The relationship between leadership style, school climate and students' persistence in middle and high schools in Arab society in Israel

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Abstract
The present study examines the relationship between leadership style, school climate, and students' persistence in middle and high schools in Arab society in Israel. Various studies have shown that leadership style, in general, and school climate, in particular, impacts the students academically, emotionally, and socially.
Moreover, they are even considered vital factors that influence students' persistence or dropping out of the education system. Therefore, the purpose of the present study focuses on examining the relationship between leadership style, school climate and students' persistence in middle and high schools in Arab society in Israel. The current study was conducted in the quantitative methodology, in which 100 teachers from five in middle and high schools from the Arab community in the north of the country have participated. The researchers used two types of questionnaires to collect data: the first measures school climate, whereas the second examines the principals' leadership style The findings of the study indicate positive associations between a human-centered leadership style, ethical school climate and students' persistence at school. This finding points to the importance of nurturing a moral school climate and a human-centered leadership style as crucial factors influencing student persistence.
Keywords: school climate, leadership style, students' persistence, Arab schools

Introduction

The school principal is one of the essential factors in school educational practice. The principal's leadership style and the way mathematics teachers perceive s/he has a significant impact on his/her perception in everything related to school. As such, s/he affects the school atmosphere and the formation of an ethical climate which can, for better or worse, jeopardize the mathematics teachers' behavior, the effectiveness of their work, and the student's behavior and mental well-being (Sotrak, 2004).

According to Kelly and colleagues (2005), a human-centered leadership style is a supportive style that encourages participation, strengthens team commitment, fosters relationships within the staff, and cares about employee well-being (Kelly et al., 2005). Principals with a human-centered leadership style emphasize the importance of people and adopt the approach that states that management's primary goal is to create a good harmony between people and the organization. These principals have a natural tendency to take care of the employees, nurture them and make decisions considering the employees' well-being.

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In contrast, there is a task-oriented leadership style. Unlike the above technique, the school principal thinks logically, sets clear goals and policies, determines the nature of people's responsibilities in their job, and provides technical support for planning, organizing, and implementing procedures for the school (Murphy et al., 2005). Task-oriented principals are primarily concerned with meeting the goals they have set, while the employees are only the means to achieve those goals. Those principals are perceived as very dedicated to their tasks, challenging, and less attentive to employees. Their decision-making is influenced primarily by achieving their goals.

A school climate describes the set of internal characteristics at school, including the perceptions of the organization members, values, social beliefs, and standards. It refers mainly to the relationship and atmosphere among the organization members to balance the school's organizational, personal, and systemic aspects (Cohen et al., 2009). This climate contributes to a sense of security and belonging among students, develops their desire to study and be at school, challenges them, gives them a good learning experience, improves their self-image, and leads them to academic success.

Many studies have examined the impact of school climate on academic achievement, yet few have examined the effects of school climate on students' persistence in the education system. According to Calderon et al., school climate is a significant factor influencing students' industry or dropping out of the education system. According to them, students stay in the school climate for many hours every day; they are greatly affected emotionally and socially. In addition, school climate is a crucial factor that impacts creating an environment that develops personal security and a sense of belonging, physical protection, mental health, moral development, and academic functioning among students. Pasternak (2003) adds that school climate is one factor that most affects students' mental health, achievement, and improvement in their cognitive, academic, social, and emotional functions (Pasternak, 2003).

Following those mentioned above, the influence of the school principal and school climate on students on different and varied levels is particularly noticeable. In light of this effect, there is a vital need for this type of research at schools in Arab society in Israel to deeply examine the degree of influence a leadership style and school climate have on students' persistence at schools in the Arab community in Israel. To investigate the subject of the study, several hypotheses were established:

1. There is a positive relationship between leadership style and school ethical climate.
2. There is a positive relationship between human-centered leadership style and students' persistence at school.
3. There is a positive relationship between school moral climate and students' industry at school.

In light of the existing research literature that deals with the impact of school leadership style and climate on students' persistence, it is interesting to investigate whether school leadership style and climate do affect students' persistence rates at schools in Arab society in Israel. Therefore, the main research question is: "Is there any connection between leadership style, school climate and students' persistence at schools in Arab society in Israel?"

Literature Review

Many researchers have defined the concept of leadership according to their perceptions and from different social experiences. For example, a leader, from Fiedler's (1964) point of view, is the person who can influence the members of a group. The source of his leadership is not his authority nor part of his resources, but rather his ability to control his followers and motivate them towards fulfilling the group's tasks.

Similarly, Schneider and Monsongo (2010) believe that leadership is a trait that describes the leader's ability to lead people under his command toward a common goal. Researchers as Igbaekemen (2014) define leadership as the art of influencing people to strive voluntarily towards achieving goals. Leadership, as various scholars claim (Iqbal et al., 2015; Alghazo & Al-Anazi, 2016; Abdul Basit & Sebastian, 2017; Bush & Glover, 2002), is a process in which a person (the leader) influences other people to achieve a goal through directing them in a way that makes the plan more cohesive and coherent. In addition, leadership plays a crucial role in creating an atmosphere or a culture that promotes the development of the organization members with efficiency and excellence.

Educational leadership

Research literature shows that, in general, leadership style is of great importance to the functioning of employees in the system, their satisfaction, their level of productivity, and their level of motivation (Matson, 2018; Grimm, 2017; Mehwish & Batool, 2015; Buble, Juras & Matic, 2014; Eyal, & Roth, 2011). According to Zuman (2009), since the principal is the personality responsible for what happens at school, it is likely that he has the enormous to navigate the system in a dynamic reality. By utilizing these powers and following his leadership style, the principal can influence the teachers, both positively and negatively. The principal's style of leading and how his/her teachers perceive s/he have a significant impact on his/her perception and approach towards school practice (Sotrak, 2004).

