



Does teaching on the "Other" side create a change

Wurud Jayusi^{a, *}, Zvi Bekerman^b

^a Mofet Institute, Beit Berl College, Israel

^b Hebrew University, Israel



HIGHLIGHTS

- Palestinian teachers feel satisfied and have strong sense of self-efficacy.
- They have good relationships with colleagues, principals, students, and parents.
- They were able to alter prejudiced opinions & to promote mutual understanding.
- Acculturation relates to integration, adopting new culture & retaining heritage.
- Their ethnic identity is ignored during Memorial Day ceremonies/Memory of Nakba.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 3 September 2017

Received in revised form

21 September 2018

Accepted 2 October 2018

1. Introduction

This study seeks to add to our understanding of the induction experiences of minority teachers in general, the processes and mechanisms that come into play when they work at majority schools, particularly those which facilitate accommodation processes and promote self-efficacy of indigenous minority teachers in conflict ridden societies.

The focus is on the experiences of Palestinian-Israeli teachers working in secular, Jewish Hebrew-speaking schools in Israel. Palestinian Israelis are those Arab-Palestinians who remained in their villages and towns during Israel's War of Independence in 1948, and later became Israeli citizens, totaling 20% of the population. They comprise 85% Muslims, 6% Druze, and 7.5% Christians (Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017).

Palestinians who achieve an academic education suffer from a high rate of unemployment. Given that their rate of employment in the private sector (e.g., high-tech) is very low, they consider that working in the civil services (e.g., in the education or health systems) offers them stability (Agbaria, 2011). Thousands of

Palestinian teachers in Israel submit employment requests to the Ministry of Education each year. Yet, Agbaria (2011) found that there are hundreds of certified teachers who remain unemployed after graduation.

For individual Palestinian-Israeli teachers who cannot find employment in the State's Arab-sector school system (the name used by Israeli officialdom), working in Jewish-Israeli schools constitutes a solution; at the same time, it helps the Jewish-Israeli-sector school system contend with the continuous shortage of qualified teachers.

The qualitative study's objective is to describe and analyze the role of the Palestinian-Israeli teachers' experiences in Jewish-Israeli schools in shaping their acculturation process in majority culture, their ethno-cultural belonging and their sense of self-efficacy. The study exposes also the Palestinian-Israeli teachers' motivations for teaching in Jewish-Israeli schools and their general feelings and relationships with the Jewish principals, colleagues, students and their parents, emphasizing their feelings about their role in reducing prejudice among those they meet.

2. Literature review

2.1. Palestinian Israelis and the educational systems in Israel

Palestinians in Israel are a national ethnic group and an indigenous minority typically viewed as a putatively hostile minority. This attitude, combined with little political representation and a debilitated social and economic infrastructure (Hesketh, 2011), is a source of further tensions and conflicts between the Palestinian-Israeli and Jewish-Israeli sectors in Israeli society. This rift is further manifested in the existence of separate Jewish and Arab educational systems that makes it very rare for Palestinian Arab and Jewish students to study under one roof (Jabareen, 2006).

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: wurud.jayusi@beitberl.ac.il (W. Jayusi).

The Jewish-Israeli and Arab-Israeli educational systems are not equal in terms of per capita expenditure for students, teaching hours, facilities, professional resources, or special curricular programs and opportunities. Consequently, the academic achievements in the Arab system tend to be poorer than those in the Jewish system (Al-Haj, 2012). Palestinian-Israeli teachers who work in Jewish schools benefit from these advantages and do not have to struggle for teaching hours, facilities, professional resources, or special curricular programs and opportunities.

Until 1973 Palestinian-Israeli teachers worked only in schools affiliated with their own sector. In 1973, a government committee recommended, for the first time, that Palestinian-Israeli teachers be incorporated into the Hebrew-speaking educational network (Shohat, 1973). By 1980, some 80 Palestinian-Israeli teachers were teaching Arabic in Jewish schools, a full 10% of the total number of Arabic teachers in the country (Yonai, 1992). In 2013, the Ministry of Education decided to step up the process and incorporated an additional 500 Palestinian-Israeli teachers into Jewish schools. Since then, the numbers have steadily risen and today Palestinians teach not only Arabic but a variety of other subjects for which the system suffers from a shortage of teachers, such as English, science, special education, and other subjects, at Israeli State secular schools (Merchavim, 2016). Recent indicators show that out of a total of 170,238 teachers in Israel, almost 24% of them are Palestinian-Israeli (Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics, 2017), of which only 0.015% teach in the Jewish secular sector budgeted and supervised by the State and Local Authorities.

