edwards and Van Harrison (1993) suggest matching the person's needs of and supplies in the environment. The person's needs consist of both innate biological and psychological needs, values and motives to achieve desired goals; and supplies in the environment includes extrinsic and intrinsic resources and rewards to fulfil the person's needs such as money, social involvement and development opportunities (Edwards et al., 1998; Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993). In this regard, this model spells out that the needs and supplies should be commensurate, and any mismatch could have consequences on the individual's wellbeing (or stress and burnout in that case).

### **Effort-reward imbalance model.**

This model underscores the importance of reciprocity between the effort put on the job and the reward for the job (Siegrist, 1996, 2010, 2012, 2015). The central ideas in this model is that a mismatch between efforts and rewards, and over-commitment could lead to psychosomatic illnesses (Siegrist, 1996, 2010, 2012, 2015; Van Vegchel, de Jonge, Bosma & Schaufeli, 2005). This model is derived from a general understanding of the psychosocial dimension of human wellbeing based on the assumption that in adult life, conscious personal self-regulation favourable to health and wellbeing depends chiefly on a successful social exchange mediated by significant roles (Eddy, Heckenberg, Wertheim, Kent & Wright, 2016; Mutambudzia, Siegrist, Meyer & Li, 2018; Siegrist, 2015). Any unfavourable exchange or lack of reciprocity in this exchange has negative effects as it weakens an individual's sense of

self-efficacy, self-esteem and belonging, thereby creating a disharmony between the person and the social environment (Siegrist, 2015).

The implication of this model is derived from the understanding that as the nature of work over the past decades has considerably changed under the influence of technological progress with many jobs putting more emphasis on information processing, controlling and communication, the dominant risks to employees' health and wellbeing have shifted from traditional health hazards associated with occupational exposure to toxic substances, heat or cold to unfavourable psychosocial work environments (Siegrist, 2015). The increased exposure to unfavourable physiological environments may result in reduced productivity, psychosomatic and affective disorders or even addictive behaviours (Siegrist, 2015).

The gist of this model is that, there must be a fair balance between the costs (effort) expended on the job and the benefits (reward) gained out of it (Larsman, 2006; Siegrist, 1996, 2010, 2012, 2015). The importance of rewards here has more to do with a person's self-worth. When an individual expends much effort in the execution of his/her job responsibilities yet the rewards associated with his/her efforts, working conditions and/or attempts to cope are disappointingly meagre, it results in reduced wellbeing and susceptibility to illness (Siegrist, 1996, 2010, 2012, 2015), and reduced body immunity and weaker mucosal membrane (Eddy et al., 2016) paving way for other illnesses such as diabetes (Mutambudzia et al., 2018).

### **Effort-distress model.**

According to this model, strain is a result of distress encountered in the job. When an individual faces excessive job demands that are not moderated by decision latitudes (autonomy and control), the resultant effect is psychophysiological strain (Friedman, 2002;

Maslach et al., 2001; Suzuki, Kumano & Sakano, 2003). In their study, Suzuki et al.(2003) found a relationship between effort coping and effort-distress coping with cardiovascular responses, especially, blood pressure and intensified skin sensitivity. These are mediated by emotional systems that control coping mechanisms and processes (Suzuki et al., 2003). In this case, effort is seen as a situation of high degree of personal control with active coping behaviour in which one engages in one's tasks uninterrupted, while distress refers to a situation of lack of control through avoidant coping behaviour in which one unwillingly engages in assumingly hard to accomplish tasks (Suzuki et al., 2003).

### **Factors Leading to Burnout**

Having briefly explored the models linking job demands and other factors to stress, strain and burnout, here are some of the outstanding factors available literature that have been associated with burnout among school leaders.

#### **Work overload resulting in job stress.**

As noted in the introductory chapter, the job description of school leaders is characterised by: role overload, role ambiguity, role conflict, high expectations and long working hours (Copland, 2001; Friedman, 2002; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Hallam et al., 2010; Karami-Akkary, 2014; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Stoelinga, 2011; Whitaker, 1996). The school leader is expected to be a virtually everything in the school from professional educator, leader and a successful manager (Copland, 2001; Friedman, 2002). The imbalance between the excessive, and often undefined, workload and job expectations on the one hand, and school leaders' abilities result in stress, strain and eventually burnout (Edwards, & Van Harrison, 1993; Karasek, 1979).

### **Managing relationships.**

School leaders are always faced with the daunting task of managing relationships with superordinates (especially issues related to excellent financial returns and outstanding academic results), subordinates (especially issues related to indiscipline, salaries, unresponsiveness, poor motivation and insubordination), students (especially indiscipline) and parents (unreasonable demands and rude behaviour) (Frayha, 2009; Friedman, 2002; Ghamrawi, 2013; Hallam et al., 2010). Noting from several authors, Friedman (2002) states that most of the work pressure school leaders face is from parents and teachers. Their role in the school as a link between/among the various interests of the different stakeholders (Hallam et al., 2010) places them in an inherently isolating position characterised by poor relations with those around them, particularly with the realisation that those they expected to be partners providing assistance and support are the source of much work pressure (Friedman, 2002). The isolation and lack of buffers and support systems lead to emotional exhaustion, stress, strain and eventually burnout (Friedman, 2002; Payne & Morrison, 2001).

Many studies show that the leadership position in schools as an isolating position, especially when it comes to newness in the school. Such studies indicate that new (especially novice) school leaders experience temporary isolation (Tahir, Thakib, Hamzah, Said & Musah, 2017) or professional isolation and loneliness (Garcia-Garduno, Slater & Lopez-Gorosave, 2011; Male, 2006; Marshal, Michaels & Mulki 2007; Shields, 2008) in the early phase of their leadership. The experience of isolation and loneliness can be stronger when one is a novice school leader and new to the school culture (Garcia-Garduno et al., 2011; Male, 2006; Marshal et al., 2007; Pineda-Báez, Bernal-Luque, Sandoval-Estupiñan & Quiroga, 2019; Shields, 2008; Tahir et al., 2017). Novice school leaders especially go through stressful and traumatic tests rendering them seem unprepared for the role, especially

with the relational dimension of their job, with the most common stressful experience being having to deal with interpersonal conflicts in which school leaders have to serve as buffers (DiPaola & Tschannen-Moran, 2005; Garcia-Garduno et al., 2011; Pineda-Báez et al., 2019). However, these ease with time and experience as they become knowledgeable and more confident (Garcia-Garduno et al., 2011).

### **Lack of adequate preparation.**

The preparation school leaders receive during their training does not equip them with the necessary skills to adapt to the role ambiguity and role conflicts that they face on the job, nor does it furnish them with the skills and knowledge to respond to rapid, varied and often conflicting demands (Friedman, 2002; Hallam et al., 2010; Karami-Akkary, 2013, 2014). At some point, the realisation of inadequacy and one's inability to live according to the expectations of the various tasks and responsibilities lead to frustrations, feelings of unaccomplishment and burnout (Siegrist, 1996, 2010, 2012, 2015). In their study comparing new school leaders in English speaking countries and non-English speaking countries, Garcia-Garduno et al. (2011) noted that while there is some preparation for school leaders in English speaking countries, a majority of school leaders in other countries other than English speaking have no preparation for school leaders prior to taking to their job roles.

Where preparation exists, Walker and Qian (2006) have posed some questions regarding the content of preparation programmes for school leadership in terms of the kind of skills presumed to be significant for effective job performance. They advocate the need to customise preparation programmes according to the actual needs of aspiring school leaders that will enhance a meaningful transition into their job roles. In their study, Walker and Qian

(2006) found that while aspiring school leaders attached more importance to exhibition of technical skills, practicing school leaders saw technical skills as least important.

### **Insufficient funding.**

Despite the excessive workload, school leaders have often to operate within funding constraints (Chaplain, 2001; Hallam et al., 2010; Karami-Akkary, 2013; Molyneaux, 2011; Smith & Holdaway, 1995). The lack of financial resources to run school programmes and to address other constraints faced by the school leaders often puts pressure and stress on them (especially in private schools) as they have to balance among staff needs for rewards, employers' desire for profits and parents' reluctance to pay tuition fees (Hallam et al., 2010; Payne & Morrison, 2001).

### **Personal variables.**

Inasmuch as school leaders are faced with a lot of expectations at the school, they also have to struggle with their own personal and family issues that require attention. In this respect, school leaders' relations with their families (supportive or unsupportive), their focused attention to their jobs (at the expense of family), and a commitment to personal and/or professional values may play a role creating stressful situations (Friedman, 2002). In situations where the school leaders are unable to create a balance between job demands and locus of control and autonomy, stress, strain and eventually burnout may be the eventual outcome (Friedman, 2002). The inadequacy of rewards for the job coupled with the cost of living also contribute to stress (Molyneaux, 2011). Additionally, Personal demographic factors such as the school leader's age, years of experience, gender, marital status and personal health may also determine a school leader's burnout outcomes (Friedman, 2002; Hallam et al., 2010).

### **Organisational factors.**

The organizational structure, school climate, working conditions, job security and the physical environment may all contribute to job satisfaction or dissatisfaction (Larsman, 2006; Siegrist, 1996, 2010, 2012, 2015). Job satisfaction in this case refers the positive feeling school leaders may have about their job including: perceived job demands, perceived job control, perceived social support from superiors and subordinates at work, and opportunities for professional development (Larsman, 2006). A lack of job satisfaction leads to stress, strain and burnout (Larsman, 2006; Payne & Morrison, 2001).

### **External environment.**

The influence that top educational leaderships, school founding bodies or trade unions exert on school leaders may also lead to burnout, especially when school leaders are deprived of the necessary autonomy and control over the exercise and execution of their job responsibilities (Copland, 2001; Friedman, 2002; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Hallam et al., 2010; Karami-Akkary, 2013; Karasek, 1979; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Stoelinga, 2011; Whitaker, 1996).

### **Coping Strategies against Burnout**

Knowing that the impact of burnout not only affects the professional careers of school leaders and their contribution to the educational process, but that it also affects the physiological and psychosocial wellbeing of individuals (Beusaert et al., 2016; Larsman, 2006), is it not possible to put in place preventive or curative measures for stress before an individual is burnt out?

**Revisiting the causes of stress.**

One possible way to deal with the likely occurrence of burnout is to address work overload by (1) ensuring a balance between job demands and the school leaders ability to perform, and not to expect hero principals (Edwards, & Van Harrison, 1993); granting school leaders the necessary autonomy and control in accordance with the job demands and expectations (Karasek, 1979); matching school leaders efforts at with rewards, improving working conditions (Siegrist, 1996, 2010, 2012, 2015); and offering school leaders the necessary buffers and supports to address constraints faced in the exercise of the jobs (Payne & Morrison, 2001).

**Control-based interventions.**

One possible way to counter the imminent danger of burnout is to address the harmful effects of perceived stress resulting from work overload, and pressure from teachers and parents by developing control-based interventions to offset stress (Friedman, 2002). This requires efforts aimed at: (1) *behaviour control* in order to diminish negativity towards specific occurrences; (2) *cognitive control* so as to rethink of negative occurrences through diverse perspectives, and to refocus energies to less problematic aspects of the occurrence; (3) *decision control* so as to enhance timely decision making ability; (4) *information control* to be able to seek and obtain sufficient information about the negative event; (5) *retrospective control* to boost the hope that a negative past event can still be controlled; (6) *secondary control* in order to align thoughts and behaviour with environmental forces (Friedman, 2002).

**Provision of support systems, training and professional growth.**

Whitaker (1996) reported that a good number of school principals in her study suggested that the school leadership should be made more attractive by improving their salaries and benefits; bringing in additional personnel; and providing opportunities for professional development. In a study by Tomic and Tomic (2008), they reported that increase the degree of existential fulfilment decreases burnout. Existential fulfilment is defined by self-distance (related to personal identity), self-transcendence (related to relationships and value in society), freedom (related choice) and responsibility. According to Tomic and Tomic (2008), by improving the existential fulfilment of school leaders, that is, granting them more control and autonomy. Whitaker's (1996) and Tomic and Tomic's (2008) relate positively to personal accomplishment and negatively correlate to emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation - hence the proposition that by enhancing personal fulfilment of the school leaders, they are enabled to cope with stress and burnout.

**Distributed leadership.**

It has been noted in earlier sections that one of the primary factors leading to burnout among school leaders is the excessive workload. To reduce possibilities of stress, strain and burnout, Harris (2004) and Hoy and Miskel (2013) propose use of distributed leadership to spread responsibilities to other capable staff members, which is advantages in terms of providing release to the school leader from stress but at the same time contributing towards capacity building among teaching staff.

### **Chapter 3**

## **METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of this research study was to (1) explore, understand and describe some of the coping strategies that school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda use to address risks of burnout (2) compare the different coping strategies according to school and societal cultural contexts based on a qualitative study carried out in Lebanon and Uganda.

### **Choice of Research Paradigm**

This study was built on a naturalistic interpretivist epistemological approach in which social reality consists of a set of meanings constructed by individuals living and interacting in that reality (Belgrave & Seide, 2018; Blumer, 1969; Carter & Fuller, 2015; Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2011; Creswell, 2012; Denzin, 2016). It was, thus, heavily characterised by an open and flexible interaction between the participants' interpretations of their personal experiences, rather than any existing scheme, as well as the researcher's interpretations based on perspectives gained from reading the existing literature on burnout in school leaders. An interpretivist approach takes into consideration the fact that there are no assumptions, social norms, traditions and beliefs of anyone single culture that fit seamlessly in other cultures (Collard, 2007). Based on this, therefore, an interpretivist paradigm was preferred for this study (Cohen et al., 2011; Creswell, 2012) which compares school leaders' coping strategies against burnout across cultures (which may include personal, organisational and societal cultures). Therefore, besides seeking to understand, rather than confirm, school leaders' coping strategies against risks of burnout (or burnout itself), it sought to make an exploration of their choice of one coping strategy rather than the other, which implied understanding the meanings they attached to situations and the choice of their actions.

## **Choice of Methodology**

According to Creswell (2012), grounded theory is useful when one needs to generate a new “broad theory or explanation of a process” (p. 423) in which the existing theories do not address the issues at hand. Following his view, the absence of theoretical and empirical studies on burnout in school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda had a bearing on the choice of grounded theory model. In this study, grounded theory guided in the development of conceptual categories through constant comparative analysis of data generated in the first interviews to subsequent field data obtained through theoretical sampling, and in comparison to the extant theoretical literature on coping strategies against burnout in school leaders following principles of grounded theory (Belgrave & Seide, 2018; Charmaz, 2008; Cohen et al., 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2012).

In the study, grounded theory was used to inductively construct a conceptual understanding of strategies against burnout used by a select number of school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda, and therefore, to develop a conceptual framework of coping strategies against burnout in the two contexts (Belgrave & Seide, 2018; Charmaz, 2014).

## **Overview of Grounded Theory**

With this in mind, this study focused on emerging a conceptual framework of coping strategies against burnout from data collected from sixteen school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda. As noted earlier in chapter two, there is a want for empirical and theoretical literature on burnout in school leaders in the contexts of Lebanon and Uganda. As noted by Glaser and Strauss (1967) that “the discovery of theory [emanates] from data systematically obtained from social research” (p. 2), using grounded theory in this study allowed theoretical categories and a theoretical framework on coping strategies against burnout in school leaders

in the two contexts of the study to emergently develop from data grounded in the life situations of the sixteen participants. In this regard, this study examined transcriptions for similarities and emerging themes, compared emerging themes with findings in the literature, and examined issues particular to participants and those particular to the two environments.

The study adopted the tools of grounded theory enumerated by Cohen et al. (2011), namely: theoretical sampling, coding, constant comparison, identification of the core variable, collection and analysis of data to saturation, and development of theory. Similarly, this study adopted some of the procedures and canons outlined by Corbin and Strauss (1990) to (1) simultaneously interrelate processes of data collection and data analysis (2) conceptualise the basic units of analysis (3) categorise related concepts (4) formulate further question to fill in the gaps (5) constantly compare data during analysis (6) account for regular patterns and variations (7) build processes into theory (8) develop and verify categories during the research process and (9) analyse broad structural conditions.

Originally, this study planned a two-step in-depth interviews, enriched by use of clarifying questions in either step as well as follow-up questions, with the same sixteen participants. The reason for this approach was rather spatio-temporal given that I had to conduct interviews in both Lebanon and Uganda within a limited time period. However, as the study progressed, it became imperative to collect more data, which I did through phone calls, WhatsApp messages and emails in order to clarify some of the information provided earlier. This later addition was vital in the generation of a characteristically fit, applicable, relevant and modifiable categories for the purpose of generating a theoretical framework.

## **Selection of Participants**

This study adopted a mixture of purposive and theoretical sampling. Firstly, purposive sampling was used to identify and select participants based on suitability for the purpose of the study, that is, according to my judgement of which participants typically possessed particular characteristics sought in the study, and which focus on specific unique cases (Cohen et al., 2011). Thus, to suit as participants in this study, participants must be (or must have been) school leaders in: (1) Lebanon or Uganda, (2) private schools, and (3) schools in which English is the language of instruction so as to match the schools in Lebanon and Uganda. The even selection of participants between the currently serving school leaders and those who quit (not retired) was prompted by my belief that the selected participants offered specific, unique characteristics and properties relevant to the purpose of this study. Therefore, there was a possibility of a varied perspective and balanced perspective.

Thus, the specificity of participants was as follows: half of the participants, eight (8) in number, were evenly drawn from current school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda; and the other half, also eight (8), were equally drawn from school leaders who already quit in both Lebanon and Uganda. However, I purposely ignored the latter's reasons for quitting (just to be sensitive to personal feelings of participants). Altogether, the sample consisted of sixteen (16) participants, all of whom were asked the same set of questions in the first interview. These are represented in Table 1.

**Table 1.***Demographic characteristic of participants denoting school location and gender*

Lebanon			Uganda		
Still serving	Already quit	Gender	Still serving	Already quit	Gender
2 Beirut	4 Mt Lebanon	3 Male	1 Kampala (other districts & in Kenya)	1 Napak	6 Male
2 Mt Lebanon		5 Female	2 Wakiso	1 Nakapiripirit, Moroto & Napak	2 Female
			1 Napak	1 Kotido & Kaabong	
				1 Nakapiripirit & Kaabong.	

Here, a school leader refers to the overall head of a school commonly referred to in Lebanon as *principal* (or *director*), and in Uganda as *headteacher* (or *director*). In summary, the initial criteria for selecting participants for this study included: (1) overall heads of schools (2) working/worked in private schools, (3) 8 of them in Lebanon and 8 in Uganda, (4) 4 of them current and 4 of them who have already quit in either country, and are/were (5) leaders in schools where English is medium of instruction. It is worthwhile noting that apart from one participant, most participants in Lebanon worked (or are still working) basically in one school, while a number of school leaders in Uganda had worked in more than one school as indicated in Table 2.

**Table 2.***Number of schools served by participants*

	Lebanon								Uganda							
	Still serving				Already quit				Still serving			Already quit				
	Peter	Andy	Cathy	Margie	Martha	Eliza	Mark	Theresa	Joan	James	Matt	Rita	Phil	Simon	Jacques	John
Number of schools served	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1	4	1	1	2	1	3	5	2

At the beginning of this study, I had purposely not taken into consideration demographic characteristics such as age, gender, years of experience and school size. However, I had to reconsider bringing them up again albeit with inability to get all the demographic characteristics of all the participants due to their inaccessibility as shown in Table 3. According to my earlier judgment, age did not make much difference because among those who quit, some were in their thirties while others were in their fifties. Likewise, years of experience did not make a difference according to my earlier judgment because one participant quit after just one year, some quit after dozens of years as school leaders, and another quit during his leadership in the second school having reported a good experience in his first school. This is corroborated by Maslach and Leiter (2007) who point out that “although higher age seems to be associated with lower burnout, it is confounded with both years of experience and with survival bias (i.e., those who survive early job stressors and do not quit). Thus, it is difficult to derive a clear explanation for this age pattern” (p. 370). After one of the participants reported that he had a harder time when the number of students in his school were only 900 compared to when it had risen to 1600, I also ignored the school size. Additionally, other participants suggested that big or small school sizes had their own

advantages and disadvantages, for example, bigger numbers meant more fees collected, yet it also meant more complex management systems.

**Table 3.**

*Further demographic characteristic of participants and their schools*

	Lebanon								Uganda							
	Still in leadership				Quit leadership				Still in leadership				Quit leadership			
	Peter	Andy	Cathy	Margie	Martha	Eliza	Mark	Theresa	Joan	James	Mat	Rita	Phil	Simon	Jacques	John
Participant's gender	M	M	F	F	F	F	M	F	F	M	M	F	M	M	M	M
Age at first appointment	44	32	48	37	45	37	30	50					24	45	34	35
Current age	52	38	58	40												
Age at quitting					46	49	41	53					26	52	45	42
Years of service	8	6	10	3	1	12	11	3				17	1	5	11	7
Schools served	1	3	1	1	1	1	1	1				2	1	3	5	2
No. of Students	1900	385	520	945	700	320	300	250			1600	670	250	580	870	270
No. of teachers	226	119	65	107	42	37	35	40				46	22	19	20	14
No. of other staff	24	60	20	45	26	10	10	12					7	5	10	
School gender	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx	G	Mx	Mx	Mx	Mx
School type	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	D	B	B	B	B	B/D	B/D	B/D	B/D

*The empty spaces in the table imply missing information as I could not get it from the participants.*

Key:  
*B = Boarding*  
*D = Day*  
*F = Female*  
*G = School for Girls only*  
*M = Male*  
*Mx = Mixed school (for boys and girls)*

The participants were sampled from private schools of different backgrounds and orientations. In terms of school affiliation, the last schools where the sampled participants were (currently or just before quitting) consisted of eleven schools affiliated to religious organisations (5 Catholic, 3 Protestants and 2 Orthodox); 3 schools were owned by private individuals; 1 school started by a non-profit NGO; and 2 schools belonged to the community.

Like purposive sampling, Corbin and Strauss (1990) and Glaser and Strauss (1967) state that the initial sample choice in theoretical sampling is based on any groups the researcher believes will enable the generation of as many properties of categories as possible, and will enable the emergence of relationships among categories and their properties. Nevertheless, with the analysis of the initial data and emergence of concepts, theoretical sampling was used from then on to formulate questions specific to each participant in order to collect subsequent data required to fill in the existing gaps in the initial data, and to clarify and substantiate the emerging theoretical categories.

Principles of theoretical sampling were followed thereon in the much more fluid and flexible second interviews, clarifying questions and follow-up questions with the objective of filling in the gaps and substantiating the emergent categories (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Glaser & Strauss, 1967). For purposes of this thesis, I tried to differentiate between clarifying questions which I often asked during the interviews, and follow up questions which I severally did on phone with some participants after the transcription and analysis of second interviews. For according to Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Corbin and Strauss (1990), the contemporaneous integration of the processes of data collection, coding and analysis allows the researcher to subsequently decide from whom to collect the data required and from where to collect it. In this way, the emerging categories and theory generation from data analysis significantly dictated the subsequent data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) in what Cohen

et al. (2011) call an iterative process that only stops when one arrives at theoretical saturation. It is for the above reason that there was a variation in the questions asked in the second interview, clarifying questions during the first and second interviews and follow up questions that sought further information missed after the second interview.

The participants in Lebanon were mainly from schools located in Beirut and Mount Lebanon Governorates. Beirut Governorate covers the area within the capital of Lebanon on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, while Mount Lebanon Governorate is Beirut's immediate neighbour that nearly surrounds it (except for the sea coastline). In Uganda, participants included individuals (five) who had worked in more than one school located in more than one district. Overall, the districts where schools in which the participants served as school leaders included: Kampala, Wakiso, Fort Portal (Municipality in Kabarole District), Moroto, Kaabong, Kotido, Napak and Nakapiripit. Kampala is the capital city of Uganda, and together with Wakiso District, its northerly and easterly neighbour, are located in the Central Region on the northern shores of Lake Victoria. Fort Portal is a municipal town located in Western Uganda, while Kaabong, Kotido, Moroto, Napak and Nakapiripit are all located in the North Eastern Region of Uganda. One current school leader had headed a school in Kenya as well. The participants had been drawn from urban and town schools.

