2-1-2020

Accountability in school governance in Egypt

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MLA Citation
Baraka, Nadeen. *Accountability in school governance in Egypt*. 2020. American University in Cairo, Master's Thesis. *AUC Knowledge Fountain*.
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The American University in Cairo

School of Global Affairs and Public Policy

Accountability in School Governance in Egypt

A Thesis Submitted to the

Public Policy and Administration Department

Fall 2019

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Public Policy

By

Nadeen Moustafa Baraka

Table of Contents

List of Acronyms

BOT   Board of Trustees

CCIMD   Center for Curriculum and Instructional Development

CPD   Continuous Professional Development

MDGs   Millennium Development Goals

MOETE   Ministry Of Education and Technical Education

NAQAAE   National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation in Education

NCEEE   National Centre for Examinations and Educational Evaluation

NCERD   National Centre for Education Research and Development

OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
PAT	Professional Teachers Academy
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization
WB	World Bank
WDR	World Development Report

Acknowledgement

I thank Allah for giving me the strength and stamina to achieve this milestone.

I would like to deeply thank Dr. Ghada Barsoum for her continuous support and understanding through the process of writing this research. Her feedback and insights were as always guiding and helpful.

I owe a lot to my professors, for always sharing their expertise, and wisdom. And the special Dr. Aisha Saad for her inspiration, and valuable friendship.

And, I am extremely grateful to the distinguished panel, Dr.Laila Elbaradei, and Dr.Khaled Abdelhalim for their recognition of my work, and their valuable input.

I am blessed with friends, and a work team who got my back through this journey, and cheered all the way to the finish line.

Words cannot express my huge gratitude to my family for always believing in me, and pushing me forward.

Last but not least, I am eternally grateful for my husband Ali, and my girls Amina, Malika, and Dania for being there for me through it all.

"The struggle to raise a nation's living standards is fought first and foremost in the classroom. The new jobs in tomorrow's industries will require workers that are literate, numerate, adaptable and trainable–in a word–educated." The Economist.

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By

Nadeen Moustafa Baraka

Supervised by

Dr. Ghada Barsoum

Abstract

The educational system in Egypt is struggling in between challenges and reforms. The low quality of the educational service provided is, ultimately, negatively impacting students' learning. This thesis deliberates how poor accountability in school governance is a major hinder in the improvement process, where the system lacks key practices, and standards, that are essential to enforce accountability measures and attain good governance. This study is a build up of three junctures; the first is the current state of knowledge in literature that discusses the effective accountability on quality of education in schools, and the linkages of enhanced comprehensive school accountability to positive impacts on quality of education. The second is a conceptual framework, based on models of work developed by the World Bank and the OECD, the framework sets the foundation of education as a public service, maps its stakeholders, and defines accountability relationships between them. The third is the analysis of qualitative data collected through in depth interviews with key informants to relate the literature backdrop to the Egyptian context. Semi-structured interviews were used to learn more about the role of key stakeholders identified, their relationships, the regulations governing these relationships, and the accountability lines between them in Egypt. This study finally recommends a comprehensive school accountability approach that is embedded in policy planning from day one, which is based on transparency, trust, and high engagement from stakeholders. It further lists specific recommendations on the four school accountability approaches underlined throughout the study; regulatory, performance, professional, and multiple approaches.

Chapter I: Introduction

Education is the backbone of economic and social advancement of nations (Asaad *&* Barsoum, 2007). It is always linked to the well being of citizens, and to their ability to create an employable force and push the country's economic progress forward (OECD, 2015). Globally, education issues have been on the agenda of reform and developmental projects, focusing on accessibility, equity, and quality of educational services provided. Recently, all educational reform agendas put good governance and school accountability as a corner stone for sustainable educational reform (United Nations, 2015; UNESCO, 2015; UNESCO, 2007).

The educational system in Egypt is struggling between attempts of reform and challenges, manifestations of the inadequate system show in the overall low quality of the educational service provided, and the persistent issue of private tutoring, ultimately, negatively impacting students' learning. Some of these issues are; firstly, the knowledge-based curricula that focus on students memorizing and ignores understanding and developing critical skills. Second, the weak ineffective assessment system that does not assess real learning, and that does not enforce checkpoints designed to measure students' learning, and teachers' performance. Third, the low quality of teachers, and teaching practices that promotes rote learning. Last, the poor governance system, where, it is an actual challenge to pinpoint the one accountable for the Egyptian students' learning (OECD, 2015).

Governance issues in the educational system are evident in a system .When the focus is on educational governance, the main attention is to the aspects of voice and accountability,

government effectiveness, and control corruption (Lewis & Pettersson , 2009), where Egypt, in 2017, ranks the 13th percentile in Voice and Accountability dimension, the 29th percentile in the government effectiveness dimension, and the 34th percentile on the control corruption dimension. Moreover, none of these ranks has shown significant improvement in the last decade. These low ranks indicate major governance issues threatening the educational system in Egypt.

Meanwhile, issues stemming from ineffective accountability mechanisms in the Egyptian educational System are rising. Examples include the high rates of teachers' absenteeism, ghost, teachers, and ineffective classroom instruction time (World Bank, 2018). Moreover, World Bank reports 60% of Egyptian students in the eighth grade are asked to memorize lessons, and do not get sufficient time of real instruction for understanding (World bank, 2019). Rote learning techniques are still extensively used in classrooms in Egyptian schools, reflecting serious issues with teaching quality, and school performance.

In 2002, the World Bank country report urged Egypt to steer attention to root causes of educational reform. It pinpoints crucial areas of investment; such as, better selection of new teachers coming into the system, professional development and support for teachers in the system, and raising efficiency of managing the schools and the educational system as a whole. The report warned of the serious implications of the low skilled, unqualified graduates of the fragile educational system, who will struggle in the future competitive global market (World Bank, 2002).

Today, almost two decades later, Egypt shows progress in the rates of students' enrollment in schools (UNESCO, 2017). However, many other issues still persist in terms of quality and equity in quality, where Egyptian students show lower learning outcomes as a result of low quality teaching, and rote learning (World bank, 2019). Some investment was directed to strategic planning and changes in laws and regulations, yet, deficiency in tracking and enforcement of these initiatives hinders real progress. Not to mention, that most these initiatives were abrupt and not complete.

Currently, Egypt is embarking on a major reform in an attempt to raise the quality of the educational service provided to Egyptian students, focusing on better learning in classrooms. It is more important than ever to discuss issues of good governance and school accountability mechanisms methodically to guarantee a more sustainable policy reform, where effective accountability mechanisms are embedded into policy reform. Thus, this thesis deliberates how poor governance and poor school accountability are the root causes of the low quality educational service provision in Egypt. It links many of the failures of the current system, as well as the ineffective reform attempts through the years, to these root causes.

The value of this study is to form an understanding of the current systems and arrangements in place that are set up to achieve good governance and accountability in the education system in Egypt. Trying to understand the current laws and regulations in place for school governance, the institutional capacity, and the approaches used to school accountability, it also investigates the relationships between the stakeholders in the educational ecosystem, and

how do they interact to define accountable parties, obtain relevant information, and act upon laws and regulations to set consequences of affirmations or sanctions.

Research Questions

This study attempts to answer the following questions and to inspire change for future enhanced school accountability for better quality education.

How can improved good governance practices and school accountability help Egyptian schools improve the quality of educational service provided?

1. What is good governance and accountability in education?
2. How does good governance in education and school accountability work in practice?
3. What is the current status, and the challenges in the Egyptian context that hinder effective school accountability?
4. What are the key changes and reforms needed to enhance the school accountability in the Egyptian educational system?
5. How can a comprehensive approach to school accountability boost education quality?

Scope of this research

Good governance is a vast definition that encompasses many directions of thought. In my work here, I focus on good governance and educational issues in pre-university education in

Egypt. The Ministry of Education and Technical Education (MOETE) is now responsible for technical and vocational education as well, still, this study does not discuss its specific governance and accountability issues. It is also important to clarify that this study is limited to discussing public schools under the authority of the MOETE, not including private schools, or Azhari schools, or experimental schools. These schools have other arrangements for management and a different relationship with MOETE than the ones discussed here.

This research studies the accountability measure in school governance, and how it can be a lever for educational quality improvement. Issues relating to efficiency and equity, are mentioned, but are not discussed in depth in this research. The work here assumes the school as a focal point, concentrating on the key directions and mechanisms of school accountability in terms of relations with the different stakeholders vertically and horizontally, and their impact on quality of the educational service provided. I chose the school as it is where the service is provided, and most of the interactions between main stakeholders occur.

Thesis layout

This study consists of six chapters, that are divided as follows

Chapter One introduces the topic, the context, and the research questions guiding the study.

Chapter Two explores the local and international backdrop of the educational ecosystem, highlighting new trends in approaching educational reform and policy making.

Chapter Three is the literature review section, dedicated to exploring the current body of knowledge available about good governance in education, and school accountability. Delving further in the different approaches to achieving school accountability according to scholars, and the considerations of school accountability in practice.

Chapter Four is the conceptual framework that is built on the understandings concluded from the readings. Where I specify the stakeholders in the educational service provision, and their relationships according to a conceptualization of school accountability.

Chapter Five describes the research methodology used in this study.

Chapter Six is an analysis of the data collected, where key findings are underlined, and linkages to the literature guiding this study are emphasized.

Chapter Seven is dedicated to discussions and conclusions that are drawn from the discourse of this study. It, also, discusses recommendations deducted by the author.

Chapter II: Background

1. Education in Egypt

Education is a constitutional right in Egypt. According to the Egyptian constitution, 2014 article 19,

> "Every citizen has the right to education. The goals of education are to build the Egyptian Character, preserve the national identity, root the scientific method of thinking, develop talents and promote innovation, establish cultural and spiritual values, and found the concepts of citizenship, tolerance and non-discrimination. The State shall observe the goals of education in the educational curricula and methods, and provide education in accordance with international quality standards." (Egypt, 2014).

The Egyptian constitution addresses accessibility, equity, and quality of education to Egyptians. It promises an education that is of international quality to all Egyptians. The article also aligns the ultimate goal of education, and specifies all aspects of growth it aspires for, for the Egyptian student.

The Egyptian child is granted the right to free education by the constitution. The structure comprises three pre-university stages, and higher education (which is managed by the Ministry of Higher Education). Pre-primary education (early childhood education before the age of 6 years old) is not a part of the official educational system. Starting the age of 6, Egyptian children

must be enrolled in schools. The basic education consists of both the 6 years of primary education (ibtedai), and 3 years of the preparatory education (I'dadi). The last 3 secondary years, students are enrolled in the general secondary certificate (thanawya a'mma), or technical and vocational schools, depending on their scores of the third preparatory final exams (World Bank, 2002).

