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## The Ideological Perspective of School Principals' Perceptions-Educational Leaders Defining their Roles

Keren Dery<sup>ID</sup>

Achva Academic College, ISRAEL

Roni Reingold<sup>ID</sup>

Achva Academic College, ISRAEL

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**Abstract:** This research describes the perceptions of school principals in the context of their role in leading the professional development of the teaching staff. Their perceptions were examined in reference to three educational ideologies: socialization, acculturation and individuation. Data analysis of semi structured interviews conducted with 20 school principals, revealed a contradiction between the educational ideology that emerged in the context of the overall educational practice and the ideology referred to in the context of their role in teachers professional development. In the context of the educational practice, the majority of principals described an individuation ideology. In the context the principals' role regarding the professional development of the teaching staff, the majority of school principals presented the socialization ideology as their guiding ethos. In addition, the minority of principals demonstrated a combination of these two ideologies. None of the principals presented the acculturation ideology.

**Keywords:** School principals, educational ideology, educational leadership, qualitative research.

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### Introduction

As part of a new educational reform titled New Horizon, the Israeli Ministry of Education announced in 2010 a new policy regarding teachers' professional development (Avidov Ungar & Reingold, 2018). The program is anchored in the concept of lifelong learning, which relates to the multiple facets of a teacher's personal, social, civic, and professional identity (Kennedy, 2015). Good teachers are those who engage in lifelong learning, not only in relation to their role as teachers, but also as intellectually curious people and as active members of their communities and societies (Berliner, 2001; Guskey & Yoon, 2009).

One main anchor of the new policy was assigning the school principals as local leaders who design and approve their teachers' professional development programs. They were defined as the penultimate link (before the teachers) in the hierarchical chain of command in the education system. They were subjected to the district managers and superintendents of the Israeli Ministry of Education, who were placed in charge of introducing and implementing this new policy.

The place of the School principals was decided considering developments in their roles in the last decades. As the central figure in school, school principals are expected to identify and articulate the school's vision and goals and to lead processes of continuous improvement in the school environment, in pursuit of these goals (Knapp et al., 2006).

School principals are in a unique position, given that they have the most direct and immediate influence on the teachers, and thus they can affect the staff members' development and performance (Bredeson, 2000; Linder & Weissblueth, 2017; Suber, 2012). As such, guiding the staff's professional development naturally should fall under the purview of the school principal.

Setting policy for the professional development of their teaching staff, and overall, of school principals' activities as educational leaders, is based upon their perceptions and beliefs. In other words, upon their educational philosophy.

Following Tzvi Lamm's typology, an educational philosophy typically implies an ideological inclination, which can be focused on one of three alternative patterns: socialization, acculturation, or individuation (Lamm, 1978, 2002; Reingold

\* Corresponding author:

Roni Reingold, Achva Academic College, Arugot, 7980400, Israel. ✉ [reingold@netvision.net.il](mailto:reingold@netvision.net.il)



et al., 2013). Adhering to more than one of these ideologies simultaneously creates a situation of conflict between them, such that an educational endeavor based on more than one ideology is ineffective. The solution is for each educational framework to determine which one of the three ideologies it aims to follow and to adjust all aspects of the educational endeavor accordingly.

An institution's educational ideology depends to a great extent on the perceptions of the school principal. Principals play an important role in shaping the encounter between ideology, i.e., a collection of ideas and beliefs, and the actions that take place in the educational arena. Hence, the aim of the current study was to describe and examine the perceptions of school principals regarding their role in setting policy for the professional development of their teaching staff. Examining their perceptions through the lens of educational ideology makes it possible to identify the specific approach of the educational endeavor. Thus, the research question was, according to the principals' narratives, which of the 3 types of educational ideologies, that were defined by Lamm, was most commonly used. These will shade a light on whether the principals are following, in a conformist manner, the policy of the Israeli Ministry of Education or acting as educational leaders.

## Literature Review

### *Educational goals and ideologies*

Ideology is a system of opinions, attitudes, beliefs and values that represent the way of thinking of the individual and society. However, it is not just a collection of ideas. It is linked to certain actions and because of them it has meaning (Jost, 2006).

