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**The American University in Cairo**  
**School of Graduate Education**

**Teachers' Recruitment and Selection Practices within Different  
Schooling Systems in Egypt**

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A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate School of Education in partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Comparative and International  
Education

By

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Supervised by

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**June 2012**

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### **Abstract**

Education is the cornerstone of societal reform at this momentous time in Egypt's history, and effective teachers are the backbone of education reform. For decades, education has ignored tackling crucial issues that, if properly addressed, would help develop generations who reinforce principles of democracy, equality, social justice and human dignity. With the expansion of various international schooling systems in Egypt, the wide held belief that foreign teachers are more effective than those locally hired are, and the growing interest of a large sector of parents to put their children in these schools, it becomes important to investigate how these schools, and other public and private schools recruit and select teachers. The purpose of this thesis is to explore the employed teachers' recruitment and selection strategies in the context of public, private and international schools.

Findings of this study demonstrate that within the two contexts of public and private schools there is a hidden criteria for teachers recruitment and selection where the implemented frameworks in both contexts are not commensurate to theoretical guidelines. Some of the factors that influence the hidden criteria for teachers' recruitment and selection are gender, age, religious background and appearance. Findings also reveal that both systems face challenges mainly because they lack professional pertinent to teachers' recruitment and selection. Furthermore, findings show that principles in public schools lacked autonomy in terms of teachers' recruitment and selection. Teachers in public schools are dissatisfied with their current social image and their work conditions, and believe that they possess unutilized potentials. Whereas teachers in private schools

are challenged by the culture of privatized education, where the owners of schools intervene in teachers' recruitment and selection constricting the autonomy of principals.

**Key Words: Teacher Preparation, Professional Development, Role of School Leadership, Decentralized versus Centralized Teacher Selection.**

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

Every morning a nation's future is born inside a classroom; it is only at the hands of a "good" teacher that this newborn future gets to shape its outlines, define its features, and reach its full potentials. It is well known that teaching is one of the most complex professions, nevertheless; it is also one of the most morally rewarding jobs in the sense that it is teachers who own the privilege of fostering the growth and development of their students' intellectual, emotional and physical wellbeing. A good or high- quality teacher is the corner stone of any effective educational system since he/she is considered by many parents, along with, experts in the field of education as one of the most determinant factors in students' academic performance (Berry, Daughtery, &Weider, 2009). In keeping with this thinking, the Education For All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report (GMR) (2005), states that "In a rigorous study of twenty eight such factors, the two most prominent were found to be directly related to the teacher". (Wei, Darling-Hammond, Andree, Richardson, &Orphanos, 2009).

Despite the fact that there is almost consensus among policy makers, parents, and educational experts concerning the impact of effective teachers on the learning outcomes of the educational process, not all schools have equitable access to good or high quality teachers (Berry, et al., 2009). This fact can be the attributed to recruitment challenges that face school administrations, school districts, and provincial educational departments all

over the world. Consequently, there is an emerging need to examine the processes of teacher recruitment, screening, selection, and hiring.

Teacher recruitment procedures are vital in being one of the significant factors in providing effective teachers. It is true that there has been an overarching concern over the importance of teacher education and teacher preparation programs over the recent decades because they represent one of the input-driven approaches toward educational reform. However, little research has delved into the issue of recruitment procedures and practices in order to shed light on how teachers are basically recruited, selected, screened and hired. This paper is an attempt to explore recruitment practices, with all that pertains to it, in five public schools and five private schools in Egypt.

**Background:**

As a parent to two school-aged girls, I share with other Egyptian parents the so called “dilemma” of choosing a good school for their children. It is worth mentioning, though, that the “dilemma” in this context is confined to parents of a particular socio-economic background that my case is the educated upper middle class, and the pool of schools to choose from is that of the language private and international school systems in Cairo, Egypt. The administrations of these schools either prioritize foreign teachers over local Egyptian teachers in the hiring process, or completely confine their available teaching openings to only foreign teachers.

Based on both personal and professional experience, it was discovered that there is pervasive assumption and belief held by Egyptian parents, international schools, and educators, broadly speaking, that internationally recruited teachers are more effective than those locally hired are.

**Research Question:** What is the situation of teachers' recruitment and selection practices within different schooling systems in Egypt?

## **Chapter 2**

### **Literature Review**

The processes of teachers' preparation, selection, recruitment and retention should be viewed as a continuum since all of the above elements are interrelated. Effective recruitment and selection strategies aim at providing schools, equitably, with quality teachers. Thus, the issues of teachers' preparation, teachers' professional development, teachers' supply and demand balance, teachers' attraction and retention strategies, in addition to teacher' centralized and decentralized selection shall be first examined within a global perspective.

#### **Teacher preparation:**

There is consensus among educational experts and researchers that teachers' preparation and teachers' education is one of the most significant determinants of students' academic achievement (Berry, Daughtrey, & Weider, 2010; Darling-Hammond, Berry & Thoreson, 2001)). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) 'Teachers Matter, Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers report (2005) indicates that there is a growing focus among most of the OECD countries to sustain teachers' initial preparation and support novice teachers throughout their early stages. Pre- service teachers' preparation is a key component for laying the foundation for teachers' knowledge. In most countries, pre- service teachers' preparation takes place at teachers' universities, colleges or institutes. Students who finish their high-

school and aspire to become candidate teachers join these universities. During their preparation years, candidate teachers are exposed to mainly two types of knowledge content: subject-based knowledge and pedagogy- based knowledge, closing the door of the long-debated issue of which type of teachers' knowledge sufficiently qualifies candidate teachers. In this respect, collaborative coordination between teachers' educators and practicing teachers becomes pivotal in designing curricula for teaching candidates during their initial preparation years (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). Moreover, teachers' initial education policies need to mandate practicum or effective fieldwork experience to teacher entrants. Many OECD countries employ various accommodations for practical teaching experience of potential teachers. In Ireland, for example, teaching trainees are offered full- time school-based experiences for the duration of days of block placement throughout the academic school year (OECD, 2005). What is remarkable in the Irish experience is that policy makers there have realized that it is not sufficient for teacher trainees to rely solely on classroom experience. In fact, it is equally important to be exposed to the all-comprehensive school-based experience to enable those potential teachers to be intimately acquainted with the processes of supervision, planning, and extra- curricular activities. Examining teachers' initial education and its significant impact on both of teachers' learning and student academic performance, I concluded that initial teachers' learning is the tipping point from which novice teachers are expected to professionally grow and become empowered. Teachers' initial education represents the foundational platform for potential teachers, however, it should be regarded as only the threshold to a life-long learning experience. Such life-long learning experience requires on-going learning opportunities represented in professional development.

## **Professional Development**

In the age of rapid social and political changes, calls on school reform are echoed across the world. The focus on schooling institutions as the cornerstone of education reform is growing day after day. At the heart of the schooling system, comes the teacher as the most valuable resource. Hence, effective teaching is primarily dependant on high - quality teachers who are competent enough to prepare students to be life-long and self-directed learners (OECD, 2005). Building teachers' capacity, therefore, drives our attention to the importance of providing effective professional development for teachers, as the link between standards input-driven movement and student achievement output-driven movement (Wei et al., 2009)

To understand clearly the crucial role of effective professional development for teachers in the process of school reform, we must first define effective professional development. In their report published by The National Staff Development Council (NSDC), Wei et al. (2009) define effective professional development as “that which results in teachers’ knowledge and instructional practice, as well as, improve student-learning outcomes.” In this respect, professional development does not only positively affect students’ learning outcomes, but also, it reinforces the new role assigned to teachers as active learners and reflective practitioners.

The last two decades have witnessed a paradigm shift in the research concerned with professional development. The new paradigm focuses on distinguishing between high-quality or effective professional development, which aims at offering active opportunities for teachers’ learning, and traditional professional development that, is criticized in literature for being ineffective (Opfer & Pedder, 2011). The most common

forms of traditional professional development are workshops, conferences, courses and institutes, whereas the “reform” activities of effective professional development take the forms of coaching, mentoring, peer observation and study groups, ( Garet, Porter, Desimone, Birman, & Yoon., 2001; Wei et al., 2009). Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon (2010) list other alternative formats of professional development such as action research, partnerships between schools and teachers' universities, teachers' networks-where teachers from different schools have access to shared information on concerns and accomplishments, and where they can engage in active learning through computer links, newsletters, etc. Teachers' networks could also facilitate the arrangement of teachers' seminars and conferences. Such seminars could be held at “teachers' centers”, which represent another alternative format for professional development. Teachers' Centers enable teachers from various school contexts to participate in constructive dialogue and develop new skills in their profession.

Research on effective professional development places emphasis on significant common characteristics of reformed professional development activities. These features include collective participation, coherence, content-based, and time- sustained activities, (Fishman, Marx, Best, & Tal , 2003; Garet et al., 2001; Opfer & Pedder, 2011; Wei et al., 2009 ).

The literature on effective professional development has reached a consensus that collegiality and collective participation of teachers- in the on-going process of professional development- have strong positive impacts on students' achievements, teachers' teaching practices in addition to teachers' beliefs and attitudes, ( Opfer & Pedder, 2011). As highlighted by many researchers, collective participation of teachers

within the context of their own school enables teachers to rely on one another and to engage in professional dialogue and rigorous processes of both self and students' assessment. This kind of interdependency of teachers entices teachers to carry their practices to a public level, hence, forming a community of active learners. Teachers then get the opportunity to be generators of knowledge, rather than being passive recipients of it. In this respect, the school also fulfils its role as a learning community, (Wei et al., 2009)

The duration period and intensity of professional development activities have also been determinants of whether these activities are effective or not with respect to teachers' learning and students' achievements. Research findings on time –allocation for professional development activities point out that when teachers are exposed to time-sustained and more intensive professional and learning development activities, they (teachers) are more likely to implement these well-absorbed and reflected-upon activities into their own daily teaching practices (Garet et al., 2001; Opfer&Pedder, 2011; Wei et al., 2009). Thus, the time-sustained professional development activities prove to be more effective than the “flavor of the month” or the one-shot workshop whose impact is minimal on teachers' learning and students' achievements (Garet et al., 2001).

Professional development requires activities that are content-based and job-embedded as well, in order to be of high quality. Researchers divide the content-based activities into two main categories: the first category is the knowledge-based content, which includes knowledge of the subject matter taught and the tools and skills related to deliver that knowledge. The second category is pedagogical competences that include teaching strategies, classroom management, and assessment (Fishman et al., 2003).

Effective professional development needs to be rich in both categories in order to be meaningful to teachers. This will guarantee on-going and consistent implementation as well.

Coherence of professional development is a key component to its success. High-quality professional development aims at activities that are carried out in coherence within the school context and in alignment with the school's endeavors toward reform, rather than patched or fragmented activities that are done in isolation of the school context (Wei et al., 2009). Coherence of effective professional development practices calls for collaboration of school management and teaching faculty. In this respect, promoting the concept of distributed leadership becomes imperative and strongly related to high-quality professional development. Coherence, as a concept, could also be extended to embrace both of teachers' individual goals for growth and the school-wide goals, where each of these two sets of goals support and reinforce the other, (Glickman, Gordon & Ross-Gordon, 2010). In keeping with this thinking, Lambert (2000) also states that school leadership should not be reduced to the person of the principal; she suggests that leadership is derived from the synergy and the collaboration of all those who want to join the wave and construct collective meaning and knowledge. In this sense, all stakeholders need to develop a shared sense of community and work toward achieving collective goals and promoting their school as a center for knowledge and empowerment.

Implementation of effective professional development mandates efforts in the domains of pre-service training, in-service induction, and the holistically on-going teacher professional development activities and practices. Teachers' institutes should collaborate with schools where teachers' educators collaborate with practicing teachers in

devising teaching practices, content-based and pedagogy-based knowledge, and curricula that are compatible with global standards and in alignment to the school-wide goals and vision for reform. Such partnership must also be sensitive to the exclusively singular school context and school culture as well. Veteran and effectively experienced teachers could be of great help to novice teachers in induction programs through mentoring. To sum up, high-quality professional development is an on-going process, rather than an event that can contribute to transforming teachers to the model of the teacher as an active learner, decision maker, problem-solver, and an active agent of change.

