

MOTIVATIONS FOR CAREER TRANSITIONS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF MILITARY PERSONNEL TRANSITIONING INTO THE FIELD OF EDUCATION

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Abstract: This study investigates the transition of Israeli military veterans to school leaders. Interviews and surveys were conducted on 40 retired career military personnel who chose to pursue a new career as school principals and leaders. The study also includes feedback from the teaching staff regarding the intergration of career veterans into the education system. Findings show that the approach taken by the veterans as education leaders was directly tied to specific identity anchors. Their focus was either on their military training, on education, or on their individual desires to excel and use their experience as school leaders as a stepping stone for future career choices.

Keywords: *Military personnel, career, transitioning, identity anchors*

Introduction: Economic and social trends that have developed in recent years have led to the fact that today, more than in the past, the tendency of older people to carry out change, in one degree or another in their professional careers, is increasing. The motives for this can be personal-internal (e.g. burnout or a desire for self-fulfillment) or alternatively, external (such as dismissal or termination of a position). According to Hepner, Multon and Johnston (1994), it is estimated that at any given time, some forty million Americans are in the process of changing careers, and this trend may increase in the future. They note that most career studies address career choice and adaptation, but very little is known about the transitions and change processes.

The growing trend of making a career change raises interesting questions in terms of the perception of personal and social identity. In his adult life, the professional occupation of the individual is considered one of the main characteristics of personal and social identity (Marcia ,1993; Super,1980; Flum and Blustein, 2000). A person’s wellbeing is perceived as influenced by the extent to which he perceives his professional occupation as befitting his inclinations and skills

(Holland, 1997), and the degree in which he identifies with and feels socially accepted at his workplace. When these conditions are met, it can be anticipated that his career will contribute to his sense of personal identity and his commitment to his work will grow. To this day, it has been common to consider a person's professional identity as stemming from both his commitment to the professional organization he works in and the type of occupation he was trained for. However, social-organizational processes of recent decades have raised the need for a re-examination of this field. For example, the existence of career transitions raises the question of the individual's commitment regarding his workplace.

A group of 40 former military professionals who opted to transition into an educational leadership role was chosen to investigate this process. It can be assumed that they face a complex, ongoing and multifaceted process. Specifically, upon entering the education system, they have to deal with the question of the relevance of their previous military experience to their current role. Questions will arise regarding the degree of their commitment to the new position, and their willingness to make changes in themselves and / or in the system in which they are entering. Against this backdrop it is interesting to examine: what will be the professional basis (or anchor) that will be most relevant in defining the current identity of these retiring military professionals in the education system? Will the anchor be related to the new career, the old one, or somewhere else entirely?

The Israeli Military Career

The perception of military service as a national mission has characterized Israeli society since the onset of the country. At the initial period following independence of the State of Israel, career officers belonged to the political, economic and administrative elite. This group chose to join the army due to clear ideological motives, and saw their military service as a way, perhaps the only way, to meaningfully contribute to the emerging society.

As early as the mid-1950s, Moshe Dayan, the chief of staff at the time, introduced the early retirement system to the IDF. In doing so, he hoped to prevent the aging of senior military personnel, and wanted to ensure that the channels of mobility for young officers were not blocked.

This method enabled retiring officers to reintegrate into key positions in society, and, in particular, at the higher levels of government and the private sector. The skills and competencies acquired by this group in the army were considered a resource that could easily be converted into

good performance and capabilities at the civilian level. Thus, key figures in politics and the private sector often approached retiring officers and offered them central leadership positions.

Early retirement remains to this day one of the main characteristics of a military career in Israel. At the age of 40, military career retirees are faced with a decision regarding the development of a second career in their lives. They must examine the skills and competencies available to them against the professional opportunities offered them by society. This transition is accompanied by a comprehensive change in their lives, and presumably raises fundamental questions related to their personal and social identity (Shue, 2021).

Unlike in the past, today there is a devaluation of the ability of military career retirees to integrate into key leadership positions in society. This can be attributed to at least two factors: first, the erosion of the IDF's prestige and the status of those who retire from it. Second, the processes of specialization and professionalization in the labor market that limit the integration of military officers who do possess the required specific professional specializations to take on complex roles.

Given the relative difficulty of military career retirees to integrate, as was customary in the past, into the economic and political elite, the question of which other career channels they will turn to upon retirement arises, and to what extent can the education system provide an alternative development channel for them. Can a career in the education system be appealing in itself, or is it an undesirable option that military retirees turn to only in the absence of other alternatives, and with a sense of diminishing self-esteem and social value. In order to try to answer this question, it is necessary to look at the characteristics of work in the education system and to understand the factors that influence the personal and social status attributed to practitioners in this field.

