

Attribution of Poverty among Youth in Lebanon

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ABSTRACT The present paper is based on causal attribution theory, investigating how Lebanese youth attribute poverty. Using the Chi-square methodology, the researcher examined the relationships between poverty and a set of independent variables, for six different scenarios. In the first phase of the research, the researcher executes cross-tabulation analyses and searches for significant variables that may predict the social class of a student. A survey of a sample of 250 private- and public-school students shows that when compared with middle-class and rich students, poor students place less blame on individual factors. Moreover, poor students tend to believe in fatalistic factors as reasons for poverty more than middle-class and rich students do. In the second phase, the researcher filters the answers to assesses only the consistent ones (that is students who believed that fatalistic factors are reasons for both poverty and wealth). Out of 250 students surveyed, only 30 students attribute poverty to fatalistic factors. The unexpected result is that, under this category, there are more middle-class students than poor students. It is concluded that, on average, Lebanese youth attribute poverty to individualistic and/or structural factors rather than fatalistic ones.

INTRODUCTION

The multidimensional issue of poverty has been discussed since the dawn of civilization. It proves to be a challenge for many economies and societies, and its definition has evolved over centuries to embrace new concepts and ideas. Poverty is defined as the inability of a person to possess the basic capabilities that guarantee his/her right to a decent life. It follows that poor people primarily have a low level of income that cannot satisfy their basic survival needs. Poverty is thus a phenomenon that has implications for the social and economic affairs of a given country.

The current study investigates how youth attribute poverty in Lebanon, a country that has experienced significant economic and social changes during the past four decades, especially owing to the Lebanese Civil War (1975-1990). According to poverty estimates by the United Nations Development Program, 8% of the Lebanese population suffered from extreme poverty in 2011. Such finding implies that almost 320,000 individuals (of the total population of four million) are unable to meet their basic food and non-food needs. Further, around 28.5% of the population (approximately 1,140,000) leads life below the upper poverty line (\$4 per capita per day). Youth unemployment is also aggravated by poverty; it is a cause that both reproduces

poverty and is a manifestation of poverty. For example, half of the extremely poor youth holding a secondary degree are unemployed (compared with 25% of their non-poor counterparts). In the following section, the researcher reviews the literature on poverty attribution followed by an overview of poverty studies in Lebanon.

Literature Review

A) Studies of Poverty Attribution

Many studies have examined how different individuals attribute poverty. These studies typically use Heider's (1958) attribution theory and divide poverty attribution into two types: (i) internal (individualistic) and (ii) external (structural, cultural, and fatalistic). Internal types of poverty attribution tend to hold the individual responsible for his/her economic situation based on his/her indolence, unethical behavior, or lack of motivation and capacity. Smith and Stone (1989) discuss the existence of four metatheories in American culture: individualism, culturalism, structuralism/situationalism, and fatalism. They list 38 causes of wealth and poverty and collect data in support of each determined metatheory. Their results show that individualism specifies the causes of poverty, while both individualism and culturalism attribute the causes of wealth. Griffin and Sayki (1993) use logistic

regression to measure the causal effects of political and socio-demographic variables on the attribution of poverty. When other variables are held constant, they find that students with conservative political affiliations, higher parental social class, and opinions in favor of the death penalty favor individual attribution. Cozzarelli et al. (2001) investigate the relationships among stereotypes of the poor, sociopolitical ideologies, feelings about the poor and poverty, and attributions of poverty. Their data, collected from Midwestern College (n=209), show that participants are most likely to blame poor people themselves for their poverty circumstances.

Feagin (1972) groups Heider's (1958) external attributions of poverty into three categories: structural (that is when an individual blames external macroeconomic forces), cultural, and fatalistic. Based on this categorization, Singh and Vasudeva (1977) survey 425 respondents from 60 Indian households and find that individuals with a lower educational background and low income tend to place more importance on socio-economic (structuralist) factors. Lamarche and Tougas (1979) also adapt the questionnaire of Feagin (1972) to show that a sample of Montreal residents attributes poverty to structural factors more than to individualistic ones. In other words, the people of Montreal place blame more to the social system than poor people themselves.

Morçöl (1997) accepted that gender, age, income, and education constitute the major determinants of poverty. Moreover, structural causes are favored by the surveyed groups, while non-poor individuals tend to offer more abstract structural explanations, whereas poor individuals prefer more tangible ones. Hayati and Karami's (2005) study of Iranian farmers also informed that 50% of respondents have a structural attitude, whereas 30% and 20% have individualistic and fatalistic attitudes, respectively. Likewise, Abouché et al. (2005) highlight that Indian youth tend to attribute poverty to structural factors while socio-demographic variables such as education and age are found to be significant predictors of individualistic poverty attribution. Similarly, Halek and Webley (2009) explore how Malaysian adolescents perceive poverty, finding that 15–16-year-old students give more individualistic and structural attributions than their 12–13-year-old counterparts.

Cultural attribution externalizes blame to social, political, ethnic, and religious factors. Feather (1974) uses a sample of metropolitan Adelaide respondents to rate the importance of the 11 reasons for poverty used in Feagin's (1972) study of American adults. The results indicate that Australians are less likely to blame the poor themselves than their U.S. counterparts; however, older respondents and Protestants (compared with Catholics) are more likely to attribute poverty to personal responsibility. In the same vein, Hunt (1996) studies a sample of Southern Californians to investigate whether race and ethnic differences affect beliefs on poverty causes, finding that African-Americans and Latino-Americans find individualistic and structuralist explanations to be more important than Caucasians do.

