

Influence of Psycho-social Support on Stakeholder Engagement in Lebanon's School Community

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Abstract

Psycho-social Support (PSS) is a practical approach to improve people's well-being affected by humanitarian crises. However, empirical research on how it can improve engagement within academic settings is still limited. To address this gap, the current study investigates the impact of the PSS Program in improving the stakeholders' engagement within the school community in Lebanon by implementing counseling and supportive activities or services. The study selected a mixed research design and a cross-sectional survey to answer the research questions and to test the hypotheses. In April 2021, a sample of 446 respondents was selected from among the school stakeholders in Lebanon using the convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Data collected was coded, cleaned, and entered into Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) for analysis. The study confirmed that PSS significantly influences stakeholder engagement that lead into stakeholder belongingness, and quality and equity of education. Based on the outcomes, the researcher recommended adopting the PSS program to better the quality of education and assist administrations with more details that improve stakeholder engagement in their schools. The study also shows best practices in the utilization of the PSS to inspire stakeholder engagement during emergencies. Findings are necessary to the ministry of education, school administrators, students, parents, and researchers interested in using PSS in school settings.

Keywords: psycho-social support, education, Lebanon, stakeholder engagement

1. Introduction

1.1 School Engagement

The advent of the 1975 civil war exposed the Lebanese education system to turbulence that has continued to subject it to longstanding challenges. Tsourapas (2019) recounted that cross-border crises such as the Syrian war have led to the influx of refugees in Lebanon, with some seeking opportunities to engage in its education system. USAID and other international organizations have been actively collaborating with Lebanon's Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) and American educational institutions to increase stakeholder engagement as one of the approaches (USAID, 2021). However, regardless of several multi-agency collaborations, stakeholder engagement within the school community in Lebanon was limited. Lack of adequate engagement has perpetuated Lebanon's education challenges, such as unequal access, affordability, and shortage of Mathematics, English, and Science (Hogsett, 2020).

Moreover, this study aimed to examine the Psycho-social Support (PSS) factors that raise stakeholder engagement in education that improves belongingness and helps achieve the desired goals of quality and equity in education. These factors also laid a foundation that helped better academic performance, inspiring positive adjustment of social behaviors outside and within the classroom. The behaviors mentioned above consolidated improved grades, decreased emotional distress, and conduct problems.

1.2 Psycho-social Support

International Federation of Psycho-social Support defines PSS as "a process of facilitating resilience within individuals, families, and communities". PSS contributes to rebuilding social cohesiveness and infrastructure by respecting people and communities' freedom, dignity, and coping strategies (Ager et al., 2011).

The psycho-social framework comprises emotional factors and social factors. Emotional factors include a range of psychological aspects such as emotions, thoughts, mental health, spirituality, and morality. According to Aouad & Bento (2020), PSS's core areas aim to address social, spiritual, and emotional well-being. These are hypothesized to

lead to stakeholder engagement, belongingness, and education equity and quality. People are said to be experiencing psycho-social well-being if they possess the competencies and capabilities to handle life demands and good relationship management.

1.3 Literature Review

Karam et al. (2016) acknowledged that several studies had been conducted among the refugees since the Syrian crisis. The finding inspired the National Mental Health Programme's implementation by the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health that mental health disorders had increased in the Syrian refugee population compared to the Lebanese population. PSS has remained a crucial approach through which the church, local communities, non-governmental organizations, and medical societies endeavor to improve refugees' well-being. The study confirmed that using PSS significantly improved Syrian refugees' social and emotional well-being (Christodoulou & Abou-Saleh, 2016). However, the study did not focus specifically on stakeholders in the school community.

Weissbecker et al. (2019) shows that MHPSS mainly focuses on a community-centered basis, which involves working in proximity with the distressed populations. This is crucial because it facilitates recognition of individual and combined capacities and resources, which can be built on to enhance well-being and protection. As the study by Karam et al. (2016), Weissbecker et al. (2019) show that psycho-social is essential in addressing refugee problems, but it has not been given due consideration in the school context.

Moreover, through UNICEF's child protection program, 1,312 boys and girls were reached in 2020. This aid gives children opportunities for self-expression and refers them to specialized services as needed. Moreover, 13,532 boys, girls, and caregivers were reached during COVID-19. Out of this number, 10,591 are caregivers, and 2,941 are boys and girls (UNICEF, 2020). In addition, Beirut Port blast on August 4, 2020, killed more than 200 people and wounded about 6,500 others. It seriously damaged almost half of Beirut incapacitated companies, and ruined lives and support (Abouzeid et al., 2021). The blast increased the risks of Child Protection (CP) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) that children may face in the aftermath of the explosion, study reveals that affected children and parents are experiencing significant levels of distress as well as several behavioral changes as a result of the blast (El Hajj, 2020).