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Educational leadership is a long-term journey that requires patience, tolerance, and forbearance from its holders. According to Opletka (2015), educational leadership aims to identify the strengths of the followers and create conditions that will allow them to grow, develop, lead different processes, and create a shared vision at the regional, school, and school personal levels. As Harpaz (2009) argues, educational leadership stems from an academic identity and commitment to an educational goal. In his opinion, the educational leader is characterized by agility and mental flexibility that allow him to face future difficulties and invest in developing organizational or personal abilities that will enable rapid real-time adaptation to the changes that occur.

The educational leader, as Opletka (2015) argues, strives to develop a school culture that includes an orderly and safe work environment, opportunities for significant students' involvement in school activities, teachers' participation in pedagogical decisions, use of external resources to support school goals and strong school-community ties. To achieve all the objectives mentioned above, the school principal has to obtain the teachers' cooperation (Elboim-Dror, 2000).

Leadership styles

There are different leadership styles, which differ from each other in three main factors:
- The leader's perception of his role and powers
- The perception of the society of the leadership roles
- The degree of the leader's exposure to his followers

As mentioned above, the role of leadership is to improve the employees' behaviors and sharpen their inclinations to achieve the organization's common goals. Mehrad and Fallahi (2014) note that leadership style determines the purpose and nature of guidance and the teamwork plan and its characteristics. Adizes (2004) adds that the differences in leadership styles are reflected in differences in behavior patterns. For example, a democratic leadership style, as Adizes argues, is based on the principles of equality, liberty, and rationality. It is characterized by openness, friendliness, and cooperation. In contrast, an authoritarian leadership style is based on principles of control and power and is characterized by closure, trouble, and lack of flexibility (Yashi, 2019).

1. Authoritarian Leadership: This leadership style, also called autocratic, is characterized by the fact that the principal makes all the decisions in the organization without the partnership of others. According to Khan and others (2015), the leader in the center of power in such a style exclusively makes all decisions. In addition, Iqbal and others (2015) argue that these leaders are characterized by a philosophy of "I say." They, exclusively, take decisions that emphasize the organization's tasks and its optimal productivity at the expense of any human consideration. Apart from this, Zareen and others state that this style gives little opportunity to the staff, and the staff members have no room to make suggestions, even if it is for the benefit of the team or the organization (Zareen et al., 2015).

2. Laissez-Faire leadership style: This is a leadership style whereby the principal provides little guidance to employees; he gives them as much freedom as possible (Tarsik et al., 2014). This style seems like a simple style without lots of intervention between the leaders and the followers. According to Bergen and Bressler (2014), leaders of this style avoid making decisions, are reluctant to take action, and get absent when they need to take a particular activity or position. Additional researchers (Antonakis et al., 2003; Monzani, 2015) note that this leadership style is characterized by avoidance of responsibility, leaders who do not respond to problems, and get absent when needed. Such leaders are inconsistent, hesitant to express an opinion and hesitate to respond to any event in the organization.

There is a consensus among various researchers that this leadership style is problematic (Gonen and Zakai, 2005; Yukl, 2010; Monzani, 2015). Lack of involvement can cause devastating damage to the organization and the employees. Followers who do not receive guidance and support may lose interest in work, which, in turn, negatively affects the organization's performance, the atmosphere, the culture, and the employees' satisfaction in the organization.

3. Transformational leadership: Such leadership expresses willingness to guide the followers to realize their full potential. It focuses primarily on the leader's emotional and cognitive aspects (Bass et al., 2003). This leadership motivates the followers to make an effort and encourages them to act and achieve qualitative performances in their missions. Various scholars argue that those leaders are endowed with four components: **charisma** which is the leader's ability to evoke strong emotions and identification with his goals; **inspiration** which is conveying a vision to others, encouraging challenges and empowering inspiration in

their work; **considering others** which includes supporting the employees, encouraging them and ensuring opportunities for growth; **intellectual stimulation** which is raising the employees' awareness towards problems and the need to solve them creatively (Bass et al., 2003; Al-Daibat, 2017). According to Opletka (2012), transformational leadership highlights the importance of the vision for increasing the team's professional and organizational commitment and motivating its members to work for their common goals.

4. Transactional Leadership: This style is based on the relationships between the leader and the followers based on a mutually agreed set of expectations. Both the leader and the followers are aware of the actions that can be obtained in the framework of these expectations, especially when the transactional leader knows how to identify those expectations and respond accordingly. The leader can build a clear connection between the action and the reward (Opletka, 2012). Avolio et al. (2004) classify transactional leadership into two categories: **conditional** refers to the degree to which the leader rewards the followers after the tasks have been performed. According to this behavior, he clarifies to his subordinates the work expected of them and specifies the conditions under which they will be rewarded for their achievements. The use of incentives and rewards given in exchange for fulfilling tasks increases the employees' motivation to invest in the organization. The second is **the management by exceptions** which is divided into active management by exceptions and passive by exceptions. Active management by exceptions refers to the extent the leader rewards the followers after the tasks have been performed. In this behavior he clarifies to his subordinates the work expected of them and specifies the conditions under which they will be rewarded. The use of incentives and rewards given in exchange for fulfilling tasks increases the employees' motivation to invest in the organization. In contrast, passive management by exceptions is manifested in the leader's intervention when followers cause problems or fail in performing their duties (Rukmani et al., 2010).