Traditionally, the field of education is considered a "female" profession - United States statistics indicate that 70% of the workforce in education is female, while in Israel, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics, out of every 100 elementary school teachers, 90 are women, and of every 100 teachers in the middle- to high- school levels, 73 are women. As in other "feminine" professions, the occupation of education is characterized by low professional status, fewer benefits, and a marginal position in social leadership (Bradley 1989). Gaziel (1978) cites elements such as public disdain, low pay, middle-class origin, and poor treatment of women as factors of low teacher self-esteem.

In Israel, the situation is unique. Findings presented by Goldring and Chen (1994) show that during the 1980s and 1990s there was a feminization of education management. Between 1972

and 1989, the number of women principals increased from 21% to 67% in elementary schools, and from 14% to 37% in high schools. During these years, however, two more trends developed: on the one hand, there was an increase in the level of education and skills acquired by teaching staff, and on the other, it was precisely during this period that the image and professional prestige of teaching staff and school principals declined. That is, school leadership was led by more educated women while the social status of the profession declined.

However, in more recent years, careers and higher positions in the field of education were found to be effective 'springboards' to political life. For example, the entry of MK Dalia Itzik into politics is an example of someone who transitioned from the education system into politics. At the municipal level, there is the well-known example of Mr. Ron Huldai, who went from an army career to a school leadership role, and from there became the mayor of Tel Aviv. There are many other examples, mainly at the municipal level.

The Integration of Military Veterans into Leadership Roles

The education system encourages and provides financial backing for programs that prepare retiring officers for teaching and management. In this way, in fact, the governing bodies of the Ministry of Education express their preference and belief in the ability of this group to make a significant contribution. One of the issues that arises in light of this, is how this approach is perceived by the veteran employees in the educational system in which the officers seek to integrate.

On the one hand, for the education system this trend may be perceived as positive because career military retirees still enjoy a relatively high social status and prestige which they may bring with them to their second career (in the education system). If so, it can be anticipated that the integration of military retirees will be related to an increase in the professional image of educators in the teams in which they have integrated (Barkol, 1996).

On the other hand, it is possible that the integration of the officers harms the professional image of employees in the education system, as the preference of this group (expressed mainly in the rapid advancement of some and the expectation of rapid advancement in others) can convey a message that the skills of an officer, who specializes in general skills of managing and creating discipline and order, are more important and valued than the educational skills acquired by teachers during their work within the system.

"Professional army officers are 'loaded' with managerial experience. The officers bring with them a great deal of managerial knowledge and experience. They have a broad perspective that allows diagnosis and analysis of processes and situations from a systemic perspective. This is without a doubt one of the most prominent assets of those joining the field of education," (pg. 307) Other researchers as well have pointed to the various benefits of the program and concluded that:

“In light of the changes and uncertainties that school communities face, the credo held by retired military personnel (for example, continuous improvement despite the ever-changing and uncertain educational context) may help school faculty become more adaptive to the social, cultural, and political turbulence that exist just outside the school gates. As a result, the directorate of the Israeli Ministry of Education should continue its support to the academic project that prepares retired military officers for administrative positions in the educational realm.” (Schechter, 2001)

This research addresses this interesting transition and seeks to determine the effectiveness of integrating military leaders into school leadership roles. What ‘baggage’ will they bring with them and what types of leadership qualities will they incorporate into their new career? In a recent study by Brauckmann et al. it was determined that leadership styles or management practices are dependent upon ‘certain (structurally or culturally-based) patterns of facilitating or obstructing certain leadership styles and management practices’ (Brauckmann, 2011), indicating that the the previous work culture of the education leader can have a profound effect on his role following his transition from the military to education.

Methodology

The research was based on a combination of several research methods and sources of information:

The interviews in this study are conducted according to the narrative interview method, recorded and transcribed in full. An extremely broad opening question was chosen for the interview, which seeks to obtain the personal life story, without any further intention on the part of the interviewer.

"I am researching the life stories of school principals. In this framework I am interested in hearing your life story as you experience it. I am interested in the whole story, whatever comes to mind, you can start wherever you want and focus on whatever concerns you. We have all the time

you need to tell your story, and while you speak, I will not disturb or disrupt you, but will make notes, and then, when you are done, I will ask you some additional questions."

The interview analysis focused on trying to understand the contemporary meaning the interviewee assigns to his past and present experiences. The 'biographical work' is the way in which a person directs and interprets himself, based on a time-life continuum and during social changes (Collins, 1998). A distinction is made between the interviewee's life story (subjective and flowing) and his life history (the objective chronology of events that can be learned from excerpts from the interview and through verification with other external sources). The ideas of Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach, and Zilber (1998), which enumerate several ways in which narratives can be treated, served as an additional methodological basis. These researchers distinguish between holistic (of all text) and categorical analysis (referring to part of the text), and between content analysis and form analysis, so that four different combinations can be created, each of which may provide additional information.