Lamm discusses the concept of ideology in the educational context:

"Ideologies are systems of recognition that are built on human values, and more than that, according to their emotional preferences, which characterize educational ideologies, like the political ones, it is impossible to decide between them - not in a theoretical way and not through experience. Understanding the essence of education is derived from the recognition that it is an ideological-driven activity and understanding of education in modern society must have acknowledged them" (Lamm, 2002, p.17).

That is, educational ideology is an expression of an individual's values and beliefs about education. The same thoughts and beliefs that pertain to the nature of people, their place in society, the educational purposes and the roles of the educator and the educator in the educational act. Further to that, an important component in any educational ideology is the complex question of the educational goals; indeed, this is the most essential and important question to be addressed (Biesta, 2015). A definition of the institution's educational goals is the point of departure for the substantial and practical aspects of education. Once educators understand what they aim to achieve in the educational endeavor, they are capable of making decisions in a variety of realms related to pedagogy and curricula (Biesta, 2015).

Educational goals are ideology-based and, as such, have ethical aspects (Biesta, 2015), which beg the following questions: who should be responsible for defining educational goals—the educators or the authorities in charge of education (on the state or local level)? Are educators obliged to pursue educational goals defined by high-ranking policy makers, or are they free to choose as they see fit? Should educational goals be adapted to correspond to the specific institution or to the learners? (Kayode et al., 2016)

In general, educational goals are intended to serve three major functions: socialization, qualification and subjectification (Biesta, 2009). Kennedy (2015), who investigated the path of professional development of teachers in Scotland, demonstrated the ways in which educational goals are manifested in professional development policies. Thus, when goals are aligned with the socialization function, the aim is to educate students according to specific traditions. They learn to act, to adopt norms and conventions related to cultural, social, political, professional, and religious traditions (Biesta, 2009; Kennedy, 2015). During professional development, teachers learn to identify social norms, in this case, professional norms (Kennedy, 2015).

Furthermore, the educator conveys knowledge and skills to the learner, so that the latter can acquire a profession that will help him or her be a productive member of society (Biesta, 2015; Kennedy, 2015). Hence, the goal associated with this function is to equip the learner with all that is necessary to become a functional member of society and thus contribute to the country's development and to its economic welfare (Biesta, 2015; Kennedy, 2015).

The subjectification function is related to the ways in which education influences the personality of the individual. Those whose ideology is guided by this function seek to promote characteristics such as independence, compassion, and critical judgment (Biesta, 2015; Kennedy, 2015). Accordingly, the goal of teachers' professional development is to help teachers fulfill their personal and individual aspirations, and to nurture their individual, unique talents and creativity, while developing their autonomy. Given this autonomy, teachers are able to contribute to the benefit of society at large (Kennedy, 2015).

Tzvi Lamm precede Biesta's typology with a very similar one, while he proposed a model of education in Israel, according to which the education system is at the service of three "masters": society – socialization, culture –

acculturation, and the individual – individuation. Each "master" represents a different goal of education and a different educational ideology. Lamm claimed that in any educational endeavor, the three ideologies cannot be manifested simultaneously, because the practices of achieving one goal contradict the practices of achieving another (Lamm, 1978, 2002). The contradiction - the mutual neutralization of educational influence - is therefore not at the conceptual level of educational goals but at the practical level of the educational means that result from them (Harpaz, 2020). Hence, each ideology can have only a single focus —or one "master," whereby the other two are either subjugated or eliminated (Lamm, 1978, 2002).

Thus, according to the socialization ideology, society is the most important factor and education is intended to serve society (Muszkat-Barkan, 2011). Seen from the perspective of this ideology, education is an activity that serves to train learners to adopt the social norms, and its main methodology is the imitation of adults (Reingold et al., 2013). Inculcating students to become adults who follow the social norms is a way to ensure the continuous existence of society (Lamm, 1978, 2002). Furthermore, according to this ideology, educators, who understand social structure and society's institutions, serve as "vehicles" whose role is to convey the behavioral guidelines accepted in their society. In this case, then, educators' pedagogical skills are at the service of the authority holders in their specific societies. The educators are not expected to exercise judgment, because the curricula will have been formulated by the society's policy makers (Zeichner, 1994).

