THE STATUS OF THE TEACHER DURING THE PERIOD OF THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS AND DISTANCE LEARNING: CHALLENGES, CHANGES, AND TEACHER-PARENT RELATIONS

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Abstract: *This article discusses the effects of the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic (2020) and the transition to online learning on the teacher's status and the teaching challenges in Israel and around the world. The transition to online learning presented the teachers with significant challenges, including dealing with new technologies, mental burnout, and communication challenges with students and their parents. The research used the qualitative approach, with the goal to examine the experiences of teachers in secondary school education in the crisis period. The findings indicate that the teachers were required to adjust rapidly to the new conditions, while dealing with systemic requirements, management of emotional loads, and lack of uniformity in the level of professional support they received. The research conclusions emphasize the need to shape an adjusted educational policy, the goal of which is to strengthen the teachers' status, improve the professional support, and develop skills of teaching suited to the digital era.*

Keywords: *Teacher status, teaching challenges, online learning, coronavirus crisis, teacher-parent relations.*

Introduction

The teachers fill a central role in the education system, with essential influence not only on the students' achievements but also on the shaping of their values and social abilities. The main difficulties and responsibilities in ensuring student socialization in an educational environment are borne primarily by teachers (Lazarov, 2016). However, the teacher's status undergoes continuous erosion because of economic, social, and technological pressures, which lead to considerable work load and harm to the sense of professional esteem (Hargreaves, 2009; Weissblay, 2013). The coronavirus pandemic added complexities and significant challenges to this system. The transition to distance learning intensified the existing difficulties and brought

with it unique challenges, such as dealing with pedagogical difficulties, adjustment to new technologies, emotional disconnection from students and peers, and change of dynamics between the teachers and the parents (Hodges & Fowler, 2020).

1. Characteristics of the Teacher in the School

The teachers are a main component of the education system, influencing not only the students' achievements but also their moral and social development. In recent decades, educational research emphasizes that the teacher's role is not limited only to the transfer of knowledge but includes the development of diverse skills, such as literacy, critical thinking, and interpersonal skills (Ben-Dov, Shamir, & Canaan, 2003). Moreover, teachers are perceived as cultural agents that influence the shaping of the students' personality and values (Aloni, 2005).

In an era of accelerated technological changes, teachers are required to adopt and adapt innovative teaching methods, which combine pedagogy with advanced digital technologies, in order to develop 21st century skills, such as creativity, collaboration and teamwork, and critical thinking (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). The quality of the relationship between the teacher and the student is considered one of the main factors that influence the students' self-confidence and academic achievements (Baker, 1999). A teacher who cultivates a positive learning environment, inspires motivation to learn, and encourages curiosity and investigation contributes to the students' growth and success (Adini, Nori, Karni, & Wartman, 2012).

2. The Teacher's Status and the Teaching Profession in Israel

The teacher's status in Israel faces extensive and complex challenges in recent decades deriving from economic, social, and technological changes. These changes have undermined the traditional role of the teacher as a source of knowledge and authority and have led to damage to the teacher's professional status (Hargreaves, 2009; Weissblay, 2013). Data of the Global Teacher Status Index of 2018 illustrate the decline in the prestige of the teaching profession, when Israel is ranked in the 34th place out of 35 countries, a datum that reflects a low public perception of this profession (Dolton, Marcenaro, Vries, & She, 2018). The main challenges the teachers face include low salary, heavy workloads, and challenging work conditions (Blass, 2009). In addition, increasing parent intervention erodes the teachers' authority and limits their ability to carry out their role effectively (RAMA, 2018). Moreover, the low student

achievements in international tests, for example TIMSS[1] and PISA[2], increase the pressure on the teachers and the sense of personal responsibility they bear for the systemic failures (Gilat & Vangorovitz, 2018). This reality contributes to the increase of the feelings of frustration and lack of satisfaction among teachers (Oplatka, 2012).