In order to add more depth to the interviews, observations were also carried out in the schools run by the principals interviewed. The analysis of the observations uses the model proposed by Eisner (Eisner, 1979) when discussing educational critique. In his view it is possible, in most cases, to distinguish between three aspects of criticism: The Descriptive Aspect, focusing on trying to identify and characterize in words the relevant qualities of educational life, the Interpretive Aspect, focusing on understanding the meanings, ideas and concepts that can explain the main characteristics observed, usually using ideas drawn from the social sciences, and the Evaluative Aspect, trying to decipher what the desired outcomes were / were not achieved through the educational activity.

Finally, to get a global assessment of the leadership qualities displayed by the principals, questionnaires were distributed to teachers who came into contact and dealt with the principals on a daily basis. Two types of questionnaires were administered in the study. The first questionnaire is the formative leadership questionnaire, The Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ), designed to assess different levels of leadership beyond the specific context in which it occurs (e.g., military, industry, or education). The second questionnaire addresses specific dimensions of the educational leader in the school.

Results

	Use of formal authority	Concern for the individual	Initiative	Community concern	Perception of status	Career ambitions
Use of formal authority						
Concern for the individual	R = -.176					
Initiative	R = .243*	R = .278*				
Community concern	R = .225	R = .712**	R = .062			
Perception of status	R = .324*	R = .116	R = .334*	R = .718**		
Career ambitions	R = .211	R = .577*	R = .484**	R = .035	R = .371**	

Table 1 Inter-correlations between the parameters of the Educational Leadership Patterns Questionnaire

Positive correlations are seen between the variables of perception of status, initiative and authority, and professional aspirations. The parameter of consideration for the individual relates to community commitment and implies the possibility that teachers identify the principal's tendency to consider them as part of a broader community commitment. No association was found between the use of formal authority and consideration for the individual (although the direction of the relationship was negative).

parameter	Use of formal authority	Concern for the individual	Initiative	Community concern	Perception of status	Career ambitions
Attributed charisma	R = .017	R = .241*	R = .723**	R = .371*	R = .430**	R = .331**
Behavioral charisma	R = .125	R = .379**	R = .497**	R = .322**	R = .373**	R = .504**
Motivated by inspiration	R = .199	R = .277*	R = .647**	R = .290*	R = .243*	R = .647**
Intellectual stimulation	R = .316*	R = .145	R = .733**	R = .023	R = .225	R = .618**
Empathy and personal development	R = -.615**	R = .587**	R = .490**	R = .504**	R = .172	R = .225
Rewarding good performance	R = .214	R = .313*	R = .372**	R = .275*	R = .272*	R = .290
Management by exceptions (active)	R = -.353**	R = .214	R = -.304**	R = -.288	R = -.119	R = -.353**
Management by exceptions (passive)	R = -.467**	R = -.367**	R = -.306**	R = -.504**	R = -.385**	R = -.443**
Avoidance and passivity	R = -.789**	R = -.373**	R = -.615**	R = -.496**	R = -.549**	R = -.789**

Table 2 Correlations between the parameters of the Full Range of Leadership Questionnaire and the parameters of the Educational Leadership Patterns Questionnaire

According to the correlations, it can be seen that, as expected, there is a high correlation between the indices of consideration for the individual and the parameter of personal attention. The measure of behavioral charisma is in high correlation with the measure of taking initiative.

Anchors of Identity

The term 'identity anchors' was chosen to describe the significant landmarks through which and around which a person organizes the story of his life. The narrative approach assumes that biographical construction, which forms the basis of the sense of identity, is not organized as a simple mechanical or chronological sequence of events. A biography, according to this conception, is constructed in a subjective and unique way. In the process of telling his story, man naturally tends to equate to his biography a narrative structure in which life events tend to cluster around certain focal points (chapters) which he considers constitute important landmarks. The importance of these focal points can be expressed in the fact that they are significantly (quantitatively) expanded in the life story, in that they are explicitly mentioned by the interviewee as having a special meaning (for example "this is the most important period in my life") or in language and thinking characteristics related to these landmarks come up again and affect other chapters of his life.

Based on the materials collected through the interviews, the observations and the questionnaires three different identity anchors were identified – the education based identity anchor, the military based identity anchor and the individual based identity anchor. Table 3 provides the coding used and provides various examples collected from the principals during the interviews.

