Educational Policy and Education Management.
Study Case: Israel

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Abstract: The world today faces new realities, conditions, and challenges as a result of the remarkable development in many fields. Across the past century, education systems all over the world have seen significant improvements. The educational system has evolved, progressed, and transformed in a way that emphasizes the democratization of education. To adapt their educational systems and objectives to the 21st century, all developed nations are coping with and confronting changes and difficulties both locally and globally. The present article wants to present some specific aspects related to educational policy and education management in Israel. Israel is a relatively new state, found in 1948 and the Israeli educational system reflects Israeli society, similarly to anywhere else in the world. In all these years of existence, Israel’s educational system has accomplished prodigious achievements. As it is obvious, Israel is a relatively young nation, hence its educational system faces various challenges, some of which are exclusive to Israel. This presentation proposes to explain briefly the roots of Israel’s education system, which began before it was recognized as a state, and will illustrate some concrete facets of the actual education system, educational policy, and education management, as well, as in Israel.

1. INTRODUCTION

Israel or officially called the State of Israel, in Hebrew (Medinat Yisra’el) is a relatively small country situated in the Middle East. Its northern border is with Lebanon, Syria is in the north-east of the country, Egypt is to the southwest, Jordan is to the east and southeast, and the Mediterranean Sea is to the west. Jerusalem serves as both the country’s capital and its seat of government, even though the city has not received widely spread global recognition. (Britannica, n. d.)

The historical past of the Jewish people shows the persistent need to develop a quality educational system. For about 2000 years, the Jewish people were living in the diaspora, having an important role in the development of culture. Over the years, Jews became educators in Europe and other parts of the world. At the beginning of the 20th century, with the inception of the British Mandate and the possibility of the Jews returning to Palestine, there appeared the desire for Jews to develop their educational system. Although around the 1900s, the creation of the State of Israel still seemed like an impossible mission. This desire could have been accomplished in several ways, one of these ways was through the development of successful institutions. This development of society, as well as the desire of more and more Jews to return to Palestine, began with the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the Russian pogroms that began as early as 1903.

As author Shlomo Lambroza stated, Russia has never been a good and friendly place for Jews. This aspect was more visible in the twentieth century. However, the first wave of pogroms...
against the Jews began in 1881, shortly after the assassination of Emperor Alexander the Second of Russia. The bloodiest pogroms occurred during the Russian Revolution of 1905. The first pogrom took place in April 1903 in Chisinau (nowadays in the Republic of Moldova), in the next three years taking place no less than 650 pogroms (Lambroza, 1987, p. 287).

Therefore, both Israeli society and the needs of a future state revolved around the migration phenomenon. Although Jews and Arabs continued to live in Palestine over the 2000 years gap, the idea of the State of Israel began to take shape within the six great waves of immigrants.

The first group which arrived in Israel in the late nineteenth century was predominately made up of Jews from the Eastern European bloc. This was succeeded by a large Russian movement, which arrived in Israel after the Russian Revolution of 1905 and the other pogroms in Russia. Those certain immigrants have been the driving force behind the establishment of kibbutzim (Kibbutz- a type of communal settlement that can be found only in Israel. All the members in the community work together traditionally in agriculture and all wealth is held in common and the profits are reinvested in the settlement), or communal settlers, as they had a special interest in developing a collective and collaborative community (USA University College Directory, Israel – History Background, n.d.).

2. ISRAELI EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM

Nowadays, in Israel, there are four educational levels, starting with pre-primary or from nursery school through primary and secondary education to various levels of higher education. With a transformation of the Compulsory Education Law in 1984, the introduction of two years of preschool was officially implemented. Additionally, primary education is both free and required (grades 1-8). Grades 9 and 10 have also been free and required since about the 1960s. Secondary education, which lasts through grade 12, is free but not required (USA University College Directory, Israel – Educational System Overview, n.d.).