### **Teacher Supply and Demand:**

As most of the world's countries are becoming increasingly aware of the significant role assigned to schooling in today's challenges, concerns about teachers' supply and demand balance are raised. The supply and demand balance relies on three determinants: pupil-teacher ratio, pupil-enrollment, and teacher attrition rate (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006; OECD, 2005; Zafeirakou, 2007) Most of the developing countries suffer shortages in their teaching force. The sub-Saharan countries, for example, face shortages in their teaching force for secondary schools. Reports indicate that the sub-Saharan region is likely to need to increase its teaching force by 68% by the year 2015 (Zafeirakou, 2007). One main challenge that the sub-Saharan region countries have to deal with is to provide schools with teachers that are sufficient in both quality and quantity. Teachers' supply and demand balance could also vary in different regions within the same country; a feature that is shared by developed and developing countries as well. Educational Policy makers are required to develop and implement effective strategies to attract quality teachers equitably to hard-to-staff schools or hard to reach

regions. Hence, managing teachers' practices for equitable placement and deployment of quality teachers is a priority in both developed and developing countries.

### **Teacher Attracting and Retaining Practices from a Global Perspective:**

Equitably supplying schools with quality teachers is directly linked to two issues: attracting effective candidate teachers and retaining the actually existing teaching force. Attracting quality teachers to the teaching career necessitates many provisions such as enlarging the hiring pool, raising the bar at teachers' colleges admission procedures to ensure high-caliber potential teachers. The necessary provisions also include providing more flexible entry routes to the teaching profession and offering alternative teachers' licensure programs that target Para-professionals, mid-career switchers, as well as, graduates from universities other than that of teachers. However, the literature on this topic finds little effective systematic research on the positive impacts of alternative teachers' licensure programs on quality teaching and student learning (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). The literature suggests that successful teachers' licensure programs share many features with traditional teachers' education programs. In fact, alternative teachers' licensure programs maintain the benefit of attracting more diverse teaching force in terms of age and ethnic background (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006). It is said that individuals become teachers for purely intrinsic reason, yet what retains them in the profession is ultimately extrinsic factors. Retaining effective teachers rests on several factors. These factors include improving the working conditions of teachers, ensuring on-going quality professional development activities, providing effective and supportive induction programs to novice teachers, widening the opportunity for teachers' empowerment and growth, providing support by school leadership, and enacting

effective mentoring and peer-coaching systems (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006; Glickman et al., 2010; OECD, 2005; Zafeirakou, 2007). Another significant factor in teachers' retention is improving teachers' self-image, which is directly dependent on teachers' social status within the society. Last, but not least, come the incentives whether monetary incentives, or non-monetary incentives in the form of housing provisions, forgivable loans, and graduate scholarships. Literature finds that such measures also serve to attract quality teachers to hard-to staff-schools in underdeveloped areas and regions.

### **Centralized versus Decentralized Teacher Selection:**

Education reform plans of most of the world's countries have resolved to a decentralized education system. Nonetheless, endeavors in that direction have not completely yielded success or effective implementation. Egypt is one of these countries. It is true that Egypt's educational reform plan, launched in 2007, illustrates the necessity to shift to the decentralized model of education, however due to the deeply engrained bureaucracy, among other reasons, the Egyptian government still has to deal with many challenges to reach the decentralized educational model. On the other hand, the literature finds some support for centralized educational policies. Cooper & Alvarado (2006) state - in their report - that centralized frameworks for teachers' policies have proven effective. The authors suggest that a centralized framework of policies help create congruence and common understanding. The authors add that centralized policy frameworks have the advantage of avoiding the ad hoc outputs of decentralized policy frameworks.

Teachers' selection and recruitment mechanisms should involve school management. The selection process is reported to be more effective and meaningful when the schools are involved (OECD, 2005; Zafeirakou, 2007). The role of the central

education office in this context is to set the general overarching standards for teachers' selection, giving the schools sufficient autonomy to make the final decision to fit the involved school best. The Kenyan decentralized selection and recruitment processes are a key testimony to the success of this teachers' selection model.

To sum up, based on research in Kenya, New York schools districts and the four states of California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan, decentralized hiring on its own is not sufficient enough to give a well-informed scope for both of the candidate and the hiring school. The collaboration between the district's central hiring office and the individual school would generate more efficient and rapid hiring procedures and decisions. The centralized district's recruiting and hiring office can lift some of the hampering factors such as late hiring, and reinforcing the training of screening skills for hiring committees and school principals, as well as, enhancing the interviewing skills that many school districts rely on as a screening instrument. Developed standardized interviews are commonly administered because they are considered as a medium-cost approach (Wise, Darling-Hammond & Berry, 1988).

### **The Case in Kenya:**

Since 2001, Kenya has acutely departed from the supply-based recruitment policy. In retrospect, since the establishment of the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) in 1967, recruitment of teachers in the public schools in Kenya was based on a centralized and supply-based policy. The Kenyan government then initiated some education reform measures and decided later that the TSC should target the dissemination of recruitment authority to the levels of schools and districts. Despite the positive outcomes of the school-based teacher recruitment policy in respect of equitable

distribution and retention of qualified teachers, it has been encountering several challenges that should be rectified.

### **School-based Teacher Recruitment Procedures in Post -Primary Public Schools in Kenya:**

The demand-driven policy of teachers' recruitment in Post-Primary public schools in Kenya is regulated by a set of guidelines as stated in the Teachers Service Commission, Policy on Teacher Recruitment and Selection (2006). The government of Kenya has also issued a scoring guide for the interviews of applicant to ensure the transparency and the fairness of the selection process. The score obtained according to the guidelines, along with, the professional certificates are considered as the selection criteria.

The Kenyan government has been working hard to rise above the threatening obstacles facing the school-based recruitment policy. Potential challenges include biases, tribalism, and nepotism, where sometimes the Board of Governors (BOG) ignores a qualified candidate to hire an "identified" one. Another threat is the deficiency in the BOGs competence skills in screening and deciding on effective prospective teachers. Some voices in Kenya support the involvement of all stakeholders in the recruitment and screening processes to ensure the validity of their issued decisions (Kipsoi & Antony, 2008).

### **New York school districts' recruitment procedures**

“Recruitment, like all aspects of human resource management, requires careful planning to be successful” (Pynes, 1997). One of the challenges that face the New York school districts is that most research on teachers' recruitment procedures is case-study based and not inclusive to all states' policies. . Policy makers usually tend to utilize the result findings of these case studies to issue wide-spectrum recommendations (Balter & Duncombe, 2005 p.3). In this respect, policy makers seem to be ignoring the role of contextualization; since what would work for New York school districts might not necessarily be very effectively valid for Colorado school districts. In this part we shall take a close look on teachers' recruitment practices within the school districts of New York.

The New York school districts rely on various recruitment strategies, some of which are traditional, and others are innovative. Examples of these traditional recruitment strategies are advertizing, local employment fairs, and college recruitment.

#### **Advertizing:**

Most of the New York school districts resort to advertizing, whether in local newspapers, or in local radio stations, being the least expensive means for recruitment. High- enrollment school districts or large districts could advertise in other New York papers. With regards to the time of the school year when the districts are likely to start recruiting for teachers, conventionally, most districts start recruiting in March or April, in that case the offer is made in June. It was reported that large districts start their recruitment a month earlier than small districts (Balter & Duncombe, 2005). It was also reported that making an early start in the recruitment process is associated with making

an early offer to potential teachers. In this respect, schools that prefer to make an early offer to prospective teachers may be paying more attention to the importance of giving the prospective applicant a fair chance to examine his/her future work place. Early hiring also enables the candidate to get to know the school administration and to get oriented with the new school culture. At this point, the candidate can give a final and irrevocable decision about joining this or that school, thus, minimizing the rate of attrition.

### **Recruiting from Colleges:**

Another recruitment strategy employed by the New York school districts is recruiting from colleges. College recruitment serves as a good supply source for novice teachers or paraprofessionals. Most school districts in New York post job notices on bulletin boards inside local and non-local colleges. The school districts also supervise student teachers and contact college faculty in local colleges. Contacting with local college can be viewed as an effective way in supplying the required number of prospective teachers. Since research suggests that most of college graduates prefer to work in their neighborhoods, or work in the same schools they were once students in. This remains in keeping with the “grow your own” program, which is founded on the principle of cultivating the needed teaching force from within in rural and urban areas (Berry et al., 2006.p.4).

### **Employment Fairs:**

Job fairs are also a common approach adopted by New York school districts. Attending job fairs helps these districts to enlarge their hire pool; however, it is more suitable to supplying novice, or mostly inexperienced teachers.

**Internet use:**

Using the internet for recruiting teachers is an emerging strategy employed by the New York districts. Internet use has many advantages such as being relatively an inexpensive way for teacher hunt. Internet use enables schools to post job notices on their school web site. It is a time-saving strategy, as the applicant teacher can always download application forms to fill in, then upload them, or send them via the school web mail. In this view, using the internet can broaden the teaching hire pool. However, it was noticed that with some small district schools, internet use was not quite accessible, since some of the small schools were reported not to have a web site. In such cases, the establishment of an organizational body like The Board of Cooperative Education Services (BOCES) in New York becomes very handy. The New York's Board of cooperative Education Services provides the school districts with required information on available applicants, advertising, online vacancies and employment. It is worth mentioning that organizations such as the BOCES seem to function better with districts that have human resources administration, or HR directors ( Balter & Duncombe., 2005 p.17). Consequently, BOCES can efficiently be implemented within the context of a centralized education system. Therefore, the public school system is likely to benefit most from such services.

In conclusion, the New York school districts rely on several recruitment strategies to increase their hire pool. These strategies include advertising, attending employment fairs, recruiting from colleges and the use of the internet. Organizations like the BOCES can effectively help in facilitating the recruitment process as it acts as a mediator between the applicant and the school. The case of New York has offered an insight as to how these schools recruit for teachers, but it did not tackle the screening and hiring procedures.

Examining the case in the four states of California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan should throw some light on selection, screening and hiring practices for new teachers.

### **The Case in the Four States of California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan:**

The processes of teachers' selection, screening and hiring can be based on different modalities. Some of these modalities are contradictory to one another. As clearly illustrated by (Wise, Darling-Hammond, & Berry, 1987), school districts are always encountered with two rivaling requirements: "the central authority's need for efficiently managing school systems and effectively maintaining uniform district standards and the local principals' need for effectively selecting candidates who best fit their particular schools" (Wise et al., 1987, p. 54). Thus, there exists this rivalry between centralized and decentralized hiring procedures. The four states of California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan mainly depend on decentralized hiring process for new teachers (Liu & Johnson, 2006). In this decentralized hiring process, the applicant is screened by the district's central office. The applicant afterwards is interviewed and offered a certain teaching position at the new school by the school administration and the school principal. In the four states of California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan, the candidate first is subjected to an initial interview at the district central office, where his or her credentials and certification are also examined and checked. The candidate then undergoes another one or more interviews in his/her future school run by the school principal; sometimes other faculty members (future colleagues) attend the interview (Liu & Johnson, 2006).