Identity Anchor - Thematic Reference	Education Based Identity	Military Based Identity	Individual Based Identity
The professional framework the interviewee states is most significant for him	"I always saw myself in education. I wanted/knew I will work in the field."	"My time in the army was the peak of my life or the most important thing I've ever done."	Both the army and education provided self-fulfillment.
The motivation of the interviewee to enter the education system and invest in it	Identifying the needs in the system the interviewee felt he could promote	A combination of the forces of the job market, encouragement from the environment and interest.	A desire for self-development while contributing to society.
The type of programs and values the interviewee reports that he or she wants to promote in the school	There are specific educational projects I wish to promote	"I aim to implement values/programs I learned in the army in my education career."	Wants to promote programs based on personal abilities and goals.
The interviewee's attitude towards the teaching staff	"I see teachers as valuable allies."	Expresses low appreciation towards teaching staff.	Functional relationship with most teachers based on their cooperation.
verbal/formal characteristics	Familiarity and use of terminology used in the education system	Use of slang and military terms and acronyms	

Table 3 - The coding table and examples of statements characterizing each identity anchor category

Through the coding process a picture was obtained about the dominant 'voice' that characterizes each of the interviewed principals. The term 'dominant voice' is based on the concept of 'dialogic self', in which different internal 'voices', which can sometimes be contradictory, struggling or disharmonious (Josselson,1995). In this sense, the distinction between the identity anchors does not presuppose dichotomies, but rather identifying components of identity which, at the specific point in time of the interview, constituted the center of gravity in the interviewee's self-perception. The methodological significance is that the subject can, for example, on the one hand, speak of teachers as allies, and on the other hand express a low appreciation and a sense of alienation towards them. The decision as to what the anchor of identity is, then, cannot be made on the basis of a single parameter, but from the overall sum of the components. The overall analysis makes it possible to see in each subject a 'voice' that was found to be the dominant 'voice'. In 35 interviews a clear anchor could be identified, based on the coding table, i.e. three or more characteristics of a specific anchor and no more than two characteristics of another anchor. In the other cases, we used the observational material and other materials from the biographical background to reach a decision. This division naturally does not set rigid statistical criteria, which quantify and place the subject accurately on the identity scale. The avoidance of using a statistical method stems from its theoretical incompatibility with the assumptions of the narrative conception that assumes qualitative differences, subjectivity and relativism.

Education Based Identity

This group exhibits a high level of motivation that appears to be driven by an autonomous internal source. They are well versed, and make extensive use of jargon common in the education system. For example, in his interview, Zeev addresses his concerns about the issue of "developing autonomous learning" and describes in detail how this approach is reflected in the process of guiding students in their final projects. Uri talks about his efforts to formulate, with the help of parents and teachers, the school's credo and the questions that arise in this context, around the issue of equal opportunities. And Na'ama reports on a large-scale social-values project she is trying to realize. On their way to integrate into the education system, these interviewees underwent a longer and more ongoing process of clarifying the options available to them, and a more selective selection of the roles they chose to fill within the education system. In some cases, the transition to education is presented as a psychological-developmental stage, in which deep and complex parts of one's personality are revealed. One of the interviewees expressed it well when he said: "You take off

your uniform, as they say, and here you are standing seemingly naked in front of the world and announcing - this is what I have to offer." The military service of this group is usually described in interviews relatively briefly (even if, on a military scale, the roles they held were impressive and central) and they see the education system as the arena that poses the real challenge to their capabilities.

Army Based Identity

The members of this group attest that their world of images and values characterizing their leadership style is significantly influenced by their military background. Examples of this are the frequent use of expressions and military language used by Irit such as "after me!", "team spirit", "not sleeping on guard". Yoram has a large sign in his room with a quote: "Every Jewish mother will know that she has entrusted her sons to deserving teachers" (a variation on the famous quote by David Ben-Gurion regarding IDF commanders), or Doron, who, when he seeks to describe his leadership style in the education system, excitedly reads Yoram Tohar Lev's poem "On the Commander", while providing explanations and personal references.

Among their contributions to the school system, they note the introduction of value-based national content. Some principals use symbolic means that emphasize the centrality and importance of the military in the life of the state, with more emphasis than is usually given to these issues in the Israeli education system. Yoram, for example, mentions the addition of ceremonies to mark the various Israeli wars (at his school, the interview was held on the eve of Yom Kippur. The students' agenda that day included an hour of conversation with the rabbi about the holiday, followed by two hours of 'warriors' discourse' dealing with the Yom Kippur War). Miki talks about his decision to give a more central place to the "wall of the fallen" which marks the school graduates who were killed in the various Israeli wars. Other examples are: planning school trips that incorporate routes described as "in the trail of the fighters" (in some cases the trail in which the principal himself participated during the service). A wall "in preparation for recruitment" at the school with information, symbols, and historical background of various troops. Meetings with key or former key figures in the military system (usually personal friends of the principal). Although these elements exist in most (public) schools in Israel, they seem to be more dominant in schools run by this group. Professionally, the main reference group of these interviewees consists of military retirees who have gone through a similar career trajectory (and are incorporated into an association called "Educational Staff"). Sometimes they expand their circle of support within the school by

hiring additional staff members with military backgrounds. Military service is for them a dominant component in the judgment and appreciation of those around them, and sometimes this approach is accompanied by a reduced appreciation for teachers and the education system as a whole.