According to the acculturation ideology, cultural values constitute the source of educational authority, and the main concern of education is culture (Muszkat-Barkan, 2011; Reingold et al., 2013). According to this ideology, the goal of education is to establish the individual's position vis-à-vis the historical human collaborative that produced culture. This goal is achieved through a prolonged process (Lamm, 2002). The learner should be guided to become a cultured person, who identifies with cultural values and has a broad range of knowledge. Educators who adhere to this ideology consider themselves agents of culture and knowledge. Some refer to these educators as "erudite teachers" (Zeichner, 1994). These educators wish to have their students identify with them and with the cultural values they represent (Harpaz, 2015). They have a broad education and extended knowledge in content areas that they consider relevant (Darling-Hammond, 1987).

According to the individuation ideology, the source of educational authority is the learner and the learner's needs. The view that focuses on the learners and their needs is also referred to as "unschooling." Accordingly, the goal of education is to help each individual manifest his or her human potential (Lamm, 1978, 2002; Muszkat-Barkan, 2011). This ideology aims to support the spontaneous development of the individual. The method is not to train or shape the learners, but rather to listen and address their needs. The truth is inherent in the learner and it is the role of the educator to stimulate the learner to think and seek the truth (Reingold et al., 2013).

### *Eclectic ideologies*

In reality, only a few educational frameworks show the sole control of ideologies derived from a single ideology. In most educational institutions, educational action is guided by two and sometimes three ideologies (Harpaz, 2020; Lamm, 2002). In fact, there are two forms of ideological eclecticism in education - The first consists of combinations of key ideas from two or three ideologies. For example, the combination of socialization and individualization can be seen in the progressive movement. An influential educational movement operating in the United States in the twentieth century inspired by John Dewey's educational beliefs. On the one hand, Dewey says, the educator should be part of a social unit whose goodness is right before one's eyes and on the other, education is the goal and education is the enterprise for finding the conditions that will ensure the prosperity and growth of the apprentice personality. Dewey seems to have tried to bridge the two socialization and individualization ideologies (Lamm, 2002).

Alongside the first type of eclectic ideology, in which all actions are guided by ideologies that attempt to integrate two or three super-ideologies of education, education also has second-type ideologies - which guide one ideology action in one area and another ideology action in another. This type is probably the most common (Lamm, 1978, 2002).

In the eclectic ideologies of the first kind, the effects of the various super-ideologies are supposed to be integrated into whatever educational act they guide. In fact, such a combination is not possible according to Lamm. Harpaz (2020) argues that what is wrong is that educators conduct this in a coincidental way, by the power of inertia, by external pressure, rather than by independent, intelligent planning. Sustainable educational impact stems from the fact that messages are always the same, emanating from one ideology and implemented through the actions derived from that ideology (Harpaz, 2020).

In the eclectic ideologies of the second type, the various super-ideologies are divided into their effect on the educational act according to the different fields of education. A particular field, with its aims and methods of operation, is dominated by one super-ideology, while another is dominated by another super-ideology.

However, according to Lamm, in educational action, no real distinction can be made between fields. The fields exist in education only as an abstraction, which mainly needs those who study education and want to understand it. Even when it is perfectly clear that a particular educational activity belongs to a specific field, such action still affects the individual

in other areas as well. The individual is not made of domains but is a functional integrity in which all of its domains are united and integrated into one another.

Finally, Lamm's theory is mainly attributed to teachers and students in schools. This study seeks to embrace Lamm's basic assumptions and project them into the work of school principals.

#### *Teachers' professional development*

Educational policies and innovations require teachers to develop professionally throughout their professional lives (Louws et al., 2017). Professional development is an ongoing process that involves teacher education and practice (Bolem, 2002). It is a process that occurs throughout one's professional career, a process that involves an implicit and explicit dialogue between personal development and professional-organizational development (Avidov-Ungar et al., 2014). Evans (2014) suggests that professional development should be considered as a multidimensional concept. That is, teachers do not just change their behavior or improve their teaching. Professional development also changes their thinking, attitudes and intellectual abilities.

