Employing teachers with disabilities: A multifaceted prism of school principals' ethical dilemmas

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Abstract
The aim of this study was to identify the ethical dilemmas of school principals who employ teachers with different physical disabilities. By conducting 18 in-depth interviews with principals from different school levels and different sectors in Israel, we identified the ethical dilemmas that emerged and their causes. The findings reveal that principals who employ teachers with disabilities struggle with multifaceted ethical dilemmas. These dilemmas reflect the tension between the educational ideology that was demonstrated by the principals' inclination for integration and inclusion versus the three different elements of the principals' professional responsibilities, namely commitment to the educational system, commitment to the wellbeing of the school staff, and commitment to the wellbeing of the students. Comprehending these dilemmas and understanding the ways in which these values contradict each other is a critical step on the way to building a more inclusive school.

Introduction

The ethical challenges of integrating persons with disabilities into the labor market is a common phenomenon in all modern world countries. In a study conducted in the USA, only 33% of persons with disabilities were employed, compared to 74% of persons without disabilities. Another study that reflects global disability trends reveals that not only are the employment rates of persons with disabilities low, but also their income from work is also lower than that of persons without disabilities (Ameri et al., 2018).

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In educational systems, employers of educators with disabilities are concerned about hiring educators that they think might not be as efficient as their nondisabled colleagues. For instance, principals tend to avoid hiring teachers with disabilities due to a lack of awareness regarding the social importance and ethical values of employing them (Loden and Teets, 2007). This is especially important, because many studies point to the importance and unique contribution of teachers with disabilities to their students (Dvir, 2015; Parker and Draves, 2018).

The integration of workers with disabilities into the workplace has been gaining more attention from employers and researchers in recent years. This process was influenced by recently enacted formal laws designed to protect the ethical employment rights of workers with disabilities through the social approach that focuses on empowering and promoting the weak (Eckstein, 2010; Feldman and Ben Moshe, 2009). The process of integrating workers with disabilities has led to the emergence of ethical dilemmas and difficulties in the labor market.

Due to the paucity of research that focuses on school principals, this study will attempt to elaborate on this issue (Ayer, 1970; Makris, 2012). Thus, the main goal of this study is to identify the emerging ethical dilemmas of school principals who employ teachers with different physical disabilities. Understanding school principals' ethical dilemmas and their causes will help to increase the employment of teachers with physical disabilities in educational systems. The sections below provide an overview of the following subjects: disability and the workforce; employment of teachers with disabilities; ethical dilemmas in the employment of persons with disabilities; and ethical dilemmas of school principals when employing teachers with disabilities. All these subjects are relevant to the main goal of the study as described above.

Theoretical background

Disability and the workforce

According to the medical model, physical disability is the result of a corporal impairment based on a biological cause and expressed physiologically (Oliver, 2017). This definition includes people with sensory disabilities such as blindness, motor disabilities such as difficulty walking, and people with health disabilities such as epilepsy or other chronic illnesses (Wendell, 2013). The Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Act defines a "person with a disability" as follows: "a person with a physical, mental or intellectual, including cognitive, impairment, whether permanent or temporary, which substantially limits his functioning in one or more of the central spheres of life" (Section 5 of the Equal Rights for Persons with Disabilities Law, 1998).

The definitions of disabilities, and the personal experiences of having one, vary among people with different types of disabilities (Pettinicchio and Maroto, 2017). Toward the end of the 20th century, a process of change began in the way disability is defined. The background to this change was the desire to challenge approaches based on the over-medicalization of disability and its perception as an individual challenge, rather than a social one. The social model of disability is based on the perception that disability stems from the interaction between the person and the environment and exists mainly because of environmental barriers and not because of physiological-biological disability alone (Shakespeare, 2010).

The American Community Survey (ACS) estimates the overall rate of people with disabilities in the US population in 2016 was 12.8%, with over half of them (51.0%) being people in the working age range of 18–64 (Kraus et al., 2018).

Difficulties in integration and non-integration in the labor market are socio-economic phenomena that are common, to a different degree, in all countries of the modern world. A study in the USA found that among people of employment age, only 33% of people with disabilities were employed, compared to 74% of people without disabilities (Ameri et al., 2018).

Similar to other modern countries, in Israel the employment rate of people with disabilities is much lower than the employment rate of people without disabilities. The ratio of workers with disabilities to the general population in Israel is lower than the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) average (OECD, 2020). While the general population of people with disabilities is at risk of being affected by this phenomenon, a more specific group dealing with these difficulties is the population of people with health disabilities. The employment rate for this population is significantly lower than the employment rate for people without health disabilities. Furthermore, the more severe the disability, the lower the employment rate (Nickell et al., 2005).