Individual Anchored Identity

This approach characterizes those interviewees who, along with a description of their work in their various jobs, emphasize factors related to their character traits, or personal circumstances in their lives, as an explanation of the professional path they have chosen. The expressions for this perception appear in some cases in a visible and explicit way and sometimes they manifest in more subtle and implicit ways. Their contributions to the military and civilian systems are usually defined in terms of imprinting a personal seal. For example, Nitzan* talks about the leadership ability he discovered at childhood as a prominent feature of his professional life. Hagit* recognizes the secret of her professional success in her ability to develop good interpersonal skills and motivate people. While Chanoch* indicates that he is an "achiever" and his understanding of complex systems is the unifying theme in his careers. Interviewees from this group see themselves as being in a constant process of development and learning, described as both influencing and being influenced by their experiences in the working world. Many of the interviewees in this group see their commitment to the education system (as, at the time, they saw their commitment to the military) as temporary, and dependent on their degree of satisfaction and personal fulfillment. This position does not necessarily reduce, and in cases was even described as increasing the degree of investment and seriousness they attach to the job. They may see future roles such as integration into the local governance, running private companies or organizational consulting, as a fairly natural continuation of their current role. For some, the educational career is defined as "a transition phase," "something I wanted to experience," "something that suited me at the time," or "something they asked me to do." The connection to the education system is described in terms of a business contract and not in emotional terms. Accordingly, much of the interpersonal relationships they create with their various partners in the education system are valued as functional and goal-oriented.

Findings

transformational leadership. Such leadership includes: consensus around goals, expectations of high performance, consideration of others, generating intellectual stimulation, setting a personal example (modeling), use of rewards, and culture structuring (Leithwood, Tomlinson, and Genge, 1996).

The findings indicate that the principal whose identity is anchored in the military is perceived as having the lowest level of transformational leadership (consensus around goals, expectations of high performance, consideration of others, generating intellectual stimulation, setting a personal example (modeling), use of rewards, and culture structuring (Leithwood, Tomlinson, and Genge, 1996)) and, on the other hand, is characterized by the highest levels of formal authority use. The other principals (the principal whose identity is anchored in education and the principal whose identity is anchored in the individual) were perceived by teachers as having a higher level of transformational leadership and consideration of others. The differences between the two were not significant, but it seems that the education-anchored principal received slightly higher accolades in relation to the tested variables.

The leadership anchored in the military was found to be characterized by high levels formal authority. This leadership style in many cases does not conform to the school culture, but can provide benefits not seen in other types of leadership. It is interesting to note that studies dealing with change processes in principals over time, have found that the use of formal authority tends to become more flexible over time. Veteran principals, moreso than less-experienced principals, tend to have networks of informal relationships with teachers (Boyan, 1988), and these relationships positively affect teacher satisfaction and motivation. It can therefore be assumed that this component may change over time.

Each of the types of principals can contribute to the system differently. Fiedler's contingency model (Fiedler, 1967; Fiedler & Garcia, 1987) assumes that the dependence between leadership characteristics and situation characteristics is what determines leadership effectiveness. Accordingly, principals with different leadership styles may appear to be effective in different situations. The impression from the analysis of the interviews and observations is that those with an identity anchored in education are indeed the most devoted and enthusiastic. Love and professional pride can be felt in their words and the way they express themselves. They often have a clear vision that their goal is aiming to fulfill and show relatively high patience and a willingness

to bear stages of ambiguity in which the results are not yet visible. Their belief in their path bridges the gaps between them and the teaching staff and makes them, in most cases, effective leaders. But there are other ways the present different courses of action and preferences that can also be taken into account in the placement process. It seems that those with an identity anchored in the military function well in tasks that require large-scale organization and the exercise of authority. The educational input they bring with them is particularly appropriate for institutions seeking to develop values and national pride. In institutions that have, over time, adopted an emotional and flexible line of action that has not proven itself, they can contribute a counterbalancing and more measured vision. Individuals with an identity anchored in the individual tend to choose short-term educational goals, which are reflected relatively quickly, in the specific skills they believe are available to them. When they analyze their inputs and successes in the school, they tend to emphasize their personal contribution, a tendency which may be problematic towards the staff with whom they work. Their relatively low commitment to the organization, on the one hand, limits their ability to share with others, or to create fruitful working relationships, but on the other hand, it increases their motivation to act quickly and effectively in order to leave their mark.

