The Perceptions of Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff about School Climate in a Sample of Private Schools in Beirut

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Abstract
Non-teaching staff constitute around 22% of private schools' staff members in Lebanon. Given the size of this category of staff and the vast responsibilities they hold, it was important to shed a light on them and understand their perceptions as compared to those of teaching staff. This study focused on the perceptions of teaching and non-teaching staff about school climate and tried to understand how these perceptions are influenced by demographic variables (years of employment, gender, age, level of education, and monthly income). 12 private schools in Beirut participated in the study. Quantitative data was collected from 303 teaching staff and 111 non-teaching staff. Interviews were conducted with 32 school leaders. Results showed a significant difference between the two groups about the school climate. Staff demographics showed to impact perceptions differently between the two groups. The findings of this study are most beneficial to school leaders and educational policy makers.

Keywords: School climate, non-teaching staff, engagement, safety, environment.

1- Background of the Study:
Employees are the most important asset in an organization and the key to its performance (Gabčanová, 2011). They want more from their jobs than financial benefit. Permarupan et al. (2013) explain that employees expect recognition and appreciation of their efforts, opportunities for career growth, an atmosphere of collaboration, connectedness, fairness, and a supportive management. They suggest that companies that are able to guarantee a similar working climate will ensure higher productivity and be able to retain valuable staff members.

In the educational field, Cohen et al. (2009) state that there has been interest among researchers in studying school climate since as early as the 1950s. However, over the last few decades, researchers became even more interested in this construct after having realized its impact on students, teachers, and staff. And despite the fact that no consensus has been reached about the definition of school climate and its parameters (Thapa et al., 2013), researchers agree that school climate is a multidimensional construct that incorporates concepts such as physical and emotional safety, interpersonal relationships, physical environment, leadership practices, and others.

School climate is the result of the interactions between students, parents, and staff while learning and working together. The majority of school climate studies, however, focus on exploring the perceptions of either students, or staff, or parents alone. Acknowledging the perceptions of all these groups together is essential to establish a comprehensive understanding about positive school climates and how schools can create them (Capp et al., 2021; Ramsey, 2014; Ramsey et al., 2016; Wang & Degol, 2016), especially that the perceptions of different school community members are not necessarily the same. Positive and negative perceptions about the climate can co-exist in schools. In fact, differences can exist even among the perceptions of the same group (Capp et al., 2020).

Studies on school climate, from the perspective of staff members, usually focus on teaching staff only. Not enough focus has been placed on non-teaching staff despite their increasingly vital roles for the functioning of school systems. The work of non-teaching staff members "has not been considered worth researching" (Howley, 2019, p. 48). This is despite the increase in the number of non-teaching staff members in schools, which increased with the augmented responsibilities and challenges placed on school leadership to demonstrate improved quality and higher accountability.

From special educators to accountants, IT specialists, administrative assistants, librarians, procurement officers, bus drivers, food service personnel, security personnel, maintenance staff, and others; these employees provide support services to students, parents, and other school staff. Some of these services might not be directly related to student learning and performance, but they are crucial to enabling it (Griffith, 2001). Many of these staff members are in close contact with students and their parents on a daily basis. Despite all these facts, the educational administration literature gave limited attention to non-teaching staff and to their roles in the past (Bayat, 2014; Conley et al., 2010; Howley, 2019; Logue, 2014; Maxwell, 2004; Paradis, 2017).

However, the positive effects of non-teaching staff on teaching and learning are becoming more and more acknowledged and verified by research (Brinkley et al., 2015; Howley, 2019; Maxwell, 2004; Ofsted, 2008). The growing roles and numbers of non-teaching staff make it essential to find out more about them through research and to recognize them as a "viable and untapped resource within the educational system" (Barakos- Cartwright, 2012, p. xv).

In Lebanon, research is limited when it comes to school climate in general (Ibrahim, 2019). There are, however, research studies in Lebanon that have addressed constructs related to school climate such as teacher motivation (Mattar, 2010), trust (Ghamrawi, 2011), engagement (Nabhani et al., 2012), burnout (El Helou et al., 2016), equity (Maaliki, 2018), and teacher bullying (Alameddine & Mirza, 2020).

This scarcity in international and national research about non-teaching staff, and the scarcity in national research about school climate, raised the need for this study to find out how the perceptions of non-teaching staff about school climate compare to those of teaching staff.