Fatalistic attribution occurs when individuals blame destiny and misfortune. Goodhand (2003) investigates the bidirectional relationship between long-term violent conflicts and chronic poverty. He finds that long-term conflicts that are considered to be fatalistic and/or structuralist are drivers of chronic poverty. Similarly, Abouché et al. (2002) use a sample of South African, Lebanese, and Portuguese students to show that South African students tend to blame the individual for his/her poverty circumstances more than their Portuguese and Lebanese counterparts do. However, the causes of poverty are found to be more structural than fatalistic or individualistic for all three groups.

B) Poverty Studies in Lebanon

Research on poverty in Lebanon is very limited because of the lack of reliable data. In general, studies of poverty in Lebanon have been conducted by the World Bank and United Nations Development Program as opposed to individual scholars. It is known that the 15-year Lebanese Civil War widened the gap between social classes and that there is no communal view about the causes of poverty. Very few studies have even attempted to investigate the causes of poverty and how Lebanese people attribute it.

Of this scarce body of research, Haddad (1996) argues that the rising interest in studying an old phenomenon such as poverty is only recent in Lebanon. According to him, there is a common belief that war is behind the expansion of poverty, while structural causes particular to

Lebanon's socio-economic system have also magnified this societal discrepancy, mainly income distribution. Haddad (1996) stresses the idea of the poverty line¹. In Lebanon, the income level at the poverty line was estimated to be \$618 per month in 1993 and extreme poverty line income was estimated to be \$306 per month. The author finds that 28% of Lebanese families were living below the poverty line and 7% were living below the extreme poverty line in that year. The author concludes that the government tends to reduce its role in offering basic education, health care, and guarantees for minimal life requirements, based on the assumption that economic growth will automatically improve living standards without the intervention of the government. This policy has generally failed in most countries that have adopted it.

Abu-Ismaïl et al. (2008) draw a poverty profile in Lebanon based on measurements of household expenditure. Similar to Haddad (1996), it is found that approximately 28% of the Lebanese population is poor, while 8% is considered to be extremely poor. Abu Ismaïl et al. (2008) also find that poverty rates are not significant in Beirut (the capital) but are very high in rural areas. The study concludes that it is necessary to redesign macroeconomic and fiscal policies to create social safety nets and implement poverty reduction programs. In terms of poverty attribution, Abouché and Nasser (2001) find that the explanations of respondents are more structural than individualistic and that parents with high occupational status are more likely to favor individualistic explanations.

C) Recent Studies

Recent studies have focused on different factors to explain poverty attribution. Noci et al. (2012) study socio-economic factors such as age, education level, income, and working conditions in order to explain the causes of poverty in Italy. From a sample of 2,000 respondents, they find that young people consider poverty to be a condition that originates from the individual more than older respondents do. In addition, a higher education level corresponds to lower internal and higher external poverty attribution. Kallio and Niemelä (2013) analyze the determinants of individualistic explanations of poverty among Europeans by using multilevel logistic regression models. Their findings sug-

gest that the level of support for the individualistic explanation of poverty varies between European nations. Among the specific determinants of poverty perceptions, welfare regime, short-term economic growth, and social expenditure as well as individual-level demographic factors, perceived economic hardship, political affiliation, and egalitarian values are associated with the individualistic attribution of poverty. Similarly, Da Costa and Dias (2013) study 15 European Union countries and consider three types of poverty attributions: individualistic, societal, and fatalistic. Despite social explanations of poverty being generalized at the individual or micro level, they find that groups also emphasize individualistic explanations, blaming the poor for their circumstances. At macro level, the most developed cluster believes in individualistic and fatalistic causes of poverty, whereas the least developed cluster explains poverty based on the injustices of society. The results of Yeboah and Ernest (2012) in Ghana also indicate that the individual perspective of poverty attribution dominates structural and fatalistic explanations. It is also revealed that success depends significantly on the individual effort and that work is one's contribution to society.

METHODOLOGY

A. Sample

A sample of 250 grade 12 (last year of high school or secondary school) students was surveyed from both private and public schools in different regions of Lebanon (North Lebanon, Mount Lebanon, and Beirut). Lebanese youth represent a large proportion (around 30%) of the population, and have different ethnic, educational, religious, and financial backgrounds. Besides, It follows that they form a representative sample of the overall Lebanese society.

B. Instrument

The questionnaire was constituted of 21 questions grouped into five parts as follows:

- ♦ Part 1 - 6 questions: civil and personal information (age, gender, religion, birthplace, origin, and living place)
- ♦ Part 2 - 3 questions: information about education (current school, university to join, and tuition payment)

- ♦ Part 3 - 6 questions: Information about parents (father's and mother's educational level, occupation, and income)
- ♦ Part 4 - 4 questions: information about family (number of brothers and sisters, number of working brothers and sisters, family classification, and living place classification)
- ♦ Part 5 - 2 questions: general questions about the attribution of poverty and wealth level. These questions were closed-ended (that is they intended to provoke clear answers from the surveyed students). There are thus six possible combinations for these two closed-ended questions: Poor AND Lazy, Poor AND Structure, Poor AND God's will, Rich AND Hard Work, Rich AND Corruption/Structure, and Rich AND God's will.