There are also cases of anxiety experienced by parents due to the common belief that their children have no future in an insecure nation and their worry over their children's education (OECD, 2020). According to a 2020 report by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, families are concerned about the security of their income sources and livelihoods and their ability to fulfill the fundamental requirements of their children adequately.

According to a report from the National Research Council (US) and Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Depression, the distress in children is shown in various ways, including anger, fear, sorrow, sleeping difficulties, violent responses, changes in play patterns, and indifference. The study also reveals that the explosion has had various effects on children at various periods and in different ways (England & Sim, 2009).

In addition, UNICEF (2011) claims that psycho-social programming depends on three core elements: skills and knowledge, emotional aptitude, and social wellness, whereas Nicolai (2003) claims that the reinforcing PSS during crises depends on recreational activities, games, non-formal educational programs, and safe locations; teacher education on psycho-social topics and PSS.

The teachers should be taught strategies for students who struggle to remain focused, such as using less length and more exercise relating learning; techniques for creating accepting learning spaces and forsaking physical or mental punishment of children; structured psycho-social and informal teaching models adapted to students' learning styles and needs, such as collaborative physical games, artwork, music, body movement, and acting; and the importance of scheduling sports (Mattingly, 2017). In another study, INEE (2016) discovered that schools and learning environments are ideal venues for providing social and emotional learning (SEL) programs, particularly in crises. They believe that SEL programs promote health, social integration, and grit and may be shown via peace programs, conflict solutions, violence avoidance, basic skills, and character improvement, among other things. Finally, as learners of all ages battle to adapt and survive in unstable and often life-threatening circumstances. According to INEE (2016), SEL skills are critical for developing resilience in children and adolescents who have experienced adversity, as they can mean the difference between having supportive relationships and being socially isolated, between managing stress effectively or resorting to negative coping mechanisms, and between academic success and dropping out.

Finally, Boothby and Melvin (2007) discovered that leisure and organized activities assisted a significant percentage of children in 'normalizing' their behavior after being exposed to violence or fleeing a dangerous situation. In a similar study by Burde et al. (2015), the researchers discovered that creative arts are increasingly being used in PSS treatments targeted at children who have been impacted by war or disaster.

Another research showed that contextually relevant community-based interventions were increasingly important in the

face of traumatic experiences. Students' psycho-social functioning and learning results were positively associated with community-supported school-based interventions in a qualitative assessment (Shah, 2014). Through parent and community involvement in school operations and educational activities and the promotion of inclusive, Burde et al. (2015) suggest that community-based interventions address urgent community needs on time.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

The researcher adopted a mixed research methodology and a cross-sectional survey to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to find and to analyze the answers about the relationship between PSS practices and engagement in the schools of Lebanon. Most of the previous studies about PSS used surveys, but no one showed the relationship between PSS and engagement within the schools before or after the Lebanese crises. Moreover, the researcher used inferential statistics to explain the relationship between the two variables in different regions, ages, types of schools, and nationalities.

2.2 Population and Sampling Procedure

The target population for this study comprised stakeholders in the school community in Lebanon, a sample of 446 stakeholders comprising various groups was targeted to participate in the study.

The sampling was convenience sampling. A total of 423 participants (10 of them participate in the pilot study) from many different Lebanese regions were targeted to participate in filling the questionnaire to collect quantitative data. Whereas, Qualitative data was collected from a sample of 23 participants; the heads of schools and the school counselors were selected using the purposeful sampling technique to improve the credibility, validity, and trustworthiness of the findings.

2.3 Instrumentation or Sources of Data

The researcher used the closed-ended questionnaire as one of the instruments of data collection, it consisted of Likert scale. The type of data that the researcher intends to collect from the participants took the form of an ordinal scale. Questionnaires have high reliability since the set of questions used is mostly uniform and closed-ended. They also have a high external and internal validity because similar results can be obtained if they are applied to another setting.

Moreover, the researcher used the online interview guide which consisted of ten semi-structured interview questions to collect qualitative data. Interviews were evaluated based on credibility and trustworthiness. For the questionnaires, internal validity was determined by comparing the responses to determine if they were consistent. Whereas, the external validity was then established by determining how responses from the questionnaires or interviews could be generalized to other contexts.

Finally, reliability was used to test the stability and consistency of the questionnaire. Before the actual study, the researcher performed a pilot study on 10 participants of the target population and calculated Cronbach's alpha. Items with an alpha value of less than 0.7 were removed to improve the reliability of the data collection instrument.

2.4 Data Collection and Management

Before data collection, the researcher informed participants about the study objectives, process of data collection, and benefits. They were allowed to opt-out of the study at any time without facing any consequence. Data was collected using online self-administered questionnaires and phone interviews. The use of online questionnaires and interviews has been partly necessitated by the restrictions occasioned to curb the spread of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Then Data was stored electronically.

