HOW DO INTERNS FROM A TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAM FOR ACADEMICS IN ISRAEL PERCEIVE TEACHER-LEADERSHIP?

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ABSTRACT

The pilot study aimed at enhancing understanding of how novice teachers in Israel perceive &=039; teacher leadership&=039; as a distinct category of &=039; educational leadership&=039. The study focuses on first-year teachers in their internship year, graduates of a Teacher Training Program for Academics. The goal of this study was to explore whether there is a discrepancy between their perceptions on the theoretical level and on the practical level.
The research paradigm was qualitative, using emic and etic approach as the basis for the content analysis of the novice teachers&=039; final papers.
The theoretical understanding yielded qualities that are necessary for teacher leaders, in 4 categories: &=039; humanistic/social qualities&=039; &=039; managerial qualities&=039; &=039; pedagogical qualities&=039; and &=039; personality qualities&=039; depicting spiritual and practical aspects. The findings from the internship year show that teacher leadership refers to teachers from different roles and school subjects, a diversity of performances at school, many of which represent individual initiatives of teachers. The profile of teacher leaders from their school days reveals teachers with sensitivity, humanity and devotion. The recommendations of the study are to further develop the professional identity of teachers as teacher leaders/innovators/change agents within Teacher Training Programs.

Keywords: Teacher Leadership, Teacher Education, Novice Teachers.

INTRODUCTION

The literature agrees that teacher-leadership relates to several foci of performance. The *'waves'* model of Silva et al. (2000) reflects *'a growing performance'* by shifting from *'wave'* to *'wave'*. In the first wave, teacher-leaders took on managerial roles. In the second, they used their instructional expertise such as curriculum development. The third and new wave dwells on reflection and inquiry on their classroom practices and collaborating/sharing with colleagues.

Another way to look at the foci of performance refers to a shift from *spiritual aspects* (Day & Harris, 2003; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999) to practical aspects (Lieberman & Walker, 2007; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). In the 1980s and 1990s teacher-leadership was already part of the professional discourse of teachers, and was equated with a sense of ownership, professional expertise, human relations with staff and novice teachers, influence over beliefs and values of others, social influence. More recently, teacher-leadership is equated with *practical aspects*: developing curricular and instructional programs; working effectively with colleagues and parents; implementing school-level procedures; selecting new staff; setting standards for student behavior. The move away from the spiritual aspects towards the practical/professional aspects might also indicate a stagnant position of teachers to remain in their zone of comfort, leaving behind the motivation for social influence.

Frost (2012) offers an extensive history of teacher-leadership mainly in the USA and in the UK which includes the set of *'model standards'* (Teacher-leadership Exploratory Consortium, 2011) for teacher-leaders in designated roles. He argues for an approach that does not link teacher-leadership to positions in the school system, but rather recognizes the potential of all teachers to exert leadership as part as their roles as teachers:

> *"The process whereby a teacher can clarify their values, develop a personal vision of improved practice"* *(Frost, 2012).*

This was implemented in the International Teacher-leadership project held in 15 countries in 2008, which encouraged individual initiatives by individual teachers rather than national level projects, and resulted in high levels of enthusiasm and a sense of moral purpose because it enabled the teachers to express a personal agenda. Most projects focused on teaching and learning in classrooms and resulted in flourishing local networks and knowledge construction.

Teachers' Perceptions of Teacher-Leadership

The literature on teacher-leadership rotates around teachers' efforts to improve student learning (York-Barr & Duke, 2004; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012). Teachers explore their practices; they question and collaborate, in order to reach this goal. They employ different strategies such as sharing, modelling, coaching, and collaborating, using mainly informal activities that they find more meaningful and influential than formal meetings convened by department head or supervisor (Mullen & Jones, 2008; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012).