Previous studies use similar techniques to measure class, the perception of class hierarchy, and self-reported variables (Duncan 1961; Jackman and Jackman 1973; Kluegel et al. 1977). Typically, these researchers define the independent variables, rank them, and give the answers a certain weight. For example, Nasser (2007) chooses five determinants of poverty (educational level of father and mother, self-perception of social class, income, and occupation) in order to reach a subjective class measure. For each of those independent variables, he defines a certain scale and assigns a grade to each possible answer (for example when asking about the father's occupation, he grades the answers from 1 to 6, with 1 representing retired/unemployed and 6 owning a business). Additionally, Nasser (2007) surveys students applying for a private university only. Since poor youth in Lebanon apply mainly to public universities, it is likely that Nasser's (2007) sample included mostly middle-class and wealthy students and excluded poor ones. This approach could give room to certain biases. Hunt (1996) uses principal component factor analysis (varimax rotation) performed on socio-demographic variables and stratification beliefs. The two dependent variables are standardized summed scales rather than factor score scales. Following previous studies (Abu Ismail et al. 2008; Haddad 1996), it is observed that is necessary to include demographic and income variables in the analysis.

C. Method

Previous studies of poverty use MANOVA tests, F-tests, and individual t-tests. This study

applies Chi-square tests to assess the relationship between poverty and each independent variable because its aim is to test for relationships and not for effects. A cross-tabulation for each possibility within the entire set of independent variables is presented. In addition, since the questionnaire comprises many answer alternatives for each question, Chi-square is the most suitable test to measure the relationships between all possible answers (regression cannot be employed in the current case). For every combination of answers, the researcher tests for the existence of a relationship. In the second phase, the researcher filters consistent answers (for example possibility "A" for general question #1 is considered to be individualistic) and these are cross-tabulated with the variables of age, gender, father's income, mother's income, education, university, and so on. The Chi-square value and contingency coefficient then determine whether there is a relationship between an answer and each of the independent variables. In other words, there are six different scenarios (for the six possibilities).

After cross-tabulating the answer possibilities with all the independent variables, the results are filtered and only consistent answers are selected (for example those who answered "God's will" to both questions in part 5). The frequencies are also adjusted in order to differentiate two different frequency usages. Some frequencies are also merged such as age, country of birth, religion, university, and institute to join. In addition, countries of birth are grouped into "Lebanon" and "abroad". The analysis covers the frequencies before and after adjustment.

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the surveyed students and their distribution among different sets of independent variables, while Table 2 shows the distribution of students' answers to the two general questions (part 5). The present study does not use scales in order to avoid subjectivity. A scaling system faces greater difficulties when dealing with general questions. Although, it is possible to implement common methods by changing the nature of the general questions and by giving a variety of answer choices (for example from strongly disagree to strongly agree), this approach can lead to ambiguous answers. Besides, the student may not choose the appropriate possibility that best reflects his/her opinion. Common scaling methods also have unclear possibility borders.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics for a sample of 250 students and their distribution among different sets of independent variables

		Frequency	%	Valid %
Age	16	10	4.0	4.0
	17	161	64.4	64.4
	18	62	24.8	24.8
	>=19	17	6.8	6.8
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Age 1	=<17 years	171	68.4	68.4
	> 17 years	79	31.6	31.6
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Gender	Male	144	57.6	57.6
	Female	106	42.4	42.4
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Religion	Christian	125	50.0	50.0
	Muslim	108	43.2	43.2
	Druze	17	6.8	6.8
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Religion 1	Christian	125	50.0	50.0
	Muslim and Druze	125	50.0	50.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Birthplace	Lebanon	189	75.6	75.6
	France	2	0.8	0.8
	U.S.A.	6	2.4	2.4
	Saudi Arabia	19	7.6	7.6
	Others	34	13.6	13.6
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Birthplace 1	Lebanon	189	75.6	75.6
	Abroad	61	24.4	24.4
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Origin	Beirut	59	23.6	23.6
	North Lebanon	81	32.4	32.4
	Mount Lebanon	67	26.8	26.8
	South Lebanon	23	9.2	9.2
	Other	20	8.0	8.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Living	Outside place of birth	93	37.2	37.2
	Place of birth	157	62.8	62.8
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Schooling	Private school	156	62.4	62.4
	Public school	94	37.6	37.6
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
University	Private	170	68.0	68.0
	University			
	Public	68	27.2	27.2
	University			
	Institute	12	4.8	4.8
University 1	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	Private	182	72.8	72.8
	Public	68	27.2	27.2
Name of Private University	Total	250	100.0	100
	Not applicable	76	30.4	30.4
	LAU	38	15.2	15.2
	AUB	36	14.4	14.4
	USJ	31	12.4	12.4
	NDU	20	8.0	8.0
	Other	49	19.6	19.6
	Total	250	100.0	100.0

Table 1: Contd...