2- Research Questions and Hypotheses:

This study was guided by the following research questions:

1. Are the perceptions of teaching staff about school climate different from those of non-teaching staff?
2. Do the demographic variables (years of employment at the school, gender, age, highest level of education achieved, and monthly income) affect the perceptions of teaching and non-teaching staff about school climate?

The hypotheses that the study tested were:

H1: There is a no significant difference between the perceptions about the school climate of teaching staff and those of non-teaching staff.

H2: There is a significant relationship between years of employment of teaching and non-teaching staff members and their perceptions about school climate.

H3: There is a significant relationship between the gender of teaching and non-teaching staff members and their perceptions about school climate.

H4: There is a significant relationship between the monthly income of teaching and non-teaching staff members and their perceptions about school climate.

H5: There is a significant relationship between the age of teaching and non-teaching staff members and their perceptions about school climate.

H6: There is a significant relationship between the highest level of education of teaching and non-teaching staff members and their perceptions about school climate.

3- Theoretical Framework:

The theoretical framework of this research study is based on the Bioecological Systems Theory developed by the Russian-American psychologist Urie Bronfenbrenner: This theory proposes that a child's development is affected by different levels of environmental influences starting with the immediate surrounding of family, friends, and school and extending to the culture and values of the community in which the child lives. The individual's genetic, psychological, socioemotional, and personality traits are at the center of the bioecological model. These traits interact together and influence each other. Therefore, in order to properly study a person's development and understand his perceptions, a researcher must look, not only at the person's immediate surrounding, but also at the larger environment in which he/she lives and with which he/she interacts (Bronfenbrenner, 1977). This theory helps understand why people behave differently in a given situation and, accordingly, why staff members working in the same institution might have different perceptions about its climate.

Another theory on which this study is based is the Theory of Human Motivation developed by Abraham Maslow. This theory confirms that individuals have a natural need to experience feelings of security, belonging, acceptance, and self-actualization in their working environment

(Maslow, 1954). According to Maslow, people are motivated by these needs, which he arranged in a hierarchy of five categories. Once the basic needs for food and safety are satisfied, individuals seek to satisfy their social needs for love and belonging, followed by their ego needs for esteem and respect, then by a desire to fulfill one's ambitions, and lastly, a need to experience spirituality. Unsatisfied needs influence the behavior of individuals and act as motivators. Maslow's hierarchy of needs confirms that staff members need to experience feelings of security, belonging, acceptance, and self-actualization in their working environments. The presence or absence of these needs would affect their motivation and accordingly, their perceptions about school climate.

4- **Methodology:**

This research followed a subjectivist (anti- positivist) approach to understanding human behavior as it sought to understand the social world through the eyes of different individuals rather than viewing it as an external reality. This is a descriptive analytical research that followed a Mixed Methods Design in which a combination of quantitative and qualitative data collection took place. Quantitative data collection was done through a survey that addressed both teaching and non-teaching staff using a customized copy of the Education School Climate Survey questionnaire (EDSCLS) originally developed by the U.S. Department of Education. Qualitative data collection was also done through interviews with principals, heads of academic departments, and heads of administrative departments. The combined collection of these two types of data ensured triangulation to validate the findings.

School climate was conceptualized, in this study, into the following domains and subsequent sub-domains:

a- **Engagement:** Engagement involves school connectedness and is composed of three topics or subdomains: cultural and linguistic competence, relationships, and participation.

Cultural and Linguistic Competence: involves the degree to which students and parents from different cultural backgrounds feel welcomed and connected to their school (US Department of Education, 2016).

Relationships: this area tackles the relationships among staff members and the quality of these relationships in terms of trust and support, in addition to social interactions between the school and the parents.

School Participation: is about the opportunities that the school provides to staff and students to participate in school life and take part in decision-making.

b- **Safety:** School safety is defined as protection from emotional and physical harm including bullying and harassment. The safety domain includes five subdomains: emotional safety, physical safety, bullying, substance abuse, and emergency readiness and management.

Emotional Safety: It is about how much staff members feel safe to express emotions and concerns relating to their jobs. In addition to feeling recognized, valued, respected, cared for, and given feedback about their performance with professional development to improve the areas that need strengthening.

Physical Safety: relates to the perception of staff members about their feelings of physical safety in the school. Usually, schools want to secure safety from accidents and injuries, theft, bullying and cyberbullying, intrusion, sexual and racial harassment, violence and aggression, vandalism, drugs, etc.

