

# “I WAS BORN TO DO THIS”: TEACHER MOTIVATION IN A JORDAN REFUGEE MIDDLE SCHOOL FOR BOYS

Rania M. Sadeq

Dr., Chicago, Illinois, The United States, rania.sadeq@outlook.com

## Abstract

Refugees are a displaced population that is fleeing war, persecution, or natural disasters. They lose everything and find themselves in makeshift camps. Many of these camps are slowly forgotten because the conflicts take so long to resolve. This ethnographic study took place in one of the 10 official refugee camps in Jordan. The United Nations Relief and Work Agency provides education for over 118,500 Palestinian students at 174 UNRWA schools in Jordan. *Al Hurriya* refugee camp was established in 1968 and has been a temporary home for three generations. My research focused specifically on Al Noor Middle School for boys in the *Al Hurriya* refugee camp.

This dissertation focused specifically on teacher motivation in Al Noor School. I conducted an ethnography to explore teacher Intrinsic Motivation (IM) and Self-Determination (SDT). My fieldwork included interviews with and observations of the principal of the school and 13 teachers. I also conducted observations of the daily life of the school as an integral site of community in the *Al Hurriya* refugee camp. In my research, I encountered a constellation of factors that contributed to teacher motivation in this refugee camp of high poverty and decades of displacement from a homeland.

My data analysis revealed that the participating teachers and principal unanimously expressed that three of the main factors for their intrinsic motivation were their pride in being educators, their loyalty to their community, and their goals of preserving their and their students' ethnic identity. This dissertation contributes knowledge about motivation overall and teacher intrinsic motivation and self-determination specifically. It illustrates how motivated and dedicated educators persevere and succeed in a harsh environment.

**Keywords:** resilience, refugees, UNRWA, Jordan, displaced population, Motivation, intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, self-esteem, self-determination, autonomous and controlled motivation, amotivation, refugee camp.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Refugees are a displaced population that has fled war, destruction, natural disasters, and other life-threatening events through no fault of their own. Often, they are placed in refugee camps that lack the basic human rights and necessities that we are all entitled to as human beings, such as clean running water, medical care, the freedom of travel, citizenship, and much more. Lacking the means and opportunity to return to their homeland, many displaced persons remain in these camps for an average of 17 years, often losing hope, and with that, the will to survive. One such refugee camp is the focus of my research; it has been a temporary settlement since the 1960s.

Due to the long duration of internment in a refugee camp, social and governmental functions, such as child education and school development, are critical but are often limited or at times non-existent. This disheartening fact about refugee schools fueled my interest in exploring the role of teachers in these settings.

The purpose of my research was to examine teacher motivation and self-determination in an all-boys middle school in a refugee camp located in Jordan. I wanted to learn about the culture of a school in a refugee camp. Specifically, my goal was to investigate the teachers who were themselves first- or second-generation refugees in this camp, who were teaching the third generation of refugee students. Ring and West (2015) asserted that “although teacher retention is a challenge in developed, developing, and refugee and emergency contexts, it is especially complex in the latter circumstances. In traditional settings, teachers do not face the political, economic, and logistical constraints of a humanitarian crisis” (p. 108). Teachers in this refugee camp had to overcome many obstacles to keep their school open because they lacked most of the basic tools and materials needed to implement their curriculum; despite these obstacles, they continued to create weekly lesson plans with whatever resources were available to them. The refugee camp I observed, *Al Hurriya* camp, was inhabited by three generations of people and was preparing to welcome a fourth generation of undocumented and displaced Palestinians. The camp is near the Jordanian capital, Amman. It is important to note that confidentiality was critical in this study. Throughout this article, pseudonyms are used in place of the real names of the participants, the school, the refugee camp, and the city; these names have all been changed to conceal and protect the privacy of the participants and the study site.

This ethnographic study took place in a refugee camp in Jordan that was established in 1968, *Al Hurriya* camp. At the time of this study, *Al Hurriya* camp was home to more than 25,000 Palestinian refugees. The camp's first generation was displaced twice in one lifetime. These refugees were displaced in 1948 from various Palestinian cities, finding themselves relocated in the Gaza Strip. Next, they were displaced for a second time in 1967 from the Gaza Strip to the Jordanian refugee camp. It was astounding to learn that the distance between Gaza and Amman is approximately 147 kilometers or 91 miles, but for the refugees, they spoke of their homeland as if it were thousands of miles away. As for the second and third generations, they have had the misfortune of calling the camp their home since birth. In fact, the teacher participants in this study, and their students, represent a small sample of the second and third generations in *Al Hurriya* camp.

## 2. REFUGEE EDUCATION

It is imperative to understand that the first feeling of normalcy for most refugee children is the feeling of going back to school. I have personally witnessed how refugee children do not have anxiety over missing their next meal or having a regular place to sleep as much as they think about going to school regularly. Antonio Gutiérrez (as cited in Braonáin, n.d.), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, asserted at the World Education Forum 2015 that “education in humanitarian crises is not an optional extra. In the devastating context of global conflict and displacement, education gives hope to refugee children and youth to envision and build a secure future” (para. 1). Education is simply the insurance for a better quality of life. In the case of the majority of refugees in *Al Hurriya* camp, that future appeared to be bleak. They had been displaced from their country to find themselves undocumented in another. However, like in any community, education continues to be a source of hope for the future of refugee children.