Being a qualitative study based on grounded theory, it was my belief that sixteen participants would provide rich data sufficient for this study. While balancing the number of participants between Lebanon and Uganda was to enable a fair comparison, I chose to also feature equal numbers of school leaders who are currently on service and those who have quit in order to delineate a balanced perspective of what coping strategies could be more effective in dealing with stress, strain and burnout.

## Data Collection

Data collection was mainly done through two-step interviews. Because in-depth interviews such as these can be time-intensive to conduct, transcribe and analyse (Boyce & Neale, 2006), data collection in this study was done in a two-step interview spanning about five and half months. The first set of interview questions were formulated based on the existing literature on burnout as shown in Chapter 2. All the sixteen participants responded to the same set of open-ended, semi-structured questions in the first step of interviews. The resultant transcriptions of audio-recordings, coding and analyses of the first set of interviews was then instrumental in the formulation of the second set of interview questions. Because the second set of interview questions aimed at filling in the gaps in the received data, each set of second interview questions was uniquely customised to collect specific missing information from each participant. The data was simultaneously collected and analysed. Based on the analysis, codes were compared and grouped to emerge patterns and themes, and themes were used to form subcategories, subcategories were related together to form categories and categories were further combined to form core categories.

However, further data was later collected through phone calls, WhatsApp messages and emails as it emerged that the data from the interviews and follow up questions still needed further clarification. The processes of data collection went as thus: six interviews (for the first step) and two second interviews (for the second step) were done in Lebanon, before conducting eight first step interviews and six second step interviews in Uganda. The rest of the interviews (except one second interview) were then completed in Lebanon.

The specific elements that the interview questions asked revolved around: emotional and physical exhaustion; job dissatisfaction; job demands and roles in relation to supports and

buffers, and authority and control; efforts put on job in relation to rewards and appreciation; and feelings of unaccomplishment. These questions are all typical features related to burnout and are shown in the Appendix III. Each of the sixteen sets of questions in the first interview had a crowning question that asked about how the participants dealt with any signs of stress and strain, if any, or how the participants managed to remain free of stress and strain.

To formulate the first set of interview questions, I was guided by the literature on burnout such as Maslach and Leiter (2007) and Maslach et al. (2001) who point out six categories reflecting person-job mismatch. The six categories they mention are: (1) workload characterised by excessive job demands with little resources; (2) control characterised by habits such as micromanagement and inability to influence; (3) rewards as in inadequate pay, lack of recognition or lack of satisfaction; (4) community typified by poor relationships, conflict and isolation; (5) fairness exhibited in discrimination and favouritism; and (6) values embodied in meaningless tasks and ethical conflicts. Maslach and Leiter (2007) further relate these to: (1) exhaustion exhibited in physical and emotional depletion of energy; (2) inefficiency reflected in a deteriorating feelings of proficiency and productivity; (3) interpersonal relationships with stakeholders.

Among the many other resources used in the formulation of the first set of interview questions are: (1) Edwards and Van Harrison (1993) who link stress, strain and burnout to a mismatch between job demands and environmental demands on one hand with personal capacity to perform on the other hand. Edwards and Van Harrison also link rewards with supplies provided by the environment; (2) Karasek (1979) who links stress, strain and burnout to a mismatch between job demands and control latitudes; (3) Siegrist (1996, 2010, 2012, 2015) who links stress, strain and burnout to insufficient rewards in comparison to efforts put on the job; and (4) Payne and Morrison (2001) who link stress, strain and burnout

to the lack of support and buffers in a demanding and stressful work environment. Once the interview questions were formulated, I first conducted a pilot study by interviewing two school leaders (not included in the sixteen participants) in Beirut, Lebanon. The pilot study enabled me to make necessary adjustments both in the interview questions and in the information letter sent to participants.

In the first interviews, all data collection was done through face-to-face interviews aided by audio-recording that was later transcribed. My preference for face-to-face interviews was based on my assumptions that (1) it allowed better observation of participants' facial and tonal expressions during the interaction and, (2) it enabled me to ask clarifying questions that I may not have been included in the original set of interview questions. All the sixteen participants were asked the same set of general open-ended, semi-structured questions about burnout in school leaders in the first interviews. As indicated by Glaser and Strauss (1967), the use of open-ended questions made it possible to collect much data that provided relevant and close-enough coverage of what was required for the study. As noted by Cohen et al. (2011) and Creswell (2012), broad and open-ended questions allowed participants the opportunity to express their views and perspectives without being weighed down by the encumbrances of the researcher's own perspectives.

The second step of the interviews consisted of new sets of open-ended, semi-structured interview questions. Unlike the first set of interview questions that were rather uniform for all participants, the second interview questions were varied and depended on the data collected from the first interviews. Overall, I first transcribed the first two interviews in Lebanon, did a quick analysis to identify the main themes, commonalities and differences, compared them to each other (including observing repetitions in each specific set of

responses) and to the literature on burnout, and then formulated questions unique to each participant.

By way of example, one of the first themes that emerged from these first and second participants' responses was *leadership*, with the second participant identifying *servant* and *distributed leadership styles* as his most preferred approaches to leadership. Thus, in formulating the second set of interview questions, participants who never mentioned about leadership in their responses to the first interview (or whose responses were not clear enough) were asked questions related to their leadership styles. This is because the objective of the second set of questions was to clarify and substantiate categories following the principles of concurrent data collection and data analysis. Therefore, each set of the second interview questions was specific to each respondent of the first interview. These sets of questions sought to collect further necessary data required to address the gaps in the first data collected, and in accordance with the principles of grounded theory. Appendix IV shows a select number of the second interview questions.

### **Data Analysis**

For the analysis, I used systematic approaches to data analysis (Cohen et al., 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Creswell, 2012). Corbin and Strauss (1990) point out that data analysis in grounded theory “begins as soon as the first bit of data is collected” (p. 6). Similarly in this study, data collection and data analysis were done simultaneously with data received being coded and analysed immediately before collection of more new data. Through the immediate analysis of collected data, questions for the second interview, that sought to identify relationships between concepts in the data already received, were developed. The immediate analysis was also instrumentally important in developing categories, identifying

their properties and clarifying the relationships between categories. Yet, this was not always the case since I had to conduct the second interviews for some participants before analysing the data of the first interview.

Prior to data analysis, a pseudonym was assigned to each participant as a precaution for confidentiality. During the extended processes of data collection and analysis, I examined the collected data closely while on the lookout for whatever required further clarification. During this process, I simultaneously identified commonalities and assigned code labels to them for easy grouping of information, and organised them into tables following emergent patterns and themes. To arrive at these patterns and themes, I used the three types of coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990) or phases of coding as Creswell (2012) calls them, for the analysis. These three phases are: open, axial and selective coding.

According to Corbin and Strauss (1990), open coding enables (1) comparison of events and actions/interactions (2) grouping of regular conceptual patterns and identification of irregularities (3) formation of categories and subcategories from patterns (4) use of categories for further sampling (5) stimulation of generative and comparative questions for further data collection (6) theoretical sensitivity to new issues (7) category specificity (8) specification of properties and dimensions of each category and (9) also enables one to overcome subjectivity and bias through questioning and constant comparison.

For Corbin and Strauss (1990), axial coding serves to (1) relate categories to subcategories (2) test the relationships using data (3) develop categories further (4) compare conditions with previous experience (5) use incoming data to repeatedly verify deductively proposed hypothetical relationships (6) facilitate revision of unsupported deductive hypothesis, and to (7) critically evaluate unsupported hypothesis for falsehood or variation of

hypothesis. According to Corbin and Strauss' (1990), selective coding functions to (1) unify all categories under a core category in relation to which other categories are explicated (2) identify poorly developed categories and those requiring more data (3) enable generalisability of grounded theory, to a certain degree, through abstraction.

This systematic approach to data analysis allowed (1) the comparisons of data collected in Lebanon and Uganda (2) the comparison of data from different participants and (3) matching participants' responses to interviews in the data collection process. For example, in open coding, I first identified the codes which were either words, phrases, sentences or groups of sentences by marking them using different ink colour or highlighted them with different colours as should in the Figure 2.

Figure 2. Photo screen shot showing an example of the first coding process

What caused the dissatisfaction [was] probably, *dealing with parents*, you-know, and with some situations, you know, [it] was difficult to deal with parents, was difficult to deal with so. Then, and again, *probably the routine, you know, going through the same things over and over and over*. So this you know, mainly created this dissatisfaction.

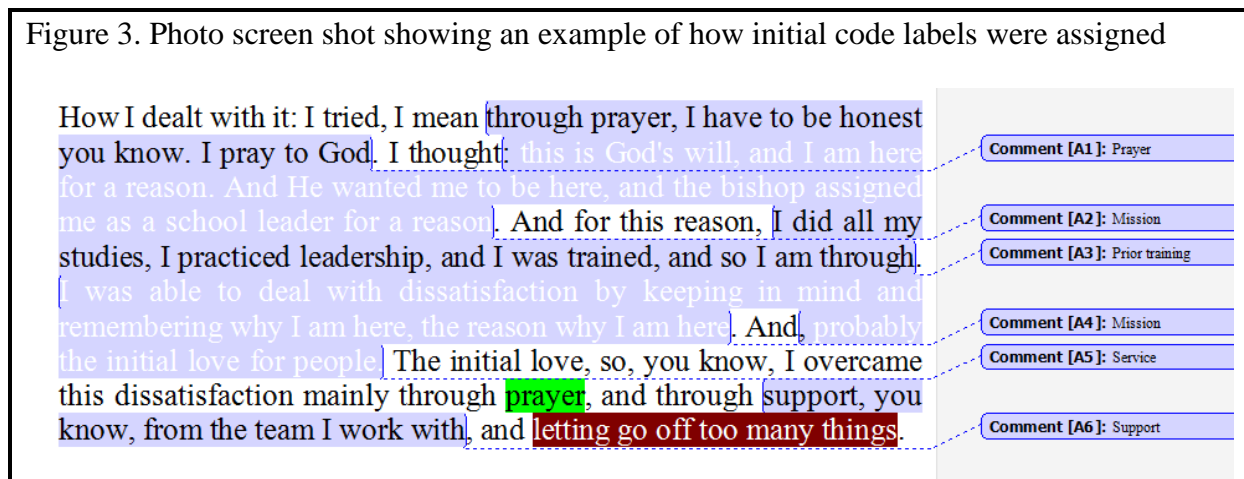
How I dealt with it: I tried, I mean *through prayer*. I have to be honest you know. *I pray to God*. I thought: *this is God's will, and I am here for a reason. And He wanted me to be here, and the bishop assigned me as a school leader for a reason. And for this reason, I did all my studies, I practiced leadership, and I was trained, and so I am through. I was able to deal with dissatisfaction by keeping in mind and remembering why I am here, the reason why I am here. And, probably the initial love for people. The initial love, so, you know, I overcame this dissatisfaction mainly through prayer, and through support, you know, from the team I work with, and letting go off too many things.*

#### Question 2

Yeah, that is normal for me and for school leaders to feel extremely exhausted... So, yes I went through moments when I felt exhausted physically. And probably mentally, I would say, when I had difficult situations to deal with, especially with the media and the social media, and the staff, the students with discipline and their parents who are difficult to deal with. And the third type of moments I went through when I felt exhausted, *feeling kind of bored. I mean the routine, the things that you do every day, over and over for years.*

So, how did I remedy the situation? Again *by remembering and putting again in front of me why I am here, you know, what I am doing, what my mission is, my call, my vocation. So this, you know, will give me energy, and talking about it with friends. And this helps a lot. You know, we can go out and have coffee or something and talk about the situation. And, you know, and things will be fine again.*

After identifying and marking the phrases, sentences or groups of sentences, I gave them initial codes. An example of the initial codes given to the responses are shown in Figure 3.



I later grouped the identified codes to form subcategories following emerging patterns and themes. For instance, to arrive at *transformational leadership*, I grouped together codes labels such as transformational leadership, inspirational motivation, individualised consideration, idealised influence, staff empowerment and offering direction.

In axial coding, I related subcategories to categories. For instance, I related together subcategories such as meditation, mindfulness and prayer. Another example of subcategories that I related together are transformational leadership, distributed leadership and servant leadership to form one category, namely, leadership styles.

In selective coding, I unified categories to form core categories. For instance, I unified categories such as leadership styles, teamwork, delegation and decentralisation to form a core category that I labelled leadership. Similarly, taking the example of mindfulness, prayer and meditation, I unified them to form what I labelled as spiritual life. A shortened representation of the whole coding process is represented in Table 4.

**Table 4.**

*Examples of coding process*

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open coding	Transcription of interview
Leadership	Leadership style	transformational leadership	“ Definitely, <i>transformational leadership</i> is a big part of my way of my principalship in the school.”
		servant leadership	“ <i>Servant leadership</i> or part of that <i>servant attitude... servant leadership</i> is a mindset, it is an ideology to be completely servant and <i>helping others progress, helping others reach their potential.</i> ”
		distributed leadership	“I’m also with a mindset that <i>distributed leadership</i> is very important as well. Part of the distributed leadership model is <i>lack of a heroic figure</i> . And <i>I never wanted to be seen as a heroic figure</i> because... What if your hero dies, what happens to your organisation?”
	Contingent to situation	“It is more of a combination. I cannot say [that] I am sticking to one type of leadership: to the servant leadership, or transactional leadership or transformational leadership... However, it’s not strictly that. There is also the servant leadership. Basically because education is a dynamic process. It’s something that always has to change...”	
	Teamwork		<p>“We work as a team.”</p> <p>“Success of a school leader has to do with the success of the team that he or she built around him or her; I feel that the stronger the team, the happier, and the more successful the team and the school will be.”</p> <p>“We do not have this much of the hierarchy between the leaders and subordinates. We believe that we are a community; we altogether are here in</p>

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open coding	Transcription of interview
			order to have the school as an institution going on.”
			“I don’t work alone, I always work with people around me.”
	delegation		“Delegation is extremely important.”
			“Delegating some of the responsibilities to others, and delegating to the appropriate persons.”
			“You have to know how to delegate the work. Let other people do some of the things that they can do ... and you know that they can do it as good as you would like them to do it.”
			“ As a school leader my big responsibility is to identify talents and people who are good at something and give them the task. It’s makes things easier for us, and makes us achieve more whenever we are delegating the appropriate task to the appropriate persons.”
	decentralisation	horizontal decentralisation	“My team and my teachers we’ve a very flat organisation. We make and define issues together, we work together, and we work through issues collaboratively.”
Decision making	democratic decision making	consensus	“We make and define issues together, we work together, and we work through issues collaboratively. That’s why, there is very little pushback from the faculty [and] from the staff. Because everything is done with their consent, everything is talked about, everything is discussed.”
			“If the team isn’t making those decisions, then they don’t have ownership. I think it’s very important for everyone to have ownership of the decisions.”

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open coding	Transcription of interview
			<p>“ I’ve never had a decision coming directly from top... I have to go back to the teacher, ... to the persons who are involved in that decision.”</p> <p>“There are also other players in the running of the school. And you have to get a consensus. It is not only my authority that counts for the running of the school, but a collective understanding, collective ideas. And then, when you come up with that then you go with the consensus. And that’s how we run the school. But sometimes your authority is challenged by those stakeholders.”</p>
		individualised consideration	<p>“We have to make the people feel that we are looking at them in personalised manner. Each person who comes to this office should leave with an idea that he was treated as a human being. Not as one teacher.”</p> <p>“I’ve never had a decision coming directly from top... I have to go back to the teacher, ... to the persons who are involved in that decision.”</p> <p>“We are not a school that doesn’t listen to our parents; I am a school leader that takes every comment to heart, because at the end of the day I am here to serve my community.”</p>
		flexibility	<p>“I feel everybody must have be part, must contribute. Without that, if I come and I say this is my idea, I must be open to that idea being dismantled. So, that is really my approach.”</p>
	meetings	valuing every comment	<p>“We’ve to plan carefully... Go step by step, not to go to drastic action without evaluating what would happen. What? How? Why?”</p>
Communication	Listening	proactive listening	<p>“ Part of that servant attitude is to make sure that the number one variable is listening; I feel that listening, being a very proactive listener... is extremely important; negative situations arise from the lack of communication, ... the</p>

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open coding	Transcription of interview
			<p>more communication there is within a school, the more transparency, the less issues and negative situations we'll have.”</p> <p>“Being a very active listener [and] being present in the moment, I would say, are the two important variables.”</p>
		Clarity	“I make myself extremely clear in what I want and what my goals are. Every faculty member [in] my team knows where I am going to be in three years, and where the school is headed to.”
	informal channels	open door policy	“I never let it get to where I am feeling very irritable, and less sympathetic because there is always an open line of communication.”
Understanding school Culture	open mind	Learning	<p>“When I first arrive here even up to now, I am still learning. So, when you are learner, obviously your authority challenged. You don't come in as a top leader; you come in as the last.”</p> <p>“So when I arrived, almost everybody was looking at me saying, ‘Are you going to manage?’ So, it really took me time. I had to be a leaner. I felt, before here, I have been a head teacher in another school.”</p> <p>“Whether you have authority or not, if you don't have the language to speak to the people, there is a gap and misunderstanding.”</p>
Adaptability	Openness	Openness to experimentation	“The imposition is suggestive. But like one little just statement is that request from above, is a command or is an order. You look at the rationality of what they suggested, and do it. As long as it has no negative consequences, do it... As long as it is something that is worthy, that does not compromise the standards... But down the road, we kept on seeing the strengths [and] the weaknesses and together we would agree on how to deal with the weaknesses

Selective Coding	Axial Coding	Open coding	Transcription of interview
			<p>which we witnessed then.”</p> <p>“If you know you are not abiding by technology, and you are not working with brand new technological advancement, [then] you know that you gonna eventually be a ‘dinosaur’; we are always on the lookout for new technologies for education, especially Edtech education technology; with the influx of the Syrians and the Syrian refugees, there was a huge mindset - first mindset change, and the huge change in the way we have to develop our curriculum, to be able to accept the Syrians.”</p>
	flexibility	Modifying plans	review plans, execute, evaluate, modify and start all over
Support and collaboration	build relationships	create a support network	create a support network of key people
		act as a community, team or a family	“We work as a team and they will always tell me: you are the head of the school, of this institution. Whatever you decide, we give you support even if we are not fully convinced. I always try to be sympathetic with the staff and students and the parents. I always call them to make sure they are doing fine.”
Expertise	expertise knowledge	Expertise knowledge strengthens authority	use administrative skills to manoeuvre difficult situations rather than use authority and power

## **Quality**

According to Corbin and Strauss' (1990) "generalisability in grounded theory partly is achieved through a process of abstraction that takes place over the entire course of the research" (p. 13). According to them, the more abstract the concepts (especially the core categories) are, the more wider the applicability or transferability of the theory. Accordingly, this study ensures the abstraction of concepts to the best possibility it can while at the same time remaining within the foundations of grounded theory by specifying actions/interactions, conditions, contexts, consequences and variations under which transferability can be applied (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

To ensure adequacy and transparency, this study was grounded on socially situated, context-bounded data based on the foundations of theoretical sampling and guided by the coding processes specified by Corbin and Strauss (1990). To ensure descriptive and interpretive validity, I minimised my own biases by seeking respondents' validation in order to ensure fidelity to the original information provided by the participants (Cohen et al., 2011). Furthermore, theoretical validity was addressed by ensuring that explanations resonated with participants' constructs (Cohen et al., 2011).

## **Ethical Concerns**

Cohen et al. (2011) note that interviews involve interpersonal interaction and collection of information about human situations, and point out that care be undertaken to ensure confidentiality, informed consent is sought and being aware of the consequences of interviews. In this research study, I sought a written (except two) informed consent of the participants before conducting interviews. Confidentiality is highly valued in this study, not

only during the process of data collection and analysis, but also as pertains the use and storage of information acquired from participants during the study.

## **Chapter 4**

### **RESEARCH FINDINGS**

This chapter tries to address the questions: (1) What coping strategies do school leaders in Lebanon use to deal with risks of burnout? and (2) What coping strategies do school leaders in Uganda use to deal with risks of burnout? Thus, the chapter shows the findings of this research study organised into two main sections (1) Challenges that factor burnout in school leaders in (a) Lebanon and (b) Uganda, and (2) Coping strategies adopted by school leaders in (a) Lebanon and (b) Uganda.

#### **Challenges that Factor Burnout in School Leaders**

Following are brief descriptions of some of the factors that influence burnout as reported by the participants in the study, first in Lebanon and then in Uganda.

##### **Work overload and time constraints.**

School leaders in this study reported the excessive nature of their tasks. Some of their job roles and expectations included managing the school, recruiting and managing personnel, soliciting and managing funds, inspecting and managing buildings, coordinating and guiding teaching and learning, accountability, teaching, meetings, guiding extra-curricular activities, personnel management, linking the school to the external environment, networking external partners, buffering teachers, coordinating between top management with school staff, managing relationships, communicating and networking with parents, attention to students' wellbeing, among others. In brief, their job roles transcend administrative and human resource management to include financial management, pedagogical leadership and public relations.

In Lebanon, seven out of eight respondents reported excessive pressure resulting from too much work. Although one of the respondents stated that her workaholic personality loved excessive responsibilities, all the respondents reported exhaustion at one point or another. The peak moments of exhaustion in school leaders in Lebanon according to all the respondents was at the beginning (when they have to plan for the school year) and end of year (with all the assessments and other end of year activities). Other moments of exhaustion in school leaders happened whenever there were special events and activities in the school, for instance, at the time of my first interview with Cathy, there was the accreditation process going on in the school, which according to her was a hectic and tedious process.

In Uganda, all the participants reported pressure from the wide range of activities they had to carry out. Besides the usual activities related to ordinary school administration and the greater numbers of student population (three current school leaders are heading secondary schools with over 1,500 students each, and the other current school leader heads a secondary school with 670 students), all the current school leaders interviewed are heading boarding schools. Unlike their Lebanese counterparts whose working hours end at about 4:30 pm, Ugandan school leaders had to be on call twenty four hours throughout the week. Their responsibility extends to minding about students full wellbeing including attention to students' health and feeding for the three months students reside in the school each term. For instance, Joan's religious institute had to create a new community by the school in order to enable her pay more attention to the students in case anything happens during the night. On his part, Mat had numerous examples related to his struggles with the responsibilities including having to handle problems with adolescents. Such examples involved paying attention to students trying to get out of school premises during the night. Mat said:

You have to be online twenty four seven as we call it this way. You have to be online, you have to be updated, there can be a scuffle between an *Askari* and a student. Because there are those students who would want to escape. At night, there are those students who would do anything of their benefit, selfish interest at night... I have had a scuffle where the *askari* [Swahili word for guard or soldier] grabbed a child who was jumping in. When he escaped, nobody realised. When he was jumping [over the perimeter wall] back, *askari* grabbed him.

Of the three school leaders who quit, three had similar challenges with work overload, and one reported that he had no problem with the too many responsibilities at all.

The excessive nature of job responsibilities have ramifications on the amount of time that school leaders give to their job. School leaders have to spend long working hours that consume some of their personal and family time. This brings us to the issue of time constraints. Some of them reported that they had often sacrificed a lot of time outside school hours. For instance, Cathy believes she was lucky that at the time of her appointment as a school leader, most of her family was living abroad which gave her the chance to put additional time to her school responsibilities. Mark equally feels lucky that his wife was understanding enough that she often helped him with some of the school work that he carried to continued at home.

Like their counterparts in Lebanon, all the participants in Uganda felt they had little time to deal with their numerous job responsibilities. In fact, when making appointments for the interviews, I could also feel how strained and tired they were as a result of numerous activities. Besides the difficulty of scheduling the interviews (I was turned down by over a dozen school leaders), our interviews were sometimes interrupted by phone calls and members of staff presenting issues to the participants during the interview sessions. The question of time constraints could be summed up in the following quote from the first

interview with James when he said, “*Sometimes ... you feel like, I wish the day had more than twenty-four hours so that I could accomplish what I have to accomplish*”. Eventually, I could not conduct a second interview with two of the participants as our appointment dates were interrupted by emergency situations.