Employment of teachers with disabilities

According to a report by the US Department of Education, persons with disabilities account for almost 1% of the teaching force; however, this percentage is considered to be an underestimation since most persons with disabilities do not report them (Lepkowska, 2012). To date, there have been almost no studies focusing on the perceptions of school principals regarding the employment and functioning of teachers with physical disabilities. This study focuses on the employment of teachers with a variety of disabilities from the perspective of the school principals who employ them.

Previous studies have indicated that teachers with disabilities promote educational values that consider the inclusion of individuals who are perceived as "different" (Dvir, 2015; Fakolade et al., 2017). In addition, students who share the same disability as their teacher often become empowered by this interaction (Dvir, 2015). Yet, many school principals are concerned regarding the employment of teachers with disabilities. These concerns may explain reports by teachers with disabilities who perceive that there are obvious barriers in finding work and integrating into the educational system (Makris, 2012).

In the literature review that was conducted for the purpose of this study, a limited number of studies focused on the issue of employing teachers with physical disabilities from the perspective of school principals. These studies were conducted in the USA during the 1960s (e.g., Ayer, 1970). Ayer found that school principals tended to reject applicants with disabilities more easily than able-bodied candidates. It was further found that younger principals were more open to employing teachers with disabilities than older ones. In a different study conducted during the 1980s, school principals reported that students benefit when taught by a teacher with a disability. According to the principals, this is the best way to demonstrate to students that an individual with a disability can reach the same level of achievement as anyone else (Gilmor et al., 1981).

Ethics and ethical dilemmas

The employment of teachers with disabilities is likely to generate many ethical aspects, for example, the ethic of justice. This concept includes two sub-categories: the ethic of justice based on fairness and the ethic of justice based on utilitarianism. The ethic of justice based on fairness focuses on individual rights and equal treatment (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016), while also emphasizing the maximization of the good (Strike, 2005). Conversely, the ethic of justice based

on utilitarianism is a perspective that aims for the total benefit for the majority despite the harm that may be inflicted on specific individuals (McCray and Beachum, 2006).

In addition, the subject of ethical dilemmas comprises a significant part of the overall literature about ethics (Arar et al., 2016). An ethical dilemma is a conflict based on moral values. Such a dilemma arises when in the course of making a decision, different sets of beliefs or values conflict with one another, leaving one to decide which takes precedence over the other (Glanz, 2010; Norberg and Johansson, 2007). These kinds of conflicts are usually based on a desire to avoid inflicting harm on someone or preventing a third party from harming someone else (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2014).

Ethical dilemmas in the employment of people with disabilities

Dealing with ethical dilemmas is a common issue when employing people with disabilities (Fraser et al., 2010; Kaye et al., 2011). For example, even in the 21st century, society still tends to place a negative stigma on persons with disabilities, as studies show a high tendency toward stereotypical perception of the individual with the disability (Capewell et al., 2015). Although recently conducted surveys indicate a decrease in negative stereotypes toward individuals with disabilities, it has been found that there are still concerns about true progress made in the area of willingness to employ persons with disabilities (Elad-Strenger et al., 2017; Kaye et al., 2011).

Previous studies (e.g., Feldman and Ben Moshe, 2009; Fraser et al., 2010; Kaye et al., 2011) gave rise to a series of issues related to the ethical dilemmas concerning employers with regards to the employment of workers with various physical disabilities. The main concern for employers is the cost–benefit issue, as they worry that the employment of workers with disabilities will devalue their products. In addition, it seems that the obstacles faced by the employment of workers with disabilities relate to a lack of awareness of the accessibility limitations and regulations, fear of costs, and fear of legal responsibility (Kaye et al., 2011).

Some studies revealed that employers have expressed concerns about the skills, productivity, the degree of supervision needed, and the ability to further promote workers with disabilities (Domzal et al., 2008; Graffam et al., 2002). Many employers believed that workers with disabilities were unsuitable for work and that it would be too challenging for them (Domzal et al., 2008). Therefore, despite the employers' positive statements regarding the employment of workers with physical disabilities – when it comes to actions – they are often conflicted as to whether they should take a "risk" by hiring a person with a disability or not (Hernandez and McDonald, 2010; Kaye et al., 2011).

A review of employers' experiences with workers with disabilities in various professional fields revealed that the employees exhibited positive performance and were perceived as loyal, punctual, and responsible as any other employee. In addition, it was found that in terms of overall job performance, workers with disabilities received performance grades that were in line with those of their colleagues without physical limitations (Hernandez and McDonald, 2010). In contrast to employers' concerns that workers with disabilities would need more supervision and assistance compared to their colleagues, it was found that in reality, the employers were not required to invest more in these workers. These results indicate that many of the employers' ethical dilemmas are unjustified, as in reality, hiring a person with a disability actually contributes to the organization (Hernandez and McDonald, 2010).