		Frequency	%	Valid %
Tuition Payment	No answer	76	30.4	30.4
	Own savings	84	33.6	33.6
	Loan assistant-ship aid	54	21.6	21.6
	Scholarship	18	7.2	7.2
	Other	18	7.2	7.2
Tuition Payment 1	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	Own means	84	33.6	48.3
	Public	90	36.0	51.7
	Total	174	69.6	100
	Missing	76	30.4	
Father Education	Total	250	100	
	University degree	140	56.0	56.0
	School degree	88	35.2	35.2
	Elementary level	17	6.8	6.8
	No education	4	1.6	1.6
Father Education 1	Other	1	0.4	0.4
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	>= University e	140	56	56
	Degree			
	<University Degree	110	44	44
Father Occupation	Total	250	100	100
	Retired deceased	22	8.8	8.8
	Unemployed	14	5.6	5.6
	Clergyman	6	2.4	2.4
	Employee	43	17.2	17.2
Father Income	Profes. employee	70	28.0	28.0
	Trade small industry	39	15.6	15.6
	Own business	34	13.6	13.6
	Other	22	8.8	8.8
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Father Income 1	No answer	33	13.2	13.2
	< 9600000	11	4.4	4.4
	960000 - <1500000	32	12.8	12.8
	1500000- <3000000	85	34.0	34.0
	3000000 - 5000000	55	22.0	22.0
Mother Education	> 5000000	34	13.6	13.6
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	<3000000	128	51.2	59
	>=3000000	89	35.6	41
	Total	217	86.8	100
Mother Education 1	Missing	33	13.2	
	Total	250	100	
	University degree	117	46.8	46.8
	School degree	111	44.4	44.4
	Elementary level	22	8.8	8.8
Mother Education 1	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	>= University Degree	117	46.8	46.8
	<University Degree	133	53.2	53.2
	Total	250	100	100

Table 1: Contd...

		Frequency	%	Valid %
Mother Occupation	No answer	1	0.4	0.4
	Retired deceased	1	0.4	0.4
	Unemployed	72	28.8	28.8
	Artisan seam stress	24	9.6	9.6
	Profess. employee	86	34.4	34.4
	Trade small industry	1	0.4	0.4
	Own business	21	8.4	8.4
	Other	44	17.6	17.6
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Mother Income	No answer	73	29.2	29.2
	< 960000ll	32	12.8	12.8
	960000 - <1500000	50	20.0	20.0
	1500000- <3000000	74	29.6	29.6
	3000000 - 5000000	18	7.2	7.2
	> 5000000	3	1.2	1.2
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Mother Income 1	<3000000	156	62.4	88.1
	>=3000000	21	8.4	11.9
	Total	177	70.8	100
	Missing	73	29.2	
Family Size	Total	250	100	
	1 person	18	7.2	7.2
	2 persons	129	51.6	51.6
	>=3 persons	103	41.2	41.2
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
Studying Family	1 person	88	35.2	35.2
	2 persons	126	50.4	50.4
	>=3 persons	36	14.4	14.4
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	Zero	3	1.2	1.2
Working Family	1 person	58	23.2	23.2
	2 persons	143	57.2	57.2
	>=3 persons	46	18.4	18.4
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	Zero	3	1.2	1.2
Social Class	High class	49	19.6	19.6
	Middle class	156	62.4	62.4
	Low income	45	18.0	18.0
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	High class	60	24.0	24.0
Living Level	Middle class	147	58.8	58.8
	Low income	43	17.2	17.2
	Total	250	100.0	100.0
	High class	60	24.0	24.0

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. Phase 1: Six Cross-tabulations

In this phase, the researcher tests for a relationship between poverty and each variable (30 variables = 30 cross-tabulations). From these cross-tabulations, the researcher gropes for significant variables that can reveal, in one way or

another, to which social class a student might belong. Besides, tuition payment, father's income, mother's income, social class, and spending level can be considered to be good predictors. This does not mean that the other variables should not be included in the study and analyzed; all cross-tabulations are important for drawing the general answer pattern for the surveyed students under each category and each answer choice. The issue is that variables such as father's and mother's education/occupation cannot predict the social class of a student when analyzed alone. For instance, a father might be well educated but also have a low income and a low-level occupation. Conversely, regardless of the occupation or education of the father or mother, one can predict the social class of a student from how he/she will finance his/her university fees.

For this, the researcher analyzes significant variables that may predict social class, under the six different scenarios. If there are two significant variables with a prediction capability, where one variable is an adjustment of the other, the researcher analyzes the more significant one (for example if tuition payment is more significant than adjusted tuition payment, the researcher analyzes the former). The cross-tabulations for all significant variables (with or without the potential to predict social class) can be found in the appendix.