2.5 Data Analysis Procedure Research Questions

The study tried to investigate the following hypotheses:

H_{A1}: The stakeholders in the school community in Lebanon need PSS to improve their belongingness and engagement.

H_{A2}: Use of PSS has a significant effect on achieving the desired goals of quality and equity in education.

Analysis of quantitative data from the questionnaires involved a quantitative coding technique. The questionnaire responses were coded, and data was entered into SPSS. This was followed by cleaning the datasets to identify and address outliers and missing values. Finally, the cleaned data was used to generate statistical outputs, including both descriptive and inferential statistics.

The researcher used descriptive statistics such as frequencies, standard deviations, and means to describe the data. Inferential statistics such as correlations and regressions were used to explain the associations and relationships between PSS, engagement, belongingness, equity, and quality of education. Moreover, multiple regressions were used to generate

coefficient values and p-values to test the relationships' statistical significance. A p-value of less than 0.05 ($p < 0.05$) implied that the relationship was statistically significant; hence, hypotheses were not being rejected. On the other hand, a p-value greater than 0.05 ($p > 0.05$) implied that the relationship is not statistically significant; hence the alternative hypothesis was rejected.

3. Results

3.1 Response Rate

The researcher targeted a sample of 350 stakeholders of in Lebanon. But at the end of the data collection period, 423 people had successfully filled and submitted the online questionnaire. This means that the turnout was exceeded the expected response rate by 18% to 118%. The online questionnaire used in this study was published on online platforms that the researcher believed are accessible to the schools in Lebanon.

3.2 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic details that the researcher collected in this study included gender, age, occupation, current residence, and nationality. A crosstab analysis was conducted to compare the occupations to which respondents from different age groups belonged to. Table 4.1 below represents the analysis of occupation against age.

Table 4.1. Crosstab results for occupation and age

		Occupation					Total
		Student	Teacher	Parent/caregiver	School principal	School counselor	
Age	1.0 Below 12 years	19	0	0	0	0	19
	2.0 12-14 years	34	0	0	0	0	34
	3.0 15-17 years	21	0	0	0	0	21
	4.0 18-21 years	31	1	1	1	0	34
	5.0 22-30 years	33	38	28	0	1	100
	6.0 31-40 years	3	58	74	3	3	141
	7.0 41-50 years	0	21	31	0	1	53
	8.0 51-60 years	0	4	3	0	1	8
	9.0 Above 60 years	0	0	1	1	1	3
Total		141	122	138	5	7	413

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

The results show that most of the respondents were students (141/34.14%) followed by parents/caregivers (33.4%). Teachers, SCs and SPs accounted for 29.5% (122), 1.68% (7) and 1.2% (5) respectively. Therefore, the information presented in this report is mostly from students, parents/caregivers and teachers.

Moreover, the researcher recognized the possibility of having different nationalities in Lebanon and wanted to identify the proportions that participated in the study. Analysis of the respondents' nationality showed that most of the participants were Lebanese (41.2%). The Lebanese were followed by Palestinians (35.6%). The Syrians were only 21.8% while those of other nationalities were 1.5%. The proportions are representative of the three nationalities that characterize Lebanon. Hence, findings reported in this report are from Lebanese, Palestinians and Syrians.

3.3 Descriptive Analysis

The researcher conducted a descriptive analysis of each variable of the study to provide a summary of data in a meaningful way. The descriptive analyses included the mean and standard deviation for each Likert scale items. First, the respondents were given a list of activities that depict PSS and asked to indicate those relevant to their school. The importance of this questionnaire item was to help determine if the schools in Lebanon are providing PSS for the stakeholders. Results from the analysis were as shown in table 4.2 below.

Table 4.3. For the activities listed below, please indicate those that are relevant to your school. You can choose more than one

Psycho-social Support activity	Frequency	Proportion
The school provides operational assistance for staff, students and parents.	203	49.15%
The school conducts regular capacity-building activities.	185	44.79%
The school pays attention to the competence development of all stakeholders.	172	41.65%
The school has effective programs for advocacy and knowledge generation.	134	32.45%
The policy and strategy development at the school focuses on helping everyone to fit in.	233	56.42%

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

Table 4.3 above shows that most of the psycho-social activities suggested for the residents were being implemented in Lebanese schools. However, the most popular activities that became evidence from the study is the role played by the policy and strategy development in schools that focuses on helping everyone to fit in; a total of 233 (56.42%) of the respondents chose this option as one of the activities relevant to their schools.

The least popular activity in Lebanon's school community is effective programs for advocacy and knowledge generation that scored only 32.45%. This implies that either most schools in Lebanon may not be implementing advocacy programs or most of the stakeholders were not aware of these programs during the time of the study. The study confirmed that most of the schools in Lebanon conduct regular capacity-building activities and pay attention to the competence development of all stakeholders. The study confirmed that only about half of the schools in Lebanon are taking a keen interest on implementing various psycho-social activities.