Teachers tend to downplay the importance of these leadership roles at school, and perceive themselves as part of a group of educators working together rather than emphasizing their own individual impact. Teachers do not think of themselves or of their colleagues as teacher- leaders, but more as innovators for learning, while their main interest dwells on their own teaching and its improvement in their individual classrooms through informal interactions (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015). The latter argue:

> *"Their (teachers') hearts were definitely in classrooms with children organizing, managing, and directing their learning".*

The quote of a teacher from Helterbran's study (2010), *"I think I have some leadership qualities, but I am just a teacher"* is a common response of teachers when asked about their leadership, and it is a good illustration of how teachers downplay their leadership. Further, in Fairman & Mackenzie's 2015 study, teachers never mentioned the term *'leadership'* during the interviews. Many of them equated leadership with formal leadership roles in school, and did not want to place themselves in any hierarchical position to their colleagues for fear that this might harm the relationships and collegiality. Similarly, Mangin & Stoelinga, (2011) state: *"The culture of teaching is one of egalitarianism"*. Other recent studies, too, make the distinction between the informal position of teacher-leadership which is associated with classroom activities, and the formal position which means moving beyond the classroom which teachers try to avoid (Scribner & Bradley-Levine, 2010; Angelle & DeHart, 2011).

Recommendations for the Enhancement of Teacher-Leadership

The review of the literature above established a legitimacy of teacher-leadership. Yet, it expresses a consensus regarding the discrepancy between teachers' capacity to make a difference on school level (Crowther, 2009) and the fact that they seldom lead to school reform (Lambert et al., 2007). Fairman & Mackenzie (2015) advocate a shift from understanding leadership as a set of qualities, skills, or a formal role that one holds, towards a collective commitment and vision in order to improve learning at school, and postulate that this collective commitment is a real teacher-leadership. They suggest replacing the term *'leadership'* by terms which imply the professional role of teachers, such as *'learning leader'* Barth (1990), or *'teacher connector'* (Weiner, 2011). Other researchers agree that teachers should be encouraged to improve school environment and the profession (Khan & Malik, 2013; Nappi, 2014), and agree that the message has not yet reached teachers (Helterbran, 2010). Despite bureaucratic and institutional impediments, researchers advocate that teacher-leadership should be shifted from the classroom boundaries to school level by taking on more influential roles beyond the classroom (Watt et al., 2010; Donghai & Jianping, 2013), and that teachers need to perceive their work as an act of *"socially responsible"* leadership and develop a powerful *"professional identity"* (Collay, 2006).

In other words, teachers need to realize that it is high time for them to become social agents. This can be done by promoting teacher-leadership programs which will develop the necessary confidence among teachers to perceive themselves as leaders who can exert influence on school reform and systems (Uribe-Florez et al., 2014; Bond, 2015). Moore et al. (2016) studied the reflections of Master's students in a Teacher-leadership program for teachers, and found that most of them expressed motivation to take on leadership roles at school, and wished to become inspiring teachers. The findings indicated professional growth, confidence and resilience in the role of educators, deeper understanding of teacher's influence and of leadership roles in school, although many of them wished to remain teachers. While these findings are optimistic, the teachers who enrolled into the Teacher-leadership program probably came with high motivation to abandon the stigma of *"I'm just a teacher"*.

The Internship Year

The internship component of teacher training programs in Israel started in 2000 (Ministry of Education, 1999). While turning the teacher training program into a four-year course, the fourth year became an internship year. During the internship year, the new teachers (interns) work on a full salary under the inspection of a mentor teacher, a veteran colleague from the school who should provide supportive feedback both on the professional and emotional level. The novice teachers also take part in a mandatory academic course for two weekly hours throughout the internship year. The objective of the course is to provide group and personal support regarding any issues of difficulty during the internship year. Studies revealed that novice teachers find the internship opportunity satisfactory (e.g. Nasser-Abu Alhija et al., 2011) with an understanding that becoming a teacher requires deliberate practical training and guidance (Zilbershtrom, 2013; Ingersoll, 2007).

Yet, extensive literature supports the notion that teachers avoid turning for help. Thus, Nasser-Abu Alhija et al. (2011) found that 78% of novice teachers turn to their colleagues and rarely to school managers. Author (2017) found that only 50% of the novice teachers turned for help, while the other 50% avoided doing so because of their feeling of alienation in the teachers' lounge. Inbar-First (2016) mentions 4 models which explain the avoidance of teachers from

turning for help and Butler (2007) argues that teachers will not do so if they believe that this will make them appear as if they fail to do their job. Author (2017) described the professional and emotional journey of novice teachers and concluded that the overall picture reflects hard feelings of disappointment and helplessness, with 73% who identify with the feelings of alienation and frustration of migrants in a foreign country/culture, although at the same time, the journey includes moments of success and satisfaction.