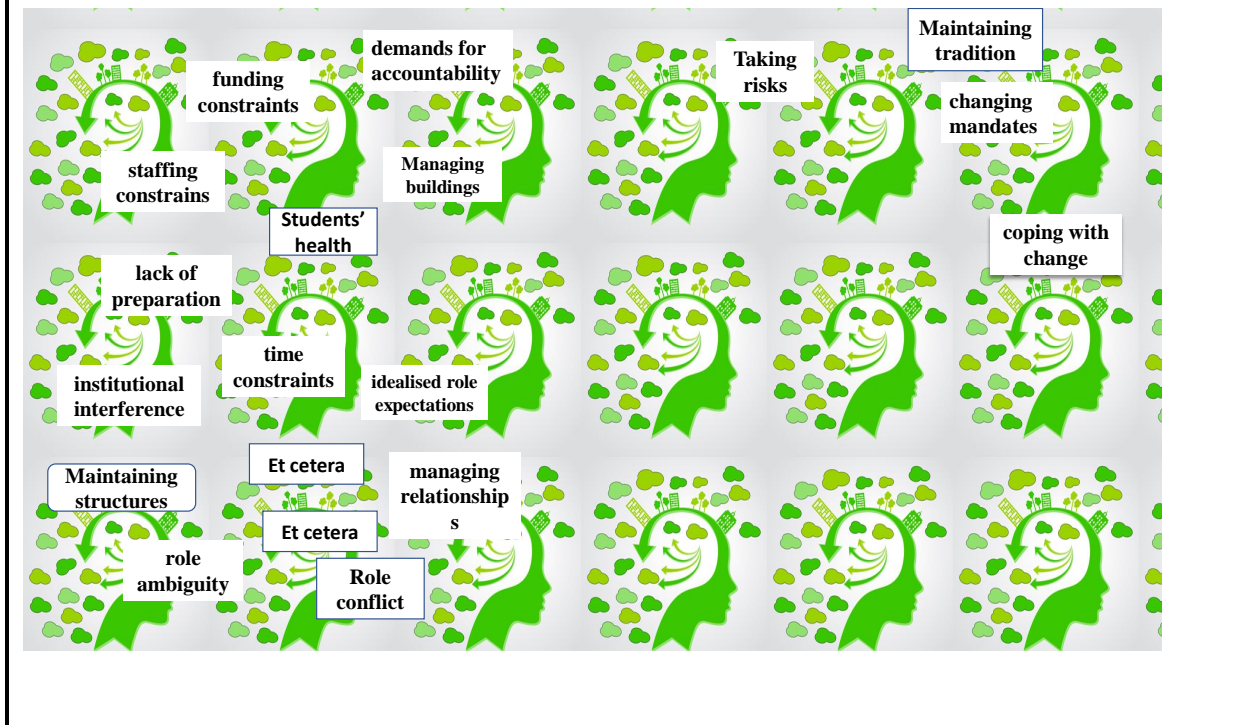
However, job demands (work overload) and time constraints did not necessarily affect every school leader equally. For instance, Theresa (a former school leader in Lebanon) said:

I am a hard worker. I do everything... So, if I have many responsibilities, my strategy is to do most of it. So, I don't escape from work. So, this is my strategy. And I don't mind whether I have many responsibilities if I am a hard worker.

And John (a former school leader in Uganda) said:

It had never felt really that the time was too little to do anything, because... in December, they (The Ministry of Education and Sports) bring out the national calendar, that all the activities of the school are clearly stipulated. So, you know what is going to be done in the first term... And together with management, the planning is done beforehand. So we have really never had any time when we had to run and then manage by crisis, except in situations where we had scarcity.

As seen from the verbatim of John and Theresa, job demands and time constraints did not automatically lead to stress, strain and burnout. Yet that does not necessarily mean overcommitted and dedicated school leaders may not experience stress. Some the job roles and expectations that school leaders have to face are represented in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Job roles, expectations and challenges faced by school leaders<sup>2</sup>

### Organisational structure and culture.

In this study, there were a variation of school structures that affected the nature of workload that specific school leaders experienced. In Uganda, the general school structure typical of all schools in the country consists of headteachers (who are the subject of this study) assisted by two deputy headteachers responsible for academics and logistics respectively (see also Hallam et al., 2010). The role of the two deputy school leaders often filters some of the issues with which the school leader has to concern himself/herself. Despite this difference, what seemed to matter most when it came to workload was how each specific school was organised, and how each school leader handled the job responsibilities. Some of the schools were highly structured in a bureaucratic model. For instance, Rita said:

<sup>2</sup> I adapted the image and edited it using Adobe Photoshop. The concepts of job roles are a result of this study.

We have management structure which goes through administrators and then teachers of different responsibilities. Okay it goes from head teacher, deputy head teacher, we have the director of studies, then we have heads of departments, then we have class teachers, patrons and then come down to the prefects [student leaders]. We have prefects' leadership and even among the prefects, they are divided into committees. So you find that most the of the activities, they go through the leadership of students first, and then they deal with it. Then it comes to the teachers and then it comes to the administrators. So, the management structure actually facilitates the general management of the school.

According to Rita and other leaders who had a top down (vertical) distribution of job roles and authority, the pressure was not as much as it could have been, which also reduced the long hours with which they could have spent attending to all the academic, financial or disciplinary issues. However, major and more difficult decisions had to be made by the school leader herself.

A much more relaxing school structure for school leaders consisted of a horizontal distribution of responsibilities. Two school leaders (one in Lebanon and one in Uganda) reported having a leadership structure with a horizontal distribution of roles and authority. In Lebanon, Andy reported a more horizontal distribution of authority among his leadership team as given in the verbatim:

My team and my teachers we've a very flat organisation. We make and define issues together, we work together, and we work through issues collaboratively. And that's why, there is very little pushback from the faculty [and] from the staff. Because everything is done with their consent, everything is talked about, everything is discussed. And I think that is a very important factor to note as to why we don't have any pushback from our staff.

Although he seemingly remained at the apex of the leadership structure, Mat (in Uganda) was the other school leader who had a somewhat horizontal structure in his style of leadership and devolution of authority as stated this verbatim:

We added an administrative secretary to the management, to my office and the tasks tried to reduce. Then two, creating very many departments. That each department acts independently in taking decisions pertaining their department or their issues like disciplinary department, like welfare department, like off-compound department, class teachers department... And it reduced the overload, it would still occur when there are issues of reference.

Most of the other school leaders both in Lebanon and Uganda emphasised the need for delegation of responsibilities to teachers to ease the pressure on themselves. Furthermore, how authority and control is exercised within the school structure and culture may have consequences on all school leaders including school leaders.

### **Autonomy and control.**

Of the four school leaders in Lebanon who quit, two of them quit due to interference from the school top management. While two participants who are still serving in Uganda reported facing interference, three of those who quit (one in Uganda and two in Lebanon) did so because the above authority or top management undermined their ability to lead by interfering with the day to day running of the school. A former school leader in Uganda stated that the school board often got involved in students' (their sons and relatives) disciplinary issues besides calling unnecessary board meetings because it involved receiving monetary allowance. In other cases, the board could just impose on the school leader as reported in by Phil:

My major problem was the board. Because even in recruitment, when you say let us do proper vetting, some just come and put their person when you feel the person, maybe, is not capable or does not have the capacity to handle the learners. They say, "No." Maybe because they know their reasons... For sure, you just get a phone call and you have to act according to that... I think for the time I was

there I stood by my conscience, and that could have played a good role in saying let us get rid of this person...

According to Martha, the school leader ought to have “total authority” and control in the school for accountability purposes. Once that authority is put into doubt, then it won't do any good for the school and any stakeholder. Her verbatim is given below:

I firmly believe that the principal should have authority, not total control, because he must be kind of accountable to certain committees and et cetera... but he has to have some authority in the school. And the minute that this authority is questioned, I think... it is not good for the school, because in a school situation its different from any other type of situation. Every minute there is a problem and... a person who has authority must be there to make decisions, and work quickly, and react and make sure that things are run smoothly. Moreover, the teachers, for example, they should know who is responsible for them... And when this is challenged, when this is in trouble - this authority - I think that the school will really suffer, especially if there is no clear job description, where everyone knows where the limits are... and how things are done in the school. Now the minute this is challenged, this is changed... And that's what really happened with me. I'm not proud of the way I dealt with it. But because I really believe in this, I kind of quit my job. So that's a good part. I don't know, it wasn't the best solution... But I had to make a stand...

Theresa too, whose reason for quitting was interference by some of the school proprietors had endured institutional interference as a school leader. And she summarised the frustrations she felt saying,

Private schools are governed by people who don't actually know much about pedagogy. They have money, they are good businessmen, and they are good persons in that field. But education and dealing with people is different. Being with children is very different from buying this, [and] selling this.

In Lebanon, all the four current school leaders interviewed reported having sufficient control and autonomy in their leadership, and two of those who quit did so because of undue interference in the school management by the board, or in one case, some members of the board. All this implies that when it comes to authority and control, the baseline is to grant school leaders sufficient control and autonomy in the exercise of their responsibilities..

### **Support and collaboration.**

When it comes to support and collaboration from stakeholders, the biggest stress and source of irritation seems to stem from uncollaborative staff. According to John, he could not handle the *laissez faire* school culture left by the previous administration. He found himself and his administrative team standing alone in their policies. John said:

The teachers were really impatient and having had a kind of administration where they were doing their own things, *laissez faire* kind of administration before. When we came, we were a bit very, very strict in terms of saying things of the school, we need the inventory for all departments. Anything to move out [of] the school, must move out with the authority of the headteacher. So, that way, because they were not used that kind of system, they never liked it and there was a bit of conflict, especially with those that were heading some departments.

Among the respondents, those that had the support and collaboration of the different stakeholders felt empowered in their work whenever challenges arose in their leadership. However, school leaders who experienced a lack of support from anyone of the stakeholders were more easily stressed whenever there were some challenges to face irrespective of how ordinary those challenges maybe. John (who quit) had problems with uncollaborative teachers. Phil (who quit) had problems and imposing board. For Eliza (who quit), her biggest struggle was the teachers often trying to criticise her baselessly. Theresa (who quit) had problems with some members of the board. For Martha (who quit), besides interference by

the top authority, one of her main challenges was to gain the teachers' trust and collaboration. According to Martha who was still new in the school, the staff were stuck in their ways of doing things and anxious about many things. For instance, making a communication by email was met with: "Is this how we contact our teachers?" On the other hand, all the current school leaders enjoyed the support of their teachers. For instance, Peter reported that his teachers often tell him, "You are the head of the school, of this institution. Whatever you decide, we give you support even if we are not fully convinced. But we are here. We will support you just to implement the decision you have taken".

### **Government policies.**

In Lebanon, despite being private schools and being less influenced by government policies than public schools, some school leaders felt government directives or changes in mandates did affect them sometimes. For instance, with the 2018 decree by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education to increase teachers' salaries mid-year, teachers in many schools went on strike forcing schools to increase fees mid-year. In such situations, school leaders found themselves caught between teachers' demands for increment and parents' unwillingness to pay the increment in tuition fees.

### **Funding constraints.**

Of the four school leaders who quit in Lebanon, two of them reported having had to struggle with insufficient funding. Theresa saw it as part of her issues with the school proprietors, and she had to look for alternative ways to raise funds for the school by herself. Mark admitted that his biggest frustration was financial in nature. Because parents were mostly unable to pay the tuition, the financial issues of the school had a bearing on the academics as well. For instance, teachers could go without pay for a month or two with the

resultant effect of being unable to attract good teachers, and therefore, to increase enrolment of fees paying students. He was caught in a situation where he had to be understanding to parents' inability to pay tuition and the teachers' need to cater for their families. And this is precisely the main reason he had to quit thinking it was better for someone with good knowledge of financial management to carry the school forward.

In Uganda, out of the eight participants in the study, seven faced financial constraints in their school leadership in some of the schools they headed. This was exacerbated by the fact that most of these schools are boarding schools, implies the need to provide food for students besides other school administrative costs. Moreover, collecting fees was much of a problem. For instance, in the two schools John headed, his biggest concern was always providing food for students. Sometimes, he had to rely on World Food Programme. Other times, he had either to use his own money or borrow money from other institutions and individuals. Similarly, in her first school, Joan too had to have recourse to friends working in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) for financial assistance. For his part, Simon had create a food management committee in the school consisting of teachers, parents and students. Mat, Phil and Jacques recounted how they had to use their own finances in several occasions for different school related programmes without being refunded by the school proprietors.

### **Prior training.**

In this study, apart from Peter (who had a Masters in educational leadership), Andy (who had a Masters in international education and financing) and Martha (who was doing a Masters in educational leadership), the other five school leaders interviewed in Lebanon had no prior training in school leadership before taking over school leadership roles. However,

they had done bachelors in education in which they had learned some modules about school leadership. One current school leader realised in the course of her career the importance and need for further training in school leadership and thus enrolled for it. The four other participants one current and three who quit did not by the time of this interview have further training in school leadership. Nevertheless, according to Andy, prior training is important yet on-job training had great significance too.

In Uganda, of the eight participants in the study, only three had leadership related preparation before taking on school leadership. The other five had only qualified as teachers and only had some ideas about school administration in the courses provided in partial fulfilment for their bachelors in education. Coupled with newness in the leadership role, the lack of expertise knowledge was a source of stress for beginning school leaders.

### **Coping with change.**

Of all the participants in Lebanon, all the current school leaders and one of those who quit believed environmental changes are opportunities for school improvement. Two of those who quit did not really appreciate environmental changes much. One of those who quit was still new in the school and everything else was also new to her. However, of all these participants, only two current leaders, Andy and Cathy, really took advantage of environmental changes and were adaptable enough to whatever changes occurred in the external environment. In Andy's case, for instance, the arrival of the Syrian refugees led them to boost the *English as a Foreign Language Department* in order to accommodate the Syrian pupils whose level of proficiency in English was very low. At one point, they had also to change the school mission to include mindfulness, and teachers were trained in mindfulness

and to be more accommodative. Cathy on her part at the time of the interview was in the process of introducing a change from grade-level classrooms to subject classrooms.

In Uganda, when it comes to general environmental changes such as demographic changes, school leaders in Uganda were very open like their Lebanese counterparts to take advantage of them as learning opportunities. With a country blessed with many ethnic groups and cultures, and whose fluid student population register in any school in any part of the country, Jacques saw it as an opportunity to introduce a weekly extracurricular activity in which students learned about themselves by sharing their different and unique cultures in music, dance and drama. Rita for her part organises regular trips for both her teachers and students to schools in other regions within the country where they can have an opportunity to interact and understand how learning is done in that different school. However, when it came to technology, even though all the school leaders interviewed showed a positive outlook on the importance of technology and are willing to use integrate it into teaching and learning, they all showed great reservation in its free use. For example, students are restricted from taking cell phones to school.

### **Staffing constraints.**

Of all the participants interviewed in Lebanon, only one respondent reported staffing issues resulting from insufficient funds to pay teachers and to attract quality teachers. Most of the current school leaders reported having sufficient control over the recruitment of teachers. In Uganda, seven of the eight participants reported having had difficulties with staffing. Staffing difficulties arose from either financial constraints or the proprietors' desire to minimise expenses. For instance, Mat gives a case in which at one point the school owner wanted to (and did actually) reduce the number of teachers to only seventeen against Mat's

wishes. By that time according to Mat, the students' population was between 900 and 1000. The consequence of this reduction in the number of teachers was reduction in the number of periods per week for some subjects. For example, instead of five periods (40 minutes each) per week, it was reduced to three or two periods per week. And with the pressure of competition in academic achievement in Uganda's schools, Mat felt dissatisfied with the situation. In her previous school<sup>3</sup>, Rita with the support of the school proprietors, had to increase tuition every year to meet staffing needs. But that left her in constant conflict with parents.

### **Personal factor.**

Two of the four school leaders who quit in Lebanon never really had any ambition to be school leaders. They loved teaching but had not contemplated becoming school leaders. For instance Mark insists he was not really ready for the task and felt he had no clear vision for the school. He just accepted the job because there was a need for someone to take the role of school leader. Eliza too, felt she was not really the right person for the job and was always dissatisfied with herself and her own performance as a school leader.

In Uganda, one participant pointed out that the most stressing moment and issues in his career as a school leader originated from his wife. Because of her disagreements with her in-laws, she took it upon herself to make wild allegations against her husband about misappropriation of school funds and other professional offences. Even though this specific school leader was cleared of any wrongdoing after investigations and auditing, the feeling of

---

<sup>3</sup> Rita's current school is Catholic-founded but now government-aided. That implies that there is a possibility for some teachers to be included on the government payroll. Therefore, information about her current is left out.

betrayal by someone from whom he had expected understanding and support outweighed all other challenges he had faced in his entire career as a school leader.

**Newness.**

Newness often provided another dimension of challenges faced by school leaders appointed to a school from elsewhere. Coupled with the lack of experience, newness was a liability that older teachers in the school tried to take advantage of and gave hard time to the newly appointed school leaders who had never been to that school before in any capacity. For instance, Martha recounts how hard it was for her to prove her worth as a leader in the eyes of parents and teachers. Similarly, Eliza felt the pressure of undue criticisms of older teachers in the school, some of whom had been her own teachers, whom she felt were more ambitious for the role of school leader. On the contrary, Cathy, who had been a teacher and then acting school leader in the same school, feels her familiarity with the school culture was instrumental her and the different individuals in the school had a great role in her adaptation to her role as school leader.

Just like in school leaders in Lebanon, newness was also a challenge for school leaders in Uganda. Of the eight participants interviewed, five of them experienced challenges related to the liability of newness. In her first school, Joan was not only new in the school but also new as a school leader, this gave her deputy the opportunity to manipulate and rally students and teachers against Joan to his advantage. It was only until a point where Joan felt either he leaves the school or she does that the deputy school leader was dismissed by the board. James who succeed a powerful predecessor, Rita who had to settle in an intimidating environment to cool down a students' strike, and Phil and Jacques who had been appointed

immediately after qualification, were constantly and variedly challenged to prove their worth as school leaders by the different stakeholders.

Newness brought along some inherited administration problems. In Uganda, school leaders are often transferred frequently. With such transfers comes the burden for the newly transferred school leader having to manage the administrative problems left behind by his/her predecessor. Such was the predicament in which five of the eight participants interviewed found themselves. For instance, Rita had to take over a school where students had just had a strike and the atmosphere was still hostile. John tried in vain to correct the *laissez faire* attitude the staff had got used from the previous administration. John pointed out, as an example, a situation where some teachers had become used to collecting tuition from students, and sometimes using it at will, rather than leaving it to the bursar whose job it is to manage school funds. For her part, Rita had to deal with an aggressive environment that had resulted in a students' strike and the after-effects of the strike.

### **Pressure from the Media.**

One current school leader reported persecution of the media, and especially the social media, as one of the biggest challenges he ever faced. The false propaganda put him in low spirits for quite some time. Three of the participants in Uganda noted the constant pressure from the media as one of the stressing issues. In an environment of academic competition, the media constantly grades schools according to their academic performances in the national examinations. Some school leaders are therefore pressured to perform. Moreover, there are a lot of inequalities related to school performances, especially with regards to admission of students as the top schools always select the best performing students.

Table 5 represents the challenges faced by school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda.

**Table 5.***Summary of challenges that factor burnout in school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda*

Category	Lebanon	Uganda
Work overload	X	X
Autonomy and control	X	X
Support and collaboration	X	X
Prior training	X	X
Time constraints	X	X
Funding constraints	X	X
Staffing constraints	X	X
Coping with change	X	X
Newness	X	X
Government policies	X	
Personality variables	X	
Inherited administrative problems		X
Pressure from the media	X	X
Family problems		X

**School Leaders Coping Strategies against Risks of Burnout**

School leaders responses to factors leading to burn out depended much on their personality type and their beliefs of their roles. Below is a report of their responses put in categories that emerged during analysis. The report is presented according to country: first Lebanon, and then Uganda. Table 7 shows a summary of the coping strategies adopted by school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda.

**Table 6.***Summary of coping strategies of school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda*

Strategy	Lebanon	Uganda
Leadership	X	X
Decision making processes	X	X
Communication	X	X
Adaptability and creativity	X	X
Understanding of school Culture	X	X
Balancing work life and personal life	X	X
Authority and control	X	X
Conflict management	X	X
Support and collaboration	X	X
Personality variable	X	X
Expertise	X	X
Time management	X	X
Spiritual life	X	X
Confidants	X	X
Vocation	X	X
Training and professional development	X	X
Trust	X	X

**Lebanon.**

In Lebanon, some of the coping strategies that the interviewed participants reported to have adopted during their leadership included the following:

*Leadership.* From the participants' responses, it was evident that leadership plays a great role in shaping and sustaining school leaders in their careers. According to the respondents, stress, such as that originating from work overload, conflicts with stakeholders and opposition to the leaders' decisions and authority, partly augured the leadership abilities of the school leader in relation to his/her leadership style and sharing of responsibilities as briefly summarised below.

*Leadership style.* Top in the responses of nearly all school leaders was the necessity to adopt an appropriate leadership style that maximised collaboration and teamwork, and at the same time reduced pressure on the school leader. However, despite respondents favouring one leadership style over others, there was no specific leadership style that was reported to suit all situations, but rather the emphasis rested upon the need to adopt a variation of leadership styles contingent upon specific situations. Most prominent among these leadership styles included: servant leadership, transformational leadership, democratic leadership, and distributed leadership. Transactional leadership also featured. For instance, Cathy had this to say:

Definitely, transformational leadership is a big part of my way of my principalship in the school. However, it's not strictly that. There is also the servant leadership. Basically, because education is a dynamic process... [you] always have to think of the development and improvement and even researching and anything that you'll try to implement in it, to evaluate whether it's a good operational process... So, here I feel more in the transformational, the one who's building the capacities for the individuals and all the group, and to go on this process of change.

*Prominence of transformational leadership.* In the ordinary school running, current school leaders favoured most transformational leadership. In their responses, statements that reflected characteristics of transformation leadership featured most. Such statements

included: inspiring people, individualised consideration, empowering staff, offering direction, connecting the school to its environment, school leaders' role is to influence others, offer directions, and setting objectives and goals.

*Teamwork.* In the responses, closely related to leadership style was teamwork. Most of the participants who felt less stress from their excessive job demands emphasised the need for teamwork as a way to limit pressure on the school leader. The emphasis on teamwork was in opposition to “heroism” or the need to appear significantly important through solo performances. For instance, Andy reported that he had to give up the hierarchical leadership structure in favour of a “flat organisation” consisting of a leadership team rather than a single individual on top. Insisting that the success of the school leader depends on the success of the leadership team the leader has build around himself/herself, Andy’s approach consists of recruiting and staffing his team with strong high level individuals, and organising them into a network. According to him, stress on the school leader originates from the weakest link in the leadership team. Contrary to the approach of the current school leaders, of the four school leaders who quit, one believed herself to be a hard worker and was hands-on in many activities, and two of them loved working alone.

*Delegation.* Out of the eight respondents, six of them (four current and two who quit), saw delegation of their job roles as a means to reduce job stress. Three current school leaders underlined the importance of delegating appropriately according to the capabilities of persons delegated to execute the job. According to Martha, it is essential to “have certain people that you can trust with the work” and “you know that they can do it”.

*Decision making processes.* All the participants reported decision making as a vital element in overcoming pressures that lead to emotional exhaustion. Consistent on the

participants' responses as practices leading to suitable decisions included democratic decision making, wide consultation and regular meetings as briefly described below.

*Democratic decision making.* Two of the current school leaders pointed out the centrality of democratic decision making. By this, they cited inclusiveness, that is, involving all in the planning, execution and evaluation; giving the staff the chance to make decisions; and seeking consensus since it is important for staff to own decisions. Cathy in particular emphasised that in leadership, it was necessary to have proper discussions, involving everybody's effort including students' opinion, and allowing staff to do spot analysis before taking the decision. Andy on his part often gives the opportunity for his leadership team to make any decisions.