Difficulties in the professional development process of teachers were discussed in the research literature. For example, teachers do not always have permission to be involved in content selection (Louws et al., 2017), or difficulties arising from a lack of knowledge about teacher development professionally (Evans, 2014).

#### *The role of principals in the professional development of teachers*

In the research literature, there is a consensus that a school principal is a key influential personality in the school (Bush, 2007; Jacobson, 2011; Klein & Schwanenber, 2020; Kurt et al., 2011). Moreover, research indicates that principals now have a great deal of responsibility and feel they must meet certain standards. The pressure they undergo to bring about change and improvement in their school is great and principals are struggling to meet expectations (Harris, 2016).

The principal is actually responsible for leading his or her team in the most successful professional development path. It has a unique position because it has the closest influence on teachers, and therefore it influences their learning and teaching (Bredeson, 2000; Linder & Weissblueth, 2017; Suber, 2012).

Like Israel, England, Wales, Scotland, and Australia expect a school principal to lead the professional development of the teaching staff. In fact, some of the professional standards the school principal must adhere to are focused on the professional development of his teaching staff (Evans, 2014).

As part of the "New Horizon" reform, the Israeli Ministry of Education assigned school principals an important role in the professional development of teaching staff and defined guidelines for their involvement in the process. School principals have been empowered to be responsible for the professional development of school teaching staff (Avidov Ungar & Reingold, 2018). Studies examining the role of principals in accompanying their teaching staff in professional development have found principals' involvement in a larger process than teachers, they tend to fulfill the expectations of the Ministry of Education in order to maintain their image and not because they understand the professional development contribution and do not know how to advise, support and guide teachers in their professional development process (Linder & Weissblueth, 2017); Principals tend to neglect their duty to accompany teachers in their professional development and prefer to perform other tasks because of workload (Castle et al., 2002; Linder & Weissblueth, 2017);

According to Bredeson (2000), teachers must be perceived as independent individuals, and so teachers control their own learning and their own growth. The influence of the principals on the professional development of teachers depends on their management style, and the perceptions of the principals and their beliefs have a great influence on the professional development of the teachers, and consequently their actions also have a great influence on their professional development (Bredeson, 2000).

The premise of this study is that school principals who hold a certain ideology, are expected to act in all aspects of their role based on their ideology. Otherwise, according to Zvi Lamm, their work will be saturated with conflicting messages, will not be effective and will not lead to the advancement of the school and the achievement of the school's goals. Thus, this article examines the ideological choices of the educational leader while leading the professional development process of his or her teacher staff. Should he/she be loyal to his/her own educational ideology, or should he/she follow the top-down educational ideology set by policymakers?

### **Methodology**

The study was qualitative in nature (Spector-Mersel, 2010). Principals perceptions and short stories formed narratives (Riessman & Quinney, 2005), were analyzed.

### *Participants*

The participants were 20 principals of state-funded elementary and middle schools (in which the New Horizon reform was implemented) from various parts of the country. The participants were recruited using the "rolling snowball" method, according to which a participant recommends others as potential participants (Josselson, 2013). All the participants were described as having some meaningful "say" in the field of education.

Principals who have worked at the school for more than three years have been included in the study, to make sure they have already contacted the teaching staff, known them and are already aware of their needs.

All 20 participants were women. Their average age was 43 and they all held an M.A. degree.

### *Research Instrument*

In-depth semi structured interviews were used to examine the perceptions of the school principals. Interviews with the school principals were conducted individually, according to the dual stage model presented by Rosenthal (2004). The guiding questions in the interviews included several open-ended questions, and questions that could be adjusted according to the direction in which the interview develops (Josselson, 2013).

Each interview began by presenting the subject of the study, in this case, the perceptions of school principals regarding their new role in the professional development of the teaching staff, as defined in the New Horizon reform. Next, the interviewees were asked to relate to the question "how do you describe yourself as a school principal?" This question aimed to elicit as many details as possible regarding the principals' educational beliefs. Although the goal was to learn about their educational values and activities vis-à-vis their preferred educational ideology, the word ideology was not explicitly mentioned, so as not to create the assumption that they were expected to specify a guiding ideology, and so as not to circumscribe their answers or to point them in any particular direction.