## 3. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main purpose of this study is to conduct ethnographic qualitative research to investigate the intrinsic motivation and self-determination factors that influence refugee teachers' desire to teach refugee students in *Al Hurriya* camp, even though they are aware of the dire social, political, and economic reality of *Al Noor* Boys Middle School.

To fulfill this purpose, I first explored the study participants' teaching beliefs and perceptions of elements that contribute to or inhibit their motivation to teach in this refugee camp school. Second, I investigated the relationships among the elements that contribute to or inhibit the participants' perceptions of their motivation to teach. Third, using the two constructs of intrinsic motivation and self-determination, I provided the commonalities and differences among the participants so as to better understand the elements that contribute to or inhibit a teacher's desire to teach in challenging conditions.

## 4. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INTRINSIC MOTIVATION AND SELF-DETERMINATION

The theoretical framework that guided my research is based on two theories: first, motivational theory, specifically intrinsic motivation theory (IM), and second, self-determination theory (SDT). On teacher intrinsic motivation in the classroom, Iliya and Ifeoma (2015) emphasized that “teacher motivation is directly linked to the instructors' desire to take part in the pedagogical process and interest in sharing their knowledge with the students. It determines their involvement or non-involvement in the teaching activities” (p. 10). Intrinsic motivation differentiates teachers who are passionate about teaching and their students learning from

teachers who are in the classroom simply because they have to be there in order to make a living.

Refugee teachers' motivation transcends far beyond the extrinsic rewards typically used to motivate teachers, such as a steady income, better school environment, promotions, and various other incentives (Frase, 2002; Nawaz & Yasin, 2015). Iliya and Ifeoma (2015) concluded in their study findings that "research and experience show that teachers are most likely to value intrinsic rewards such as self-respect, responsibility, and a sense of accomplishment" (p. 16). Therefore, extrinsic awards do not have the impact that some researchers once claimed they had on teacher motivation.

Extrinsic factors include, for example, salary, promotions, and job security. According to a study conducted by Nawaz & Yasin (2015) on motivational theories, "extrinsic factors only eliminate the job dissatisfaction" (p. 56). However, intrinsic motivational factors are, beliefs and values that are personally rewarding; essentially, the job is completed because of its own value and merit, not for any external rewards. Nawaz also found that intrinsic factors that cause motivation are achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth" (p. 56). The concept of intrinsic motivation led me to ask what are the motivational factors that influence a refugee teacher to teach refugee students in the same camp for more than 20 years? Iliya and Ifeoma (2015) pointed out that "discovering what matters to teachers and how best to motivate them for sustained and improved performance is a complicated challenge" (p. 16).

The second construct is self-determination theory (SDT). Lyness, Lurie, Ward, Mooney, and Lambert (2013) explained that "self-determination theory is a comprehensive theory of human behavior supporting our natural or intrinsic tendencies to behave in effective and healthy ways" (p. 152). These authors also noted that studies revealed the three basic psychological needs that support the individual's experience: autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

Howard, Gagné, Morin, and Van den Broeck (2016) explained the connection between motivational theories and self-determination theory (SDT):

Intrinsic motivation occurs when an individual participates in an activity for the enjoyment inherent in the activity itself, while at the other extreme extrinsic motivation occurs when behaviors are enacted for an instrumental reason. SDT proposes that extrinsic motivation can be internalized to become autonomously regulated. (p. 75)

Essentially, the amalgamation of these two constructs, IM and SDT, presented a holistic view of the participants' motivational factors. IM and SDT were the lenses through which I analyzed the data I had collected during the interviews and observations I conducted in Al Hurriya camp. My interview questions revolved around how my participants perceived the impact of intrinsic motivation on their longevity in their profession. I also constructed inquiries into how they felt about their profession, community, school, and students.

The purpose of this study was to better understand the teachers' level of self-determination and commitment to their teaching profession. There is an abundance of research and theories discussing student motivation and teacher motivation in general, but there is scant research that focuses particularly on the motivation of refugee teachers who also teach refugee students. I found that even when teacher motivation is the focus of a study, often times, the researcher's aim is to understand how teacher motivation influences student motivation; this then brings the research focus back to the student and away from the teacher.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative methods were employed in this institutional ethnographic study to explore the intrinsic motivation and self-determination factors that influenced teachers in a refugee camp. I decided to utilize an ethnographic approach for this study, because little is known about the lives of refugee teachers. Literature compiled on student motivation in refugee camps was scarce, sadly, there was even less literature found on refugee teacher motivation. Qualitative methods were the best choice for this type of research, because these methods allowed me the opportunity to listen to the views of my participants; while I focused on the natural settings, such as the everyday interaction among the main participants of this study with their environment.