*Grapevine.* Two of the current school leaders emphasised the need to gather information before making the decision to avoid any resentment. Cathy particularly acknowledged the importance of grapevine to "test the flow" and to gather stakeholders feelings about a proposal. And testing the flow required using other key people rather than the leader himself/herself getting involved. According to her introducing new ideas needed a subtle approach, for instance, in form of questions.

*Meetings.* All the participants believe that having regular meetings was important. Such meetings would range from faculty meetings and division meetings, to meetings with students. For Margie, there is no single week that passes by without her having a meeting within the school. Cathy pointed out that a majority of her meetings are with her staff concerning school administrative matters rather than with people outside and that she preferred it that way.

*Communication.* Quality communication helps to avoid conflicts and the stress that arises with those conflicts. In their responses, participants pointed out how clarity, dialogue and having all channels of communication open are vital in school leadership as briefly reported below.

*Clarity.* School leaders who felt able to handle stressing situations reported that the mode of communication in the school is vital in making or breaking the school leader. Important elements of communication that easily wither storms included clarity in communicating decisions. Where necessary, the leader needs to proactively make clarification or ask for clarification of issue before enactment. If necessary, he/she has to explain again and again. In other words, the school leader needs to communicate with clarity what he/she needs from all stakeholders. Andy, for instance, underscored the importance of making everyone (stakeholders) understand the departure point, direction and goal of the school and the vision of school leader.

*Formal and informal channels.* School leaders interviewed who reported success in their communication in the school believe that both formal and informal channels of communication have their strengths and weaknesses. It was up to the leader to choose which one to use at an appropriate moment. However, being open to both channels of communication is imperative. Most importantly, the school leader must be accessible to all at any given time.

*Dialogue.* Most of the respondents (seven), both current and those who quit, believe that school leaders need to have an open flow of ideas, listening proactively, and valuing every comment. Good communication is necessary for building good and healthy relationships. For example, Theresa reported that one of her strengths in building support

from staff was by “giving importance to what others say”. Where the leader proposes and idea, he/she has to learn to convince on what everyone stands to gain from the vision or new idea. Additionally, the leader could use informal leaders to sell out ideas.

***Adaptability.*** In the face of the ever-changing external environment, school leaders are to be open-minded, flexible, creative and adaptable or they risk facing a downturn. To put it in the words of Andy, they “gonna eventually be a dinosaur” (or extinct). School leaders with rigid approaches to leadership risk getting dissatisfied, frustrated, and developing feelings of unachievement. In view of these, participants who have been able to wither possibilities of dissatisfaction were those that saw environmental changes as challenges to overcome. Rather than bottling up only to explode in dissatisfaction, successful ones perceived such challenges as opportunities to review plans, execute again, evaluate, modify and start all over again.

***Understanding of school Culture.*** Participants who were successful through hard times in their leadership were those who started by first learning the school culture, mission, and goals as well as the its nature, its environment and its *modus operandi*, before asserting their own vision and direction of the school. They approached school leadership with a readiness to learn first without imposing their own new ideas or principles. Their first task as school leaders in a particular school was to listen; observe what, how, why; understand the nature of communication; draw priorities and then begin manipulating and appropriating the acquired knowledge according to their vision.

***Balancing work life and personal life.*** All the current school leaders and only one of those who quit stated how very important it is to always take time off fully disconnected from school business, have a good rest, spend time with family, interact with students, exercise and

sports, and even be by oneself. According to Andy, the “winning formula is healthy mind, healthy body, healthy soul”. On the contrary, one respondent who quit reported having suffered a lot of physical and emotional strain reported that,

I was drained and I had stomach aches. Severe, severe, severe. (Interviewer: Ulcers?) Maybe. Severe. Because I did not take care of myself as I should, and I was under stress all the time. Because whatever happened with me, I could not tell to others... So, I kept everything to myself. So, what happens, and I cannot even tell my family members about it, because it is none of their concerns. Again, I have to keep the privacy of what is going on in the- school... I stored everything and it somehow, exploded. And the doctors said, “You know, we don’t have a cure for sure because this is not something physical that is creating this problem. It is the stress you are in”.

***Authority and control.*** Among the participants, all the current school leaders felt they had sufficient authority to exercise their roles, while two of those who quit reported that there had been interference from school proprietors. However, while they could do nothing about the interference by school owners, the respondents think that mutual respect and clear laws and regulations on job description for all stakeholders was necessary. Yet the six school leaders who felt they had sufficient authority to run the school reported that they put responsibility before authority. For example, Margie stated that the authority she holds is only to enable her perform her responsibilities rather than to control people. Andy emphasised the need to allow individuals the opportunity to use their intuition to make decisions.

***Conflict management.*** The biggest difference between the respondents who withstood the rough moments in their leadership and those that quit was the style of conflict management. Whereas those who quit as a result of failure to resolve conflicts were insistent on what they believed to be right, those who succeeded in withering conflicts made use of

dialogue, discussion and “open, honest and candid conversation”, as stated by Andy, in conflict situations. Additionally, they reported making concerted efforts to: consult widely, collect different perspectives, go to the root of the problem, delay response, avoid impulsive reactions, treat issues individually, listen patiently and to give importance to people. Besides doing their best to act with professionalism, they tried as much as possible to avoid getting too personal, and always asked for clarifications before acting.

***Support and collaboration.*** Lack of support and collaboration from superiors, parents and teachers was another issue that put much stress on school leaders leading to emotional strain. Two of those who quit reported a lack of collaboration and support from the staff. All the current school leaders reported their strength lies in the support and collaboration of the stakeholders. For example, Cathy felt more energised by the philosophy of the school she leads, which emphasises on a community-like approach in which there is no much hierarchical difference between superiors and subordinates, because it matches her own personality. Yet three of the current school leaders think such support has to be built and strengthened through the concerted efforts of the school leader. The school leader should develop the ability to create a support network of key people in the school, and to build relationships through creative approaches.

***Personality variable.*** Most of the current school leaders who feel less stress have strong, positive, persistent and patient attitudes. They are attentive, respectful and composed. They understand how to deal with people who possess power yet lack expertise in the field of education. They know what is within their own limits and do their best to resolve issues amicably. On the contrary, among the respondents, two of the school leaders who quit had a perfectionist attitude. One of the two, from the very beginning, harboured feelings of inability

and self-doubt, and it was the reason for his quitting even though he spent many years as a school leader.

**Expertise.** Among the participants who were successful, knowledge and experience also served in addressing pressure and undesirable situations. Expertise in the field served to enhance the school leaders' proper use of authority and it gave them added confidence, professionalism and administrative skills to manoeuvre through difficult situations rather than reliance on authority and power.

**Spiritual life.** Three school leaders reported prayer as one of their coping strategies, and one reported mindfulness, yoga and meditation as one of his coping strategies.

**Confidants.** Two school leaders reported having confidants to share some of their feelings concerning their work as one of the ways in which they relieved themselves from the weight of their work pressure.

**Professional development and coaching.** Three school leaders reported their own professional development as one of the ways they tried to cope with the stress of their jobs, one reported coaching his staff so as to raise their performance levels in order to ease pressure on himself.

**Programming.** Five school leaders reported scheduling and prioritising their tasks according to days, weeks and months as one of the ways to handle the pressure of the many job roles.

**Trust.** Two school leaders reported the importance of building trust in the school, while three others reported the need to have among the staff those they can trust to implement some of the decisions well.

**Uganda.**

In Uganda, some of the coping strategies adopted by school leaders resonate with those used by school leaders in Lebanon as seen below.

*Leadership.* Like in Lebanon, participants felt that leadership played a great role in the school leaders' ability with stress resulting from work overload, conflicts with stakeholders and opposition to the school leaders' decisions and authority. Coping with stress, strain and potential burnout depended much on the school leaders' style of leadership and his/her disposition to share responsibilities and involve others in the running of the school as briefly stated below.

*Leadership style.* Just like in Lebanon, school leaders in Uganda reported that it is vital to adopt a leadership style that limits pressure and stress on the school leader. There was an assertion of the need to adopt a variation of leadership styles according to the specific situations of the school. Respondents in Uganda also pointed out transformational leadership, servant leadership and distributed leadership, and in some occasions transactional leadership, as the most appropriate leadership styles. Three of the current school leaders and two of those who quit emphasised the need to draw every stakeholder to play their part, and that any kind of authoritarian leadership is bound to fail because, in the words of James, the school as an institution is not a "one man's show" but rather it "consists of a team of players" with each playing an important role however insignificant it may appear in the eyes of many. The school leaders is more of an "accounting officer", insisted James. Rita had this to say,

My approach is more participatory approach. Because I believe, I do not know it all. And if I tried to do it all, I will break. Yes, because I feel everybody must have be part, must contribute.

Prominence of transformational leadership. In the ordinary school running, current school leaders favoured most transformational leadership. In their responses, statements that reflected characteristics of transformation leadership featured most. Such statements included: inspiring people, individualised consideration, empowering staff, offering direction, connecting the school to its environment, school leaders' role is to influence others, offer directions, and setting objectives and goals.

*Decentralisation.* School leaders in Uganda particularly saw the benefit of a decentralised leadership style. Uganda's schools already have a leadership structure that distributes leadership roles from the school leader through the deputies, departments, committees, classroom teachers, down to student leaders. According to Rita, she would not survive long if she had to handle all the issues in the school by herself. Transferred to her current school a year ago in the heat of a students' strike, she insists that student leaders have helped a lot in handling most of the indiscipline in the school. It is whatever student leaders cannot handle that sifts up through the leadership structure such that by the time problematic issues reach her office, a great deal would have been dealt with by student leaders, classroom teachers, teachers on duty and the disciplinary committee. She believes that her main role is an oversight function. However, besides the existing leadership/management structure in Uganda's schools, Mat felt his school of over 1,600 (only secondary school) was overwhelming to administer. So he had to create a number of departments and devolved decision making functions to them, granting them a sort of semi-independence.

*Teamwork.* While Mat and Rita's approach pointed above still reflects a vertical sort of decentralisation, John had a more horizontal approach to leadership. The importance of teamwork to John was reflected throughout the interview as he kept responding "we" all the time even though I always asked the questions in the singular. This prompted me to ask him

why he always responded with a “we”. Rita was able to whither the hostile atmosphere that greeted her arrival by trying to involve every stakeholder in the affairs of the school including the community around and the alumni. James’ approach to school looks at the institution as “a family” in which no one is less important. In these leaders’ view, merits and demerits belong to all rather than the leader.

*Delegation.* All the respondents, including those who quit saw delegation of job roles as a means to reduce pressure that the job roles put on school leaders. Apart from Simon and Jacques who, in some occasions, would delegate roles to willing staff members, the other school leaders saw it fit to appropriately delegate roles according to capabilities. For instance, Jacques said, “... I always moved to the next teacher to seek [his] support. If the deputy is given responsibility [and] he doesn’t take it, you take it to the next teacher. That is how I coped with the situation...” Understandably so, one of the biggest challenges in the leadership careers of Simon and Jacques was their staff. However, Joan, a current school leader entrusts her responsibilities to her two deputies and the head of academics while she takes a few days off whenever she felt exhausted. On the normal running of the school, she believes it is vital to distribute, allocate and share roles with her deputies.

*Decision making processes.* Participants reported the importance of appropriate decision making processes in the running of the school. Just as in Lebanon, participants pointed out that involving the participation of stakeholders in the decision making processes not only adds to the quality of the decisions made, but also limits the pressure and expectations laid upon the school leader. Below, I outline briefly three main concepts reported in the interview.

*Democratic decision making.* All the current school leaders and two of those who quit identified democratic decision making as a vital element in overcoming pressures that leads to emotional exhaustion. Democratic decision making implies variedly involving all in the planning, execution and evaluation; giving the staff the chance to make decisions; making collective choices for the common good; and seeking consensus since it is important for staff to own decisions. James, Mat and Rita particularly emphasised that in leadership, it was necessary to have proper discussions. In Rita's words, proper discussions meant that "if I come and I say this is my idea, I must be open to that idea being dismantled". For Mat, it means giving even a disagreeable position a moment for experimentation and observe its strengths and weaknesses, then deal with the weakness. And for James, it means a realisation that running the school involves others as well as shown in the following quote:

You may come up with something, ... executive says, "But according to what we feel, that will not work"... You get to know that I am not the only player. There are also other players in the running of the what? Of the school. And you have to get a consensus. But it is not only my idea that is always bad, not only my authority that counts for the running of the school, but a collective understanding, collective ideas. And then, when you come up with that then you go with the consensus. And that's how we run the school.

*Consultations.* Where necessary, making consultations with experienced persons and professionals is important. For instance, according to Simon, not only did he often rely on a retired school leader for guidance in many of his decisions, but he also more than often had to make use of resourceful persons and other experienced persons. By "resourceful persons" is meant experts in fields other than education who are capable of giving alternatives to school leadership; and "experienced persons" means those individuals within the school who have had years of experienced in dealing with certain issues. Rita has built her leadership around

the vitality of everyone's input including the community around the school and the school old girls.

*Grapevine.* James and Rita underscored the importance of gathering information before making the decisions. James admits the importance of grapevine to gather information about stakeholders' feelings and reactions on certain proposals. For James, understanding school dynamics, informal groups and their leaders is key to getting such information. James thinks that the school leader has sometimes to get out of his office to chat with students, and staff, asking them what they think and feel about certain proposals.

*Meetings.* According to all the respondents, having regular meetings was important in school running. These extended from formal meetings to informal meetings. In handling administrative issues, flexibility without forgetting the essence of things counts a lot. Such flexibility also means that the school leader does not take it personal when someone takes particular issues with the leader's opinion as pointed out by James when he said, "... not only my authority that counts for the running of the school, but a collective understanding, collective ideas." Here, the issue of consensus plays a great role. James, Mat, Rita and John, underscore the importance of arriving at consensus in a participative leadership approach.

*Communication.* Another important strategy in dealing with stress, strain and potential burnout is quality communication. This is particularly vital when conflicts with stakeholders arise. School leaders need to have an open flow of ideas, listening proactively, seeking for consensus, have an open door policy, "have ears on the ground" (James), and daily and weekly meetings. Quality communication presumes clarity, dialogue and openness. Below, I briefly go over the content of the responses.

*Clarity.* One element of communication that addresses potential conflicts is clarity. All the current school leaders and three of those who quit felt that clarity in communication is important. For instance, James pointed out that one of the things that irritates him is when after a meeting in which he felt everyone understood what was to be done, instead he finds someone doing something differently from what has been agreed. So it is always important to communicate with clarity and make everyone understand the decisions taken. If by necessity school leader has to repeat oneself, then he/she must do it to avoid unnecessary potential conflicts.

*Formal and informal channels.* Apart from one that I never got to ask this question, all the school leaders interviewed believe that it is important to use both formal and informal channels of communication. How and when to use what channel of communication is dependent on the school leader's discretion. It was up to the leader to choose which one to use at an appropriate moment. However, having both channels of communication was very important. Most importantly, the school leader must be accessible to all.

*Dialogue.* All the current leaders interviewed as well as two of those who quit were fully aware of the importance of sometimes tactically compromising with their own positions just to ensure issues don't escalate into conflicts among stakeholders. Dialogue is one of the most effective ways to build amicable and healthy relationships. Where the leader proposes an idea, he/she has to learn to convince on what everyone stands to gain from the new idea rather than use authority. For instance, Jacques stated, "A lot of experience showed me that when you confront a situation, you don't get the desired answer. Instead, you escalate it." Additionally, when the leader's idea does not get through, the leader could use informal leaders to sell out ideas as espoused by James.

***Adaptability.*** Change in the internal and external environments becomes an opportunity for school improvement only when it is met with adaptability and flexibility in mind. All the current school leaders interviewed and two of those who quit reported the importance of open-mindedness in the face of change. For instance, as James stated, one cannot just remain indifferently unchanged. One “must go with some rhythms according to the changes that are coming. Otherwise you will be lagging behind,” said James.

***Understanding school Culture.*** It was participants’ who took time to understand the school culture, its mission, its goals and operational mindset that easily survived the pressure from stakeholders. This was not just because they were necessarily wrong in whatever they had to propose for the school, but just because of the level of understanding of the stakeholders on the importance of what was being proposed. For instance, while comparing her experience in her previous and current schools, Rita had this to say,

But when I came here, I really felt I was so challenged: different experience, different people... When I arrived, almost everybody was looking at me [as if] to say, “Are you going to manage?” So, it really took me time. I had to be a leaner... You don’t come in as a top leader; you come in as the last. So in that way, it has been a challenge from the teachers’ point of view and it takes you longer to re-learn...

Contrary to Rita’s approach, in his first school as a leader, John faced a lot of complaints from students and parents because of the strict discipline he had imposed in the school, a kind of discipline typical of the school he had deputised. His strict discipline was only justified at the end of the year by the excellent results the school achieved in the national examinations. However, John’s attempts to make reforms in his second school met a lot of resistance from the staff who were used to John’s predecessor’s approach to leadership. In his frustration, John resigned and changed career altogether. Like Rita, the two other current

school leaders interviews and one who quit emphasised the need to understand the prevailing school culture before introducing any changes.

***Balancing work life and personal life.*** In the study, three of the current school leaders and two of those who quit felt it very important to always take time off fully disconnected from school business, have a good rest, spend time with family, sleep well, do some physical exercise and sports, change environment, take a short vacation, interact with students, socialise friends, and go for leisure activities.

***Authority and control.*** Among the participants, two of the current school leaders interviewed and two of those who quit, felt they had sufficient authority to exercise their roles, while two of the current school leaders interviewed and two of those who quit reported that there was interference from school proprietors. For Mat, whenever there was a policy imposed by the school proprietors, his approach was to implement the given policy, do regular evaluations as well as giving regular reports for the proprietors to see for themselves the effects of their decision. Mat put it in this way:

They do impose. The imposition is suggestive like one little statement. That is a request from above, it is a command or is an order. You look at the rationality of what they suggested, and do it. As long as it has no negative consequences, do it. But down the road when you realize a negativity, the impossibilities, suggest this works

Like their Lebanese counterparts, the Ugandan participants believe that it is vital to have clear laws and regulations that guide job descriptions and interpersonal relationships for all stakeholders was necessary. They believe in the necessity of regularly reviewing job descriptions and enacting by-laws. Yet most of the school leaders reported that they putting responsibility before authority. For instance Margie felt that the authority she holds is to

enable her perform her responsibility rather than to control people. Rita also thinks authority does not always count.

Many other respondents equally thought that what is rather valuable is a system of proactive measures to guide relationships. Andy, Mat, Rita and John emphasised the need to give others opportunity to use their intuition. According to James, it is important to be open to having own “ideas being dismantled” by subordinates. A majority of the respondents also felt that authority needs to be accompanied by experience and expertise for it to be productive according to Simon, even though using tools of power are necessary they should be used according to situations. However, number of school leaders who quit or where asked to quit had issues with exercising authority. Even though they rightly used their authority, they were open to being misunderstood by others thus fracturing relationships.

***Conflict management.*** The biggest difference between the respondents who withstood the rough moments in their leadership and those that quit was the style of conflict management. Most of those who succeed made use of dialogue, discussion and “open, honest and candid conversation” (Andy) in conflict situations. Additionally, they reported making efforts to understand the different personalities of all stakeholders, made consultations, took time to reflect on situations, collected different perspectives, went to the root of the problem, delayed response and avoided impulsive reactions. Besides doing their best to act professionalism, they tried as much as possible to avoid getting too personal, always ask for clarifications before acting, owning mistakes and apologise whenever they were on wrong.

Noting how difficult it was for beginners, experience always made problem issues easier to solve. For instance, Joan recounts her first year in which she had a nightmare with one of the school’s prominent stakeholders who picked issues with her for ignoring to

acknowledge him during a function. Looking back at that year's incident, she says that if it was today, she would have acknowledged him just to make relations easy even if the acknowledgement was not deserved. It is always important to note that toughness depends on situations but what is more important in situations of conflict is counselling, guidance and encouragement, and appreciating before chastising. Most of the school leaders who succeeded in managing conflict situations highlight that patient listening, giving importance to people and human formation is priority.

Others reported the immediate attention to issues and individualised consideration when addressing conflicts. Some of the respondents think that it is important to learn to recollect oneself, be calm and avoid confrontations as much as possible since confrontations often escalates issues. A few felt that depending on situations, the best solutions are sometimes to let go, use win-win strategies, examine both sides of an issue, and don't push people too hard even if you have the authority to do so. Where necessary, use administrative channels rather than taking draconian steps, use the board to deal with certain contentious issues, especially when it involves school proprietors. For other staff, one could use code of conduct, apply sanctions, and beware of when to apply strict laws and flexible laws.;

***Support and collaboration.*** Lack of support and collaboration from superiors, parents and teachers was another issue that put much pressure on school leaders leading to emotional strain. Among the respondents who had quit, four had faced institutional interference. Two felt and two of them quit because of lack of collaboration and support from the staff. One of the participants still serving as school leader felt let down school proprietors in occasions. Among the participants, those who got through hard situations were those who had the support of some or all of the stakeholders but had also the ability to create a support network of key people, build relationships, and to use creative approaches to inspire bonding & unity

with teachers, students, board, and local community. These school leaders saw the necessity of building teams and making the school act as one.

***Expertise.*** Among the participants who were successful, knowledge and experience also served in addressing pressure and undesirable situations. Expertise in the field served to enhance their proper use of authority and it gave them added confidence, professionalism and administrative skills to manoeuvre through difficult situations rather than reliance on authority and power.

***Spiritual Life.*** Three school leaders in Uganda reported prayer as one of their coping strategies to release the stress that accompanied their jobs.

***Confidants.*** Three school leaders reported having confidants to share some of their feelings concerning their work as one of the ways in which they relieved themselves from the weight of their work pressure.

***Professional development and coaching.*** Two school leaders reported their own professional development as one of the ways they tried to cope with the stress of their jobs,.

***Programming.*** Six school leaders reported scheduling and prioritising their tasks and organising them in the annual calendar as one of the ways to deal the pressure of the many job roles.

***Trust.*** One respondent reported the importance of building trusting relationships within the school and the surrounding community. One of the ways they use to achieve this end is by dedicating a day in a month to visit the communities surrounding the school.

## Comparisons Between Lebanon and Uganda

Owing to absence of literature identifying similarities and differences in coping strategies against burnout in school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda, data obtained during this study forms the primary basis for comparisons. Comparisons between the data in this study reveals that, just like there are lot of commonalities in the factors that influence burnout in the contexts of Lebanon and Uganda, so are the coping strategies against burnout used by the specific school leaders similar across the two countries. However, there also exists a few unique issues influencing burnout in the two contexts and a few unique solutions according to specific school leaders. Table 7 below gives a summary of some of the main ideas in relation to factors that are likely to contribute to stress, strain and burnout in the school leaders in the two contexts.

