

Research Article

**The Role of Principals, Teachers and Officials in the Implementation of Inclusion Programs and Integration into Education System in Arab-Palestinian Society in Israel**

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**Abstract**

The current study examines the implementation of inclusion and integration programs within the "MLA" program (another learning space) in the Arab education system in Israel and the share of principals and the responsible education staff. The success and ability to contain and self-image are related to the academic staff's management style and professionalism operating in Palestinian Arab society in Israel. Various studies have shown that trust between teachers and the principal facilitates cooperation, greater openness between people, and strengthens group cohesion. The purpose of the current study is to examine how management, inclusion, and self-image styles are cornerstones of the success of these programs in "MLA" classes. The current study was conducted using a combined methodology (qualitative and quantitative) involving 106 female and male teachers from secondary schools in Palestinian Arab society in Israel. The researchers used a three-part structured questionnaire, and in addition, conducted open-ended interviews with five female and male teachers who teach "MLA" classes and five female and male teachers who do not teach these classes. The study's findings showed a positive relationship between the creation of a culture of inclusion, a policy of inclusion, the nurture of doing inclusion, and the level of self-image among the participants. In addition, the findings of the study indicated differences in perceptions and attitudes between the two groups of teachers mentioned above. Despite the successes in the results of the

implementation of inclusion and integration programs, there are still gaps and backlogs in students' achievements in Arab-Palestinian education compared to students in Jewish education in Israel.

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**Keywords:** management styles, inclusion and integration, learning and dropout difficulties, self-image, teacher training, academic achievement

## Introduction

School is an essential and fundamental pillar in any reformed society. Its importance and centrality in human life have made it one of the most researched subjects. Many studies have attempted to deepen the knowledge about the characteristics of the school, its development, the values it instills, the various connections between all the factors that affect it and those affected by it. The school is a warm and supportive place for all students, including struggling students, and in our case, 'MLA' classroom students. Students of these classes and the like (TLM, ITGAR, MABAR... and more), defined as 'struggling' students and who are at risk, were designed in the various divisions to provide them with an appropriate response.

Various studies (Avgar, Berkowitz, Shalev-Vigisser 2012; Arar and Massry-Herzallah, 2016, etc.) have shown that trust between teachers and principals increases collaboration and openness between people and strengthens group cohesion. The role of school principals is to lead the school from an educational and pedagogical point of view to improve the education and learning of all the students. As the school leader, the principal must see the school system on various dimensions and areas and create close connections between them for the success of all students. This leadership applies to all students, including struggling students studying in the 'TLM,' 'MLA,' 'Omits,' 'MBAR,' and various integration and inclusion classes, and ensuring that these students receive an appropriate response to their unique needs. To this end, the principal must adopt a management style that can assist in leading effective learning that requires diverse methods that encourage active and reflective learning at the individual and group level and appropriate assessment methods in all learning frameworks.

Hence and following what has been mentioned above, there is likely a connection between creating a culture of inclusion and nurturing the integration and level of self-image among the participants. In light of this, there is a vital need for this type of research in schools, especially in middle schools in Palestinian Arab society in Israel, to examine teachers' perceptions regarding this issue. To examine the subject of the study, several hypotheses were established: A. a connection will be found between the creation of the inclusive culture and the level of self-image among the participants. B. a connection will be found between creating the inclusion policy and the level of self-image among the participants. C. a connection will be found between nurturing the inclusion's practice and the level of self-image among the participants. D. there will be differences in attitudes and perceptions of inclusion among female and male teachers who teach in the 'MLA' classes and female and male teachers who do not teach in these classes.

In light of the existing research literature on the effect of management styles on the inclusion and self-image of "MLA" students in middle school, it is interesting to investigate this topic in middle schools in Palestinian Arab society in Israel.

Therefore, the questions at the heart of this study are: Is there a relationship between management styles and the inclusion and self-esteem of MLA program students? Are there differences between teachers who teach in MLA classes and teachers who do not teach in these classes? Moreover, how successful are these programs in implementation and achievement?

This is a pioneering study that examines the impact of the management style on the inclusion and self-image of the students of the "MLA" program in schools in Arab society in Israel.

