ARAB OPEN UNIVERSITY

FACULTY OF BUSINESS STUDIES

Lebanon Branch

T306 Managing Complexity: A Systems Approach

EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS

Private vs. Public Schools

Final Project Presented by

DORIS BOU ABDOU

Supervisor

Dr. ELIANE NEHME

Spring 2010
I hereby certify that the work presented in this TMA is my own and is not copied from any
Signature
Date of Submission / / 2010

I. Tutor's Comments
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Tutor’s Name
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Date Returned / / 2010
Educational Problems
Private vs. Public Schools
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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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ABSTRACT

The study concerns the educational problems in private and public schools of Lebanon. The concentration was on: “why parents decide to pay for education there are free public schools available”. In order to clarify this issue, a study was done in order to compare private and public schools in Lebanon. Using some statistics, the study comprised two schools, one private and one public, in the same region Mount of Lebanon. Structured interviews were performed, together with a particular analysis and some key concepts used to develop further understanding. The study undertakes many aspects: the stakeholders, funding and financial resources, teaching quality, cultural differences, technological access, relations at schools (administration/teachers, teachers/students), parents and their relation to the schools. It was found that there were some
important differences between private and public schools that are not only related to the students’ performances. This related to the external control of the public school and the internal authority patterns in private schools. Teachers were associated to their job performance and sense of belonging to the schools. In the private schools, bigger freedom in decision making by the principals and staff determined additional proficient actions; better responsibility to parents intended further helpfulness and less disciplinary culture for learning. A representation of the school level and quality was proposed to present a conceptual structure to appreciate these features. This comprised the elements of: power, independence responsibility, equality and authority. Addition to that, many issues related to sustainable development affect the parents’ choice of the schools for their children directly or indirectly such as social, economic, political, cultural, & environmental issues. So, this study makes suggestions for better autonomy for public schools, but not for privatization in isolation. It also recommends better equality for all schools.
ETHICALITY STATEMENT

By definition, ethicality statements specify the ethical values and objectives that a person seeks to hold in his work. Thus, I will state my ethicality statements regarding the project:

♦ In this study, the view points and perspectives of students and are equally taken into consideration as the perspectives of parents, teachers, religious groups and administrators in both schools.

♦ In this project, the methods and concepts used are related to the direct interviews made, and are available to anyone involved in this study.

♦ Everyone involved in this study have the right to: decide not to participate or change his mind at any time; know what his role is if he decides to participate; know about the information that he presents.

♦ Confidentiality is very important in the study, so information will not be shared with anyone that isn’t involved or has the right to share them.
CHAPTER 1: TUTOR REPORT

1 INTRODUCTION

“Education is very important for our lives”. Many problems arise related to education such as funding, teaching quality and profession, academic performances of students, cultural differences and different educational opportunity, unsafe schools and unequal access to educational technology, the labor force needs and global competition. So, many key factors are presented in addressing other social problems, such as the educational system as a social institution, individuals’ educational experiences and levels of achievement. These facts are related to both private and public schools and differentiate between them.

So, I will discuss later this issue and the problems attached, and I will analyze this complex situation as a System Practitioner. In a more detailed discussion, I will present these problems in the Mount Lebanon area as an example to clarify the complexity and trying to provide solutions to these problems.

Moreover, Complexity has many different features based on both rational and emotional factors. It existence based on different elements such as uncertainty and their interactions, as a result the possible decisions and outcomes will be produced. I decided to talk about this complexity because it is an important issue that we should study in order to have solutions and having emergent outcomes. In this project I will discuss this complex situation using different
concepts related to the T306, taking more time to study this complexity from different perspectives, having awareness of gaps and constraints around my subject, finding opportunities and using my past experience to re-analyze and discuss this complex situation. Therefore, in order to avoid gaps I decided to use the Soft System Method because I’m studying a social issue & the problems are messier, unbounded, unclear and uncertain. Also, I will identify my work on this project through a BECM process structure.

2 DISCUSSION

“Public schools are different from private schools, in terms of their funding & administration”. Public schools get the majority of their funds from the government; while private schools rely on private sources. However, most public schools are administered by local governments; while private schools are under the control of a private administration. Parents always make this comparison when choosing the suitable school for their children. Parents are seen as very important elements at school. They would ask for the best to their children; they try to have some pressure on the management of the school from time to time. School environment is affected by internal and external contributions especially parental involvement, and the relation of parents with the school.
2.1 Concepts used related to T306:

Many problems could be discussed using the T306 concepts such as the characteristics of the System Practitioner, CATWOE checklist (being able to classify people involved in the “Educational Problems” complexity, with the identification of who’s affected, and who’s responsible for resolving and improving the Education in Lebanon). SWOT analysis (being able to represent the position of this complex situation in the local area), Reflective Practice, and other concepts that I will use to more clarify the complexity. Addition to that, I will apply the SSM stages (which help in formulating complex problems and facilitate managing the complexity in a holistic way), also the BECM process structure, and representing the issues through the suitable diagrams.

2.2 BECM process:

BECM approach is represented by Being, Engaging, Contextualizing & Managing which are considered balls, maintained in the air by a juggler (that I should be in my project); he will throw them in the air and juggle them, but without falling down any ball. In addition, the effective Practitioner has to try maintaining and processing these four balls (BECM).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B ball: Being a Systems Practitioner</th>
<th>E ball: Engaging with the Complexity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C ball: Contextualizing Systems Approaches</td>
<td>M ball: Managing the Complexity</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Educational Problems: Private vs. Public Schools
2.2.1 “B ball”: Being a System Practitioner:

In this phase, I should know how the experience can be built into a practice & how I become capable to be part of a case or situation. For this reason, and to be an aware Systems Practitioner, I should have his particular characteristics that will make me different from others in order to deal with complex situations in a creative and systemic way.