**Table 7.**

*How culture influences psychophysiological stress in school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda*

	Lebanon	Uganda
Cultural heterogeneity	Cultural heterogeneity is present. Religion plays a prominent role. Ethnic diversity and its role on educational culture is more limited	Cultural heterogeneity is diverse. Ethnic and tribal cultures play a great role in educational culture. Influence of religion is limited
Duty Call	Day schools: School leaders day begins early in the morning and ends at about 16h30	Boarding schools: School leaders are on call twenty four hours, seven days a week
School calendar	School year runs for nine months with only the Christmas season providing a break	School year is divided into three terms of about three months, each with a break
Government policies	Sometimes, decrees are issued by government within school year, e.g., increment of teachers' salaries in 2018.	Apart from Islamic feasts, any changes are given prior to beginning of academic year including opening and closing dates. Only schools in Kampala (capital city) can open or

		close two weeks earlier or later.
Stability on job	School leaders often remain in the same school for a stable period of time	School leaders are frequently transferred. This sets in issued of inherited administrative problems
Administrative structure	School leader acts as head with all the job roles.	School leaders always have two deputies: one in charge of academics, and the other in charge of welfare
Teaching roles	School leaders often teach besides administrative work	School leaders are expected to do at least six lessons a week as an assigned duty for remedial measures
Exhaustion	Peak moments of exhaustion are at the beginning and end of year, and during special activities/events	Peak moments of exhaustion are the beginning and end of term, and during some special activities
Recruitment	School leaders rise from among the ranks: teacher - coordinator - head of department - school leader.  Mainly those who had gone through this kind of channel were more astute in dealing with presenting challenges	School leaders rise from among the ranks: Teacher - classroom teacher - head of department - deputy school leader - school leader. Sometimes on transfer.  Mainly those who went through this kind of channel and the more experienced transfers were more astute in facing any challenges
Prior training in school leadership	No prior training in school leadership is required. It is left to individuals. They were teachers	No prior training in school leadership is required. It is left to individuals. They were teachers
Experience	Newness is a big challenge. The first years are the hardest	Newness is a big challenge. The first years is the hardest
Technology	Schools leaders are more open to use of technology as far as possible	Schools leaders and stakeholders are more reluctant to use of technology for fear of abuse
Role of media	Media attacks (especially social media) is a challenge, especially for schools that require more enrolment	The mainstream media puts great pressure through constant comparisons in academic performance of schools

**Similarity in coping strategies.**

Data from participants shows a wide range of similarities in terms of the approaches for coping with situations that potentially cause stress, strain and burnout as seen above. Below is a summary of the coping strategies reported by the school leaders in the two contexts.

**Leadership style.** School leaders in both contexts had a leaning towards transformational, distributed leadership and servant leadership. Although some participants displayed a tendency to work alone, they nevertheless appreciated the need to work as a team especially as they reflect back to some of the troubles they have gone through in the past. Nearly all the school leaders believed in the need to delegate, with some stating that it is important to delegate to appropriate persons.

**Communication.** Nearly all the leaders emphasised the need to have good communication strategies. Although some individual participants in either country put more emphasis on formal channels of communication, others stressed the importance of balancing both the formal and informal channels depending on situations and whatever was being proposed in the communication. For instance, when introducing an idea that is bound to face resistance from stakeholders.

**Decision making.** A number of individual participants across the two countries emphasised the importance of democratic decision making processes that involve both consensus and consideration of individual's opinions. It is only by allowing the full participation of the different stakeholders in the decision making processes that they can have ownership of whatever project was being proposed.

***Understanding school Culture.*** A number of school leaders stated the importance of learning the school culture, nature, environment, *modus operandi*, its philosophy, its mission and vision, and the mode of communication. And by learning the school culture, the school leader is able to get the ideas through more easily than if he/she imposed his/her own style and ideas despite how learned those ideas may be.

***Adaptability.*** Related to culture was the issue of adaptability, flexibility, openness and creativity. Participants across the two contexts stated that dissatisfying situations in the school contexts arise from routine and boredom. Therefore, it was important to be open to change. One participant in Lebanon stated that they went as far as changing the school mission in order to adopt a new idea in their school. School leaders who kept pace with the challenge of environmental change, and were often implementing something new regularly felt more satisfaction, motivation and encouragement in their roles as school leaders.

***Balancing work life and personal life.*** With the exception of two participants, one in Lebanon and the other in Uganda, most participants felt overwhelmed by the job demands of school leaders. And they proposed varied coping strategies that suggest taking time off and paying attention to their overall wellbeing rather than putting all their attention on work. Only one participants reported to have directly suffered from physical and emotional burnout because this participant always assumed to be strong and soaked all the pressure only to end up in hospital in several occasions.

***Spiritual life.*** Two school leaders in Lebanon spoke of prayer as one of their coping strategies, and three in Uganda mentioned likewise. However, I coded under the same category of spiritual life another subcategory, namely, mindfulness that was suggested by a

different participant as one of his coping strategies. This is because in the interviews, both prayer and mindfulness were connected by “meditation” and the idea of the soul.

***Authority and Control.*** While a majority of participants in both countries felt that they had sufficient authority in the exercise of the responsibilities, those who felt interference in one way or another suggested the importance of having clear job descriptions accompanied by clear laws and regulations on job description for all stakeholders. Only one participant, a current school leader in Uganda, stated that one of the measures guiding good relationships in his school was that they have clear job descriptions with by-laws that are regularly reviewed.

***Rewards and appreciation.*** Contrary to the literature suggesting that the imbalance between rewards and job demands could contribute to burnout (Siegrist, 1996; 2010; 2012; 2015), all the respondents in this study suggested that they were motivated by success and achievement in the work done, and the formation and nurturing of young people rather than by financial rewards. One respondent in Lebanon emphasised this point by stating that if he wanted a high salary, he could as well choose to be a bank manager. However, some school leaders in Uganda admitted that their salaries are very low, but money is never a factor in their choice to be school leaders.

***Conflict management.*** In both Lebanon and Uganda, participants reported coping strategies that varied more in line with individual participants, but which were rather similar in the two contexts. Individuals who preferred win-win strategies, those who put more priority in human formation, counselling, guidance and encouragement, those acted with professionalism, and those who adopted dialogue, ready to appreciate and reluctant to punish, were more likely to feel less stress and strain. On this contrary, those who stuck to their principles, however correct and valid those principles were, were more likely to feel stressed

and quit. Of the two participants who chose to quit due to lack of support and collaboration from staff, one in Lebanon and one in Uganda, they insisted to their principles. It is needless to insist that the issues they insisted on were actually valid and important.

***Support and collaboration.*** Respondents in both Lebanon and Uganda insisted that building good relationships among the stakeholders was vital to the success of a school leader. Therefore, it was important to find creative ways to gain the support and collaboration of especially staff, superiors and parents. In both countries, participants felt that good relations with teachers was more vital since school leaders have to deal with them on a regular basis. Good relationships with superiors or school proprietors was equally important.

***Expertise.*** In either country, there were some respondents who suggested that it was much more important to support the legitimate authority with expertise and experience knowledge. According to them, expertise and experience knowledge build the school leaders' confidence and strengthens their authority.

***Confidants.*** Some respondents in either country suggested the importance of having someone to talk to, or sharing problems and challenges, as this offers relief from stress. Alternatively, others proposed doing consultations with experienced and resourceful persons.

***Time management.*** A number of respondents in either country also stated that one of their ways of dealing with the excessive job demands was advanced planning, prioritising, scheduling tasks and drawing deadlines.

***Professional development.*** Some of the leaders in either country stated that being a school leader required continuous learning. However, only one school leader, in Lebanon, felt she needed to enrol on a course about school leadership after her appointment. Two school

leaders in Uganda and one in Lebanon stated the importance of coaching staff and offering them professional development. Only one school leader in Uganda said she was trying to do some community professional development, and was in the process of offering parenting class to the community around the school.

### **Issues unique to Lebanon.**

Comparing the data from the interviews two features were a little more unique to Lebanon. Based on my coding of the interviews, these features were individual's personality and trust.

***Personality variable.*** It was only in Lebanon that two participants confessed that one of their struggles in their leadership had to do with their feeling of inability to lead in the school. One even after several years as a school leader, still felt he was not able to carry the school forward. The other, because of perfectionism was too critical and overbearing on herself. And the lack of confidence weighed so much in their leadership. The personality of school leaders may, therefore, play a role in their ability to cope with job demands, and handling relationships and coping with pressures from the internal and external environment.

***Trust.*** Only in Lebanon did the issue of building trust among the stakeholders come out strongly. Trusting the staff featured with regards to delegation and allowing them to make intuitive decisions, as well as making efforts to gain the trust of stakeholders and building relationships in trust, honesty and transparency. Only one school leader in Uganda reported the need to build trust in the school and in the surrounding communities.

**Issues unique to Uganda.**

There was one feature especially unique to the Ugandan school leaders. This was with regards to the decentralised system of leadership. Already, Uganda's education system empowers lower administrative units handling administration. However, one school leader took this further by even granting more responsibilities to staff by granting them independence in handling specific issues related to their departments. Another even empowers students beyond the usual responsibilities of student leaders.

As described in Chapter 3, the main source of data for this study was from interviews conducted on sixteen former and current school leaders of private schools in Lebanon and Uganda. The findings indicate a wide range of similarities in the approaches adopted by the school leaders in the two countries. While the challenges faced by the school leaders had a lot of similarities in the two contexts of the study, it was rather their personality variation, their school contexts and the level of experience that was more influential in their responses and strategies when faced with challenges. Nevertheless, there were a few variations in the cultural contexts and the level of pressures, with specific school cultures playing a much more prominent role rather than the national school cultures.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

School leaders are expected to be and to do a lot of things in the school. Some of the things school leaders have to constantly think of and deal with during their typical running of schools are conflicting. For instance, while they are supposed to be creative risk-takers and change agents, they are at the same time supposed to maintain rigid traditions (Boyland, 2011). However, as pointed out by Bedi and Kukemelk (2018), policy makers and top authority never furnish any possible strategies for school leaders to be and to perform all that is expected of them, nor do policy makers and top authority pay any attention to the psychophysiological concerns of school leaders who are the main policy implementers in the school. This makes school leadership very stressful (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018).

In this study, it became apparent that participating school leaders experience (or experienced) similar constraints as those reported in the literature. As indicated in the literature (Beausaert et al., 2016; Copland, 2001; Friedman, 2002; Karami-Akkary, 2013; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Kaufman, 2019), school leaders' work demands are too varied, undefined, conflicting and with a lot of expectations. Just like in countries such as India where school leaders are first and foremost teachers, and then administrators (Mangad & Nath, 2015), so were a majority of school leaders in this study.

As noted in the models for burnout in Chapter 2, when there is excessive workload without the corresponding decision latitudes (Bakker et al., 2010; Hwang & Ramadoss, 2017; Karasek, 1979) or excessive job demands without decision latitudes mediated by support (Hu et al., 2013); or job demands that create constraints in individuals without any support or

buffers (Payne & Morrison, 2001; Sargent & Terry, 2000); or when an individual puts much effort to work without corresponding rewards (Eddy et al., 2016; Mutambudzia et al., 2018; Siegrist, 2015); or when an individual puts much effort in a task and yet distresses in an attempt to cope (Friedman, 2002; Maslach et al., 2001; Suzuki et al., 2003), then an individual becomes stressed and burnt out. These are exacerbated by the tensions between the strategic apex and the middle line (Hoy & Miskel, 2013).

Yet how do they survive in spite of all these risks to their wellbeing? The findings of this study reflect a great deal of what is given in the existing literature regarding coping strategies against burnout in school leaders. The interviews reflected coping strategies against factors leading to burnout as reported by a select number of school leaders in Lebanon and Uganda. Although there are some differences between the two national contexts in the nature of the work (for example, boarding schools in Uganda verses day schools in Lebanon) and leadership structure (for instance, Ugandan school leaders have two deputy school leaders while there was no evidence of a nationwide presence of deputy school leaders in Lebanese schools), there is barely any difference in their strategies as far as national context is concerned. What made the difference was individuals' perceptions of their job roles, their individual strategies and the specific school situations they faced rather than the national cultural context.

A possible explanation for this could rest on the fact that both Lebanon and Uganda have societal cultures that are open to international educational trends, policies and global influence, for instance, the application of Education for All declaration (EFA) following the 1990 Jomtien (Thailand) conference (Karami-Akkary, 2014; MEHE, 2016; Molyneaux, 2011; Muwanga, 2000). Besides that, the study was carried out on private schools in either country rather than public schools. Private schools tend to be more independent and varied in

their approaches to education than public schools (Hallam et al., 2010; Hamdan, 2013; Harma, 2011). Additionally, both Lebanon and Uganda have education systems that originated from France and Britain respectively as stated in Chapter 1.

Overall, the respondents' strategies centred around leadership style; communication style; decision making processes; understanding of school culture, nature, environment and school operational methods; adaptability, openness, flexibility and creativity; balancing work life and personal life; authority and control; conflict management; support and collaboration; expertise and experience in school leadership; having confidants; personality; time management; professional development; and trust.

If the responses of the participants in this study is anything to go by, we could say that the factors leading to burnout given in the literature in the different contexts all over the world as shown in Chapter 2 apply largely to Lebanon and Uganda as well. Yet the influence of these factors occurs at varying degrees of weight depending on specific school situations and the individual school leaders' perceptions of their role and relationships with stakeholders. This is consistent with the analysis on several studies on school leadership in East Asian countries (Ng et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015). For instance, in their review of several studies in East Asian countries, Walker and Hallinger (2015) found that *personal factors* such as religious background instilled dedication, and personal introspection and self-mastery nurtured positivity in school leaders' practices and perceived success. Ng et al. (2015) also reviewed several studies on school leadership in Singapore and found that personality traits such as self-confidence, consideration, open-mindedness, empathy and high ethical values; cognitive skills such as personal mastery and self-reflexivity; motivational qualities such as ability to inspire and trustworthiness; and social skills such as good listening skills, willingness to trust and ability to build and maintain mutual trust were all influential to

school leadership and school leaders' experience of their job. The study also confirms other studies such as Crow et al. (2017) and Carpenter (2015). In their study, Crow et al. (2017) found that leadership identities are constructed within time, space and place, and that school leaders' emotions reflect the complexities of leadership structures, cultures and power relations within specific contexts. Similarly, Carpenter (2015) found that collaborative school cultures had a positive influence on leadership styles compared to school cultures where power distance was kept.

When it comes to comparing respondents who are still serving and those who quit, personal and organisational factors were the main determinants rather than the national context. Primarily, school leaders responded to school contexts just as stated by Crow et al. (2017) that school leaders construct their leadership identities within the contextual framework of place, time and space, and that their emotions mirror the complex leadership realities existing within the school culture, structure and social relations of authority and control. Hence, school leaders mainly quit from schools without a culture of trust, collaboration and support; and in schools with organisational structures in which the strategic apex (top leadership) interfered with the regular functioning of the middle line (school leaders) and the operating core (teachers). However, where there existed trust, collaboration and support, school leaders tended to persevere despite other straining issues.

In terms of personal factors, personality traits such as open-mindedness, cognitive skills such as personal mastery and social skills such as willingness to build and maintain mutual trust were determinant. For instance, while four school leaders quit because they felt they could not handle school boards and proprietors who imposed decision against what school leaders felt were interference with their professional standards, Matt (still serving) often handled such impositions by experimenting them and giving regular feedback to

support his perspective and disapproval of the imposed decisions, thereby making his superiors to withdraw their decisions. This was an approach that had a lot to do with personal factors. In other words, while those who remained mainly adopted problem-focused coping strategies to deal with contextual stress factors, those who quit mainly adopted either avoidant or emotion coping strategies to deal with stress factors (De Rijk et al., 1998; Scheier et al., 1986).

If the influence of societal factors, school context factors and personal factors could be represented in a visual form, perhaps it would be something like in Figure 5.

Figure 5. Representation of the relationship between context and coping strategies



In terms of gender, this study did not make much consideration of the similarities and differences. This is reflected in the sampling in which there were five female school leaders in Lebanon and three male school leaders compared to six male school leaders and two female school leaders in Uganda. In Lebanon, three of those who quit were women and all

the four of those who quit in Uganda were men. Therefore, this study had no preliminary foresight for gender comparisons.

### **Coping strategies**

According to Hallinger and Heck (2011), effective school leadership must be highly grounded in the context of specific schools, and school leaders' profiles must be linked to specific school profiles at all times emphasising that each school has its own trajectory. The current study shows that when it comes to coping strategies against any antecedents of burnout, personal and school contextual factors contributed much to the exercise of school leadership (Ng et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015). Personal factors such as personal background, qualities, style, values, religious beliefs, life experiences, personality, personal introspection and self-mastery (Ng et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015) can contribute to a school leader's wellbeing. Political and socio-cultural factors (Walker & Hallinger, 2015) may also create enabling and mindful school structures and cultures that allow school leaders to experience job satisfaction, or hindering school structures and cultures that create stressful experiences for school leaders.

### **Leadership.**

Due to the excessive nature of the school leaders' job, Beusaert et al. (2016), Copland (2001), Edwards and Van Harrison (1993) and Friedman (2002) proposed demystifying, redefining and restructuring the job of school leaders in order to match the job expectations with the school leaders' abilities to perform. However, this study specifically sought what school leaders do for themselves rather than what should be done for them. Except for one school in Lebanon which operated with a leadership team, the leadership structures in this study concentrate most responsibilities in the school on school leaders.

In the school where the leadership operates in what the respondent called a “flat” organisation, that is, without any readily distinguishable hierarchy in the leadership team, members in the leadership team act collaboratively. The implication of this is a school structure and culture where everyone takes responsibility according to their roles, which bodes well with the concept of leadership as a shared responsibility rather than a set of traits in an individual (Lambert, 2002, 2006), authentic education leadership (Duignan, 2014), and leadership for learning as a dynamic relationship with other organisational processes in a mutually reciprocal influence process (Hallinger & Heck, 2010; 2011).

According to Lambert (2002, 2006), leadership transcends a set of skills that an individual school leader possesses and it encompasses synergetic patterns of reciprocal interactions, relationships and learning together as a school community at a horizontal level. In Lambert’s (2002) view, a school culture should promote teacher leadership in which leadership becomes an inclusive and open circle of participation. Leadership entails acknowledging that authentic leaders operate in a complex, non-linear, interconnected and sometimes messy context of pressures, paradoxes and challenges, which demands that the leader has to begin with a focus on understanding oneself and being true to oneself in relation to others (Duignan, 2014). According to Duignan (2014), authentic leadership is fostered by recognising, accepting and embracing this messy complexity; enhancing the well-being of all the other stakeholders, and nurturing their collaboration into a collective responsibility. Most of the leadership structures and cultures in schools where participants of this study worked did not reflect this reality. Rather, most of the leadership structure reflected leadership styles in which many roles and authority were centred on the school leaders, which could explain why most felt the weight of workload and the limitedness of time.

Despite this concentration of responsibilities and authority in the school leaders, most of the participants indicated the centrality of choosing an appropriate leadership style if one had to deal with stressors that contribute to burnout. Although most of the participants favoured either transformational leadership, servant leadership, distributed leadership or participative leadership, nearly all the current school leaders interviewed pointed out the importance of combining a number of leadership styles, or at least applying any one of them according to the specific school situations.

In their attempt to ease workload and pressure, they saw it important to ensure the active participation of other stakeholders, especially teachers, in the administrative responsibilities. They saw anything far from that to be more stressful. The participation of other staff members could range from proper delegation in the very least, to constituting a collaborative leadership team capable of diffusing the pressure and stress among them rather than leaving it to weigh on an individual school leader (Hallinger & Heck, 2010, 2011; Liu & Hallinger, 2017). Their strategy is consistent with the existing literature, for instance, Boyland (2011), Harris (2004), Hoy and Miskel (2013) and Whitaker (1996), that suggests the distribution and spread of the work load to other staff as a means to deal with stress and burnout. For instance, Andy, a current leader in Lebanon, stated that:

... I'm also with a mindset that distributed leadership is very important as well. Part of the distributed leadership model is lack of a heroic figure. And I never wanted to be seen as a heroic figure because... What if your hero dies, what happens to your organisation? ... My team and my teachers, we've a very flat organisation. We make and define issues together, we work together, and we work through issues collaboratively. That's why, there is very little pushback from the faculty [and] from the staff. Because everything is done with their consent, everything is talked about, everything is discussed.

This excerpt taken from a transcription from an interview with Andy also reflects part of participative leadership. Counter to the notion of super-principal (Copland, 2002), Andy refuses to be identified with a heroic figure in the school positing teamwork as the reason he never experienced stress and strain in his leadership. This is enhanced by the active

participation of a quality leadership team and other teachers in the leadership process. Andy's strategy is consistent with Duignan's (2014) concept of authentic leadership where a school leader recognises his/her self-fulfilment in relation to other stakeholders. Another example is of Rita, a current school leader in Uganda, who explicated her approach to leadership in the following words:

My approach is more participatory approach because I believe [that] I do not know it all. And if I tried to do it all, I will break. Yes, because I feel everybody must be part, must contribute. Without that, if I come and I say "this is my idea", I must be open to that idea being dismantled. So, that is really my approach. Also much servant [leadership], but I think I approach it in the fact that involvement of everybody at all levels, including the community around, including the old girls, and the school, [to reduce] pressure and expectations.

Thus, the choice of leadership style is vital in addressing work load, managing relationships, feelings of unaccomplishment, depersonalisation and frustrations arising from feelings of personal inabilities by school leaders. For instance, as indicated in Chapter 2 that one of the primary stress factors leading to burnout is work overload (Copland, 2001; Friedman, 2002; Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Hallam et al., 2010; Karami-Akkary, 2014; Klocko & Wells, 2015; Lovely, 2004; Stoelinga, 2011; Whitaker, 1996), some participants reported that their coping strategy as far as workload is concerned is distributed leadership, which is consistent with a strategy in Boyland (2011), Harris (2004), Hoy and Miskel (2013) and Whitaker (1996). Nevertheless, this study focused on what school leaders do to deal with the problem rather than what could be done for them.

The implication of this is the understanding that school leaders do not have to see themselves as heroes capable of soaking all the pressure. The position of school leaders needs to be seen in light of the understanding that a single player cannot win the game alone without the team as testified by the following excerpt from James, a current school leader in Uganda:

In the exercise of my job responsibilities, what I have come to learn, and my philosophy is: It's not a one-man's-show. It's us... It's not a one-man's-show, or a hero principal, it's us all. It's us together, working together. And actually, for us particularly in this school, we say, "We are a family". Now, when you are a family, you have a father, mother, brother, sister and so on. But it doesn't mean that the children are more or less important than the father. The father is less important [or] more important than the [children]. Each one has a part to play. What the different categories of stakeholders that we have, are in place just because of responsibilities. So, how do I exercise my responsibilities? ...My work is leadership actually, to influence others to get the set objectives and goals together so that we can achieve as an institution, as a family.

Consistent with the strategy of delegating some responsibilities as reported in the literature, for instance (Boyland, 2011), participants widely reported delegation as one of the most essential ways of reducing the stress and strain posed by work overload. However, while a majority of the respondents stated delegation in general sense, some insisted that identifying the appropriate persons to delegate is imperative. For instance, Cathy, a current school leader in Lebanon, had this to say:

Again, as I said previously, it's about delegation, and delegating to the appropriate persons. As a school leader, I think my big responsibility is to identify talents and, let's say, people who are good at something and give them the task, delegate to them this responsibility. It's something that makes things easier for us, and makes us achieve more and more whenever we are delegating the appropriate task to the appropriate persons.

Following their point of view, delegating to appropriate persons increases possibilities of achievement, thereby increasing the degree of existential fulfilment and job satisfaction. According to Tomic and Tomic (2008), existential fulfilment counters feelings of unachievement and, therefore, decreases burnout.

### **Decision making.**

As reflected in the studies by Walker and Hallinger (2015) and Ng et al. (2015), contextual factors determine the nature of decision making in a school. Unlike in school and national cultures as in the case of Vietnam (Walker & Hallinger, 2015) where participation in decision making means mobilisation of compliance, school cultures and structures that encourage distributed and participative leadership largely imply a balance of decision-making

power between school leaders and teachers or in the cases where there exist co-principals, it implies shared decision making among those serving in the leadership roles (Grubb & Flessa, 2006; Liu & Hallinger, 2017; Ng et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015). The participation of stakeholders, especially teachers, in the administrative responsibilities of the school leader necessarily extends to decision making. However, Grubb and Flessa (2006) also note that while this approach to leadership may lead to efficiency and offloading of some of the burden from the school leader, it may not necessarily translate to effectiveness, which may contribute to dissatisfaction. Some of the participants in this study seem to have been aware of this drawback when they insisted on delegating to the right persons to execute the right roles.

A school structure and culture which involves the right stakeholders, especially those who are directly involved in the implementation process, in decision making is particularly central when it comes to ownership of proposed ideas and projects to be implemented and in order to gain their full support and collaboration (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018). Additionally, they have immediate, firsthand information and knowledge in their specific fields of operation. For instance, according to Cathy, the person involved in the implementation process has a fundamental role in the decision. In her own words, Cathy said “I’ve never had a decision coming directly from top... I have to go back to the teacher, ... to the persons who are involved in that decision”.