### **Inclusion and integration of struggling students and youth at risk**

School management styles should consider that school students are a heterogeneous population characterized by educational, emotional, socioeconomic, and other differences. Principals should accommodate all students because the school is a warm and supportive home for all its students. Areas of inclusion need to be expressed in different areas, including the field of study, social, economic, emotional, behavioral, physical, healthy family, and other areas. For their part, researchers Razer, Mittelberg, Mottola, Bar-Shoshan (2014) raise one of the questions on inclusion, whether processes aimed at increasing inclusion in education contradict processes aimed at raising achievement in education, or are these processes that can be complementary.

Razer and colleagues argue that national and international studies show that students' academic level from a weak socioeconomic class is significantly lower than the academic level of students from a high socioeconomic class, including the low achievements of students in Arab education in Israel compared to their counterparts in Jewish education. These studies show that the principles of inclusive education can be combined with the pursuit of high academic achievement for all students. The school is traditionally required to function primarily for the provision of education, and on the other hand, it is required for social inclusion and adjustment of the framework for all its students because a combination of these two goals today is the school's primary task (Barak-Medina, 2020). Benvenisti and Friedman (2020) noted that the effective assimilation of emotional-social learning requires creating an environment that nurtures, promotes, and strengthens skills among students according to their developmental stage. This broad environment also integrates the family and community.

### **"MLA": A program to handle students' dropouts in Israel**

A report at the "Adva" Center indicates that the rate of those eligible for the matriculation certificate in 2015 was 56%, just over half of the age group. The data are worrying when in 2014, about one-fifth of the age group of youth (19.5%) did not study in the twelfth grade. The highest rates were recorded among youth in Arab society in Israel and this age group among ultra-Orthodox communities (45.7%). The highest rate among youth in Arab society in Israel was among the Bedouin in the Negev (36.2%), among the youth in Arab society in general, excluding the Bedouin and the Druze, was 19.7%, among the Druze youth it was 15.5%, (in East Jerusalem, according to estimates for 2012/13, the rate was 36%). The main reason for this phenomenon was dropping out of school. In the transition between 2013/14 and 2014/15, 2.1% of tenth-grade students in Israel dropped out (1,981 students), 5.0% of eleventh-grade students (4,651), and 1.1% of twelfth-grade students (942), and a total of 7,574 male and female students. Among the youth in Jewish societies in Israel, the highest rates were recorded among new immigrants who immigrated since 2006 and among the ultra-Orthodox: in 11th grade, 16.2% of all new immigrants dropped out and 15.2% of all ultra-Orthodox. In all cases, the boy's dropout rate is higher than the rate for girls. To the female and male dropouts should be added another group with a low chance of getting a matriculation certificate: those in the care of regular visiting officers. According to data from the Council for the Welfare of the Child, in the 2013/14 school year, their number among upper-division students was 38,200, with 62% of them Jews and 32% Arabs. Only about a third of dropout students study in other settings: yeshivas or schools of the Ministry of Economics. In 2014, 19.2% of dropout students moved to Ministry of Economy schools and 13.8% too large yeshivas (Svirsky and Conon-Atias, 2017; Nasser-Abu Alhija and Israelashvili, 2021).

The staff of the "MLA" program works to plan educational channels to reach students at risk of dropping out while constantly looking for opportunities to make binding and regular contact with those students and create learning opportunities tailored to the needs of each. The program adapts itself to the changing

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needs of each student. The student is offered a space of belonging that varies according to his connection to the mother's class and the school. Each student is placed in a mother class and comes to the "MLA" according to a personal plan determined for him. For the success of the "MLA" program, criteria, goals, and objectives for the implementation of the program were set, including:

- The number of students in the MLA class ranges from 10-20 students according to needs and subject to the supervisor's approval.
- A weekly basket of hours in the MLA class is at least 30 hours (school hours + standard hours from the department).
- Learning in small groups not to exceed five students.
- Make sure that the MLA classroom is open all year round and staffed by at least one adult.

The program initiators have set several goals and objectives in the hope that the MLA program will fulfill them. In the last two decades, the increase in the construction of elementary and middle schools in Israel has increased significantly (CBS, 2013).

The Shahar Division of the Ministry of Education notes that the MLA program helps deal with the phenomenon of children dropping out of the school system in schools. Focuses on finding a way to establish regular contact with the students identified for the program and create learning opportunities tailored to each individual's needs. The program establishes a good learning experience and enables optimal return and belonging to the school's framework and learning system. For each student located at the MLA, an adapted learning program is built that strengthens him according to his needs. The type of response varies and is flexible depending on the level of the detachment of the student from the framework and ranges from intensive and individual reference to group reinforcement to the course of his integration in the classroom.