Today, around 22 million students are enrolled in the different stages of the pre-university education system in Egypt (MOETE, 2018), the largest student population in basic education in the Middle East and Africa region. Where the larger number of students, and teachers is in the basic education phase (from Grade 1 to Grade 9). Latest numbers according to MOETE show a student body of 17.5 million students in these grades, and 1 million teachers and administrators (MOETE, 2018).

1.1: The Structure of the Education System

The state observes goals of education as defined by the constitution, the curricula, methods, and other tasks for educational services provision, through the central authority of the Egyptian Ministry of Education and Technical Education MOETE. The MOETE is central located in the capital, Cairo. It manages 27 governorate level authorities (muddiriyas). Under each governorate authority there is a number of districts (idara), each is responsible for the supervision of a number of schools, where these different layers manage their roles and relationships as follows:

Central Level MOETE	• In the Capital Cairo.
Governorate Level (Mudereyia) 27	• One in each governorate. • Governor acts as Minister.
District Level (Idara)	• According to geographical distribution. • Each district is responsible for overviewing a number of schools.
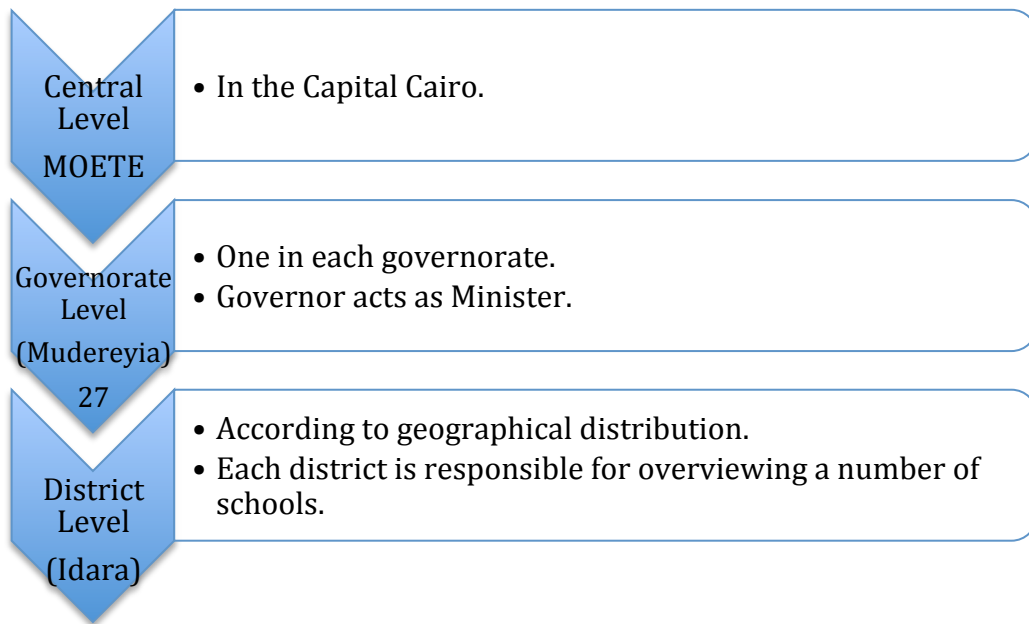
The Ministry of Education and Technical Education:

As the central authority MOETE is responsible for policy planning, implementation, and evaluation, followed by strategic planning and monitoring tasks. It is also responsible for designing and planning of curricula. Lastly, it manages financial and human resources, sets development plans and manages accordingly. It bases much of its information needed for evaluating and changing plans from reports and analysis coming from the governorates (muddiriyas) (OECD, 2015).

The governorate authority (Directorate or muddiriya):

According to the decentralized structure, the governorate educational authority acts as the MOETE on the governorate level. It performs monitoring, and evaluating of educational services provided in its districts. Also, managing the available financial and human resources on the

governorate level, and manage teachers' training programs. The muddiriyas submit end of year reports, providing information about status of the educational outcomes, and detailing the educational developments (OECD, 2015).

The district authority (Department or idara):

The district authority monitors the technical performance of the schools within its authority. Educational supervisors of the different subjects are hired at the district level, each responsible for monitoring and evaluating of a number of teaches in the different schools in the designated district. . This technical supervision includes ensuring alignment with the curriculum, and reports on classroom instruction and methods of teaching used. End of year reports are written, and cascaded up from the district level to the governorate authority to help planning and evaluating process at the governorate level.

There are three main centers that support the MOETE. Firstly, the Center for Curriculum and Instructional Development, which is responsible for designing and developing curricula. Secondly, the National Centre for Education Research and Development (NCERD), which supports the MOETE with research and findings for evaluating and planning of educational policies. Lastly, the National Centre for Examinations and Educational Evaluation (NCEEE), managing national assessments and examinations (OECD, 2015).

Other institutions support the MOETE in its governing roles; they were originally established as independent governing entities;

Professional Teachers Academy (PAT)

The Academy was established according to the law 155 for the year 2007, as an independent body that is responsible for teachers' continuous professional development, and maintaining a fair, credible system for the Egyptian educators career paths. The academy would manage professional standards compliance as part of the promotional criteria along with the required years in the system.

National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAEE).

This authority was established according to law number 82 for the year 2006, and its executive bylaws were passed in 2007 (Establishment law of the national authority for quality assurance and accreditation of education (NAQAAE)). NAQAAE is an independent institution authorized to evaluate schools of all types according to international quality standards that were designed and approved by the local institutions. However, the NAQAAE accreditation and quality assurance process remains optional and not compulsory by law.

2. Education on the global development agenda

This section explores the shifting in the perception of educational reform by tracking changing long-term strategies of international organizations. Thus, the first section here discusses the change that occurred in benchmarking educational results between the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The second section highlights one significant move in educational policy, moving to decentralized arrangements. The discussion takes into consideration the reasons for this new approach, the

following changes in governance and accountability arrangements between schools and educational authorities, and the impacts on the quality of the educational service provided.

2.1: A new long-term strategy in place

If we compare the education reform focus in the MDGs by the United Nations Organizations and the new focus in the SDGs, we find a change in the perspective from efforts to mainstream basic education to a new vision of sustainable development in education. The MDGs were leading development work to help nations reach a better status in the new millennium, with implementation phase between years 1990 and 2000. The goal for education was "to achieve universal primary education", that "children everywhere, boys and girls alike, complete full course of primary schooling". The goal stresses the importance of literacy and numeracy for citizens to be able to lead productive lives into adulthood, while drawing attention to gender equality (United Nations, 2015). In the UNESCO report for Education For All, the strategy stemming from the UNMDGs at the time for education, the approach was based on "a human rights based" approach. This movement was lead by UNESCO in partnership with other Un organizations, and the World Bank after. The mission was to ensure that the education is available and accessible to all children despite their economic, social, ethnic, and religious backgrounds, or their gender. Education quality issues emerged, but clear focus was to overcome issues of accessibility and equity (UNESCO, 2007).

A new framework was developed for educational goals from 2015 to 2030 according to the Sustainable Development Goals. Goal 4 in SDG is to "ensure inclusive and equitable quality

education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all" (UNESCO, 2015). Clear shift in strategy to approach educational reform has developed, from previous focus on the service provision and its availability in MDGs to a more policy reform approach, while access and equity are still on the agenda, new terms such as "governance and accountability" become repeated as mechanisms to implementation to ensure quality education. While education remains a right for all, the new framework for education tackles more the issues of quality and equity in quality. It also no more focuses only on literacy and numeracy, but extends to include "subject knowledge, cognitive, and non-cognitive skills" as part of defining" quality education" (ibid).

And finally, in recent years a new agenda of "learning" and not just "education is evolving. The sharp increase in students' enrollments in schools in the last two decades though was intended for and targeted by International organizations under slogan of "Education For All". The unprepared system, and especially in developing and underdeveloped countries, are challenged. One main aspect that was lost is true "Learning". The World Development Report 2018 is leading action to bring it back by dedicating the report to uncover issues obstructing learning, their reasons, and new ways to remove them and progress (World Bank, 2018).

2.2: From centralized to decentralized educational systems

The state is responsible for providing free, quality pre-university education to all children (United Nations, 2015). The classic model is for a central government that is responsible for the knowledge, and curricula delivered to students. However, in recent years new ideas of decentralized schools have grown. Decentralization in education means, "devolution of governance functions to levels of government that are below the national level" (Crouch & Winkler , 2008, p.9), where a medium institution mediates the management of management

issues that are not related to education. They stem their authority form the national level administration as their agent in specific geographical areas.

States would pursue agenda of decentralization to help with issues regarding "quality, and equity in quality" (Crouch & Winkler , 2008, p.60), aiming to increase efficiency and community participation, and encourage new forms of provision. Thus, what is originally a pure political agenda has its impacts that should be considered on students learning. These decentralized schools are more autonomous and independent have proven to be more efficient in terms of governance and quality of service delivered. Where school autonomy here means the "devolution of governance, finance, and management down to the school level" (Crouch & Winkler , 2008, p.9). Where we expect the school principal to be in charge of decisions regarding financial resource allocations, and other administrative and operational decisions (Crouch & Winkler , 2008).

Decentralization is designed to encourage competition in service provision, and balance monitoring and accountability mechanisms to achieve better quality for citizens. In education, decentralization is looked at as one key policy reform to improve quality of learning, based on the assumption that autonomy will help efficient use of resources, and awareness of the context would allow better decision-making. School management, and the local community exercise this autonomy. It is the capacity of this partnership that should then allow better education results, when supported by the proper institutional framework to govern and guide its activities (Bardhan, 2002).

Chapter III: Literature Review

This literature review explores the state of knowledge on the positive impact of good governance, and effective accountability on quality of education in schools. Thus, this literature is divided to three main sections, the first, links scholars' work on good governance and accountability notions to that of their implementation on the educational service provision. The second section identifies common approaches to school accountability, and their impact on educational quality in different countries. The third deliberates on cross cutting themes of essential foundations for the discussion of good governance and school accountability.

Section 1: Good governance and accountability in education

Kaufmann, Kraay, and Mastruzzi (2009) define good governance as the "traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised for the common good". They break down good governance into six indicators; voice and accountability, political stability, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, and control of corruption (Kaufmann, Kraay , & Mastruzzi , 2009). These indicators help states determine their political, and economic governance, and are usually used to compare advancements of states against their improvement in these indicators. Egypt ranks on the lowest 30th percentile in all six indicators (World Bank).