Decentralized hiring as one of the recruitment and hiring processes is meant to be a rich-information hiring process where the future candidate gets the opportunity to visit

his/her future school and meet with some of his/her future colleagues, supervisors and students. This strategy seems to be working in parallel with the rising consensus, over the last decade, among experts in the education field, along with policy makers over the significance of reinforcing the individualized control of schools over their hiring decisions (Murnane & Levy, 1996). Proponents of this trend suggest that the individually decentralized hiring process is to result in evading any likely miss match between the candidate and the school

In the ideal implementation of decentralized hiring, the teaching candidate is asked to prepare a demonstrative lesson in its natural setting, where students are there along with some of the teaching faculty and school principal. The purpose of this procedure is to offer a fair chance for both the school administration and the candidate to test waters before a deal is made. However, as reported by some research conducted in the four states of California, Florida, Massachusetts, and Michigan, there is no guarantee that the decentralized hiring strategy would render itself efficiency due to many reasons (Liu & Johnson, 2006.p.351). Though giving a demo lesson by the teaching candidate could be regarded as an effective tool of judging his/her teaching skills, the school administration might not find the time for such a procedure. Some of the faculty members (future colleagues) might be busy giving their own lessons. On some occasions, the new school's principal is to travel or to move to the candidate current school to watch him/her in action, which is a process that is both time and effort consuming. Finally, it was reported that in the cases where the teaching candidates are screened during summer when regular classes have been broken up, the candidate is screened by the school administration through a personal interview in the presence of a hiring committee. The

candidate's papers of credentials are previewed, and a decision is made. In such cases, the decision is both decentralized & individualized; nonetheless, it is a poor-information hiring process for both parties involved.

To ensure information-rich and effective hiring process for both of the teaching candidate and the school, it is imperative to establish cooperation between hiring schools and districts central hiring offices. The involvement of the district central hiring office ensures standardization of screening tools, and provides opportunities for fairness and early hiring. Moreover, school's involvement allows candidates to become more aware of the school culture to guarantee best-fit hiring.

After examining some different international contexts on best practices in the processes of teachers' selection and recruitment, and before we investigate the corresponding practices within the schooling context of Egypt, let us take a look at the Egyptian context in general and the education context in particular at present.

## **Chapter 3**

### **The Case in Egypt**

#### **The Egyptian National Context**

Between a heated Arab Spring and the advent of winter, Egypt stands amidst a very foggy transitional period that is clouded by blurred vision, and a great deal of uncertainties as to the destination of the process of democratic transformation. The spirit of oneness, and the unified stance which the people of Egypt had exhibited in Tahrir square in the face of the former corrupt regime during the past months of January and

February, has somehow taken a step backward. The past year and a half, since the onset of the 25<sup>th</sup> January Egyptian revolution, have been anything but calm. The revolution has been witnessing successive surges, formation of new political parties ranging from extreme fundamentalists to extreme liberals, attempts of polarization as well as attempts to exclude the youth who had initially ignited this revolution. Faltering economy, and floundering supreme military council, which incessantly claims that it- the council- is the protector of the revolution, and that its role is restricted to navigating the state through the transitional period and definitely not ruling it, until the state is delivered to civil authority. Tahrir Square has been showing growing anger on Fridays from the various platforms of the Salafists, The Muslim Brotherhood, the liberal forces depending on which group the supreme military council is siding with. The Egyptian street is forcibly being torn by a state of anarchy and chaos, especially with the deliberate absence of the police forces. Last but not least appears sectarianism to crest this general state of chaos threatening to drag Egypt into a labyrinth for years to come.

However, despite everything that is currently going on in Egypt, one fact remains and that is the hands of the clock are never going back again. Egyptians have tasted the victory of breaking the bars of their prison. They have competently defeated the barrier of fear inside of them, and they have learnt how to say “no” and “enough”. Egyptians are aware that the path to democracy is still long. Egypt has rightfully earned its freedom, and now deserves to lead a democratic life where all citizens enjoy equity and equality in terms of rights and duties. At such a momentous stage in Egypt's history, the road to democracy starts with education.

Education plays the lead role in shaping the upcoming stage in Egypt. Post-25th January Egypt requires transforming the standing Egyptian educational system in order for education to incubate a new set of values and standards to be instilled and nurtured in the new generations of Egypt. The education system urgently needs to meet the requirements of a transparent and democratic new Egypt

For decades, the education system in Egypt has ignored tackling crucial issues that, if properly addressed, would develop generations who enjoy social and political rights and would reinforce principles of democracy, equity, social justice and human dignity.

### **The Egyptian Educational Context:**

Egypt has witnessed multiple provisions in terms of the education system especially over the last two decades. Until recently, the schooling system in Egypt was divided into two main sectors; the public governmental schools and the private language schools. Today, there is a variety of schooling systems in Egypt. There are public schools that are completely under the government authority and strictly follow the regulations of the Egyptian ministry of Education. The government schools are sub-divided into public schools, with no or very little tuition (mainly registration and books tuition only) and Experimental government schools that teach the English language from first primary and teach the subjects of Math and Science in the English language. The Egyptian government subsidizes the tuitions in experimental schools. Experimental schools also work within a different framework of educational law that regulates their management.

A new sector has emerged and is widely expanding in Egypt in the last ten years which is the International schools sector. Nowadays in Egypt we have almost all sorts of

international schools; German, British, French, Canadian, American and even Pakistani schools. It was important to shed some background light on the operating school systems in Egypt since, as we shall see later in this research, each schooling system and each school as well, follows a certain set of recruitment procedures.

In private schools in Egypt, there is the noticeable phenomenon of pharmacists, or doctors teaching Science and engineers teaching Math; the reason for that as explained in the MENA-OECD (2010) is that Egypt requires no teaching certification or special teacher qualification for teachers, a university degree in the same or near-same specialization of the subject taught is enough. In this context, private schools pursuing teacher recruitment are focusing on teachers who possess subject matter and knowledge content and ignore the importance of pedagogical preparation that is essential to the teaching profession. Nonetheless, private schools maintain better recruitment practices than do public schools, as the former is obliged to satisfy its customers( parents) with a certain level of service ( MENA-OECD, 2010).

Egypt is one of the most populous states in the Arab world with a population that exceeds 80 millions of inhabitants (MENA-OECD, 2010). The noticeable feature in the demographics of Egypt is its huge youth bulge, where 34% of the population is under the age of 15. Around 98% of the population is crowded around the narrow stripes of the Nile valley. These demographic features place significant value on the role played by the human capital in Egypt in the process of educational reform. Both the investment in and the development of the human capital -led by teachers- in the Egyptian educational field form one of the most critical challenges educational reform must deal with effectively in Egypt.

“Teachers are the backbone of a country’s human capital development strategy”, Middle East and North Africa (MENA) - The Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Investment Programme, 2010). Government’s high engagement in recruitment and retention strategies of teachers reflects its firm belief in the value of the teaching policy, (MENA-OECD, 2010).

Egypt has been committed to an uprising in the education field. In 2007, the Egyptian government launched the National strategy in Education Reform, which included for the first time the development of a separate strategy for teachers’ recruitment and retention. However, many of the endeavors that are initiated at a ministerial level are not effectively implemented on the ground (MENA-OECD, 2010, p.18). Due to the lack of the monitoring and follow up procedures to ensure that the new recruitment strategy is correctly implemented, teachers remain “inexperienced, under paid, and under qualified”, (MENA-OECD, 2010).

The Business Climate Development Strategy BCDS is a strategy that defines where and how a country should reform to improve its business climate as well as its competitiveness. The BCDS is a joint initiative of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank, the European Union Commission (EU), and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The BCDS has developed a framework of five indicators for Teacher recruitment and retention that are arranged in ascending order, where level one is the least and level five the most. These five indicators aim at measuring the development and implementation of policies affecting teachers’ recruitment and retention . The BCDS score of Egypt’s input to teacher recruitment and retention policy is 2.5, this is attributed to the fact that Egypt has not yet developed a

comprehensively over-arching monitoring strategy in the area of teacher recruitment and retention in the public sector, that could be effectively implemented on the ground and not only on the ministerial level.

### **Teacher Supply and Demand Balance in Egypt:**

Unlike South and West Africa, Egypt public schools' sector maintains a comparatively low teachers' attrition rate. Teachers in the public education sector keep their teaching posts for life. They are promoted upon seniority, which is not necessarily equivalent to effective teaching competency; in fact, public school teachers maintain their teaching posts while having parallel additional jobs that mainly rotate around private tutoring (MENA-OECD, 2010). Moreover, reports suggest that most of high school students, who enroll in teachers' colleges, do so to ensure themselves a guaranteed job and secure a profitable career. However, a corresponding number of schools does not meet the huge increase in the number of Teachers' Colleges' graduates. Although other sources such as The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO, continue to report teacher shortages in Egypt, the truth has possibly to do with poor allocation and deployment.

Another problem is that in the last few years the state went back on its policy to hire graduates from teachers' colleges for ideological and political reasons. Egypt is one of the countries that are still struggling with infrastructural provisions in the schooling context (Zafierakou, 2007). The economic factor also intervenes in the supply and demand balance of teachers. In many a case, there is actually a surplus of novice teachers, yet there is not enough allocated budget to hire and professionally support them. Pupil-teacher ratio is also an effective determinant in the balanced supply and demand of

teachers in Egypt, yet it differs from one governorate to another. According to the Egyptian ministry of Education yearly statistics of the academic school year 2010-2011, Al Wadi- algadid-New Valley- governorate, the pupil -teacher ratio in public secondary schools is 6.04- 1 (annex 2); whereas in Cairo governorate it is 28.07-1 (annex 3). As a result, educational policy-makers in Egypt should focus on elevating the teaching capacity of the practicing teaching force, in addition to, motivating and attracting quality-teachers to join all schools in equity.

The ministry of education in Egypt is striving for the implementation of a reform policy for teacher recruitment and retention in the public schools sector; for that, it has sponsored the establishment of the Professional Academy for Teachers in 2007. One of the roles assigned to this academy is to foster a clear-cut strategy for teacher selection, recruitment and retention.

Egypt's score of 2.5 can be read in the light that Egypt's performance in that realm- developing and effectively implementing an all-inclusive regular teacher training strategy- is hanging between level 2 and level 3. This illustrates that Egypt is currently is in the process of formulating a national strategy for an on-going process of teachers' professional development, however, it is again lacking the effectively proper and quantifiable tools for monitoring (MENA-OECD, 2010).

### **The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT):**

The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) was established in 2008 as part of Egypt's education reform plan. The PAT has set many goals to achieve to build teachers' capacities and enhance teachers' empowerment as a regional center for excellence. The goals of PAT include setting standards for teachers' promotion, setting standards for

teachers' professional development, accrediting teachers' certification, granting teachers' licensures, and supporting educational research studies

The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) was able to achieve accomplishments, in partnership with some donors , in the field of Egyptian education.

Some Examples of PAT achievements are (as cited in El kharashy, 2010):

1. The strategic plan for The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT).
2. The promotion matrix for teachers
3. Job description teachers' cards
4. Teachers' performance evaluation tools
5. Teachers' skills and knowledge matrix
6. Human resources management system
7. Proposed Framework for the professional development of school leadership

It is worth mentioning that one of the main objectives of The National Reform Strategy, launched by the Egyptian government in 2007, and of The Professional Academy for Teachers (PAT) as well, is to enhance and ensure all-inclusive professional development plans for all Egyptian teachers working in the public sector ( MENA-OECD, 2010). Nevertheless, the existing professional development strategy is fragmented. It is currently implemented on small scale, rather than covering the whole public teaching force. One of the attributes of this situation might be that education reform hasn't been among the priorities of Egypt's former regime. Another attribute is that endeavors that have taken place so far are the results of small-scale initiatives that are done on the part of donors of worldwide organizations such as the World Bank and

the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), in cooperation with the ministry of education in Egypt (MENA-OECD, 2010).

Some assessment reports claim that PAT has many gaps to fill in the field of implementing formative professional development strategy and procedures with respect to initial teaching training, induction programs for veteran teachers, which are primarily aimed at teacher empowerment and teacher involvement in decision-making as well as policy-making. .