Following, five clarification questions regarded the two topics: educational ideology, and professional development. The following questions were included at this stage: What, in your opinion, is the most important aspect in the work of the school principal? Please describe an event or incident that you experienced in your job as school principal, in which you felt that your actions manifested the way in which you believe the educational endeavor should be managed. Please tell us about a professional development workshop that took place at school, and please describe how this workshop influenced you and the teaching staff.

By means of this instrument, investigators can document the perceptions and experiences of the participants in the research, and the open-ended questions are used to gather more specific information in order to describe the phenomenon in its complexity (Josselson, 2013).

### *Data Analysis*

The data provided in the study were of a narrative nature; hence, the analysis of the data was based on the principles of narrative analysis, as defined by Miles and Huberman (1994). The principals' short stories were regarded as "self-defined narrative", in which the informants described a specific incident in their life story (Spector- Mersel, 2011).

The analysis was performed using a two-stage coding system. In the first stage, transcriptions of the interviews were read and researchers came to realize that the principles described one ideology in regard to teachers' professional development and another ideology in relation to the general educational practice and their image of the school graduate. Content segments were categorized according to whether they represented the ideology relevant to professional development or the ideology relevant to the educational practice and the ideal graduate. In the next stage, these main categories were divided into subcategories according to the three types of ideology described by Lamm (1978, 2002).

In order to ensure the reliability of the data analysis a double reading was performed by the two researchers.

## **Results**

Findings from the textual analysis of the interview transcripts were categorized according to two main themes: 1. Educational ideology related to the educational endeavor and the image of the school graduate; 2. Educational ideology related to professional development implementation. The categories emerged from the literature review, which was conducted in relation to the research questions.

### *Educational Ideology Related to the Educational Endeavor and the Image of the Graduate*

This category included expressions in which the interviewees revealed their ideology in relation to the educational endeavor and to their image of the ideal school graduate. The findings suggested two tendencies: the first shows the majority of participants who described an educational ideology of individuation. The second presents statements by managers that combine two ideologies.

The following excerpts, in which teachers describe their understanding of the educational endeavor, demonstrate this ideology.

'Students want to feel at home while at school and feel secure knowing that the adults are the ones responsible... not for policing them, but for behaving like caring adults involved in the students' well-being.' (Principal 2)

The belief in the children's potential is of major importance... To believe in them, to make eye contact, and to forge a true connection.... It's the ability to listen and express empathy, to understand where they stand.... You come to understand that the teacher is no longer the source of knowledge or information. (Principal 7)

'Lots of times I end up listening to the student and I come to understand his or her viewpoint and the way the issue at hand was perceived.' (Principal 8)

'The New Horizon reform is beneficial to the education system; however, we have a long way ahead of us.... It is still our job to perceive the student as a whole and to help develop his or her talents.... This generation cannot do with simply memorizing material.' (Principal 9)

Another teacher commented, 'In my opinion, students are active participants in the educational endeavor at school' (Principal 13). Similarly, another interviewee stated

Treating each student differently is of the essence. In addition, beyond the learning, in my job as school principal, I am obligated to take into account the character of the learner. The unique character of each individual is not expressed solely in the way one learns (Principal 20)

In the context of describing the educational endeavor, five of the 20 participating school principals expressed an educational ideology that encompasses both socialization and individuation, which means, an eclectic educational ideology. Excerpts from their descriptions follow. One of the participants (Principal 1) presented the individuation ideology, stating that in the educational endeavor, the emphasis is on the child:

We are all responsible for the personal development of our students at school. In other words, all of our actions should be geared towards the child.... Our educational role is to help students identify their strengths and develop them.... The child receives personal attention; we see them as individuals. (Principal 1)

She then added that she wishes to inculcate in students social values, and by stating this, she represented the ideology of socialization as well.