Teacher Training Programs for Academics

The main goal of Teacher Training Programs for Academics is to fill a void in the number of people enrolling for a bachelor's degree in teaching (Kfir & Ariav, 2008). At first, the duration of these programs was two years, at the end of which graduates receive a teaching certificate in the field of their B.A. (e.g., with a B.A. in History, the graduate gets a teaching certificate in History). In recent years, there has been a significant increase in the number of participants enrolling in the Teacher Training Programs for Academics: in the academic year 2003/4, 428 students completed the program, in comparison to 2,978 in 2013/14 (The Center for Research and Information, The Knesset, 2014). The students' profile in the Teacher Training Programs for Academics indicates that their average age is 30, part of them are married and have families, the majority (90%) have a bachelor's degree, and a small minority (10%) have a Master's degree, and most of them (87%) are women (Donitza-Schmidt & Weinberger, 2007).

The Goals of the Study

The present study aimed at the enhancement of understanding of how novice teachers in Israel who are in their internship year perceive *'teacher-leadership'* and *'teacher-leaders'* as a distinct category of *'educational leadership'*. In this sense the study is a pilot study because it focuses on a distinct category of novice teachers. The study focused on the theoretical level (their definitions of educational leadership), and on the practical level (the teachers they see at school as novice teachers, and what they saw at school as pupils).
The research questions:

1. How do novice teachers define *'teacher-leadership'*?
2. Who were their models of teacher-leaders in their first year of teaching?
3. Which teachers do they remember from their school days as teacher-leaders?

METHODOLOGY

Research Paradigm: The study focuses on the qualitative paradigm as it allows us to understand a phenomenon in its entirety and agrees with the study's interpretive nature (Cohen et al., 2007). The aim of the study was to explore how novice teachers perceive *'teacher-leadership'* and *'teacher-leaders'* as a distinct category of *'educational leadership'* on the theoretical and practical levels. The phenomenological approach, which underpins this study, believes in looking at a particular experience while focusing on subjective experiences (Flood, 2010). The methodological approaches of emic and etic formed the basis for the content analysis of the novice teachers' final papers. While emic defines how people see and make order of the world, etic allows the researcher to emphasise what is important in his or her eyes (Kottak, 2006). Jingfeng (2011) emphasizes that the two anthropological approaches, which are seemingly contradictory, complement each other and help the researcher to create a whole picture. Thus,

while the emic aspect enabled a presentation of the teachers' perceptions of educational leadership, and present their stories from their first year of teaching and from their school days, the etic aspect refers to the researcher's interpretation of the texts.

Research Design, Research Population and Data Collection: In an effort to understand how novice teachers perceive the concept of teacher-leadership, the final paper of the internship course with rich repository of qualitative data, served as the source of data for content analysis. The 21 novice teachers are graduates of a Teacher Training Program for Academics, which is a designated 2-year program for academics from different academic disciplines who wish to obtain a teaching certificate. This group participated in an academic mandatory course for interns in their internship year. At the end of the course, each of them submitted a paper entitled *"Teacher-leadership in My First Year of Teaching"*. The 4-page-long composition related to the following prompts: 1. What is *'teacher-leadership'*?; 2. Describe a teacher-leader you came across in your first year of teaching; 3. Describe a teacher-leader you came across as a pupil/student;

Data Analysis: The researcher has taught and graded internship courses for career-changers numerous times across a period of 15 years, and her academic expertise lies in the field of educational leadership. For the sake of objectivity, the content analysis on the papers was done with the help of a colleague who teaches a parallel course. The two lecturers validated the analysis by means of an experts' judgment procedure. Each researcher analysed separately the answers and, then, the data obtained by the two instructors were compared, illustrating that the rate of consensus was 89% for the first research question, and 87% for the second. The data analysis was presented in analytical Tables for the different dimensions (Miles et al., 2014). This process was done for each research question 1 and 2 separately.