Qualitative research methods are an essential tool for producing rich descriptions of complex phenomena. It is also the best approach to analyzing and interpreting the rich world around us. Many researchers have found that qualitative research naturally lends itself to the exploration of education and educational institutions.

The best way to understand a community is to become a part of that community; to a feasible extent. It is

noteworthy, that an ethnographer's presence in any community would have an effect on the behaviors of that community. These differences should be accounted for and recognized throughout the research process. This is referred to by some scholars as the "Consequential presence". By merely existing in a specific place and time, the researcher would no doubt have an impact on the social setting. Hence, it is a balancing act between placing oneself in a community that is foreign, while trying to fit in and interact without changing the course of day-to-day activities. In my case, I was the "outsider" female observer in an all-male conservative middle school. The challenge for me was to try to blend in with this community, in a way that my presence did not severely alter the behaviors of the participants.

## 6. A FORGOTTEN REFUGEE CAMP IN JORDAN

My ethnographic study took place in *Al Hurriya* Camp refugee camp in Jordan that was established in 1968. As stated earlier, the name of the camp has been changed to protect the privacy of my participants.

Peteet (2005) described refugee camps as being "a cornerstone of humanitarian and host state responses to an influx of the displaced" (p. 29). My research site was Jordan's response to the Palestinian diaspora across its borders, but this camp was less fortunate than all the other camps based in Jordan. Although all of the Palestinian refugee camp residents in Jordan have to cope with overcrowding and poverty, *Al Hurriya* camp residents have always suffered the most from these realities of life. While *Al Hurriya* Camp was set up after the 1967 War for 11,500 Palestinians who fled Gaza, after all these years, the camp's borders have not expanded. Despite the population of the camp almost doubling in number to 24,000 residents, the camp and its people remained almost invisible to the majority of the Jordanian population until around 2000, when the plight of these people slowly began to receive more exposure.

UNRWA (n.d.) recognized a Palestine refugee camp as "a plot of land placed at the disposal of UNRWA by the host government to accommodate Palestine refugees and set up facilities to cater to their needs" (para. 4). In the case of Jordanian refugee camps, many of these have been placed in rural areas. Three generations of refugees in *Al Hurriya* camp lived below the poverty line. Tiltnes and Zhang (2014) reported that in 2014, the poverty line in this camp was below the national poverty line of 814 JD (Jordanian Dinar). As undocumented refugees, they were strictly bound to the schools inside the refugee camp, with the exception to attend a high school located outside the camp, and hence, the lack of exposure to students outside of the camp. This is why UNRWA schools play a vital role in the lives of Palestinian refugees. The organization has in many respects tried to step up to the plate to provide a formal education for the three generations of *Al Hurriya* Camp children. However, UNRWA is facing a crisis because the number of refugees has increased exponentially due to the civil war in Syria. This left the people on the ground scrambling to keep their clinics, canteens, and schools open. This funding crisis is now putting all the schools in the Middle East in danger of closing their doors forever.

## 7. STUDY PARTICIPANTS

*Al Hurriya* camp was a homogenous society comprised of inhabitants who shared a long history, a common struggle, and a predetermined way of life. In light of this connectedness, it was not difficult to secure a sample of teachers who had much in common. The participants in this study included the school principal and 13 teachers from the same school. *Al Noor* All-Boys School was built in 2013 to alleviate some overcrowding in the neighboring schools. All the teachers I interviewed were the original teachers who had begun working at *Al Noor* School once the school opened its doors. All the participants were males, fathers, and all except for one teacher, were first- or second-generation refugees in the same camp. The majority of the participants were born, raised, and educated in *Al Hurriya* camp. Each was married and had three to six children. They all had obtained a minimum education of a bachelor's degree from an accredited university. Their ages ranged from between 45 to 65 years old. All participants, except for one Jordanian teacher, were undocumented residents of Jordan. Through UNRWA schools they were able to secure a stable job in teaching.

To provide a proper introduction of the participants, I present each educator with some brief personal background information. This information was gleaned directly from the interviews I conducted during my last visit to the school in 2016.

### 7.1. Making New Friends: Participant Profiles

Because the research interview process involves the creation of collaborative and mutually respectful relationships that become personally revelatory, it is not unusual for these interactions to eventually evolve into friendships. This certainly was my experience as the research process progressed.