While it may not be so easy to always arrive at consensus, full discussions and critical analyses of issues allows better discernment (Duignan, 2014) involving the recognition and acceptance of the messy complexity of the school context with its different stakeholders, enhancing their wellbeing and nurturing their collaboration into a collective responsibility. Following what Rita stated about being open to having one’s (the school leader’s) ideas being dismantled, it is equally important to be considerate when using democratic decision making

so that group thinking does not drown the insightful ideas of individuals. Good decisions could always be formed if the leader consults widely, especially consulting people with experience and knowledge. The implication of this is that, creating an enabling school culture and structure where stakeholders feel a part of the school leadership process enhances ownership of decisions, which in turn promotes school leaders' wellbeing and self-fulfilment (Duignan, 2014).

### **Communication.**

One of the *buffers and support* systems Boyland (2011) proposed as a measure to deal with job stressors following her study was improving the communication skills of school leaders. Friedman (2002) as well pointed out the need for school leaders to develop the ability to seek and obtain sufficient information about negative situations and to control information about negative events. If this is the case, it means school leaders' communication strategies can factor their ability to deal with stressors that lead to burnout. In this study, communication style was very much prominent from the responses participants gave.

According to the participants in this study, minimising stressors requires clear communication of the decisions made. Irrespective of how decisions have been arrived at, without an appropriate channel of communication and without clarity, there are bound to be misunderstandings. For example, Peter, a current school leader in Lebanon, stated that, "I express my opinion, my ideas in all respect and courtesy; when they don't understand what I said, I meet again with them and try to explain and I clarify things". And Andy stated,

I never let it get to where I am feeling very irritable and less sympathetic because there is always an open line of communication... I make myself extremely clear in what I want and what my goals are. Every faculty member, my team knows where I am going to be in three years, and where the school is headed to.

Additionally, whether one has preference for formal or informal channels of communication, it is essential for the school leader to be accessible. For instance, Cathy says, “We have this open door policy, and mostly, I prioritise having meetings with our staff and our faculty members”. According to Lambert (2002), leadership requires improving communication patterns by allowing the construction of information to generatively flow from inside-out through reflective practice, use of feedback, discovery through evidence and asking questions of practice that characterise leadership.

### **Control and autonomy.**

As seen in Chapter One, school leaders in Lebanon (Frayha, 2009; Ghamrawi, 2013; Karami-Akkary, 2013) and Uganda (Hallam et al., 2010; MacOpiyo, 2011; Muwanga, 2000) face institutional interference from superiors. For instance, Mat, a current school leader in Uganda, said the following about such interference:

They do impose. The imposition is suggestive, but just like one little statement. That is, request from above is a command or is an order. You look at the rationality of what they suggested, and do it. As long as it has no negative consequences, do it. But down the road when you realise a negativity, the impossibilities, suggest this works... But the way to deal with that, is regular reports... you give a report and through the report, they later realise where these people are wrong...

Unlike those who stuck to their professional principles insisting on their independence in the execution of their responsibilities and quit, Mat faced any imposition or interference by giving a try to whatever is being imposed on him and giving regular reports on it as indicated in the preceding excerpt. On her part, Joan, a current school leader, faced any imposition through dialogue with her superiors.

According Karasek (1979), Bakker et al. (2010), Hwang and Ramadoss (2017), Iacovides et al. (2003), Schaufeli et al. (2009) and Tomic and Tomic (2008), school leaders ought to be granted the necessary autonomy and control fitting to their job demands and

expectations because a mismatch between job demands and decision latitudes (excessive job demands with limited authority and control) can lead to mental strain and job dissatisfaction. What this implies is that hindering bureaucratic cultures where decision are made from above and school leaders are supposed to conform (Bedi & Kukemelk, 2018; Walker & Hallinger, 2015) have negative consequences on school leaders' wellbeing. On the contrary, school cultures in which leadership and authority structures form a dynamic relationship in mutually reciprocal influence process (Duignan, 2014; Hallinger & Heck, 2011; Lambert, 2002, 2006; Liu & Hallinger, 2017; Ng et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015) have an enhancing and creative effect on school leaders and promotes their wellbeing.

### **Support and collaboration.**

Payne and Morison's (2001) demand-support-constraints model proposes that in fulfilling their job roles, school leaders need to be given the necessary support when faced with constraints. Other studies such as Beusaert et al. (2016), Boyland (2011) Sargent and Terry (2000), and Whitaker (1996) have supported this proposition. In this study, one of the primary stressors reported by the participants of this study was the lack of support and collaboration from either their superiors (who were often either the school proprietors or the board of directors), the staff or parents. John, a school leader in Uganda, could not bear the lack of collaboration by some of the staff and decided to quit. In his own words, John reported that:

Well, in the first school, that [feeling of isolation] was not there. We were a team, and a very strong team. Then in the second one, as I said before, that they were used to a different system. The changes we were bringing were strange, and they never liked it. So, we tried to go through the board, the board tried to talk to them, and finally when we found out that they were really not listening, we said, "It is okay, we cannot proceed like this. You can continue. Yeah, this is not how we work and we don't really want to..." Yeah, we decided it was the right thing. I left. Later on, the bursar also left. Then some other colleagues also left.

Eliza, a school leader in Lebanon who eventually quit, said, "... Whenever you look at some people who do not want to support you, you say, 'Okay'. You become angry maybe, you become sad maybe, you become disappointed maybe, you become depressed maybe...". What John and Eliza expressed in their responses reflect what Friedman (2002) found in his study. According to Friedman (2002), among the stressors that school leaders face stem from the poor performance and behaviour of teachers. These include indiscipline, unresponsiveness to requests from the school leader, and "a demonstrable non-recognition of the principal's authority to tell them what to do, in professional, administrative and organisational terms" (Friedman, 2002, p. 245).

Without contradicting the perspective of Friedman, Liu and Hallinger (2017) advocate a teacher centred school leadership structure and culture in which school leaders intentionally engage in efforts to guide, direct, support, and participate in teacher learning which have been shown to be successful in shaping teachers' attitudes, trust and agency. What this could mean is that support and collaboration do not necessarily have to originate from other individuals, but that school leaders should actively build a school environment where trust and support among the different stakeholders can flourish to the benefit not only of the school leaders but also of all the stakeholders in the school. Similarly, Lambert (2002, 2006) advocates a school culture consisting of a reciprocal learning community in which every individual is both a learner and a safety net of support for one another, inducing the improvement of one another through challenges, and challenging the status quo with a motive of reaching a shared purpose.

In contrast to what John and Eliza reported, Andy said:

The reason I told you [I have not had] any dissatisfaction is because I feel that I have put a strong team in place... But back to the satisfaction, I feel that it all goes back to how good your leadership team is.

And if they are able to help you move through the progress and success of the school, the happier they'll make you, and the less dissatisfied you will be.

Like Andy, Peter, a school leader in Lebanon, stated that:

I was appointed by the bishop, and I am doing my job, and he supports me... I am satisfied... I overcame dissatisfaction, mainly through prayer, and through support from the team I work with... We work as a team, and they will always tell me: you are the head of the school, of this institution. Whatever you decide, we give you support even if we are not fully convinced but we are here, we will support you, just to implement the decision that you have taken.

These examples from both Lebanon and Uganda reflect how the support and collaboration from stakeholders affects school leaders in the exercise of their responsibilities. This study shows that it is those school leaders who had the support and collaboration of the different stakeholders that found their leadership roles much easier to manoeuvre. Without the support and collaboration of the teachers and school proprietors, the isolation school leaders experience is heavy and stressful. These findings are in line with studies done by Beausaert et al. (2016), Boyland (2011), Payne and Morrison (2001) and Whitaker (1996) which proposed that school leaders be offered necessary buffers and support systems to address constraints faced during the job. Beausaert et al. (2016) and Boyland (2011) further highlight that besides the support of colleagues, the support of the wider community could also be vital in diffusing stress, strain and depersonalisation in school leaders.

Copland (2001) wrote that there is a recognition among some school systems (in the United States) that school leaders do need support against potential disasters. Therefore, school systems are building system-wide support systems and policies which are all designed to help school leaders deal affirmatively with high job demands and expectations (Copland, 2001). These support systems and policies include among others hiring early-career mentors; provision of professional development, leadership skills and growth opportunities; and setting mandatory periods of rest and reflection during the course of the year.

**Professional development.**

Consistent with such support systems, some of the school leaders quickly realised their need to further their leadership skills, albeit as a personal initiative, and enrolled for leadership courses. Others saw professional development as a way forward, while other school leaders saw the necessity of not only equipping themselves with leadership knowledge and skills, but also involved teachers and the community around in the learning process by providing them further training and coaching. The benefit of growing as a community of learners comes close to the idea of professional learning communities in which individuals collectively “learn their way out of trouble” (Hagreaves, 2007, p. 185). When stakeholders move with a steady pace, then the possibility of stress on school leaders is minimised just as Andy had reported that dissatisfaction and stress arise when some team members fail to perform. Miller, Goddard, Kim, Jacob, Goddard & Schroeder (2016) reported in their study substantive evidence that linked a *professional development programme* to improvement in terms of principal efficacy, being change agent, teacher collaboration, parent and community involvement, social persuasion, situational awareness, teacher collective responsibility, collective efficacy, intellectual stimulation, ideals and beliefs, principal trust in teachers, and principal network reflection.

**Adaptability.**

Friedman (2002) highlighted in his study the necessity for school leaders to align their thoughts and behaviour patterns to environmental forces so as to offset stress. In reviewing how personal and contextual factors influence school leadership, Walker and Hallinger (2015) and Ng et al. (2015) highlight how the personal and contextual (socio-cultural and political) factors affect the experience of school leaders and their wellbeing. For instance

some of the pertinent personality traits they point out include self-confidence, consideration, open-mindedness and empathy; motivational qualities such as ability to inspire and trustworthiness social skills such as good listening skills, willingness to trust and ability to build and maintain mutual trust. These are necessarily good qualities for adaptability. A school leader's possession of such qualities are necessary for his/her wellbeing. Similarly, the openness of a school leader to the influences of school culture, ethos, staffing and structure; to the influence of local community; to the influences of government policies and national culture and global trends is necessary for his/her wellbeing (Ng et al., 2015; Walker & Hallinger, 2015).

The ability to adapt to the nature of school environments, both internal and external, enables school leaders to break through the hurdles they may face especially in relation to newness in the school environment. For instance, in Lebanon, six of the eight participants had been teachers in their schools before their appointment as school leaders. They were, therefore, familiar with the school environment and culture. However, the other two participants were appointed as school leaders in new school environments. This contributed a great deal to the stress and strain they faced. This is exemplified by Martha's words when she said, “

I did not feel any environmental changes because all of it was a change, it was a great change... Everything was a change... I did not get to the point that I started my work... As for the teachers, as I explained before, they were afraid of change... So, I did a kind of invest some time on that, explaining things, and making sure that they understand that this is a change for all of us, but it's a change for the good, and we can work on that...

What Martha reports is consistent with what is given in the literature. For instance, according to Fullan (2001), people often resist change for different reasons including lack of sufficient knowledge concerning the benefits of change, lack of skills and abilities, insufficient knowledge of the rationale for change, lack of involvement in decision making,

worry of failure, negative experience with change, perception of the change agent as lacking credibility, conflict between innovation and the school culture, or simply because people are satisfied with the status quo. This implies that arriving to a new school environment usually requires mental adjustment on the part of the school leader and the need to first learn the school culture, its nature, its environment, its nature of communication and its mode of operation. Learning the school culture enables the school leader to communicate his/her vision of the school to stakeholders in a manner that is understandable to his/her audience. To be able to achieve that, the school leader has first to become a learner as reported by Rita in the following:

So when I arrived, almost everybody was looking at me [as if] to say, “Are you going to manage?” So, it really took me time. I had to be a learner. Before here, I had been a headteacher in another school (for fourteen years). But when I came here, I really felt so challenged... a different environment, different experience, different people. And also the school is bigger, much bigger than where I was... So when I first arrive here even up to now, am still learning. So, when you are a learner, obviously your authority is challenged. You don't come in as a top leader; you come in as the last. So, in that way it has been a challenge from the teachers' point of view and it takes you longer to re-learn... Whether you have authority or not if you don't have language to speak to the people, there is a gap and misunderstanding.

In summary, other participants who reported success in their school environments had in their responses words and phrases that refer to adaptability such as: “rigidity causes stunting”; “one risks becoming a dinosaur if one doesn't adapt”; “when an idea is rejected, rebrand the idea and try again, use different approaches, use influential people”; “aligning expectations with capacities”; “change is inevitable”; “keep pace with environmental changes”; “rising above comfort zone”; “concentrate on what is achievable”; “having developmental mindset”; “we are an agile school”; “we changed the mission statement to incorporate health of mind”; “enjoy the challenge”; and “accept and celebrate differences”.

Adaptability would require a school leader to think and act creatively with the backing of an enabling school culture (Hoy & Miskel, 2013). According to Stoll and Temperley (2015), creative leadership transcends imaginative and well-reflected responses to

opportunities and challenges inhibit learning to include the provision of conditions, environment and opportunities that empower creativity in others. Creative leadership includes the active scanning of environmental challenges that create inhibitions if not addressed, and stimulating in colleagues new thinking and experiences (Stoll & Temperley, 2015). In this study, some participants reported boredom arising from routine as a source of dissatisfaction. With creativity, the possibility of boredom would not create any dissatisfaction in school leaders. Creativity brings constant progress and makes the job exciting, rewarding, motivating and encouraging as reported by other participants who were more adept in creative innovations. One of the school leaders reported having implemented six new programmes in the school within seven years. Creative leadership could also become handy when it comes to building good relationships with parents as reported by Athanasoula-Reppaa, Makri-Botsaria, Kounenoua and Psycharisa (2010).

### **Balancing work life and personal life.**

Copland (2001) wrote that one of supports that school systems (in the United States) are putting in place to offset burnout in school leaders is ensuring that there is a balance between school leaders' professional and personal lives amidst a highly demanding working environment. A good number of participants reported how essential it is to have this balance between work life and personal life. Whether it was about having time with family, sleeping well, interacting with students or socialising with friends, doing exercise and sports, changing environment or taking a short vacation, visiting other schools and interacting with other principals and learning from them, going for leisure activities, or just being by oneself and contemplating, the most important thing was taking time off from the job responsibilities or disconnecting totally from school life once in a while. The words of Andy crown it all when he stated that "I think that if your mind is right and your body is right and your soul is right,

then you have a winning formula". Many studies, for instance Kaufman (2019) have supported the need to mitigate job stress and burnout using multiple strategies such as doing physical activities (as suggested by a majority of participants in this study), engaging with friends, family or colleagues and practice of meditative techniques.

### **Conflict management.**

One of the biggest factors leading to stress according to this study was managing relationships. Often, how school leaders approached relationships could create a healthy environment or a toxic one. For instance, Joan, when reflected on her experience in her first school as a leader, said:

And with these missionaries, we misunderstood each other really. And of course it is true that they caused it. Maybe they were wrong, but if it was today, I would have approached it differently. You just make people happy and pray more over it than to show them that "Ah! You are wrong!" Because some of these things, you take them [easy] and it works.

Compared to her earlier approach to managing relationships, Joan stated that it was more important to appreciate before chastising, an approach that was more centred on understanding the other's situation first. Like Joan, some other respondents also pointed out the centrality of searching for win-win strategies and human formation rather than the leader trying to prove how he/she is right, or how wrong the other is. For instance, Jacques, a former school leader in Uganda, stated that over the years, he realised that confrontation often escalates issues. Margie, a current school leader in Lebanon also said that sometimes when it comes to dealing with parents in issues related to their children, it is take things easy, and if an apology could calm a situation, then it is better offer it. Their strategies echo what Johnson (2003) points out.

According to Johnson (2003), many of the conflicts school leaders experience originate from their own interpersonal behaviour which may be a revelation of their leadership skills including conflict response styles, problem solving, communication styles and bases of power. Such conflict management leadership skills may be influenced by the degree of school leaders' concern for the self in relation to others (Johnson, 2003). Johnson (2003) states that while expert school leaders are more other-centred in their approach to school leadership, novice school leaders are more self-centred, thus exacerbating personal and professional dissatisfaction. This resonates with some of the responses of the participants in this study, who pointed out that experience and expertise give confidence, strengthen authority and make problem situations easier to manoeuvre. Hence, school leaders need to approach relationships with stakeholders with a more other-centred approach. Therefore, personality variables such as Patience, humility, trust, respect, courtesy and positive attitude become handy.

### **Rewards and appreciation.**

Following Siegrist's (1996, 2010, 2012, 2015) effort-reward imbalance model, other studies, for instance, Eddy et al. (2016), Mutambudzia et al. (2018) and Van Vegchel et al. (2005) have promoted the need to balance between the effort put into the job with rewards. The concept of rewards extends beyond the monetary benefits school leaders receive to include the resources used in the execution of the job demands as well as what generally promotes school leaders wellbeing. One of the strategies put forward by Siegrist (1996, 2010, 2012, 2015) and Whitaker (1996) in order to offset dissatisfaction, stress and burnout is giving sufficient rewards to school leaders to match their job demands. While some school leaders, especially in Uganda, acknowledged that their salaries are not adequate as far as job roles are concerned, all the participants reported that monetary rewards is not a motivating

factor. Just like Whitaker (1996) reports in her study, participants in this study were more interested in seeing the success of their students in different fields, such as human growth, in addition to academic achievements.

### **Trust.**

Although one respondent in Uganda reported the importance of trust in school leadership, it did not feature as prominently as it did among the respondents in Lebanon. Van Maele and Van Houtte (2015) have argued on the importance of trust in school as a buffer for the different stakeholders. Similarly, Hoy and Miskel (2013) write about how a culture of trust promotes and at the same time benefits collaboration, openness, professionalism, group cohesion and collective achievement. In a school with a culture of trust, all individuals in the school are willing to render themselves with confidence that other individuals in the school will act benevolently, reliably, honestly, competently and professionally. This fosters good relationships in the school and the wellbeing of all including the school leader.

### **Spiritual life.**

A number of respondents reported prayer, meditation, yoga and mindfulness as some of the strategies they adopted to deal with job stress. According to Schaufeli et al. (2009), Freudenberger proposed not to turn to meditation and yoga in an attempt to deal with burnout since the least strategy a burnt out person requires is introspection and mental strain but physical exhaustion. However, Bagi (2013) in his study enriched by a personal experience argues that burnout requires more than medication and physical treatment. According to Bagi, counselling and personal rediscovery and renewal do contribute to a greater part especially with the mental or psychological dimension. In his perspective, personal renewal consists of a balanced perspective of life (including awareness of one's limitations), healthier sense of

identity, and increased awareness and growth in spirituality. This is also consistent with Falloot (2007) who argues that although spirituality and religious concerns may sometimes be seen as problematic and attributable to mental illness, spirituality and religion are salient dimensions in recovery from mental illness.

### **Vocation.**

Some of the respondents reported that they constantly remind themselves the reason why they were school leaders, namely, a calling or a mission they have been assigned to carry out. This is consistent with what Schaufeli et al. (2009) report about a 1983 study by Cherniss and Kranz who observed that burnout was non-existent in communities where job responsibilities were considered a calling such as monasteries, Montessori schools and religious care centres. In such communities, the ideology of vocation or mission prevented the occurrence of burnout due to social commitment, sense of communion, contact with the collective whole, and shared strong values (Schaufeli et al., 2009).

### **Specific Contextual Strategies**

The findings of this study indicate that even though there are similarities and differences in factors that contribute to stress, strain and burnout in the contexts of Lebanon and Uganda, the coping strategies according to the responses of the participants do not really differ according to the national contexts, but rather according to individual leadership abilities compounded by specific school situations. However, the findings of this study outline some concepts and contextual practices in Lebanon and Uganda from which school leaders in the two contexts could benefit. Such practices include leadership structure, stability on the job, and openness to technology.

### **Decentralisation.**

Lebanese school leaders could learn from their Ugandan counterparts the decentralised leadership structure which devolves authority to lower levels down to student leaders. While Lebanese school leaders already have heads of departments and heads of sections (like those in Uganda), they could as well benefit from a leadership structure with deputy school leaders similar to their counterparts in Uganda to lessen the pressure that comes with too many responsibilities. More about the decentralisation of leadership in Uganda's schools is described in Chapter 1.

Nevertheless, Ugandan and other Lebanese school leaders could also learn from one Lebanese school that operates using a leadership team. On the one hand, the decentralised leadership structure in Uganda devolves authority and power to lower leadership levels in a vertical hierarchical structure. This means that responsibility still filters to the school leader who remains the sole authority for major decisions. It implies that the pressure on the school leader only becomes lighter but the stress still remains. On the other hand, operating with a leadership team diffuses both authority and responsibility horizontally among the leadership team, which means that the stress associated with the job of the school leaders is also shared among the different members of the leadership team (Lambert, 2002, 2006).

Such a horizontal leadership arrangement demands understanding oneself as a school leader, being true to oneself in relation to others, and acknowledging that authentic leadership occurs within a complex, non-linear, interconnected and often messy world of pressures, paradoxes and challenges (Duignan, 2014) where there exist sometimes conflicts between professional values and bureaucratic expectations (Hoy & Miskel). To be able to adopt such a leadership design requires decoupling (see Chapter 2) where the school leader intentionally

neglects some of the demands of bureaucratic structures to promote professionalism (Hoy & Miskel 2013). It also requires coaching the leadership team as practised by the respondent of the school with a leadership team. In fact, his approach closely resembles Lambert's (2002, 2006) shared leadership.

### **Stability on the job.**

Uganda could as well benefit from school leadership practices in Lebanon such as stability on the job and openness to technology. One of the main issues faced by Ugandan school leaders was frequent transfers with accompanying problems of newness (for instance, adapting to a new school culture) and inherited administrative problems (such as differences in the leadership styles of the previous and succeeding school leaders). There was no such experience among the respondents in Lebanon because such frequent transfers did not occur among any of the respondents. Therefore, Uganda could learn from the Lebanese context the importance of appointing school leaders to the responsibility for a stable period of time to avoid unnecessary problems associated with newness such as personal and professional isolation (Garcia-Garduno et al., 2011; Male, 2006; Marshal et al., 2007; Pineda-Báez et al., 2019; Shields, 2008; Tahir et al., 2017), and problems of succession as expressed Hallam et al. (2010), Molyneaux (2011), and Jingdong et al. (2017). While some studies have suggested regular rotation in view of sustainability (Fink & Brayman, 2006; Renihan, 2012), others consider it to be a contributing factor to school leadership crisis (Pounder, Galvin & Shepherd, 2003). Therefore, having school leaders in a position for a stable period of time could help minimise unwanted leadership problems.

### **Technology.**

Many school leaders in Uganda also reported restrictive use of technology and internet for fear of the risks that come with their use, and cell phones were strictly forbidden in the schools. Where necessary, students could only access internet using the computers in the school libraries under supervision. However, their Lebanese counterparts encouraged the use of technology and internet in the teaching and learning. Therefore, Ugandan school leaders could learn from their Lebanese counterparts to allow more use of internet and technology and integrate more into the learning process. While the reservations of Ugandan respondents on the use of internet and technology may have some basis in the literature (Beale & Hall, 2007; Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018), the literature also indicates that technology and the internet have had profound impact in education (Beale & Hall, 2007; Huang & Chou, 2013; Livingstone, Haddon, Gorzig & Olafsson, 2011; Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018; Vanderhoveva, Schellensa & Valckea, 2014; Willard, 2007).

For instance, Kimbrough, Culpepper and Crutcher (2017) found that a majority of students in their study felt the use of cell phones in the classroom was a positive experience that made them more engaged, focused and improved their concentration. However, other studies have shown some of the risks students may face with use of technology to include unintentional visit to harmful online content (Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018), cyberbullying (Beale & Hall, 2007; Eden, Heiman & Olenik-Shemesh, 2013; Huang & Chou, 2013; Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018; Willard, 2007), threats to privacy (Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018; Vanderhoveva et al., 2014), financial exploitation, sexual solicitation, and addiction which students' wellbeing and school life (Beale & Hall, 2007; Huang & Chou, 2013; Kimbrough et al., 2017; Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018; Willard, 2007). Hence,

school leaders felt confident that it is within their educational and moral leadership to intervene (Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018).