3. The Teachers' Dealing with Unique Challenges in the Coronavirus Crisis Period

Until the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic, the teaching profession was characterized primarily by face-to-face interactions and frontal teaching, when technological skills did not constitute a main part in the teachers' training (Darling-Hammond & Bransford, 2007). With the transition to online learning, the teachers were required to quickly develop new technological skills, while dealing with digital gaps, creating contents adjusted to a digital environment, and maintaining the students' active involvement in the learning process (Hodges & Fowler, 2020).

Alongside increased access to educational contents (Dhawan, 2020), the transition to online learning brought with it significant challenges, including technological difficulties, increased workload, and continuous burnout among the teachers (United Nations, 2020). The students in this period were forced to deal with a feeling of loneliness, decline in the motivation and concentration, and digital gaps that prevented full participation in the learning process (Engzell, Frey, & Verhagen, 2021). In parallel, the parents were required to combine between their work commitments and support of the management of their children's learning from home (Garbe, Ogurlu, Logan, & Cook, 2020). In Israel, the data of the Central Bureau of Statistics in Israel indicate a significant crisis. In the 2021-2022 school year there was a 23% increase in teacher departure, alongside a 12% decline in the absorption of new teachers (Sela, 2022). Research studies show that the lack of balance between the professional requirements and the family commitments, alongside the lack of response to the teachers' basic needs, contributed to the feeling of stress and burnout (Kim, Leary, & Asbury, 2021).

4. Research Objective

The objective of the research study is to examine the influences of the coronavirus pandemic crisis on the status of the teachers in Israel, with focus on and analysis of the pedagogical, technological, social, and economic challenges they experienced in the crisis

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[11] TIMSS – Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study – is an international test examining student achievements in science and mathematics.

[2] PISA – Programme for International Student Assessment – is an international test examining skills among middle school students.

period. The research aspires to analyze the teachers' experiences during the crisis period, while focusing on the implications of the crisis on the teaching profession in the long term, and to formulate applied recommendations for the improvement of the education system and reinforcement of the teacher's status in the future.

5. Methodology

The research study is based on the qualitative-constructivist paradigm, which emphasizes the importance of understanding the social reality from the participants' viewpoint (Merriam & Tisdell, 2015; Patton, 2015). This approach was chosen because of its ability to reveal the complexity of the human experience and deepen the understanding of the teachers' interactions in the period of the crisis of the coronavirus pandemic.

To understand the teachers' experience with greater depth and accuracy, grounded theory was used, which enables the development of theoretical insights from empirical data. This approach emphasizes the social and cultural context in the understanding of the researched phenomena and focuses on the ways in which the participants interpret and shape their social reality (Charmaz, 2014; Corbin & Strauss, 2015; Glaser & Strauss, 2017). The use of grounded theory enables the identification of main patterns and processes in the teachers' dealing with the changes that occurred in the period of the coronavirus crisis, while focusing on the complexity of the unique social and educational context of this period.

5.1 Research Population and Sample

The choice of the research population in qualitative constructivist research is carried out according to the principle of purposeful sampling, which emphasizes the importance in the choice of the participants who can provide rich and in-depth information about the researched phenomenon (Charmaz, 2014; Patton, 2015). Accordingly, 21 teachers who meet the following criteria participated in the study: the teachers teach in grades 7-12, have two or more years of teaching experience, have teaching experience during the coronavirus crisis period, and consent to participate in interviews and share their experiences regarding challenges and communication with parents during this period.

5.2 Research Instruments: Semi-Structured In-Depth Interviews

The research uses semi-structured in-depth interviews as the main method of data collection, based on principles of the grounded theory approach. This method was chosen because of its ability to enable teachers to express their experiences authentically and directly, while maintaining an in-depth process of the investigation of the researched phenomenon

(Corbin & Strauss, 2015). The interviews were based on a flexible outline of questions, which allowed the researcher to tailor the course of the interview to the contents from the interviewees' statements. This approach enabled in-depth research of significant topics that arose during the conversation, while maintaining balance between the focus on the research questions and openness to new insights that stemmed from the field (Patton, 2015). In addition, the use of semi-structured interviews contributed to the deepening of the understanding of the phenomenon from the participants' perspective and thus strengthened the authenticity and trustworthiness of the data.