- Mr. Yacoub, the school's principal, was a serious and intelligent man. He was well-read and knowledgeable about world affairs. Each day that I visited the school, I observed Mr. Yacoub put on the hats of an administrator, secretary, educator, school nurse, father, and counselor. It was fascinating to watch him switch between different roles all day long. His relationships with the teachers were transparent. He managed to balance being a leader and a friend with ease. He openly expressed his views to his teachers, without reservations or sugarcoating. He commanded respect from teachers and students alike.
- Mr. Maher was the school workshop and carpentry teacher. He had short white hair and a white mustache. He was about five feet, five inches tall and was very thin. He was proud to tell me that he had been teaching since 1980; "that means 36 years of teaching!" he stated. He was excited about teaching; he was animated; and his stories were all very touching and emotional.
- Mr. Taleb was the chemistry teacher. He was a quiet man of few words. He was always smiling and seemed a bit shy. The principal and Mr. Taleb were hiking buddies. They would find a beautiful, quiet spot and sit there and enjoy each other's company. His unwavering appreciation and love for his own teachers was heartwarming to witness.
- Mr. Zaid was the English teacher. He, like Mr. Taleb, was very quiet and shy. He was the most private teacher of the group, but was kind and answered all the questions I asked him. He was a wonderful storyteller; he would answer my interview questions as if he was reading a children's storybook. He had taught at the elementary level for a while, teaching Arabic, but he eventually switched to English when he saw a need for English teachers.
- Mr. Ali, the Arabic language teacher, was frustrated with his life. He was reluctant to speak with me for the first 20 minutes of our interview. His questions to me indicated that he did not fully trust me. I quickly realized that he was simply angry at what he could not change and was sad about what his children's future held.
- Mr. Basheer taught 9th and 10th grade social studies. He was the only Jordanian citizen in the school, and he was not of Palestinian descent. He had never been a refugee. He retired from his original teaching position in the public school system when he was hired at Al Noor School because his field was rare and in demand. There were not enough social studies teachers in that area. He had four years of teaching experience in UNRWA schools. I asked him what he attributed his colleagues' motivation to, and he verbally reflected: "I think the tribal environment here keeps the students and teachers connected as one family." Mr. Basheer further explained: "They all know each other. The connection between everyone is unlike anywhere else." What Mr. Basheer admired most about the school was the "strong leadership" the principal exhibited.
- Mr. Nabil was the Arabic teacher for the 9th and 10th grade classes. He was tall and slim. Mr. Nabil was very loud and vocal. He always spoke as if he was leading a rally, which was somewhat humorous, and he was very talkative.
- Mr. Ibrahim, the 9th and 10th grade religious studies teacher, was very quiet and polite. He expressed how much he enjoyed our meetings. He would make it a point to find me every morning to say "sabah al khair!" which meant "good morning!"
- Mr. Fahd, the 8th grade Arabic language teacher, he revealed that the reason why he stayed in the teaching profession was because he had "a mission to fulfill," referring to the mission of raising moral young men. He also confided that "salary was the most important aspect of my job, then that changes with time."
- Mr. Hassan was the Arabic teacher. He was very soft spoken and calm. He revealed that "as a teen, [he] was a provider for [his] family; we were 12 kids." He was the second oldest child in his family. He spent his salary caring for his family. He was the head of the teacher union, Nakeeb Al mo'alemeen, since 1999.
- Mr. Zaki was the 9th grade math teacher. He had a bachelor's degree in math. "I love math," he told me, "I studied math for the sake of math. The subject of math brought me to teaching." He said his teaching philosophy was to "try to tie math with everyday life. I don't want them to wonder why they need to learn math." Later, with a smile, he stated, "I always tell them to love math and math will love you back. Everything in life requires some type of calculation."
- Mr. Nabeeh was another math teacher and was also the youngest of all 13 participants. He had 25 years of teaching experience. Mr. Nabeeh was very observant and curious about how schools are run in the West and wanted to learn more about the latest teaching methods in the U.S.
- Mr. Saleh was the 10th grade math teacher. He was a gentle man who always had a serious look on his

face. As I observed him, I noticed how patient and friendly he was with me and everyone else he talked to. He was generous with his information and very respectful.

- Mr. Salman was the 8th grade science teacher. He was a very calm, polite, and outgoing teacher. He was constantly smiling and was excited to answer every question. He, along with several other teachers, lived outside of the camp since 2000. He was born in Gaza, as a refugee for the first time; then he became a refugee for the second time in 1967 when his parents and siblings found themselves displaced in the Al Hurriya Jordanian refugee camp.

## **8. RESEARCH FINDING – MOTIVATION AT AL NOOR SCHOOL: PRIDE, NOSTALGIA, COMMUNITY, AND LEADERSHIP**

During my interview process, I realized that a great deal of data yielded information on intrinsic motivation and self-determination. I focused on the four major ways that the teachers were able to express what motivation and self-determination meant to them and how I observed teacher motivation in my fieldwork. I divide motivation into four themes. First, I discuss how the teachers' belief, that teaching is a noble profession, was a motivating force in their work. The second way motivation was expressed had to do with patriotism and nostalgia for their homeland. The third, and probably the strongest intrinsic motivational category I observed, was their community connections and loyalty to their community. Four, intrinsic motivation and self-determination was fostered through the strong school leadership of Mr. Yacoub. I discuss each of these aspects of motivation that were grounded in my observations and especially, the voices of the participants heard in my interviews.

### **8.1. Teaching Is A Noble Profession: "I Come Here To Fulfill My Calling."**

As I interviewed Mr. Zaki, the 9th grade math teacher; I asked him one of the same questions on my list: "What is your motivation beyond your salary?" His answer was a very common answer that I had heard from all 13 teachers, with the exception of Mr. Ali. He affirmed, "I come here to fulfill my calling. I want to teach and I want my students to learn." He expressed the importance of reaching his children and not failing them as their math teacher and life mentor. He saw teaching as a noble profession because teachers were regarded as "agents of the future"; they helped their students acquire the skills they needed to face the challenges of the world around them while contributing to that same world in meaningful ways.