El kharashy (2010) assessment report summarizes the gaps that PAT needs to fill. He states that PAT has accomplished many achievements; however, it still faces some challenges. Some of the gaps that PAT needs to fill are insufficiency of qualified human resources and lack of assessment tools to evaluate them, absence of internal quality system that ensures ongoing performance self-evaluation, and absence of data base for local and regional professional development needs. Finally, the report emphasizes the need for PAT to reinforce communication with professional educators across the Arab region, in addition to, promoting its programs, mission and vision through various mechanisms locally, regionally, and internationally.

**Research Question:** What is the situation of teachers' recruitment and selection practices within different schooling systems in Egypt?

## Chapter 4

### Research Design and Methodology

**Research Design:** since the main concern of this research is to explore what is actually taking place within different school contexts in terms of teacher recruitment, selection,

placement, deployment and retention. I employed qualitative research approach to answer my thesis question. Consequently, I have interviewed school principals, teachers, school administrators, and district supervisors in different schools' contexts.

### **Type and Size of Sample**

Taking into consideration security issues and the state of unrest that the country is currently going through, I had to rely on possible points of access as the main determinant for the sample. Thus, a convenient sample appeared to be the best option available for me. Personal contacts have furnished access for me in the chosen schools. As the study is comparative, I divided the sample into five public schools and five private and international schools. Furthermore, I had to prepare myself for some risk factors that might arise because of being an AUC (an American institution) graduate student, at a time when political and social events have brought questions on AUC's position with regards to the revolution and current events in Egypt.. In general, gaining access to the five private schools was in a way easier than that to public schools. However, personal contacts who facilitated my access to public schools have been of great help. With regards to private schools, being myself a teacher in a private international school for over thirteen years has enabled me to maintain good work relations with many teachers in the field. The five private schools were all located in Cairo, whereas the other five public schools were located in Alexandria.

To ensure validity and enhance confidence in the ensued findings, I resolved to the triangulation of data. Denzin (1970) defines triangulation of data as integrating data from multiple sources to ensure validity. The total number of interviewed participants in the public schools was 28 participants. Participants included principals, teachers, school

administrators and district instructional supervisors. In the private schools' context, I have interviewed 25 participants. The sample of private school participants comprised of school principals, teachers, administrators and heads of departments. Hence, multiple vantage points were used to ensure reliable data from the various stakeholder participants.

### **The Demographics of the Sample:**

Participants from both school contexts, public and private, varied in age and experience. The age range of public school participants was between early thirties and late fifties, whereas that of private school participants was between early twenties and early fifties. It should be noted that the discrepancy in the age of the younger groups of participants in both contexts is attributed to relative shortage in young entrants to the teaching pool in public schools. In terms of gender, the majority of participants in both school's contexts were females. Teaching and Learning International Survey TALIS (2009) states that 70% of teachers in TALIS countries are females. In this respect, Egypt can be regarded as no exception. To ensure confidentiality and anonymity, I have omitted the names of the participants who are referred to in the study in terms of their job titles.

### **Data Collection Instrument:**

I employed guided, open-ended interviews as instrument for collecting data. Open -ended interviews allow participants to express their minds and feelings, which give the researcher an opportunity to gain more insight into the investigated issues (Boudah, 2011). I conducted face-to-face interviews with all participants. Participants were engaged in the interviews in their normal work places. I gave the participants the

interview protocol before starting the interviews. On all public school visits, contact persons have accompanied me to introduce me to the school principal and to facilitate my mission. I always started the interview by introducing myself and explaining the purpose of my research. Then I would highlight the potential positive implications of the study on future teachers' policies. At this point, I must acknowledge that the vast majority of participants have been very encouraged to open up and give their input on the interviewed topics, once I assured them that their identities as well as their schools were to remain anonymous. Furthermore, I yielded to their desire when I asked if they would feel comfortable with the process of recording their responses, and they expressed that they would not feel comfortable with the idea of recording. Consequently, I used only field notes to document their responses. I spent around four to six weeks to complete data collection. The duration for each school visit and interview was about five hours.

**List of Interview Topics:**

1. How do you recruit for teachers?
2. To what extent, is the school leadership involved in the selection process of teachers?
3. How do you screen teachers?
4. How do you manage teachers' placement inside your school?
5. Is your selection policy competency-based, or convenience-based?
6. In terms of credentials, what are your minimum requirements?
7. How do you manage the promotion system at your school?
8. How do you manage professional development at your school?
9. What kind of support does the school leadership offer to novice teachers?

10. How does the school manage to retain able- teachers?

### **Data Analysis:**

I used thematic analysis where I had read my raw data, my field notes, and personal memos several times to extract themes that both represent and reflect participants' responses. During the process of thematic analysis, I recurrently referred to participants for clarifying some emergent ambiguous points, and/or validating my analysis of their responses.

### **Triangulation of Data**

As mentioned above, I interviewed principals, teachers, school administrators and district supervisors within the same school and using the same research instrument for multiple sources of data to ensure validity. Furthermore, while applying thematic analysis, I have referred to multiple sources of data to verify the analyzed responses.

During the process of initial analysis of data, I felt a strong need to go into in-depth examples to develop better and deeper understanding of what is actually going on inside schools in terms of teachers' recruitment, selection, placement, deployment, and retention. Since the core of the study rests on comparison, I decided to present an example of one public school and one private school in the secondary stage to compare the employed procedures and strategies pertinent to teachers' recruitment and selection.

### **Public school X**

#### **Historical Background**

When the ministry of education established school X in 1989, it was a mixed preparatory school with an annex for secondary school students. The school lies in one of

the remote school districts in the governorate of Alexandria, Ameriya School district. Many teachers and district instructional supervisors, at that time, identified it as a hard-to-staff- district and refused to be transferred to work there because of its remoteness from down town and the insufficiency in transportation means. However, when the Gulf war II broke out in August 1990, many teachers, who the Egyptian Ministry of Education used to send regularly to teach in the Gulf Arab countries, were forced to return home. Subsequently, a large sector of returning teachers supplied some of the hard-to-staff- schools and school districts with teaching force. Another factor that helped filling that hard to staff school district was the initiative undertaken by the Egyptian government in 1992 to build schools in compensation of the schools that have collapsed in the earthquake that hit Egypt at that time. Gradually, the remote and hard-to-staff-school district started to be populated with both students and teachers.

### **School Profile:**

The school has a teaching population of 170 teachers teaching 2548 students in the secondary stage. The teacher-students ratio is around 1:60. There are five female social workers, two psychology specialists, seven female administrators, and two female workers. Over the last ten years, the school has become over populated with students that the school administration had to turn the school's mosque to a classroom. To overcome dense student population, the school administration built a four-storey concrete building that nearly swallows the school's playground leaving not much room for students' recreation. Teachers' working space is in no better conditions. Some of the male teachers have built themselves small-sized aluminium shacks in the remaining space of the school's playground to finish their daily marking and grading. On my first interview visit

to that school, I sat with six teachers in a room whose area is about six square meters (2 x 3). When I commented on the size of the room, teachers informed me that they share that room with four other teachers of another department. They added, *"It-the room- was better than having to sit in the playground where the sky is your only roof"*

## **Data Collection Plan**

### **Key informants**

Due to work obligations and study conditions here in Cairo, I set out on employing a key informant technique as the data sources for school X example. Marshall (1996) defines key informants' technique as employing expert sources of data in an ethnographic research method. Tremblay (1957) suggests there are five characteristics that qualify "ideal" key informants: role in the community, knowledge, communicability, willingness, and impartiality. Taking this into consideration the highlighted characteristics of eligible key informants, I tried to choose key informants who possess most of the above-mentioned qualities.

My choice settled on two key informants: a senior high school female teacher and a middle-range educator. The rationale for choosing two key informants instead of one was that I wanted to capture the complete picture and get a real "feel" of the school culture and setting in terms of teachers' selection, placement and deployment processes. Moreover, I think that the two employed key informants were largely suitable as expert data sources. The first key informant is a high school senior teacher who has been in the school since its establishment. Hence, she has been long enough in the place to develop a deep knowledge of its politics and dynamics. She was also awarded the "Ideal Teacher"

prize across all public school teachers in 1992. Moreover, on my first visit to school X, and as I was interviewing some of that senior teacher's teaching staff individually, I saw how she positively supports and inspires her teachers in their teaching performance. It was very interesting for me to find out from one of the novice teachers interviewed that she-the novice teacher- used to be a student in the same school X, and that the chosen key informant was her high school teacher at that time. . The novice teachers then added that her senior teacher- my first key informant- was her inspiration to become a successful teacher.

The second key informant is a middle-range district supervisor who has been supervising school X since 1995. She maintains very good rapport with teachers of school X; something that I have noticed during my first school visit. The district supervisor has expressed her willingness to help me do the case study, and I think that having an inside perspective and an outside perspective has added significant insight to the case study of school X. Collecting data from key informants took place in two face-to face meetings, in addition to, frequent phone calls.

### **Private School Y:**

#### **Background Note:**

School Y is a privately owned school that was founded in 1984. The first school building was a villa in one of Cairo's prestigious suburbs. When the school first opened, it only housed KG I and KG II students. Since its early establishment, the policy of the school's administration was to attract a certain social sector in the Egyptian society: the upper middle and upper-class families. The school has managed to achieve its target due

to two main reasons: one, the personal connections of the owner-who is a renowned businessperson and two, through its initiation of a schooling routine that was very innovative among all schools at that time. When school Y moved to its premises to a fancy establishment located in the outskirts of Cairo, it adopted a system where students can stay after school for two or three hours with teachers to finish their homework. The system was optional, yet the vast majority of parents embraced the idea and decided to keep their children after school, especially that it was a free-of-charge service offered by the school. Within that system, students would finish all their daily homework at school and arrive home around six in the evening to freshen up, eat dinner and go to bed. The system was applied to only primary students. Assigned teachers, whom the school paid extra, used to help students do their homework. The system has been up and running for about ten years during which school Y has occupied a remarkable status among other private schools in Cairo. School Y has stopped adopting that system when some parents started to complain that their children's test performances do not match with their performance in homework completion. Simultaneously, teachers began to voice their concerns that the afternoon system pays off with only high achieving students whose parents help at home.

With the expansion of the American and British education systems in Egypt in general and Cairo in specific, school Y opened an American division in 1999. Seven years ago, the owner of school Y decided not to accept any new students into the national private system because the school wants to become completely an American school that grants an American Diploma as a high school completion certificate.

At present, the American division of school Y contains 651 students from Pre-K through G12, 80 teachers, and 11 administrators.

### **Data Collection Plan: Participant Observation**

The data collection plan for school Y example relied solely on observation. Many scholars have acknowledged Participant Observation as the hallmark of ethnographic studies. Participant observation enables the researcher to learn about the activities of the people studied in their natural setting through both observation and participation (Kawulich, 2005). Since I have been a high school teacher at school Y for the last thirteen years, I resolved to employ myself as a participant observer for the case study of school Y. Being part of the teaching faculty at school Y for many successive years has equipped me with privileges that made my observation mission smoother. There were factors that have helped me accomplish my observation with better efficiency. For example, I had natural access to the studied field, I maintained strong and good work relations with my colleagues. Moreover, I have developed a good sense of the culture and a considerably good feel of the studied field. I had enough knowledge of the studied field to know whom and what to observe that would yield richness and depth to my study. Last, but not least, I am known to be one of the most sociable persons in the school. Before proceeding with data collection, I informed the studied community of the purpose of my study, and the reason I was observing their activities. I also assured community members of the anonymity of their identities. I decided to do so because I wanted to be in alignment with the code of ethics for participant observation, (Kawulich, 2005).