When the focus is on educational governance, the main attention is to the aspects of voice and accountability, government effectiveness, and control corruption (Lewis & Pettersson , 2009). Where Egypt, in 2017, ranks the 13th percentile in Voice and Accountability dimension,

the 29th percentile in the government effectiveness dimension, and the 34th percentile on the control corruption dimension.

States are keen to enhance good governance practices in education to avoid negative impacts of poor governance on students learning and quality of education in schools. Poor governance issues mostly show in the mismanagement, and corrupt management of financial resources, and human resources. Although, the manipulations of school budgets, and budget leakages are rarely detected. They greatly impact available learning resources at the school, such as books, instructional material, and funds for activities (Crouch & Winkler , 2008). On a central level, some of the issues of poor governance show in teachers' selection that is sometimes manipulated through bribery and connections, thus, impacting teachers' quality and commitment to their jobs (Hallak & Poisson , 2006). Results of poor management and lack of governance structure, especially in developing countries, are seen in the high rates of teachers' absenteeism, reaching 50% in some African countries according to the WDR 18. The report also describes another version of low quality instruction in classroom, where large numbers of teachers perceive low efforts in classrooms acceptable (World Bank, 2018).

Zooming in on school accountability as a corner stone of good governance. Ackerman (2005) defines accountability as "a pro-active process by which public officials inform about and justify their plans of action, their behavior and results, and are sanctioned accordingly." (Ackerman, 2005, p.6). Similarly, Hooge et al (2012), define accountability as a process by which actors provide reasons for their actions against the backdrop of possible negative or positive consequences. He proceeds to rationalize the steps of the "accountability process", where actions by officials are questioned, debated, and are applicable to appropriate consequences or sanctions (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012). While, later definitions

perceive accountability as "the process through which decisions and actions are being called to account by an external authority to demand information and explanations for the decisions made, and if needed, impose sanctions to the responsible individuals or institutions" (Mechkova, Lührmann , & Lindberg , 2017, p.6).

The quick review of some understandings of accountability in existing literature shows an agreement that the elements of effective accountability mechanisms are an authority to answer to, information on performance and actions, and consequences; affirmations or sanctions (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008). To further clarify school accountability is to "act in compliance of rules and regulations of school governance, report to those with oversight authority, and link rewards and sanctions to expected results" (Demas & Arcia, 2015, p.3). Noting the complexity of accountability relationships in the provision of public services, such as education. There are greater concerns about implementation of the understanding of accountability as only questioning and sanctions is sometimes not sufficient to achieve results desired (OECD, 2014).

The issue of the quality of the services provided to poor people has been discussed in the international community, and in 2004, the World Development Report (WDR) of 2004 launched a new understanding of accountability for service provision. The report introduced the "short route to accountability" for the first time, where the citizen is perceived as a client who has "client power" directly over his service provider. Unlike "long route" of accountability, where the citizen's only power over his service provider has to first go through policy makers, who will in turn influence providers' actions (World Bank, 2004). This new approach inspired a

conversation shift to a more holistic approach to accountability in service provision that includes the service beneficiaries as an authority to be answered to as well as government entities.

Today, most international organizations and governments perceive an effective accountability system in education as one that begins at the government as the "primary bearer of the right of education", yet includes all stakeholders; parents, teachers, students, civil society, and media. The vision, plan and policy are set at government level, but should be open to consultation by the people. The system is reinforced by legal and regulatory routes to accountability, as well as the "checks and balances" between government institutions, where transparency and information sharing is key to the successful flow of accountability mechanisms (UNESCO, 2017).

Section 2: Approaches to School accountability

Levin (1974) explains how there are a four intersecting pathways to accountability in education, where accountability can be perceived as performance reporting, a technical process, a political process, and an institutional process (Levin, 1974). The performance reporting in Levin's work refers to reports on students' test scores, and the reporting on their results as an outcome of the educational process. The technical process is concerned with the inputs of the educational process, mainly the teachers and their certifications and skills. Here, the author refers to the political process as the consensus on the educational objectives. Lastly, the institutional process is defined by the author as making institution (the school) accountable to the community as a whole, and not only the goals of the political directions of the state (Levin, 1974).

Most of the literature identifies the accountability in education from the perception of abiding to laws and regulations in place. The emphasis is on fulfilling the tasks and roles mandated by the country's laws and regulations, ultimately, achieving accountability in education through following the policy makers' policies and plans (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016). Strong regulations that are aligned with the state's vision and needs for education are key to guide the outcomes to the end indented by policy makers. Regulations come from the constitution's interpretations, to provide specific guidelines detailed in regulations and by laws. At the same time, if policy changes, or new interventions are introduced, the regulations should be the first priority to align (UNESCO, 2017). Consistent legal and regulatory frameworks are critical to maintain good governance and proper managerial systems in education. Moreover, in this specific ecosystem, "professional and ethical codes of practice" should be carefully developed for educators, who are the first liners providing the educational service to students (Hallak & Poisson , 2006).

Other scholars have a more singular approach to accountability in education. Ladd (2007) refers school accountability as "systems that use measures of students outcomes – primarily student achievement as measured by test scores – to hold schools accountable for improving the performance of their students" (Ladd, 2007, p.2). In his assessment, test scores are the best fit indicator to hold educators. He expects educators to act as agents of the educational policy set by policy makers, and be accountable for their performance in an efficient manner. (Ladd, 2007). This is a much-used strategy in many countries, to assess educational outcomes, monitor school performance, and consequently result in penalties and rewards for teachers and the school. However, issues arise from this approach and pose serious concerns. First, in many developed countries where such policies exist, teachers are dissatisfied with how their work is being

assessed. Teachers Unions object to such practices in some countries, they see it as an unfair evaluation to their profession. More importantly, jeopardizing the quality of teaching when test scores drive the process, and evident negative impacts show. This is what is called "teaching to the test", where assessments pose stress on the teaching process to dilute its aims to teach for the desired test scores, or even in some cases encourage cheating (Rosenkvist, 2010). Schools and teachers would do that in order to avoid sanctions, and penalties for the school and the teacher, and consequently risk the actual core of students learning.

The No Child Left Behind policy in the United States of America, launched in 2001, is a well known example of a school accountability mechanism that is basically built on performance assessment. The results of students' assessment are and measurement against standards for determining school rankings, and judgment for specific consequences is applied to schools and teachers. The consequences vary from support, reward, penalties, or sanctions according to the results. The unintended consequences on students' equity to quality education have been a rising concern to policy makers, where noticeable disparities in minority black communities have been affected by such policies. Schools that are already suffering of poor quality education are the schools where most students preform poorly on tests, thus getting penalized by lower school budgets, leading to deterioration in educational quality in such schools (Hanushek & Raymond , 2005). Moreover, the actual effectiveness of holding teachers accountable for their performance by measuring students' results in standardized exams is debatable. Some accuse school performance accountability approaches in education to be "de-skilling teachers" (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008).

The above discussions highlight the negative implications, explored in current literature, of the top down vertical accountability approaches; such as slow responsiveness, low quality of

services provided, and lower professional standards of educational personnel in schools. This realization has pushed the international community and policy makers to explore new means for accountability. Finding that more horizontal forms of accountability (further examined in below discussions) can manage to balance the adverse impacts of the vertical approaches (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008; Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012; Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.) , 2016). Where horizontal accountability refers to he non-hierarchial approaches to accountability that do not depend on top down monitoring and audit (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012).

One form of horizontal accountability in education is "professional school accountability" (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012; Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.) , 2016). Today, the teaching profession is transformed from a noble, appreciated profession to a new attitude towards the teacher being more of an instruction tool with the duty of delivering pre-set curricula to students (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008). This limitation of the teacher's imagination and space threatens the real learning happening in the classroom. Teachers with no space to be creative find no means but traditional obsolete instructional methods that encourage rote learning, and ultimately limit the students' learning experiences and growth (World Bank, 2018). This horizontal approach to accountability aims to bring back professional standards to the teaching profession, and stress on the professional support provided to teachers (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012).

In recent years, the notion of social accountability, another approach of horizontal accountability, has gained popularity. It was previously mentioned by Levin's (1974) progressive thought of accountability as "political and institutional" processes of accountability (Levin, 1974). Where he contested how the common objective of education had to come from both policy at the top and the people at the school community. To further understand origins of social

accountability, I look also at Heirchman (1970), where one foundation of political economy discussed is the options of "voice" and "exit". "Voice" refers to ability of the people to use their voice through political process to object on issues of concern. On the contrary, "exit" refers to the marketization idea, where people use their ability to exercise "choice" and leave the service provider to another (Heirchman, 1970). While the education service is provided by the state, and in cases where there is no option of choice between providers, and thus no option to "exit". On the other hand, critique of long, sometimes inefficient, mechanisms of elections that do not allow "voice" of people to be heard. There is a vacuum that we can, for now, fit the short route of accountability in when contesting other means of accountability by the people in terms of educational service provision (World Bank, 2004).

The concept has evolved, and started to form an accountability movement "as a form of alternative political control, using informal tools to activate institutional tools" (Mechkova, Lührmann , & Lindberg , 2017, p.8). This form of accountability depends on actions taken by citizens, civil society organizations, and independent media. These actions are informal ways of self-expression; such as demonstrations, public interest law suits, articles in the media. And the main objective is to voice concerns and push on formal institutions responsible for overviewing and monitoring services to act on matters of concern (Mechkova, Lührmann , & Lindberg , 2017). This approach is especially powerful in countries "where governments are weak, or not responsive" (Fox, 2015).

In education, public involvement is a lever to fighting corruption, and increases sense of competition between schools allowing for a different approach in educational service provision to the citizens. Means to achieve public participation is sometimes not publicized or vague. Using the different media outlets to inform parents and other members of the community of the

available channels to be active members in school monitoring, eventually enhancing community participation (Hallak & Poisson , 2006). On the other hand, many countries are realizing the added value of community consultation and engagement early on in the decision-making process, through feedback cycles and discussions (World Bank, 2004). Many parents' participation models are established as an accountability mechanism accompanying decentralization agendas, where governments are interested in assessing the output (the students' learning). The government shares the accountability assessment with parents in an organized legitimate arrangement such as local school boards, where the board is usually comprised of parents, teachers, and school principal (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016).

Section 3: Operationalization and achieving accountability in practice

Latest reports by most prominent international organization give accountability in education high priority when discussing future of educational reform, discoursing different country experiences, trying to highlight lessons learned and build best practices. (World Bank, 2018; Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.) , 2016; UNESCO, 2017). From these reports and other literature I focus in this section on highlighting common areas that establish successful accountability mechanisms. Here I refer to transperancy,trust, autonomy and capacity building.