Characteristics of an aware System Practitioner:

Some of these characteristics are: Considering my own view and others’ perspectives in order to have emergent outcome; Learning from experience (through the quality of attention and the memory to callback the experience); Taking into consideration the preceding history of the wider context and my own history (as a system practitioner); being ethical; Immersing myself in the complexity; having an own variety; identifying values, beliefs, and circumstances in order to make them apparent and clear; and Being a learner able to distinguish between systemic and
systematic thinking in practice… One important characteristic of the effective practitioner is being aware of the opportunities and constraints which develop my collection of behavioral responses because I should be able to communicate with others which have different cultures.

By the use a **Spray Diagram (Diagram 1)** I can clarify my situation in an understandable way. According to this diagram, we can notice that the "Educational Problems: Public vs. Private Schools" complexity is caused by government & private sector and their activities.

Two important issues are presented: why parents prefer to pay for education while public schools are available for free? Or why parents choose the public schools while private schools are more secure for their children? In order to clarify these issues, we should compare private vs. public schools in Lebanon. My study consists of two schools in the same region of Lebanon, which is Mount Lebanon, and I prefer to choose the two schools I attended which are St. Joseph School Jbeil & Amchit Official School. From my own experience, I have attended these both private & public schools.

Therefore, if I make a reflective practice about my project, I can say that I didn’t fall into gaps until present, I tried to avoid the systematic and reductionist way of working on a complex situation. And we will see in the next parts of my project many and many other characteristics of the System Practitioner. Furthermore, after completing this phase, I can now move to the second one of the BECM process, which is concerned with Engaging in the complex situation.

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*Educational Problems: Private vs. Public Schools*
2.2.2 “E ball”: Engaging in the complexity:

In this phase, I should immerse myself in the complex situation and become part of it. Also, I will try to read the situation as I experienced and try sensing the case front of me. This phase is also concerned with finding the ways to represent the situation, taking and describing the right information in a more detailed manner in order to understand, communicate and identify it.

Stakeholders and their Values, Beliefs & Circumstances:

Moreover, we can have a better understanding & engaging more in this complex situation through identifying the different stakeholders related. So, in this case we can identify the following stakeholders: students, teachers, parents, administrators, employees (under the term society), government, and religious groups. These stakeholders have various values, beliefs & view points on the purposes of schooling and learning; this affects how they make structure to educational institution, define learning, and understand the different students. Some authors argue that beliefs and values are the central part of the organizational culture because they are the basis for the organization’s existence. If these beliefs are to create happier, more productive and more effective students, an autonomous path should be followed. This path starts with the conduct of students with self-esteem and respect, as well as helping them develop their skills and self-governing residency. We will see in the following two tables the stakeholders, their perspectives and the values, beliefs and circumstances of some of them.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders (S)</th>
<th>Perspectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Students</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In private &amp; public school</td>
<td>They play the direct role in the educational process and as stakeholders are estimated to contribute to the process. They want to be educated. Some of them prefer private schools in order to be more secure and searching for help from teachers, and others prefer public schools for the freedom presented.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public schools</td>
<td>They seek to have more technical support, improvements in the educational system, and new educational plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teachers</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In private &amp; public school</td>
<td>Along with the student, teachers play an interactive role in the educational process since one cannot function without the other. The empowerment of teachers will help the empowerment of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In public schools</td>
<td>They are searching for Openness, Wide education, new educational plans, improvement in the educational system; they also look for training sessions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In private schools</td>
<td>They are searching for more profit, more skills, high level of education, being close to students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Employees</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In private &amp; public school</td>
<td>They seek to have (in public school) more improved tools with IT support, and well-organized work. Also, they prefer to be more motivated in private schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under the term society</td>
<td>Want students to be educated and ready to communicate with society.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parents</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In private &amp; public school</td>
<td>The parents’ main objective is the guarantee that their children will obtain a quality education, which will enable the children to guide creative satisfying lives as adults in a global society. Many parents’ selections of educational issues are notably influenced by their values &amp; beliefs rather than school rule.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich parents</td>
<td>They seek to make sure that their children are safely educated, and having a high quality of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor parents</td>
<td>They seek to educate their children without paying lots of money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administrators in schools</strong></td>
<td>They have many perspectives including improving (public) schools with technical support, making profits (in private school), educate students...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Government presented by the Minister of education</strong></td>
<td>Wants people more educated, with safe education, reducing problems, improving public schools, making long-term plans, improving the educational systems, and having equality in both schools level of education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious groups</strong></td>
<td>Want to make students close to religion.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 1 Various Stakeholders and their perspectives*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholders</th>
<th>Values, Beliefs, and Circumstances</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Students have intrinsic values and beliefs. They expect to be treated with respect and are estimated to treat others with respect. They learn greatest when the circumstance for learning is dynamic and significant to them. Their self-esteem will be improved by strong and healthy relationships with administrators, teachers and staff who are role models of schools values. They need a safe, helpful and restricted environment of learning. The circumstance is presented by a “student” following the rules of the school (private or public), so it will change some of his beliefs according to the school’s values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers</td>
<td>Teachers have also intrinsic values and beliefs. They expect to be treated with respect and are anticipated to treat others with respect. They are responsible for their students’ values including the values of society, respect, guidance and service. Their beliefs are related to receiving and giving support and encouragement from the administrators and staff. The circumstance is presented by a “teacher” also following the rules of the school (private or public), so it will change some of his beliefs according to the school’s values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>The parents' values &amp; beliefs play a main role in establishing the nature of school they choose for their children. So, parents' values might not be evidently expressed they do control their awareness of the nature of child care they wish for their children, their reactions to differing child care schools &amp; their fulfillment with those environments. The circumstance is presented by “parents” changing some of their beliefs according to the school’s values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>Administrators in schools believe that: each student can learn, all employees have a responsibility in student success, schools must be welcoming, secure, and well maintained to offer a quality learning situation for each student. They also value: strictness and consequence in both the instruction and evaluation of students, they value respect and responsibility for parents, students, staff, and the society. The circumstance is presented by “administrators” avoiding some beliefs in order to have well relationship with parents, teachers, staff, and students, and according to their values.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 6 Various Stakeholders and their values, beliefs and circumstances*