Various researchers have found that transactional leadership is less effective than transformational style. In their view, transformational leaders can feel their environment more and cultivate personal relationships with their subordinates. Therefore, teachers will be more satisfied as followers of a transformational leader compared to the transactional or the "Laissez Faire" leader (Shaul, 2011; Rukmani et al., 2010).

School climate

A school climate refers to the quality and nature of school life; it reflects norms, goals, values, teaching and learning methods, and interpersonal relationships at school. Four main areas shape the climate: safety, relationships, teaching and learning, and the environmental structure. One of the fundamentally essential dimensions of school climate is interpersonal relationships, which is how each student feels connected to at least one responsible adult at school. Personal and supportive attitude, adaptive teaching and assessment methods for students, and belief in their ability influence students' persistence at school (Cohen et al., 2009).

There is growing evidence that school climate can affect students' social, behavioral, and learning environments. The social framework has a significant influence as qualitative and quantitative support, i.e., the number of resources the student can turn to when s/he needs and the likelihood that the student will use this network of connections (Zullig et al., 2010). Most studies address the extent to which the perception of school climate shapes literary adaptation; simultaneously, they give lower weight to the emotional and behavioral consequences. Surprisingly, given that in middle school, symptoms of depression, low self-esteem, and behavioral difficulties occur (Cohen et al., 2009).

School climate has a profound effect on the students' mental and emotional health. Many studies have found that a positive climate is directly related to declining students' absenteeism in middle and high schools due to its strong influence on motivation for learning, academic success, reducing violence, bullying, and sexual harassment and as being a protective factor for learning and overall positive development (Kuperminic et al., 2001).

Many studies document biological and psychological cognitive changes in early adolescence that may negatively affect the school environment (Way et al., 2007). The changes in middle schools concerning the relationship between teacher-student and the changes in the relationship with the peer group affect the students' perception of the school climate and their psychological and behavioral aspects. Way and colleagues (2007) examined the pathways of change in students' perceptions regarding four dimensions connected to school climate:

- Teacher support, peer group support
- Student autonomy in class
- Clarity and consistency of school rules and regulations

They examined the effect of these change pathways on the psychological and behavioral adjustment among 1451 adolescents at three different periods in middle schools. The findings indicate that all dimensions of school climate perception weaken during middle school. Moreover, a direct link has been found between this weakening and the students' psychological and behavioral adaptation (Way et al., 2007).

Other developmental theorists emphasize the importance of trust and caring in relationships, self-expression and autonomy in choices, and decision-making, as critical factors for normal development. A study of 1,415 American

and Chinese middle school adolescents examined the relationship between three dimensions of school climate (teacher support, peer group support, and opportunities for classroom autonomy), psychological adjustment, and learning. Positive correlations were found between the three dimensions of the climate, the student's self-esteem, and achievement grades. In addition, a negative relationship was found between teachers' support, peer group support, and depressive symptoms, i.e., the higher the teachers' and peer group support, the lower the depressive symptoms. These findings dominate both cultures and both genders (Jia et al., 2009).

Dimensions of school climate

Teacher-student relationship

The source of the educational practice lies in the teacher-student relationship as a relationship that represents a whole world of content, methods, and emotions. Various thinkers and philosophers like Buber and Fromm have emphasized the need for interpersonal relationships that stem from caring, concern, and responsibility toward others. Both emphasized the importance of the relationships that arise from the individual's inner desire to include others out of love. They see the human and caring relationship as a primary source of the individual's happiness (Shel, 2013). The social environment at school and academic satisfaction are closely intertwined with the teacher-student relationship. Satisfaction with school refers to enjoyment, interest, and desire to be at school (Zullig et al., 2010).

Gehlbach et al. (2012), which examined teacher-student relationship changes among middle school students, found that relationships tended to be less favorable throughout the year from the students' perspective. Moving to middle school, the student's relationship with their teachers tends to be less personal and less positive. Teacher-student relationship may be the key to understand the process of alienation from school. Students with a weak social connection with their teachers, tend to feel more detached and alienated. Studies on high school students' persistence point to poor relationships with teachers being central to leaving school (Zullig et al., 2010).

Supportive and caring teachers develop students with higher motivation and self-efficacy (Gehlbach et al., 2012). Supportive teachers are perceived by middle and high school students as those connected to their students on the emotional level, use different teaching strategies, push for students' academic success, and demonstrate decency when interacting with students (Suldo et al., 2009). Teachers' support has been shown to influence the students' behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement. Adolescents who exhibit school involvement in the emotional dimension tend to develop fewer emotional problems because they feel protected by the supportive relationships with the educational staff and peer group (Li & Lerner, 2011).

The support of the peer group

During adolescence, adolescents spend less time with their family and more with a peer group, usually within a school setting (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011). The term peer group includes different circles ranging from the best friends of those boys to all the teens from the same age group in their environment, regardless of the degree of closeness. School and class are social places by nature, and peer group has significant influences on achievement, behaviors, and beliefs within those places (Crosnoe & Johnson, 2011).

Mental well-being was found to be consistently associated with peer group support. The support of the peer group plays a significant role in the adolescents' adaptation over time. It is a predictor of emotional symptoms such as anxiety, social stress, depression, interpersonal relationships, and self-esteem (Walsh et al., 2010).

Despite the impact of family support and teacher-student relationships on educational outcomes, there is little information regarding the relationship between peer group support and these educational outcomes. The school is organized so that, besides studying and activities, there are also characteristics of social interactions within the peer group, such as sports activities, breaks, and mealtimes. Their peers' sense of social support and acceptance satisfies the adolescents' need for belonging and helps them develop satisfaction, influencing behavioral, emotional, and cognitive involvement (Wang & Eccles, 2012).