From the definitions and discussions about good governance and accountability in education, one underlying aspect forms a foundation for success, which is transparency and use of information. Correct and authentic information is key to make well-informed decisions regarding educational planning and management regarding distribution of resources (Crouch & Winkler , 2008). School evaluation and students assessment are direct feedback on the quality of learning in the classroom; it is the closest authentic measure available to inform decision-

making. Results of these assessments when compared to international, or national benchmarks should indicate areas in need for improvement. Consequently, resulting in changes in methods of instruction, teacher training (Arcia, Macdonald , Patrinos , & Port, 2011). Information is meant to create reliable standards and benchmarks that can effectively guide evaluating performance in different areas of educational governance. Measuring against these indicators and benchmarks is where issues are determined, and gaps are identified. Questioning these issues and gaps is "Real accountability" (Lewis & Pettersson , 2009).

Transparency is also essential in the social accountability approach. Multiple laws ensure and encourage sharing of information, and puts transparency forward. However, citizens' right to access to important information regarding educational performance, and use of resources remains limited (Hallak & Poisson , 2006). "Informing stakeholders" is an important stage in the accountability process, where informed stakeholders build understandings for action. These stakeholders can be on the central level, where they consider penalties or sanctions accordingly (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008). Or, they can members of the community who jointly plan remedial actions and progress plans with the school (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012).

. Based on data from Austria, OECD showcases impact of institutional capacity and reliable information about teachers' performance, on well-informed policies. It further underlines importance of local capacity building that is "aligned with the system vision". Concluding that local capacity building should be driven by country's objectives, based on authentic data, and linked to educational research (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016). Strong managerial calibers directly contribute to better use of human and financial resources. We should train these managerial calibers and develop their skills in areas of using information, mechanisms to detect and deal with fraud, and manage people in their institutions (Hallak & Poisson , 2006)

But, we also need to think about capacity building for other stakeholders outside the school sphere (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012). Especially to unfamiliar parents, who are not informed or oriented on what information to seek and how should this information be interpreted to apprise quality of teachers, and thus quality if education. Evidently, many research have shown parents quite happy about their children's education, while results from standardized tests and other data showed the opposite (Hallak & Poisson , 2006).

Another founding assumption is that of "Trust". According to OECD "Trust is essential to good governance in education", as it impacts ownership, implementation, and collaborations for policy reform (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016). The absence of trust hinders innovation and risk taking, which are key components to effective implementation of policies and achieving change (Cerna, 2014). In a low-trusting environment, parallel informal networks grow, where individuals are "uncertain" about the formal existing one. One cause of this dilemma comes from human basic need to protect one's self from "punishment and blame". When a teacher fails to function in the formal system according to its existing regulations, the system, in many cases, does not offer any options but punishment (World Bank, 2018). On the contrary, in countries with strong education institutions, "trust" can become the main accountability element (Demas & Arcia, 2015).

The World Development Report (WDR) in 2007 stresses that "Accountability and autonomy are twins", especially when social accountability mechanisms are scoped into the discussion (World Bank, 2004). The classic school autonomy refers to freedom of principal to take financial and operational decisions at the school that impact school performance (Arcia, Macdonald , Patrinos , & Port, 2011). The notion has evolved in recent years to encompass

teachers as well, where teacher autonomy it justifies the link between the lack of autonomy and low students' learning. Where non-autonomous systems hinder the creative process needed for effective classroom instruction, and thus effective students' learning, as non-autonomous teachers cannot take risks or be creative (World Bank, 2018; UNESCO, 2017)

Conclusion

This section discussed the literature on good governance and school accountability, its approaches, mechanisms of work, and consideration for success. It is evident from the literature that school accountability is a complex concept. It encompasses both classical approaches of vertical accountability, where the school is accountable to the central institution, which is accountable to policy makers, who in turn are accountable for the educational service delivered to people. But also comprises more modern approaches that discuss social (or diagonal) accountability (Mechkova, Lührmann , & Lindberg , 2017; Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012).

However, despite the accountability type or approach, all accountability forms depend on a process. That begins with identifying stakeholders, "who is accountable for what". Then proceeds to "informing stakeholders". Finally, ends with "judgment, may lead to affirmation or sanctions" (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008).

I conclude this chapter with an understanding that in governing such a complex, multilayered system, there is no one approach to follow, but rather each state must build its accountability for education on the foundations of its political directions, institutional

arrangements, strategic plans, strength of its information systems, capacity of management, readiness for partnerships with other stakeholders (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016).

Chapter IV: Conceptual framework

This study attempts to understand accountability in school governance in Egypt. It explores the current accountability mechanisms in place, their success, and the challenges that hinder their progress to effective governance mechanisms.

Mapping stakeholders, and identifying accountability relationships

I choose to use the client model that was first introduced by the WDR in 2004. This model helps map stakeholders according to a new perception of citizens receiving a service provided by the government as clients to the government. Further, the model sets the foundation for the long and short routes to accountability in literature.

The government is responsible for the provision of key services to the people like health and educational services, however, there is a struggle to hold officials responsible for the quality of the services delivered. Poor people would suffer from low quality, and receive bad services, but rarely that someone is held accountable. In 2004, World Development Report initiated a new approach to accountability, aiming to find new ways to hold people in the governmental institutions responsible for service provision, and accountable for their actions and performance.
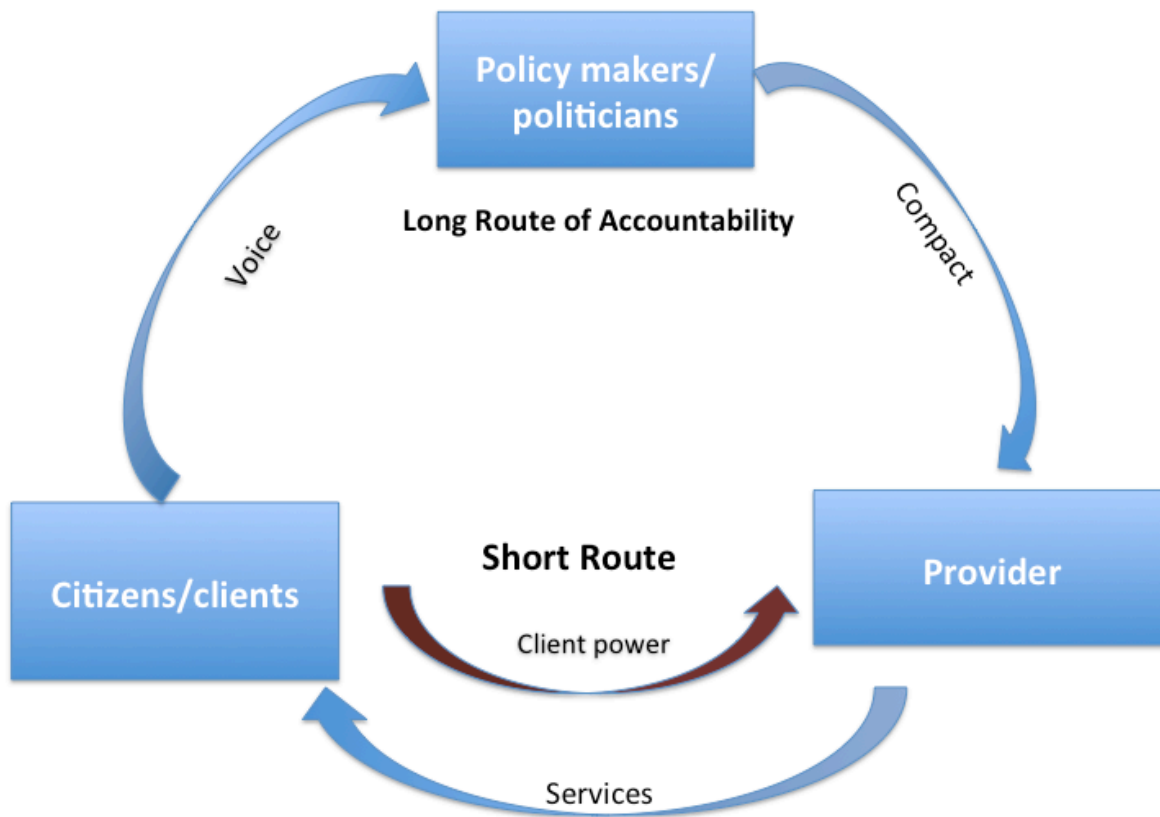
From the World Development Report (2004).

The report recognizes challenges with the political process's success in reflecting on better service provision for poor people. It is not easy to voice people's issues through the bureaucratic system to politicians. And, when it comes to the democratic process instrument, the political agenda for improving service provision of a candidate or a party does not take priority when it comes to voting in many cases. Other variables may be considered when it comes to voting, such as ethnic background, and religious affiliations. Thus, the accountability mechanisms remain ineffective, and the quality of public services provided remains low.

Accordingly, WDR 04 offers an alternative "short route" that aims to allow people's "voices" to impact the quality of the service they receive. The approach, first recognizes the separation between politicians and service providers, and links providers directly to service users.

The new framework (illustrated above from the WDR04) maps the stakeholders in the service provision transaction. Identifying the elected policy makers and politicians in a different position than the governmental front line service providers, who are in he direct contact with the citizen. And the citizen here is referred to as the client. The accountability here has two paths; one through the democratic process of voice and traditional citizen-state relation ship; "the long route", and the other is the "short route accountability" guided by the idea of "client power" (World Bank, 2004).

Conceptualization of accountability in education

While there are many definitions and approaches to school accountability discussed in the literature review section, the one that guides this study is Hooge et al (2012) as he defines accountability as

"A process by which actors provide reasons for their actions against the backdrop of possible negative or positive consequences." (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012, p.26).

He proceeds to highlight four distinct school accountability approaches, where the four approaches to school accountability are:

1. Regulatory school accountability.

2. School performance accountability.

3. Professional school accountability.

4. Multiple School accountability.

Hooge et al (2012) approach was then adopted by an OECD report on "governing education in a complex world" (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016). The authors clarify that these approaches are not to be perceived as distinct approaches to school accountability, but rather as complementary, where one approach levers the others. The first two are hierarchical (vertical) approaches to accountability. And, the latter two are non-hierarchical (horizontal) approaches to school accountability. The four approaches are compiled and grouped as follows:

1. Regulatory school accountability

   This approach discusses the alignment of the school with the laws and regulations designed to govern it. In Egyptian context, this approach would consider the extent of fulfilling of the Egyptian constitution and laws following, in terms of budget allocations, and the reporting system where information about educational inputs is reported to superior level of the educational institutional structure (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016).