### **Data Collection Tools**

As the main purpose of my study was to explore the employed processes and procedures in teachers' recruitment and selection, I utilized the interview topics as a framework for collecting data from school Y. I also used informal conversations and casual talks that took place mostly in the teachers' lounge or in staff rooms. I was careful to diversify my data sources, which enabled me to triangulate my findings for validity issues. The shared trust between most of the respondents and me has made participants open up easily and express their thoughts, feelings, and reflect on many of the activities and strategies that are relevant to teachers' policies in the studied field. I observed novice and veteran teachers of various teaching disciplines, leadership and administrators, in addition to regular daily activities that took place in the studied field.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Findings and Discussion**

#### **Public Schools: Leadership in Public Schools:**

##### **Autonomy**

The overall findings of the five examined schools show that leadership in public schools does not exercise any autonomy with respect to teachers' recruitment, selection, and hiring. The directorate of education in every governorate is the official apparatus that hires or/and contracts, deploys teachers across school districts within that governorate. The directorate of the education bureau deploys the hired teachers to the districts across the governorate according to shortage and surplus matrix. Hence, the role

of leadership in public schools is limited to identifying teacher shortages in a specific subject matter within their schools, and reporting this data to the district instructional supervision to take necessary actions. Furthermore, leadership in public schools does not possess the authority to reject or refuse a teacher into their schools once he or she has been hired and deployed by the directorate of education.

Leadership in public schools is also not involved in teachers' placement inside their schools. The senior teacher, supervised by district instructional supervision, places the hired or transferred teacher inside the school. In this respect, the concept of competency is completely ignored, or at the best, not counted for as criterion for teachers' selection or teachers' placement. For example, a principal of high school girls' school comments on that point saying, "*competency is an out-of-context-word, since I have no prior knowledge of any of the hired or transferred teachers*". Instead, he resolves to "seniority" as a substitute criterion for competency. Seniority is considered a fundamental key instrument in the employed strategies for teachers' selection, placement, and promotion in the public education sector in Egypt. Findings reveal that the main determinant factor for teachers' placement inside a school is seniority. A district instructional supervisor explains that in case of having two hired or transferred teachers for two openings within the same school-, one opening is in a senior high school class, and the other is in a junior high class, the two teachers are placed according to seniority. Seniority-based comparison, as she explains, would extend to include dates of graduation, hiring and birth, in addition to, the alphabetic order of each of the two candidates' names to identify the more eligible candidate. In this context, seniority becomes equivalent to

eligibility. This practice is a clear reflection of the deeply rooted bureaucratic system that dominates the Egyptian governmental apparatus in general.

Leadership in public schools is not autonomous in terms of either designing or conducting professional development sessions for their teachers. The interviewed principals state that professional learning of teachers is the responsibility of the district instructional supervisor and not theirs. One identified exception is a middle school principal, who says that he, along with the head of the training unit, sets a yearly plan for professional development for each of school administrators, teachers, and school workers. He adds that each subject matter department is scheduled for a certain date within the academic year to conduct professional development sessions. The principal adds that sometimes he sends a teacher or two, to “reinforcement workshop” that are arranged by the general instructional supervision office where teachers across the governorate are given training on topics such as teaching methodology, or where teachers get oriented with a certain regulation that has been recently initiated and enacted by the ministry of education. In this context, the principal states that he always chooses the teacher who *“absorbs well and delivers equally well to the rest of the faculty members”*. What identifies this school principal as an exception is that he practically enacts the regulations and makes sure that all teachers at his school benefit from the workshops designed by the general supervision office. The school principal comments on that point illustrating that, *“if I love my job, and I do, I must act proactively, but before anything, I must build my team and involve my teachers in everything. This is the only way we can achieve success at the school level.”* To elaborate further on that point, the

school principal stated proudly that his school has managed to establish a science club that is supervised by Bibliotheca Alexandrina through self-funding and personal contacts.

Findings reveal that there is a unit for training and evaluation in every school that is supervised by the vice principal. However, the training and quality unit is not assigned to develop and foster teachers' professional learning or carry out action research projects. It is assigned to train teachers on crisis management, safety issues, first aid, maintenance, etc.

The vice principal and head of the training and quality unit at a girls' high school comments on this unit as being "futile". *"I beg for teachers to come and attend the training sessions, most of the time they are not free or too over-loaded with work to attend. Besides there's no budget allocated to this unit; sometimes we resolve to self-funding, other times we borrow from other units' budgets"*. It is worth noting that the National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education in Egypt (NAQAAE) accredited this school in 2010.

### **Teachers in Public Schools:**

#### **Dissatisfaction**

*"How can I motivate my teachers, when I myself feel de-motivated and under-acknowledged"*

The overall findings relevant to teachers in public schools show that the overriding common element is dissatisfaction. Participants' responses reflect their discouragement in performing their roles as educators to the fullest because of many challenges they face. The vast majority of participants' responses reflect that teachers'

academic performance is highly affected by many factors. These factors include underpayment, insufficiency of financial and teaching resources, inefficiency of teachers' education and preparation, over-crowded classrooms, and exclusion on the policy-making level. However, teachers' biggest challenge remains to be that they are unrecognized by community members. Teachers feel that their social image is regarded as less accomplished, compared to that of other professions.

A district instructional supervisor with a teaching experience of more than twenty-five years expresses her disappointment at how the community and policy makers reward teachers. She says that, *"the government is always declaring that our ministry of education is a ministry that does not provide the government with any income. They, neglect the fact that we as teachers provide the whole state with the most precious income; we export human resources to the whole community that are more valuable than any other financial asset, so where is recognition and what is our reward"*

With regards to this point, a middle-range policy-maker demonstrated that the ministry of education in Egypt has introduced some reform measures in terms of teachers' policies such as the enactment of the teachers' cadre in 2007-2008. One of the positive outcomes of the teachers' cadre is raising the salaries of teachers by a range that varies from 50% to 150% decided upon according to the number of teaching experience years. However, respondents refuted that point saying that this cadre raise is not fixated on the basic salary of teachers. Consequently; many teachers, even the ones with the highest rank in the cadre, when they come to retire find themselves receive a pension that is set according to their latest paid basic salary and not according to the cadre salary. This

point, in particular, , is a currently disputed issue among teachers, the ministry of education, and the Egyptian government.

The overall findings suggest that the vast majority of participant teachers are dissatisfied with the present strategies of teachers' selection as well as their working conditions in general. A senior teacher in a technical girls' high school cynically comments on the induction he received in his first teaching experience saying, "*The Sea is your best swimming coach*". By this quote he means that his senior teacher, when he first became a teacher, did not provide him with any beneficial input on his role as a novice teacher, especially that he was not a graduate of the Teachers' College, so he lacked pedagogical education in that respect.

Another technical high school lead teacher expresses his embarrassment when he goes to the bank and meets with one of his former students who is now an employee at that bank. "*every time, I run into one of my former students in a bank or any other institution, I feel so embarrassed when I compare my income as a public school teacher ,with almost thirty years of experience, and my former student's salary. It is just not fair.*"

The vast majority of responses show that teachers in public schools are dissatisfied with their exclusion from the process of decision making pertinent to teachers' policies. " we should be involved", says a female high school senior teacher who further adds that "*especially in terms of professional development training, we- teachers- should be involved in designing and choosing the topics for these sessions. We are the front liners, not those who sit in their air-conditioned fancy offices*".

Among these dissatisfied responses, there is one dissenting voice of a senior teacher at a girls' high school. The responses of that teacher reflect his reconciliation with

the education system at large, and the processes pertinent to teachers' selection in specific. He describes the process of teachers' selection and hiring as effective enough. It is worth mentioning, in this context, that this one identified exception might be attributed to the individual circumstances of this participant in particular. I noted that he is involved in almost all of his accredited school's administrative matters. In addition to being a senior high school teacher, he is the head of the governance and management unit at his school. He is also the head of the exam control unit. Moreover, he is a member of the school board and an elected member on the school board of Trustees. He is greatly acknowledged by his school principal who describes him as "the school dynamo" because he possesses high social, administrative and communication skills which enables him to deal effectively with many challenges that the school faces on daily basis. Last, but not least, the senior high school teacher is a well-established private tutor within the school neighborhood.

#### **Awareness and Intellectual Maturity:**

While conducting interviews with the public school teacher participants, I experienced mixed feeling of surprise, sympathy and pride. All the participants' responses demonstrate a significant sense of awareness that might appear-at the superficial level-not very much in congruence with their current state of discouragement and under-acknowledgement. However, as much as teacher participants suffer non-recognition and lack of academic motivation, as much as they exhibit a remarkable sense of consciousness of their situation as public school teachers. Moreover, participants' responses manifest a mature and realistic evaluation for the processes of education reform in Egypt as a whole.

A senior high school teacher summarizes all measures undertaken by the ministry of education as *“a mile long and an inch deep, as long as their voice is neither heard nor considered by policy makers”*.

Undeterred by many challenges, most of the participant teachers appeared open to change and ready for further academic and professional development. This willingness for transformation springs from their understanding of the realities of their profession and the limitations imposed on them as well. They are aware of active learning versus traditional teaching technique, they are aware of the importance of having class discussions and debates; they realize that the current testing system is based on rote learning and memorization, last, but not least they genuinely want to be active agents for social and educational change. Unfortunately, their hands are tied by the centralized system and their under representation in policymaking. A high school Psychology teacher, comments on his situation as a teacher as being “static” whereas he wishes to become more “dynamic”. This teacher, joined by four of his colleagues of the same teaching department, illustrates that he lacks the flexibility to proceed, or to initiate any adjustments to the syllabus he teaches. The distribution of the syllabus is designed by the general counselor for the subject matter, who also sets the detailed yearly plan and sends it to all public high schools in Egypt to follow thoroughly. It then becomes the responsibility of both the district instructional supervisor and the senior teacher to make sure that all teachers teaching that subject are proceeding at the same pace, covering the same topic at the same time across the state.

### **Colleagues as the Support-Base:**

The overall findings relevant to teachers' retention indicate that teachers' retention is significantly dependant on colleagues and friends in the work setting, and not on school leadership. Teachers relate to their colleagues as their support-base from which they are provided with all kinds of support: academic, emotional and psychological. Some of the participants turn to their senior teacher, but only as a secondary resort; the primary resort is always colleagues and friends especially those of the same department. The term "family" is the most frequent answer teachers give when asked about retention. Most of these teachers identify school principals as "ephemeral" while their colleagues are "lasting".

Findings suggest a correlation between school size and teachers' compartmentalization. It is noted that in small-sized schools, teachers tend to develop and extend strong collegiality bonds with all co-workers, whereas in big-sized schools; teachers are more compartmentalized and more enclosed toward their department co-workers

### **Private/International Schools' Findings**

#### **The Traditional Cycle of Teachers' Recruitment and Selection**

Findings from four schools show that all of the four schools follow the same cycle of teachers' recruitment and selection with slight individual variation. The means for recruitment vary between advertizing on the school web, advertizing in newspapers, walk-in applicants, and applicants furnished through members of the teaching faculty.

The first thing the applicant does is filling out an application form and submitting a resume. After initial screening for both the applicant and his or her resume, the applicant is scheduled for an interview. Traditionally, the interview is attended by the senior teacher or the head of department of the subject the candidate is applying for. Findings reveal that the screening process that takes place during the first interview focus on specific areas. These areas are mainly that of appearance, self-confidence, communication and interpersonal skills, attitude, self-composure, content and pedagogical knowledge. Some exceptions were noted in one of the studied schools, where the academic director inquired about the marital status. Furthermore, in case of newly married female applicants, the same academic director inquires about pregnancy plans, and how the applicant expects to manage her newborn and her job commitments. The academic director defends her position saying, “ *I must probe that area, many times I have been put in situation where expecting teachers leave without prior notice, where they suddenly decide to quit work because they cannot take care of their babies*”

Having survived the first interview, the candidate is then asked to prepare a demo lesson. Again, the politics of handling demo lessons vary from one school to another. Two of the studied sample ask the candidate to prepare any lesson they choose, two other schools do not require a demo lesson, and one school makes certain provisions for that demo lesson. That school asks the candidate to give the demo lesson to real student audience. They specify the lesson that the candidate must prepare; usually they follow the syllabus of the subject applied for. The principal of one of these two schools demonstrate that, “*we want to see the candidate performing in a natural*

*setting, we want to observe his or her interaction with the students and at the same time, we don't want those students to fall behind in their syllabus".* These provisions are feasible if the candidate applies while classes are still running, but in case the candidate applies during the summer vacation, faculty members substitute students. When the candidate gives a satisfactory demo lesson, he or she then meets with the school principal to finalize the deal in terms of finances.