Moreover, Mean and standard deviation analysis for the responses to the Likert scale items for variable 'PSS' was carried out and the results presented using table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4. Descriptive analysis results for Psycho-social Support

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q11 Our school creates opportunities to give input on the vision, mission, and strategic plans for the overall effort.	413	1.0	5.0	2.630	1.4145
Q12 Our school focuses on trauma-sensitive approaches.	413	1.0	5.0	3.027	1.5585
Q13 Our school has programs to address racial disparities and ensure each individual connects with others.	413	1.0	5.0	2.603	1.4605
Q14 Our school provides programs that enhance our emotional well-being.	413	1.0	5.0	3.186	1.4851
Q15 Our school uses different media types such as print and electronic to send regular messages about the importance of school climate.	413	1.0	5.0	2.574	1.4168
Q16 When a person is unknown at the school, they are taken through orientation sessions to fit in.	413	1.0	5.0	3.368	1.5185
Q17 Our school has a website, and social media presence focused on school climate.	413	1.0	5.0	2.492	1.3467
Q18 Our school has counseling programs that help students to overcome the fears of the academic year.	413	1.0	5.0	2.729	1.4695
Q19 Our school places students that need health, psychological, financial, and other assistance on a special program to enable them to cope.	413	1.0	5.0	2.985	1.5641
Valid N (listwise)	413				

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

The data presented in the table above shows that most of the responses are clustered around 3, which means that the majority of the respondents maintained neutrality to the Likert scale statements regarding PSS. Moreover, the aggregate

mean of the responses is 2.844, which when rounded off the nearest whole become 3 (neither agree nor disagree). The high standard deviation of 1.47 implies that there was a high variability of the responses. What this means is that some of the schools are excellently implementing PSS activities while some are poorly doing it.

As well, mean and standard deviation analysis for the responses to the Likert scale items for variable ‘stakeholder engagement’ was carried out and the results presented using table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5. Descriptive analysis results for stakeholder engagement

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q20 I have the courage to engage in the activities of the school.	413	1.0	5.0	2.048	1.2686
Q21 I am always willing and ready to participate in school activities when called upon.	413	1.0	5.0	2.068	1.2426
Q22 I believe the school administration welcomes parents, teachers, and students to participate in making major school decisions.	413	1.0	5.0	2.615	1.4712
Q23 I am willing to help the school to make important decisions.	413	1.0	5.0	2.295	1.3474
Q24 I believe that the school is ready to receive my contribution anytime.	413	1.0	5.0	2.719	1.5020
Q25 Whenever I am called to act on matters relating to this school, I act immediately.	413	1.0	5.0	2.179	1.2587
Q26 I feel that I have the freedom to challenge or support the school's activities	413	1.0	5.0	2.690	1.4815
Valid N (listwise)	413				

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

Similar to the aggregate mean of 2.373, the mean values in the table 4.5 indicates that most of the values are tending towards 2 when rounded off to the nearest whole number. This study showed that school stakeholders in Lebanon are starting to appreciate the need to engage in school activities. However, the high mean standard deviation of 1.37 implies that there was a high variability in the responses that the participants selected, thus, indicating a wide gap in the willingness of stakeholders to engage in school activities.

Furthermore, mean and standard deviation analysis for the responses to the Likert scale items for variable ‘school belongingness’ was carried out and the results presented using table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6. Descriptive analysis results for school belongingness

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q27 I am glad to be associated with this school	413	1.0	5.0	2.259	1.3788
Q28 I feel lucky to be a student/teacher/parent at this school.	413	1.0	5.0	2.455	1.4800
Q29 I have an undoubted pride in being associated with this school.	413	1.0	5.0	2.603	1.5240
Q30 Even if I have several opportunities to change my school, I would not change from this school.	413	1.0	5.0	2.971	1.6068
Q31 I feel that I am cared for by this school.	413	1.0	5.0	2.789	1.5724
Q32 I want to be associated with this school to unforeseen future.	413	1.0	5.0	2.961	1.6246
Q33 I would not be happy if I stopped being part of this school.	413	1.0	5.0	2.918	1.5912
Q34 I encourage my significant others to seek association with this school.	413	1.0	5.0	2.627	1.4867
Valid N (listwise)	413				

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

The clustering of most of the mean values towards supported by the aggregate mean of 2.698 (~3) implies that most of

the respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with the Likert scale statements. Having a central value could mean that the number of schools to which stakeholder belongingness is actualized are almost equal to those that it is not. The high standard deviation of 1.533 implies a high variability of the responses as selected by the participants.