To deal with the risks and dangers to students, countries have responded differently. While in European countries, proactive strategies, such as developing education packages, are being designed to that effect (Livingstone et al., 2011; Vanderhoveva et al., 2014), respondents in Uganda, like their counterparts in Greece (Touloupis & Athanasiades, 2018), showed a rather restrictive response that limits the use of technology and internet among students unlike their counterparts in Lebanon who showed more openness to maximising technology and internet use for learning purposes.

In their study, Touloupis and Athanasiades (2018) related school leaders self-efficacy, job satisfaction and burnout to students' risky internet use indicating that school leaders' perceived burnout was positively predicted by the perceived seriousness of incidents of students' risky internet use. Touloupis and Athanasiades (2018) showed that school leaders deemed incidents of students' risky internet use to be serious and, depending on the kind of students' risky online behaviour, worthy of intervention. Moreover, school leaders' views are shared by teachers (Eden et al., 2013), other educators (Beale & Hall, 2007; Livingstone et al., 2011; Vanderhoveva et al., 2014; Willard, 2007) and parents (Beale & Hall, 2007; Livingstone et al., 2011; Willard, 2007). Furthermore, the study by Touloupis and Athanasiades (2018) indicated that school leaders' perceived efficacy in educational and moral leadership, satisfaction from the general nature of their work and sense of personal accomplishments positively predicted their attitudes towards their work.

## **Implications for Policy and Practice**

School leaders face a variety of challenges arising from high job expectations and dealing with both the external and internal school environments. These pressures exerted by excessive job demands are exacerbated by limited decision latitudes (Karasek, 1979), lack of training in leadership (Edwards & Van Harrison, 1993) and buffers or supports against constraints (Payne & Morrison, 2001). This study highlights that on the one hand, school leaders need to develop personal coping strategies and build school cultures and structures that involve the participation of teachers in the leadership in order to offset stress, strain and burnout. Suggested strategies could include: adapting leadership styles that lessen work overload; finding appropriate ways to deal with relationships; getting further training and professional development among others. On the other hand, policy makers need to put in place buffers and supports that alleviate stress factors from school leaders through deliberate policing. Such policies could include debunking or demystifying the idea that school leaders have to be everything in the school and restructuring the job of the school leader to incorporate other individuals in school leadership (Copland, 2001). The fact that mainly personal factors and school contextual factors combine to determine leadership identities and coping strategies (Crow et al., 2017) means that the transferability of any given strategy may suit better insofar as it fits to a specific context and individual school leader. In other words, there is no one best strategy for all contexts and all individuals. This, therefore, calls for discretion when adopting any given strategy.

## **Limitations**

This research study had some limitations. These limitations include (1) the sole reliance on participant interviews without use of any other method of data collection to back

up the information provided by the participants; (2) my inability to conduct all the interviews required as three participants could not participate in the second step of the interview. Two of the participants could not keep the appointments due to busy schedules and travels, and the third participant could not respond to my emails or calls.

### **Recommendations for further research**

This study made use of in-depth interviews that provided rich and detailed information about how the sixteen participants coped with stress, strain and (potential) burnout. From this study, it is apparent that the transferability of the research findings depends much on the personal and school factors. This means that schools and their leaders need to adopt leadership styles that promote shared responsibility, and build trusting school cultures and structures to offset stress, strain and possible burnout. Recommendations for future research could include among others: (1) how distributed leadership or participative leadership offsets stress, strain and burnout beyond sharing roles, (2) to what extent meditation, prayer or mindfulness reduce stress, strain and burnout and (3) how provision of professional development and prior training could relate to school leaders wellbeing.

## REFERENCES

- Alaraideh, E. S. N. (2016). Burnout among special education teachers. *Journal of Psychological Science and Education (in Arabic)*, 2 (1), 197 - 227. Retrieved from: [http://search.shamaa.org/PDF/Articles/AeJpes/JpesVol2No1Y2016/jpes\\_2016-v2-n1\\_197-227.pdf](http://search.shamaa.org/PDF/Articles/AeJpes/JpesVol2No1Y2016/jpes_2016-v2-n1_197-227.pdf)
- Al-Chibani, W. & Hajal-Al-Chibani, P. H. ( 2013). Leadership styles of school principals in Lebanon: Multiple case study. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 93, 174 – 176. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.09.173
- Aldhafri, S. (2016). Predicting pre-school teachers' burnout levels through their efficacy beliefs in the Sultanate of Oman. *Journal of Arab Childhood*, 17 (66), 105 - 115. Retrieved from: [http://search.shamaa.org/PDF/Articles/KUJAc/JacVol17No66Y2016/jac\\_2016-v17-n66\\_105-115.pdf](http://search.shamaa.org/PDF/Articles/KUJAc/JacVol17No66Y2016/jac_2016-v17-n66_105-115.pdf)
- Al-Khalaileh, H., Al-Shayeb, A. E. & Saleh, H. (2012). Teachers' burnout and its relationship to school organizational trust in Zarqa Governorate Schools as perceived by teachers. *Jordanian Journal of Educational Sciences*, 8 (3), 243 - 254. Retrieved from: <http://journals.yu.edu.jo/jjes/Issues/2012/Vol8No3/5.pdf>
- Alkhateeb, O. Kraishan, O. M. & Salah, R. O. (2015). Level of psychological burnout of a sample of secondary phase teachers in Ma'an Governorate and its relationship with some other variables. *International Education Studies*, 8 (6), 56 - 68. DOI: 10.5539/ies.v8n6p56

Al-Mohannadi, A. & Capel, S. (2007). Stress in physical education teachers in Qatar. *Social Psychology of Education, 10*, 55 – 75. DOI: 10.1007/s11218-006-9004-9

Athanasoula-Reppaa, A., Makri-Botsaria, E., & Kounenoua, K. & Psycharisa, S. (2010). School leadership innovations and creativity: The case of communication between school and parents. *Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 2*, 2207–2211. Doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.03.309

Baalbaki, H. I. (2016). *Teacher burnout causes, symptoms and recommended solutions: a study on special education teachers in Lebanon* (Master's thesis). Retrieved from: [https://laur.lau.edu.lb:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10725/5327/Hiba\\_Imad\\_Baalbaki\\_Thesis\\_Redacted.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y](https://laur.lau.edu.lb:8443/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10725/5327/Hiba_Imad_Baalbaki_Thesis_Redacted.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y)

Bagi, S. (2013). When leaders burn out: The causes, costs and prevention of burnout among leaders. *Collective Efficacy: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on International Leadership, 20*, 261-289. DOI: 10.1108/S1479-3660(2013)0000020015

Bakker, A. B., Van Veldhoven, M. & Xanthopoulou, D. (2010). Beyond the demand-control model: Thriving on high job demands and resources. *Journal of Personnel Psychology, 9* (1), 3–16. DOI: 10.1027/1866-5888/a000000

Balkar, B. (2015). Defining an empowering school culture (ESC): Teacher perceptions. *Issues in Educational Research, 25* (3), 205-224. Retrieved from: <http://www.iier.org.au/iier25/balkar.pdf>

Bashshur, M. (2009). Curriculum in Arab states: Historical and contemporary perspectives. In: S. Boujaoude & Z. Dagher, (eds.), *The World of Science Education: Arab States*

(Vol. 3, pp. 256–264). Rotterdam: Sense Publishers. Retrieved from:

<https://www.sensepublishers.com/media/1173-the-world-of-science-education.pdf>

Beale, A. V., & Hall, K. R. (2007). Cyberbullying: What school administrators (and parents) can do. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 81 (1), 8–12. DOI: 10.3200/TCHS.81.1.8-12

Beausaert, S., Froehlich, D.E., Devos, C.& Riley, P. (2016). Effects of support on stress and burnout in school principals. *Educational Research*, 58 (4), 347 - 365. DOI: 10.1080/00131881.2016.1220810

Bedi, I. K. & Kukemelk, H. (2018). School principals and job stress: The silent dismissal agent and forgotten pill in the united nations sustainable development goal 4. *US-China Education Review B*, 8 (8), 357-364. doi: 10.17265/2161-6248/2018.08.004

Belgrave L. L., & Seide K. (2018) Grounded theory methodology: Principles and practices. in: Liamputtong P. (ed.) *Handbook of Research Methods in Health Social Sciences*. DOI: [https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6\\_84-1](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-10-2779-6_84-1)

Benoiel, P. A. Barth, (2017). The implications of the school's cultural attributes in the relationships between participative leadership and teacher job satisfaction and burnout. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 55 (6), 640-656. DOI 10.1108/JEA-10-2016-0116

Blumer H. (1969). *Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method*. Prentice-Hall,

Englewood Cliffs, NJ, USA. Retrieved from:

<https://books.google.com.lb/books?id=HVuognZFofC&printsec=frontcover#v=onepage&q&f=false>

- Boyce, C., & Neale, P. (2006). Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input. *Pathfinder International Tool Series, 2. 1 - 12*. Retrieved from:  
[http://www2.pathfinder.org/site/DocServer/m\\_e\\_tool\\_series\\_indepth\\_interviews.pdf](http://www2.pathfinder.org/site/DocServer/m_e_tool_series_indepth_interviews.pdf)
- Boyland, L. (2011). Job stress and coping strategies of elementary principals: a state-wide study. *Current Issues in Education, 14* (3), 1 - 11. Retrieved from:  
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.833.3488&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Busingye, J. D. & Najjuma, R. (2015). Do learning and teaching materials influence learning outcomes amidst high enrolments? Lessons from Uganda's universal primary education. *Africa Education Review, 12* (1), 109 – 126. DOI:  
10.1080/18146627.2015.1036572
- Carpenter, D.(2015). School culture and leadership of professional learning communities. *International Journal of Educational Management, 29* (5) 682-694. DOI:  
10.1108/IJEM-04-2014-0046
- Carter, M. J. & Fuller, C.(2015). *Symbolic interactionism*. Sociopedia.isa. 1 - 17. DOI:  
10.1177/205684601561
- Cayirdag, N. (2016). The relationship among creative (Mis) fit, college culture, creative and academic self-efficacy. *Educational Research and Reviews, 11* (15), 1382 - 1390.  
DOI: 10.5897/ERR2016.2828
- Chaaban. J. & El-Khoury, A. (2015). *Spotlight on Youth in Lebanon*. Beirut: UNDP.  
Retrieved from:

[https://www.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/Poverty/Publications/Spotlight%20on%20Youth%20Final%20\(23-06-2016\).pdf](https://www.undp.org/content/dam/lebanon/docs/Poverty/Publications/Spotlight%20on%20Youth%20Final%20(23-06-2016).pdf)

Chaplain, R. P. (2001). Stress and job satisfaction among primary headteachers: a question of balance? *Educational Management & Administration*, 29 (2), 197–215: Retrieved from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0263211X010292005>

Charmaz, K. (2008). Constructionism and the grounded theory. In J. A. Holstein & J. F. Gubrium (Eds.), *Handbook of constructionist research* (pp. 397-412). New York: The Guilford Press. Retrieved from: [www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Charmaz\\_2008-a.pdf](http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Charmaz_2008-a.pdf)

Charmaz, K. (2014). *Constructing grounded theory*. (2 ed.) London: Sage Publications. Retrieved from: [https://books.google.com.lb/books?hl=en&lr=&id=v\\_GGAwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=charmaz+2010+grounded+theory+&ots=YWVuM4zyi-&sig=4kQ4YdFZl6MDp1WnQWV28BhfCvw&redir\\_esc=y#v=onepage&q=charmaz%202010%20grounded%20theory&f=false](https://books.google.com.lb/books?hl=en&lr=&id=v_GGAwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=charmaz+2010+grounded+theory+&ots=YWVuM4zyi-&sig=4kQ4YdFZl6MDp1WnQWV28BhfCvw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=charmaz%202010%20grounded%20theory&f=false)

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. (2011). *Research methods in education*. (7th ed.) New York: Routledge.

Collard, J. (2007). Constructing theory for leadership in intercultural contexts. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 45 (6), 740-755. DOI 10.1108/09578230710829919

Copland, M. A. (2001). The Myth of the super principal. *Phi Delta Kappan*. 82 (7), 528 - 533. Retrieved from: 10.1177/003172170108200710

Corbin, J. & Strauss, A. (1990). Grounded theory research: procedures, canons, and evaluative criteria. *Qualitative Sociology*, 13 (1), 3 - 21. Retrieved from: <http://iranarze.ir/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/8424-English-IranArze.pdf>

Creswell, J. W. (2012). *Educational research: planning, conducting and evaluating quantitative and qualitative research*. (3rd ed.). Upper Saddle River: Pearson. Retrieved from: <http://basu.nahad.ir/uploads/creswell.pdf>

Crow, G., Day, C. & Moller, J. (2017). Framing research on school principals' identities. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 20 (3), 265–277. DOI: 10.1080/13603124.2015.1123299

Davies, B. J. & Davies, B. (2006). Developing a model for strategic leadership in schools. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 34 (1), 121–139. DOI: 10.1177/1741143206059542

De Rijk, A. E., Le Blanc, P. M., & Schaufeli, W. B. (1998). Active coping and need for control as moderators of the job demand-control model: Effects on burnout. *Journal of Occupational and Organisational Psychology*, 71, 1-18. Retrieved from: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/j.2044-8325.1998.tb00658.x>

Demerouti, E. (2015). Strategies used by individuals to prevent burnout. *European Journal of Clinical Investigation*, 45 (10), 1106 - 1112. DOI: 10.1111/eci.12494

Denzin, N. K. (2016). Symbolic interactionism. DOI: 10.1002/9781118766804.wbiect143

Devos, G., Bouckenoghe, D., Engels, N., Hotton, G. & Aelterman, A. (2007). An assessment of well-being of principals in Flemish primary schools. *Journal of*

*Educational Administration*, 45 (1), 33-61. Retrieved from:

<https://doi.org/10.1108/09578230710722449>

Dimmock, C. & Walker A. (2000). Developing comparative and international educational leadership and management: a cross-cultural model. *School Leadership & Management*, 20 (2), 143 - 160. DOI: 10.1080/13632430050011399

DiPaola, M. & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2003). The Principals at a crossroads: A study of the conditions and concerns of principals. *NASSP Bulletin*, 87 (634), 43 - 65.

Retrieved from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/019263650308763404>

DiPaola, M. F. & Tschannen-Moran, M. (2005). Bridging or buffering? The impact of schools' adaptive strategies on student achievement. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 43 (1), 60-71. DOI 10.1108/09578230510577290

Duignan, P. A. (2014). Authenticity in educational leadership: History, ideal, reality. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 52 (2), 152-172. DOI: 10.1108/JEA-01-2014-0012

Eddy, P., Heckenberg, R., Wertheim, E. H., Kent, S. & Wright, B. J. (2016). A systematic review and meta-analysis of the effort-reward imbalance model of workplace stress with indicators of immune function. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 91, 1–8.

Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2016.10.003>

Eden, S., Heiman, T., & Olenik-Shemesh, D. (2013). Teachers' perceptions, beliefs and concerns about cyberbullying. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 44 (6), 1036–1052. DOI:10.1111/j.1467-8535.2012.01363.x

Edwards, J. R. & Van Harrison, R. (1993). Job demands and worker health: three-dimensional re-examination of the relationship between person-environment fit and

strain. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 78 (4), 628 - 648. Retrieved from:  
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.463.5387&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Edwards, J. R., Cable, D. M., Williamson, I. O., Lambert, L. S. & Shipp, A. J. (2006). The phenomenology of fit: Linking the person and environment to the subjective experience of person–environment fit. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 91, (4), 802–827. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.91.4.802

Edwards, J. R., Caplan, R. D., & Harrison, R. V. (1998). Person-environment fit theory: Conceptual foundations, empirical evidence, and directions for future research. In C. L. Cooper (Ed.), *Theories of organizational stress* (pp. 28-67). Oxford: Oxford University Press.

El Helou, M., Nabhani, M. & Bahous, R. (2016) Teachers' views on causes leading to their burnout. *School Leadership & Management*, 36 (5), 551 - 567. DOI: 10.1080/13632434.2016.1247051

Fallot, R.D. (2007). Spirituality and Religion in Recovery: Some Current Issues. *Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal*, 30 (4), 261-270. DOI: 10.2975/30.4.2007.261.270

Federici, R. A. & Skaalvik, E. M. (2012). Principal self-efficacy: relations with burnout, job satisfaction and motivation to quit. *Soc Psychol Educ*, 15, 295 – 320. DOI: 10.1007/s11218-012-9183-5

Fink, D. & Brayman, C. (2006). School leadership succession and the challenges of change, *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42, (1), 62-89. DOI: 10.1177/0013161X05278186

- Frayha, N. (2009). The negative face of the Lebanese education system. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.lebanonrenaissance.org/assets/Uploads/0-The-negative-face-of-the-Lebanese-education-system-by-Nmer-Frayha-2009.pdf>
- Friedman, I. A. (2002). Burnout in school principals: role related antecedents. *Social Psychology of Education* 5, 229 – 251. Retrieved from:  
<https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1023%2FA%3A1016321210858.pdf>
- Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading in a culture of change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED467449.pdf>
- Garcia-Garduno, J. M., Slater, C. & Lopez-Gorosave, G. (2011). Beginning elementary principals around the world. *Management in Education*, 25 (3), 100–105. DOI: 10.1177/0892020611403806
- Ghamrawi, N. (2013). Teachers helping teachers: a professional development model that promotes teacher leadership. *International Education Studies*, 6 (4), DOI:10.5539/ies.v6n4p171
- Glaser, B., & Strauss, A. (1967). *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago: Aldine. Retrieved from: [www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Glaser\\_1967.pdf](http://www.sxf.uevora.pt/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/Glaser_1967.pdf)
- Grubb, W. N. & Flessa, J. J. (2006). “A job too big for one”: Multiple principals and other non-traditional approaches to school leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42 (4). 518 - 550. DOI: 10.1177/0013161X06290641
- Guglielmi, D., Simbula, S., Schaufeli, W. B. & Depolo, M. (2012). Self-efficacy and workaholism as initiators of the job demands-resources model. *Career Development*

*International*, 17 (4), 375-389. Retrieved from:

<https://doi.org/10.1108/13620431211255842>

Hagreaves, A. (2007). Professional learning communities. In Stoll, L. & Seashore, L. K.

(Eds.), *Professional learning communities: Divergence, depth and dilemmas*.

Buckingham: Open University Press.

Hallam, P. R., Hite, J. M., Hite, S. J. & Mugimu, C. B. (2010). So you want to be a

headteacher? Liabilities of newness, challenges and strategies of new headteachers in

Uganda. In A. R. Shoho, B. G. Barnett & A. K. Tooms (Eds.). *The challenges of new*

*principals in the 21st Century* (Vol. 1). Charlotte, NC: Information Age Publishing.

Hallinger, P. & Heck R. H. (2010). Leadership for learning: Does collaborative leadership

make a difference in school improvement? *Educational Management Administration*

*& Leadership* 38 (6), 654–678. DOI: 10.1177/1741143210379060

Hallinger, P. & Heck, R. H. (2011). Collaborative leadership and school improvement:

Understanding the impact on school capacity and student learning. In T. Townsend &

J. MacBeath (Eds.), *Springer International Handbooks of Education 25, International*

*Handbook of Leadership for Learning* (469-485). DOI: 10.1007/978-94-007-1350-

5\_27

Hamdan, H. (2013). *Education in Lebanon: Report from War Child International*. Retrieved

from:

<https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/EducationPaperLebanon.pdf>

- Harma, J. (2011). Low cost private schooling in India: Is it pro-poor and equitable? *International Journal of Educational Development*, 31, 250-256.  
DOI:10.1016/j.ijedudev.2011.01.003
- Harris, A. (2004). Distributed leadership and school improvement: Leading or misleading? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 32 (1). 11– 24. DOI: 10.1177/1741143204039297
- Hoy, W. K. & Miskel, C. G. (2013). *Educational administration: Theory, research and practice* (9th ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.
- Hu, Q., Schaufeli, W. B. & Taris, T. W. (2013). Does equity mediate the effects of job demands and job resources on work outcomes? An extension of the job demands-resources model. *Career Development International*, 18 (4), 357-376. DOI: 10.1108/CDI-12-2012-0126
- Huang, Y. & Chou, C. (2013). Revisiting cyberbullying: perspectives from Taiwanese teachers. *Computers & Education*, 63, 227–239. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2012.11.023>
- Hwang, W. & Ramadoss, K. (2017). The job demands–control–support model and job satisfaction across gender: The mediating role of work–family conflict. *Journal of Family Issues*, 38 (1) 52–72. DOI: 10.1177/0192513X16647983
- Iacovides, A., Fountoulakis, K.N., Kaprinis, S. & Kaprinis, G. (2003). The relationship between job stress, burnout and clinical depression. *Journal of Affective Disorders*, 75, 209–221. DOI:10.1016/S0165-0327(02)00101-5

- Jingdong, Y., Najjuko, C. & Ochwo, G. (2017). Remuneration Level on Teachers Turnover in Secondary Schools in Uganda. *European Journal of Business and Management*, 9 (20), 57 - 61. Retrieved from:  
[www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/download/37811/38894](http://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/EJBM/article/download/37811/38894)
- Johnson, P. E. (2003). Conflict and the school leader: Expert or novice. *Journal of Research for Educational Leaders (JREL)*, 1 (3). 28 - 45. Retrieved from:  
[http://www2.education.uiowa.edu/archives/jrel/spring03/johnson\\_0204.pdf](http://www2.education.uiowa.edu/archives/jrel/spring03/johnson_0204.pdf)
- Karakose, T., Kocabas, I., Yirci, R., Esen, C. & Celik, M. (2016). Exploring the relationship between school principals' burnout situation and life satisfaction. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 4 (6), 1488 - 1494. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2016.040629
- Karami-Akkary, R. (2013). The role and role context of the Lebanese school principal: toward a culturally grounded understanding of the principalship. *Educational Management, Administration & Leadership*, 42 (5), 1 – 25. DOI:  
10.1177/1741143213510503
- Karami-Akkary, R. (2014). Facing the challenges of educational reform in the Arab world. *Journal of Educational Change*, 15 (2), 179 – 202. DOI: 10.1007/s10833-013-9225-6
- Karasek, R. A. (1979). Job demands, job decision latitude, and mental strain: implications for job redesign. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 24 (2), 285 - 308. DOI:  
10.2307/2392498
- Kaufman, J. A. (2019). Stress and coping among public school principals in a Midwest metropolitan sample. *SAGE Open*, 1–6. DOI: 10.1177/2158244019829549

- Kebbi, M. (2018). Stress and coping strategies used by special education and general classroom teachers. *International Journal of Special Education*, 33 (1), 34-61. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1184086.pdf>
- Kimbrough, S., Culpepper, D. & Crutcher, T (2017). Students' perception of cell phones in the classroom. *International Journal of Humanities Social Sciences and Education*, 4 (11), 147-152. Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.20431/2349-0381.0411016>.
- Klocko, B. A. & Wells, C. M. (2015). Workload Pressures of Principals: A Focus on Renewal, Support, and Mindfulness. *NASSP Bulletin*, 99 (4). 332 – 355. Retrieved from: <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0192636515619727>
- Lambert, L. (2002). Building leadership capacity in schools [Monograph]. *Australian Principals Centre, 1*. Retrieved from: [https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=apc\\_monographs](https://research.acer.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=apc_monographs)
- Lambert, L. (2006). Lasting leadership: A study of high leadership capacity schools. *The Educational Forum*, 70, 238-254. Retrieved from: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ735836.pdf>
- Larsman, P. (2006). *On the relation between psychosocial work environment and musculoskeletal symptoms: A structural equation modelling approach*. Stockholm: National Institute for Working Life. Retrieved from: [https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/4378/1/ah2006\\_02.pdf](https://gupea.ub.gu.se/bitstream/2077/4378/1/ah2006_02.pdf)