2. School performance accountability

   This is an approach based on students' test scores of standardized test, which is measured against expectations or compared to standards to inform level of performance of teachers and of the school. The reports and findings from such information guides penalties and sanctions in some courtiers, and other public information, such as school ranking according to performance. While we do not have this performance accountability system in place and functioning in Egypt, it remains an important corner stone of school accountability (Rosenkvist, 2010; Levin, 1974).

3. Professional school accountability

   This approach examines the professional standards of teachers, the amount of set benchmarks that are reliable and beneficial of expected performance from teachers and other educational staff in the school, and how much support is provided to them through learning communities (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008).

4. Multiple school accountability

   Also referred to as social accountability, where parents, and school communities are involved in the strategic planning, and decision-making (Levin, 1974; Mechkova, Lührmann , & Lindberg , 2017).

The conceptual framework guiding this study

Based on the discussions above, I attempt to map the four different school accountability approaches according to the client model developed by the WD04. As discussed by Levitt et al (2008) and Hooge et al (2012), effective accountability consists of three steps. First, is to identify who is accountable for what, which means understanding the relationships between stakeholders, here I use the WD04 as a base for my case as education is a public service provided. Second, is to question the actions of these stakeholders. Lastly, is to refer to set laws and regulations for the proper consequences; affirmations or sanctions. Accordingly, I suggest the below conceptual framework to guide my study, and help recognize the accountability relationships in the educational system in Egypt, identify and further understand the gaps in practice.
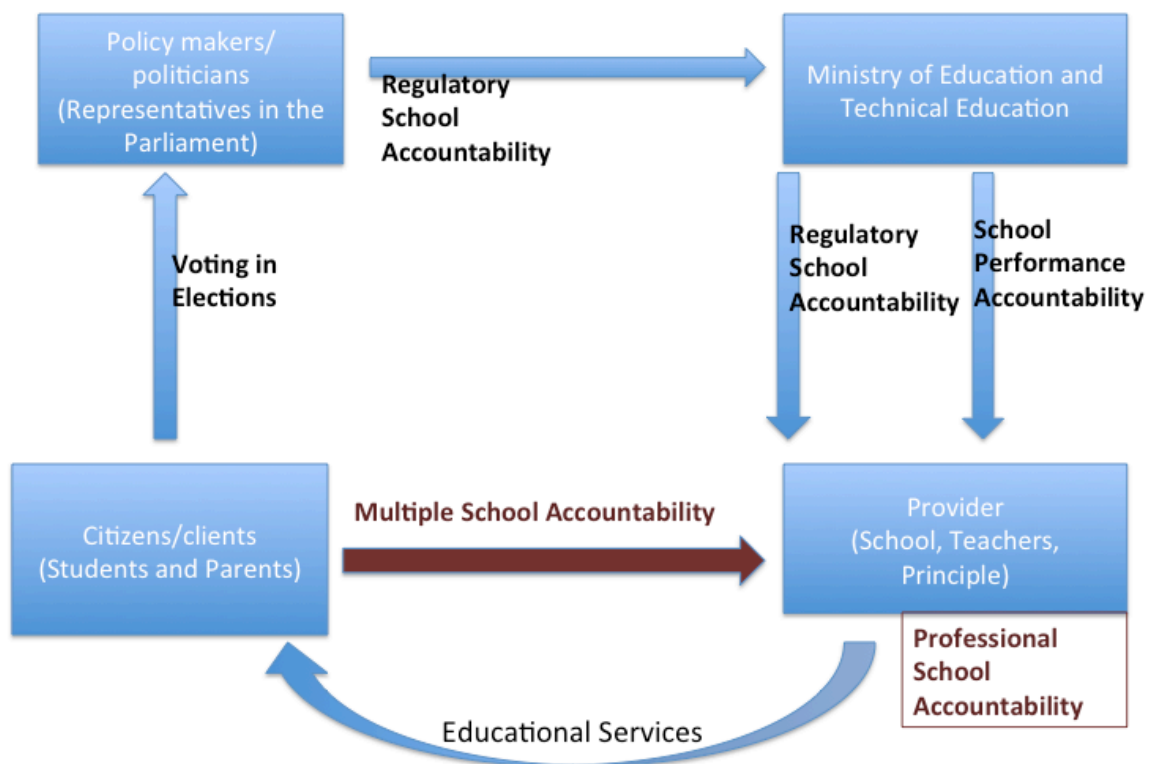
Developed by the Author

First, I identify the different stakeholders in the educational system. The clients here are the students and parents who are on the receiving end of the educational service provision. On the delivery end, the school with its educators and other educational staff are the service providers. Second, I draw an important distinction between policy makers, and executive government authority. The parliament representatives who are elected and help set, approve, and evaluate policies are different than the MOETE, which is responsible for implementation of policies, and reporting on performance when questioned by parliament representatives.

The four approaches of school accountability defined by by Hooge et al (2012) are mapped on the suggested stakeholders map modified to accommodate the educational service provision. First the vertical school accountability approaches, where regulatory school accountability are mainly the laws that are enforced top bottom, to ensure compliance of the school to the educational vision planned by the policy makers. The school performance accountability is another vertical, hierarchical accountability approach that depends on rotational reporting on school performance and indicators about school performance from results of standardized tests.

The two horizontal approaches that assume non-hierarchical relationships (here clarified in red); multiple school accountability, which depends on the direct relation between parents and the school. And the professional school accountability that depends on the professional standards of teachers and educational staff in the school.

Chapter V: Methodology

Approach and rationale

This thesis proposition investigates the problems and challenges facing Egyptian schools in terms of governance, and school accountability. For these purposes a qualitative approach was chosen in an attempt to survey these issues across the educational system in Egypt. Then, deduce implications about the status and challenges. International literature generally accepts education in a culture-social setting rather than a scientific one. This is outlined due to main four reasons; the first is that schooling is often viewed as a privilege and reflects a certain social standing going beyond direct knowledge acquisition. Second is the complex nature of education in different local setups that portray a society's coordinated activities (Marshall & Rossman, 2014).

Thirdly, education has evolved over centuries borrowing from its sister disciplines to reach a certain level of maturity. These disciplines include sociology, anthropology, history, etc. Both shown in curriculums designed as well as school setups and approaches to learning. The last reason lies in the epistemological process of education, which is believed to extend beyond the idea of schooling. The development of learning as such is influenced by interactions with different aspects of the community including those in the social, familial and professional ones (Freebody, 2003). All the above reasons justify and give evidence to why education is thought of as a qualitative process.

Study sample

The samples examined were primary sources from 8 interviews from MOETE different levels, teachers, officials working on educational projects in international organizations, and an educational expert. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with of the management and workers of the schools including principles, department heads and teachers. For issues of privacy and ethical considerations, aliases were given to individuals in the data analysis and findings in sections to follow.

For the purposes of this research, non-probability purposive sampling was chosen (Babbie, 2013). In order to find out underlying challenges and associations, those in the field of education needed to be selected. The selection process was randomized, as there were no equal weights given to the different officials, and interviewees outside the MOETE. Interviewees were asked permissions for interviews that lasted between 30 to 60 minutes each. Most interviews took place in the interviewees' offices. All participants in this study contributed to this research on voluntary basis. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality are preserved.

Data collection

Semi-structured interviews, and reports of international organizations were highly depended on as a form of data collection. The questions posed were adapted from one interview to the other depending on the previous knowledge of the researcher of the position and work of the participant (Harrell & Bradley , 2009). However, main questions like; challenges of school

accountability, role of parents in public schools in Egypt, were asked. Supplementary questions and follow-ups were also made in order to have a deeper insight on the situation. The interviews took around 30 to 60 minutes each. All interviews, except one, were recorded, after permission of the participant, for a later accurate transcription. The interviewees took place between the beginning of March and the end of June 2019.

Data analysis

The main sources of the data were reports by international organizations, and the interviews. The audios from the interviews were used for detection of patterns and discussion of challenges. Together with international theories about school accountability, governance and transparency, the data was categorized accordingly and followed suite to the conceptual framework. The quotes gathered were used to identify international trends that either complies with the literature or disagrees with it. Transcripts, and notes from interviews were read, and classified according to thematic groupings informed by the conceptual framework; regulatory school accountability, school performance accountability, professional school accountability, and multiple school accountability.

Ethical considerations

Primary data collected depends on participation by people on giving information, and sharing experience. All participants in this study contributed to this research on voluntary basis. Participants' anonymity and confidentiality are preserved (Babbie, 2013). The Institutional

Review Board of the American University in Cairo approved data collection for this research on 1st March 2019, after all ethical considerations were reviewed and accepted. The research objectives were shared with participants, clarifying that the data was collected for a thesis research project to fulfill the Masters of Public Policy requirement.

Chapter VI: Data analysis and key findings

In this chapter, I map findings from primary data sources according to the previously discussed and illustrated conceptual framework. The identified stakeholders, their relationships, and accountability lines that were highlighted are used here to highlight areas of weakness, and surfacing challenges in school accountability in Egypt. These main thematic understandings deducted are divided into vertical and horizontal school accountability; the earlier refers to the hierarchical accountability relationships, while the latter refers to the non-hierarchical ones.

1. Vertical School Accountability

Vertical accountability is the hierarchal mechanisms of accountability within a school. These are more formal accountability lines between the central authority and the school. These accountability lines encompass regulatory school accountability, and school performance accountability (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012).

1.1: Regulatory School Accountability

Regulatory school accountability is the approach that focuses on the laws and regulations that govern the school accountability. In this section I explore findings regarding both institutional arrangements, and regulatory laws that govern the educational service provision in Egypt. As both directly impact regulatory school accountability. The regulatory school accountability is separated at the origin from the performance accountability. Teachers' performance, further discussed in later sections, is the responsibility of the supervisor at the district level, and the

MOETE at a central level. While the enforcement of regulations at the school level is the responsibility of the school principal.