These sentiments of intrinsic motivation and self-determination were clearly illustrated by Mr. Maher's story about when he had to twice climb the high concrete walls of the school in order to start his day on time. Mr. Maher explained, "I have always been the second person to come to school for the last 20 years, after the janitor who opens the school doors. One day, I was there on time but the janitor was late; so I had to climb the wall, jumped in, and started my day on time." After the two wall incidents with Mr. Maher, Mr. Yacoub decided to give a spare key for the school to Mr. Maher.

Mr. Taleb, the chemistry teacher, and I conversed about his daily routine, he gave me a detailed account of his entire day, from the moment he walked into the school to the moment he went home. I asked him about how he motivated himself to show up at work every morning. He gave me a surprised look, as if he was wondering why he would ever even contemplate not showing up. He then professed, as other teachers did before him, that "there is a code of conduct at work. It is important to follow the ethical rules. I am loyal to the profession because I am committed to my kids." Mr. Taleb had a sense of autonomous self-determination and intrinsic motivation that propelled him to fully commit to his work. This all stemmed from Mr. Taleb's sense of pride in the noble profession he was a part of.

Mr. Maher loved sharing stories of his past experiences. He recounted several amazing stories that he considered to be a part of everyday life and not at all as spectacular as I found them to be. He shared with me a memory of when he taught a 1st grade class of 40 students several years back at an UNRWA school just down the street from where Al Noor School was located. He passionately related to me how he could not ignore the severe depletion of resources in his school. He paid for all his students' materials out of his modest salary. Mr. Maher described how he made his "own books to teach them math and Arabic. Their curriculum was not working for them." Therefore, he wrote and printed out copies for the kids to use. He gave his students lunch money if they were hungry.

Mr. Maher fondly recalled a space heater he brought from home every morning to keep his kids warm in the winter. I asked, "Did you own that heater?" He answered, "Yes, it was my heater." Mr. Maher then shared with me a story that went beyond an act of kindness:

I would bring in the milk and an electric heater every day of the school year; then I heated up milk on the

heater before the kids walked in. As they arrived, I greeted them and gave each child a cup of warm milk before we started any type of learning. I wanted to ensure that all my kids get to drink warm milk every morning.

As soon as I thought Mr. Maher was moving on to a new story, little did I know that he was going to fast forward many years later to one of those very same first graders. He spoke affectionately about a young man he had taught many years back. Mr. Maher described this young man when he met him:

I saw one of my students, who was a very handsome young man; he was working and doing well for himself. He had strikingly beautiful hair. I jokingly asked him "Do you know why you have such beautiful, healthy, thick hair?" He [the young man] answered without hesitation, "Yes sir; it's because of the milk you used to give me every morning in first grade."

Mr. Maher then told me that these are the stories that always reminded him of why he was so proud to be a teacher and intrinsically motivated him every day.

## **8.2. Motivation and Nostalgia for the Homeland**

During my research a brief historical account of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict was crucial so as to set the scene for why my participants were refugees in another country. This was important for several reasons, but the most significant reason was the effect nostalgia had on the participants' day-to-day activities, thoughts, and feelings. Their connection to Palestine remained so strong that it guided their decisions and plans. The teachers' conversations always had a sense of nostalgia and longing for their homeland, *al-ghurba*.

This nostalgia was a motivating factor for the majority of the teachers. They were raised by their own teachers to dream of one day going back home, and they in turn, were instilling the same patriotic lessons into their students. Their nostalgia created a form of intrinsic motivational force that was embedded in every conversation.

## **8.3. Motivation and Loyalty to Community**

The strong connections between Al Hurriya camp and Al Noor School were mutual and shared experiences. The lines between where and when the borders of the school began and ended in relation to the community were blurred and, at times, non-existent. The school and the surrounding community functioned as a solid unit. This provided Al Noor School personnel with the natural community connections they needed to thrive as educators. It also gave them the autonomy and authority to help raise their male students alongside their parents.

Mr. Maher excitedly remarked, "I can go for another 36 years. I am never bored. I want to teach." During my visits, I witnessed that the study participants all had a sense of loyalty and belonging to the refugee camp they called home. This strong attachment to place and people also stemmed from their fear of losing that stable community, no matter how difficult the conditions were. In the history of this camp, the stories of displacement, loss of life, and diaspora were still fresh in their minds. That was why they held onto what they had, and most of them were very grateful for what they had.

## **8.4. Leadership and Motivation**

As for school leadership, Mr. Yacoub demonstrated his role as an effective leader day after day. School leadership played a significant role in amplifying the teachers' sense of pride in their profession. Under Mr. Yacoub's leadership in Al Noor School, teachers were able to freely express themselves. They were given the confidence to run their classes anyway they saw fit, as long as they produced positive results. This type of environment gave the teachers a sense of pride in their profession every day. Principal Yacoub always treated them with respect. He considered some of the teachers to be his own mentors and frequently looked to them for advice because he viewed teaching as a noble profession and his peers were honorable members of the community. This strong relationship between Mr. Yacoub and his teachers was another source of pride that intrinsically motivated teachers to come to school every morning.