Table 1: During the analysis of research question 1, the researcher accumulated the teacher- leader's qualities that appeared in what the novice teachers wrote in their papers, and, in turn, created categories. The decision of the category for each quality was taken in collaboration with another colleague and the results agreed in 89% of the cases. Here are 3 examples that illustrate the process of the decision-making: 1. *'innovator'* could be placed under *'personality qualities'* or *'managerial qualities'*, but since the description referred to the educational context, it was finally placed under *'managerial qualities'* because it has a direct effect on how the teacher manages work. 2. *'inspiring as a person'* or *'charismatic'* were placed under *'personality qualities'*, whereas *'inspiring students'* was placed under *'pedagogical/teaching qualities'* because, the former describes him/her as a person in general, whereas the latter relates to the educational context. 3. *'authoritative'* and *'assertive'* were placed under *'managerial qualities'* rather than under *'pedagogical/teaching qualities'*, because they are demonstrated in the teacher-leader's management of work rather than in his/her teaching. In the next step of the analysis, the number of mentions for each category was counted, indicating the importance of each category in the eyes of the novice teachers.

Table 2: In the analysis of research question 2, the participants introduced the teacher-leaders from their schools and these data were divided into *'who the teachers are'* - their role and characteristics, and *'what they do'* - example/s that demonstrates their performance. Then, the researcher and her colleague categorized these data into the 4 categories: personality qualities, humanistic/social qualities, managerial qualities, and pedagogical qualities. I most cases the data fitted more than one category. The rate of consensus between them was 87%.

In reply to question 3, the participants introduced the teacher-leaders as they remember them from their school days. Excerpts and highlights of the participants were quoted, and this allowed for an understanding of what the novice teachers perceive as teacher-leaders in retrospective, and whether it is similar or different to how they perceive teacher-leaders at school as teachers. The names of the participants were removed because of ethical considerations.

Findings

How do novice teachers define *'teacher-leadership'*?

The qualities that appeared in the final papers were assembled into 4 categories: *'humanistic/social qualities'* which depict how the teacher-leader treats others in the environment; *'managerial qualities'* which depict how he/she performs within school system; *'personality qualities'* which describe him/her as a person, and *'pedagogical/teaching qualities'* which focus on the professional aspects. The findings are presented in the Table 1 below:

Table 1 TEACHER-LEADERSHIP QUALITIES		
Teacher-Leader qualities	Categories	No. of mentions for this category
People-loving; caring; empathic; inclusive; sees *"the other"*; lives by values; cares for the next generations of teachers and for society;	Humanistic/social qualities	15
Energetic and able to lead for changes; assertive; determined; authoritative; able to empower people around him/her; able to distribute responsibilities; able to make decisions; develops dynamics among students, parents and teachers; innovator; involved in school life; has a vision and a sense of mission;	Managerial qualities	28
Outstanding; charismatic; interesting; high EQ; self- confidence; inspiring as a person; has a relaxing effect; personal agenda; model for life; high interpersonal abilities; modest; has integrity; tolerant; generous; decent; patient; respectful; dedicated and hard-working; sensitive;	Personality qualities	39
Educator before teacher; a model for students; sets clear limits; uses diverse practices; aware of his/her responsibility; life-long learner; engaged in school life; inspiring students; motivate students to learn, expand horizons, encourages independent thinking; encourages creativity and knowledge; flexible vis-à-vis students and parents; creates a safe learning environment;	Pedagogical/teaching qualities	15

The findings lead to 3 main conclusions:

1. When asked to define teacher-leadership the most prevalent category is the *personality qualities* of the teacher (39 mentions). The next important category refers to the managerial qualities of the teacher-leader

(28 mentions), and finally the humanistic/social qualities (15 mentions) and the pedagogical-teaching (15 mentions).