Finally, Mean and standard deviation analysis for the responses to the Likert scale items for variable ‘quality and equity’ was carried out and the results presented using table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7. Descriptive analysis results for quality and equity

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q35 The appearance of the school’s physical facilities, equipment, and personnel.	413	1.0	5.0	2.317	.8860
Q36 The accuracy with which the school’s service providers deliver services.	413	1.0	5.0	2.276	.8597
Q37 Promptness of the service and willingness to help visitors	413	1.0	5.0	2.332	.8668
Q38 Ability to inspire trust and confidence among the school stakeholders.	413	1.0	5.0	2.218	.9456
Q39 Communication, caring, accessibility, and individualized attention to each stakeholder.	413	1.0	5.0	2.308	.9057
Q40 Identification and provision of systematic help for all stakeholders depending on their actual needs.	413	.0	5.0	2.368	.9705
Q41 Response to diversity and provision for the successful inclusion of refugees and minorities within the mainstream education.	413	1.0	5.0	2.479	.9792
Q42 Service customization to user needs.	413	1.0	5.0	2.525	.9766
Valid N (listwise)	413				

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

The schools in Lebanon seem to pay keen interest in the matters of equity and quality of education give that most of the mean values in table 4.7 are tending towards 2, which stands for agree. The aggregate mean value of 2.343 (~2) further supports the fact that most of the respondents agreed with the statements depicting equity and equality of education in Lebanon. The low standard deviation 0.924 implies that the responses did not vary, thus, most of the respondents selected almost same answers from the Likert scale options.

3.4 Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis was conducted to identify the association between the independent variable (PSS) and the three dependent variables (stakeholder belongingness, stakeholder engagement and quality and equity). The results from analysis were presented using table 4.8 below.

Table 4.8. Correlation analysis

		Stakeholder engagement	School belongingness	Quality and Equity	Psycho-social Support
Stakeholder engagement	Pearson Correlation	1	.624**	.539**	.546**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000
	N	413	413	413	413
Stakeholder belongingness	Pearson Correlation	.624**	1	.711**	.618**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000
	N	413	413	413	413
Quality and Equity	Pearson Correlation	.539**	.711**	1	.593**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000
	N	413	413	413	413
Psycho-social Support	Pearson Correlation	.546**	.618**	.593**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	
	N	413	413	413	413

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

The correlation between stakeholder engagement and PSS is positive and strong ($r=0.547$). This means that changing PSS by one unit leads to a 0.546 change in stakeholder engagement. The association is also statistically significant given the p-value of 0.00 ($p<0.05$).

The correlation between PSS and stakeholder belongingness is positive and strong ($r=0.618$). This means that changing PSS by one unit leads to a 0.618 change in stakeholder belongingness. The association is also statistically significant given the p-value of 0.00 ($p<0.05$).

The correlation between PSS and education quality and equity is positive and strong ($r=0.593$). This means that changing PSS by one unit leads to a 0.593 change in education quality and equity. The association is also statistically significant given the p-value of 0.00 ($p<0.05$).

3.5 Regression Analysis:

The aim of carrying out regression analysis was to identify the relationship between PSS and the three dependent variables (stakeholder belongingness, stakeholder engagement, and quality and equity).

First, Regression analysis for the effect of psycho-social development was carried out the results presented using table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9. The effect of psycho-social development on stakeholder belongingness

Model Summary					
Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
	.618 ^a	.382	.381	.9754	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	241.922	1	241.922	254.364	.000 ^b
Residual	390.896	411	.951		
Total	632.818	412			
Coefficients^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.452	.149		3.038	.003
Psycho-social Support	.790	.050	.618	15.942	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Stakeholder belongingness

b. Predictors: (Constant), Psycho-social Support

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

The regression results in table 4.9 above show that R-squared value is 0.382. What this means is that PSS is responsible for only 38.2% of the variability in School belongingness. The remaining variability (61.8%) is determined by other variables that are not part of this study. The ANOVA table shows that significance value of the model is 0.00 ($p < 0.05$). Thus, the model is significant in explaining the relationship between PSS and school belongingness. The table further shows that the coefficient of PSS is 0.790. This means that there is a strong relationship between PSS and stakeholder belongingness such that a unit change in PSS could lead to a 0.79 change in stakeholder belongingness. Using this relationship, it is possible to construct a linear regression model of the form:

$$Y = 0.452 + 0.79x + 0.9754 \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (stakeholder belongingness), x is the independent variable (PSS), and 0.9745 is the standard error of the estimate.

The equation can be used to predict the changes in any of the variable of interest by replacing the value in the value that is to be tested. The relationship between PSS and stakeholder belongingness is also significant given the p-value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$). Hence, the alternative hypothesis, *the stakeholders in the school community in Lebanon need Psycho-social Support to improve their belongingness and engagement*, holds, thus, it is not rejected.

Second, the computed regression analysis for the effect of PSS on stakeholder engagement was presented using table 4.10 below.