5.3 Interview Guide

The interview guide developed for the purpose of this research study was planned in order to ensure comprehensive and in-depth coverage of the main research topics, while maintaining correspondence to the objectives (Patton, 2015; Taylor, Bogdan, & DeVault, 2015). The guide is divided into two main parts: a demographic questionnaire and a semi-structured interview guide. The demographic questionnaire focuses on the collection of essential background data in two areas: personal data – gender, age, and family situation, and professional background – level of education, years of experience in teaching, and roles filled in the education system. The second part of the guide is organized around five main axes: (1) pedagogical aspects – changes in teaching approaches and adjustments carried out in the period of the coronavirus crisis; (2) social-emotional aspects – influences on the period on the relationships with the parents and peers; (3) technological challenges – use of digital instruments, difficulties of adjustment to the new systems and technological solutions adopted, (4) economic and family implications – the way in which the changes in the teachers' work influenced their personal life; and (5) communication patterns – with students, parents, and the school management.

These questions were shaped in order to reveal the teachers' subjective interpretation of the difficulties and challenges they experienced and the processes of learning and adjustment that occurred in this period (Aurini, Heath, & Howells, 2021; King, Brooks, & Horrocks, 2018).

5.4 Data Analysis

The process of the data analysis in this research study was based on four main stages, which were intended to deepen the understanding and create significant insights from the data. In the first stage, holistic reading was performed, during which the researcher went over all the interviews in order to obtain a general picture of the narratives and experiences that the

participants described. In the second stage, open coding was performed, in the framework of which the researcher analyzed the text and identified basic units of meaning, which served as raw material for the formation of initial concepts from the data. In the third stage, axial coding was performed, during which the categories that were identified in the open coding were organized and the system of relationships between them was examined, which enabled the building of a hierarchical structure composed of themes and categories. Last, in the fourth stage, focused coding was performed, which included the refinement of the main themes from re-examination of the data in light of the insights that were obtained in the previous stages, so as to form a clear and consistent theoretical framework (Bernard, Wutich, & Ryan, 2016; Givton, 2001; Shimoni, 2016).

6. Findings

The findings indicate that the coronavirus period caused a significant shock and profound change in the teachers' status and functioning, primarily because of the blurring of the boundaries between the personal space (the home) and the professional space (the school). This period presented the teachers with complex challenges in four primary dimensions: pedagogical, technological, emotional-social, and financial. The findings emphasize the sources of the stress, which derived not only from the sudden transition to the distance teaching, but also from the complex interactions with the parents and the requirements imposed on the teachers by the Ministry of Education and the education system as a whole.

6.1 Pedagogical Challenges

The teachers were required to adjust the teaching methods to the online framework, while coping with the pressures from their superiors and with difficulties with the accurate evaluation of the students' progress. The teacher EA described: *"Most of the teachers in the coronavirus dealt with difficulty in finding methods and new tools that will suit the transition to distance learning. The pressure put on us by the Ministry of Education, that it is possible to teach regularly in the coronavirus, was not justified. It caused the learning of the students to be limited and not meaningful pedagogically."* In addition, the evaluation of the students' progress became an especially challenging task. The teacher Z noted: "*We found large gaps in the learning with the students' return to the school. The pressures on the part of the school management or the Ministry of Education to find creative solutions did not always meet the need for quality pedagogy, and sometimes even caused accusations by the parents against the teachers."*

6.2 Technological Challenges

The sudden transition to distance learning revealed the immediate need for training and technological support for teachers, but many teachers had to deal with technical glitches that made their functioning and the relationship with the students difficult. The teacher AA noted: "*Most of us needed technological help to hold online lessons. We did not receive adequate guidance for effective integration of appropriate teaching methods in the online space.*" Beyond the need for training, the technological glitches hurt not only the quality of teaching but also the system of relationships between the teachers and the parents. The teacher H described: "*The technological glitches caused me to lose contact with the students. In addition, we received hurtful comments from the parents about our learning methods, which added to the pressure and harmed the teaching effectiveness.*" The technological challenges not only halted the effectiveness of the teaching but also influenced the teachers' mental wellbeing. Accordingly, the teacher AC described the experience: *"The technological difficulties created a feeling of frustration and harm to the self-confidence, which led to stress and a feeling of lack of professional fulfillment."*