The educational system in Egypt is a centralized one, although structure (explained in the background) shows a cascading model, from the central government to governorate offices, district offices down to schools. Most interviewees working in the MOETE or even outside agreed that the decentralized offices and schools do not have real autonomy, and have little capacity to manage tasks asked of them. An official working on the central level shared the experience in the main buildings, explaining that,

> *"The system in fact, is super centralized. We have all these layers of authority and employees, but due to how ineffective those entities are, all issues end up at the Minister's office. For example, there is an office called the office for political communication, which is at each district level. This office is responsible to connect with the parliament representatives if they have any issues to report or questions. But, due to how ineffective those offices are, what happens on the ground is that if any parliament representative has an issue he would come directly knocking on the Minister's door"* *(Government Official, June, 2019).*

Interviewees and informants agreed on the fact that what is currently in place is a centralized system. Despite the different initiatives to change the system to be more decentralized, there is no real investment in the layers of the employees at the local level. The government employees in these offices are usually not prepared or trained for requirements of supporting decision-

making process, and responding to citizens concerns at the local level (UNESCO, 2007). People, who go through many failed attempts to get responses at the local offices, find no other way but to go to the minister himself. One example is shared from an interviewee with what happens at an office called "the political communication office". This office is found at every district level to respond to questions and concerns raised by parliament representative of the district concerning schools and the provision of the educational service in their district. However, when faced with employees who have no or low ability to handle such inquiries, or efficient abilities to understand the requests of parliament representatives. The Parliament representatives find no other way but to go directly to the minister's office for responses, using much of the valuable time, for planning and other needed tasks that the minister needs to attend to, used in responding to issues at the local level. The, often, low capacity of employees in the lower level offices in such hierarchies poses serious challenges when it comes to decentralization.

This shows that, at the moment, it is a confused system, where decentralization is only adding more layers to the system, but with no real authorities or clear responsibilities at the local level. The push for a decentralized system in Egypt starting in the early 2000s changed laws and regulations to initiate more autonomous schools, that are able plan for educational resources efficient use at a school level according to each school own needs and allocated budget. According to law 155 for the year 2007, the school should have its annual budget allocated, and managed by the principal with the supervision of the Board of Trustees as a governing body. While, in theory, this move encourages autonomy, and is implemented to encourage informed spending at the school level. A former principal of a school describes

"New laws allowed principals to spend money, but usually there is a long process of bids and approvals. The budget would have lines for maintenance, and activities mainly. Salaries are paid centrally, and schools do not pay electric or water bills. Of course there are penalties for mismanagement of funds that I know scared many of my colleagues when they were to spend any money in the school treasury. Also, there was a Board of Trustees, who had the authority to question why we sent the money, and sign off the approvals, but they also helped the school at times when funds were needed." *(Former School Principal, March, 2019).*

Laws guided the money spent, by the principal, with strict guidelines consisting of specific processes and approvals that ensure fair bidding, and efficient use of financial resources. However, these long bureaucratic processes drove away principals to take on the task of spending money. Moreover, the penalties the law enforced in cases of incorrect spending of money were severe and scared away principals who were reluctant to take on such responsibility of being questioned on money spent. In addition, the Board of Trustees (discussed in further details in a later section) was established to oversee the money spending and sign off budget approvals for decision made by the principal, but also to help raise funds supporting the financial needs by the school with agreement with the principal.

Another official working on development educational projects explains another side of the failure of the decentralized new system. From his experience he explains,

"Principals were either not ready to do budget decision, either afraid to, or unfortunately, used this power in a corrupt way. The mismanagement of funds lead to serious problems, for example for maintenance, many schools suffered from poor maintenance, broken desks, and other problems with bathrooms, classrooms, and playgrounds. That is why this line in the budget has been back to being managed by the Authority for Educational Buildings." (Project Manager at an International Organization, April, 2019).

Another unintended consequence was more corruption in managing school budgets. Although there were laws and regulations to monitor the process, question spending decisions, and enforce penalties. The corruption and lack of capacity lead to mismanaged funds (Hallak & Poisson , 2006). All these different reasons ended up leading to serious repercussions on schools maintenance status, such as; poor playgrounds, broken desks, and lack of instructional material. After noticing the deterioration of the schools' infrastructure, MOETE decided to put all maintenance funds at the authority of the General Authority for Educational Buildings (GAEB). Principals are back to the old system, where they send for requests to the authority to fix, renew, or provide any maintenance services to the buildings or furnishing of the school. And the schools are back to suffer from the slow responses and lack of funds at the central level.

While, there are regulations and an announced set of bylaws "la'eha" on the school level, most interviews revealed that job descriptions and responsibilities between school staff are not always clear or applicable, and do not always follow regulations. An educational expert comments from his experience in schools that there is always one most influential person in the

school,

> *"The school principal is supposed to be the person responsible for the execution at the school level, and manages the operational aspect at the school. But, the one really in charge or what I call the Joker, is not a fixed person. In some schools he can be the principal, other schools it is the social worker or a teacher. That person is in control, that person is the one able to manage and move the whole school" (Educational expert, June, 2019).*

The whole purpose of existing regulations and mandates is to arrange authority and accountability and ensures that vertical accountability is realized (UNESCO, 2017). The fact that the person doing the job is not the person mandated by the law confuses the accountability on actions. If the principal is supposed to take a decision, instead another person volunteers and makes this decision, how can the person responsible be determined and held accountable.

1.2: School Performance Accountability

School performance accountability is the hierarchical accountability mechanism that depends on informed school performance evaluation through results of students standardized testing, or rotational evaluations and reports about the school. Some countries base most of its school accountability on this approach, considering it the most valid one that allows for ranking schools, and focus on students' performance as a key indicator.

Egypt has no system in place to track the performance of schools, pinpoint underperforming ones, and enforce sanctions to motivate improvement. There is no national standardized student assessment system in Egypt (UNESCO, 2016), providing no indicator on school performance, no national ranking of school, and no sanctions for underperforming schools. These missing elements threaten the educational process in schools; one example was shared by one of the interviewee, he said,

"I was surprised about the variation between schools. Some schools are committed to the school day, which ends at 3 pm. But, most schools I have see, in rural areas around Greater Cairo or in Upper Egypt, is that no one is committed to the school day.. You would find the school empty at 12 pm." (Project Manager at an International Organization, April, 2019).

The school day ends at 12 pm instead of 3 pm, where students, teachers, and administrators just leave by that time. With no proper monitoring or standards in place this became a regular habit, and the school has been operating this way for years, these practices undervalue the real outcome of the education these students are receiving. The World Bank detects similar practices across developing countries that decrease the actual classroom instruction time (World bank, 2019).

Reasons for such unanimous decisions on school campuses to cut the school day short are not clear. Yet, in the absence of sanctions or penalties, these actions became normative in some, especially in rural areas.

Although Egypt has shown better numbers in accessibility to schools and higher enrollment rates of students in tertiary education in recent years (UNESCO, 2016). It is worthy to question the actual value of more students attending school if they do not attend a proper school day, and there is no sufficient instruction time. One common tool of school performance accountability across countries as discussed is a standardized student testing. Regular standardized students assessment is an important tool to set expectations, and benchmarks for school performance. An educational expert shares her thoughts on the importance on assessment said,

"Through results of students we can track students performance, understand weaknesses in understanding, and actually help the student. We can say the same on the school level. Standardized testing is supposed to check the school performance, and try to understand where are challenges coming from. Is it the quality of teachers, the leader at the school, the lack of resources? What we are facing now in Egypt is strange, it is like we are penalizing the students, not the teachers or the schools! The only assessment that we have on a national level is the school-leaving exam (Thanawya a'mma), where it would be too late to change what is happening in the school or help the student!" (Educational expert, June, 2019).

Standardized testing is important to assess student's improvement, also to inform on the performance of the learning process at the school level. It is one crucial way to collect data on what is happening in schools, to be measured against expectations and bench marks, showing indicators on those underperforming ones (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012). The lack of a real assessment system is harming the educational process; there is no tracking of school performance or indicators of fir issues arising and enforcement of proper sanctions or penalties.

The invalidity of the current assessment system in the educational Egyptian system makes it unreliable to depend on its results in evaluating performance, or identifying learning gaps. Although, Egyptian students do go through a governorate level standardized test on the 9th grade, and another national standardized test at the 12th grade, it is acknowledged that the assessment system in Egypt needs a total reform in to a system that is "fair, valid, and reliable" (World Bank, 2018).

The inequitable set up of the one exam at leaving school is harming students' future. The World Bank urged MOETE to establish a standardized assessment across the nation for students finishing their 4th grade, to be able to detect educational set backs that can have remedial tracks at such an age. Also, to establish a tracking tool of school performance year after year, that enables the MOETE to set a fair system of rewards and sanctions (World Bank, 2018). Such system is expected to enhance accountability, and avail important information about the different school performance.

In an attempt to set quality standards for schools in Egypt, the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) was founded in an attempt to set quality standards for educational institutions including schools on a national level (Establishment law of the national authority for quality assurance and accreditation of education (NAQAAE)). However, NAQAAE quality standards remain optional, and not mandated for public schools. As an official working on the central level explained that "There is no entity or a system in place to follow up on a school as a unit, we have no common quality standards, and no school ranking for public schools". The lack of continuous monitoring on school performance raises extreme issues; like shorter school, so much time wasted during the school day, and no commitment to quality of the educational service provided by the school.

2. Horizontal School Accountability

"Assumes non- hierarchical relationships, focused at how schools and teachers conduct their profession and/or at how schools and teachers provide multiple stakeholders with insight into their educational processes, decision-making, implementation, and results." (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012).

2.1: Professional School Accountability

Professional school accountability refers to the standards in place for educators, and educational staff. These standards help teachers keep professional standards by ensuring mechanisms for improving teaching quality, and maintaining it. This is usually implemented

through Continuous Professional Development (CPD), teachers communities of practice. So, teachers are able to sustainably learn and continue to be professional educators.

The inadequately trained teacher is a clear issue to everyone working in the system. In almost all my interviews, the issue of teacher quality surfaced as a major pain. There is consensus that "A qualified teacher is the main tool that makes quality education a reality" as one official phrases it. Teachers in Egypt are public employees, they are hired at the central level, and they have a career advancement plan governed by the cadre law, which draws loose expectations, but in reality there are no enforced specific performance indicators.

There are two authorities responsible for teachers' performance supervision; the school principal is authorized to supervise operational aspects, such as the attendance of teachers, and their commitment to going to their classes. While the subject supervisor from the local district (idara), is responsible for the teacher's technical performance in terms of methods of instruction, commitment to study material, and the time plan for covering learning objectives according to the set curriculum.

The school principal is the one responsible for all administrative matters in his school, that means organizing and maintaining the right environment for students to learn. A retired school principal explained the boundaries of a principal's authority, and the level of informality by which most teachers are supervised in the Egyptian schools.