At the end of the day, we are all here for the children, we want to raise a generation of people who are equipped to cope with the difficulties encountered in life's path.... The way I see it, teaching students arithmetic or sciences is a way of preparing them for their future lives. (Principal 1)

Principal 5 presented an approach that supports dialogue, and in this sense, she represented the individuation ideology: 'I believe we must invest in fruitful dialogue; it serves the students and it serves us.' She added that rules and regulations are important, as is the need to accept discipline and demonstrate obedience, a statement that relates to the ideology of socialization.

If a student used bad language against a teacher or another form of violence, we must turn to the Director General's Code of By-Laws, where everything is clearly written and there is no room for discussion. The penalty for such behaviors is obvious to everyone, and thus it prevents potential misunderstandings. (Principal 5)

Principal 14 referred to socialization, as she stated that the goal of education is to gain academic achievements and convey knowledge and values:

Every school principal can tell you the position of his or her school on the list of nationwide school rankings. We just received the results and we achieved an excellent ranking. In my opinion, achievement is not a dirty word; rather, it is the goal that has brought us all together, to function as a school, to lead our students to excellence, to convey knowledge, and inculcate values.

Principal 14 also added that she encourages students to develop paths of thought and she emphasized the issue of emotional containment, a comment that clearly represents the ideology of individuation: "My job is to lead students to better achievements and to develop their cognitive thinking... It is my belief that a school is not measured by its strengths" (Principal 14). She further added that each student should be educated according to his or her unique character, as a way of expressing the teacher's belief in the individual student's abilities. Hence, she clearly related to the individuation ideology, but later, she reverted to the socialization ideology, by restating the importance of academic achievements: "Teach each youngster according to his or her path, so as to attract the student towards academic achievements and self-realization; there should always be an adult at school who believes in the child's potential."

### *Educational Ideologies Related to Professional Development*

This category corresponds to statements in which the implied educational ideology emerged from participants' descriptions of their role in the teachers' professional development. Thirteen of the 20 interviewees referred to the socialization ideology in this context.

The following excerpts demonstrate this.

It is a matter of promotion. No one wants to stay here after work hours. Teachers work very hard and they have no interest in a professional development course that will not help them attain a promotion. I understand them.... However, this changes the language; thus, we are no longer talking about mission and vision, but about profitability. (Principal 2)

There is no way that a teacher (particularly a homeroom teacher) could opt out of professional development – that is the new reality. And we, the principals and teachers, have to adjust to this reality.... I see no other way. And why shouldn't they want to advance?... If I approach it in this manner, I can gain their cooperation. (Principal 3)

I convey the message that [teachers'] attendance [at the workshop] is obligatory and that it is a schoolwide demand that everyone, without exception, learns.... The workshop we had about the topic of IT in the classroom was very successful. Teachers came out feeling very positive, despite their complaining throughout the school year.... They are not exactly thrilled about having to hand in assignments, and especially not a summary assignment, but they know in advance that that is part of the conditions for accruing the hours necessary to merit a promotion. (Principal 6)

Coordinators of the various disciplines are responsible for the students' learning and for their academic achievements.... I help new coordinators, but the experienced ones already know that the bottom line has to do with facts, which means --like it or not-- students' grades. (Principal 10)

"Experience shows that a good schoolwide professional development workshop is one that is practical, in which teachers receive tools that they can work with in the classroom" (Principal, 11).

It appears that the current state of affairs and the demands introduced by the Ministry of Education are the main motivations for selecting a schoolwide professional development workshop. In other words, if I refer to the two workshops that I selected in previous years, one was about differential teaching. The purpose was to overcome the trend of failing the nationwide ranking tests... The second workshop was alternative evaluations, which differs from the concept of the Ministry of Education about evaluating students' performance. Teachers needed additional tools. Was I pleased with the overall outcome of these workshops? Based on my participation in workshops and through the documents issued by the Ministry of Education, I identified this need, and I chose these workshops in order to address certain needs. (Principal, 15)

Principal 5 emphasized that the considerations that guided her decisions were the demands made by the higher-up authority figures. The principal emphasizes the importance of achievement and delivering results, which fits the socialization ideology:

I am responsible for providing results, real achievements, no fudging.... This is the concern that guides me and, yes – I find it important to demonstrate that things are run according to the demands made from higher up. The way I do it here at school, that is my business.... It is not necessary to make everything – not to mention professional development– part of a predefined agenda. (Principal 5)

Principal 8 consciously outlined the compromises that her actions convey about professional development; hence, when managing this issue, she did not decide to adhere to the individuation ideology, which she presented in relation to the educational endeavor and the image of the graduate.