A. 1) Poor AND Lazy (Individualist Attribution)

(Refer to Table 3 and Tables 5 to 15)³

Altogether, 12 variables show significance when testing for a relationship with poverty. The Chi-square (χ^2) significances become weaker after adjusting the frequencies for mother's education and mother's income. The following variables show significant relationships with poverty at different significance intervals (refer to Table 3 for all test results):

- 90% confidence interval: age and adjusted mother's income
- 95% confidence interval: tuition payment, adjusted father's education, father's income, mother's education, and mother's income
- 99% confidence interval: adjusted tuition payment, adjusted father's income, mother's education, adjusted mother's education, social class, and spending level

Table 2: Descriptive statistics showing the distribution of students' answers for the two general questions (Part 5)

	<i>Frequ- ency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Cumu- lative %</i>
Poor AND Lazy	50	20	20	20
	200	80	80	100
	250	100	100	
Poor AND God's Will	40	16	16	16
	210	84	84	100
	250	100	100	
Rich AND Corrupt	45	18	18	18
	205	82	82	100
	250	100	100	
Poor AND Bad Judgment	162	65	64.8	64.8
	88	35	35.2	100
	250	100	100	
Rich AND Hard Worker	166	66	66.4	66.4
	84	34	33.6	100
	250	100	100	
Rich AND God's Will	37	15	14.8	14.8
	213	85	85.2	100
	250	100	100	

The researcher provided different answers for tuition payment: (i) own savings, (ii) loans, aids, and assistantships, (iii) scholarships, and (iv) other methods of financing. After adjusting the entries, the researcher kept only two answers: (i) own financing methods and (ii) other financing methods (loans, scholarships, and aids). Under this scenario, adjusted tuition payment is more significant than tuition payment. The cross-tabulation shows that 48.3% of students cover their tuition fees from their own savings, while 51.7% rely on other financing methods. In general, students who cover their tuition fees from their own savings belong to the high-middle and rich classes. Of those rich and high-middle class students, 66.7% do not attribute poverty to individualistic factors compared with 85.7% of poor, low-middle, and middle-class students.

For father's income, there are five income categories based on the approximate minimum wage (plus benefits) in Lebanon ("I" refers to monthly income):

(i) $I \leq \$640$; (ii) $\$640 < I < \$1,000$; (iii) $\$1,000 \leq I < \$2,000$; (iv) $\$2,000 \leq I < \$3,300$; and (v) $\$3,300 > I$. $\$640$. For adjusted father's income, there are two income categories: (i) $I < \$2,000$ and (ii) $I \geq \$2,000$.

Since adjusted father's income is more significant than father's income, the researcher analyzes its cross-tabulation and finds that 59% of students belong to the first income group, where-

as 41% belong to the second. Of those students, 14.1% and 30.3% attribute poverty to individual reasons, respectively. Accordingly, the researcher deduces that in general, students whose fathers have higher incomes tend to blame individualist factors for poverty more than students whose fathers have lower incomes.

Social class has significant results and this is considered to be a good and direct predictor. The researcher finds that 19.6% of students belong to the rich class, of which 61.2% do not blame the individual. In total, 62.4% are middle-class students, of which 81.4% do not blame the individual. Finally, 18% are poor students, of which 95.6% do not attribute poverty to individualistic reasons. Moreover, living level shows that 24% of students have higher-class living standards, 58.8% have middle-class standards, and 17.2% have poor standards. It's also worth noting that out of students, 68.3%, 80.3%, and 95.3% do not attribute poverty to individualistic reasons, respectively. There are different figures between living level and social class because some students self-rate themselves unconsciously in a different class.

A. 2) Poor and Structure (Structuralist Attribution)

(Refer to Tables 3, 16, and 17)³

Two variables show significance when testing for a relationship with poverty (refer to Table 3 for all test results):

- 90% confidence interval: social class
- 95% confidence interval: mother's income

For mother's income, the researcher finds that 18.1% of students belong to the first income group, 28% to the second, 41.8% to the third, 10.2% to the fourth, and 1.7% to the fifth. Of those students, 78.1%, 56%, 64.9%, 55.6%, and 0% attribute poverty to structural factors, respectively. This means that, in general, as mother's income decreases, students tend to place more blame on structural factors. The cross-tabulation of social class under this category shows that 19.6% of students are rich, 62% are middle-class, and 18% are poor. Of those students, 51%, 66.7%, and 73.3% blame structural factors, respectively.

A. 3) Poor and God's Will (Fatalist Attribution)

(Refer to Tables 3 and 18)³

Only schooling shows significance at the 90% confidence interval. In general, public-

Table 3: Summary of Chi-square (χ^2) tests with corresponding contingency coefficients for the all six scenarios