The overall findings show that all studied schools require credentials. These credentials are usually the official transcript of the candidate's university scores and a copy of the candidate's identity card. Findings at three schools show that teachers' certification is an asset, but not a must. There is one identified exception of the studied sample, where the school does not mandate the candidate to present his or her credentials.

### **Autonomy of Leadership in Private Schools**

In terms of exercising autonomy over the processes of teachers' recruitment, selection, placement and retention, the overall findings show that in four of the five examined schools; school leadership is completely involved in teachers' selection. The one identified exception is a Canadian offshore School. Leadership of that offshore school is not involved by any means in the processes of teachers' recruitment, selection, hiring, placement, and retention. An agent whose headquarters is located in Canada is contacted exclusively by the school here in Egypt to handle all processes related to teachers' selection and hiring. The contracting process takes place in Canada, and while there, teachers are supplied with all the information they need to know about their teaching positions in the school in Egypt. The school principal does not provide any input

in that direction. She comments on that by saying that her job is to, *"take them from the door, and make sure they do a good job"*. The school principal states that she has utter trust in the Canadian school agent, *"the agent is well-acquainted with our school culture, and he knows how to select for us"*

### **Teachers' Placement**

Findings of four examined schools reveal that school leadership places teachers inside their schools based on specific determinants such as experience, age, and gender. School leaderships prefer to place experienced teachers in middle or high school and novice teachers in foundation and elementary stages. The principal of a Girls' International American school says that for high school, she prefers teachers who are over 40 years old, as she says, *"they are better-fit to handle teenagers"*.

The vast majority of the sample thinks that novice and young teachers are better in dealing with kindergarten children and elementary students. However, there is one identified exception in an American International school. The school principal at that school emphasizes that she hires only graduates of Kindergarten Teachers' College to teach the foundation stage regardless of the candidates' age. She gives her comment saying, *"certification is what matters most to our school at the early stages"*

Gender is one of the influential determinants at one of the examined schools. The female school principal expresses that she would always favor females over males if both were equally competent. Her rationale is that, *"women are usually more patient and more dedicated to their students than men"*. The same school principal would make an exception in the case of Arabic language teachers, *"for Arabic teaching, I believe male teachers are more competent, especially in terms of classroom management"*

### **Friends and Colleagues are the Main Support-Base:**

The vast majority of the participant teachers state that their main reason for staying at their schools is their colleagues and friends. School leadership support is ranked as less influential in teachers' retention. A senior science teacher comments on that point saying that she is aware that her school leadership is supportive, however, she adds that, *"I'm here because of my friends and colleagues; they're my source of comfort."* Another English High school teacher expresses the same point, yet differently, when she says, *"no matter how much the school offers to give, it never compensates the amount of effort, zeal or passion exerted by teachers."*

### **The Hierarchy of Teachers**

With the exception of the Canadian offshore school, findings of the four other examined schools reveal that leadership in these schools do not prioritize foreign teachers over local Egyptian ones. In terms of the Canadian offshore school, it only recruits and hires foreigners, preferably those with an offshore teaching experiences. The owner of the Canadian school demonstrates that his school must abide to the teachers' selection criteria employed in the Canadian province where his school is accredited. These criteria state that candidate teachers must exclusively come from the province hiring pool, they must be certified teachers, their teaching licensure must be annually renewed, and their criminal records checked. Findings from the Canadian school also reveal that local Egyptian teachers are hired as only Arabic, religion, and Arabic social studies teachers with a completely different pay scale than that of the Canadian teaching faculty. *"It is just a fact of life"*, says the owner, and *"we have to play by the rules"*. These findings are

supported by two other term papers <sup>1</sup> for EDU 521, fall 2011. The findings of the two studies suggest that American international schools pay their teachers based on nationality . The majority of these foreign teachers are uncertified, and inexperienced or specialized, yet, they are on the top of the pay scale just because they are not Egyptians.

**Examples of Some Employed Strategies for Teachers Recruitment and Selection:**

*(the following examples are adapted from a term paper done by the researcher for EDUC521, spring 2011)*

**School A**

School A is an American international school. Findings of school A reveals some especially good and innovative approaches, compared to the other studied sample, School A was the only school reported to have a provisional membership with The Council of International Schools, CIS, which enjoys a bank of teachers' resumes. The vice principal has told me that they are expected to have their full membership by next fall. The vice principal pointed out that her school membership with the CIS was to be implemented the current school year if it were not for 25 January Revolution. School A posits a must on hiring licensured teachers regardless of their nationality. The second thing that characterized School A is its candidate's screening strategy. The vice school principal says that the new candidate is evaluated based on an appraisal form adopted from Charlotte Danielson's "The Framework for Teaching". The evaluation form includes three descriptors: content pedagogy, classroom management and professionalism. Teachers' placement, as pointed out, by the vice-principal rests on the factors of best-fit, teacher's preferences and available vacancies.

In terms of professional development inside school A, the vice principal reports that in their school they have a policy for professional development that is simply: “job-embedded”. She illustrated her answer by explaining that all teaching faculty must use the “6+1 Traits of Writing” including the Arabic and Arabic social studies teachers. School A also arranges for professional development workshops on how to use some research database such as Academic Research Complete, and how to manage student-led parents' conferences. The rest of the screening process that School A adopts could be regarded traditional, where they follow the circle of surveying the applicant's resume, conducting an interview, laying great emphasis on whether or not the candidate is a possible match with the school culture and environment.

The last commendable finding of school A, is that their professional development workshops are inclusive to all subjects; my concern here is the Arabic teachers, who are usually under-estimated and undermined within the context of most of the international schools in Egypt by their students and their school administrations.

### **School B:**

School B had its own way of screening prospective young teachers. On some occasions, the principal had reported that an applicant would seem not to be “*hundred percent ready, or competent for a teacher, especially if she is a fresh grad*”, yet “*we would see her as promising given the proper induction by experienced teachers*” In that case she would be hired as a contract teacher. The newly hired teacher then, reports that principal is exposed to in-house training by senior teachers of the same field and out-houses training in institutions like the British Council. This kind of training is completely funded by the school, if the new teacher signs an agreement that he/she is not to leave the

school before the passage of certain duration of time. In reply to whether they hire based on criteria of convenience, or experience, the principal had clarified that they must consider the knowledge-based content of the applicant, along with, his/her specialized field, years of teaching experience. However, the thing they primarily look for is whether or not the candidate can effectively function within a team; *"it is one of our main concerns at our school; team spirit"*

Findings reveal that School B principal and administration puts weight on the importance of always having a cadre of new teachers in line that are receiving hands-on teacher training and preparation. Adopting this approach, School B spares itself resorting to emergency hires who in , many cases, might not be the best fit either in quality, personal interests, or experience.

### **The De jures and De Facto in Teachers' Recruitment and Selection Procedures in the Contexts of Public and Private Schools:**

The two examples of the public and the private secondary schools reveal alternative routes for the practices of teachers' recruitment, selection and deployment. Deep examination of the two examples unfolds the hidden criteria for teachers' selection and deployment. Circumvention of regulations and laws is noted; gender, religion, age, academic competence, and socioeconomic status are identified as major determinants in the hidden selection criteria.

### **The Example of School X**

School X started strong with a devoted and enlightened principal, cooperative and harmonious teaching faculty, and supportive district instructional supervision. The three

parties shared common goals of reinforcing the school status and enhancing students' achievement. The small-sized teaching population during the school early years, and their similar socio-economic background helped disseminate an atmosphere of collegiality and friendliness that was a characteristic of the school during that time. The school principal was an ardent female educator who believed in her teachers' potentials. She started working at this school first as a vice principal, then as a principal. The school principal had a vision for her school, a vision that she managed to communicate to her teaching faculty and to the district instructional supervision. The core of that vision was to enhance the academic and pedagogical competencies of her teaching faculty. Implementing that vision required utmost support from the school district supervision, since it is the apparatus responsible for deploying and transferring teachers across the school district. The school principal was fortunate enough to have district supervisors that were in alignment with her educational goals and philosophy of education. Laws and regulations did not stand behind the agreement between district supervision and the leadership of School X; in fact, regulations and laws do not authorize leadership in public schools to fire, reject or refuse any teacher that district supervision deploys to his or her school. It was an exceptional agreement resting on individual circumstances.

In terms of teachers' selection, deployment and retention, school X has borne witness to several incidents that both reflect and exemplify the hidden criteria for teachers' selection and deployment and the circumvention of law and regulations as well. During her leadership, the school principal encountered problems with a high school psychology teacher. The psychology teacher was in the habit of leaving classes during the school day, making up excuses most of the times, as reported by key informants. The

school principal tried to talk with the teacher to make her change her behavior, yet it was futile, especially when the teacher would regularly sign in and out in the school attendance sheet. Therefore, going by regulations, the teacher had not actually broken any rule, and she had the attendance sheet to support her. It was at that time that the school principal decided to turn to the district instructional supervisor for help. The district Psychology supervisor listened to the complaint of the school principal and decided to “put that teacher under the microscope” for close academic observation. After several class visits by both the district supervisor and the senior Psychology teacher of the school, and after meticulous follow up of the teacher’s lesson plans and her students’ academic records; the opportunity came during one of the class visits conducted by the district supervisor, when the teacher delivered wrong information to her students in class. The district supervisor then held a meeting with the Psychology teacher to inform her of her dissatisfactory academic performance as a teacher. Supported, by evidence from the teacher’s lesson plan and feedback of her students, and more importantly, by the General Supervisor of psychology, the district supervisor told the teacher to submit a formal request for her transfer from the whole district to another school district. It should be noted here that while the district supervisor was intently observing the teacher academic performance, she had also informed the General supervisor of the whole situation for the purposes of advice and support. Gaining support from the General supervisor, the district supervisor then clarified to the teacher that, in case, she did not officially request for a transfer, wide-scale investigation should take place in the directorate of education that should cover all of her past practices in the school. The teacher, at this point, felt that her

only way out of this fix was to yield to what her supervisor asked her to do, and she was transferred from the whole district.

The major implications of this incident, with all its behind-the stage-maneuvers, reveal some of the practices that occur in the de facto of teachers' transfer and deployment . One of the clear revelations is the significance of establishing agreement and synergy in the educational vision between both school leadership and district supervision. Another finding that should not be ignored is the personal harmony that existed between the school leader and the district supervisor on the professional level to pursue the same goals.

The bureaucratic and centralized system is another part to be added to teachers' selection, deployment, placement and transfer cycle that also needs to be thoroughly examined. The school principal lacked sufficient autonomy; consequently, she turned to the district supervisor for support. The district supervisor, in turn, needed professional support from a higher entity, in the case events escalated or took unexpected course. Last, but not least are the loopholes that characterize the existing educational law. The teacher was allegedly not fully committed to the school and to her obligations as a teacher. However, the school principal lacked the legal support to discipline her, especially if the district supervisor endorsed the teacher. Yet, in this situation, the district supervisor shared the same opinion with the school principal. Utilizing the same loopholes, the supervisor tactfully was able to transfer the teacher and achieve the principal's end. It is probably true that the teacher was academically incompetent compared to the rest of the teaching faculty at that school, and it could be acknowledged by many of us that the school principal had every right to make sure that her teachers are

of a remarkable academic and ethical level. Nevertheless, what we need to stop at here is how the deeply bureaucratic educational regulations and their loopholes can be overcome and maneuvered to realize two contradicting results.

School X has also witnessed incidents where gender was an influential factor in the processes of teachers' selection, placement and deployment. The key informant states that across all public high schools there is an implicit direction to feminize girls' schools and masculinize boys' school as much as circumstances would allow. Inside school X, girls would be put in separate classes from the boys' in high school.