Here, we can notice the importance of hierarchies & levels in the domains of systems practice & sustainable development since these two are interrelated. Also, systems practice is the way of dealing with the complex situations because the mode of practice is related to system practitioner which sees himself as a co-creator of a system of information with other stakeholders. Through the identification of the stakeholders & the mode of practice we will be able to achieve sustainable development in any complex situation.
**Soft System Method:**

After identifying the stakeholders, I will progress my discussion with the use and application of the Soft System Method stages (but in a step-by-step sequence). Therefore, Soft Systems Method (SSM) was developed by Peter Checkland. By definition, it is a general problem solving tool. It helps formulate and structure thinking about complex problems in human situations. Its core is the construction of conceptual models and the comparison of those models with the real world. This process can greatly clarify those multi-faceted problems with many conflicting potential solutions. This process of inquiry consists of seven stages:

![Diagram of SSM Stages](image)

*Graph 5 SSM Stages*

Moreover, I will apply the SSM mode 1, when presenting the stages in a step-by-step manner, but without forgetting the mode 2, by joining many concepts such as the BECM process together with the stages of SSM in a holistic & systemic manner by using own experience and own view. SSM is in used to explore the educational problems under study. This investigation involved a
stream of cultural analysis that provided a basic to identify the relevant issues, actors, structure, and conflict in the problem situation.

**Cultural Stream Analysis:**

The following table shows the Cultural Stream Analysis of this Study:

| **Social Analysis** | - Some stakeholders’ awareness is relatively low.  
- Lack of teamwork and collaboration work between stakeholders.  
- Lack of knowledge sharing culture across schools.  
- Limited budget to cater new appliance & infrastructure for the entire educational needs. |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Political Analysis</strong></td>
<td>Relatively difficult to get access and collect knowledge from distributed data governmental systems.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 7 Cultural Stream Analysis*

**a) Stage 1: Problem Situation Unstructured:**

“Educational Problems: Private vs. Public Schools” is a big complexity that all people suffer from it especially in Lebanon because it is an unstructured and unbounded complex situation. So, I chose the Soft System Method in this complexity in order to develop a more detailed discussion related to this problem situation, in a way to achieve understanding of organizational problems and improvements of this case. During this stage I will be gathering the needed information (resources of information: interviews, statistics, internet search, books) for the next stage. Therefore, the information collected should be documented in a systemic and effective manner in order to emphasize my knowledge about this complexity. So, I found the key issues related to the educational problems, the advantages and disadvantages of both private and public schools, what are the reasons for this big complexity in such field…
b) Stage 2: Problem Situation Expressed (Rich picture):

This stage consists of gathering and assembling the information, here the complex situation will be expressed in a different manner. As we all know education systems are particularly demanding of the managerial, technical, and financial capacity of governments, and, therefore, as a service, education is too complex to be proficiently formed and distributed in a centralized way. Thus, I will draw a rich picture showing the Educational Problems in Mount of Lebanon and explain in a summarized way these issues.

The Rich Picture (Diagram 2) captures all the things in an individual senses about the situation and identifies the ideas included. A rich description could be included when drawing the rich picture: this diagram elaborates all features related to the educational complexity in Lebanon such as public schools, private schools, government, statistics, the relation between parents and teachers, training needed to teachers, technology needed to more improve schools, and other important ideas.

c) Stage 3: Root Definition, Relevant Systems, CATWOE checklist:

A root definition and relevant system are needed to define the aims and means of the system to be modeled. I can identify some relevant systems to improve my problem situation:

I’m talking here about a system to improve the educational system (by increasing the educational openness, promoting the educational program); a system to manage and improve basis
knowledge, experience, and skills; a system to ensure interaction between teachers/parents and teachers/students; a system to manage the high quality of teaching (through refreshing teaching, training performance); a system to achieve balance between private and public schools; a system to realize the coordination and honesty between education/learning and the needs of Lebanese society; a system to increase the interaction with universal cultures (through the compatibility of scientific progress and technological development).

Here, we should answer the important questions in order to identify the root definition: a system to do what? How? Why? A system to reduce or trying to reduce educational problems (Private vs. Public Schools) through the use of new ideas, statistics, educational plans, in order to have sustainable development in the Lebanese education and to have emergent outcomes that present educated Lebanese people being able to interact with the society.