	Poor AND Lazy		Poor AND Structure		Poor AND God's Will		Rich AND Hard Work		Rich AND Corruption/Structure		Rich AND God's Will	
	Pearson Chi-square	Significance	Pearson Chi-square	Significance	Pearson Chi-square	Significance	Pearson Chi-square	Significance	Pearson Chi-square	Significance	Pearson Chi-square	Significance
Fatalist * Age	7.569	0.056(*)	4.688	0.196	4.619	0.202	2.608	0.456	0.031	0.999	3.936	0.268
Fatalist * Age 1	0.375	0.54	1.177	0.278	0.37	0.543	1.042	0.307	0.006	0.938	1.054	0.302
Fatalist * Gender	1.806	0.179	0.788	0.375	0.132	0.717	0.192	0.661	0.001	0.979	0.013	0.901
Fatalist * Religion	1.332	0.514	0	1	1.08	0.583	0.582	0.747	0.378	0.828	1.883	0.39
Fatalist * Religion 1	0.9	0.343	0	1	1.071	0.301	0.287	0.592	0.027	0.869	0.285	0.593
Fatalist * Birthplace	2.984	0.561	4.481	0.345	6.778	0.148	3.116	0.539	2.856	0.582	5.663	0.226
Fatalist * Birthplace 1	0.439	0.508	0.608	0.436	0.009	0.923	0.22	0.639	1.305	0.253	4.251	0.039(**)
Fatalist * Origin	1.027	0.906	3.754	0.44	5.926	0.205	2.97	0.563	1.085	0.897	4.463	0.347
Fatalist * Living	0.723	0.395	1.048	0.306	0.45	0.502	0.043	0.835	0.184	0.668	0.079	0.778
Fatalist * Schooling	1.539	0.215	0.273	0.601	3.121	0.077(*)	8.291	0.004(**)	2.981	0.084(*)	3.5	0.061(*)
Fatalist * University	4.289	0.117	0.11	0.947	2.56	0.278	11.612	0.003(***)	5.128	0.077(*)	2.803	0.246
Fatalist * University 1	2.672	0.102	0.078	0.781	1.463	0.226	0.9	0.343	0.079	0.779	1.381	0.24
Fatalist * Name of Private Uni.	4.11	0.381	2.235	0.693	2.137	0.711	4.508	0.342	4.294	0.368	1.063	0.9
Fatalist * Tuition Payment	9.388	0.025(**)	2.385	0.497	3.786	0.285	9.302	0.026(**)	4.214	0.239	3.212	0.36
Fatalist * Tuition Payment 1	8.607	0.003(***)	2.096	0.148	1.295	0.255	4.869	0.027(*)	2.858	0.091(*)	0.888	0.346
Fatalist * Father's Education	7.055	0.133	3.731	0.444	4.551	0.337	15.175	0.004(***)	9.717	0.045(**)	2.667	0.615
Fatalist * Father's Education 1	6.494	0.011(**)	2.329	0.127	0.237	0.627	10.548	0.001(**)	5.702	0.017(*)	1.782	0.182
Fatalist * Father's Occupation	10.827	0.146	8.669	0.277	6.819	0.448	7.688	0.361	12.125	0.097(*)	6.518	0.481
Fatalist * Father's Income	10.159	0.038(**)	3.011	0.556	3.906	0.419	9.018	0.061(*)	4.801	0.308	4.561	0.335
Fatalist * Father's Income 1	8.459	0.004(***)	1.066	0.302	1.951	0.162	5.705	0.017(*)	2.063	0.151	1.146	0.284
Fatalist * Mother's Education	10.444	0.005(***)	4.23	0.121	0.885	0.643	5.346	0.069(*)	2.485	0.289	1.417	0.492
Fatalist * Mother's Education 1	17.426	0.006(***)	2.382	0.123	0.884	0.347	4.975	0.026(*)	1.794	0.18	1.401	0.237
Fatalist * Mother's Occupation	14.451	0.025(**)	7.968	0.24	1.195	0.977	4.148	0.657	2.733	0.842	1.698	0.945
Fatalist * Mother's Income	12.671	0.013(*)	9.801	0.044(**)	5.957	0.202	5.176	0.27	4.634	0.327	3.858	0.426
Fatalist * Mother's Income 1	3.578	0.059(*)	2.321	0.128	0.042	0.837	2.345	0.126	3.027	0.082(*)	0.001	0.982
Fatalist * Family Size	1.701	0.427	3.17	0.205	3.993	0.136	4.48	0.106	6.271	0.043(**)	1.448	0.485
Fatalist * Studying Family	1.614	0.446	0.859	0.651	0.192	0.908	3.524	0.172	11.608	0.003(***)	1.358	0.507
Fatalist * Working Family	1.509	0.68	0.693	0.875	3.011	0.39	7.114	0.068(*)	3.796	0.284	2.717	0.437
Fatalist * Social Class	17.795	0(**)	5.754	0.056(*)	2.521	0.283	17.921	0(**)	11.902	0.003(***)	3.678	0.159
Fatalist * Living Level	11.442	0.003(***)	2.119	0.347	2.536	0.281	6.937	0.031(**)	3.704	0.157	1.673	0.433

(**) Significant at 99% confidence interval

(***) Significant at 98% confidence interval

(**) Significant at 90% confidence interval

school students are poor, low-middle, and middle-class, whereas private-school students are middle, high-middle, and rich. Here, there might be an overlap for middle-class students because they might be in a private or a public school. The researcher does not consider this overlap to constitute a major limitation because in rural areas, private schools are free and run by NGOs. Hence, the concept is similar to a public school. For this, many students in private schools might see themselves as public-school students. Accordingly, the researcher considers that private schools are for middle-class, high-middle, and rich students and that public schools are for low-middle and poor students. The cross-tabulation for this variable shows that 62.4% are private-school students, of which 12.8% attribute poverty to fatalistic factors. On the other hand, 37.6% are public-school students, of which 21.3% blame fatalistic factors.