There is an educational system in place and we are part of it; we chose to be part of it... Have you always been able to agree with every step you took in life? Did you always do it without making concessions? Sometimes it is precisely the compromises that lead us to better outcomes..., by virtue of the fact that we gave an opportunity and tried other ways. I truly believe in this and I trust this system, of which I chose to be a part. (Principal 8)

Principal 20 presented the socialization ideology as guiding her decisions related to professional development, despite the fact that it was the individuation ideology that she invoked as a guiding principle in her activities related both to the educational endeavor and to professional development. She expresses a desire for things to happen and for teachers to take part in professional development as required by the Ministry of Education, even if it happens at the expense of each teacher's individual needs:

I would have liked to devote more time to this topic, to reach a more profound understanding and to construct an individualized professional development program for each of the teachers... I think that would make the whole thing more meaningful for them.... As things stand, however, I simply make sure that their professional development is in the relevant disciplines.... I make sure things get done, but not to the extent I would have liked. (Principal 20)

## Discussion

There is a well-established body of research in the field of Educational leadership and also, in professional development. Nevertheless, not enough studies focus on school principals' roles and their possible effects in regards of their staff professional development process. Moreover, even less studies combine the issues of teacher professional development, educational leadership and the issue of educational goals or educational ideologies.

In the current study, we sought to describe the perceptions of school principals regarding their role in the professional development of their teaching staff. We examined their descriptions and perceptions in terms of the educational ideologies represented. The three ideologies referred to by Lamm (2002), namely, socialization, acculturation, and individuation, served as the basis for our data analysis.

Findings demonstrate that in the context of the educational endeavor and the ideal image of the school graduate, the majority of principals described an individuation ideology, either on its own or in combination with another ideology. They emphasized that the essence of their role as principals is to ensure that students develop a strong sense of self, independence, and their unique talents. They noted that it is their responsibility to help students realize their strengths and, hence, they expect the teaching staff to act accordingly. Among the expressions mentioned by the school principals were the following: 'the learner in the center,' 'autonomy,' 'empathy,' 'trust,' 'empowerment,' 'personal development,' and 'initiative.'

As regards the principals' role in the teaching staffs' professional development, in this context, the majority of school principals presented the socialization ideology as their guiding ethos. They described their role in this regard as preserving the organizational structure and claimed that they are managing this goal according to the norms and expectations set by the Ministry of Education. They described the issue of professional development as something that is dictated from above and emphasized the need to manage it strategically. Among the expressions used by the school principals were the following: 'loss and gain,' 'accepted norms,' 'adjusting to the new reality,' 'promotion,' 'adjusting to the needs of the system,' and 'demands set by the Ministry of Education.'

In describing their actions regarding the professional development of the teaching staff, the school principals noted that they are required to decide how to implement the policy outlined in the New Horizon reform. Based on their descriptions, it appears that most of the school principals make a context-based decision, that is, they follow an ideology, which they perceive as a default. The principals reported that in managing the professional development of teachers, they must take into account the demands of the system. Among the expressions mentioned in this context were the following: 'adjusting to reality,' 'no other choice,' 'adapting to the needs of the system,' and 'concessions.' In light of these descriptions, the ideology represented by most of the school principals in regard to the issue of the teaching staff professional development was that of socialization. In other words, the findings of the current research indicate an ideological contradiction between the two contexts. In the context of the educational endeavor and their view of the ideal graduate, the principals believe in individuation; however, in the context of implementing the professional development of the teaching staff, the principals appeared to uphold an ideology of socialization, which guides them both on the theoretical and on the practical level.