Considering the study context, when facing an ethical dilemma, school principals will consider their desire to be inclusive and accept a variety of people, on the one hand, and their responsibility and loyalty to the organization, on the other hand (Fraser et al., 2010).

Ethical dilemmas of school principals when employing teachers with disabilities

Ethical dilemmas of school principals are a major and central issue in the literature on educational leadership (Berkovich and Eyal, 2018; Crawford, 2017). There are three main ethical aspects of leadership work: the ability to identify an ethical dilemma; the ability to solve it; and the ability to make decisions when confronting an ethical dilemma (Arar et al., 2016).

School principals often face ethical dilemmas during their day-to-day work when they are forced to make complex decisions that take into account both the best interests of the staff and the best interests of students (Cranston et al., 2006). School principals have an obligation to best preserve the interests of students and staff, even if they are often contradictive. For many school principals, the "best interest" of the student is the most important guideline in moral decision-making (Crawford, 2017; Frick et al., 2013).

A study (Catacutan and Guzman, 2016) that focused on ethical decision-making in educational management found three types of ethical dilemmas: behavioral or those that relate to people in the school's internal and external environments; structural or those that pertain to the school's organizational processes; and political, those that relate to individual and group exercising of power as they operate in the organization. In a different study (Carrington and Ehrich, 2017; Dempster and Berry, 2003) that examined ethical decision-making, it was found that ethical dilemmas could be divided into four main areas: dilemmas relating to students; staff; finances and resources; and external relations. Another study indicated that many principals reported stress when they had to deal with a poorly performing teacher (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016). Other studies indicated that the ethical dilemmas that stemmed from the interests of the school community were particularly complex (Cranston et al., 2006). When the consequences of the ethical decision are likely to effect the whole community and not only one individual, there is greater pressure on the principal (Crawford, 2017; Oduol and Cornforth, 2019).

While studies concerning the ethical issues relevant to school principals are relatively common, very few of them have examined the unique ethical dilemmas of principals employing teachers with disabilities. Furthermore, the overall literature on this topic is very limited and largely outdated (Ayer, 1970; Sokal et al., 2017). School principals, similarly to principals of other organizations, often find themselves torn between their commitment to the organization's success and their desire to follow inclusive education ideals and see beyond one's disability. They believe that they must avoid the risk of employing a person with a disability who, in their opinion, might be incompetent and hurt the effectiveness of the staff (Domzal et al., 2008; Fraser et al., 2010).

Other ethical dilemmas may arise out of school principals' personal attitudes toward teachers with disabilities (which may be prejudiced) and their commitment to equal opportunity and the legal prohibition of discrimination (Whetzel and Goddard, 2010). These issues are similar to those dealt by principals who include students with disabilities at their schools. In both cases, while they are required to provide an inclusive environment, their ability to do so is constrained by pressures to focus on the academic achievement of the student body as a whole (Garrad et al., 2019; McLaughlin, 2010).

Loden and Teets (2007) argue that there are many ethical dilemmas in the employment of teachers with disabilities; their study shows that principals and administrators have a profound

influence on the overall experiences of teachers with disabilities. Therefore, it is important to assist school principals and staff in dealing with these ethical issues and to deepen society's exposure to them.

Method

Participants

For the purposes of this study, we approached 18 school principals who employ at least one teacher with a physical disability. The participants' group was composed of 5 males and 13 females, all of whom have worked as school principals in recent years. Two out the 18 principals employed more than one teacher with a disability (an overview of data regarding the participants is provided in Table 1). The participants were selected through a purposeful sample strategy based on the objective of the study (Gentles et al., 2015), as they were expected to respond to research questions related to their experience in employing teachers with disabilities (not all Israeli school principals are included in this group of employers). The interviewees came from different geographical regions in Israel and worked in different schools varying in location, age group (elementary school, middle school, and high school), and special and normative education.

This variety allowed for a broad and diverse picture of the subject at hand. All the teachers who were employed by the interviewed principals met the definition of people with physical disabilities (Matthews and Harrington, 2000; Pettinicchio and Maroto, 2017). They varied in their disabilities and could be divided into three categories of physical disabilities: some have a motor disability (e.g., difficulty walking, use of a wheelchair); some have a sensory disability (blindness and deafness); and others have a health disability (chronic illnesses).

Ethical consideration in data collection

All of the participants were made aware of the aim and procedure of the study, and they consented to being recorded. Similarly, all personal information remained strictly confidential, and every participant was given a pseudonyms name to maintain anonymity. The participants were asked to provide only general details about the school in which they were employed (such as grade levels and geographic district) and were not asked to reveal the school's name or other identifying features to the researcher. Since the principals' interviews focused on their relationship with teachers that were absent and were not part of the study, when talking about them, all principals were asked to avoid disclosing any of that teacher's personal information. In cases where such information was mentioned it was deleted later during the transcription phase.