Mr. Yacoub's leadership methods facilitated a strong community within the school as well as outside of the school. Principal Yacoub also encouraged his teachers to be knowledgeable in their field to establish a sense of autonomy in their classrooms. Mr. Yacoub did not interfere in his teachers work as long as they were doing it right; once he saw a problem, he acted swiftly, confidently, and with compassion towards the teachers.

The teachers were proud of their profession and Mr. Yacoub frequently affirmed that they were doing a good job. He also tried to always include the teachers in decision making. Because Mr. Yacoub was also a

refugee, he had the sense of nostalgia for home like everyone else. This was a bonding factor among administrators, teachers, students, and the local community.

Finally, Mr. Yacoub's leadership ability positively impacted the overall effectiveness of the Al Noor School environment.

## **9. CONCLUSION**

The Al Noor School environment was effective because it worked. Teachers were staying; students were learning; and their track record was impressive given their impoverished circumstances. Arnett-Hartwick and Walters (2016) described an effective school environment when they explained that school "is not just about the knowledge; it is also about how the learning environment is structured. Effective practitioners are not necessarily the ones who are well liked but those who move students to be better and make a difference" (p. 21). During my field work at Al Noor School, I learned that their priorities were different from those of some traditional school systems. Knowledge was only one of the many goals that the teachers focused on in the school. As I conducted my study, Chicago schools were never far from my mind. Chicago is now home to me, so naturally, I found myself constantly comparing and contrasting the two different but also similar environments. I explore the significant impact my study may have on UNRWA's refugee schools. I also reflect on the conditions and opportunities of Chicago's impoverished and underrepresented schools.

With the turmoil in the world, and especially in the Middle East, the true victims are the refugees who find themselves homeless, displaced, and helpless. From my own personal experiences, most of these victims dream of a proper education for themselves, their children, and their new-formed community, the refugee camp. My study is only a drop of water in a vast sea of possible research on refugee education; this particular focus is still in the infancy stages and much more exploration would benefit so many.

Deci and Ryan (2008) found that motivation increases when conditions are favorable to meet people's psychological needs, and when those needs are not met, motivation decreases. Although the participants in this study lived in a refugee camp, their basic psychological needs were actually met. I found that some of the main psychological needs that motivated the study participants were respect from the community as well as their need to believe that they were making a change in the lives of the students they taught. According to Crabbe (2011),

An individual's cultural background can play a role in increasing his or her motivation to tackle tasks typically described as extrinsic. This is especially true if the talk leads to an increased sense of relatedness to a group such as a nation, village, or city. Thus, it is possible to internalize extrinsically motivated activities to become self-determined. (p. 15)

In summary, I would be remiss if I did not compare community and school connections in the West to the connections, I witnessed in Al Hurriya camp. In western research, there is a constant striving to achieve what is called the authentic engagement of community in schools. I believe that this study's four main themes of motivation—nostalgia for the homeland, pride in service, community connections, and leadership—not only provided me with an example of authentic community engagement, but also of organic family engagement.

The relationships I experienced in Al Noor School could not be nurtured through regulated, rigid school initiatives and programs. By organic, I am referring to the natural interaction of an open door policy between the school and community that swings both ways. I believe that this system could never be fully implemented in any "modern" society due to the rules, restrictions, and laws put in place, and unfortunately, many times the rules are there for good reasons. Nonetheless, the organic community-school-family engagement I found in Al Hurriya refugee camp was a natural response to the political, social, and economic conditions found in this camp. The refugees had a mutual cause that united them and gave them hope in the midst of despair. This made it everyone's business and responsibility to play a role in raising all the children in the camp. They truly were an example of a whole village raising the children.

## **REFERENCE LIST**

Abdul-Hamid, H., Patrinos, H., Reyes, J., Kelcey, J., & Varela, A. D. (2015). Learning in the face of adversity: The UNRWA education program for Palestine refugees. A World Bank study. Washington, DC: The World Bank Group. doi:10.1596/978-1-4648-0706-0