**CATWOE checklist:**

The CATWOE checklist is used to check that all the components are in this definition.

- **C** stands for the **clients/customers** of the system, which are the students, schools, employers
- **A** stands for the actors who carry out activity in the system, which are the teachers, minister of education, schools administrators, parents.
- **T** stands for the **transformation process** being the transfer of the inputs into outputs, which is represented by the use of support, money, and educational design expertise, to solve the
educational problems and to develop a well learning pathway for students through the use of new ideas, statistics, and educational plans.

- \( W \) stands for the \textit{worldview} such as “the good education isn’t only concerning physical inputs (classrooms, teachers, and textbooks) but also regarding incentives that led to better instruction and learning”.

- \( O \) stands for the \textit{owner} with the power to start or stop the system, here is presented by the schools administrators, teachers, parents.

- \( E \) stands for the \textit{environmental constraints} included in the world surrounding the system, such as schools timetable, money, schools rules, parents attitudes, governmental regulations, in addition to the Prescribed educational, academic quality, assessment and accreditation standards and requirements.

Therefore, CATWOE is only a module checklist, and the suitability of a root definition can only be evaluated through the process of assessment, argument and alteration.

\textit{SWOT analysis:}

Moreover, SWOT analysis can provide well participation of administrators, teachers, staff, and parents in the analysis of what is effective and less effective in the schools systems (both schools: private & public) & procedures, in preparation for a new educational plan in order to solve educational problems & improve the learning system in the Lebanese schools.
**Strengths:** internal factors that probably have a positive effect on achieving the educational plan for improving schools’ systems

- Some highly skilled teachers
- Good relation between parents & teachers (private schools)
- Strong culture of openness, sharing & commitment to increasing parental confidence (private schools)
- Social principal refers to the formal & informal partnerships involving the schools, parents, community, agencies, & institutions that have the potential support & be supported by the school

**Weaknesses:** internal factors that probably have a negative effect on achieving the educational plan for improving schools’ systems

- Teachers not available to meet parents repeatedly (public schools)
- Not enough staff time to apply educational plans
- Not clear role of staff in the parent relationship (public schools)
- Cultural differences
- Unequal access to educational technology (public schools)

**Opportunities:** external factors that probably have a positive effect on achieving the educational plan for improving schools’ systems

- Active helper groups prepared to plan
- Students active in the schools’ scholar participation project improvement can be asked for suggestions (private schools)
- Outside professional teachers prepared to help improving and preparing programs
- Using parents to contribute to the improvement of the educational system

**Threats:** external factors that probably have a negative effect on achieving the educational plan for improving schools’ systems

- Confidentiality is a risk (public schools)
- Students pressure to do things not wish to do

*Table 8 SWOT analysis of the complexity*

Besides, I can identify the advantages and disadvantages of both private and public schools, especially the two schools I attended, in order to achieve a better understanding and engaging in this complexity.

When parents ask where to send their children, they have maybe considered private school as an important choice because private schools offer many benefits more than public schools. In such case my parents were facing problems, when they decided to send me to a
private school first. An important issue related to the disadvantages of the private school faced by my parents so they decided to send me to a public school (Amchit Official School).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advantages &amp; Disadvantages of Private School</th>
<th>Advantages &amp; Disadvantages of Public School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There are many advantages and disadvantages that parents should consider before registering their children in a private school. One of the advantages is that most private schools have smaller classroom sizes that allow students to obtain a more individual attention from teachers. Parents pay for private schools this should present a better academic and additional program. On the other hand, some of the disadvantages are that private schools don't conform strictly to the rules and regulations of education. Also, private schools are expensive.</td>
<td>When they were looking for the right school, my parents were considering many advantages of public schools. But they faced many disadvantages. First, they were thinking that the public school education is free. Even if sometimes this means that the quality of the programs is not as high as in private schools. They saw that classrooms are larger in the public school, but this means that there are more students and less attention for each student from teachers. In public schools, failure and violence rates are generally higher than in private school, but such statistics don’t concern all schools.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 9 Advantages & Disadvantages of Private and Public Schools*

Here are some statistics, concerning this complexity, were used in order to differentiate between private and public schools in Lebanon:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of schools in Lebanon (2007/2008)</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Semi Free</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1399</td>
<td>364</td>
<td>1025</td>
<td>2788</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Distribution of Students by schools in Lebanon (2007/2008)</th>
<th>Public</th>
<th>Semi Free</th>
<th>Private</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>324651</td>
<td>115254</td>
<td>471409</td>
<td>911314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Educational Problems: Private vs. Public Schools

**Distribution of Schools in Mount of Lebanon**

- Public: 33%
- Private: 67%

**Distribution of Students in Schools of Mount of Lebanon**

- Public: 63%
- Private: 37%

**Distribution of Schools in Mount of Lebanon According to Students' Numbers**

- Less: 20%
- 201+: 40%
- 401+: 20%
- 601+: 10%

**Distribution of Private & Public Schools in Lebanon According to Students' Numbers**

- Less: 20%
- 201+: 40%
- 401+: 20%
- 601+: 20%

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Private Schools</strong></th>
<th><strong>Public Schools</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>School authority</strong></td>
<td>More regulatory and more use of control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Autonomy (learning)</strong></td>
<td>High level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low level</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Financial resources</strong></td>
<td>Tuition fees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Registration fees and government</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>scholarships</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Use of technology</strong></td>
<td>IT used more in management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Computers not evidently used</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Teamwork</strong></td>
<td>Academic &amp; Social</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Decision-making</strong></td>
<td>More democratic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excited for training and more</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>concerned about school decisions</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Communication &amp; Meetings</strong></td>
<td>Negotiation &amp; discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Only information</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for resistance to change</strong></td>
<td>Fear of the unknown and lack of**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fear of the unknown and lack of</strong></td>
<td>information**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reasons for parental choice</strong></td>
<td>Religion - Academic quality - Discipline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cheapness - Convenience</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relations with students</strong></td>
<td>More surveyed and controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Depends on the personality of the</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>teacher</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10 Private vs. Public Schools
In order to immerse myself more in this complexity, I can use four diagrams to well understand it and having better solutions proposed in following phases. These diagrams are:

The **Systems Map (Diagram 3)** which presents a practical structure for the purpose and defines a boundary between the system of interest and its environment in such case; The **Influence Diagram (Diagram 4)** which is a simple image of a decision problem. It shows the major structural features of the complexity and the interrelation between them and states a wide view of how things are studied in a considered area; The **Multiple Cause Diagram (Diagram 5)** which represents the causal connections between the issues and factors included in the situation, and identifies achievable improvement; and The **Sign Graph (Diagram 6)** which is used to represent & explore the interactions between variables in a specified situation (Diagramming, 2009), it identifies the causal relations in the Multiple Cause Diagram, classifies positive and negative loops, and makes us discover where the involvement will be more effective and efficient.
2.2.3 “C ball”: Contextualizing Systems Approaches

In this phase, I will increase my skill of learning, through experience to manage the relationships between a particular system approach and the real world situation and putting the approach into context. In other words, I should distinguish between systemic & systematic thinking, contextualizing different approaches methods and choosing the suitable approach. Let us now continue the SSM stages:

d) Stage 4: Conceptual models:

The conceptual models demonstrate potential activities and their logical dependencies. It derives entirely from the root definition, without referring to the real situation.
**e) Stage 5: Comparison of Stage 4 with Stage 2:**

There will be a comparison between the elements and activities of the Conceptual Model with the activities that actually exists in the real situation. This comparison presents the problem situation in a clear manner and enhances the need for improvements in the Educational System.

**f) Stage 6: Debate with stakeholders involved in the situation:**

In this stage, there will be a debate with stakeholders involved in this situation, with proposed changes to ensure that the items on the agenda are systemically desirable and culturally feasible.

Therefore, in the form of a table I can summarize these four stages (4, 5, & 6) in a more comprehensive way.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Model</th>
<th>Comparing with Real World Situation</th>
<th>Idea for change</th>
<th>Feasible/Desirable Changes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Improving the educational system</td>
<td>1.1 Private schools promote some educational programs but public schools don’t.</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible &amp; desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Increasing the educational openness &amp; Promoting the educational program</td>
<td>1.2 not currently done, there is lack of strategies</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible &amp; desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Appreciating educational strategies to support schools needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Improving basis knowledge</td>
<td>2.1 No sharing of experiences &amp; skills</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible &amp; desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 exploring &amp; sharing experience, &amp; skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 having potential updated studies enhancing knowledge</td>
<td>2.2 Slow progress in knowledge &amp; skills in both schools</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
<td>Not feasible &amp; desirable (no R&amp;D support)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ensuring interaction teachers/parents &amp; teachers/students</td>
<td>3.1 Appreciate meetings between teachers &amp; parents</td>
<td>3.1 No meetings in public schools but few in private ones</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Having open sessions between teachers &amp; students</td>
<td>3.2 Formal interaction between teachers &amp; students</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible &amp; desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Managing the high quality of teaching</td>
<td>4.1 Refreshing teaching by training performance</td>
<td>4.1 No refreshing teaching &amp; training performance in public schools</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Preparing sequential evaluations for teachers</td>
<td>4.2 No sequential evaluations in public schools, few in private schools</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
<td>Feasible &amp; desirable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Achieving balance between private and public schools</td>
<td>5.1 Equality in level of education</td>
<td>5.1 No equality regarding level of education</td>
<td>Idea for change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Equality in economic support</td>
<td>5.2 High liquidity in private schools, but lack of economic support in public schools</td>
<td>No idea for change</td>
<td>Not feasible &amp; desirable</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
6. Realizing the honesty between education & the needs of society

| 6.1 Having updated coordination between education & society needs | 6.1 No coordination between education & society needs | Idea for change | Feasible & desirable |
| 6.2 Meetings between schools principals & societal administrators | 6.2 Lack of interaction between both of them | Idea for change | Not feasible & desirable |

7. Increasing the interaction with universal cultures

| 7.1 Compatibility of scientific progress & technological development | 7.1 There is technological development in private schools but not in public schools | Idea for change | Feasible & desirable |

Table 7 Stages 4, 5, 6 of SSM

2.2.4 “M ball”: Managing the Complexity:

Last and not least, this phase depends on performance, and this is the process by which I engage with real world situation and manage the complexity in a holistic and systemic way. Here, we should use the skills and procedures involved in the suitable approach when managing the complexity, and making a feedback at the end.

The main purpose of the system is to reduce “educational problems: private vs. public schools”.