6.3 Challenges of Communication with the Students' Parents

During the period of the coronavirus crisis, the communication between parents and teachers became tense and even led to a complete disconnection between the sides. Many parents tended to blame the teachers for their children's learning difficulties, which led to the intensification of the feeling of load and stress among the teaching staffs. The teacher M addressed the change in the perception of the teachers' role by the parents. "*Parents during the coronavirus began to perceive us as a type of babysitter and not as teachers of their children and educational partners.*" This statement reflects the difficulty created in the system of relationships between teachers and parents. Instead of cooperation and mutual support, these relationships became in many cases conflicts. This situation eroded the feeling of educational partnership that was supposed to serve as a basis for effective communication during this period.

6.4 Coping with Emotional and Mental Difficulties

The transition to distance learning during the coronavirus pandemic, alongside the physical disconnection from the students and the work peers, created significant emotional challenges for the teachers. Dealing with rapid changes, uncertainty, and lack of social interaction caused feelings of loneliness, anxiety, and even depression among some of the

teaching staff. The teacher Tz noted: *"I found myself dealing with loneliness at home during the lockdown, and this influenced my mental situation until I was forced to take pills against depression and even to turn to professional help."* The teacher G emphasized the mental difficulties she experienced. *"The transition to distance learning caused me to experience anxiety because of the lack of interaction with the students and my fellow teachers. I needed conversations for support with an educational counselor or psychologist."* These testimonies illustrate the significant impact of the social and professional disconnection on the teachers' mental wellbeing and the need for emotional support in similar situations.

6.5 Economic Difficulties

The period of the coronavirus crisis significantly influenced the mental situation of the teachers, who dealt with a decline in their income alongside an increase in the unexpected expenses. The teacher N described the challenges her family experienced. *"The Ministry of Education did not understand our difficulties as teachers. My husband did not work during the coronavirus, and this caused economic difficulties."* This testimony reflects the economic complexity experienced by many families of teachers, who were forced to deal with a reduced income in parallel to increased expenses. Furthermore, many teachers described that they had difficulties meeting regular payments, such as mortgage payments. The teacher R said: *"Teachers lost their income from private tutorial lessons. For example, a mathematics teacher told me that her income from private lessons was essential to the payment of her mortgage, also for other teachers she knows."* Another difficulty revealed in this research study was the technological-economic difficulty: for example, teachers who were forced to purchase additional computers for their homes, which created obstacles in the teachers' work. The teacher V described this: *"Some of the teachers did not have the financial ability to purchase additional computers for their children's distance learning, when they themselves were forced to use the computer for professional needs. The use of online software programs often required payment, which we did not the ability to fund."* These testimonies indicate the great economic burden that derived both from the general economic crisis and from the specific requirements of distance learning, which influenced the teachers' professional and personal functioning.

7. Discussion and Conclusions

The research findings indicate that the period of the coronavirus crisis not only revealed the existing challenges of the status of the teacher in Israel but also exacerbated them greatly. The rapid transition to distance learning blurred the boundaries between the areas of

responsibility of the teachers, parents, and students. This situation created a new educational reality that was characterized by layered challenges: pedagogical, technological, emotional-social, and economic. The following discussion focuses on the main effects of this period and its implications on the education system.

7.1 Pedagogical Aspects

The research study indicates the significant pedagogical challenges faced by teachers following the sudden transition to online distance learning. The teachers were required to adopt new teaching methods, often without sufficient training, which led to feelings of stress and frustration. Another difficulty derived from the lack of effective instruments for the evaluation of the students' progress in an online environment, and learning gaps between students from different socio-economic classes intensified. Furthermore, many teachers reported a significant burden on the part of the Ministry of Education, which insisted on continuing the educational process in a "normal: manner despite the difficulties and complexities. This approach created a gap between the pedagogical requirements and the ability to implement them in actuality, and there was criticism from the parents. This criticism increased the feeling of stress among the teachers and emphasized the need for a systemic and more adjusted response.