Bullying and Cyberbullying: According to Pepler and Craig (2014), bullying is defined as a repeated and aggressive behavior that is directed at an individual(s) and causing fear, distress, and/or harm to the bullied person's body, feelings, or reputation; and can create a negative environment when occurring in schools.

c- **Environment:** The environment domain includes five topics: physical environment, instructional environment, physical health, mental health, and discipline:

Physical Environment: includes the physical appearance and functioning of the school buildings, including lighting, air conditioning, ventilation, size of rooms, etc.

Instructional Environment: refers to the quality and availability of materials and resources, and a shared sense of responsibility among staff members.

Discipline: is concerned with the policies and strategies applied by the school to manage student behavior and encourage self-discipline.

This conceptualization is summarized in the following table:

Table 1

Model of School Climate Used in this Study (adapted from EDSCLS)

Domain 1: Engagement	Domain 2: Safety	Domain 3: Environment
Topic 1: Cultural and linguistic competence	Topic 1: Emotional safety	Topic 1: physical environment
Topic 2: Relationships	Topic 2: Physical safety	Topic 2: Instructional environment
Topic 3: School participation	Topic 3: Bullying/ Cyberbullying	Topic 3: Discipline

To test the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, a pilot study was undertaken prior to the actual data collection. Measures were taken to eliminate any threats to validity, such as eliminating any difficult vocabulary, complex sentence structures, unclear test directions, etc. As for reliability, the internal consistency was checked by performing Cronbach Alpha test to the pilot data. The reliability measure was found to be 0.9 indicating an appropriate instrument internal consistency. Pilot interviews were also conducted to refine and rephrase the semi-structured questions. Measures to validate the qualitative data collected also took place throughout data collection and analysis. The researcher resorted to checking transcripts to make sure no mistakes were done during transcribing the information. During the coding process, data was also constantly compared with the codes to make sure there was no shift in the meaning of the codes during the

coding process. Another method that was used to validate the qualitative findings was by practicing reflexivity and clarifying possible bias the researcher brings to the study. The researcher monitored descriptive validity by making sure that quotations from participants were accurately stated.

Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the quantitative data. Descriptive statistics such as frequencies, mean, percentages, standard deviation, significance tests were used to describe the data. For the analysis of qualitative data, the researcher followed Creswell's six steps approach for data analysis in qualitative research.

5- Results and Analysis:

The survey questionnaire was filled by 414 staff members (303 teaching staff and 111 non-teaching staff), and interviews were conducted with 32 school leaders (nine principals, 17 heads of academic departments and six heads of administrative departments) in 12 private schools in Beirut and its suburbs.

The non-teaching staff that participated in this study worked in admissions, accounting, human resources management, information technology, marketing and social media, counseling, health care, speech and psychomotor therapy, student records, laboratories, libraries, procurement, supervision, maintenance, security, bus service, administrative assistance, and others.

5.1. Results of the Survey Addressed to Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff
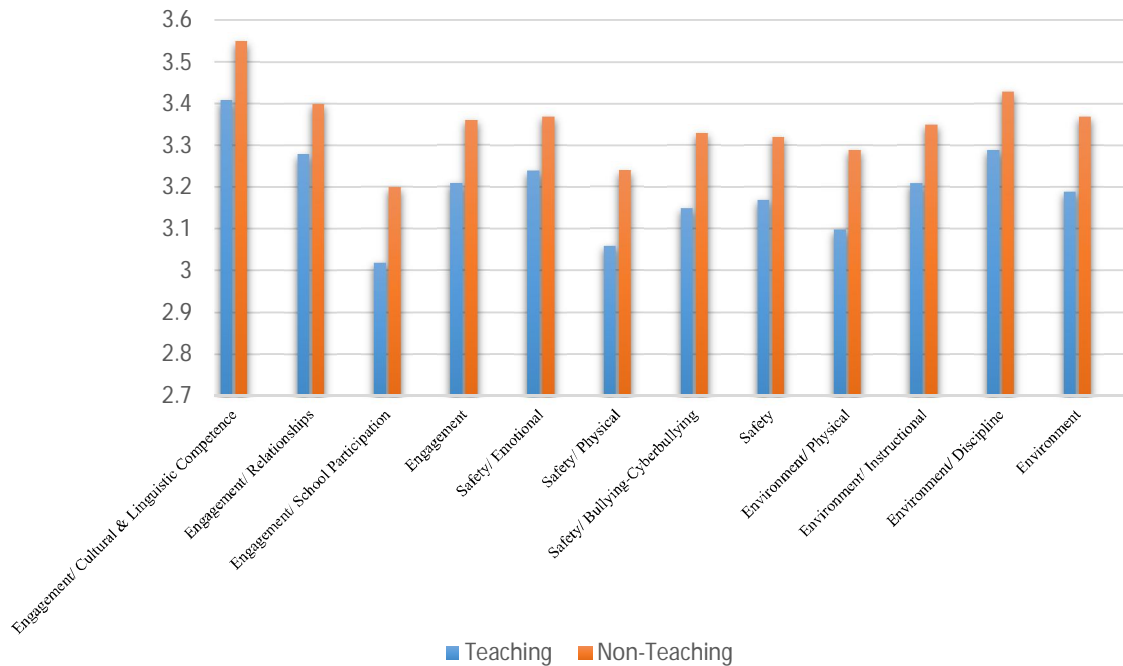### *5.1.1. Research Question One*