Table 4.10. The effect of psycho-social development on stakeholder engagement

Model Summary					
Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
	.546 ^a	.298	.296	.7793	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	105.927	1	105.927	174.439	.000 ^b
Residual	249.578	411	.607		
Total	355.506	412			
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	.889	.119		7.483	.000
Psycho-social Support	.522	.040	.546	13.208	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Stakeholder engagement

b. Predictors: (Constant), Psycho-social Support

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

The relationship table shows that PSS is responsible for only 29.8% of the variability in stakeholder engagement (r-squared is 0.298). The remaining 70.2% is determined by other factors that are not part of this model. The ANOVA value of 0.00 (p<0.05) shows that the model is significant in explaining the relationship between Psycho-social Support and stakeholder engagement. The coefficient value of 0.522 implies a strong and positive relationship such that a unit change in PSS could cause a 0.522 change in stakeholder engagement. A predictive equation of the relationship can be constructed in the form:

$$Y=0.889+0.522x+0.7793.....(i)$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (stakeholder engagement), x is the independent variable (PSS), and 0.7793 is the standard error of the estimate.

Replacing any value in the model can help determine change in other variables of the study. The relationship between PSS and stakeholder engagement is significant given the p-value of 0.00 (p<0.05). Hence, the alternative hypothesis, *The stakeholders in the school community in Lebanon need Psycho-social Support to improve their belongingness and engagement*, failed to be rejected again.

Finally, Regression analysis for the effect of psychological support on quality and equity of education was computed and the results presented using table 4.11 below.

Model Summary					
Model 1	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	
	.593 ^a	.352	.350	.6126	
ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	83.607	1	83.607	222.788	.000 ^b
Residual	154.238	411	.375		
Total	237.845	412			
Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1.034	.093		11.072	.000
Psycho-social Support	.464	.031	.593	14.926	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Education Quality and Equity

b. Predictors: (Constant), Psycho-social Support

(Source: Survey data, 2021)

Findings from the study revealed that PSS explains only 35.2% of the variability in the education quality and equity while the rest 64.8% is explained by factors that are not part of this study. The model is significant in explaining the relationship between Psycho-social Support and education equity and quality given the significance value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$). The relationship between PSS and education equity and quality is positive, but weak (0.464). A unit change in PSS could lead to a 0.464 change in education quality and equity. Using this information, it is possible to construct a predictive equation of the form:

$$Y = 1.034 + 0.464x + 0.6126 \dots \dots \dots (i)$$

Where Y is the dependent variable (education equity and quality), x is the independent variable (PSS), and 0.6126 is the standard error of the estimate.

Replacing any value in the model can help determine change in other variables of the study. The relationship between PSS and education equity and quality is significant given the p-value of 0.00 ($p < 0.05$). Based on this result, the second alternative hypothesis: *Use of Psycho-social Support has a significant effect on achieving the desired goals of quality and equity in education*, holds, thus, it is not rejected.

3.6 Analysis of Qualitative Data

Qualitative data was collected from interviews that involved a total of 23 participants. The 23 included 11 school counselors and 12 school principals. The interviews were transcribed, read reiteratively and subjected to qualitative coding, which allowed the researcher to create the following themes that were analyzed using the thematic analysis technique.

The first theme is PSS, the study showed that more than half of the schools in Lebanon do not put into consideration the crucial aspects of PSS. This is evidenced by 56.52% of the respondents who did not think that the school stakeholders they manage exhibit a balanced social, psychological and spiritual aspects. A few of the respondents said that it is sometimes possible to achieve PSS while some gave conditions that must prevail for the achievement of PSS. For example, Respondent 7 said:

This is difficult and may differ from person to person, from staff to staff, and depending on the circumstances (Respondent 7)

Respondent 10 also viewed that social needs are always expressed in an extreme or exaggerated way, hence, becoming difficult to balance. However, Respondent 12 said that no one of the most difficult areas of expression is the field of expressing the psychological and spiritual aspects, while the social ones are less difficult to express. On the other hand, Respondent 18 said that it is not possible to implement PSS because most cannot show it and try to suppress it. Nonetheless, only 21.74% of the interviewees were confident that the stakeholders in the schools they manage exhibit balanced social, psychological and spiritual aspects.

The complexity of achieving a satisfactory PSS in academic institutions was recognized by Beydoun, Abdulrahim & Sakr (2021). However, McLuckie et al. (2018) contended that with the right policy, effort and commitment, it is possible to implement PSS with a high level of excellence. Similarly, the study revealed that availability of a supportive and caring environment can ensure prevalence of Psycho-social Support (Respondent 12). In fact, the study showed that more than half of the schools are implementing actions that seek to address the psychological, social and spiritual concerns of the stakeholders.

The school's duty is to strive continuously, according to its available capabilities, to address any problem faced by the beneficiaries (Respondent 19).