Teachers Assessments of Former Military Personnel Taking on School Leadership Roles

The questionnaires were handed out during staff meetings (the principals reported that because of the size of the teachers' room they preferred focused meetings with the relevant teachers and coordinators), and included the "Full Range of Leadership" questionnaire (Avolio and Bass 1995) and the questionnaire on specific patterns of educational leadership, which we developed for the purpose of this study.

Based on a qualitative analysis, we hypothesized that teachers would value the leader whose identity is anchored in education as having a higher level of formative leadership, relative to leaders whose identity is anchored in either the military or in their individuality.

Analysis of the replies to the questionnaires revealed that there is a significant difference between the army anchored leadership and both education anchored leadership ($T(1,52) = 3.69, p < .001$) and individual anchored leadership ($T(1,52) = 2.82, p < .008$). But the differences were not significant between education anchored leadership and individual anchored leadership. That is, the

significant difference is between army-anchored leadership and other types of leadership, with military-anchored leadership having significantly lower scores in the formative leadership dimension. The findings obtained from the analysis of the questionnaires indicate that the anchor through which principals opt to create and build his identity and leadership, is significant in terms of its effects perceived by the teachers.

Discussion

In the field of occupational psychology, great efforts have been made in recent years to characterize the changes that will transpire in the workplace of the future and to examine their psychological meanings. The phenomenon of career transitions is seen as one of the main and most interesting trends in this context (Stroh & Reilly, 1997, 1995; Carson & Carson, Hepner, Multon & Johnston, 1994). The interest in this phenomenon stems mainly from the perception that sees occupation as an important tier in identity construction (Marcia, 1993; Super, 1980; Flum & Blustein, 2000). The findings of the present study contribute to knowledge in the field of career transitions in a number of ways:

The conceptualization of the anchors of identity proposed in the present study may be valuable in observing similar phenomena of career transition. The advantage of this conceptualization is that it makes it possible to look at the complex internal dialogue that takes place during the career transition process. So far, key concepts in the field of career transitions have highlighted adaptation to the new role as a key metric (Nicholson, 1984; Hepner, Multon & Johnston, 1994; Robitschek, 1997). The term anchor of identity assumes that, in the process of career transition, there is a dialogue between different identities, in which one must examine, along with the process of entering a new role, the person's affinity for the role he left. In this respect, one can turn to studies carried out on immigrants (e.g. Berry & Sam, 1997), from engaging in a process of adaptation and assimilation to engaging in dialogues between their different identities, as a useful analogy to career development research.

The term anchor of identity can also be seen as an example of the contribution of the narrative approach to the field of career transitions. The idea that identity construction should be examined rather through biographical analysis and not by spot assessment using closed questionnaires (Fisher-Rosenthal, 1995, Lieblich, Tuval-Mashiach & Zilber, 1998), is reflected in the analysis process in which various indicators intertwined throughout their life story, integrate and paint a picture that might appear complex, but is also psychologically coherent. At the same

time, the term anchor of identity is not only an additive summary of all parts of the personal biography (see analysis in the appendix), but a selective construct, which allows the individual, at any given moment, to create a sense of uniformity and consistency in the way he sees himself and in the way society sees him. In this sense, the term anchor of identity reconciles with the Erikson's concept (Erikson, 1963,1968), which sees identity as a structure with psychosocial functionality. Identity building, then, is an ongoing and dynamic process, while the identity anchor represents a structure that serves, at a specific point in time, as an organizing factor and gives meaning at both the intrapersonal and interpersonal levels.

Although the distinction between the three anchors of identity made it possible to identify different patterns of biographical construction, it seems that further distinctions can be made which will lead to a more accurate and distinct detection of different constructs. This is especially true for subjects with an identity anchored in the individual. Common to these subjects is the lack of a clear preference for the military or educational career, in biographical construction. But the impression obtained from reading the interviews is that, among this group, two types of identity constructs can be discerned: there are subjects who clearly define the thread that connects the various 'stations' in their lives (e.g. themes like leadership ability or intellectual curiosity as a driving force and the like). In contrast, there are subjects for whom, the very transition between different commitments, without defining a specific theme that unites their various experiences, is what serves as a central motif of their biographical construction. A follow-up study will deal with an attempt to create a more accurate diagnosis between these subjects, based on the conceptualization proposed by sociologist Sigmund Bauman (Bauman, 1992) Between two types of identity construction: the identity of the 'pilgrim', and the identity of the 'nomad'. According to this concept, the identity of the 'pilgrim' is organized as a description of a journey focused on a particular destination. The identity of the 'nomad', on the other hand, is organized as a fragmentary sequence, with an emphasis on the present. Bauman proposes the concept of *connexity* as a dimension that distinguishes between the two types of constructs. Where in the construction of the identity of the 'pilgrim' (which in his opinion corresponds to the modern age) coherent connections can be found between different parts of the biography, while in the construction of the identity of the 'nomad' (which in his opinion corresponds to the postmodern age) there are no such connections. It seems that this conceptualization may also serve as a basis for making more accurate diagnoses between different subjects in the present study, to which the method of analysis described in the chapter on