A novice teacher in his late twenties was deployed by the district supervision to teach philosophy for high school. It is worth mentioning here that according to the Egyptian high school education system, Philosophy and Psychology are electives that are chosen by high school students only. Furthermore, these two subjects are among the subjects that suffer shortages in teachers across the country. The novice teacher had a hard time in the girls' classes. Both the district supervision and school leadership had their concerns about the teacher's age and gender in relation to the Bedouin cultural background of the girls and their families. Both authorities-school leadership and district supervision- thought that it would be a wise step on their part to assign the teacher to boys' classes only. The district supervisor was worried about the teacher's reaction to such a move.

Interestingly enough after teaching boys' classes for two weeks, the teacher went to the district supervisor and begged her to deploy him as an administrator in district supervision office because he did not want to carry on as a teacher. When the district supervisor clarified to her teacher that he must have known that he would become a teacher upon enrolling in the Teachers' College, he answered her saying that "*theory is*

*way different than reality*". He added that after spending time inside the classroom, he realized that he was not cut out to become a teacher, he just did not fit. The teacher was then deployed to work as a secretary for the district supervision office. The supervisor realized that not all Teacher college graduates are academically, pedagogically, or individually fit to become effective teachers.

School X has also resolved to gender-based teachers' placement on more than one occasion. The school principal is one of those many leaders across the country that believes that feminizing girls' Science classes and masculinizing that of boys' would spare the school a lot of troubles especially in the reproduction system lesson. Because the majority of the student population has a Bedouin cultural background, the principal of school X makes sure to consider this issue in the academic yearly plan for the school in terms of Science teachers' placement. It happened once that such arrangements could not take place in one of the boys' classes due to teacher shortage. To save the situation, the principal asked a male science teacher from the high school to replace the female science teacher for that lesson only to avoid raising any sensitive issues between the teenage boys' students and their female teacher.

In keeping with that type of thinking, religion also enters the scene of school X and influences some of the decisions pertaining to teachers' placement and deployment. Again, the school principal being aware of the socio-economic and cultural background of her student body and their families, she tries her best to place Muslim teachers for the junior high History course. Her rationale is that a big portion of that course deals with Islamic history and Muslim History teachers are better fit to teach it rather than Coptic ones. In this context, the school principal, as explained by key informants, is driven by

her desire to evade raising any sectarian tension around the school. She is not genuinely convinced that Muslim teachers are more competent than Coptic teachers are in teaching Islamic history. Nevertheless, she resolves to this as precautionary measure to eliminate any triggers for sectarian tension around her own school.

### **The Example of School Y**

School Y is remarkably distinguished by its culture. The school culture owes its survival to some of the teachers, students and parents or the culture transmitters that have survived the two eras of the school: private language and American international. The culture of school Y is basically the culture of a privatized school with few main characteristics. These characteristics include pleasing the customer or the students, authorizing vice principals with constricted autonomy, allowing private tutoring, placing great emphasis on teachers' appearance, and maintaining a family-like working atmosphere.

The most overriding component of the school culture is the governing mentality of privatized education, where education is a commodity and where the customer is always right. Applying this to the school context will lead to one main fact that students, along with their parents, must be pleased by the teachers and the school administration. It is well known across the school that if a clash occurred and was neither contained nor reconciled between a student and a teacher, then it shall always end in the favor of the student and not the teacher. As a participant observer, I attended a faculty meeting held by the owner of the school where he bluntly declared that students are the income providers for the school whereas teachers are paid by the school. The underlying message was delivered to all faculty members. Another main component of the school culture is

the constant absence of the school principal. The owner of the school who is a businessperson and not an educator and does not hold any educational background has officially appointed himself as the school principal. The official school principal is never visible around the school; most of the teachers who have joined the school over the last ten years have never seen him in person. The actual person, who is assigned the responsibilities of the school principal, yet with a constricted hand, is the vice principal. The owner of the school runs the place by phone, allowing the vice principal little room for autonomy.

Examination of private school Y findings reveals determinant factors with respect to the processes of teachers' recruitment, selection, placement and retention. The determinant factors spring from the culture of privatized education. They are represented in teacher appearance, teacher socio-economic status, hierarchy of subject matter, and teacher personal contacts .

Appearance has always been one of the top- considered factors in teachers' recruitment and selection at this school. Across the board, all teachers and administrators regardless of their gender, maintain an appearance that has to be fashionable, trendy, and stylish. The general culture of the school does not favor recruiting and hiring female teachers who wear a veil. This culture is emphasized enough to dismiss a veiled applicant before even the head of department, she is applying for gets to meet with her or screen her. An administrator, who is neither the vice principal nor the head of teachers, runs the initial screening process relying primarily on the candidate's appearance and secondarily on his/her language proficiency or accent. It should be noted that the screening personnel does not consider the candidate's academic certification, pedagogical competences or

area of specialization as a priority in the screening process. Candidates wearing veils are usually labeled as not up to the socio-economic teachers' standard of the school.

However, the school leadership would actually go against the set culture and hire female teachers wearing veils in situations where the school is facing severe teacher shortage that cannot be recovered. In this context, supply and demand rules. Around the school, Teachers' popularity, in many ways, can be determined based on his/her appearance and clothing style with a special preference to foreign-like looking candidates who have blonde hair and blue eyes.

Language proficiency always precedes academic specialization and pedagogical competences in the process of teachers' recruitment and selection. The school leaderships defend this attitude by stating that they are an international school, and the first likely indicator of being proper international is selecting and hiring teachers with a high language proficiency level. In this respect, school leaderships place candidates' academic and pedagogical competences as second to a fluent foreign accent. Language proficiency is significantly important especially in language teaching classes, but knowledge and pedagogical competences are equally important, if not more important.

The candidates' certified specialization is reduced to become the least in the school selection and hiring criteria. All Science teachers-veterans and novices- are graduates of faculties of medicine, pharmacy, or dentistry. All Math teachers are university graduates with an engineering or Commerce background. They all are selected and hired disregarding their pedagogical competences. The same happens with English language arts teachers, where the vast majority of teachers are non- graduates of English language Teacher's college, faculty of English arts, or faculty of Alsun. These three

institutions are the ones authorized to graduate English language arts teachers. Most of the English language teachers are teachers with various disciplines' background, yet they are language fluent.

The school culture in terms of teachers' recruitment and selection accept candidates that do not hold any teacher education preparation. The school academic leadership relies on providing the novice teachers with on-task support. They furnish novice teachers with full subject-matter file that contains lesson plans, sample tests and sample worksheets. In this respect, I should note that the heads of departments hold an opposing view to that of the school's academic director. The academic director regards language proficiency and appearance as more qualifying than certified content knowledge, whereas the heads of departments always seek content and pedagogical competencies as a priority in the applicants. They-heads of departments comment on that saying: "*candidates are not shooting movies, they are teachers, not movie stars, and they need to know what and how they will do it*". The heads of the science and math departments explain that the behavior of their academic director springs from the fact that she does not have to spend a hard time training and offering induction to novice teachers, whereas, they must "*We are the ones who suffer with incompetent teachers, and not her*"

Along similar lines, the culture of the school does not mandate teachers to submit their academic and professional credentials to the school administration. I spent thirteen years as a high school teacher in that school, and no one asked for my credentials. I provided them voluntarily; unfortunately, no one has ever checked or reviewed those official documents and certifications. This case is general across the school; it extends to all faculty members whether veteran or novice. One of the attributes of such

circumstances is that the vast majority of teachers are not officially contracted. Even the very few teachers, who have actually signed contracts, do not keep their copy of the contract; both copies are kept by the school, with only the teacher's signature. The other party of the contract, representing the school does not sign.

It should be noted here, that when I investigated the issue of teachers' academic credentials, contracts, and whether teachers are covered by insurance or not, the school leadership's response came as affirmative, emphasizing that the school has developed a thorough filing and database system that contains all credentials of the teaching faculty. Furthermore, the school vice principal affirms the fact that all teachers are legally contracted and covered by insurance with the exception of very few ones.

Teachers' responses on the same issues state complete contradictory answers to the same questions. None of the teachers who have been hired since 2006 has been asked to provide their academic credentials and their official university transcript. They all fill in an application form when they first come to apply. They write down their university degree in that form and that is all they know. They are sure that what they write in the application form is never double-checked because none of them actually submitted his/her academic credentials to the school. As for the contracts, again none of the teachers, since 2006-the year when the school officially acquired accreditation for an American international school- has signed a legal contract. Consequently, none of them falls under the umbrella of insurance. What is interesting about the school culture, in this context, is that none of the participant teachers expressed any eagerness to sign legal contracts with the school. They say they like it this way because it is easier for them and the school not to place any legal obligations or consequences on either party.

With respect to the processes of teachers' selection, hiring, and pay, the culture of the school reinforces the hierarchy of subject matters. The idea of teachers' hierarchy falls on the framework of a privatized education culture, where every service the school provides, including education, is a commodity. School Y has always treated English, Math, and Science teachers as its first class citizens. To illustrate on that point, I should note that when parents come to apply for their children in school Y, only carefully selected English teachers get to become the interviewers. Usually, the selected sample must hold a native, or at least native-like English accent, and the fashionable look. The owner of the school regards this as one effectively promotional tool for his school. Differential payment, in this context, becomes the embodiment of this commercialized school culture.

Arabic language teachers along with Arabic social studies teachers are treated as second-rate citizen inside the school in terms of teacher pay scale. Arabic social studies teachers, along with Arabic and Religion teachers commented that their biggest challenge is the implications of their condition inside the school in terms of their social image in the eyes of their students. The senior Arabic teacher laments his teaching days in the private language section of school Y before he was ordered to move to the American international division. He calls those days his "days of glory" when he used to teach *Thanaweya amma*, and was highly respected and acknowledged by students, parents and school administration. At present, in the context of an American international education system, students are only required to get the cut-off score in the subjects of Arabic, Religion, and Arabic social studies to get into universities. This situation is not the same within the private language schools system or the public schools system, where the scores

of Arabic, and Arabic social studies affect students' overall Grade Point Average (GPA). These findings are supported by findings of a study conducted as a term paper for the EDU 521 course, Fall 2011. The study is titled "*A Study of Power Struggles and Marginalization*". The findings of that study conclude that within international schools' context, there exists a hierarchy of subject matters. Furthermore, the amount of respect and recognition school leadership pays to their teachers is reflected in the way students regard and value these teachers. The study also suggests that discrepancies in teachers' payment, along with under-acknowledgment can cause teachers to be discouraged and become "burnt-out" teachers.

An Arabic Social Studies teacher with 16 years of experience in that school and with a specialized university degree is allegedly paid as much as one third of novice teacher's monthly payment. "*those teachers are inexperienced, more importantly their university degree is not in the area of specialization of what they teach, yet they are paid three times as much as I am, is that fair*" says that teacher. The teacher further comments on that point saying, "*nothing to wonder about since this is Egypt and our school is the miniature form of our country, so it's only normal that the school does not show respect or recognition to the history of the country*". It should be marked that this teacher teaches grades 4 through 12 with an average of two periods per week for each class.

The social studies teacher words on how the school reflects the broader spectrum drags us to examine another component of the school culture that is pertinent to teachers' selection and hiring processes. A recent entrant to the school culture is *inheritance*. During the past four years the school has hired about seven novice teachers in the disciplines of English, French, Math, Art, Information technology and discipline

coordinators whose mothers are veteran teachers at the school or/and hold leadership positions. It should be noted that about half of them lacked academic and pedagogical competence, yet they were retained for the sake of their mothers.