The role of the school counselor in ensuring effective PSS was recognized from the study results. Respondent 11 emphasized that all schools need a social counselor. Similarly, Respondent 12 said that they have a school counselor "Yes; we have a school counselor who follows up on the students' cases, which has led to significant improvement in PSS." Lack of satisfactory PSS in the presence of actions that seek to address the psychological, social and spiritual needs imply that these activities and programs are not effective to the specific needs of the stakeholders in Lebanon.

The second theme is Belongingness, the study showed that although belongingness has been widely affected by distance education due to learning turning complex and obstructed (Respondent 13). Communication by mobile was blamed for deterring physical association, thus, undermining cooperation between school stakeholders (Respondent 1). However, some of the respondents felt that although each stakeholder is different in his or her opinion of belongingness

(Respondent 18), they are not required to belong unconsciously and the extent to which the school administration pleases them can make all stakeholders to develop a sense of belongingness (Respondent 17). All the respondents except one agreed that they are aware of the factors that impede a sense of stakeholder belongingness to their schools.

At the same time, Respondent 10 blamed lack of professionalism and the parents' lack of understanding of the meaning of interest. Similar to Chopra's (2018) assertion, lack of attention to the social, psychological and academic situation and failure to provide crisis assistance when any problem occurs with them was found to undermine a sense of belongingness (Respondent 12). Furthermore, lack of concern from the school management could create a serious problem.

Yeah. The beneficiaries' feeling of the management's indifference to their problems, opinions, and needs is the primary factor for a lack of a sense of belonging (Respondent 19).

As per Aouad & Bento (2020), a sense of belongingness could be demeaned when safety, trust and relationships within the school are negative. Similarly, the study confirmed that if the school stakeholders feel that there is no safety, trust and positive relationships within the school, they may not readily exhibit a feeling of belongingness (Respondent 19).

The third theme is Motivation, Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs is founded on the principle that human needs are satisfied in a hierarchical order such that when one need is satisfied, the next need in the hierarchy becomes a motivating factor to work hard (Koomen, 2017). The study revealed that economic factors that negatively influence ability to satisfy basic needs can impede engagement and belongingness to a school (Respondent 4). Denying the stakeholders, the chance to develop a sense of belongingness through establishing networks between the school family and the outside impacts on the belongingness and engagement

(Respondent 7). Consistent Khalil's (2017) assertion in his research, Respondent 10 stated:

Lack of reinforcement, too many tasks, injustice, lack of methodology in the management's work, lack of appreciation for the team's effort.

Similarly, Respondent 17 identified lack of appreciation of efficiency and effort, and the school's resources diminish for paying salaries on time as the major impediments to motivation. Similar to factors identified by previous researchers such as Hogsett (2020) and Chopra (2018), the study revealed other aspects that deter motivation of stakeholders to cooperate with the schools, including:

Neotism and favoritism and lack of adoption of merit and competence (Respondent 11)

Discrimination, bad relationships between school and stakeholders, focusing on academic side ignoring the social, health and psychological sides (Respondent 23).

However, Respondent 21 expressed heightened optimism through the denial of obstacles and insisting on the need to address the obstacles and build on the school's strengths.

There are no obstacles that prevent my belonging and my involvement with the school because I work with respect to meet all needs, overcome obstacles, and build on the strengths of school.

Based on their research findings, Shuayb & Ahmad (2021) had also suggested that school administrations should strive to satisfy the needs of each individual as part of the PSS endeavor, thus, enhancing stakeholder motivation to engage in school activities. The school counselors were identified as the sources of motivation for all school stakeholders.

Standing on the quality of services and motivation in distance education ... conversation sessions and psychological support for teachers and parents (Respondent 4).

The school counselor promotes belongingness to the school (Respondent 8), directs positive feelings towards school activities (Respondent 10), makes the school stakeholders feel accepted, respected, and an integral part of the school community (Respondent 19), and prepares educational and administrative personnel to develop the desired level of competence in their roles (Respondent 23).

Previously, Hogsett (2020) acknowledged that the school counselor is a crucial figure in the school community that helps to encourage all stakeholders to keep working hard despite the psychological and social challenges they are facing.

The last theme is Communication, the research findings from a study confirmed that lack of effective communication could negatively affect the awareness and implementation of PSS, and the study revealed that lack of belongingness is caused by lack of effective communication.

Certainly, including: Lack of communication between individuals within the school - building concerns between the school family and others. Therefore, we are working to create a harmonious environment that improves belonging feelings and works as one cooperative family in all circumstances (Respondent 7).

The study showed that holding weekly meetings provides avenues for communication to improve mental health (Respondent 1 and 12) and create ongoing awareness sessions and motivational activities (Respondent 2). Further the study showed collecting data from stakeholders, consulting them, taking their opinions, and making them participate in the decisions that related to their children are communication strategies that help address stakeholder engagement (Respondent 10). Respondent 14 also identified recognized the role that communication plays in addressing the issue of stakeholder engagement in the school community.