A. 4) Rich and Hard Work (Individual Attribution)

(Refer to Table 3 and Tables 19 to 31)³

The following variables show significant relationships with poverty:

- 90% confidence interval: father's income, mother's education, and working family
- 95% confidence interval: tuition payment, adjusted tuition payment, adjusted father's income, adjusted mother's education, and living level
- 99% confidence interval: father's income, mother's education, and working family

This scenario is related to the first one. Hence, the researcher expects similar results. After adjusting the frequencies for birthplace, university, and tuition payment, the significances of the Chi-square tests become weaker. The schooling variable is also present in this scenario. The researcher finds that 62.4% are private-school students, whereas 37.6% are public-school students. Of those, 73.1% and 55.3% find that wealth is caused by individual factors, respectively. Similarly, students who plan to enroll in private universities constitute 68% compared with 27.2% and 4.8% who plan to enroll in public universities or institutes, respectively. Altogether, 71.2% of future private-university students give credit to the individual compared with 61.8% and 25% of future public-university and institute students. As mentioned earlier, in general,

public-university and institute students belong to the low-middle, poor, and middle-class categories (because a number of private universities have very low tuition fees).

Tuition payment is more significant than adjusted tuition payment. The results show that 48.3% of students will pay from their own savings, 31% will rely on loans and financial aid, 10.3% on scholarships, and 10.1% on other financing methods. Further, 78.6%, 59.3%, 83.3%, and 55.6% of students attribute poverty to individual factors, respectively. Based on the analysis above on the similar variable, the researcher finds that students paying tuition fees from their own financial resources give more credit to the individual as a reason for wealth. On the contrary, poor, low-middle, and middle-class students tend to give less credit. In this case, scholarships might also embrace students from several classes.

Adjusted father's income is more significant than father's income. This result is consistent with those of the first scenario: of the 41% of students whose fathers earn more or equal to \$2,000, 76.4% give credit to the individual as a reason for wealth. On the contrary, of the 59% of students whose fathers earn less than \$2,000, 60.9% give credit to the individual.

The variable of working family shows varying results, perhaps because it fails to predict the social class of a student. In Lebanon, more importance is placed on fathers and mothers' incomes, even though the parents might earn less than other family members. The results also show that high-class students (19.6%) give credit to the individual as a cause of wealth more than do middle-class (62.45%) and poor students (18%). Of rich students, 85.7% attribute poverty to individualistic factors, while of middle-class and poor students, 66.7% and 44.4% give credit to the individual, respectively. The researcher does not analyze the cross-tabulations for father's education, mother's education, and so on for the same reasons cited earlier.

A. 5) Rich and Corruption (Structural/Moral Attribution)

(Refer to Table 3 and Tables 32 to 41)³

The following variables show significant relationships with poverty:

- 90% confidence interval: schooling, university, adjusted tuition payment, father's occupation, and adjusted mother's income

- 95% confidence interval: father's education, adjusted father's education, and family size
- 99% confidence interval: studying family and social class

For the first time, family size (χ^2 significance = 0.043) and studying family (χ^2 significance = 0.003) show relationships with poverty. Based on the previous analyses presented herein, the researcher finds that 62.4% are private-school students, whereas 37.6% are public-school students. Of those, 14.7% and 23.4% find corruption and structural factors to be causes of wealth, while 68%, 27.2%, and 4.8% of students plan to enroll in private universities, public universities, and institutes, respectively. Of those, 15.9%, 19.1%, and 41.7% find structural factors and corruption to be causes of wealth. Tuition payment, similar to previous scenarios, shows that students who rely on financial aid and loans as methods of financing place more importance on corruption and structure as causes of wealth. Those students constitute 31%, of which 22.2% find that corruption and structure are causes of wealth. Conversely, students that pay tuition fees from their own savings constitute 48.3%, of which 10.7% believe that corruption and structure are causes of wealth.

From the cross-tabulation of adjusted mother's income, the researcher tabulates that 88.1% of students whose mothers earn less than \$2,000 place more blame on corruption and structure as causes of wealth compared with students whose mothers earn more than \$2,000 (11.9%). The results for social class show that high-class students constitute 19.6%, of which 6.7% attribute poverty to corruption/structure. The unexpected result is that poor students place less blame on corruption/structure than middle-class students: of middle-class (62.4%) and poor (18%) students, 60% and 30% find that corruption/structure are causes of wealth, respectively.

A. 6) Rich and God's Will (Fatalist Attribution)

(Refer to Tables 3, 42, and 43)³

When testing for relationship with poverty, two variables show significance:

- 90% confidence interval: schooling
- 95% confidence interval: adjusted birthplace

The schooling variable shows that of the 62.4% private-school students, 7.2% believe in fatalistic factors, whereas of the 37.6% public-

school students, 7.6% do so. Based on the previous analysis, the researcher finds that poor and low-middle class students believe in fatalistic factors as a cause of wealth more than middle, high-middle, and rich students do. In addition, for the first time, birthplace shows a significant relationship with poverty. Out of the 24% of students born abroad, 5.6% find fatalistic factors to be causes of wealth, whereas of the 75.6% of students born in Lebanon, 9.2% do so.

B. Phase 2

This phase stresses only logically related or consistent answers (for example students who answered "lazy" as a cause of poverty and "hard worker" as a cause of wealth). The aim is to show how different answer groups (fatalistic, individualistic, and structuralistic) are subdivided and categorized. Of the 250 students surveyed, only 30 attribute poverty to fatalistic factors and answer "God's will" for both questions. Of those 30 students, 73% are older than 17, 56.7% are men, 56.7% are Muslims/Druze, 66.7% are born in Lebanon, 26.7% are from Beirut, 26.7% live outside their places of birth, 46.7% are private-school students, and 56.7% plan to enroll in private universities. The unexpected result is that under this category, 63.3% are middle-class students and 26.7% are poor (refer to Table 4). Further, 60% have a middle-class standard of living and 26.7% are poor. On the contrary, students who do not attribute poverty to fatalistic factors are widely distributed and their data are varied. Hence, it is impossible to run a percentage analysis for each possible set of answers. This constitutes a limitation of the study.