In the Arab education system in Israel, most middle schools are characterized as homogeneous in terms of their population, with students from Arab society in Israel, in its various shades: Muslims, Christians, and Druze. The dropout phenomenon, both overt and covert, is expected in the education system and is more prominent in schools in the Arab sector (Reches, Rudnicki, 2008: 10, 55-59). According to the 2017 yearbook, since 2012, there has been a decrease in the rate of dropouts, and the percentage of students who were in the care of regular visiting officers is declining. However, until the 2016/2017 school year, higher dropout rates were still observed in the Arab education system, especially among Bedouin in the Negev and ultra-Orthodox localities in Jewish society (Berman, 2017: 146-160). Therefore, in recent years, there have been efforts to reduce dropout rates in Arab schools in Israel, and superiors are outlining various programs and reforms to eradicate the phenomenon or at least reduce it (Nasser-Abu Alhija and Israelashvili, 2021).

The "MLA" program and other programs are intended to find suitable frameworks for students who are struggling and at-risk youth and to increase their ability to persevere and motivate them to go to school and study. However, the question remains open: How successful are these programs and their implementation in the Arab education system in Israel?

### **School management styles and their impact on "MLA" program applications**

"MLA" classrooms and the like (TLM, ITGAR, MBAR ... and more) were designed in the various divisions to address the population of students who have difficulty learning and are at risk of dropping out. School principals are not unified in management styles, and they run their institutions heterogeneously and in different patterns of conduct. However, the Ministry of Education has established unified courses of action with flexibility, depending on the student population under their

management. The research published by the "Avnei Rasha" Institute states that the training of school principals and their role is to lead the school educationally and pedagogically to serve all students and work to improve their educational and learning situation. The goals facing the manager focus on four primary areas of management that assist him in the role (Givoli, Heiman, and Ofarim, 2012):

- A. Design a school vision and the ability to manage the required change
- B. Leadership of the educational staff and the proper form of management for professional development
- C. Ability to focus on the individual (individual reference)
- D. Managing school relationships with the community.

The school principal, as the leader of the educational institution in charge, should have a comprehensive vision of the school system in all areas in order to bring about the success of all students to the appropriate degree, including challenging students studying in special classes, such as 'TLM,' 'MLA,' 'OMITS,' 'MBAR' and more. The importance of management style is prominent in leading exceptional and practical learning to help use diverse and appropriate methods for active learning, both at the individual level and in the group. Focuses on short-term activities, such as the types of executive and managerial management, while some managers work in the long-term, such as entrepreneurial managers and system managers.

Adizes (1979) deals with basic concepts; one is "effectiveness," which means achieving the desired and needed results and focusing on them. The second concept is "Efficiency," which means performing actions while focusing on the process with desire and interest. There is a significant difference between the two concepts, with "effectiveness" focusing on doing the right things, whereas "efficiency" focuses on the right way of doing things.

Thus, there is a difficulty in achieving both simultaneously because focusing on one will be at the expense of the other. Thus, the Adizes approach refers to additional concepts: "long-term" and "short-term," related to different management styles:

A. Producer: Focuses on short-term performance to achieve immediate results concerning parties related to the educational institution, such as supervision, parents, and students.

B. Administrative Manager: A manager who strives primarily for short-term results and is a manager who sees his role as managing his educational institution daily, focusing mainly on the excellent work processes to achieve immediate results and in the short term as possible.

C. Entrepreneur: The principal emphasizes the strengthening of the connection between the entrepreneurial experience of execution and the person's desire and mental attitude. Thus, he requires mental maturity and broad vision and vision to achieve the right balance and response to all parties related to the school (Ben Porat, 2013). Ben Porat claims that sometimes many entrepreneurial managers pay a personal price due to lack of experience and personal and managerial maturity in the competitive market today, also in the field of education. Ben Porat offers entrepreneurial managers the tools that help them and presents them with the methods to achieve their goals without paying a personal price if possible. In this, he combines wisdom with other valuable insights like a sense of humor and personal experience. In Ben Porat's opinion, this is a kind of management style that focuses on the right things in the long run, and at the same time, he gives up doing the right things in the short run.

D. Integrator: Such a manager is a management style defined as system thinking. It focuses on proper work processes and long-term outcomes, intending to adapt to the learning environment in all its components, including many elements, and developing strategies to lead the desired and necessary changes.