[...] a more open and varied communication plan / involvement of parents in making decisions related to premiums / a series of educational meetings for parents on topics in which they are consulted / organizing open days for parents to attend classes or participate in school activities

Similar to the findings from the study by Hogsett (2020)), Respondent 23 confirmed that effective communication between the stakeholders are critical in addressing engagement problems among them. When asked about the extent to which the school's services exhibit consistency with the needs of students, parents and teachers, Respondent 19 said that it is always listen to all stakeholders and find appropriate solutions to their problems and needs.

However, Respondent 20 blamed the beneficiaries for not actively participating in the activities of the schools as an issue that affects the ability to meet stakeholder needs.

Further importance of communication in was recognized by Respondent 1, who suggested it as part of the strategy to improve stakeholder improvement, belongingness, engagement and quality/equity of education.

Communication and cooperation between all. Teachers should increase their involvement with their students by using modern techniques [...] helping caregivers in the technical aspects especially in COVID-19 Pandemic and this bad situation (Respondent 1).

The study confirmed the assertion by Khalil (2017) regarding the centrality of dealing with everyone transparently (Respondent 8), forming consultative committees (Respondent 17), and building positive relationships between the school and the beneficiaries through the councils that try to find solutions to problems using effective and consistent communication channels with the external school community stakeholders (Respondent 23).

4. Discussion

The aim of this study was to analyze the effect of PSS on stakeholder engagement in Lebanon's school community. The study adopted a primary data methodology, which involved the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data from a sample of 446 stakeholders of the school community in Lebanon.

Findings from the study confirmed that there is a significant relationship between PSS and stakeholder engagement. Although descriptive analysis of the mean had shown that PSS and stakeholder engagement are strongly and positively correlated ($r=0.546$). Regression analysis also confirmed a strong and significant relationship between the two variables ($p=0.00$; $p<0.05$). The alternative hypothesis that depicted the relationship between PSS and stakeholder engagement was not rejected.

The study further showed that PSS and stakeholder belongingness are positively related. The findings revealed that the two variables are positively and strongly correlated ($r=0.618$). Descriptive analysis of the mean also showed that majority of the respondents had agreed with the statements of the Likert scale that depict stakeholder belongingness. The regression analysis confirmed a statistically significant relationship between PSS and stakeholder belongingness ($p=0.00$; $p<0.05$).

Thus, the hypothesis depicting the relationship was earlier evidenced from the study by Hogsett (2020) who argued that stakeholder belongingness can be actualized in school contexts that prioritize balancing social, psychological and spiritual needs of the stakeholders.

The results from the study ascertained that use of PSS has a significant effect on achieving the desired goals of quality and equity in education, leading to acceptance of alternative hypothesis two. The correlation value was found to be 0.593 ($r>0.5$) while the significance value of the relationship was 0.00 ($p<0.05$). However, based on the regression analysis, the relationship between PSS and education equity and quality is somehow weak, but it is positive and significance. Regardless of this, Shuayb & Ahmad (2021) had found out that caring for the social, psychological and spiritual needs of the stakeholders is a core aspect of quality and equity of education.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from the study is that the stakeholders in the school community in Lebanon need PSS to improve their belongingness and engagement. Without proper programs for ensuring that stakeholders' psychological, social and spiritual are balanced, it is difficult to achieve the desired levels of stakeholder engagement and belongingness. The second conclusion is that use of PSS significantly affects the achievement of the desired goals of quality and equity in education. Hence, implementing PSS programs can greatly determine the extent to which the

Lebanese education caters for the needs of all the populations and satisfies the actual needs of students, teachers, parents/caregivers/, support staff, and school administration teams.

Using the findings from this study, two recommendations can be made. First, the Lebanese government should partner with schools and stakeholder groups to implement activities that help to satisfy the psycho-social needs of the stakeholders. Through this, the stakeholders will increase their belongingness and engagement with the school activities. Furthermore, it will increase the quality and equity of education.

Second, the Lebanese school administrations should effectively communicate with the stakeholders and motivate them to develop a feeling of belongingness and engage in the activities of the schools. The study showed that communication and motivation are instrumental in addressing stakeholder engagement and belongingness.

Third, the Ministry of Education should develop policies and strategies that improve the nature of PSS provided in order to facilitate stakeholder engagement and belongingness and the overall equity and quality of education.

Finally, future researchers may consider replicating this topic to larger and diverse populations. Cross-country or cross-regional comparisons recruiting large sample sizes will not only minimize the sampling error, but also lead to generation of more generalizable findings. Moreover, further research should be carried out to unravel other factors apart from PSS that influence stakeholder engagement, stakeholder belongingness and education quality and equity.

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