Research tools

We employed semi-structured interviews to learn of the participants' perceptions of ethical dilemmas arising from the employment of teachers with disabilities. The individual interviews took place at the participants' homes or offices. Each interview lasted for a duration of between 30 and 60 minutes, was audio recorded, and later transcribed into print. During each interview, the participant was asked to share his or her experiences of working with a teacher with a disability. Each principal was asked to choose a specific teacher with a disability who is/was employed in the school and answer the questions about the experience of working with that specific teacher.

Table 1. The study participants' profiles.

Information regarding the school principals				Type of school	Information regarding the teachers with disabilities	
Name	Gender	Age	Seniority	School	Disability of the teacher employed (some principals employ more than one teacher)	Gender of teacher employed
Lily	Woman	45	3 years	Elementary school	Deaf	Woman
Leah	Woman	60	10 years	Elementary school	Blind	Man
Ami	Man	65	15 years	High school	Stutter	Man
Ruth	Woman	50	23 years	Elementary school	Crohn disease	Woman
Hope	Woman	45	5 years	Elementary school	Fibromyalgia	Woman
Menashe	Man	45	3 years	Ultra-orthodox yeshiva school	Chronic illness	Man
Rose	Woman	65	15 years	Elementary school	Muscular dystrophy	Woman
					Muscular dystrophy	Woman
Galit	Woman	65	20 years	Elementary school	Muscular dystrophy	Woman
Shai	Man	40	3 years	Modern orthodox middle school	Muscular dystrophy	Woman
Nira	Woman	55	15 years	Special ed. elementary school	Chronic illness	Woman
					Limp	Woman
Lilac	Woman	50	5 years	High school	Cerebral palsy	Woman
Mirit	Woman	45	4 years	Special ed. elementary school	Cerebral palsy	Woman
Topaz	Woman	50	10 years	High school	Cerebral palsy	Woman
Daphne	Woman	50	15 years	Elementary school	Limp	Woman
Aden	Man	45	5 years	High school	Chronic illness	Woman
					Chronic illness	Woman
					Chronic illness	Man
Tami	Woman	50	3 years	Special ed. elementary school	Cerebral palsy	Man
Naomi	Woman	55	10 years	Ultra-orthodox school for girls	Paralysis following polio	Woman
Ben	Man	70	20 years	Boarding high school	Paralysis following polio	Man

Note: In order to guarantee anonymity, all of the participants' names are pseudonyms.

For the purpose of the interview, we prepared the following basic questions in order to bring out the principals' perceptions of the teachers they were asked about.

- Can you tell me about the teacher you chose and about the experience of working together with him/her?
- How, if at all, does the disability affect or influence the teacher's work?
- How, if at all, does the disability affect or influence the teacher's relationship with colleagues, students, and\or students' parents?
- What are the ethical dilemmas that arise during employing a teacher with physical disabilities?

The participants were then asked additional questions for clarification on specific topics as needed and were requested to add information about issues and contexts that we identified as ethical dilemmas.

Data analysis

The data were analyzed by constructing categories based on the information collected and based on a priori constructs from relevant literature. Open, axial, and selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 2008) were used to interpret the data to develop categories representing the experiences of the participants as principals who employ teachers with disabilities.

During the open coding phase, data segments were separated and sorted and then combined into a new and different set of information. This was done by comparing the different parts of the data to find commonalities, differences, and connections between them. Each new initial category was given a name that describes its meaning.

The axial coding phase involved recognizing relationships between categories. This phase was characterized by mapping and recognizing main categories and sub-categories, and then exploring the relationships between them (Grossoehme, 2014). In this phase, the categories that were identified at the initial coding phase were divided into new categories.

In the selective coding phase, both major and minor categories were formed by correlating each group of data to each other, thus determining which category was the core category, and relating all other categories to that category. This was accomplished by observing the initial data categories to determine which category encompassed the most data from the perspective of all of the participants.

During the next phase, all of the categories were reexamined and edited, and new categories were then created to reflect the issues that had not yet arisen during the initial phases. Out of all these categories, the main ones were conceptualized and defined, and henceforth they became the basis for the entire study. Finally, according to the grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 2017), a theoretical conceptualization of the descriptive image arose from earlier phases while using terms from relevant studies to clarify the data and construct the theory.