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Berger's research findings (2015) highlight the role of the successful principal as a leader who engages all staff members in the educational-learning process, and his ability to promote and make the school a warm and attractive school, and acts as an authoritative principal who implements and defines permissible and forbidden boundaries. Such a principal supports and strives to provide an appropriate response to the needs of the various students and those with differences at the educational and learning level alike. Berger argues that a manager-leader works to approximate his physical, personal, and social distance through his physical presence and while transmitting non-verbal emotional messages, and who demonstrates moderation, restraint, and self-control in times of crisis and conflict. This manager creates a network of support and sympathy for the ideas and implementation of his actions and maintains connections both at the individual level and at the group and community level.

It is important to note that school principals in Israel generally belong to different types of supervision. Nevertheless, the traditional education schools in the Arab sector all belong to the state supervision, which in 2011 accounted for 24% of the total distribution of the other principals in the country. While in the Jewish sector, school principals belong to several types of supervision. From the analysis of the data presented by Givoli and his colleagues in their study, it is also possible to learn about the differences in the composition of managers by gender in the various sectors. In the Jewish sector, for example, women constitute a majority among the principals, and their proportion reaches 67% of all principals in this sector, while in the Arab sector, the principals are men: 67% in the Arab sector, 94% in the Bedouin sector and 84% in the Druze sector (Givoli, Heiman and Ofarim, 2012).

Bar-Lev (2009), for his part, tries to discuss the question: How central is the principal's influence? This question related to the work of the principal highlights the degree of influence of the principal and his management style, especially in the education system in the Arab sector in Israel. Bar-Lev emphasizes that the more the principal is perceived by the other parties related to him as a driving force in the school, the more noticeable his contribution and actions are, whether in the positive or negative dimension. In recent years, principals have been given more authority, independence, and autonomy in school management than the loosening of Israel's central supervision of educational institutions, which often causes principals to refrain from being enterprising or systemic principals. The findings of Hamdallah's study of the clan's involvement in education in Arab localities show that the heads of local authorities in Arab-Palestinian society see the clan's involvement in education as a kind of "intervention" that harms the quality of the entire system, both administratively and pedagogically. Principals tend to act without the participation of team members who are subordinate to it and connected to the system; most of these managers are afraid to go beyond the fixed framework given and work to preserve the existing one (Hamdallah, 2021).

There are differences in the educational perceptions of principals and differences in the patterns of conduct among principals in general, not only in the education system in the Arab sector. In addition to the entrepreneurial and managerial approach, researchers Hall and colleagues added a critical approach, which is the responsive approach, in which the principal responds to occurrences and does not initiate, but instead acts to reduce harm and does not take initiatives to run his institution optimally (Hall & Hord, 1984). In light of this, Kylie and his colleagues advocate managerial flexibility on the part of school principals who rely on a wide variety of managerial styles, tailored to the situations he or she faces. They see that managerial flexibility in school is required to provide an appropriate response to all students according to their different needs (Kelley, Thornton & Daugherty, 2005).

**The relationship between management styles and the degree of trust between principals and teachers**

Many studies have pointed to the characteristics of the schools in which the integration program takes place, the most important of which is the commitment of school principals to present themselves with an inclusive educational vision and to be able to assimilate this vision among other school leadership bodies such as teachers and parents. The success of principals today depends more on collaboration with others, as in the organizational circle of the teaching staff and also on the outer circle of people associated with the school as supervisors, counselors, and other factors (Barak-Medina, 2020; Opletka, 2010; Hehir & Katzman, 2012). The principal's management style is reflected in his behavior and professional level, motivation towards others, and the management methods he adapts to himself, directly affecting the school climate and the teachers and students (Bogler, 2000). The role of the principal is crucial to the success of the school. The Avnei Rasha Institute has defined the central role of school principals as responsible for the educational leadership and pedagogy in the school to improve the education and learning of all students. School principals are responsible, among other things, for four other areas:

- shaping the future image as a vision and managing change in the school
- leading the staff in managing professional development
- focusing on the individual
- managing and strengthening the ties between the school and the community

As the school leader, the principal must see the school system in a variety of dimensions and areas and create close connections between them for the success of all students, and bring about improvement in their academic achievements (Luria, Levy and Ben Tzur, 2010; Givol et al., 2012; Ofarim, 2013).