Are the perceptions of teaching staff about school climate different from those of non-teaching staff?

Statistical analysis (T-test) was used to investigate the difference between two group averages (teaching vs. non-teaching staff). P-value or probability value ($p < 0.05$) determined the statistical significance of results. Survey results showed that, although the perceptions of teaching staff and non-teaching staff about school climate were both positive, there was a significant difference between the two groups in the three domains of school climate as p values for engagement, safety, and environment were all equal to 0.00. Similarly, p values for all subdomains were less than 0.05 therefore indicating a significant difference between the perceptions of teaching and non-teaching staff at all subdomains levels as well.

Survey results showed that the mean scores for non-teaching staff were higher than those of non-teaching staff for all school climate domains and sub-domains. Figure 1 presents a comparison of the means of teaching and non-teaching staff by school climate domains and subdomains:

Figure 1

Means of Teaching Vs. Non-Teaching Staff by School Climate Domains and Sub-Domains

Results obtained for the first research question conformed with the results of some previous studies, which focused on both teaching and non-teaching staff, and disagreed with others (Curl, 2015; Fairbanks North Star schools' climate survey, 2022; Thacker, 2017). Other research studies tackled either teaching staff or non-teaching staff but did not compare both groups together (Massom, 2021; Paradis, 2014; Silva et al., 2015). All studies, however, seemed to agree that engagement, safety, and environment dimensions influence how school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) perceived school climate. In the case of Lebanon, previous research explored the perceptions of teaching staff about different constructs, such as engagement, relationships, safety, motivation, involvement in decision making, etc. but did not address the perspectives of non-teaching staff members for the researcher to be able to compare results in the Lebanese context.

As for the possible reasons that make non-teaching staff have more positive perceptions than teaching staff about school climate, this could be related, among other factors, to the workload of teachers that they generally perceive as overwhelming and leading to burnout. This justification is confirmed by El Helou et al. (2016) who revealed that work load, school environment, coordination and mentoring, discipline, were among the main reasons that lead to teacher burnout and reduced productivity. The lack of proper induction and unsupportive coordinators were also considered to make things harder on teachers to handle.

5.1.2. Research Question Two

The second research question was about whether the demographic variables (years of employment at the school, gender, age, highest level of education achieved, and monthly income) affect the perceptions of teaching and non-teaching staff about school climate.

The following figure summarizes the results obtained for research question two:

Figure 2

Summary of the Results of Research Question Two

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	Years of Employement		Gender		Monthly Income		Age		Level of Education	
	Teaching	Non-Teaching	Teaching	Non-Teaching	Teaching	Non-Teaching	Teaching	Non-Teaching	Teaching	Non-Teaching
Engagement	✔	✔			✔					
Cultural and Linguistic Competence		✔			✔	✔				
Relationships	✔				✔					
School Participation					✔					
Safety	✔	✔			✔		✔			
Emotional Safety	✔	✔			✔		✔			
Physical Safety		✔	✔		✔		✔			
Bullying/Cyberbullying		✔			✔					
Environment		✔			✔					
Physical Environment					✔					
Instructional Environment					✔					
Discipline		✔			✔					

School Climate

The study results showed that **years of employment** had the following effects on the perceptions of staff about school climate:

For teaching staff, years of employment affected the perceptions about engagement, and specifically about relationships. This means that teaching staff who had been employed for 11 or more years at their schools, felt stronger about their relationships with their colleagues and with parents. In terms of safety, years of employment seemed to positively influence emotional safety specifically, meaning that, as the number of years at their current schools increased, teaching staff felt more appreciated and that they could freely express any concerns they had about their jobs. These results generally agreed with the results of Dixon (2013) and Massom (2021) who concluded that the more the number of years of employment at their current school increased, the more positive a teacher perceived the school climate.