Conclusions and Pedagogical Recommendations

The research findings led to the following conclusions, the implementation of which will enable the teachers to more effectively cope with the challenges in distance learning and/or periods of crisis, while maintaining the quality of the teaching and reducing the feeling of mental and professional burden.

1. Continuous professional development. Investment is required in the constant professional development of teachers, with emphasis on the training of teachers to use teaching methods suited to distance learning. Designated programs that will help the teachers identify learning difficulties and provide suitable solutions in an online environment should be developed.

2. Adjustment of the learning contents to online learning. It is necessary to adjust the learning contents to online learning, while maintaining high standards of teaching quality.

3. Management flexibility on the part of the Ministry of Education. The management of the education system needs to exhibit flexibility and take into consideration the teachers' needs, especially in periods of crisis. The Ministry of Education needs to ease

the burden of requirements on the teacher and understand the emotional and professional challenges the teachers deal with in times like these.

4. Flexibility in the management of the teaching time. The education system must allow greater flexibility in the management of the teaching time in times of crisis in order to allow the teachers to balance between their professional commitments and their personal needs. Possible solutions include the shift of lessons to afternoon hours and the possibility of the assignment of alternative tasks to the students.

7.2 Technological Challenges

The sharp transition to distance learning exposed the education system to a range of technological challenges that made it difficult for the teachers to teach optimally. The teachers were forced to deal with repeated technical glitches, lack of necessary teaching equipment, and lack of adequate professional training. These difficulties significantly limited the teachers' ability to manage quality teaching processes. The requirement to use new technological tools forced the teachers to rapidly adjust to the new reality, but frequently without adequate technical support. This situation was worsened because of the continuous pressures by the parents, who criticized the effectiveness of the online learning. The increasing feeling of frustration among the teaching staffs harmed the quality of the educational process and the ability to create a significant learning experience for the students.

Conclusions and Recommendations for Dealing with Technological Challenges

The research findings led to the following conclusions that will contribute to the teachers' effective dealing with technological challenges and strengthen the ability of the education system to integrate educational technologies optimally in the future as well.

1. Investment in advanced technological infrastructures. The Ministry of Education must upgrade the technological infrastructures of the education system and ensure rapid response to technical glitches, through a professional technical support system operating in real-time.

2. Development of technological training programs. Comprehensive training programs for teachers in the field of educational technology should be developed, with emphasis on the integration of digital tools in the teaching processes, the dealing with technological challenges, and aspects of information security and preservation of online safety.

3. Equal technological access: The education system should ensure equal access for all teachers and students to appropriate technological equipment. Possible solutions include

direct funding, loan of equipment, and establishment of reserves of technological equipment for use by the education system.

7.3 Challenges of Communication with the Students' Parents

The research findings indicate that the sudden transition to distance learning revealed significant gaps in the expectations between the parents and the teachers. Many parents developed high expectations regarding the scope and nature of online learning, from the assumption that the teachers could maintain the level of instruction that had existed in the school also in the online framework. The difficulties that the students experienced in distance learning, such as the decline in motivation, technological difficulties, and lack of physical support, led to accusations from the parents, who saw the teachers to be directly responsible for the decline in their children's achievements. These tensions were intensified following the gaps of information and lack of clear and understood communication between the sides. In certain cases, the parents' criticism deteriorated into conflicts and sometimes even the complete disconnection of the relationship. The parents' responses, which sometimes were expressed with criticism and hostility, significantly deepened the teachers' sense of powerlessness and increased the emotional load they experienced. The lack of adequate systemic support in the dealing with the parents' criticism worsened the harm to the teachers' professional status and feeling of efficacy.