- LeChasseur, K., Donaldson, M., Fernandez, E. & Fenc-Bagwell, M. (2018). Brokering, buffering, and the rationalities of principal work. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 56 (3), 262-276. DOI: 10.1108/JEA-10-2016-0129
- Leiter, M. (1993). Burnout as a developmental process: Consideration of models. In W. Schaufeli, C. Maslach & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional burnout: Recent developments in theory and research* (pp. 237-250). Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232543718\\_Burnout\\_as\\_a\\_developmental\\_process\\_Consideration\\_of\\_models](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/232543718_Burnout_as_a_developmental_process_Consideration_of_models)
- Leventis, C., Papakitsos, E. C., Karakiozis, K. & Argyriou, A. (2017). Work-related stress and burnout factors of principals in Regional Greece: A historical perspective. *Journal of Research Initiatives*, 3 (1), 1-11. Retrieved from: <https://digitalcommons.uncfsu.edu/jri/vol3/iss1/1/>
- Liu, S. & Hallinger, P. (2017). Leading teacher learning in China: A mixed methods study of successful school leadership. In K. Leithwood, J. Sun & K. Pollock (Eds.), *Studies in Educational Leadership 23, How School Leaders Contribute to Student Success* (279-303). DOI: 10.1007/978-3-319-50980-8\_13
- Livingstone, S., Haddon, L., Görzig, A., & Ólafsson, K. (2011). EU kids online: Final report [Monograph]. *London School of Economics & Political Science (LSE), London*. Retrieved from: <http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/id/eprint/39351>
- Lovely, S. (2004). Staffing the Principalship. *ASCD*. Retrieved from: <http://www.ascd.org/publications/books/104010.aspx>

- Lunenburg, F. C. (2012). Organizational Structure: Mintzberg's Framework. *International Journal of Scholarly, Academic, Intellectual Diversity*, 14 (1), 1-8. Retrieved from: <https://platform.europeanmoocs.eu/users/8/Lunenburg-Fred-C.-Organizational-Structure-Mintzberg-Framework-IJSAID-V14-N1-2012.pdf>
- MacOpiyo, L. (2011). *Pastoralists' livelihoods in the Kidepo Valley area of northern Uganda: A desk review of the prevailing livelihood strategies, development environment and state of resource management in the Kidepo Valley area and its environment*. African Union/Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources. Retrieved from: <https://tinyurl.com/ybjoqoo7>
- Male, T. (2006). *Being an Effective Headteacher*. London: Paul Chapman. DOI: 10.4135/9781446213285
- Mangad, A. & Nath, B. K. (2015). Problems of higher secondary school principals in Kerala – Dual role of classroom teaching and school administration. *International Journal of Applied Research*, 1 (12), 1028-1031. Retrieved from: <http://www.allresearchjournal.com/archives/2015/vol1issue12/PartO/1-12-66.pdf>
- Marshall, G. W., Michaels, C. E. & Mulki, J. P. (2007). Workplace isolation: Exploring the construct and its measurement. *Psychology and Marketing*, 24 (3) 195–223. DOI: 10.1002/mar.20158
- Maslach, C. & Leiter, M. P. (2007). Burnout. In G. Fink, (Ed.) *Encyclopedia of Stress* (2nd ed., pp 368 - 371). DOI: 10.1016/B978-0-12-800951-2.00044-3

Maslach, C. & Leiter, M. P. (2016). Understanding the burnout experience: recent research and its implications for psychiatry. *World Psychiatry, 15* (2), 103-111. DOI: 10.1002/wps.20311

Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B. & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review in Psychology, 52*, 397–422. Retrieved from:  
<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/5fc3/eccc1afad1365bc8469ab5c39477e8c26146.pdf>

Maxwell, A. & Riley, P. (2017). Emotional demands, emotional labour and occupational outcomes in school principals: Modelling the relationships. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership, 45* (3). 484–502. DOI: 10.1177/1741143215607878

Miller, R. J., Goddard, R. D., Kim, M., Jacob, R., Goddard, Y. & Schroeder, P. (2016). Can professional development improve school leadership? Results from a randomized control trial assessing the impact of McREL's Balanced Leadership program on principals in rural Michigan schools. *Educational Administration Quarterly, 52* (4), 531–566. DOI: 10.1177/0013161X16651926

Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). (2016). *Reaching All Children with Education: RACE II (2017-2021)*. Beirut: MEHE. Retrieved from:  
[http://www.mehe.gov.lb/uploads/file/2016/Oct/RACE%20II\\_FINAL%20Narrative\\_29AUG2016.pdf](http://www.mehe.gov.lb/uploads/file/2016/Oct/RACE%20II_FINAL%20Narrative_29AUG2016.pdf)

Ministry of Education and Sports (2017). *Education and sports sector strategic plan 2017/18 - 2019/20*. Retrieved from:  
[http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/uganda\\_education\\_sector\\_strategic\\_plan\\_2017-2018\\_2019\\_2020.pdf](http://planipolis.iiep.unesco.org/sites/planipolis/files/ressources/uganda_education_sector_strategic_plan_2017-2018_2019_2020.pdf)

Mintzberg, H. (1979). *The structuring of organizations*. Englewood Cliffs NJ: Prentice Hall.

Retrieved from: <https://www.nrc.gov/docs/ML0907/ML090710600.pdf>

Molyneaux, K. J. (2011). Uganda's Universal Secondary Education policy and its effect on 'empowered' women: how reduced income and moonlighting activities differentially impact male and female teachers. *Research in Comparative and International Education*, 6 (1), 62 - 78. Retrieved from:

*Education*, 6 (1), 62 - 78. Retrieved from:

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.2304/rcie.2011.6.1.62>

Mutambudzia, M., Siegrist, J., Meyer, J.D. & Li, J. (2018). Association between effort-reward imbalance and self-reported diabetes mellitus in older U.S. workers. *Journal of Psychosomatic Research*, 104, 61–64. Retrieved from:

<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpsychores.2017.11.008>

Muwanga, N. K. (2000). *The politics of primary education in Uganda: parent participation and national reforms*. (Doctoral dissertation, Graduate Department of Political Science, University of Toronto). Retrieved from:

<https://tspace.library.utoronto.ca/bitstream/1807/14909/1/NQ53852.pdf>

Najjar, D. (2008). *Effectiveness of management in private schools in Lebanon*. (Doctoral dissertation, The University of Birmingham School of Education). Retrieved from:

<https://theses.bham.ac.uk/id/eprint/324/1/Najjar09PhD.pdf>

Namukasa, I. & Buye, R. (2007). Decentralization and education in Uganda. *Comparative and International Education*, 36 (1), 93 - 116. Retrieved from:

<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1024&context=cie-eci>

- Ng, D. F. S., Nguyen, D. T., Wong, B. K. S. & Choy, W. K. W. (2015). A review of Singapore principals' leadership qualities, styles, and roles. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53 (4), 512 - 533. DOI 10.1108/JEA-08-2013-0085
- Payne, R. L. & Morrison, D. (2001). Test of the demands, supports-constraints framework in predicting psychological distress amongst Australian public sector employees. *Work & Stress*, 15 (4), 314 - 327. DOI: 10.1080/02678370110092220
- Pineda-Báez, C., Bernal-Luque, R., Sandoval-Estupiñan L. Y. & Quiroga, C. (2019). Challenges facing novice principals: A study in Colombian schools using a socialisation perspective. *Issues in Educational Research*, 29 (1), 205 - 222.  
Retrieved from: <http://www.iier.org.au/iier29/pineda-baez.pdf>
- Poirel, E. & Yvon, F. (2014). School principals' emotional coping process. *Canadian Journal of Education*, 37 (3), 1 - 23. Retrieved from: <http://journals.sfu.ca/cje/index.php/cje-rce/article/view/1041/1700>
- Pounder, D. G., Galvin, P., & Shepherd, P. (2003). An analysis of the United States' educational administrator shortage. *Australian journal of Education*, 47 (2), 133-145.  
Retrieved from:  
<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.851.8074&rep=rep1&type=pdf>
- Renihan, P. J. ( 2012 ). Leadership Succession for Tomorrow's Schools. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 55, 138 – 147. DOI: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.09.487
- Rutledge, S. A., Harris, D. N. & Ingle, W. K. (2010). How principals bridge and buffer the new demands of teacher quality and accountability: A mixed-methods analysis of

teacher hiring. *Educational Foundations, Leadership and Policy*, 116 (3). Retrieved from: [https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/seflp\\_pubs/3](https://scholarworks.bgsu.edu/seflp_pubs/3)

Sargent, L. D. & Terry, D. J. (2000). The moderating role of social support in Karasek's job strain model. *Work & Stress*, 14 (3), 245-261, DOI: 10.1080/02678370010025568

Schaufeli, W. B. & Bakker, A. B. (2004). Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: a multi-sample study. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 25, 293-315. DOI: 10.1002/job.248

Schaufeli, W. B., Leiter, M. P. & Maslach, C. (2009). Burnout: 35 years of research and practice. *Career Development International*, 14 (3), 204-220. DOI: 10.1108/13620430910966406

Scheier, M., Weintraub, J. K. & Carver, C. S. (1986). Coping with stress: Divergent strategies of optimists and pessimists. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 51 (6), 1257 - 1264.

Schwab, R. L., Jackson, S. E. & Schuler R. S. (1986). Educator burnout: sources and consequences. *Educational Research Quarterly*, 10 (3), 14 - 30. Retrieved from: [https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/documents/faculty\\_staff\\_docs/EducatorBurnout.pdf](https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/documents/faculty_staff_docs/EducatorBurnout.pdf)

Shields, M. (2008). Surviving the first year: What helps principals last the distance? *TEACH Journal of Christian Education*, 2 (2), 32-39. Retrieved from: <https://research.avondale.edu.au/teach/vol2/iss2/11/>

- Shuayb, M. (2016). Education for social cohesion attempts in Lebanon: Reflections on the 1994 and 2010 education reforms. *UNISA*, 20 (3), 225–242. DOI: 10.17159/1947-9417/2016/1531
- Siegrist, J. (1996). Adverse health effects of high-effort/low-reward conditions. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 1 (1), 27 - 41. Retrieved from: <https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/79da/fe09b439dff93d0cf4f4a0d231fff321e0a4.pdf>
- Siegrist, J. (2010). Effort-reward imbalance at work and cardiovascular diseases. *International Journal of Occupational Medicine and Environmental Health*; 23 (3):279 – 285. DOI 10.2478/v10001-010-0013-8
- Siegrist, J. (2012). Effort-reward imbalance at work: theory, measurement and evidence. *Department of Medical Sociology, University Du`sseldorf, Germany*. Retrieved from: [http://www.uniklinik-duesseldorf.de/fileadmin/Datenpool/einrichtungen/institut\\_fuer\\_medizinische\\_soziologie\\_id54/ERI/ERI-Website.pdf](http://www.uniklinik-duesseldorf.de/fileadmin/Datenpool/einrichtungen/institut_fuer_medizinische_soziologie_id54/ERI/ERI-Website.pdf)
- Siegrist, J. (2015). “Effort-reward imbalance at work and health”. In P. L. Perrewe & D. C. Ganster (eds.). *Historical and Current Perspectives on Stress and Health* (2), (261 - 291). Retrieved from: [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3555\(02\)02007-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1479-3555(02)02007-3)
- Smith, D. M. & Holdaway, E. A. (1995). Constraints on the effectiveness of schools and their principals. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 9 (5), 31 - 39. DOI: 10.1108/09513549510095103

- Stoelinga, S. R. (2011). Pressuring teachers to leave: honest talk about how principals use harassing supervision. *Kappan*, 92 (4), 57 - 61. Retrieved from:  
<http://teacherobservation.cmswiki.wikispaces.net/file/view/pressuring+teachers.pdf>
- Stoll, L. & Temperley, J. (2015). Creative leadership: A challenge of our times. *School Leadership and Management*, 29 (1), 63-76. DOI: 10.1080/13632430802646404
- Su, R., Murdock, C. D., & Rounds, J. (2015). Person-environment fit. In P. J. Hartung, M. L. Savickas, & W. B. Walsh (Eds.), *APA Handbook of Career Interventions, Vol. 1. Foundations* (pp. 81-98). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.  
Retrieved from: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/14438-005>
- Suzuki, S., Kumano, & Sakano, H. Y. (2003). Effects of effort and distress coping processes on psychophysiological and psychological stress responses. *International Journal of Psychophysiology*, 47, 117–128. DOI: S0167-8760Ž02.00120-4
- Tahir, L., Thakib, M. T. M., Hamzah, M. H., Said, M. N. H. M. & Musah, M. B. (2017). Novice head teachers' isolation and loneliness experiences: A mixed-methods study. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 45 (1) 164–189. DOI: 10.1177/1741143215587302
- Teachers Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa (TISSA). (2014). *Teacher issues in Uganda: A shared vision for an effective teachers policy*. Dakar: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0022/002297/229777e.pdf>
- The Republic of Uganda (2018). *State of Uganda population report 2017*. Retrieved from: [library.health.go.ug/download/file/fid/581158](http://library.health.go.ug/download/file/fid/581158)

- Tomic, W. & Tomic, E. (2008). Existential fulfilment and burnout among principals and teachers. *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 29 (1), 11 - 27. DOI: 10.1080/13617670801928191
- Touloupis, T. & Athanasiades, C. (2018). Principals' attitudes towards risky internet use of primary school students: The role of occupational factors. *Education and Information Technology*, 23 (1), 497–516. DOI 10.1007/s10639-017-9614-1
- Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2016). *National Population and Housing Census 2014: Main Report*. Kampala: UBOS. Retrieved from <http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/NPHC/NPHC%202014%20FINAL%20RESULTS%20REPORT.pdf>
- United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN-ESCWA) (2011). *ESCWA 2011: Annual Report*. Beirut: ESCWA. Retrieved from: <https://www.unescwa.org/recurring-publication-identifier/escwa-annual-report>
- Valcour, M. (2016). Beating Burnout. *Harvard Business Review*, 94 (11), 98-101. Retrieved from: [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308986353\\_Beating\\_Burnout](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308986353_Beating_Burnout)
- Valsiner, J. (2009). *Culture in minds and societies: Foundations of cultural psychology*. New Delhi: Sage Publications.
- Van Maele, D. & Van Houtte, M. (2015). Trust in school: A pathway to inhibit teacher burnout? *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53 (1) 93-115. DOI 10.1108/JEA-02-2014-0018

- Van Vegchel, N., de Jonge, J., Bosma, H. & Schaufeli, W. (2005). Reviewing the effort–reward imbalance model: Drawing up the balance of 45 empirical studies. *Social Science & Medicine*, 60, 1117–1131. DOI:10.1016/j.socscimed.2004.06.043
- Vanderhove, E., Schellens, T. & Valcke, M. (2014). Educational packages about the risks on Social Network Sites: State of the art. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 112, 603 – 612. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.01.1207
- Vlaardingerbroek, B. & Shehab, S. S. (2012). Educational assessment in Lebanon. *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 19 (3), 379-386. DOI: 10.1080/0969594X.2011.637900
- Vlaardingerbroek, B., Al-Hroub A. & Saab, C. (2017). The Lebanese Education System. In R.G. Sultana (Ed.) *Career Guidance and Livelihood Planning across the Mediterranean..* Rotterdam: EMCER. Retrieved from: <https://link.springer.com/content/pdf/10.1007%2F978-94-6300-992-8.pdf>
- Walker, A. & Hallinger, P. (2015). A synthesis of reviews of research on principal leadership in East Asia. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 53 (4) 554-570. DOI 10.1108/JEA-05-2015-0038
- Walker, A. & Qian, H. (2006). Beginning principals: Balancing at the top of the greasy pole. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44 (4), 297-309. DOI 10.1108/0957823061067492
- Wenner, J. A. & Settlage, J. (2015). School leader enactments of the structure/agency dialectic via buffering. *Journal of Research in Science Teaching*, 52 (4), 503–515. DOI10.1002/tea.21212

Whitaker, K. S. (1996). Exploring causes of principal burnout. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 34 (1), 60 - 71. DOI: 10.1108/09578239610107165

Willard, N. E. (2007). Educator's guide to cyberbullying: Addressing the harm caused by online social cruelty. Retrieved from:  
<https://education.ohio.gov/getattachment/Topics/Other-Resources/School-Safety/Safe-and-Supportive-Learning/Anti-Harassment-Intimidation-and-Bullying-Resource/Educator-s-Guide-Cyber-Safety.pdf.aspx>

Yaacoub, N. & Badre L. (2012). *Statistics in focus: education in Lebanon*. Beirut: Central Administration of Statistics. Retrieved from  
[http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/PDFs/SIF/CAS\\_Education\\_In\\_Lebanon\\_SIF3.pdf](http://www.cas.gov.lb/images/PDFs/SIF/CAS_Education_In_Lebanon_SIF3.pdf)

## APPENDIX I

### Participant information letter

Dear Ms./Mr.

I am \_\_\_\_\_, a student at Haigazian University from the Department of Education. I am currently carrying out a research study titled *Coping Strategies against Burnout in School Leaders: A Comparative Study of School Leaders in Lebanon and Uganda* supervised by Dr Hagop Yacoubian.

You are being asked to take part in this study since you are working (or formerly worked) as a school leader, and I believe you could provide important information that can enrich this study.

Kindly read the information below to decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

#### **Purpose of this Research Project**

This research study aims at understanding the existing coping strategies used by individual school leaders so as to formulate systematic coping strategies. Framing systematic coping strategies against burnout in school leaders will be significant for school leaders facing work overload, and internal and external pressures, yet there are no support systems or buffers to help them cope. This will also benefit society since school leaders are the focus of school improvement.

#### **What will I be asked to do?**

- If you choose to participate in this research study, you will be asked to be interviewed. Your participation will involve an interview with open-ended questions of approximately one hour. The interview will involve audio-recording. If you are not willing to be audio-recorded, you are free not to participate. Participation in this project is voluntary. You are free to withdraw anytime without having to give any reasons for your withdrawal.

#### **What are my rights?**

- Participation in this study is completely voluntary, anonymous and confidential. Your name, the name of your school or any other identifying information will not be disclosed to any third party. Your name and the name of your school will be replaced with pseudonyms before data analysis to ensure your privacy.
- Data you provide along with data from all participants in the present research will be stored in aggregate in a password protected folder in my personal computer. The data will be analysed and reported in aggregate. Only I will have access to the compiled data which will be stored for a period of 10 years post data collection as per the regulations of the ethical review committee at Haigazian University. During this time, you have the right to inspect the data.
- You have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue participation at any time for any reason. Your decision to refuse participation or withdraw will not involve any penalty or loss of benefits to which you are entitled. Discontinuing your participation in no way affects your relationship with Haigazian University.

- This research study has been reviewed and has received clearance from the Haigazian University ethics committee. If you have any further concerns about your rights as a research participant, please, do not hesitate to contact Dr Hagop Yacoubian using the contacts below.

**What are the risks and benefits of participation?**

- Participation in this study does not involve any physical risk to you beyond the risks of daily life. The questions that will be asked in the interview are related to work experience. Where questions asked might evoke emotional memories, you are free to call off the interview.
- You will receive no direct benefits from participating in this research; however your participation will enrich this research with coping strategies against burnout in school leaders.

**Contact information**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research you may contact:

Lokwang Koryang Casimiro  
MA Candidate, Educational Administration  
Haigazian University  
Tel.: .....

Email: .....

Hagop A. Yacoubian  
Associate Professor and Chairperson  
Faculty of Social & Behavioral Sciences  
Haigazian University  
Tel.: .....  
Email: .....

## APPENDIX II

### Participant consent Form

#### **Coping Strategies against Burnout in School Leaders: A Comparative Study of School Leaders in Lebanon and Uganda**

Please read the following statements and place a check mark in the boxes adjacent to them.

- I have volunteered to participate in this research project conducted for purposes of study. My participation is voluntary and does not involve payment of any kind.
- I agree to participate in this research project conducted for purposes of study. My decision is voluntary and does not involve payment of any kind.
- I know that I can choose to withdraw from participation any time without any penalties or consequences whatsoever. I also hold the right to decline to respond to any question(s) that I may feel uncomfortable with.
- My participation involves an interview of approximately 30 - 45 minutes (or answering a questionnaire). The interview may involve note-taking or audio-recording. I understand that my unwillingness to be audio-recorded implies my withdrawal from participation. (I will be given a transcription of the audio-recording / tape-recording for possible rectification).
- I have been assured that the researcher will maintain my identity securely confidential.  
  
I have been assured that the information from this interview will be used for the purpose of academic study only.
- I have received the assurance that this research study has been duly reviewed and approved by the Haigazian University ethics committee.
- I agree that the data gathered be kept in a secure location under the care of the study investigator for a period of 10 years as per Haigazian University's guidelines.
- I have been assured that I can access my data (if identified) at any time.
- I have read, listened and fully understand the explanation given to me. All my questions have been satisfactorily answered.

I, therefore, choose to voluntarily participate in this research study.

I have received a copy of this consent form co-signed by the researcher.

Participant consent

Investigator

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

### APPENDIX III

#### First Set of Interview Questions

1. Have you ever felt dissatisfaction in your job as a school leader? Would you please describe/explain what created the dissatisfaction? How did you deal with it?
2. Have you ever had a moment in your career, as a school leader, when you felt extremely exhausted? How did you remedy the situation?
3. Have you ever felt that you have very little time to perform too many responsibilities? What proactive strategies do/did you use to deal with the stress associated with your job demands?
4. Did you ever feel that your authority as a school leader was being challenged by parents or teachers? How did you respond/react to that?
5. How do/did you deal with environmental changes associated with your responsibilities as a school leader? (e.g. *influence of technology, demographic changes*).
6. In the exercise of your responsibilities, how is/was your relationship with your superordinates, colleagues, students, parents? What did you do to solve any negative situation?
7. Did you ever feel that you were never given (sufficient) authority and control over your job responsibilities? How did you deal with that?
8. Did you ever feel that you never received enough support and collaboration from your superiors, colleagues, parents? What did you do to resolve the situation?
9. Have you ever felt isolated by your colleagues? Why do you think it was the case? What remedies did you apply to resolve the occurrence?
10. Did you ever feel that your efforts at work were never appreciated or rewarded enough? What was your reaction/response?

11. Was there a moment in your career when you felt physically and emotionally drained?

What steps did you take to address the situation?

12. Did you ever lose interest in your job or even became negative about it? Would you

please share what led to that situations? What did you do to address it?

13. Did you ever feel easily irritable and less sympathetic with your staff, superordinates or

students? Why and how did you resolve the irritability?

14. Did you ever feel frequently/constantly misunderstood by your superordinates, staff or

parents? How did you resolve the situation?

15. Did you ever feel that you were never achieving anything in the exercise of your

responsibilities? What solutions did you apply to the situation?

16. Did you ever experience frustrations in your job? Why and how did you resolve the

frustration?

## APPENDIX IV

### Examples of Second Interview Questions<sup>4</sup>

1. Had you any preparation in school leadership before taking the leadership role?
2. What is your ideal style of leadership: servant leadership, distributed leadership, transactional leadership or transformational leadership?
3. What was your utmost concern as a school leader: outcomes or processes?
4. In your leadership, did you emphasise:
  - a. formal or informal control and linkage?
  - b. Direct or indirect control?
5. What was your ideal style of leadership: servant leadership, distributed leadership, transactional leadership or transformational leadership?
6. How do you keep yourself motivated?
7. Literature on school leadership speaks about principals being buffers for their teachers. What is your take on this, and who should act as a buffer for school principals?
8. What influence does your cultural background at:
  - a. personal level,
  - b. school level, and
  - c. societal levelhave on your leadership qualities?
9. How is your work life linked to your personal life? How do you create a balance given the excessive nature of your workload? Does your community give you enough support in relation to your work?

---

<sup>4</sup> These questions were not addressed to a single individual. Here, I have put them together only as examples of the type of questions I asked in the second interview.

10. What advice do you offer for beginning school leaders?

11.