The Arab education system in Israel is an integral part of the general state education system, despite the policy of inequality between the two education systems, the Arab and the Jewish. In the Arab education system, too, school principals must fulfill their role most appropriately and suitably possible. The school principal in the Arab education system stands out for being the figure with the first responsibility for the effective functioning of the school, for its success in all areas of educational and study life in the school. The principal should also be a leader to succeed in carrying out his role in managing affairs and leading the school, the students, and the teachers to educational, cultural, and academic achievements. In order to achieve excellence and a positive and good self-image in school and become a leader, the principal can advance in professional training and acquire appropriate new tools (Sherman, 2009).

#### **The role of teachers in shaping the student's personality and self-image**

Levy (2014) notes that treatment of low self-esteem should address the characterization and isolation of the aspect that affects self-image—recognizing that this is a particular matter and not all aspects of life will be the initial step after which it will be possible to address something that so much affects one's self-image and its consequences. There are various and varied ways to improve self-image and reduce, and even eradicate, the feeling of low self-esteem that can cause different anxieties in different areas. Researcher Nachshon (2014) noted in this context several steps necessary to strengthen the image and self-confidence of these problematic students, with the first stage being locating and identifying low self-esteem and self-confidence, and gradually increasing while encouraging and involving students in consultations in various fields. Some stand by their side and are willing to help and guide. School is a significant factor in the lives of children and adolescents as it is a meeting place for various aspects of their academic, emotional, and social lives (Zeidner, 2010; Zeidner & Matthews, 2017). Various studies have examined the relationship between school leadership styles, teacher perceptions, organizational culture, core teaching, and student achievement, and which influence various academic coefficients, such as social skills and emotional abilities, self-perceptions, motivational factors and degree of learning involvement, etc. (Ofarim, 2013; Hadar-Paker, 2013; (DiPerna, Volpe & Elliott, 2002; Eccles, 2004).

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At the center of the discussions and programs, struggling children stand; some feel disconnected and disengaged from school at one stage or another. Some are defined as visible dropouts, and some are covert. The education system looks for different ways to create a bridge of understanding and closeness between these children and the school. The Shajar Division makes efforts to find solutions and study frameworks for these students to strengthen their sense of belonging to the school and increase their ability to persevere in school and study. Teachers, as well as principals, can make a considerable contribution to building student self-confidence and self-image. Self-image and self-confidence are not based on a single successful event. They are built on the small things that happen in the student's life every day, and a significant portion of them depend on the teachers. So what can be done to raise the student's self-confidence and self-image? The objective successes or failures of a student in the field of learning on his image and self-confidence and the shaping of his personality. Teaching methods and content are a significant channel of influence of the teacher on developing students' personalities. In Arab society, there are several barriers in this field. The participation of students and adolescents in non-formal education circles and implement integration programs, in addition to other professional factors, and making non-formal education space where self-image and personal and social identity are shaped of children and youth in Arab society (Nasser-Abu al-Hija and Israelashvili, 2021; Haddad Hajj-Yahya et al., 2021).

At the same time, there is no doubt that the mental development of students is also affected by those events between teacher and student, which are not directly related to the teaching process (Kobobi, 1977). In Gilat's (2007) study, he notes and explains that the high inclusion ability of the teacher who shows empathy, encouragement, interest, attentive ear, and emotional support, certainly raises the self-image among his students and makes them believe in their abilities. In contrast, in his study, Clark (1997) argues that teachers felt less anger and pity for children with learning disabilities and tended to reward them because they expected these students to fail in their studies compared to students without learning disabilities. These attitudes toward students with learning disabilities do not contribute to raise their self-esteem and do not motivate learning, and may even negatively affect the attitudes of other students in the class towards students with learning disabilities. It seems crucial to focus emotionally on children's social and emotional problems. In Shechtman's (2010) study, it is seen that there is room to compare groups of children with learning disabilities with groups of children without learning disabilities in terms of the results and processes of the intervention.

### Difficulties and challenges in the education system in Arab-Palestinian society in Israel

In recent years, the gap between the Arab sector and the Jewish sector has narrowed in the allocation of teaching hours, with the gap in teaching hours per student being higher than the gap in teaching hours per class, as classes in the Arab sector are more crowded with than 30 students, despite the improvement in number in recent years. Also, there are gaps in the allocation of essential standard hours, while reducing gaps is taking place. This process impacts efforts to ensure equal budgeting for all parts of the education system (Nasser-Abu al-Hija and Israelashvili, 2021; Haddad Haj-Yahya et al., 2021; Dagan-Buzaglo, 2019; Blass Wadler, 2009). The gaps in inputs in Arab education compared to education in Jewish society significantly affect outputs, which is particularly evident in achievements. National feedback tests in primary education and Meitzav tests among students in Arab society, the achievements are much lower than the achievements of students in the Jewish sector. Therefore, Blass and Adler recommend in their study that Ranging from early ages to upper-division and academic education (Blass and Adler, 2009).