For non-teaching staff, years of employment affected the perceptions about engagement, particularly relating to their perceptions about cultural and linguistic competence; meaning that, non-teaching staff felt that their schools respected their cultural differences and those of their students. Years of employment also influenced the perceptions of non-teaching staff about safety,

and particularly, about emotional safety, meaning that, as the number of years at their current schools increased, non-teaching staff felt more appreciated and that they could freely express any concerns they had about their jobs. Moreover, the more the number of years of employment increased, the more non-teaching staff felt safe from any physical harm or threat. The perceptions about bullying and cyberbullying of non-teaching staff were also influenced by the years of employment. However, results revealed that non-teaching staff members who had been employed for 3 or less years had the most positive perceptions about it, meaning that they scored the highest when asked to confirm that bullying was not a problem at their schools and other questions around it. This could be explained by the results from Bradshaw et al. (2013) which revealed that non-teaching staff could have a lesser ability than teaching staff to identify bullying and that they might not be as likely to witness bullying among students or have students report bullying to them. This situation could change as non-teaching staff spend more time in their schools and become more familiar to the students and more able to understand and identify bullying. The current study also showed that years of employment affected the perceptions about environment of non-teaching staff only. Non-teaching staff members who had been employed for 11 or more years had the most positive perceptions about environment. Moreover, the years of employment seemed to specifically influence non-teaching staff's perceptions about the disciplinary measures that the school follows.

The results of this current study conformed with those of Willingham (1990) who concluded that the number of years of employment was significantly and positively related to the non-teaching staff attitudes and esprit (satisfaction and task performance), meaning that, the longer non-teaching staff stayed in their jobs, the higher their morale became, and the more satisfied they were about their relationships with other staff members and students, and the better was their performance. Another study by Lester et al. (2020) concluded that the number of years of employment by schools did not affect the perceptions of school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) on relationships with their colleagues, students, or parents. These results contradict with those of this current study's in terms of perceptions about relationships for teaching staff. The results of the two studies, however, agree in terms of the perceptions about relationships for non-teaching staff.

The results of this current study generally contradict with the results of the study by Capp et al. (2021) who concluded that staff members (teaching and non-teaching) within the first 3 years of their job showed the highest levels of positive school climate perceptions while staff members with 6–10 years of experience reported the most negative levels of school climate perceptions. Similarly, the study by Capp et al. (2020) that similarly targeted all school staff members including both teaching and non-teaching staff, noted a decline in the perceptions about school climate between the second and 10th year of employment. The researchers related this decline in perceptions about school climate, in the case of teachers, to burnout and attrition (Brunsting et al., 2014; Ingersoll et al., 2014, as cited in Capp et al., 2020). Both studies by Capp et al. (2020) and Capp et al. (2021) recommended that further studies should try to investigate the reasons behind these differences.

The results of this study showed that **gender** did not have any effect on the perceptions about school climate of neither teaching nor non-teaching staff for any of the three domains. At the subdomain level, however, gender seemed to influence the perceptions of teachers about physical safety. Male teachers seemed to feel more secure from physical harm or aggression. Previous

research studies by Vukičević et al. (2019), Smith (2020), and Masoom (2021) concluded that gender did not have a significant impact on perceptions of teachers about school climate. Willingham (1990) concluded that the gender of non-teaching staff is significantly related to their perceptions about school climate. Females in Willingham's study had a more positive perception about the school climate than males in terms of staff attitudes and administrator dedication and enthusiasm. Similarly, Lester et al. (2020) reported that female staff members (both teaching and non-teaching) who participated in their study perceived relationships among staff members and relationships between staff and school community members (students and parents) to be more supportive than males did. Females also considered that their schools provided them with active engagement opportunities, meaning that they involved them in planning and policy development and provided them with the professional development they needed.