Thus, to be an effective practitioner I made the interviews in order to take into consideration
different perspectives and to have an important characteristic, which is “deciding with other stakeholders”. This is the way of managing the engagement with stakeholders when taking decisions. Moreover, and as an aware system practitioner I can suggest some solutions for this complexity; so, I will mention some suggestions first for government, specifically those in the Ministry of Education concerned about the control of schools, and then for principals, in both public and private schools, in terms of their management. Addition to that, I will suggest some ideas for change and improvements that might be done in both private and public schools.

1st. **Suggestions for the Government/Ministry of Education:**

- First, greater autonomy could and should safely be given to schools, such as the recruitment of teachers and supplementary staff and in the daily decisions such as administration of examinations or the organization of additional activities.

- Second, service training sessions should be obligatory for teachers as well as for administrators at public schools, followed by evaluation procedures and judgment to see how this training is both viewed and used.

- Third, allocation to students of some power in the school should be introduced, in order to let students practice public life and be concerned in school decisions.
2nd. *Suggestions for principals in both private and public schools:*

- First, heads of the schools should ensure that staff has clear job descriptions and that they understand and operate by them.

- Second, clear job descriptions also allow greater allocation, as long as they are not part of an inflexible hierarchy.

- Third, it isn’t possible to recreate the complete consumer ethic and lines of responsibility of private schools, but greater links between teachers, administrators and the parents should be encouraged at public schools for the well-being and progress of students.

3rd. *Some improvements might be done in both public and private schools:*

- Students should meet and exceed academic standards and graduate prepared for higher education, careers and citizenship.

- Learning goals should be clearly communicated regularly to make students and families understand what students are expected to learn at each grade level and for each subject area.

  In addition, they should use a program that ensures the continuous intellectual, social/emotional and physical development of students.

- Teachers should use information and technology resources for instruction, assessment and instructional management.

- School community should work together for improvement in academic achievement.

- School staff should also be supportive and responsive to students and families.
Now we can continue with the last stage of the SSM approach:

**g) Stage 7: Action to solve the problem/improve the situation (implementation):**

This is the stage of action to improve the problem situation by implementing suitable changes. All the improvements and ideas for change should be implemented in the real world in order to have an effective educational system in the private and public schools.

Moreover, after suggesting some improvements, I can present the control loop. Furthermore, the **Control Model Diagram (Diagrams 7 & 8)** is used because it shows the application of control to a process ensuring that the objectives are achieved. It can be developed from the input-output diagram by the ways of sensing and monitoring the outputs and making a feedback of information to a comparator that can lead to manage the inputs by an actuator. It is often used to analyze the control problems.
3 CONCLUSION

In summary, we can find that there is no general right or wrong answer concerning whether private or public school education is best for students today. The best thing when making this decision is to consider the factors and evaluate which ones are important to us. Many people are thinking about the option of having a religious association that this may be the only thing important to us.

Here I can say that my understanding of this complexity changed regarding the measures: First, the number of schools chosen for this complexity discussion (one public & one private) could have limited the complete view of the complexity. Second, the geographical location of the schools is an advantage for my study in that comparison is possible because they are in the same area. However, students or parents in other areas of Lebanon may think or behave differently.

My study has also facilitated serious personal reflection on my notion about the issue of education. First, I had an opinion that Lebanese private schools are better than public schools in total terms, which I found not to be true. None of them is ideal, and the exploration found areas of weaknesses in private schools as it did in public schools. Second, it is not necessarily the people in different locations that are better or inferior in terms of leadership, but that the system of one type conditions performance and direction. Finally, this study has improved my understanding not just of management, but it improved my understanding of how educational unfairness continues.
To the Minister of Education (and the Principals in Private & Public Schools)

The project concerns the evaluation of the gaps and problems in the private and public schools in Lebanon. The concentration was on "why parents decide to pay for education when there are free public schools available". In order to clarify this point a full project was structured in order to compare private and public schools in Lebanon. Structured interviews were performed. Some aspects were tackled in this study: the structure of the schools, financial properties, relationships at schools between administrators/teachers, teachers/students, the different cultures, and the parents and their interaction with schools' principals. I found that there were some main differences between private and public schools which didn't only relay on their students' resources, they are connected to the external control of the school and the internal authority relationships. The teacher’s safety was connected to the job performance. In the private schools, a superior independence in decision making by the principals and staff intended a more efficient procedure; superior responsibility to parents intended a more helpful and less disciplinary culture for learning. This included the essentials of: authority, democracy and discipline. These aspects were the direct or indirect reasons for the parents' choice of the schools for their children. This study aims to compare private and public schools in Lebanon in terms of many features. In this project I tried to discover the causes of the gap between the private and public schools and the need to change and improvement of the educational system in both schools.
## CHAPTER 3: PROJECT LOG

### Weekly summaries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Work done</th>
</tr>
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</table>
| **Week 1** | First, I divided this week into two parts:  
- The first part was presented by the most important step in this project, which is choosing and selecting an appropriate complexity in Lebanon. So, as a system practitioner, I chose a complex situation concerning the “Educational Problems: Private vs. public schools” in Lebanon especially Mount Lebanon area. I talked to my tutor “Dr. Eliane Nehme about my chosen complexity, so she accepted it and gave me some key points and the way I should work on my project. I started with collecting and reading a lot of information concerning this complexity in order to well discuss the issues as a system practitioner.  
- The second part was presented by starting to gather the information I collected. And then I made a full review of the T306 concepts that it might use in my project (using the T205 diagramming resources and the T306 books) including the following:  
  * Reviewing the concepts that could be used in my study  
  * Reviewing the BECM method and finding the ways in which it can be applied to the complexity  
  * Considering how modeling could be done and preparing a range of diagrams that would facilitate my analysis |
| **Week 2** | I started my project by the Tutor Report which included the introduction and the discussion among my complexity chosen.  
In progress I made a definition about the complexity, why I chose it as an example of complexity, the method that I will use in order to manage the complexity in a holistic way. So, I selected the SSM method because it’s a social issue.  
I began the body of the project by discussing in a more detailed way the complexity, identifying the concepts that I will use in order to link the study to the T306 course. Then, I briefly defined the BECM approach which I will use to structure and divide my project in many parts. In addition, I tried to find more resources for each part of the project. |
Here, I started with the first phase of the BECM approach; represented by the B ball which stands for “Being a System Practitioner”. So I talked about how I’m working on this project as a system practitioner having many characteristics. Also, I made a small reflective practice on what I have done until that part.