Conclusions and Recommendations for the Improvement of the Communication with the Parents

The following conclusions and recommendations may contribute to the improvement of the relationships between teachers and parents, the reduction of the emotional difficulties, and the empowerment of the sense of professional safety of the teaching staffs.

1. Development of positive and supportive channels of communication between the teachers and the parents. It is necessary to formulate a comprehensive program based on the perception of true educational partnership between the teachers and the parents. The program needs to include the establishment of open and transparent platforms of communication that will enable continuous cooperation also in times of crisis.

2. Professional training in the management of communication and conflicts. The education system needs to offer the teachers designated training in topics of effective communication with the parents, dealing with criticism, and management of conflicts.

This training will help them improve their interpersonal abilities and even respond professionally to sensitive situations.

3. Clarification of expectations and definition of authorities. In situations of emergency and crisis, the school management and the Ministry of Education are required to clarify to the parents the teachers' areas of responsibility and authorities. In parallel, it is necessary to emphasize the importance of the display of tolerance, understanding, and support of the teaching staffs.

4. Tools for the construction of relations of trust. It is recommended to provide the teachers with practical tools for the building of work relationships based on trust with the parents, including ways of creating a constructive dialogue and solving arguments cooperatively.

5. Policy for dealing with hostile communication. The Ministry of Education must formulate a clear policy for dealing with cases of hostile communication by the parents. This policy needs to include mechanisms of support and institutional assistance for the teachers, such as legal consultation or professional accompaniment in situations of conflict.

7.4 Emotional and Mental Difficulties

The physical disconnection from the students and the professional colleagues harmed the system of traditional social support in the education system. The situation led to profound feelings of professional loneliness among the teachers. Moreover, the teachers were required to deal with high demands from two directions: on the one hand, the education system demanded that they rapidly adjust to the new reality, while on the other hand, the parents expected that a high level of studies be maintained despite the new challenges. This dual pressure, in combination with the lack of adequate emotional support, led to the development of feelings of powerlessness and anxiety among many of the teaching workers. Furthermore, these feelings, along with the feeling of isolation, continued to detrimentally influence the teachers even after the return to frontal learning.

Conclusions regarding Dealing with Emotional-Mental Difficulties

The research findings led to the following conclusions and recommendations, which may make it easier for the teachers to deal with the emotional and mental challenges that occurred during the distance learning period and may help improve their mental wellbeing in the education system in similar situations in the future.

1. Establishment of a professional mental counseling system. A system of mental support should be established, including educational psychologists and professional counselors, who will be available for the teachers continuously. This system needs to include services such as a hotline for immediate support in crisis situations, alongside continuous support for the teachers who are dealing with burnout and mental stress.

2. Reinforcement of the professional-social relationships. It is essential to strengthen the social relationships in the educational staff, both on the pedagogical level and on the personal level. The development of learning and support communities, in addition to the holding of regular meetings of the pedagogical staff, may serve as an important lever in dealing with the feelings of loneliness and reinforcing the teachers' sense of belonging to the education system.

3. Creation of a policy for dealing with outside pressures. It is necessary to formulate a clear policy for dealing with outside pressures exerted on the teachers, including setting clear boundaries of authority, in order to prevent verbal violence towards the teaching staffs. This policy needs to include means of protection of the teachers, which will ensure their wellbeing in particular and the wellbeing of the educational staffs in general.

7.5 Financial Difficulties

The period of the coronavirus crisis brought about a significant economic crisis in the public of teachers, which was characterized by dual harm: a decline in the income and an increase in expenses. One of the main sources of income, private lessons, was harmed greatly following the lockdowns and isolations and the transition to distance learning. This economic burden was exacerbated in many cases because of the need to provide economic support to the family members who were harmed by the crisis, a situation that intensified the harm to the households' financial stability. The research findings exposed a significant gap between the high professional requirements set for teachers and the economic resources put at their disposal.