"The principal is not responsible for technicalities, only involved in organizing them. And, the ultimate authority a principal can have on a teacher is to refer him to an investigation, but for something not educational related, like physical abuse for a

child. However, in many cases issues are solved in an informal way at the school level to avoid punishment for teachers, and putting a permanent black mark on their record" *(Former School principal, March, 2019).*

The school principal cannot interfere in the teacher's choice of instructional methods, if many complaints are submitted to the principal, he can refer the matter to the district level. If an incident happens, principal can only refer the teacher to an investigation, but has no authority to enforce penalties directly. The interviewee shared that laws and regulations governing the teachers' performance are not usually enforced, many principals choose to resolve any issues with teachers in an informal manner to avoid penalties that can affect the teacher's career progress.

On the other hand, the direct technical supervision comes from the district level, where the district supervisor responsible for a certain subject would have the responsibility to supervise a number of teachers in the district. The role of the supervisor is purely technical supervision, an official who has been a teacher for years explains:

> *"Supervisors at the district level, each in his subject, are responsible for a number of teachers in his district. The supervisor visits teachers; classrooms, follows up on their performance, and writes reports accordingly. These reports are one major criteria of judgment when it comes to career advancement for the Egyptian teacher. (Government Official, June, 2019).*

The subject supervisor writes performance reports, however, they are usually according to his understanding of best practices, and not guided by national professional standards for teachers. There are no common, official professional standards that guide teachers' performance. The subject supervisor mainly tracks that teacher is abiding by curriculum planned by MOETE, and oversees class performance.

The cadre law for teacher passed in 2007, draws a career advancement path for teachers, that is primarily dependent on number of years in the system, but also considers the supervisors' reports. According to the law, the career advancement mechanisms are tied to number of years working in the system, and not to performance. Like most countries trapped in this low-quality performance low-quality learning predicament, the primary condition of career advancement is the number of years in the system (World bank, 2019).

One major factor of sustaining development of teachers' performance is Continuous Professional Development (CPD), which means establishing a continuous path of improvement for teachers depending on a series of well-designed professional development for teachers that continues through their careers (World Bank, 2018). Presently, only accidental and ineffective trainings have been in traduced to teachers, hence there was an agreement between interviewees that current Continuous Professional Development CPD system is "dysfunctional". A practitioner who has been responsible for public school teachers training for years, elaborates how on ground trainings are random and not based on real needs of the teachers development,

"Teachers usually perceive trainings as a waste of time, they were not beneficial, let's be honest! There was no real professional development, only topics that are pre planned. Teachers are only interested in what they really need, and what will not make their lives easier in the classrooms, and cannot relate to what they see not fitting to their context or their current curriculum at hand" (Government Official, June, 2019).

Teachers are looking for professional development that is connected to their environment, understands the challenges they face, and is able to really help them with the curricula at hand. The planning for professional development usually happens at the central level, and is disconnected from the actual teachers needs. Most of the time, it does not include teachers and educational leaders in the decision-making, and planning process. Therefore, final selection of training topics may not be of relevance to teachers at the moment.

The CPD is not only the training, but it also comprises the support system of coaching, and availability of community of practices that ensure support and continuous development for teachers. This lays ground for questioning performance and holding teachers accountable for their performance in classrooms. Thus, the absence of guidelines of practice, and supporting communities of practice in Egypt negatively impacts professional accountability. One official working directly with teacher training for years was hopeful that new initiatives such as Teachers First can change the current negative context,

"Up till three years ago, we can say that we used to pretend to measure teachers' performance, but since then with the introduction of Teachers First, Education 2.0

reform, and other MOETE programs, we can say there are serious trials to change ways

from accountability written on papers, to a measurable approach that really measures

performance aspects. We are measuring outcomes only.. We should be orienting teachers

and training them to be reflective teachers, and how to work in a community of practice."

(Government Official, June, 2019).

Teachers First is a nation wide program, that aims to instill new culture of continuous professional development by creating, designing, and delivering a new approach of teacher training. One that focuses more on teachers contextualized needs and curricula taught, and that is based on behavioral change. It also aims to establish platforms of communities of practice on the school, district, and governorate level that aim to support teachers after training and provide feedback and learning opportunities for them (What is Teahers First, 2014-2016). The literature describes professional school accountability is where there are credible, useful standards and professional learning communities." (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012). Building up programs that support teachers' progress through relevant CPD, and opportunities for joining professional learning communities, can allow new professional norms to emerge, and activate the role of the professional teacher in the school, ultimately enhancing professional accountability.

One other contributor to the unprofessional teachers in the system is the corrupt selection process for new teachers coming in the system. World Bank education report on the MENA region reports 75% of people in Egypt agree that a personal connection (wasta) is needed to be able to get a job as a teacher in the MOETE (World bank, 2019). Corrupt selection process of teachers negatively impacts quality of education (Hallak & Poisson , 2006). Inefficient teachers coming in the system pose a serious set back to quality of instruction. These teachers may remain

in the system for a long time in their teaching positions, and challenge CPD and professional accountability progress in the educational systems in Egypt.

2.2: Multiple School Accountability

Multiple school accountability perceives accountability outside its formal circles, in a non-hierarchical way that considers other stakeholders' role in formulating, evaluating plans, and the decision making process. It assumes the role of students, parents, and community in the accountability process. Also referred to as social accountability.

It is challenging for social accountability to flourish in an educational set up, where there is a lack of confidence in the central authority and its plans. An official, who has been working in the central government, understands the parents' frustration, and explains,

> *"We have seen the secondary system change many times, 6th grade added few years ago. Many radical changes that impact the student, the family, and the teacher. So, now when the Ministry says it will reform the secondary certificate **again..** parents are hesitant to believe that" (Government Official, June, 2019).*

Many of the interventions in the educational system in Egypt are top down, with no communication with other the stakeholders, parents or teachers. The transformation process for new change is usually hard, and the objectives behind them are not understood. Parents and students are puzzled by these changes and loose trust in the system. On the other hand, teachers,

who are not consulted, cannot cope with change and the reform is challenged to achieve its objectives. This dilemma then manifests in a disturbed relationship between parents and the school, as the school staff are the first liners delivering the service.

The education global monitoring report in 2017 discusses how the lack of trust drives parents away from the system, they feel unheard, and they search for other options (UNESCO, 2017). Parents seek alternative ways to provide the educational service for their children initiating informal systems, such as private tutoring in Egypt. This broken relationship between school and parents, the tension, and the informal relationships hinder effective formal entities, such as Board of Trustees or Parents Associations, to fulfill their role social accountability bodies.

According to the law 15 for the year 2007, the second clause launches the initiative of the Board of Trustees on the levels of schools, districts, governorates, and on the national level. BOTs are supposed to act as governance bodies, holding the school accountable for its actions, and performance. An official who has been a member of one of these BOTs before further explains its structure, role, and the current status:

> *"The new structure of the BOT allows for other members of the community to be involved, these members are also elected. So the usual structure of a BOT would include elected parents, members of the community, teachers, the principal, and the social worker. In the mandates of the new structure of the BOT, members meet regularly and they can call for urgent meetings. The BOT members also help with getting the parents'*

voices heard on issues they face. Since 2010, elections were paused and the BOT became all appointed members, some schools still have this entity, others don't and they only have the general assembly for parents in place." (Government Official, June, 2019).

The original objective of the BOT is to strengthen the school accountability system, by granting it the legitimacy to hold the school accountable for actions impacting students learning, such as budget and management decisions. This form of social accountability is not clear today in Egypt. While elections are paused, no one is sure of the actual objective of the entity, and its procedure and functions.

These participatory mechanisms assume a level of school autonomy and management capacity, which is usually, established under larger national decentralization agendas (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016). The current Egyptian context does not align to a decentralized agenda that was once created in the late 1990s to encourage such movement are still in place. Yet, the laws and mandates that were created then are still in place. Thus, it is confusing to understand the current actual structure, and what are the mandated and actual performed responsibilities.

In fact, the current context is chaotic, limiting the role of PTAs and BOTs to random singular efforts that try to help in times of emergencies, one official in the central level explained what usually happens,

"There are only random efforts by concerned parents and keen community individuals to support the school in funding when needed. When there is an emergency, there is an urgent meeting for the general parents assembly for the school. In one example, parents convened and decided to collect money and install surveillance cameras in the school upon issues been reported many times in the school playground." (Government Official, June, 2019).

Parents gather and organize movements on urgent matters that threaten their children's safety and well-being. The objective of accountability is not in focus anymore, only quick solutions implemented by the parents and community without proper questioning of responsible ones. In the case discussed by the interviewee here, parents did not seek formal lines of communication to penalize responsible employees at the school for the lack of supervision in the playground, they informally agreed to a best solution, and took actions to implement it. These informal relationships foster secret networks, where people build shield of informal norms and interdependencies to avoid blame and punishment. This leads to responsibility, and accountability lines to weaken, therefore, "accountability needed for students" learning becomes secondary" (World Bank, 2018).

Consequences of diminished confidence in the system and disorganized arrangements for these entities reflect on how parents perceive the significance of PTAs and BOTs meetings. An educational expert, who has been working in this field for more than 15 years, explains how parents need to see direct positive impacts on their children's academic improvement to initiate

their interest in actively participating in meetings and activating such community participation bodies. She says:

"Parents have many other responsibilities, and they feel that these meetings are a waste of time, and that they see no improvement in their children's education. Parents should be involved through assigning them tasks, engaging them in their children's education, asking them to volunteer, and showcase successes that encourage them to keep the momentum of participation." (Educational expert, June 2019).

The lack of clear guidelines for the process and objective of parents' participation entities demotivates parents to take a part in meetings and tasks. Parents' participation structures should have clear guidelines that allow for real participation, engagement in the decision-making process. Ultimately, the core objective is to get the parents' voices heard (Demas & Arcia, 2015). Egyptian parents have genuine care for their children's progress and education; their concern if translated into actions of partnership can yield constructive results for the children's development. Real partnership should be the foundation for parents' participation, creating new platforms for fruitful interaction between teachers and educational staff at the school on one side, parents and community on the other side. Initiating plans for school growth and ensuring better learning opportunities for students.

3. Transparency and School accountability

In Egypt the notion of data and evidence informed decision- making and policy planning is still novel. The value of accurate information is diminished, as one official who has been involved in many educational development projects in Egypt states:

> *"Government officials still consider time spent collecting and verifying information as a waste of time, and assume that they know and understand the issues on the ground."*

It is important to understand the context, and take decisions based on solid, accurate data. However, officials in MOETE find it, sometimes, more important to proceed with decisions that are not evidence-informed, rather than take the time to collect and analyze needed information. Correct and authentic information is key to make well-informed decisions regarding educational planning and management (Crouch & Winkler , 2008). When this step is neglected we end up with subjective opinions, which are misleading in planning.