The last component of the school culture that is closely related to teachers' selection and retention processes is the low attrition rate. The school enjoys a highly attractive work environment that appears to touch its entire teaching faculty. The school stands out with its distinguished friendly atmosphere that envelops teachers and students. Teachers of that school are known for being gregarious, introverts have no place at that school and if found they are colored by the school culture in almost no time. Teachers love their students immensely, especially veteran teachers who have either taught the same students' groups across the years, or have taught the siblings or other family members of their current students. Yet, even with novice teachers, they also fall into the same trend. It is a very normal scene to see teachers greeting students with hugs and kisses across the stages. It is just the school's culture.

When the researcher asked veteran teachers about their low attrition, responses came to emphasize the collegial and friendly atmosphere of the school. The head of department of Science comments on this saying, *"I have been here for twenty-two years, and when I leave here, it won't be for another place, I don't think I can work in any other place. Where would I find such magnificent friends and colleagues? These are the real gains of working in this school"*

Novice teacher who have been in the school for five years or more share the same views in terms of retention. However, they also have their share of personal input. A female Chemistry teacher who has been in the school for two years says that she stays in the

school because, *"the workload is relatively light, I get to dress what I like, I mean there are not heavy restrictions concerning dress code, and I love my colleagues"*. Another math teacher shares the same reasons, yet acting more openly and candid she comments on the fact that the school does not tax teachers for giving private tutoring, as long as, *"they don't receive any complaints from parents, then it's ok with them"*

Both veterans and novice teachers rely on one another for academic and emotional support, and while the school leaderships express their endless support for their teachers to the extent that the leaderships believe that they have spoiled their teachers. Teachers, on the other hand, do not share the same view at all. Teachers, especially novice ones, firmly express that their friends and colleagues are their actual support-base. These teachers say that they regard their school leaderships as insufficiently supportive especially in the areas of reinforcing students' discipline. Most of them say that they are aware that in this school the balance of support is always skewed toward the student at the expense of the teacher. An English teacher who has been teaching at the school for two years, and before that, she has been a high school student at the same school, sums up the situation saying, *"In this school, you are on your own, as long as you keep your problems to the four walls of your classroom, you're on the safe side. If you allow problems out of your classroom, make sure that you shall receive no help"*. This teacher's statement reflects the underlying culture of the school as a privatized education culture that pleases the customer, rather than satisfies his/her knowledge and life-skill needs.

## Conclusion

*“Education either functions as an instrument which is used to facilitate integration of the younger generation into the logic of the present system and bring about conformity or it becomes the practice of freedom, the means by which men and women deal critically and creatively with reality and discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.”*

— Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*

This study has initially started with the aim of exploring the existing employed strategies in teachers' recruitment and selection processes in different contexts of schools. The results of that quest reveal that within each of the public education schools and the private international schools, there exist two parallel systems for teachers' selection, placement, and deployment. In the context of public schools, the de facto practices of teachers' selection, deployment and placement are highly influenced by other factors than those of overt regulations and law. Results of public schools' findings show that school culture and relationships networks- between school leadership and district supervision- are the main determinants for teachers' deployment and placement. Other influential factors include gender, age and religious background.

Private and international schools, on the other hand, are primarily dominated by the commercial culture of privatized education. However, the evident dichotomy between teachers' recruitment and selection strategies, in the contexts of public, private, and international schools, is the fact that implemented frameworks are not commensurate to theoretical guidelines. Public schools work within the framework of centralized teachers'

recruitment and hiring system, whereas private and international schools work within school-based decentralized recruitment and hiring system.

Some success stories in Kenya, New York, and the four states of California, Florida, Michigan and Massachusetts demonstrate that the dissemination of centralized hiring authority from the state's level to that of both the district's and the school's, results in more effective and more information-rich hiring process.

Egypt could purposefully borrow such experiences, yet, it should carefully consider the specificity of our home context. Many of the participants' responses reflect their dissatisfaction with the ministry of education when it adopts specific systems from any other country, and demand its implementation in Egypt, overlooking the potential local impediments. To illustrate, participants mentioned the teaching methodology of active learning, one high school science teacher comments on that point saying, *"we attend video conferences where they tell us students should sit in a U-shape arrangement, while teachers should walk around the classroom, use cooperative learning and divide students into groups. How can I do that when my students' population is 72, and I can barely make it to the second row?"*

The results of the study suggests that neither the public schools' system, nor that of private and international schools is air tight in terms of teachers' recruitment and selection strategies and procedures. Both systems are challenged by the lack of professional guidelines pertinent to teachers' recruitment and selection processes. The main attribute, I argue, is that in both of the public and private education sectors, education is not professionalized; consequently, teachers are not held as accountable professionals who rely on their science and knowledge. (LAS & UNICEF, 2010)

Public schools deal with many challenges such as infrastructures, inefficiency of professional development programs for teachers, and the non-alignment between the programs of Teachers' Colleges and the actual challenges practicing teachers face on daily basis. In terms of teachers' selection, hiring, and deployment processes, leadership in public schools lack autonomy. This lack of autonomy contradicts with recent research findings that suggest that successful schools are lead by autonomous and effective leaders. These leaders are responsible, along with the rest of all stakeholders, to create a shared vision for the school and to nourish and maintain their schools' specific culture. More importantly, effective school leaders foster teachers' professional learning and work on developing their schools into learning communities to enhance students' achievement, which is the ultimate goal for any educational institution (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003).

While many people think that private and international schools are better than public schools in the aspect of autonomy, the study reveals that not all leadership in private and international schools have autonomy. Most of the studied sample of leadership in private and international schools, in addition to, findings from the case study of School Y, shows that owners of private schools usually intervene in teachers' recruitment and selection process. Owners' intervention can be directive through constricting the principal's authority and autonomy in all school matters, or it can be nondirective through establishing a certain kind of school culture that influences the process of teachers' recruitment and selection.

The study also suggests that, contrary to what many of us might think, teachers in public schools are not passive. The studied sample exhibited a laudable level of

awareness and intellectual maturity. Responses of the studied sample of teachers in public schools manifest that they have unutilized potentials in addition to a high level of willingness to transform and fulfill their roles as active agents for change. The vast majority of responses hold a visionary dimension. Most of the studied sample was eager to suggest recommendations to enhance teachers' capacities and empowerment.

In terms of teachers' recruitment, selection and hiring strategies, the majority of the studied sample suggested disseminating the selection and hiring authority from the state centralized level to governorate and district level. For implementation, participants suggest forming committees with members representing the directorate of education in every governorate, school district, and leadership in the school where the candidate is to be hired. I should note here that none of the respondents wanted parents or teachers from the same school, to be members on that committee to ensure objectivity and transparency.

The vast majority of the studied sample emphasized the importance of having a standardized framework for teachers' selection criteria with general guidelines that, at the same time, preserve and respect the specificity of each individual school culture. To complement these valuable and enlightened recommendations, I suggest the implementation of the *Guiding Framework of Performance Standards for Arab Teachers: Policies and Programs* that should elevate teachers' capacities and help teachers teach to standards, in a valid step toward the professionalization of teachers.

Another valuable recommendation is to initiate teachers' reform policies on two levels: the level of practicing teaching force and the level of student teachers. The studied sample of teachers in public school unanimously agree that not all graduates of Teachers' Colleges are suitable as teachers, especially in the absence of selection criteria

for entrants to teachers' Colleges or teachers' preparation institutions. Therefore, participants of the studied sample, including teachers, principals, and district supervisors, suggest that high school students who want to become teachers should be subjected to personality tests, emotional intelligence tests, and emotional and psychological stability tests before they are accepted in Teachers' Colleges. Same procedures should apply to paraprofessionals and mid-career switchers who want to become teachers. Another round of tests should take place after finishing college and before actual hiring of candidates.

The studied sample also recommends collaboration and integration between instructors at Teachers' Colleges and practicing teachers. The sample believes that Teachers' Colleges instructors need to identify the challenges teachers face on the grounds, to be able to address these challenges in their curricula for student teachers. A middle-range educator recommends that teachers' education and preparation courses must include courses on creative thinking and school leadership.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Teacher-Pupil ratio in the governorate of New Valley

العام الدراسي 2011 / 2010				الإحصاءات والمؤشرات مديريات -مراحل مدارس - فصول - تلاميذ - هيئات تدريس				الوادي الجديد			
المؤشرات				مدرسين			تلاميذ			فصول	مدارس
نسبة التربويين للإجمالي	نصيب المدرس من التلاميذ	نسبة البنات للجملة	كثافة الفصل	جملة	غير تربوي	تربوي	جملة	بنات	بنون		
جملة حكومي											
%96	19.26	%48	28.0	272	10	262	5239	2536	2703	187	79
%93	5.91	%49	23.7	4185	280	3905	24723	12025	12698	1043	141
%62	2.62	%91	6.9	29	11	18	76	69	7	11	11
%82	4.92	%48	23.6	2154	392	1762	10591	5093	5498	449	103
%66	6.04	%56	25.8	683	231	452	4125	2311	1814	160	20
%84	5.29	%37	27.5	488	79	409	2582	956	1626	94	9
%67	5.44	%45	22.7	242	80	162	1316	586	730	58	4
%74	7.45	%68	27.4	92	24	68	685	466	219	25	2
%89	1.20	%33	2.8	122	14	108	147	48	99	53	14
%86	5.99	%49	23.8	8267	1121	7146	49484	24090	25394	2080	383
%86	5.99	%49	23.8	8267	1121	7146	49484	24090	25394	2080	383



## Appendix 2: Teacher-Pupil ratio in Cairo governorate

العام الدراسي 2011 / 2010				الإحصاءات والمؤشرات مديريات -مراحل مدارس - فصول - تلاميذ - هيئات تدريس				القاهرة			
المؤشرات				مدرسين			تلاميذ			فصول	مدارس
نسبة التربويين للاجمالي	نصيب المدرس من التلاميذ	نسبة البنات للجملة	كثافة الفصل	جملة	غير تربوي	تربوي	جملة	بنات	بنون		
جملة حكومي											
%92	30.73	%48	39.0	1480	119	1361	45484	21784	23700	1166	342
%91	28.07	%49	47.8	18913	1640	17273	530880	257649	273231	11101	605
%30	15.24	%59	45.1	80	56	24	1219	718	501	27	27
%76	15.39	%50	40.8	16924	4091	12833	260447	130554	129893	6383	412
%69	11.00	%53	36.0	11974	3675	8299	131722	69812	61910	3659	197
%85	5.93	%28	29.3	7955	1174	6781	47190	13052	34138	1609	65
%46	9.08	%69	32.1	2439	1323	1116	22147	15391	6756	689	32
%82	4.09	%41	8.9	1049	193	856	4287	1747	2540	482	90
%80	17.16	%49	41.5	60814	12271	48543	1043376	510707	532669	25116	1770
جملة خاص											
%45	15.35	%49	28.1	3930	2166	1764	60339	29491	30848	2151	441
%52	16.81	%49	32.3	13755	6595	7160	231266	113946	117320	7167	460
%59	12.07	%48	31.1	7110	2893	4217	85822	41113	44709	2762	382
%57	10.99	%52	27.6	3227	1396	1831	35478	18385	17093	1285	202
%61	19.59	%3	26.5	46	18	28	901	23	878	34	4
%43	34.22	%60	37.5	701	397	304	23986	14359	9627	639	60
%10	2.37	%43	6.4	98	88	10	232	100	132	36	7
%53	15.17	%50	31.1	28867	13553	15314	438024	217417	220607	14074	1556
%71	16.52	%49	37.8	89681	25824	63857	1481400	728124	753276	39190	3326

### **Appendix 3: List of Interview Topics**

1. How do you recruit for teachers?
2. To what extent, is the school leadership involved in the selection process of teachers?
3. How do you screen teachers?
4. How do you manage teachers' placement inside your school?
5. Is your selection policy competency-based, or convenience-based?
6. In terms of credentials, what are your minimum requirements?
7. How do you manage the promotion system at your school?
8. How do you manage professional development at your school?
9. What kind of support does the school leadership offer to novice teachers?
10. How does the school manage to retain able- teachers?

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