2. Novice teachers refer to *'spiritual'* aspects as well as to *'practical'* aspects in the way they understand the teacher-leadership. Thus, the categories *'humanistic qualities'* and *'personality qualities'* include spiritual qualities that cannot be measured. For example *'lives by values'*; *'cares for the next generations and for society'*; *'inspiring as a person'*. On the other hand, the categories *'managerial qualities'* and *'pedagogical/teaching qualities'* describe practical aspects which are measurable, such as *'sets clear limits'*; *'uses diverse practices'*; *'able to make decisions'*.

3. They describe teacher-leaders according to *'what they do'*, for example: *'develops dynamics among students, parents and teachers'*; *'involved in school life'*; *'encourages creativity and knowledge'*, as well as to *'who they are'*, for example, *'tolerant; generous; decent; patient; respectful'*.

Who were their models of teacher-leaders in their first year of teaching?

The models of teacher-leaders that the novice teachers identified during their internship year are presented in Table 2.

Table 2 EXAMPLES OF PROFILES OF TEACHER-LEADERS DURING THE INTERNSHIP YEAR		
Who the teacher-leader is	What the teacher-leader did	Categories
History & Bible Teacher. Model for social engagement and for making the world a better place in small-scale changes.	Last summer the pupils and the teacher operated summer school for the children of refugees, and collected babies' products for babies in Syria	Humanistic/social qualities
Head of Department. Innovator; Assertive and self-confident; Challenging, caring and encouraging.	Initiated Action Research among teachers: each teacher videoed her class and then, in groups, the teachers commented on strengths they identify in the presenting teacher;	Managerial qualities
Math teacher. professional, model for learning, authoritative with clear limits, inclusive,	He made the pupils in a very weak class regain their confidence and increase their motivation in learning Math through experiences of success, expressing faith in them, and acquisition of learning habits. She 'fights' for them and makes them fight for themselves.	Pedagogical/teaching qualities
Head of Department (History); described as *'anchor'*, *'life vest'*, honest with pupils, helpful towards novice teachers and staff;	Always comes with inspiring ideas for activities and innovative teaching methods, collegial and easy to share hardships with, always willing to provide pedagogical advice, motivates pupils to study and never gives up on pupils, creates close contacts with them for fear of losing authority.	Pedagogical qualities; Personality qualities;
History teacher. Serious, dedicated, sees *'the other'* and his/her needs, considerate of individual's needs, caring, modest and humane.	He would do anything to meet his pupils' needs. One day a pupil in the 11th grade, a transvestite, wanted to participate in the Gay Pride Parade, and the teacher changed the whole exam schedule of the class in order to enable him to make it for the parade.	Humanistic/social qualities; Personality qualities;

The findings introduce examples of profiles of teacher-leaders during the internship year. One novice teacher who experienced many hardships in her school during the internship year could not identify any teacher-leader in her school. The profiles related to a variety of roles and school subjects, diversity in the examples of their performance at school, but mainly to individual teachers' initiatives. The combination of categories that came up in the teacher-leader's profile was also diverse and did not allow for clear-cut conclusions about the category of qualities that a teacher-leader must have. This could imply that all categories of qualities are equally important and that the profile of a teacher-leader is complicated and has various performances. However, the most frequent combination was *'pedagogical qualities'* and *'personality qualities'*.

E, one of the participants in this study, stood out in the level of the insights that he has reached due to his extremely rich language and high sensitivity. He described 3 teacher- leaders from his school almost without differentiating between then, and it is the combination of the 3 that he adores. Here are some of his powerful statements: *"I wish that one day I'll be able to make my students feel equal, protected, important, and loved unconditionally, like they do"*; *"Their pupils are like their own children. Hence, they act in the most serious, dedicated and responsible way in anything they say or do for them. They do not take advantage of their seniority to benefit for themselves. On the contrary, they use their status to benefit for their pupils"*; *"They are not interested in being loved or remembered as the 'nice' teachers once they retire, but in leaving something they believe in as a legacy at school"*; *"In my eyes they are the engines of school from every aspect"*.

Which teachers do they remember from their school days as teacher-leaders?

Who were the teachers that the novice teachers remember as teacher-leaders, or teachers that had the most impact on their pupils? The quotes below represent their perceptions according to groups:

"I shall always remember my homeroom teacher from the 5th grade. I was a good student but very shy, and she was the only teacher who "saw" me'. One day she wrote me a letter saying that she notices that I sometimes want to say something but avoid doing so. The sheer knowledge that someone sees me was the beginning of a change for me. I know now that she was very meaningful for me and she made a difference".