Perceiving the degree of school democracy

The democratic educational theories were primarily developed under the philosopher and psychologist John Dewey (1859-1952). Dewey has worked hard to benefit from free education based on the students' experience and not on "coercing" knowledge from above; this is what he called democracy. He stressed the need to expand the

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educational view beyond the learning relationship between teachers and students because education is the social process by nature (Dewey, 1969).

The democratic dimension is the school climatic component that relates to the sense of involvement, choice and decision-making, fairness, and the ability for autonomous self-expression. Democracy is not just a form of the regime but, in fact, a state of life, a culture that puts the person first, not the organization (Segal and Richter, 2007).

The degree of democracy at school depends not only on the name and central vision of the school but on the active applications of democratic educational approaches. Applying a democratic education approach allow students to take a significant part at school and perceive it as a creation they are partners in. Students' perception of school climate as democratic, contributes to increasing responsibility and participation in school activities, strengthens the students' persistence, and reduces violent behaviors (Lannegrans-Willems, 2012; Sliwka, 2008).

Ethical climate

Climate is a comprehensive and multidimensional concept that includes many factors such as interpersonal relationships, norms, the degree of supervision or freedom, cohesion, a sense of belonging and satisfaction, order and procedure, sharing, competitiveness, and more. Patterson (2005) defines the organizational climate as a concept that combines behavioral components, assumptions, and values shared by the organization members with a common corporate culture. Out of the idea of the organizational climate, Victor and Cullen (1988) deduced items dealing with morality and hence, called it an ethical climate. They define the moral organizational climate as a kind of element in the corporate culture. In their view, organizational culture is broader and includes overall components of behaviors and symbols. Specifically, the ethical climate pertains to the organizational norms that directly relate to the administrative procedures and practices with different ethical implications. Both researchers presented two dimensions of moral climate: a climate of caring and concern which works for the well-being of others, and the formal climate based on regulations and policies established by the organization, including professional employee codes (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

Victor and Cullen (1988) presented a classification of five ethical climates with empirical metrics for identification:

1. Caring, ethical climate
2. Instrumental ethical climate
3. The moral climate of "rules and regulations."
4. The ethical environment of "laws and codes."
5. The ethical environment of "independence."

Two dimensions characterize the five types of ethical climate: the first concerns the motive of the person who makes the moral decision (generosity or moral principles), and the second concerns the level from which the considerations for decision-making stem (the individual, organizational and social groups) (Zehava and Peled, 2003).

Focusing on two types of climate - the caring and the instrumental sharpens the distinction between them and defines the ethical climate as a caring climate that indicates the employees' concern for the well-being of others. This climate is a product of the decision-maker and the cosmopolitanism from which the problem for the whole, the motive of generosity and the consideration for making the decision, stems. In contrast, in the instrumental ethical climate, personal and organizational interest is emphasized. It is a product of the decision-maker, which is based on a single consideration for making the decisions. This climate is based on an instrumental reference towards the individual so that the individual is another organizational resource, where everyone in the organization maximizes only his/her benefit (Victor & Cullen, 1988).

Persistence at school

Students' persistence in the education system is expressed in their desire to continue learning and avoid leaving school. In 2000, the "Student Rights Law" was enacted in the Knesset. According to the law, the state is responsible for ensuring the child the optimal conditions for proper learning, while recognizing his/her needs and rights to meaningful learning. The state tries to guarantee these rights with the help of the education system and the various services available for children and youth to ensure the students' persistence in the education system and prevent the dropout phenomenon (Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, 2000).

Shaky relationships between students and school can affect their persistence or formal stay at school, even though they are detached from the learning process (Dover, 2005). Students' persistence in the education system is influenced by many factors, the student, the family and the community, yet quite a few of them are dependent and related to the education system and school. Various researchers (Cohen-Navot et al., 2001; Lahav, 2004; Sasson-Peretz, 1998; Calderon et al., 2009) pointed out key factors that affect students' persistence at school:

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1. **Family factors**: Characteristics of a low socio-economic situation such as families with many children, unemployment, or low income may influence a students' persistence at school, or they're dropping out.
2. **Cultural factors**: Schools have become a social arena where children are exposed to diverse behaviors, values , and norms. Cultural factors have been found to affect students' persistence so that the importance of education affects their desire to continue learning or leave school.
3. **Personal factors**: The students' personal characteristics which are connected to low academic achievement, problematic school behavior, many absences from school, negative attitudes towards school, social problems at school, in addition low motivation, are all considered factors that negatively affect students' persistence at school.
4. **School-related factors**: school climate is a significant factor that affects the students' persistence at school. Many researchers and educators point out that inefficient teaching methods and low teaching quality, low expectations of the students by their teachers, are significant factors behind staying or leaving school. One of the salient strategies identified as effective in ensuring students' persistence in learning is creating a safe, protected, and positive school climate and promoting diversity, uniqueness, and creativity.

Ethical climate and persistence

Various studies have found that school climate is one of the practical and influencing factors in students' persistence or drop out. Rosenthal (2003) argues that dropouts, as opposed to persistent students, have low self-esteem, low self-confidence, feelings of worthlessness, problems with interpersonal communication, impulsive behavior, difficulty in self-control, and higher attention deficit disorders. It is necessary to create a positive school climate that contributes to strengthening students' persistence in school.