- Al Hussein, J. (2010). UNRWA and the refugees: A difficult but lasting marriage. *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 40(1), 6–26. doi:1. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/jps.2010.xl.1.006> doi:1
- Arnett-Hartwick, S., & Walters, C. M. (2016). Advancing learning by countering the effects of poverty. *Journal of Family and Consumer Sciences*, 108(4), 18–22. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.14307/JFCS108.4.18>
- Bakirci, H., Turkdogan, A., & Guler, M. (2012). Is my school an effective school? headmaster and teacher views. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 3471–3476. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.087
- Black, R. (2001). Fifty years of refugee studies: From theory to policy. *The International Migration Review*, 35(1), 57-78. doi:10.1111/j.1747-7379.2001.tb00004.x
- Braonáin, L. (n.d.). 5 reasons displaced and refugee children need schools. Human Appeal International Ireland. Retrieved from <http://humanappeal.ie/media/blog/5-reasons-displaced-and-refugee-children-need-schools/#.WRnELm8zVjo>
- Clanet, J. (2010). The relationship between teaching practices and student achievement in first year classes. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 25(2), 192–206. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10212-010-0012-y>
- Crabbe, P. J. (2011). Intrinsic learning at hands-on, interactive exhibits: Exploring ways for children's museums to appeal to older children (Doctoral dissertation, Roosevelt University). (Order No. 3454715). Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.roosevelt.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/870964271?accountid=28518>
- Dabbagh, N. (2012). Behind the statistics: The ethnography of suicide in Palestine. *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*, 36(2), 286–305. Retrieved from doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s11013-012-9251-5>
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum Press.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000, October). The “what” and “why” of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, 11(4), 227–268.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2002). *Handbook of self-determination research*. Rochester, NY: University Rochester Press.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Facilitating optimal motivation and psychological well-being across life's domains. *Canadian Psychology*, 49, 14–23.
- Diedring, M., & Dorber, J. (2015, October 27). Refugee Crisis: how language contributes to the fate of refugees. Retrieved May 04, 2017, from <http://theelders.org/article/refugee-crisis-how-language-contributes-fate-refugees>
- Draft, R. L. (2006). *The new era of management*. Mason, OH: Thomson South-Western.
- Edwards, A. (2015, August 27). UNHCR viewpoint: 'Refugee' or 'migrant'—Which is right? Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/news/latest/2016/7/55df0e556/unhcr-viewpoint-refugee-migrant-right.html>
- Emerson, R. M., Fretz, R. I., & Shaw, L. L. (2014). *Writing ethnographic fieldnotes*. Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.
- Erickson, F. (1984). What makes school ethnography ‘ethnographic’? *Anthropology and Education Quarterly*, 15, 51–66.
- Fábos, A. (2015). Refugees in the Arab Middle East: Academic and policy perspectives. *DOMES: Digest of Middle East Studies*, 24(1), 96–110. doi:10.1111/dome.12056
- Fetterman, D. M. (1998). *Ethnography* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Frase, L. E. (2002). The effects of teaching rewards on recognition and job enrichment. *Journal of Educational Research*, 83(1), 53–57.
- Frase, L. E., & Sorenson, L. (1992). Teacher motivation and satisfaction: Impact on participatory management. *NASSP Bulletin*, 76(540), 37–43.
- Freedman, S. W., & Appleman, D. (2009). In it for the long haul: How teacher education can contribute to teacher retention in high-poverty, urban schools. *Journal of Teacher Education*, 60(3), 323–337.

- Gagné, M., & Deci, E. L. (2005). Self-determination theory and work motivation. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 26(4), 331–362. doi:10.1002/job.322
- Gandara, P., Gutierrez, D., & O'Hara, S. (2001). Planning for the future in rural and urban high schools. *Journal of Education for Students Placed At Risk*, 6(1), 73–93.
- Gray, A., Heinen, D., Hastrup, K., & Elsass, P. (1990). On anthropological advocacy. *Current Anthropology*, 31(4), 387–390. doi:10.1086/203853
- Gultekin, H., & Acar, E. (2014). The intrinsic and extrinsic factors for teacher motivation. *Revista De Cercetare Si Interventie Sociala*, 47, 291–306. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.roosevelt.edu:2048/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/1666288190?accountid=28518>
- Habibian, M. (2012). The relationship between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation with learner autonomy among PhD students in National University of Singapore. *e-Bangi Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 7(1), 215–223.
- Hardré, P. L., & Hennessey, M. N. (2013). What they think, what they know, what they do: Rural secondary teachers' motivational beliefs and strategies. *Learning Environments Research*, 16(3), 411–436. Retrieved from doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10984-013-9131-0>
- Hardré, P. L., Sullivan, D. W., & Roberts, N. (2008). Rural teachers' best motivating strategies: A blending of teachers' and students' perspectives. *The Rural Educator*, 30(1), 19–31. Retrieved from <http://ezproxy.roosevelt.edu:20448/login?url=http://search.proquest.com/docview/220981258?accountid=28518>
- Hatch, J. A. (2002). *Doing qualitative research in education settings*. New York, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Helton, A. C. (2002). *The price of indifference: Refugees and humanitarian action in the new century*. Oxford, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Howard, J., Gagné, M., Morin, A. J. S., & Van den Broeck, A. (2016). Motivation profiles at work: A self-determination theory approach. *Journal of Vocational Behavior*, 95, 74–89. doi:10.1016/j.jvb.2016.07.004
- Hoy, W. K., & Clover, S. R. I. (1986). Elementary school climate: A revision of the ICDQ. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 22, 93–110.
- Iliya, A., & Ifeoma, L. G. (2015). Assessment of teacher motivation approaches in the less developed countries. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(22), 10–17.
- Ingersoll, R. M. (2004). Why do high-poverty schools have difficulty staffing their classrooms with qualified teachers? Center for American Progress and the Institute for America's Future. Retrieved from <http://www.americanprogress.org/wp-content/uploads/kf/ingersoll-final.pdf>
- Kangas, M. (2010). Finnish children's views on the ideal school and learning environment. *Learning Environments Research*, 13(3), 205–223. doi:<http://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10984-010-9075-6>
- Lewis, D. (1973). Anthropology and colonialism. *Current Anthropology*, 14(5), 581–602. Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2741037>
- Lyness, J. M., Lurie, S. J., Ward, D. S., Mooney, C. J., & Lambert, D. R. (2013). Engaging students and faculty: Implications of self-determination theory for teachers and leaders in academic medicine. *BMC Medical Education*, 13(1), 151–151. doi:10.1186/1472-6920-13-151
- Malik, N. (2010). A study on motivational factors of the faculty members at University of Balochistan. *Serbian Journal of Management* 5(1), 143–149.
- Malterud, K. (2001). Qualitative research: Standards, challenges, and guidelines. *The Lancet*, 358(9280), 483–488.
- Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G., & Muhamad, M. (2001, September-October) Power and positionality: Negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures. *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(5), 405–416.
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370–396.