Thus, in order to be able to run multi-system institutional programs from early childhood to upper secondary education in all sectors, consistent and ongoing processes are required, which include



continuous improvement in the inclusion, integration, and advancement of students with difficulties and learning disabilities and behavioral difficulties. Various inclusion programs are designed to enable teaching staff to provide the answer in the field of study and the other fields while constantly developing perceptions, knowledge, and skills. The program is intended to help teach staff effectively implement the school support model for expanding inclusion and integration and promoting learners in educational institutions according to a curriculum tailored to the needs of the child with special needs but implemented in the context of a classroom and school curricula. Such programs offer professional development processes to all functionaries who take part in their implementation, whether at the headquarters, the district, or the educational institutions themselves (Ministry of Education, 2019).

In 1988, the Special Education Law in Israel was enacted to assist students with difficulty integrating them into regular schools, although some are in special classes. The Special Education Law has undergone various amendments over the years, and in November 2002, Chapter D1 was added to the law, which deals with integrating students with special needs in regular education. The amendment, known as the "Integration Law," regulates the rights of special education students studying in a regular classroom (individual integration). The particular education policy has changed over the years since 1988, and in 2018 the special education law was amended. Several significant changes were reflected that reflect the policy of the Ministry of Education and its values, including the establishment of an eligibility and characterization committee, multidisciplinary staff, parent selection, student basket of services, and more (Ministry of Education, 2019: 8-9; Monikandam-Givon, 2017; Weissblai, 2015). In the last two decades, an "MLA" program has emerged, whose function is to prevent students from dropping out of education in the various schools, if it is an overt and covert dropout. This program provides a framework for students at risk of dropping out and allows them to study in a defined space within the school that is appropriate to the situation and needs of these students. The program is managed by a permanent teacher or staff member, who can implement a personal and permanent curriculum and create opportunities to build a secure relationship with this student population. It will eventually lead to change and development (Ministry of Education, 2019).

In 2007, the inclusion program included 70 schools throughout the country (Israel), and in 2009 the program was implemented in the Ministry of Education in the Shahaar Division (Department of Regular Visitation and Dropout Prevention) managed by Moti Benau. In 2011, the program became part of Division A programs for children and youth at risk in institutions of Education. The "MLA program" objectives amounted to four main areas: a. Individuality: providing a unique response to each student according to his needs for integration as a normative student within the class; B. Creating a commitment by the whole school to address the dropout phenomenon; C. Building a staff in the school and training it to prevent student dropouts (MLA staff); D. Assimilating the world of values and working principles of MLA in the education system. Thus, in 2016, 155,772 students studied in the unique education system in Israel, of which 76% in Jewish Education and the rest (24%) studied in Arab Education. However, until then, and within studies and reports until 2015, it appears that there are short gaps between Jewish society and Arab society, and especially Bedouin, both in the severe shortage of physical infrastructure of kindergartens and special education schools, and the inadequacy of existing buildings; severe shortage of professional workforce, teachers, paramedical experts, psychologists, and lack of culturally appropriate diagnostic and placement methods and lack of appropriate and varied interventions (Monikandam-Givon, 2017).

In the spirit of this inclusion program, researcher Ben-Rabi and her partners (2014) emphasize that every student has the full right to study under the best conditions that suit him. Every student needs Education, care, the development of the full abilities inherent in it, and the full right of these students to integrate into the regular education system. To enable them to do so, supervisors need to deepen their

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understanding of the best conditions and ways in which these children can be helped and reach their full potential. However, there are difficulties, and quite a few teachers wonder how they can help struggling students in a large classroom setting. What can be done for the struggling students depends on the circumstances and the teachers' inventiveness and creativity, and the student's willingness to accept the help offered to him and use it. In addition, there is a need to train supervisors, principals, deputy principals, counselors, and teachers who teach in various frameworks on the subject of integrating and expanding their inclusion capacity that will enable the promotion of students with difficulty in regular Education (Ben-Rabi et al., 2014).