In a study by Levy-Yitzhak (2007) that focuses on the intrapsychic experience of dropout youth versus persistent youth, the researcher presents themes that explain the dropout factors such as problems in the functioning, learning, and performance, low achievement, low self-esteem, low satisfaction and a sense of alienation from school. Bachmann (2002) argues that a school ethical climate affects the nature of the student's connection to the educational system: feeling protected, staff support, and close interpersonal relationships. When these are missing or defective, the risk of dropping out increases. Adams and Christensen (2000) add that when trust is broken, cooperation is terminated, even if both parties have apparent interests in maintaining the relationship between them. Trust plays a vital role in the success of teaching and learning processes—a strong correlation between trust and school attendance (Adams and Christensen, 2000). Trust between the involved persons at school enables an open school climate and healthy interpersonal relationships. Trust is more acceptable in an environment of caring than in an atmosphere of rules (Coleman, 2008). Consequently, it can be noted that trust can be a mediating factor between the ethical climate at school and persistence in studying. Trust is more significant in schools with a caring, moral environment.

Hypotheses: (a) there is a positive relationship between leadership style and school ethical climate, (b) there is a positive relationship between human-centered leadership style and students' persistence at school and (c) there is a positive relationship between school ethical climate and students' persistence in school.

The main research question: Is there any connection between leadership style, school climate, and students' persistence at school in Arab society in Israel?

Methodology
The research method
The present study is based on the quantitative paradigm, which uses questionnaires that examine both school climate and leadership style. In quantitative research, the data can be quantified and statistically processed. The quantitative research paradigm assumes that knowledge is "there" waiting to be uncovered and that the researchers' role is to be "objective" and not allow their attitudes, values, and beliefs to penetrate the research process. Epistemologically, quantitative research is deductive and confirmatory (Strauss, 1987).
Study population and sample
The sample Includes teachers from Arab middle and high schools in Israel. The sample included 200 teachers, 134 males, and 66 females. The average years of seniority are 7.5 (range from two years to 15 years in teaching). One hundred sixty-four teachers with a bachelor's degree (82%) and 36 with a master's degree (18%).

Research tool
Respondents were asked to fill in three questionnaires: the first examines school ethical climate (ethical/instrumental), according to (Victor & Cullen, 1987); the second concerns the leadership style (human-focused/task-focused) in middle and high schools in the Arab sector and the third examines the demographic variables.
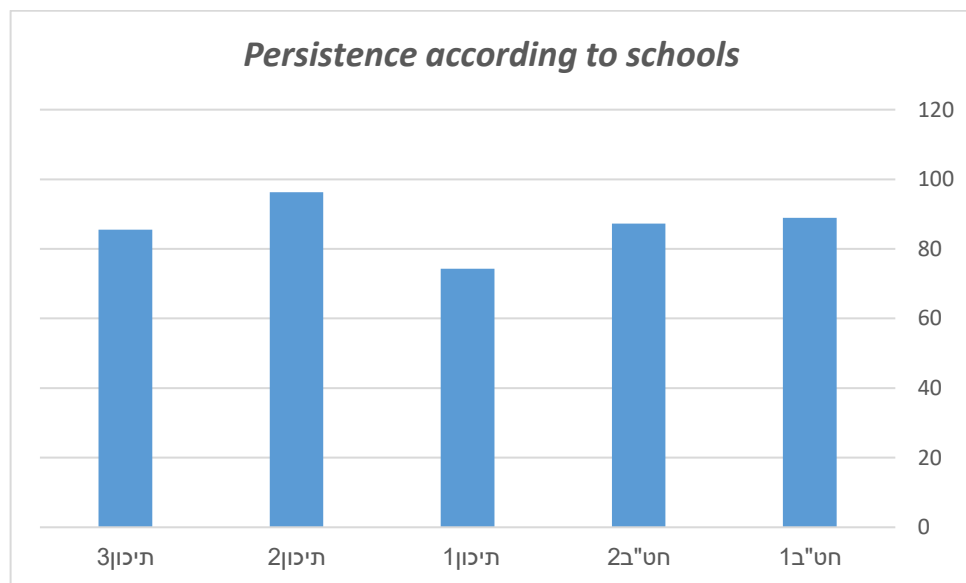
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Findings

The present study examines the relationship between school leadership style, climate, and students' persistence at schools in Arab society in Israel. The following data is taken from the Ministry of Education's website regarding the percentage of industry in each researched school:

Table 1: *Percentages of persistence in the selected middle and high schools in Arab society (data of 2019 from schools of Ordinary Education).*

School name	Percentage of persistence
High school 1	74.3
High school 2	96.3
High school 3	85.5
Middle school 1	88.9
Middle school 2	87.3

Diagram 1*: Persistence data according to schools*:

It can be seen from Table 1 and Figure 1 that High School 2 has the highest percentage of persistence (96.3%) followed by Middle School 1 (88.9), then High School 2 with a percentage of 87.3, followed by High School 3 (85.5%).

The lowest is High School 1, with a persistence percentage of 74.3%.

The present study examines the relationship between school leadership style, climate, and students' persistence in Arab society in Israel. For carrying out the research, statistical data (means and standard deviations) of the variables of the study according to the school were calculated. Data is presented in Table 2 and Diagram 2.