Findings

Principals who employ a teacher with a disability face various dilemmas regarding that teacher's disability or his/her perception of this disability. The findings of this study imply that principals deal with multifaceted ethical dilemmas. Those major ethical dilemmas reflect a conflict between the value of inclusion and three other values: commitment to the wellbeing of the school staff; commitment to the wellbeing of the student; commitment to the educational system. All of these values are significant to the principals and are part of their professional responsibilities (an overview of these dilemmas is provided in Figure 1).

Integration and inclusion versus commitment to the wellbeing of the school staff

Most of the principals interviewed in this study believe that the employment of teachers with disabilities and the inclusion of those teachers in the workforce constitutes a personal example for students and expresses a moral duty. Examples are shown in the narratives below.
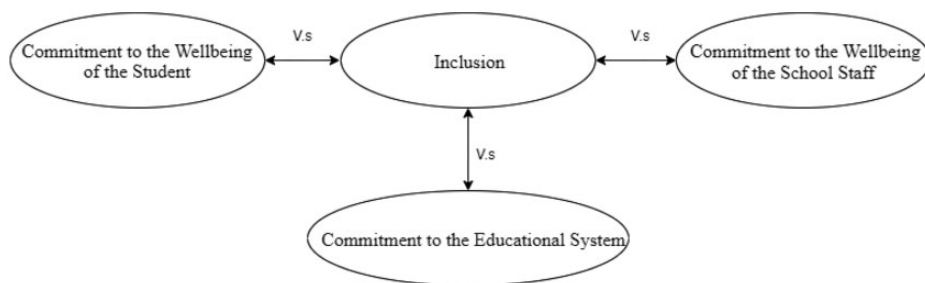
Figure 1. The conflict between the ideology of integration and inclusion and professional responsibilities.

> I think employing a disabled teacher – that is our greatest success! It is good for us as educators, it is right for the girls and it is God's will. (Naomi, about 55 years old, about 10 years of administrative seniority, director of an ultra-Orthodox school for girls, in the school a teacher with paralysis following polio)
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> A personal example is the thing! At the end of the day we are like monkeys, we learn best from imitation. By setting an example that everyone can see they will understand that there are all kinds of people and everyone can do anything they want. (Ami, about 65 years old, about 15 years of administrative seniority, retired elementary school principal, in the school a teacher with a stutter)

The principals are also committed to the wellbeing of the school staff and they are aware of the challenges that the faculty might have to face when integrating a teacher with a disability into the workplace.

When the principals believe a teacher with a disability is a burden on the rest of the staff, on the one hand, but believe that including teachers with disabilities is important, on the other, they face an ethical dilemma. One of the most common issues that drives principals to think that employing teachers with a disability is a burden is when they consider frequent absentees.

Initially, Menashe talks about the importance of inclusion and acceptance of all kinds of different people.

> Integration, in my opinion, is the most important thing. I believe, a school principal who cannot contain and cannot cope with the unexpected will have a very hard time doing the job well. We have ten fingers that are different from each other. That's how people are, just as their faces are different, so are their opinions. We are all different from each other. (Menashe, 45 years old, about 3 years of administrative seniority, a high school principal, in the school a teacher with a chronic illness in the school)

Later on, the same principal describes how when the teacher he was employing was absent from school he made an effort to distribute the additional workload among as many co-workers as possible and how difficult that was.

> I tried very hard not to put all the work load on one person or two, but to be smart about it. I once canceled classes, and on one occasion asked a teacher to sub, and on another occasion asked a different teacher to fill in . . . If there is too much burden on the staff, then I will lose them. This is absolutely one of the problems, when one teacher doesn't show up all the rest pay the price.

Many other principals addressed this issue and raised concerns regarding absentees from work:

When she started to feel unwell [the teacher] she took a few days off and then we realized that her condition was not good and that she had to be hospitalized. As soon as this happened, I contacted the appropriate Ministry of Education officials and asked for a substitute teacher. It didn't go so well; they didn't send anyone. So, we asked the teachers who are working with her to work with students who really needed help and cover for her. [. . .] It was a long time but I think the other teachers weren't mad. They understood she had no choice. (Ruth, about 50 years old, about 23 years of managerial seniority, principal of an elementary school, in the school a teacher with Crohn's disease)

Menashe, Ruth, Naomi, Ami, and other principals were torn by their responsibility to the teacher with the disability, on the one hand, and to the other teachers, on the other.

Integration and inclusion versus commitment to the wellbeing of the student

While the principals referred to the inclusion of teachers with disabilities as an important value, they emphasized how committed they were to their students. A dilemma that school principals confronted with arose when they believed that accommodating the disabled teacher was taking a toll on the students.

Shai's educational perspective is that when one wants to educate on including different people, the way to do so is through personal experience. His goal was to integrate as diverse a group of teachers as possible in the school, thinking this would affect the students and the atmosphere in school.