In Israel, there seem to be three different kinds of high schools: academic, career-related technical, and comprehensive. Academic high schools begin preparing high school graduates and lead through matriculation certificates. Vocational technical high schools educate people about technical as well as practical career choices in engineering or other sectors. There are numerous types of training institutions at the postsecondary level that provide instruction for careers in healthcare, teaching elementary school, and other technical fields. Seven institutions offer bachelor's, master's, and doctoral degrees. Students must pass the "bagrut", or nationwide admissions exam, to be admitted to a university (USA University College Directory, Israel – Educational System Overview, n.d.).

The Ministry of Education and Culture is in charge of centralizing and standardizing the curriculum across the entire Israeli educational system. All levels of education, which include higher education, are under the Ministry's supervision; the Council for Higher Education is in charge of this sector. The education system goes further than the conventional distinctions between public, private, and state-religious schools to address the diversity of the population through a variety of methods (USA University College Directory, Israel – Educational System Overview, n.d.).

The preschool educational program evolved from the traditional Jewish educational program (Heder), which was a type of early childhood education popular among Jews in the Middle Ages. Heder
meant that boys aged 3 to 13 would study Hebrew and receive religious instruction from a particular teacher. Israeli educators had started to create elementary school and preschool curricula in line with contemporary theories of early childhood growth by the turn of the 20th century. Such schemes involve basic educational reading and writing preparatory work, social skills development, and study of the Hebrew language and culture. Both preschool and elementary schools aim to promote children's development and national unity by providing all teenagers with equal access to quality education (USA University College Directory, Israel – Preprimary Primary Education, n.d.).

There have originally been many clashing primary education methods before Israel became a state. The main distinction between these methods was how much time was spent on religious studies compared to secular topics. By the end of World War I, modern Hebrew had also been widely used in schools as its primary language of instruction. Private religious schools and state or state-religious schools were established by the State Education Law of 1953 (USA University College Directory, Israel – Preprimary Primary Education, n.d.).

The diversified community of Israel and its substantial immigrant populations are taken seriously in primary schools. The spotlight of teaching in the primary school system focuses on the dual objectives of fairness and justice as well as integration into Israeli society. Due to the inability to meet these objectives, the educational system needed to undergo significant changes. The School Reform Act introduced modernization in 1968. The role of parents in the education system has evolved, and some parents still want more control over which school their children attend. Additionally, parents demanded control over the course content and curricular enrichment in both the creative and academic fields (USA University College Directory, Israel – Preprimary Primary Education, n.d.).

The Ministry of Education and Culture determines the basic school curricula. It covers the standard curriculums taught in schools, such as scientific knowledge, basic arithmetic, geography, historical background, and so forth. Teenagers also learn about the Bible and the Talmud (Jewish tradition) in all colleges, though the state religious schools give more attention to such topics than some public schools do. Hebrew vocabulary and literature are learned by children in language courses since they may not be the natal tongue of some immigrant groups. Starting through grade 5 or grade 6, students are expected to study English as their first-second language; however, in some schools, French is officially compulsory (USA University College Directory, Israel – Preprimary Primary Education, n.d.).

An interesting strategy used within the educational system in Israel is to keep students in the same group. Young people do not move to other groups from one year to the next, they remain in the same class for the entire duration of the educational cycle. There is a lot of emphasis on developing friendly relationships between the members of the group, and at the same time trying to keep an entire class united, without making differences between more talented students and those with weaker grades.

We have called this practice a strategy, however, because there is also an aspect of preparing young people for the compulsory military service that is still present in Israel. So, this method comes to the aid of children they often get to know their colleagues in the army for several years. They are trying to form a community, through so-called "small groups" of dozens of young people. In this way the whole system will work better, will be more efficient, and the soldiers will have more confidence in each other.
3. **ISRAEL’S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM REFORMS**

Secondary education was paid for by tuition even before Israel's autonomy and throughout the early days of its existence as a nation. It wasn't required. Just after modernization with reforms in 1968, there was no tuition and all students had to attend classes till 10th grade. The failed effort of the schools to provide full equality, particularly for underprivileged students, and the perceived limited capacity of the schools to help in the integration of different immigrant groups into Israeli society led to such shifts (USA University College Directory, Israel – Secondary Education, n.d.).