One interviewee asserted how consistent flow of data is key; "beginning with data collection, then monitoring, to reach the evidence-informed policy aspired for". This feedback cycle is what builds sound educational policies, and evidence-informed decisions. However, on the school level, the idea of data collection or information sharing is still not a common practice. One official in an International Organization that has been working in the Egyptian school system for years shared his challenging task to collect information in schools in Egypt, he said:

> *"It is forbidden to collect data in a school. It would be almost impossible to distribute a questionnaire in a school. Information available about the inputs in the school is limited*

and in many cases not the latest numbers. The current principal may know information about his school as he needs these to be able to manage and allocate his human and financial resources, however, there are no documents verified by MOETE at the school that discloses information officially." (Project Manager at an International Organization, April, 2019).

The frustration of the challenge to access information in Egypt is real. While some figures are available publicly of headcounts of students, teachers, and their geographical allocations. Some important information on the school is usually missing, it would be almost impossible to understand the actual day-to-day operation or collect data that inform actual performance in most cases.

There is also a disconnect in terms of the information available at the different levels, the information collected at the school level may not be available to the MOETE in many cases. In many countries, and now in Egypt, there are Educational Management Systems that should help accountability frameworks to function. A dashboard, connecting local authorities (idarat) to the central authority (MOETE) is available, which allows the ministry to gather and disseminate information effectively. This is a step in the right direction to enhance accountability on resource allocation and performance monitoring across governorates in Egypt.

Nevertheless, the officials' weak caliber, and their inexperience in data-informed decision-making is problematic (Burns, T. and F. Köster (eds.), 2016). Officials on the local level in the educational system in Egypt should be aligned with the central level plans for data collection, and management information systems. The capacity building of these calibers is crucial for accurate information to be generated and shared across stakeholders, inside and outside school.

Chapter VII: Discussion and Recommendations

OECD (2015) proclaims that for the Egyptian educational system to progress, "considerable effort will need to be applied to making the necessary shift from an authoritarian and unaccountable management model to one based on transparent information that underpins accountability for performance at every level" (OECD, 2015, p.14). This guides the coming discussion of my conclusions and recommendations for this study.

In this study, I highlighted three phases for effective school accountability, as discussed in the literature review section. First, is to identify who is accountable for what (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008), where in a confused system, this becomes a challenging task. Between old attempts of decentralization and the current context, the responsibilities and thus the accountability of actions are lost. Although, there is an agreement of the gains of decentralization, and the positive impact on quality of education in schools, this cannot be achieved if real devolution and delegation of power are transferred to those on the local levels. With insufficient preparation for school principals and capacity building for the new tasks ahead, the situation ended up chaotic that efforts to decentralize are back in action (Elbaradei, 2015). Moving forward requires an agreement of the political context, and an alignment of the laws and regulations to achieve the political agenda in place. Moreover, real school autonomy is vital, where the school management has the real power and authority to manage resources, decide spending priorities, and manage teachers in their schools.

The second phase is getting the correct, accurate information needed to assess the actions of officials (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008). There are two layers in this phase, the first is to get

the information, and the second is to have standards to compare against. The most valuable information in school accountability is students' performance, obtained from assessment systems. The weak assessment system in Egypt (OECD, 2015), which fails to provide the needed information, is a major obstacle that requires immediate attention. The second layer of this phase is comparing to existing standards to determine performance issues. There are no transparent, credible standards in place in the Egyptian educational system, serious concerns on the capability to track performance surface. It requires joint efforts from technical education experts and policy makers to achieve assessment system that informs policy making. But, also takes into consideration measuring real students' learning in terms of academic progress, and personal growth.

The third phase in school accountability is consequences; affirmations or sanctions (Levitt, Janta, & Wegrich , 2008). This is almost impossible when we cannot even point the accountable person for a certain action, and no standards or benchmarks to compare against. Moreover, with an immune teacher as a public employee, there are usually little penalties available according to Egyptian law that can be enforced. A second thought on the current incentive system should take place in a consultative manner with all stakeholders involved; teachers, Teachers Union, MOETE, supervisors on district and governorate level, and parents representatives. Aiming to establish a new reward/penalties system, that is not top down implemented, but comes with a consensus from all stakeholders involved to embrace the new change.

Yet, we need to first consider that teachers are trapped in the middle of a continuous blame game, where they are not able to perform their tasks, at the same time blamed by the superior entities and from parents. Before holding teachers accountable, the system must consider a real support system, which does not only train teachers, but offers real learning opportunities and

support system through communities of practice and ongoing coaching.

Accountability lines in the educational system in Egypt are weak and ineffective. The new approaches of social accountability require identification of stakeholders, and openness to questioning by the community (Hooge, Burns, & Wilkoszewski , 2012). And again, although there is a structure on paper for a BOT, the function is at halt. The question of having BOTs is related actually back to the organizational structure. The BOT's functions, and mandates, depend on the role it supposed to be serving in the school. And whatever the agreed upon name for parents' involvement, there should be a real will to involve them as key stakeholders, and equip them with the tools and understanding to hold schools accountable.

Students have been always thought of as passive recipients in the educational system (World Bank, 2018). Today's youth have more access to new communication channels, such as social media, and are to voice their concerns and perceptions. I believe it is time to activate existing channels such as Students Unions, or create new ones that are able to channel the passion and eagerness to communicate with decision makers in education in a productive manner that allows the MOETE to benefit from their input in informing new policies and plans, and evaluate existing ones.

Random singular reform attempts are hurting quality of the educational system rather than helping. If there is a serious attempt to implement school accountability, it has to be implemented through a comprehensive perception where the key stakeholders and accountability lines are identified and aligned with the political direction. As informed by interviewees, there should be a real buy in from parents and teachers for accountability to work. As well as better

communication and transparency between MOETE, and the governorate and local offices, as well as with parents and teachers, to regain trust and confidence.

Failure of creating the right foundation of school accountability does not only negatively impact education quality, but it fails the whole educational system and puts obstacles for further reform efforts to succeed. With the current reform efforts in the educational system, Egypt has a chance to develop new approaches needed for better learning outcomes, however, this will not be effective or sustainable without a sound foundation of accountability mechanisms embedded in the different layers of the system, and rigorously enforced.

Recommendations

No one approach of school accountability is panacea, my research above makes the argument of the importance of a comprehensive approach to school accountability, which takes into consideration the Egyptian context, understands its challenges and is planned accordingly. I moreover, recommend that this comprehensive accountability approach is based on transparency, trust, and high engagement from stakeholders. And that takes into consideration the following recommendations:

- Transparent communication and engaging internal stakeholders at MOETE is key for better alignment on strategic plans and objectives.

- MOETE, internal and external stakeholders in the educational system should be accepting to sharing of information across the different levels in the MOETE, and with external stakeholders.

- A connected Educational Management Information System (EMIS) should be used on all levels.

- Building capacity of local officials of how to use EMIS, deduct important needed information, and analyze it. So they can use it in reporting or decision-making.

- Best practices, and other countries experiences may be helpful. But, investing in educational research that is specific to Egypt's context is key at this point. This includes both technical, academic research, and educational policy research.

Other specific recommendations for every school accountability approach discussed in this research, is detailed as follows:

Recommendations for Regulatory School Accountability

- Review of all regulations guiding the school accountability in Egypt is a must.

- Aligning with the strategic vision of Egypt, and its arrangement of public employees. If the strategy is to establish and maintain a decentralized system, then all by laws should follow accordingly. Accompanied by real devolution of authority and power to act. And, with serious consideration of building the capacity of local officials to perform their assigned roles, and exercise their authorities.

- Regulations should be enforced and monitored regularly by higher authority.

Recommendations for School performance accountability

- A valid, credible national standardized assessment has to be in place. It makes the most sense to follow World Bank recommendations and design this national examination at the end of fourth grade.

- Clear performance standards should be shared with all stakeholders, detailing expectations from students' performance and building a criteria to follow that enforces sanctions and penalties.

Recommendations for professional school accountability

- No professional development is ever enough to support teachers' progress, coaching by district supervisors has to be a new approach adopted for sustaining change in instructional methods in classrooms.

- Teachers need to be empowered to lead change in their schools, and professional communities.

- A continuous professional development program has to be implemented.

- The planning of different trainings should be based on real assessment of learning gaps of teachers, based on the curricula in hand, and based on researched-based teaching methodology.

- Building strong communities of practice on local levels is crucial. Communities of practice provide teachers with a lot of support and opportunities for learning from their peers.

Recommendations for multiple school accountability

This constitutes one of the important pillars of the integrated approach to accountability. As suggested by UNESCO (2017), it is valuable to build platforms of strong social accountability in countries with weaker democratic process to balance the lack of top down accountability mechanisms (UNESCO, 2017).

- BOTs role remains vague. A clear description of the different roles and expectations should be aligned with the stakeholders themselves, they need to have a say in what they are able, and want to do for their communities and not a top down law.
- Continuous support of BOTs is needed to ensure they are fulfilling their accountability role. This should be coupled with awareness and training of the stakeholders involved on the actual tools at hand to use to raise flags in cases of breach of laws for example.
- The different responsibilities assigned to BOTs are, in many cases, not aligned with what is actually happening in schools.

Suggestions for future research

As discussed in the above recommendations, further educational research is needed. While international experiences and best practices are of great value, Egypt needs a strong educational policy research unit that is able to design solutions and policies that are specific to the Egyptian experience and context. Hence, the following are some future research suggestions that compliment and build on this research.

Firstly, this thesis studies the successful accountability mechanisms in school governance, and its positive attribution to educational quality in Egypt. Future research is needed to further study the implications on other aspects of the education service provision, such as; accessibility and equality.

Secondly, while this research scratches the surface on many of the current issues in the area of accountability and the relationship between the different levels and institutions, there is more to understand, and unravel. Beginning with the accountability mechanisms between the parliament and the MOETE, how is the current interactions translating in actual sanctions or affecting educational service provision in Egypt. Moreover, questioning the capacity of the parliament's special councils, their capacity to research educational policy and to, accordingly, question the Egyptian Minister of Education.

Thirdly, there is more to be researched in specific aspects of effective teacher training, and communities of practice. There is more to be learnt from teachers about their needs, and to be translated in to future policy recommendations, and strategic plans for effective CPD.

Lastly, as Egypt is still discovering the best fitting strategies to social accountability in education, it is of value to enrich this area with further research. Documenting success stories from previous BOTs experiences, and challenges of parents' participation is essential to understand the current status of these governance bodies. To be able to build new approaches

that enhances participation in earlier stages of policy planning and designing. This also includes students, who are becoming more aware of their needs and more keen to voice their thoughts and concerns.

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