There is a term in biology – fractals. Fractals are objects in which the same patterns occur again and again at different scales and sizes. A good example is cauliflower; the big cauliflower resembles the little sprouts it's made of. I believe this analogy is true for how education should work. If you want to lead to pluralism and get the people in your school to accept differences, but everyone looks the same, you are doing it all wrong. A diverse set of teachers at the school must be the driving force for this endeavor: political diversity, age diversity, sexual preference diversity, and also teachers who have disabilities. (Shai, 40 years old, about 3 years of managerial seniority, a principal in a modern orthodox middle school, in the school a teacher with muscular dystrophy in the school)

Later, Shai describes how he made sure a teacher with a disability would not be assigned to early morning lessons in order to accommodate her specific needs, and how this was not actually in the students' best interest, and led to some criticism from the school staff:

This teacher receives medical treatment in the morning and can therefore teach only at relatively late hours meaning entire classes learn mathematics, an important and complex subject, at the end of the school day. Doing this makes it difficult for the students, and many students and parents complained about this [. . .] also, many teachers did not understand why I was allowing this to happen and felt it was unjust.

Shai had to choose between accommodating the teacher's needs in the most inclusive way in order to integrate the teacher in school and accommodating the students' needs to study math early in the day.

Other principals also shared their frustration when having to deal with a teacher whose disability is a burden on the students. Sometimes their comments were stereotypical and insulting:

Her physical limitations and this slack behavior . . . how can you face a classroom when you seem so lame and insecure? The kids feel it! (Daphne, about 50 years old, about 15 years of managerial seniority, elementary school principal, in the school a teacher with a limp)

She is very neglected and just looks repulsive, she has a lot of wounds on her face. [. . .] Visibly, it's not good, it is unpleasant, it should not be neglected just because she is disabled. [. . .] there was one girl who couldn't bear to sit next to her in class. (Mirit, about 45 years old, about 4 years of senior management, principal of an elementary school, special education, teacher school with CP [Cerebral palsy is a group of permanent disorders of the development of movement and posture, causing activity limitation])

The conflict between the idea of inclusion and the notion of students "paying the price" is one of the biggest conflicts principals face when employing a teacher with a disability.

Integration and inclusion versus commitment to the educational system

While the principals stated that integration and inclusion of teachers with disabilities reflects their values as educators, they also made it clear that they are committed to their role as representatives of the educational system.

Principals stated that while inclusion is important, the people responsible should give principals support when doing so:

It is important to employ people with disabilities as part of society's diversity. It is important for principals to address the opportunities that arise from dealing with this. But it is also important that the education system make this possible by providing assistance to the principals. (Leah, about 60 years old, about 10 years of managerial seniority, principal of an elementary school, in the school a teacher who is blind)

When the principals want to best accommodate a teacher with a disability but the rules and regulations makes it difficult or impossible, they are conflicted.

For example, Galit would like to allocate hours to the teacher, who faces significant physical difficulties, to work in small groups with students. In her opinion, both the students and the teacher herself would benefit from this arrangement. However, the educational system regulations do not allow for the teacher's hours to be divided up in such a way:

I would do so much for her, to integrate her, the sky is the limit . . . I would create conditions that would allow her to work with groups around the table. And [the students] would benefit from her wonderful ability to educate and to teach. But I'm too timid and honest, and I never break the [ministry of education] rules! I cannot possibly use hours that are allocated to teaching in a large classroom and re-allocate them for something else. It's immoral, and yet, ignoring what is best for this teacher can also be construed as immoral. (Galit, about 65 years old, about 20 years of managerial seniority, principal of an elementary school, in the school a teacher with muscular dystrophy)

Another principal explains how in spite of her desire to fully accommodate the teacher, it remains impossible due to the regulations regarding sick days:

I have a teacher here who has a pretty bad condition of Crohn's disease. I mean, she's absent a lot! Now, honestly, on the one hand, from the point of view of the Ministry of Education, the rules are very

clear and very problematic, there is a sick leave quota and once it has all been used the teacher cannot take any more sick days. On the other hand, she is a very good teacher and I would like to help her to integrate in school. This is so complicated, I run a school and I have a responsibility to the system and I admit that this is a problem. (Nira, about 55 years old, about 15 years of managerial seniority, principal of an elementary school, special education, in the school a teacher with Crohn's disease and a teacher with a limp)

These principals believe they have to choose between being truly inclusive, acting toward integrating the teacher with disability, and breaking the rules.

Some other principals presented bureaucratic difficulties in organizing accessible accommodations for teachers:

She told me her limitations. She told me it was hard for her to go up the stairs. The school entrance was a three-step walkway. And that was a problem, because there are three steps at the entrance to each of the buildings in the school. She herself was very strong and it was resolved. She held the railing and she climbed the three steps despite the difficulty. (Galit, about 65 years old, about 20 years of managerial seniority, principal of an elementary school, in the school a teacher with muscular dystrophy)

This dilemma reflects the difficulty in applying the principles of integration when the bureaucratic system and the rules of the education system are not sufficiently adapted for the employment of teachers with disabilities.