In this week, first, I started the second phase of the BECM approach, which is represented by the E ball “Engaging in the complexity”. So, I made a more detailed discussion of the issues by immersing myself in the complex situation and in a holistic manner.

Then second, I identified the Stakeholders of this complexity and their perspectives, values, beliefs and circumstances.

Third, I began the Soft System Method by defining it and applying the first three stages. Including the Rich Picture, the root definition, the relevant systems, and the CATWOE checklist. I prepared the SWOT analysis of the complexity. Then, I drew a table comparing the advantages and disadvantages of both private and public schools; also, I continued my comparison by mentioning some statistics through drawing charts and tables.

In this week, and after finishing the E ball, I started the C & M balls:

I applied the C ball “Contextualizing systems approaches”, and continued to apply the stages of SSM (stage 4, 5, and 6) by drawing a table including the Conceptual model, the real world situation, the comparison between stage 4 and 2, then identification of feasible and desirable changes.

I also applied the M ball “Managing the complexity”, and finishing the SSM approach by the last stage (stage 7: implementation) after providing suggestions for the Government/Ministry of Education, for principals in both private and public schools, and some improvements to both public & private schools.

Then, I wrote a conclusion identifying if I’m satisfied or not, if I attended my objectives, and what were the gaps?

In this week, I worked on the Client Report and the Project Log including the Weekly Summary and the Overall Summary.

Then I prepared the List of References and the appendices needed, and drew the diagrams.
I made a final revision to ensure that all concepts are clear, well designed project, holistic view is presented.

Finally, I’m ready to the defense of my project having many copies for tutors.

**Overall summary:**

This summary represents an overall reflection about the added value of T306 course and the final project related.

The T306 course added value to my skills; it made many changes in my understanding, and improved my system practice. It helped me: identify, as a system practitioner, different ways of managing complexity through system approaches, use many systems concepts which I can apply on many complex situations, identify suitable systems of interest by the use of wide range of diagrams and techniques, improve my own learning and performance in a professional level, being able to solve problems and complex situations in a holistic way, learn and work as a system practitioner which take into consideration others’ perspectives. This course helped me understand the importance of the reflective practice and many concepts that I can use to well manage complex situations such as Soft System Method, Hard System Method, BECM approach, and LUMAS process…

In a more detailed reflection: after finishing the T306 course “Managing complexity” I have learned to write my own ideas and view point of a complex situation through the use of
many processes such as BECM process, which help me manage complexity and solve problems related in a systemic & systematic way. Thus, The BECM process helped me, in this project, identify an essential complexity in Lebanon, work as a system practitioner through engaging in the complex situation, develop a system approach in order to handle and manage this complexity. The T306 course helped me in:

- Reflecting on my purposes & expectations, taking responsibility for my own reflections, identifying the main objectives of drawing diagrams, being aware of my own practices and the measures of performance, Being System Practitioner in tackling issues, differentiating between Systemic and Systematic approaches, formulating my System of Interest, Engaging With Complexity, Contextualizing Systems Approaches, Managing Complexity, and making connection between Systems Thinking and Practice.

- Exploring complex domains using Soft and Hard systems approaches, differentiating between Soft System Method and Hard System Method, Applying a Logical Framework to my project plan, using systems diagramming and modeling skills.

- Identifying and applying Viable System Method, Differentiating between Critical Reflective Practice and Personally Reflective Practice, Combining VSM with SSM and HSM in order to create own methodology, implementing the Viplan structure of ALC in IALC in order to engage systems practice.
Engaging with the domain of Sustainable Development, Contextualizing my own experience in the domain of Sustainable Development, recognizing the importance if Hierarchies and Levels in both the Domain of Sustainable Development and Systems Practice, identifying multiple Stakeholders and their values, beliefs and circumstances, formulating Systems of Interest in multiple stakeholder settings.

Exploring the experience of Systems Practice and Being Systems Practitioner, Developing models for Structuring Reflection on Systems practice, being reflective, becoming aware.

Finally, by focusing on many aspects before, during and after working on my project, I can say that I have the characteristics of an aware System Practitioner such as:

- Considering systematically and systemically my own & others’ perspectives
- Learning by experience (through the quality of attention and the memory to callback the experience)
- Being worry of any solution to a complex situation
- Enjoying diversity & complexity in a situation
- Taking on fully the implications of the world’s unknowability
- Immersing myself in the complexity
- Being aware of my constraints & possibilities
- Being able to distinguish between systemic and systematic thinking, & to embody these distinctions in practice
Having a triple learning: Learning about the Domain, myself (as a system practitioner) and the approach.