This quote above depicts a teacher with high sensitivity, who *"sees"* her student and eventually made a difference for him and created a change for this individual pupil.

"Daphne has been my homeroom teacher for 2 years, yet I felt she has always been there. She made every one of us feel that he was unique. I remember so many things from her that simply touched my soul. When my father had cancer she was there for me. She passed away when we were in the army. I believe that her spirit resides in all her pupils".

This quote above describes a teacher who acknowledged the uniqueness of her pupils as individuals, and provided support and warmth on top of being a teacher.

"The teachers in school did not like me because I was quite disruptive. However, my homeroom teacher in the 7th grade, Ruthie, liked me, and years after I had graduated from high school my mother told me that when they meet accidentally she always asked about me with a smile on her face".

The quote above is mainly about a teacher who cares about her pupils in the long run and is fond of them, and most importantly, makes them feel that she cares.

"I grew up in the US and arrived to Israel in the 3rd grade. I had many difficulties with the language on top of ADHD, and Iris was always there for me encouraging and fighting for my success. She was so caring and had a generous heart. I will never forget her and her impact on me as a person and as a teacher"

"Danny was a Physics teacher who believed that no other subject was more important than Physics. However, when a girl in our group age was raped, he stopped teaching us, and spoke for weeks about what happened because he wanted to make us understand how horrible it was. His reactions were strong and clear. Danny was someone you could follow eyes-folded"

The 2 quotes above refer to teachers who were extremely humane, trustworthy and inspiring in their personality - teachers for life.

"My Sociology and Psychology teacher from high school, Tamar, was so passionate when she taught us about the experiments of Pavlov and Skinner. This is the only thing that I remember from high school. Her lessons were so alive! I still remember her anthropological stories about Papua New Guinea where she went on holiday to make her dream come true, between my 11th to 12th grade".

The quote above depicts teachers who stood out in their pedagogical agenda and passion for teaching. The quotes indicate that the personal experiences and memories of the teachers from their school days relate to 3 categories: the humanistic/social qualities of their teachers, their personality qualities, and pedagogical abilities and qualities. However, *'managerial qualities'* were not perceived as necessary in school days. The first person (I) prevails in this section and the novice teachers were able to describe their own experiences as pupils from many years ago in a lively and unforgettable way.

DISCUSSION

The goal of this pilot study was to enhance understanding of how novice teachers perceive *'teacher-leadership'* and *'teacher-leaders'* as a distinct category of *'educational leadership'*, and explore whether there is a discrepancy between their perceptions on the theoretical level (their definitions of educational leadership), and on the practical level (the teachers they see at school as novice teachers, and what they saw at school as pupils).

The findings of the study show that novice teachers define teacher-leadership Table 1 on the basis of on personality qualities. This means that the personality of the teacher is a primary condition to be considered as a teacher-leader. The category of *'personality qualities'* includes qualities such as *'decent'*, *'charismatic'*, *'self-confident'*, *'generous'*, that attest to *'who the teacher is'* as a person, rather to *'how s/he performs'* in the educational context. At the same time, their definition refers to theoretical/spiritual and to practical aspects and introduces 4 categories that emerged from their answers. The categories *'humanistic qualities'* and *'personality qualities'* can be affiliated to spiritual qualities that cannot be measured (*'who the teacher is'*), while the categories *'managerial qualities'* and *'pedagogical/teaching qualities'* describe practical aspects which are measurable (*'what the teacher does'*). Their understanding of teacher-leadership is comprehensive and multi-angled and does not agree with the literature that identified *'waves'* or a shift from managerial foci to instructional and later on to collaborative and reflective (Silva et al., 2000) and a clear-cut division into spiritual and practical aspects of leadership (Lieberman &

Walker, 2007; Dana & Bourisaw, 2006). In a very similar way to the literature, the novice teachers referred mainly to how a teacher-leader performs within classroom boundaries through informal interactions rather than on school level via formal roles (Fairman & Mackenzie, 2015). Yet, the young generation of teachers in this study mentioned the concept *'leadership'* many times, as opposed to Fairman & Mackenzie (2015) who argue that teachers never mentioned the term *'leadership'* during the interviews. To sum up the theoretical understanding, it seems that the young generation of teachers understands that the concept *'teacher-leadership'* is a complicated, multi-angled concept and must include all the aspects that are related to teacher's work and to his/her personality. This new generation of teachers is aware of the need to become teacher-leaders and acknowledges the need for managerial qualities as part of it.