Summary of the findings

These ethical dilemmas stem from the conflict between the educational ideology of the principal that reflects integration and inclusion, and the sense of professional responsibilities that are represented by commitment to the wellbeing of the school staff, commitment to the wellbeing of the student, and commitment to the educational system.

Discussion

The main aim of this study was to explore the ethical dilemmas faced by school principals who employ teachers with physical disabilities. The findings of this study indicate that the ethical dilemmas they face are based on safeguarding the interests of the educational system, the students, and the staff. This conclusion is consistent with the extensive literature dealing with ethical dilemmas of principals (Cranston et al., 2006; Dempster and Berry, 2003). Recent studies (e.g., Catacutan and Guzman, 2016) indicated there are different types of ethical dilemmas: behavioral, structural, and political. The dilemmas described in this study reflect these types. Yet, the principals interviewed in this study often deal with these issues in a way that is specifically relevant to the employment of a teacher with a disability.

All of the principals who participated in this study employed at least one teacher with a disability. Based on the experience of working closely with them, many principals dealt with ethical dilemmas in regard to the teacher's disability. The principals' sense of conflict stemmed from the tension between the value of educational ideology that advocates for integration and inclusion versus what they perceive as their professional responsibilities. These responsibilities, which include commitment to the wellbeing of the school staff, commitment to the wellbeing of the student, and commitment to the system, reflect a set of commitments that the principals define

as core values of their professional role. Exploring these core values contributes to the under-standing of principals' perceptions regarding their role as educator.

Values of professional responsibilities represent the ethic of utilitarianism that emphasizes total benefit for the majority within a society despite the harm that may be inflicted on specific individuals (McCray and Beachum, 2006; Strike, 2005). In some cases, the principals believed that the only ones to benefit from the inclusion of teachers with disabilities were those teachers themselves, while the majority of students or staff were harmed as a consequence. Conversely, in other cases, some principals truly thought that this inclusion was in the best interest of both those teachers and the rest of the students and staff all.

Both the values of integration and inclusion and the ethic of fairness and equity focus on individual rights and equality (Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016). These two ideologies aim to guar-antee equal treatment for everyone based on universal standards that are applied beyond any specific person or circumstance (Starratt, 1991). Yet, Eyal et al. (2011) found in their research negative correlations between those choices reflecting values of fairness and those reflecting utilitarianism and care. Ethics of care implies that typically, on detecting an expressed need, the care giver feels empathy toward the cared-for and directs effort (temporarily) away from one's own projects toward those of the cared-for (Noddings, 2012). Therefore, the findings of this research intimate that the principals do not perceive the teachers with disabilities as a group of people that they have to "care" for.

The educational approach that emphasizes the importance of integrating teachers with disabil-ities in schools was a topic mentioned by almost all of the principals interviewed. Even when the principals described negative experiences or difficulties in coping with the teacher's disability, most of them believed that the integration of teachers with disabilities into the system is a worthy act that can contribute to society in general and to students in particular. This can be explained by the emphasis in recent years on the integration of children with disabilities (O'Hanlon, 2018).

The dilemma of integration and inclusion versus commitment to the wellbeing of the school staff reflects the tension between the idea of integration and inclusion and the commitment to ensure the wellbeing of the entire educational staff. However, this dilemma reflects the commit-ment to inclusion not only as an ideology but also as a practice, when an actual teacher with a disability is involved. While many studies described the difficulties of dealing with a poorly performing teacher, the dilemma found in this study reflects the conflict between loyalty to the school staff and loyalty, not only to the idea of integration, but also to the specific teacher with disabilities, a teacher who might be pitied because of his disability (Capewell et al., 2015; Shapiro and Stefkovich, 2016).

The principals in this study expressed significant concern regarding the employment of a teacher with a disability, namely that it could create additional workload that would make it more difficult for the rest of the school staff. The strong sense of commitment to the educational staff can be explained by the principals' perception of the role as the manager and the educational team leader (Oplatka, 2015). It is important to note that the principals' concerns may not reflect the actual experience of the school staff (Tal-Alon and Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2019). Despite princi-pals' concerns, most studies indicate that employing individuals with a disability does not neces-sarily lead to frequent absenteeism or require special assistance from peer colleagues (Hernandez and McDonald, 2010).