Several native languages were carried by the numerous waves of immigrants. They founded or attended schools that spoke the local immigrant group's native tongue, such as German, Russian, etc. A large number of immigrants spoke Yiddish, which was also used in a few educational establishments. There had been a Hebrew Teachers' Association by 1903, which supported educators throughout the region who wished to keep using Hebrew as the dialect of school instruction. Also, an important aspect was that Zionists began using only Hebrew in their school. (USA University College Directory, Israel – Secondary Education, n.d.).

The establishment of the very first accredited university, the Technion, in Haifa, triggered a linguistic conflict. Leading up to its official establishment, the Technion had been funded by charitable contributions from Russian and German channels, as well as being supervised by German supervisors who desired to be using German as the teaching language (USA University College Directory, Israel – Secondary Education, n.d.). The State of Israel is a complex case in which we can analyze the various aspects of a multicultural society. This society also has an impact on the educational system.

The chief information officer Dr. Ofer Rimon from the Ministry of Education in Israel said that they were looking for a platform to “centralize and automate management”. The Ministry needed a centralized database with a “uniform enforcement of information security procedures.” Last but not least, they needed “an effective self-service function, where users can update their accounts.” (Ministry of Education Israel, Case Study, 2021).

This system will facilitate the access of both students and teachers to daily educational activities. This platform shows the openness of the Ministry of Education towards digitalization, towards an innovative field in education.

The Ministry makes also significant investments in implementing a digital educational system, in addition to the introduction of online books, learning management systems, e-learning climates, notebooks access to all students, and also the installation of internet services and infrastructure in schools, the need for an organized identity management platform to achieve prompt but also prevent unauthorized access has increased (Ministry of Education Israel, Case Study, 2021). One of the highlights of this software program was that it provided a fully automated platform for more than two million users. The Ministry relies mostly on cloud-based applications and other management solutions.

The pre-state Jewish community have already established and sustained an operational educational system by the time the State of Israel was established (1948), using Hebrew as the teaching language. Hebrew had indeed been brought back to life for everyday discourse just at the end of the nineteenth century. (My Jewish Learning, n.d.)
The newly founded state had to impose several reforms in different development phases. The newly formed Ministry of Education dealt with a shortage of highly trained educators, uneducated and poor parents, and a severe economic crisis, also a poverty nation that continued to struggle in the first ten years. All these facts added to a community that was constantly increasing. (Sprinzak et al., 2004, p. 63). Moreover, in the Jewish tradition, there is a high emphasis on the quality of the educational system. This is why Jewish communities were among the first to implement mandatory courses for young people (Axinte, 2022, p. 230).

The educational system in Israel can also be seen from the perspective of a system that wants the cohesion of a society with many points of view. Education can help integrate multiple groups into the same community, giving freedom to each vision. Israel's education system wants to form a society without segregation in schools, racial differences, and the elimination of differential treatment from society (Axinte, 2022, p. 235). The school has the role of developing culture and civil society, but it can also have an impact on the economy and the development of other state institutions.

4. EDUCATION MANAGEMENT IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD

Education management along with educational administration and educational leadership is one of the main perspectives in this field. Its overarching goal of educational management would be to successfully build and keep surroundings throughout academic institutions that foster, encourage, and preserve effective education and learning, however the specific methods used to accomplish these key goals can vary greatly based upon its educational system or tier and throughout academic societies (Lynch et al., 2020). The government is always in charge of creating, organizing, and setting up educational systems. Human resource management, campus life, financial support, evaluation, and housing for people with disabilities are among the sectors available to experts in education management. These roles concentrate on different facets of education and work to enhance and optimize the educational system (Helmy, 2022).

5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the management of the educational system in Israel has been very focused on managing the migration phenomenon and adapting the educational process to each different group of people. The Israeli state had to invest in an educational system that can eliminate inequalities in society, and create a solid community that incorporates more ideologies. Education management involves a national strategy that eventually comes to focus on the individual.

References