the anchors of identity was not sufficiently sensitive. Further research will focus on trying to develop another operative index that will distinguish between different levels of connexity in the process of identity construction.

Analysis of the anchors of identity shows that the subjective meaning of the career transition is related to the way in which the person experiences and gives meaning to the professional systems into which he integrates. This finding is consistent with the findings of Hofstede and colleagues ((Hofstede, Bond & Luk, 1993) which propose to distinguish between the organizational culture (expressed in the analysis of the general characteristics of the organization), and the psychological (culture) located in the mind of the individual, and contributing to the way he experiences the organizational culture. That is, the meaning of the transition from the military to the educational system is influenced by the way each subject perceives the cultural differences between the systems, and not only by the overall and formal differences between them.

The findings that point to the relationship between the principal's anchor of identity, and his managerial behavior, as perceived by teachers, illustrate how the internal dialogue conducted in the career transition process is projected to the external environment and influences perceptions of the receptive environment and back to the principal (Hoque & Raya, 2023). These findings reinforce the perception that the question of identity is of central importance in the process of training educators (Friesen & Besley, 2013). The findings suggest that the principal, whose identity is anchored in the military, is perceived as having lower levels of consideration of others and transformational leadership, in contrast, he is characterized by higher levels of formal authority, compared to the other identity anchors (those principals whose identity is anchored in education or in the individual). The differences between the principal whose identity is anchored in education and the one anchored in the individual were not significant, but the tendency is to credit the principal who has an identity anchored in education as functioning at a higher transformational level of leadership and consideration of others. At the methodological level, these findings contribute to the *triangulation* process, in which a specific phenomenon is studied from multiple perspectives (Alexander, 2001). At the theoretical level, they point to how identity building is related to professional and interpersonal behavior at work.

The present study points to different managerial perceptions, derived from the place of the managerial role in biographical construction. Principals whose identities are anchored in the

military, tended to have a managerial perception that emphasized discipline, hierarchy, order, and nationalist values. Principals whose identity is anchored in education tended to a managerial conception based on an ideological educational vision, familiarity with educational concepts and theories, collaborative work with teachers, and relative tolerance for long-term processes. Principals anchored in the individual, on the other hand, have integrated components from different managerial perceptions (military and educational), emphasizing achievements, usually short-term, and based on their personal benefits (as they perceive them). The impression obtained from the analysis of the interviews and observations is that the managerial perception of those with an identity anchored in the military can suit schools that over time have adopted an emotional and flexible mode of action that has not proven itself, or in schools seeking to develop values and national pride. For example, Hezi, the principal of a high school boarding school for Aliyat Hanoar, gained the appreciation of teachers and supervisors after choosing, as a first goal, to address any financial irregularities that came to light. He instituted disciplinary procedures at the boarding school that included regular inspections and allocating chores to students, and often brought up his military experience with teachers and students. In an interview with him and a high school observer, it was possible to understand how this managerial perception was essential to the school. It is possible that over time, the situation will evolve in both the school and Hezi's perceptions - but at the specific point in time that Hezi joined the school, the interaction he created was effective. Principals with an identity anchored in the individual were successfully integrated when they discovered the ability to identify relatively short-term educational goals, which reflected the specific skills they perceived they possessed. They motivated the teaching staff primarily by creating a climate that encourages and rewards personal contributions and achievements, consistent with managerial goals. For example, Hanoch sees his talent for understanding systems as his executive ability, as a key factor in his biographical construction,

sees as a major achievement the fact that he was able to quickly establish a network of connections between the school, the local community center and the youth movement, to run a project in the field of aliyah absorption. Nitzan presents the same success (involving organizational and educational elements), and claims it radiated positively on the image of the school. The teachers who were involved in the project were rewarded through compliments and a letter of appreciation to their personal files, but Nitzan sees them as an ad-hoc team, suitable for carrying out the specific project. According to him, for other projects he will likely select different teachers