The dilemma of integration and inclusion versus the commitment to the wellbeing of the students was the most dramatic in the eyes of the principals. An in-depth examination of the principals' remarks reveals that although there are a range of values that are meaningful to them,

not all of them have the same significance. While the principals describe values that are part of their professional responsibilities, the value that was the most significant was the one of the students' best interests. This is consistent with studies that emphasize the importance of the student's wellbeing at the school and studies that point out that the strongest conflict arises when children's rights might be at stake (Tal-Alon, 2019; Tal-Alon and Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2019; Norberg and Johansson, 2007). Another study found that the best interests of the student was a central guideline in moral decision-making for principals (Frick et al., 2013). Most school principals and other educators believe that teachers with disabilities have a unique contribution and a positive effect on their students (Dvir, 2015; Loden and Teets, 2007; Parker and Draves, 2018). As long as the principals believed that the inclusion of a teacher with a disability was also in the best interest of the students, they faced no dilemma. However, once a principal sensed that the teacher's performance might not be adequate, the commitment to the students overcame the commitment to the idea of inclusion.

The dilemma of integration and inclusion versus commitment to the educational system reflects the principals' fear that working with a teacher with a disability might burden the system and conflict with the Ministry of Education regulations. Many principals feel that there is tension between accommodation and standards (Sokal et al., 2017). The principal's role includes extensive administrative work and responsibility for the proper functioning of the school. Many principals fear that employing a teacher with disabilities will lead to frequent absences, unprofessional work, and a variety of special needs that will burden the system and make it difficult for them to work (Graffam et al., 2002). Principals are required by law to provide teachers with disabilities reasonable accommodations that are required for them in order to do their job (Feldman and Ben Moshe, 2009). Many principals referred to situations where they believed they could better accommodate the teacher's specific needs but that this was against the school system regulation and did not apply as "reasonable" accommodation. Based on these findings, it is recommended to conduct an investigation led by the Ministry of Education in conjunction with the Institute for Accessibility and expand the adjustments made for teachers.

The principals in this study claim to support integration and believe in the ideology of integration and inclusion of teachers with disabilities. However, the dilemmas they describe reflect the gap between this ideology and reality. Such a gap is common among many educators when it comes to the inclusion of students with disabilities and is the finding of this study, which indicates that this gap is also common when it comes to the employment of teachers with disabilities (Garrad et al., 2019; Vaz et al., 2015). While the ideology itself supports the integration and inclusion of teachers with disabilities, the professional responsibilities of the principals are often seen as conflicting with it. The principals experience the employment of a teacher with a disability as such that may take a toll on students and the rest of the staff and may even be in conflict with the regulations of the Ministry of Education. This gap reflects the lack of infrastructure in employment environments to provide complex accommodations regarding accessibility beyond simple physical accessibility (Padkapayeva et al., 2016).

Contributions, limitations, recommendations, and future study

In this study we conducted in-depth interviews in order to explore the ethical dilemmas of principals who employ teachers with disabilities. This study included principals from multiple of sectors within Israel's school systems. In addition, the teachers who are employed by the principals vary in their disabilities (motor disabilities, health disabilities, and motor disabilities). It is recommended

to pursue further study focusing on more specific groups, such as principals employing teachers with sensory disabilities only, teachers with medical disabilities, or focusing on a particular sector, such as principals who employ teachers with disabilities in the ultra-orthodox population. This may shed light on findings that were not raised in this current study.

The findings of this study revealed that principals who employ teachers with disabilities struggle with an ethical dilemma that reflects the conflict between their educational ideology that advocates for integration and inclusion, and some of their professional responsibilities. Comprehending these dilemmas and understanding the specific difficulties of the principals are critical steps on the way to a more inclusive school.

One significant limitation to the current study is the fact that the findings reflect only the principal's perspective regarding the employment of teachers with disabilities. Expanding the study to include interviewers with policy-makers and with teachers with disabilities will enable a deeper understanding of this issue.

Another limitation of the current study is the use of only one source for the collection of data. The decision was made not to use other tools, such as observations, out of concern for teachers' privacy and out of concern for the sensitivity of this unique group of people.

The guidelines given to principals in regards to the employment of teachers with disabilities should be reviewed in detail. School principals should be provided with regulated information sources on accessibility adjustments, and a professional liaison should be appointed to address bureaucratic issues. The findings of this study, which point to the importance of employing teachers with disabilities and the educational benefits inherent in it, suggest the need to make the educational system more accessible. In addition, it is recommended that principals who already employ a teacher with disabilities lead an open discussion with the general educational staff at the school. This open discussion can give the principal information about the difficulties the rest of the staff endure, in case there are any. In the event that the educational staff does indeed point out real difficulties arising from working with a teacher with disabilities, the principals must examine how to provide accommodations that will meet the needs of the teacher with disabilities and will simultaneously resolve the needs of the general staff.

Declaration of conflicting interests

Funding

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