Discussion

A. 1) Poor and Lazy (Individual Attribution)

In general, students whose fathers have higher income tend to blame individualist factors as a reason for poverty more than students whose fathers have lower income.

Out of those significant variables that can predict the social class of a student, the researcher can determine that poor, low-middle, and middle-class students tend to remove blame on individualistic factors as a reason for poverty more than rich and high-middle class students do.

A. 2) Poor and Structure (Structuralist Attribution)

The results of this study show that poor students blame structure as a reason for poverty more than middle-class and rich students do.

A. 3) Poor and God's Will (Fatalist Attribution)

The researcher finds that low-middle class and poor students tend to place the blame on fatalistic factors as a reason for poverty more than do middle, high-middle, and rich students.

A. 4) Rich and Hard Work (Individual Attribution)

Based on the researcher's categorization for schooling listed above, it is deduced that low-middle class and poor students tend to give credit to the individual as a cause of wealth less than middle, high-middle, and rich students do. From this, the researcher finds that low-middle and poor students give less credit to the individual than other students do. In general, as social class declines, the student is less likely to give credit to the individual for his/her wealth.

A. 5) Rich and Corruption (Structural / Moral Attribution)

This section confirms that low-middle and poor students find corruption and structure as reasons for wealth to be more important than middle-class, high middle-class, and rich students do. The researcher did not test for the other significant variables, because when ana-

lyzed alone, they fail to show any potential to predict social class.

A. 6) Rich and God's Will (Fatalist Attribution)

The researcher deduces that students born in Lebanon believe in fatalism more than those born abroad do, which might be due to the war atmosphere in which those students were born. This finding can be explained by the common belief that war is half the truth of poverty, as explained by Haddad (1996).

CONCLUSION

The researcher involved a sample of 250 students from both private and public schools in different regions of Lebanon. Based on causal attribution theory, the researcher tested for relationships between poverty and different variables to understand how Lebanese youth attribute poverty. The questionnaire was constituted of 21 questions grouped into five sets: civil and personal information, information about education, about parents, about family, and general closed-ended questions. The independent variables were weighted and to avoid subjectivity, this study did not use scales.

By using the Chi-square test, the researcher examined relationships between poverty and each independent variable for six different scenarios. Besides, based on previous studies, the researcher also added demographic and income variables. In the first phase, the researcher ran cross-tabulation analyses (30 variables = 30 cross-tabulations) and searched for significant variables that may predict the social class of a student.

The results showed that compared with middle-class and rich students, poor students place less blame on the individual. Similarly, poor students give less credit to the individual as a reason for wealth than middle-class and rich students do. Further, poor students find structure/corruption as reasons for poverty and wealth to be more important than middle-class and rich students do. In addition, poor students tend to believe in fatalistic factors as reasons for poverty more than middle-class and rich students do.

In the second phase, the researcher filtered the answers and assessed only the consistent ones (for example students who believed fatal-

Table 4: Descriptive statistics for the 30 "Fatalistic" students regarding social class and living level

	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Valid %</i>	<i>Cumulative %</i>
<i>Social class</i>				
Valid				
Rich	3	10.0	10.0	10.0
Middle class	19	63.3	63.3	73.3
Poor	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	
<i>Living level</i>				
Valid				
Rich	4	13.3	13.3	13.3
Middle class	18	60.0	60.0	73.3
Poor	8	26.7	26.7	100.0
Total	30	100.0	100.0	

istic factors to be reasons for both poverty and wealth). Of the 250 students surveyed, only 30 attributed poverty to fatalistic factors. The unexpected result was that, under this category, there were more middle-class students than poor students. On the contrary, the data for non-fatalistic students were varied and widely distributed, which made it impossible to run a percentage analysis for each possible set of answers. This constitutes a limitation of the study.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Future researchers in the field are advised to extend the sample size and include schools from other geographical areas (for example south Lebanon, Bekaa). It would also be of great interest to perform a comparative study on youth from other countries based on the Human Development Index in order to check for attribution differences between Middle Eastern and North African countries.

The Lebanese Civil War increased poverty and left the country in a miserable state from both human and infrastructural aspects. Successive governments are paying more attention to reconstruction rather than considering the socio-economic condition of its citizens. Policy makers should thus find ways in which to alleviate the burden of poverty on the poor, especially those forced to relocate or that have lost their businesses and properties. The government's negligence may have caused indignation among different social classes. Therefore, the adoption of certain measures to increase the social safety net (social security or hospitalization, etc.) might affect the results reported in this study, especially those related to structuralist factors.

NOTES

- 1 "The income level at which an average family of five can meet its food requirements and other basic needs such as health, education, housing, and clothing"
- 2 SPSS.com: "The Chi-square (χ^2) test for independence, also called Pearson's Chi-square test or the Chi-square test of association, is used to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables"
- 3 Tables 1 to 4 are found in the paper. The remaining tables (5 to 44) can be downloaded from the following website: <http://goo.gl/gw85yR>

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