      The results of this study showed that **monthly income** affected the perceptions of teaching staff about engagement, safety, and environment domains and all their subdomains. The higher the income level of teaching staff, the more positive their perceptions were about each of the three school climate domains and all their subdomains. On the other hand, monthly income only affected the perceptions of non-teaching staff about school climate at the level of the subdomain cultural and linguistic competence. This means that as their monthly income increased, non-teaching staff felt more positively about the respect for diversity and cultural differences, shown by their schools. The results obtained from a study conducted in Lebanon in 2016 by Education International (EI) Arab Countries office and Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (FES), in which questions were asked about the satisfaction with the working environment in a number of Lebanese schools (mainly public schools), showed that monthly income was one of the reasons why staff members (teaching and non-teaching) were dissatisfied with their working environments. Results revealed that only 12% of the fixed term employees were satisfied with their salaries and contracts. Another study conducted by Ngeny et al. (2017) in Kenya concluded that salary had an important and significant effect on the job satisfaction of non-teaching staff with 71% of the respondents considering that their salaries were neither satisfactory nor reasonable.

      The results of this study showed that **age** affected the perceptions of teaching staff about safety. The older the teaching staff members, the more positive their perceptions became about safety. Age specifically affected the perceptions of teachers about emotional and physical safety; meaning that, older teachers felt safer to express emotions and concerns relating to their jobs. They also felt more recognized, valued, and respected. Older teachers also felt more protected from physical harm or threats. The results of this current study showed that age had no effect on the perceptions of non-teaching staff about school climate. These results contradicted with those concluded by Lester et al. (2020) who reported that younger school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) considered their schools to be more supporting of their engagement, meaning that their schools valued their contributions, treated them equally, and assigned them clear roles and responsibilities. Lester et al. (2020) also reported that younger school staff (both teaching and non-teaching) perceived the relationships of staff members among themselves to be more supportive; and same for staff relations with school community members (students and parents). Gunbayi (2007) linked age to perceptions of teaching staff about school climate. Gunbayi examined the

difference in the levels of the teachers' perceptions about school climate among teachers belonging to different age groups in high schools in Afyon city and in Usak city in West Turkey. Results revealed that there was a significant difference in the school climate perceptions relating to the reward factor (perceptions about the promotion system, positive encouragement by principals and the balance of reward and performance) according to age of the teachers. Older teachers reported more positive perceptions than younger ones in relation to the factor of reward. Gunbayi interpreted this result to be due to the fact that younger teachers have higher expectations in relation to reward than older teachers, who are more realistic. This could cause more stress to younger teachers and accordingly less positive perceptions about the school climate.

In the current study, the **level of education** did not have any effect on the perceptions about school climate of neither teaching nor non-teaching staff. This result is similar to findings by Gunbayi (2007), who found no significant difference in the perceptions about climate among teachers with different education levels. However, Gunbayi reported a general trend among teachers with lower degrees of education (undergraduate or graduate of a two-years college program) who reported lower open school climate than the ones with higher degrees of education (B.A. or B.S. graduates). Gunbayi's interpretation was that teachers with higher degrees are more educated and knowledgeable compared to teachers with lower degrees, which could cause stress to the latter and accordingly affect their perceptions about the school climate. Lester et al. (2020) reported that the level of education affected staff's perception about their schools' supportive engagement practices, meaning that the higher the level of education, the more staff members (both teaching and non-teaching) considered that their schools valued their contributions, treated them equally, and assigned them clear roles and responsibilities.

5.2. Results Obtained from Interviews

The answers to the interview questions were consistent among leaders of the same school meaning that there were no differences between the answers of head of school/ principal, heads of academic departments, or heads of administrative departments.

Comparing across all schools, results were also generally consistent. The school climate was generally described as positive and comfortable. Family atmosphere was considered to be dominant and open communication was the norm between all community members who were respected and listened to. The answers obtained allowed for the identification of the themes (dimensions) that leaders consider as major factors influencing the school climate:

- **Engagement:** The majority of respondents considered relationships among staff members to be positive and friendly. They described the climate as a family-like atmosphere. Team spirit existed among staff members who collaborated with and supported each other.

The relationship with parents was considered to be good and healthy, with strong communication and absence of clashes. They described the policy with parents to be an "open-door policy" and their engagement in school life was valued. The relationship with students was described as generally positive: "We try to speak their language".