These findings coincide with those described in the research by Kennedy (2015). Kennedy examined the issue of teachers' professional development in Scotland, in relation to the educational goals defined for students in Scotland (Kennedy, 2015). Biesta (2015) is of the opinion that educational systems throughout the world place an emphasis on socialization, given that discussions focusing on education typically highlight the issue of measuring and comparing academic achievements (Biesta, 2009). An individual's achievements are recognized in the context of competition, which again coincides with the socialization ideology (Biesta, 2015). This ideology is manifested both in relation to the students and in relation to the professional development of teachers (Kennedy, 2015).

The results of the current study, which found the principals supporting a socialization ideology in the context of teachers' professional development, coincide also with the approach put forth by Harpaz (2015). The latter noted that educators in the field are busy with the operational aspects of the education system. Furthermore, he claimed that education has several goals, which are derived from different ideologies and, hence, when focusing on one goal, the others are neglected. The findings of the current study suggest that the goals of individuation are abandoned in favor of goals related to the socialization ideology. Moreover, in practice, most schools adopt more than one ideology for different aspects of education (Elias & Merriam, 1995; Gioti, 2010; Guo, 2004; Zinn, 1994, 1998). The current findings, which demonstrate a different ideology utilized for each context, reveal the school principals' confusion: their authentic descriptions of their ideals regarding the educational endeavor convey a preference for an ideology of individuation. However, they cannot implement this ideology in practice when making decisions, as demonstrated in the context of their role in the professional development of the teaching staff, wherein their actions reflect an ideology of socialization. A different explanation of this ideological gap is that the school principals are experiencing a shift in their worldview.

Lamm (1978, 2002) believes that the combination of different ideologies implemented in relation to different aspects of education in a single educational institution by a single school principal, is not sustainable. The socialization ideology, for example, contains an authoritative component, whereas the ideology of individuation includes a component of



liberal permissiveness; consequently, the two cannot be combined. Is it possible to praise students for being original and unique and at the same time criticize them for not conforming and being like the majority of their peers? The same is true in the realm of professional development: how can the principal endeavor to support a professional development process that addresses the desires and uniqueness of the individual teacher and thus create a logical continuum of development and at the same time demand that teachers adapt to the requirements of the system? In other words, the means for accomplishing the two goals cannot be combined.

In Israel, the Ministry of Education is the governing body that decides about all aspects of educational policies, including the policy for the professional development of educators, as demonstrated in the New Horizon reform (Avidov Ungar & Reingold, 2018). In effect, the New Horizon reform was dictated from the top down (Avidov-Ungar & Eshet-Alkakay, 2011). Therefore, despite the fact that the Ministry of Education defines the school principals' role in accordance with the contemporary discourse, namely, as educational leaders, in effect, the school principals serve as a link in a chain of policy implementers, and in this regard they must exercise authority over the teachers in their schools. It appears that policy makers in Israel nowadays expect school principals to conform to the demands of the Ministry of Education, as Lamm claimed several decades ago (Lamm, 1978).

In fact, the principals in the current study demonstrated that in their role as educational leaders, they uphold the individuation ideology, in light of the educational discourse that advocates placing the student at the center of the educational endeavor. However, because the Ministry of Education expects them to behave in a conformist manner and implement its policies, their voices reflect a contradictory ideology, namely, the conservative socialization ideology, when they come to describe their role in the professional development of the teaching staff.

### Conclusions

The contradiction revealed in the current study between the proclaimed preferred ideology for the educational endeavor and for shaping the ideal school graduate, on the one hand, and the ideology that is practically in use when shaping teachers' professional development, on the other hand, demonstrates the complexity of ideological issues. That is the main contribution of the paper to the ongoing educational discourse about educational leadership and about teachers' professional development.

Despite all this, and in a positive tone, along with the great awareness that educational leadership has great influence even in centralized contexts like Israel, there is evidence from around the world that these educational leaders can maneuver between limitations while exercising discretion and influencing school advancement in their unique way (Bush, 2020).

This study presents a unique perspective on educational-ideological perceptions of those engaged in education. However, he has some limitations, such as presenting the perspective of school principals only. It will be interesting to explore the point of view of the teaching staff from the ideological perspective. In addition, the sample includes only Israeli principals and the sample is relatively small. Therefore, we recommend conducting an investigation elsewhere in the world.

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