- Being a learner, analyst, enquirer, juggler, catalyst, researcher, active, and designer person.
- Having my own variety
- Identifying beliefs, values, and circumstances of stakeholders...

**LIST OF REFERENCES**


**E-Library:**


T306B_Final Project_7320_Doris Bou Abdou_S209


LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix 1: Interviews

Questions to the administrators:
~ Do you think that all staff knows their specific duties?
~ What are the structures for meetings, consultation, and information to staff?
~ Are reports done written or orally?
~ Does any training or staff development program exist?
~ Is bureaucracy to facilitate or constrain?
~ What do you think about the parents of the students in the school?
~ Do they come to school? How often? (For activities/for teacher-parent meeting)
~ How do parents choose the school for their children? Do you know why they come to your school?
~ Are there computers in the school? For whom? Students, Teachers, Staff?
~ Do the computers have advantages or disadvantages in the improvement of school?
~ Does the government intervene?
~ What are your views on the reform plan? Is privatization a solution for the public school?

Questions to the Teachers
~ Students: how do they work with each others? In a democratic way or there is always somebody who dictates them?
~ Do they respect each other’s ideas?
~ Are teachers and staff free to share new ideas?
~ How decisions are taken (share of power or acceptance of other’s ideas)
~ Does team work exist?
Would the principal like to know how things are done? Or is it enough for him to know that they are done?

Questions to Parents:
- Why did you bring your child to this School? (Academic, discipline)
- Why it is better?
- Do you go to school? How frequently? Do you call for meetings with teachers or principals?
- How is communication done?
- Do they listen if you go to talk about a problem?
- Do you help him/her with his study?

Appendix 2: Diagrams

Diagram 1: Spray Diagram (Drawn by hand): The spray diagram shows the structure of the “educational problems” mess presented in Mount Lebanon. It represents the ideas related to this mess, causes, effects, sources, ways to reduce it, and the other sub-systems such as public schools, private schools, government, parents. All these sub-systems are linked to other ideas and components that can together represent the situation, which I’m talking about.

Diagram 2: Rich Picture (Drawn by hand): The rich picture shows the “educational problems” mess in other way and the use of pictures with less wording. In this diagram we can see all features related to the mess such as public school, private school, government, statistics, the relation between parents and teachers, training needed to teachers, technology needed to more improve schools, and other important ideas.

Diagram 3: System Map (Drawn by hand): The system map represents the “educational problems” in Mount Lebanon, the sub-systems and the external environment sub-systems. The internal sub-systems are public schools, private schools, parents; and the external sub-systems are: government, ministry of education, religion groups, teachers’ competition, public institutions, social factors, political factors, economic factors, and social life).

Diagram 4: Influence Diagram (Drawn by hand): The influence diagram derives from the system map, but it shows the influence of each component on the other internally or externally.

Diagram 5: Multiple Cause Diagram (Drawn by hand): The multiple-cause diagram represents the same mess but from the point of causal issues related to the system and to each other. Some of these causal issues are low salaries, centralization, demotivated teachers, quality of education, government policies, economic factors, choice of school, and so on.

Diagram 6: Sign Graph (Drawn by hand): The sign graph derives from the multiple-cause diagram, but in a different way presented by the variables and the (+) and (-) signs.

Diagram 7: Control Model 1 (Drawn by hand): The control model drawn represents a closed loop in which we can make a feedback. Inputs are presented as important issues that should be transferred after the process part to outputs. Inputs are: teachers’ role, quality of education,
parent’s view of schools, and governmental regulations. The process is the educational problems reduction. Outputs are: teachers training & help students, high quality of education, unclear parent’s view of schools, and application of regulations. The sensor and comparator presented by the ministry of education. The feedback path that characterize the closed loop and differentiate it from the open loop. The actuator presented by the government. The knowledge about the situation. And the goal of reduction of educational problems. As a result, the process is not same as the goal.

**Diagram 8: Control Model 2 (Drawn by hand):** The second control model presents the same elements of the first one but shows the differences in some elements. One of the outputs is changed (choice of suitable school). The sensor, comparator and actuator presented by parents (each has different role). But all other elements are the same and here we can say that the process is the same as the goal achieved.
Diagram 2: Rich Picture Showing the “Educational Problems in Mount Lebanon” Complexity

- Economic factors
- Individual factors
- Classroom size
- Technology
- Statistics of educational problems
- Educational freedom
- Government
- Ministry of Education
- Teachers
- School buses
- Parents
- Parents
- Parents
- Who has the most to gain?
- shhh... Ill stop talking
- Bedtime

Educational Problems: Private vs. Public Schools
Diagram 3: Systems Map Representing the “Educational Problems in Mount Lebanon” Internally & External Factors of the Environment
Diagram 4: Influence Diagram Representing the “Educational Problems in Mount Lebanon” & the External Factors Affecting

Educational Problems: Private vs. Public Schools
Diagram 8: Control Model 2 of the “Educational Problems in Mount Lebanon” Reduction Process with Closed Loop Control

- Reduction of Educational Problems
  - Parents’ feedback when comparing private vs. public schools in Mount Lebanon
- Feedback Path
  - Parents’ views when comparing private vs. public schools
  - Teachers’ role
    - Quality of High school performance
    - Governmental regulations
    - Parents’ views
- Process of “Educational Problems in Private & Public Schools (Mount Lebanon)” Reduction
  - Teachers’ training to help students
  - Application of educational regulations
  - Choice of suitable schools
  - Teachers’ role