Table 2*: Averages and Standard Deviations of school climate and school leadership style:*

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	M-SCH* 1 N=40		M-SCH 2 N=40		H-SCH** 1 N=40		H-SCH 2 N=40		H-SCH 3 N=40		Total N=200	
	M	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**	**M**	**SD**
Caring ethical climate	**3.26**	0.123	**3.28**	0.115	**2.93**	0.067	**3.77**	0.228	**3.37**	0.242	**3.33**	0.310
Instrumental ethical climate	**2.16**	0.261	**3.09**	0.168	**4.62**	0.130	**1.51**	0.315	**3.47**	0.114	**2.96**	1.095
Human-focused leadership style	**4.59**	0.167	**4.21**	0.155	**1.37**	0.188	**4.69**	0.130	**2.62**	0.263	**3.49**	1.312
Task-oriented leadership style	**1.51**	0.165	**2.30**	0.179	**4.57**	0.139	**1.20**	0.120	**3.59**	0.128	**2.60**	1.278
Persistence	**88.9**		**87.3**		**74.3**		**96.3**		**85.5**			

* M-SCH= Middle school. ** H-SCH= High school

Diagram 2*: Values of school climate and leadership style:*
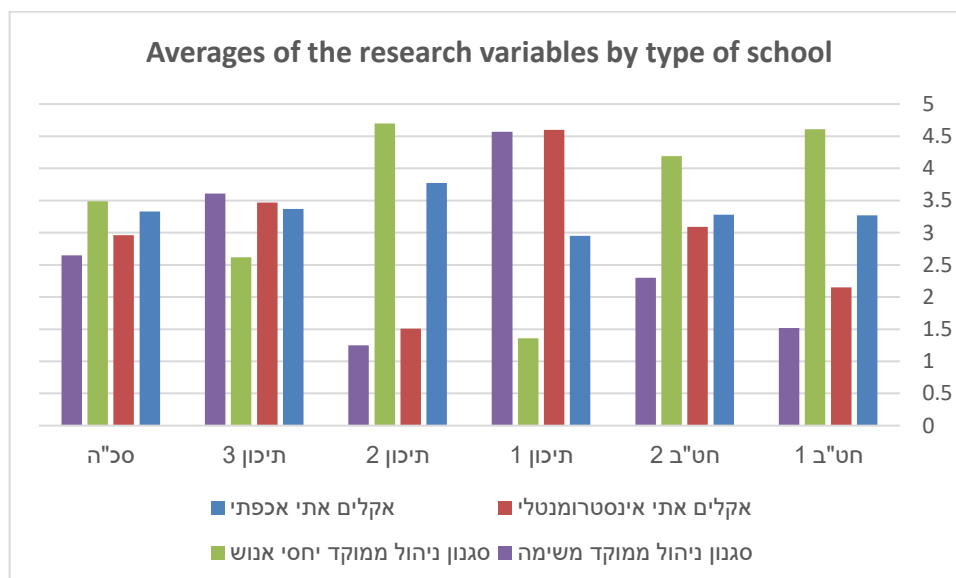
It can be seen from Table 2 and Figure 2 that in High School 2, which has the highest persistence rate (96.3%), the perception of the school climate as caring is extremely high (M = 3.77; SD = 0.228). High School 2 has a high rating of human-focused leadership style (M = 4.69; SD = 0.130). Middle School 1, which has a persistence percentage of 88.9%, the perception of the school climate as caring is (M = 3.26; SD = 0.123). Middle School 1 has a high rating of human-focused leadership style (M = 4.59; SD = 0.167). Concerning Middle School 2, which has a persistence percentage of 87.3%, the perception of the school climate as caring is the highest (M = 3.28; SD = 0.115). Middle School 2 has a high ranking of human-focused leadership style (M = 4.21; SD = 0.155). High School 1, which has a very low persistence rate (74.3%), the instrumental school climate perception is extremely high (M = 4.62; SD = 0.130). High school 1 has a high rating of task-oriented leadership style (M=4.57; SD=0.139). High School 3 that has a persistence percentage of 85.5%, the instrumental school climate perception is (M = 3.47; SD = 0.114). It also has a high rating of task-oriented leadership style (M = 3.59; SD = 0.128).

To test the significance of the differences presented above, one-way Anova tests were calculated to examine the difference between the averages of the climate (caring/instrumental) and the averages of leadership styles (human-focused/task-focused) schools. Results are presented in Table 2.

Table 3: *One-way Anova results of school climate and school leadership style*

	F
A caring climate	$F_{(4,95)}= 59.501^{**}$
Instrumental climate	$F_{(4,95)}= 631.411^{**}$

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Human-focused leadership style	$F_{(4,95)}= 1219.801^{**}$
Task-oriented leadership style	$F_{(4,95)}= 1811.012^{**}$

Note: ** - Significance level of $p < 0.001$

Table 3 shows a statistically significant difference between teachers' caring perception of ethical climate among all schools [$F_{(4,95)}=59.501$, $p<001$] so that the average of the caring perceptions towards the school ethical climate is higher in High School 2, followed by Middle School 1, followed by Middle School 2, followed by High School 3 , while the lowest is High School 1. It was also found a statistically significant difference between teachers' instrumental perceptions regarding the school ethical climate among all schools [$F_{(4,95)}=631.411$, $p<001$] so that the average of the instrumental perception regarding the ethical climate is higher in High School 1, then High School 3, followed by Middle School 2 and then Middle School 1, while the lowest is High School 2. There is a statistically significant difference between teachers' caring perceptions of the human-centered leadership style [$F_{(4,95)}=1219.801$, $p<001$] so that the average human-centered perception of the leadership style is higher in High School 2, followed by Middle School 1, followed by Middle School 2, followed by High School 3, while the lowest is High School 1. The findings also show a statistically significant difference between the teachers' perception of a task-oriented leadership style among all schools [$F_{(4,95)}=1811.012$, $p<001$] so that the average of the perception of task-focused leadership style is higher in High School 1, then High School 3, followed by Middle School 2 and then Middle School 1, while the lowest is High School 2.