depending on the nature of the task. Principals with an identity rooted in education, who see their educational careers as a significant and central achievement, were the most dedicated and enthusiastic. Their ability to present a clear educational vision, their patience for long-term processes, and the respect they expressed towards the teachers, made them in most cases effective leaders. For example, Zeev, who is making attempts to realize the concept of "developing autonomous learner", reports many difficulties in running the project, from the physical, tangible level (relative scarcity in learning resources like computers and relevant textbooks) to the didactic level (how to help students without compromising their autonomy, how to evaluate their works and more). At the same time, the passion with which he talks about the idea, his willingness to learn from veteran teachers about teaching methodologies and his insistence that "success does not have to happen tomorrow", create an atmosphere of commitment to the task, high motivation and enjoyment of the process. From this analysis, it appears that each of the managerial perceptions, can be functional in different contexts. It is interesting to note that while working on the research, when I explained what I was doing, one of the most common questions I was asked was: "So what do you say about this matter, is it good or bad?" It seems to me that questions of this kind, rather than looking for a more profound and complex answer, reflect the human need to create a simple worldview (Hamilton, 1981). The study findings provide a more complex picture, consistent with the growing recognition of the need to legitimize different models of management (Gordon, 1999) along with the perception that leadership is a product of the interaction between personal and contextual characteristics (Fiedler, 1967; Blake & Mouton, 1985; Vecchio, 1997). The interactive model I presented does not represent the full range of management styles that were identified as effective (or at times ineffective) in the study. At the same time, further research will be able to shed light on additional possibilities and teach about the diversity that exists within groups of principals and not just between them.

Another aspect highlighted by the findings of the present study is how specific decisions regarding career development and transition, are affected by personal and social values : in the analysis of the interviews, it could be seen how respondents' decisions about professional military service as well as their decisions regarding the transition to education were affected by nationalism, collectiveness, personal achievement, individuality and more. The differences between the subjects, in terms of the values that guide them, may reflect the dynamics and changes in values in Israeli society, as will be discussed below. On a personal level, one can get an impression of how

the dominant values of each subject affect his or her coping process in the career transition. People who are primarily characterized by the values of personal achievement and individualism, (those whose identity definition is anchored in individuality), are required to undergo a less complex process of sociocultural adaptation in career transition, relative to those characterized by a deeper affinity for organizational values (those whose identity anchors are based on the military or on education). On the other hand, the construction of identity around values with an organizational and collective orientation, which characterized the latter subjects, means a more demanding process in terms of the socio-cultural adaptation to a new career.

Finally, the findings of the present study point to the responses of the educational system as a significant factor in the career transition process. The meeting of the principals who had left the military with the teaching staff, illustrates the process by which certain elements of identity become relevant in the meeting with representatives of a different social group (Tajfel, 1978). Career transitions, may in many cases create situations in which the receiving system leans more to stereotypical elements that define the newcomer as different and not similar. In the present study this was reflected in teachers' tendency (as perceived by the principals) to attribute new behaviors to be 'military' (and in some cases 'masculine'), even when the principals themselves did not see it that way. This dynamic can result in alienation and loneliness (Prauford, 1999). However, when both sides are open to getting acquainted and to mutual learning, the balance of prejudices diminishes and gives way to an interaction based on a more personal acquaintance and a more genuine appreciation of the potentials and limitations (Brown, 1988).

In conclusion, the contribution of the findings of the present study to this field is, first, in the conceptualization and analysis of possible ways in which people construct their identities in the process of career transition. Second, in illustrating the way in which different constructions of professional identity affect functioning and attitudes at work. In addition, the findings demonstrate how specific decisions regarding career development and career transition are affected by personal and social settings. Finally, they point to responses from the receiving system as a significant factor in the career transition process. By taking into account, in the present study, of the various components of the process, it is possible to point out the dynamics between intrapersonal, interpersonal and social components in the career transition process.

The findings of this study offer new directions in relation to the processes of career transitions, management of education systems, gender relations in organizations and value changes

in Israeli society. Based on the findings, a number of options for further research can be proposed: First, a comparative study is required, to assess the similarities and differences in the adaptation processes of military retirees and principals who have emerged from the education system. Such research may contribute to a more accurate assessment of the extent to which components of past experience, gender, and social status influence the process of adapting to a managerial role. In this sense, it would be interesting to compare the retiring officers in teaching positions against the retiring officers in leadership positions. Second, broader research is needed to assess the suitability of different management styles for different schools. In this type of study, it will also be necessary to examine the extent to which there are reciprocal change processes of the principal and teachers over time. This study, therefore, offered different and varied perspectives on the phenomenon of integrating military retirees into leadership roles in education, but also brings up new questions of theoretical and practical importance.

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