Most of the leaders considered that their schools encouraged the participation of all stakeholders. As leaders, they listened to the opinions of staff, parents, and students and included

them in the long-term planning of their schools. In many schools, all stakeholders took part in the strategic planning process that started with writing the vision and the mission statements. Some schools sought stakeholders' feedback through satisfaction surveys. Parents were encouraged to participate in school life. The approach with students was considered to be friendly and understanding. One leader said: "We want them to feel supported and heard".

- **Safety:** The majority of interviewees spoke about issues that secured emotional safety for staff, students, and parents. They shared that the school climate was friendly and family like. Many leaders spoke of an open-door policy with staff, students, and parents. This allowed staff members to feel that they were cared for and could express feelings and job-related concerns freely and safely. And although not all schools provided financial compensation for staff efforts, their contributions and performance were recognized in many different ways. This open-door policy was also followed with parents. Most of the schools mentioned that parents were welcome to call or come to school and share their concerns, which the school leaders would address appropriately. Schools also provided educational, social, and emotional support to students: "We teach them how to express their emotions", one leader said. Some of the school leaders spoke about accommodating and supporting students with special educational needs: "We celebrate differences and build the personality of the students". Another leader considered that the fact that the school was an inclusive one made a difference in the perceptions about school climate of all community. "This gave the school an added value since differences became accepted".

The "engagement" and "safety" themes were the most dominant in the statements shared by the leader about school climate. The "environment" theme, which is one of the domains under which school climate is conceptualized in this study was also evident in the information shared by the interviewees, although not as dominant as the other two themes (engagement and safety). The interviewees spoke about the appropriate physical work setting that the schools provided for its employees, along with the availability of educational resources and the willingness of the school to provide them with all their teaching needs.

6- Conclusion:

Hypothesis one was rejected or disproved. Evidence from the study suggested that there was a significant difference between the perceptions of teaching and non-teaching staff about school climate in all three domains: engagement, safety, and environment.

Hypotheses two, three, four, and five were partially accepted as results confirmed that the number of years of employment, gender, monthly income, and age had different effects on teaching and non-teaching staff and on different domains and sub-domains of school climate.

Hypothesis six was rejected as results suggested that the level of education did not have any effects on the perceptions about school climate of neither teaching nor non-teaching staff.

7- Implications:

This study contributed in filling the gap in the national and international literature about non-teaching staff by shedding a light on a category of school staff that has not been researched enough, hopefully serving as a starting point for further research that will focus on this group in Lebanon.

Findings of this study will guide further research that will look into the notions tackled in more depth and allow for better generalization of the results.

Looking at this category of school staff provided stakeholders and policy makers with answers to questions such as: who are the non-teaching staff members that constitute a significant part of the Lebanese private school communities and what are their concerns? The study results allowed school leaders and educational policy makers to understand possible reasons behind the engagement, motivation, efficiency, effectiveness, and commitment of staff members, or lack of it, therefore providing these leaders with the opportunity to take actions needed as this category of staff influences school operations by supporting or opposing changes proposed by school leaders.

This research has implications not only on the schools that participated in the study but also on other schools interested in improving the school climate at their premises. Future studies can build on the findings of this study to find out more in-depth information about this topic.

8- Recommendations for Future Research:

This study has a few recommendations for future research:

The first recommendation is to include a larger sample size. To be able to generalize their results, future studies should include more schools, and possibly schools from different geographical areas in Lebanon.

Future studies exploring school climate could explore the perceptions of students and parents to compare with the perceptions of the teaching and non-teaching staff. By adding the perceptions of these major community constituents, more depth would be added to the research.

Also, future studies could compare different groups such as private and public schools, or even subgroups of staff (for example special education teachers, counselors, IT support teams, etc.) as results from Capp et al. (2020) suggested that the type of job undertaken could affect the perceptions about school climate. As a matter of fact, it would be beneficial for future studies to explore whether perceptions about school climate differ among sub-groups of non-teaching staff and try to find the reasons behind such possible differences. Future research needs to explore how different jobs might influence staff members' perceptions and understanding of school climate in Lebanese schools.

Future studies should try to use a shorter instrument to secure more participation in this study, or better focus on specific domains of school climate. The instrument should also be translated to the native language of the participants for those staff members who are not fluent in English to ensure proper understanding of the questions and more accuracy in responses.

Also, collecting other types of data could provide useful sources of information that would help triangulate the findings and validate data obtained from self-reported perceptions surveys. Possible examples could be data about turnover rates and absenteeism.

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