In order to test the hypotheses of the study that relate to the relationships between climate perception and leadership style and persistence, Pearson tests were calculated to test the correlations between the variables. Results are presented in Table 3:

Table 4: *Correlation results for testing the relationship between school climate, leadership style and persistence*:

	Persistence	Ethical caring climate	Ethical instrumental climate	Human-focused leadership style	Task-oriented leadership style
Ethical caring climate	$r= 0.791^{**}$		$r= -0.691^{**}$	$r= -0.618^{**}$	$r= 0.591^{**}$
Ethical instrumental climate	$r= -0.946^{**}$	$r= -0.691^{**}$		$r= 0.910^{**}$	$r= 0.945^{**}$
Human-focused leadership style	$r= 0.897^{**}$	$r= 0.591^{**}$	$r=- 0.910^{**}$	$r=- 0.975^{**}$	
Task-oriented leadership style	$r= -0.899^{**}$	$r= -0.618^{**}$	$r= 0.945^{**}$	$r= -0.975^{**}$	

Note: ** - Significance level of $p < 0.001$

Table 4 shows a statistically significant strong positive relationship between perceiving the ethical climate as caring and persistence ($r = 0.791$, $p < 0.001$); so that the more caring the perception, the higher the persistence, and vice versa. Moreover, a statistically significant strong negative relationship is found between perceiving the ethical climate as instrumental and persistence ($r = -0.946$, $p < 0.001$); so that the more instrumental the perception, the lower the persistence. In addition, a statistically significant positive relationship is found between human-centered leadership style and persistence ($r = 0.897$, $p < 0.001$), so the more human-centered the leadership style is, the higher the persistence, and vice versa. Furthermore, a statistically significant strong negative relationship is found between task-focused leadership style and persistence ($r = -0.899$, $p < 0.001$); so that the more task-focused the leadership style is, the lower the persistence. And, a statistically significant moderate positive relationship is found between human-centered leadership style and a caring school climate ($r = 0.591$, $p < 0.001$); so the more human-centered the leadership style is, the more caring the school climate perception will be. Finally, a statistically significant positive relationship is found between task-focused leadership style and the instrumental

school climate (r = 0.945, p <0.001); so the more task-oriented the leadership style is, the more instrumental the perception of the school climate will be, and vice versa. **Thus the three hypotheses were confirmed.**

Discussion

Nowadays, the leadership of education is distinctive from other areas of leadership.

It is distinguished as a separate academic field because school is perceived as different from industrial companies and other organizations. This field was founded in 1875 when the first book for school principals was published. American principals have gained much autonomy, and the increase in the number of schools has required specific attention to the training of school principals. The purpose of the field is controversial: several researchers see it as a field of application, whose goal is to develop knowledge that focuses on the personnel problems (principals, supervisors, etc.), whereas others attach importance to the scientific thinking as well as a critical and empirical examination of theories. The field of education leadership also has secondary objectives, such as improving the training of principals, examining the effects of school reforms, and evaluating various processes conducted at schools.

There is no doubt that education is a significant basis in every person's life that helps him shape his worldview and personality, make personal and professional decisions, and create a good base for promoting the individual in society on several levels. Believing that good education is the basis for a better life, we chose to examine the issue of persistence with an emphasis on the school ethical climate (both caring and instrumental) as an influential factor and leadership style (human-focused and task-focused). The present study examines the impact of school climate on its various dimensions (the instrumental ethical climate, law and code, and moral, caring climate according to Victor & Cullen, 1987), and leadership style on students' persistence in Arab middle and high schools. **Hypotheses:** (a) there is a positive relationship between leadership style and school ethical climate, (b) there is a positive relationship between human-centered leadership style and students' persistence at school and (c) there is a positive relationship between school ethical climate and students' persistence in school.
The main research question: Is there any connection between leadership style, school climate, and students' persistence at school in Arab society in Israel?
The primary purpose of this study is to examine whether there is a relationship between leadership style, school climate, and students' persistence at schools in Arab society in Israel. For examining such a relationship, teachers were given a questionnaire to explore the ethical environment (caring and instrumental) and explore leadership styles (human-focused and task-oriented). Over the years, many studies have been done on the subject. Most studies have shown unequivocally that school climate affects students' dropout, based on the extensive literary background in this study, but few have examined the impact of ethical environment and leadership style on students' persistence, especially in Arab society. The hypotheses of the study are:
 (a) there is a positive relationship between leadership style and school ethical climate; (b) there is a positive relationship between human-centered leadership style and students' persistence at school; and (c) there is a positive relationship between school ethical climate and students' persistence in school.
Dropout from school is one of the risk behaviors that exist among adolescents. It has negative consequences on dropouts both in their present life and later in the future (Cohen-Navot et al., 2001; Lahav, 2004). Various studies have mentioned that school is a significant factor influencing students' attendance, so that the educational challenge is to understand the persistence processes better so that educators can intervene and support students until they complete their studying successfully.

The set of the leader's organizational behavior patterns towards his subordinates is called leadership style. This style stems from the principal's assumptions and values, the goals and norms of his behavior, and the employees' professional level and motivation. These perceptions are reflected by the behaviors and management practices the principals adapt (Menz, 1991). School leadership style has a direct impact on the school climate and affects both teachers and students. (Blase, 1986, Farber, 1983). Hence, we confirm the first hypothesis which assumes a positive relationship between leadership style and school ethical climate. In the second part of the first hypothesis, we thought that the more human the leadership style is, the more caring the ethical climate will be. For example, in High School 2, it was found that the average of the human-focused perception regarding leadership style is the highest. Moreover, High School 2 shows the highest average of caring perception regarding the ethical climate. On the contrary, in High School 1 it was found that the average of human-focused perception concerning leadership style is the lowest with the lowest average of caring perception concerning the ethical climate. The success of principals, nowadays, depends more than ever on collaborations with others. Collaborations can be in the intra-organizational circle with the teaching staff, and also in the outer circle with customers, suppliers,

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supervisors, instructors and other factors (Opletka, 2007). The leader's behavior patterns towards his subordinates is called leadership style. This style stems from both the leader's personal assumptions and values, his/her goals and norms of behavior, and the employees' professional level and motivation.