- Nawaz, N., & Yasin, H. (2015). Determinants of motivation in teachers: A study of private secondary schools chain networks in Bahawalpur. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(4), 55–60.
- Neves de Jesus, S., & Lens, W. (2005). An integrated model for the study of teacher motivation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 54(1), 119–134. doi:10.1111/j.1464-0597.2005.00199.x
- Ofoegbu, F. I. (2004, March). Teacher motivation: A factor for classroom effectiveness and school improvement in Nigeria. *College Student Journal*, 38(1), 81-89.
- Olsen, B., & Anderson, L. (2007). Courses of action: A qualitative investigation into urban teacher retention and career development. *Urban Education*, 42(5), 5–29.
- Pappé, I. (2004). *A history of modern Palestine: One land, two peoples*. Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Pappé, I. (2006). *The ethnic cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford, UK: Oneworld Publications.
- Peck, N. F., Maude, S. P., & Brotherson, M. J. (2015, May). Understanding preschool teachers' perspectives on empathy: A qualitative inquiry. *Early Childhood Education Journal*, 43(3), 169–179. doi:10.1007/s10643-014-0648-3
- Peteet, J. M. (2005). *Landscape of hope and despair: Palestinian refugee camps*. Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Reeves, M. A., Kanan, L. M., & Plog, A. E. (2010). *Comprehensive planning for safe learning environments: A school professional's guide to integrating physical and psychological safety, prevention through recovery*. New York, NY: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group.
- Reeves, S., Kuper, A., & Hodges, B. D. (2008). Qualitative research: Qualitative research methodologies: Ethnography. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 337(7668), 512–514. doi:10.1136/bmj.a1020
- Ring, H. R., & West, A. R. (2015). Teacher retention in refugee and emergency settings: The state of the literature. *International Education Journal: Comparative Perspectives*, 14(3), 106–121.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations: Classic definitions and new directions. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 25(1), 54–67. doi:10.1006/ceps.1999.1020
- Said, E. W. (2000). *Reflections on exile*. In E.W. Said (Ed.), *Reflections on exile and other essays*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Spindler, G. (2002). The collusion of illusion and how to get people to tell you what they don't know. In Y. Zou & E. T. Trueba (Eds.), *Ethnography and schools: Qualitative approaches to the study of education* (pp. 13–25). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Thomas, J. (1993). *Doing critical ethnography*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Tiltne, A., & Zhang, H. (2014). *The socio-economic conditions of Jordan's Palestinian camp refugees*. Retrieved from [http://www.academia.edu/12249861/The\\_socio-economic\\_conditions\\_of\\_Jordan\\_s\\_Palestinian\\_camp\\_refugees](http://www.academia.edu/12249861/The_socio-economic_conditions_of_Jordan_s_Palestinian_camp_refugees)
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (n.d.). *UNHCR global trends: Forced displacement in 2014*. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/556725e69.pdf>
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. (2015). *Figures at a glance*. Retrieved from <http://www.unhcr.org/en-us/figures-at-a-glance.html>
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). (n.d.). *Palestine refugees*. Retrieved from <http://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA). (2015). *Where we work*. Retrieved from <http://www.unrwa.org/where-we-work/jordan>
- van Maanen, J. (2011). *Tales of the field: On writing ethnography* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Walker, L., Smithgall, C., & Cusick, G. R. (2012). *Making community an authentic part of school and community partnerships*. Chicago, IL: Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago. Retrieved from [https://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/062012\\_CH\\_DiscussionPaper.pdf](https://www.chapinhall.org/sites/default/files/062012_CH_DiscussionPaper.pdf)

Wolcott, H. F. (2002). Ethnography? Or educational travel writing? In Y. Zou & E. T. Trueba (Eds.), *Ethnography and schools: Qualitative approaches to the study of education* (pp. 27–48). Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

Zou, Y., & Trueba, E. T. (Eds.). (2002). *Ethnography and schools: Qualitative approaches to the study of education*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.