Similarly, the practical perceptions of teacher-leaders Table 2 relate to a variety of roles and school subjects, and a diversity in the examples of their performance at school, many of which represent individual initiatives of teachers. The reference to the 4 categories that came up in the teacher-leader's profile imply that all categories of qualities are equally important and constitute a teacher-leader, and that the profile of a teacher-leader is complicated and can have various performances and demonstrations. This study supports the literature (Mullen & Jones, 2008; Fairman & Mackenzie, 2012), by showing that the novice teachers appreciate initiatives which are done through informal activities rather than within formal roles in school. The main difference, though, is that none of the novice teachers downplayed the impact of teachers as leaders while *'hiding'* behind the need for collegial and collaborative work of teachers in school or behind viewing the culture of teaching as egalitarianism (Mangin & Stoelinga, 2011). None of them supported the phrase

"I think I have some leadership qualities, but I am just a teacher" (Helterbran, 2010).

Moreover, the novice teachers seem very proud of the individual work of their colleagues, which they did not perceive at all as damaging the staff collaboration. They seem to adore these colleagues for the way they perform, and state clearly that they wish to become like them one day. As for their perception of teacher-leaders from their school days, the findings related to the categories *'humanistic/social qualities'*, *'personality qualities'*, and *'pedagogical qualities'*. However, *'managerial qualities'* were not perceived as necessary in the perception of teacher- leaders from their teachers in school days. This is quite understandable because children do not relate to their teachers as leaders or as class managers, not even in retrospective. Naturally, the first person (I) prevails in this section and the novice teachers described their own experiences as pupils in a lively way. The examples they provide (a, b, c, d) describe moments of vulnerability and distress to which the teacher reacted with sensitivity, humanity and devotion (a, b, c, d). Example e is mainly inspiring pedagogically for the novice teacher, while all the others reflect the personality, and humanistic qualities that the novice teachers found to be necessary for teacher-leaders.

The novice teachers in this study did not avoid turning for help, as opposed to what we know from the literature (Nasser-Abu Alhija et al., 2011; Author, 2017; Inbal-First, 2016). Indeed, part of why they identified some teachers as leaders, was because of their constant help and support.

CONCLUSIONS AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The findings of this pilot study indicate, perhaps, the beginning of a new generation of teachers, who acknowledge the significance of teachers as leaders, who can see the complexity of teacher-leadership, and aspire to become teacher-leaders. One way to explain this urge is the emphasis on the development of educational leadership within Teacher Training Programs, and the fact that in some departments students need to take a mandatory course on teacher-leadership. Of course, this generalization should be looked at with caution due to the small number of participants, but it may indicate a new spirit among novice teachers, with should be further investigated.

The designated part of this article on the *'recommendations to enhance teacher-leadership'* advocates to promote teacher-leadership programs in order to develop the necessary confidence among teachers and help them perceive themselves as leaders who can exert influence on school reform and systems (Uribe-Florez et al., 2014; Bond, 2015). The present study reflects a shift from downplaying teachers' role, to an upgraded perception of the teaching profession, and of novice teachers who see themselves as would-be leaders. This supports the findings of Moore et al. (2016) who found that most of the teachers in their study expressed motivation to take on leadership roles at school, and wished to become inspiring teachers.

In order to further develop the professional identity of teachers as teacher-leaders/innovators/change agents, and work on the qualities and performances needed for this task, I recommend that Teacher Training Programs should pursue the elaboration of this concept in courses and workshops, and focus on the growth of the personality elements of leadership, so that no teacher will ever say *"I'm just a teacher"*.

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