The phenomenon of integrating minority/migrant/international teachers in majority schools is not exclusive to Israel. In the United States, for instance, the issue of integrating people of color has been addressed from the 1970s (King, 1993). Researchers unanimously agree that teachers from diverse cultural and ethnic backgrounds contribute extensively to American education (Easton-Brooks, Lewis, & Yang, 2010; Irvine & Fenwick, 2011). In Germany, hiring more minority teachers is considered a promising means of dealing with existing difficulties in diverse schools. Minority teachers draw on specific personal experiences that may be useful in overcoming cultural and/or language barriers (Irvine, 1989; Strasser & Waburg, 2015). Their sociocultural experiences, as well as their potential multilingual competencies (Nieto, 1998), facilitate more deliberate dealings with cultural diversity at schools (Lengyel & Rosen, 2015). The Palestinian-Israeli teachers who integrate in the Jewish-Israeli schools work in the secular, "official" and "recognized" schools, i.e., supervised and supported by the government. Detailing in full the complexities of the Israeli segregated school system would be for another article, although we have indicated that given these complexities Jews and Palestinians have little chance to meet within the educational system.

McNamara and Basit (2004) examined the induction experiences of British teachers of Asian and African Caribbean origin and showed that the majority of the teachers find their schools supportive and the induction process valuable and that they feel successful in building bridges between antagonistic communities and feel that they counter prejudice and racism both within schools and the wider community.

Santoro (2007) investigated the experiences of indigenous teachers and ethnic minority teachers in Australian schools. She suggested that the teachers' "knowledge of self" in regard to ethnicity and/or indigeneity and social class enables them to empathize with diverse students from perspectives not available to teachers from the dominant cultural majority.

Kheimets and Epstein (2001) studied the Mofet school system, which was founded by a group of immigrant teachers in 1991 in Israel for immigrant Russians. The findings indicated that the immigrant teachers are a valuable resource in multicultural schools

with a majority of marginalized populations of students: a systematic and meaningful dialogue with them may help host directors, counselors and teachers born in Israel to improve their understanding of their immigrant students' expectations and reduce alienation among them.

Michael (2006) examined the professional absorption of immigrant teachers from the Former Soviet Union in comparison to veteran teachers working in the same schools in Israel. His findings show significant differences between the two groups, with immigrant teachers belonging less often to professional organizations, participating less in school decision-making forums, holding fewer coordinating school positions and partaking less frequently in professional enrichment courses, indicating that barriers exist in the school system that place difficulties in the way of immigrant teachers' absorption, despite the prevalent view that immigrant absorption is of significant national value.

Research on Palestinian-Israeli teachers working in State Hebrew-speaking schools is scant. Fragman (2008) shows them having a strong desire to be "ambassadors of good will," offering them an opportunity to break down stereotypes and misconceptions about the Palestinian-Israeli minority. Brosh's (2013) findings indicate that the teachers were unsuccessful in integrating because of a lack of cultural understanding and that it was difficult, even impossible, for them to effectively communicate their knowledge to students. Sion (2014) examined how Palestinian-Israeli teachers appropriated performative identity strategies by passing as cultural hybrids to gain acceptance in the schools. She found that despite their efforts, the teachers, for the most part, felt lonely, isolated and vulnerable.

At this early point in the involvement of Palestinian-Israeli teachers in the Hebrew-speaking school system, the main questions we ask do not relate to their potential to contribute to more adequate and professional approaches to diversity issues. The Ministry of Education states as its primary aim for the integration of Palestinian-Israeli teachers in Jewish schools the potential this step has to add to today's shortage of highly qualified teaching staff, thus saving the government large sums of money by eliminating the need to train or retrain new teachers; only in second place does it mention the potential to encourage tolerance for diversity among students (Ministry of Education, 2015). Given the ministry's declared self-interest mostly unrelated to diversity issues, our present research is more aligned with research inquiring into the teachers' perspectives and concerns when entering majority schools (Maylor, Ross, Rollock, & Williams, 2006; Strasser, 2013; Wilkins & Lall, 2011). More specifically our concern is with the teachers' experiences regarding stereotypical attitudes of peers, social isolation, their experiences in the faculty room, how they judge their potential contribution to school and students, their need to acculturate or not to the hegemonic culture, their sense of having or not having opportunity for promotion and progression in the school hierarchy, etc.

In the following we point to the ways in which psychological constructs such as acculturation, ethnic identity and self-efficacy intersect and their potential to help us better understand the functioning of minority teachers in educational settings (Flores & Clark, 2004; Tong, Castillo, & Pérez, 2010); these seemed fertile theoretical perspectives through which to interpret our data after the analysis.

2.2. *Acculturation, ethnic identity and self efficacy*

Acculturation can be defined as a dual process of cultural and psychological change that involves various forms of mutual accommodation, leading to some long-term psychological and sociocultural adaptations between the groups in contact (Sam &

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/11023988>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/11023988>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)