Conclusions and Recommendations regarding Economic Assistance for Teachers in Situations of Crisis

The Ministry of Education should establish a designated fund for providing grants to the teaching staffs in situations of crisis, alongside a program of loans with preferred conditions, which will provide economic flexibility to the teachers in challenging periods. It is important to emphasize that the economic support needs to include significant incentives for the

continuation of the teachers' work under changing and unexpected conditions. In addition, the Ministry of Education needs to take full responsibility and provide the equipment necessary for distance teaching and ensure that every teacher will receive the digital means necessary without cost, so as to allow the teachers to continue their work effectively and professionally.

8. Research Limitations

The present research study faces a number of methodological and contextual limitations, which must be taken into account when the findings are interpreted.

<u>Limitations of context and sample</u>. The research study focused on teachers in the middle schools and high schools (grades 7-12) in Israel. Accordingly, the findings may not accurately reflect the educational reality in different age groups, such as elementary schools or preschools, or in other education systems with different cultural, economic, and social contexts. In addition, the unique cultural and social context of the Israeli education system is another limiting factor that may influence the ability to generalize the findings to education systems in other countries.

<u>Methodological limitations</u>. The research study was based primarily on the participants' self-reports, which were conveyed using personal interviews and analysis of documents. This methodology may be exposed to biases, such as selective memory, tendency to intensify negative experiences, or perceptual distortions. The integration of additional information sources, for example direct observations or quantitative data, may have strengthened the validity of the findings and enabled the delineation of a more comprehensive and objective picture.

<u>Limitations of time</u>. The research study was carried out in the period after the coronavirus pandemic, and therefore it is not possible to evaluate the long-term implications of the crisis on the teachers and the education system in general. The research study focuses on a short-term look and does not go in-depth into the systemic and social changes that may occur over time. A longitudinal research could have provided a more in-depth understanding of the changes and processes that occurred following the crisis. Longitudinal continuation studies, covering a number of years, can deepen the understanding of the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and provide significant insights regarding the system's coping with future crises.

To deal with the limitations noted above, it is recommended to carry out complementary research studies based on the integration of qualitative and quantitative methodologies. These research studies can include statistical analysis of student, parent, and teacher data, alongside interviews and observations, in order to provide a multidimensional understanding of the

challenges. In addition, it is important to expand the research to additional populations, such as teachers in elementary schools or informal education staffs (some of whom continued with face-to-face learning in education institutions), and to examine how cultural and social contexts affect the education system's handling of crisis situations. Such research studies can serve as a basis for the development of a global educational policy, based on lessons from the current crisis.

9. Summary

The present research study emphasizes the importance of the adoption of a systemic and holistic approach for the purpose of the effective dealing with the challenges of the education system in crisis periods. The findings of the research study indicate the need for the integrative reference to pedagogical, technological, emotional-social, and economic aspects, both in the planning and in the development of long-term educational policy. The research results illustrate the complexity of the difficulties the teachers faced during the crisis of the coronavirus and distance learning, with emphasis of the need for a comprehensive and effective response. This response is required so as to support both the teachers and the entire education system, with the goal to ensure the continuation of effective and stable functioning even in times of emergency.

9.1 Theoretical and Applied Contributions

The main contribution of the research study lies in the extension of the theoretical knowledge regarding the teachers' patterns of communication and interaction during times of crisis. The research findings provide a solid theoretical infrastructure for the development of innovative models for the improvement of the quality of communication and cooperation between parents and teachers, both in times of routines and in periods of emergency. In addition, the research proposes profound insights, which can serve as a basis for the formulation of an evidence-based educational policy. This policy is expected to contribute to the improvement of the teacher's status and to increase the teacher's overall contribution to Israeli society.

9.2 Future Directions of Research

To deepen the understanding of the phenomenon and its implications, it is recommended to carry out similar research studies and continuation studies that will include broader samples, which encompass diverse geographic regions and represent different populations and cultures. These research studies may allow an in-depth examination of the long-term influences of crises on the education system. In addition, applied models for the improvement of the communication between all the partners in the education system, and in particular the teachers, the parents, and

the students, should be developed. The implementation of these insights may contribute significantly to the advancement of the education system in Israel and the effective dealing with future challenges, both in times of routine and in times of crisis.

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