The results of the study also show a positive relationship between human-focused leadership style and persistence. Hence, we confirm the second research hypothesis, so that in High School 1, which is characterized by the highest average of human-focused leadership style (M = 4.7), we get high persistence rates (96.3).

And at the same time, High School 1, with the lowest perception average of human-focused leadership style (M = 1.37), also shows the lowest percentage of persistence (74.3). In a study that examined the impact of teachers' perception of school principal's leadership style and decision-making style, on teachers' perception of their profession and job satisfaction, it was found that leadership style based on change and innovation affects teachers' satisfaction, their perception and the principal's style of leadership (Bolger, 2001). The relationship between teachers and school principal documented many cases in which teachers refuse to obey the principal's instructions, especially when they do not trust him and they perceive principal's instructions as unreasonable (Snowden & Gorton, 2002). Another study suggests that an authoritarian leadership style adversely affects employees' attitudes and beliefs in their principal and their satisfaction (Sagie, 2002).

The study results confirm the third hypothesis, which states that in schools with a caring, ethical climate, the persistence percentage is higher (High School 2 shows the highest average perception of the caring environment - 3.77 and the highest percentage of persistence - 96.3.

Accordingly, the lower the ethical, caring climate, the higher the percentage of school persistence is (e.g., High School 1). These findings reinforce the hypothesis that there is a link between the school ethical climate and persistence, so that the more caring the school climate is, the higher the persistence average will be. A caring environment will be mainly promoted by the decision-maker who cares for those around him (Victor & Cullen, 1987).

So, schools should be characterized by values of loyalty to people and respect for their integrity (Start, 1991).

In schools characterized by an instrumental ethical climate, the students' level of persistence is low.

For example, High School 1 shows the highest average of instrumental climate perception (4.62) and the lowest persistence percentage (74.3).

The present study's findings are consistent with other studies that show that school, the classroom will all its dynamics and processes are related to students' persistence at school, beyond the relationship attributed to the background, personality, and family factors. In his study, Levy (2007) claims a link between dropout and school climate, whether directly or indirectly affect factors such as feeling protected, staff support, and close interpersonal relationships, which form part of an optimal ethical climate; when these are deficient or missing, the chance of dropout, increases.

The results of this study indicate the effect of the ethical climate on students' persistence at school, and that an optimal and caring ethical climate leads to the intensification of students' persistence.

In addition, the results indicate the effect of leadership style on the ethical, caring climate that leads to a positive impact on the persistence data. The current research contributes to the literature review, and principals can understand the importance of the ethical climate and their leadership style as factors that have a far-reaching impact on diverse aspects of their schools. Consequently, there is a need to invest in improving the ethical climate and leadership style if necessary.

Summary and Conclusions

The study results show that a positive ethical and caring climate is an essential factor for a healthy and proper education system. The study results show a connection between leadership style and school moral climate so that the more human-focused the leadership style is, the more caring the ethical environment will be.

The study results indicate a positive relationship between a caring, ethical climate and students' persistence at school.

The relationship between leadership style, school climate and students' persistence in middle and high schools in Arab society in Israel

Hence, there is an emergent need to foster a more caring ethical climate and improve it. It can be said that effective principals who work for teachers' compliance within their authority avoid using force and coercion and prefer empowering teachers and strengthening their commitment to the school.

Add to this, the use of expertise to promote trust between the principal and his staff increases the teachers' motivation and loyalty to the organization. It has been found that a leadership style based on positive, egalitarian relationships of collaboration between principals and teachers, allows for similar relationships between the teachers. They develop communication patterns of cooperation and mutual support instead of competition and striving against each other.

The school can produce a variety of climates, but a school system that wants to promote education, achievement, and belonging should emphasize the development of a caring, ethical environment that is driven by social motives, caring for others, to increase persistence rates. The caring climate is a more positive moral climate that leads to both an increase in trust and persistence rates.

The belief that school is the natural place for every student where students receive an education that prepares him/her for a better life places the phenomenon of persistence as a significant phenomenon. Persistence on coming to school reduces the risk of exposing children to negative wonders and behaviors such as drugs and violence.

These behaviors can negatively affect the life of the students. In the Arab sector, where persistence is less than in the Jewish sector, all the reasons for this phenomenon must be examined, including the ethical climate at schools and the leadership style of the school principals. The factors that affect persistence at school can be used to find ways to improve the situation and increase the percentage of persistence. School climate and leadership style factors are factors that school administration can influence; the benefit of enhancing them will affect the school, teachers, and students.

Research recommendations

Strong emphasis should be placed on systemic improvement of school culture and climate from class and upwards, with effective collaboration between students, teachers, and parents and also strengthening the bond between the educational staff and students. While principals, supervisors, or education policymakers want to find ways to increase the persistence rates, they should attach more importance to the school climate and cultivate a more human-focused leadership style. Priorities can be expressed in various ways, beginning from creating awareness of the vital contribution of school and classroom climates, going over the students' perception for improving their educational process, and diverting more resources and efforts to improve it. A leadership style that relies on the principal's support for the teachers, their participation in decision-making, and the formulation of school policy increases motivation among teachers and reduces burnout from work.

As educators, who are a critical factor in working on education, we need to understand the importance of fostering a positive ethical school climate. Principals need to adopt a more collaborative policy with the teaching staff to create a more caring school climate to try to promote it as much as possible. We have to increase the percentage of persistence significantly.

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