Various scholars emphasize the importance of the teacher's belief in himself and his ability to teach and assist his students. Some teachers are apprehensive about the difficulties they may encounter in conducting a classroom lesson with differences in abilities among students with disabilities. Many teachers feel that they have not been adequately trained and lack the skills to teach such mixed students of disabilities alongside students without disabilities (Hay, Smit, & Paulsen, 2001; Romi & Leyser, 2006; Angelides, Stylianou & Gibbs, 2006; Lancaster & Bain, 2007; Main & Hammond, 2008). Therefore, in the professional development processes of teachers, consideration should be given to the perception of teachers' ability concerning inclusive teaching and their attitudes towards integration and inclusion and people with disabilities. It is, therefore, essential to help them formulate positive attitudes and perceptions (Barak-Medina, 2020: 22-31).

It is important to remember that the learning environment differentiates between success and failure for struggling students. These students may have difficulty reading, writing, concentrating, listening, mathematical calculations, and so on. To successfully deal with these difficulties, one should encourage and emphasize their skills and not just focus on the learning difficulties but try to incorporate other alternatives in which the student excels, such as painting, sports, or any other field. Such a student population should not be burdened with homework and other assignments. Teachers should be educated to take actions that will facilitate these students to accommodate them and gradually return them to the level of learning and natural and normal behavior as much as possible (Ben-Rabbi et al., 2014).

To improve the achievement of graduates in such a program and address social and emotional aspects, the system undergoes reforms quite often when many are not successful, due to student load and class size, when teaching in poorer classes is more successful, and the teacher in a small class can address all students, allow for class discussions and reduce the disciplinary issues that characterize the crowded classrooms. It should be noted that such struggling students usually have low self-esteem resulting, and some feel a kind of disconnection and lack of belonging to the educational and even social framework in which they find themselves. Therefore, beyond the main inclusion goals, integration is intended as an important central goal: to strengthen students' self-image, especially students who have difficulty, and give them a sense of belonging, confidence, and faith that they can and are thriving. In addition, it is essential to ensure that particular education frameworks are referred only to students with complex disabilities who have all the professional responses given to them in regular education indicated that they need a particular framework. One of the critical goals of the education system is to create a culture of inclusion that may strengthen the image and self-esteem of struggling students, including students in 'MLA' classes (Ministry of Education, 2012).

For further treatment of the issue of inclusion, the Ministry of Education in Israel announced the 2012/2013 school year as a year in which emphasis was placed on inclusion, and various seminars were held on this subject for all teachers in order to assimilate the value of inclusion among the teaching public. Integration and inclusion have posed a new challenge in the education system and teaching methods. There is no doubt that awareness of diverse teaching styles and methods tailored to specific

students can significantly help all students in the class. These students are entirely in the regular classrooms while expanding their inclusion and providing diverse responses (Ziv, 2015).

## **Methodology**

### **The research method**

The present study was based on the quantitative paradigm.

### **The study population**

One hundred fifty-nine teachers from Arab schools in Israel. To examine their positions on the subject in question and examine whether there is a gap between teachers who teach in the "MLA" classes and teachers who do not teach in these classes. In addition, an open questionnaire will be distributed to ten teachers, half of whom teach in the MLA program and half of whom do not teach in this program.

### **Research tool**

As stated, two research tools will be used: a closed position questionnaire, and each interviewee will be asked to mark according to a four-point scale the characteristic answer that describes it. The research tool is a structured questionnaire consisting of three main parts:

**Part One:** This section includes questions about study participants' personal and professional demographics, gender, and seniority.

**Part Two:** This part includes a questionnaire to measure and describe the participants' self-image; the questionnaire includes ten statements, with the answer scale being of the 4-grade Likert type, one raonek strongly opposing and 4 rafourk highly agreeing, ranks 2 and 3 intermediate ranks. The statements 3, 5, 8, 9, 10 are negatively worded (inverted), so they are reversed. The self-image variable was constructed by calculating the average participants' responses to the ten statements; each participant was given a value between 1 and 4 in self-image; a high value indicates a high self-image level. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using intrinsic consistency by Kronbach's alpha coefficient, and it was found that the alpha value is equal to 0.712 value indicating good reliability.

**Part Three:** This part deals with inclusion in three aspects: creating the inclusion culture, creating the inclusion policy, and nurturing inclusion. The dimension of creating a culture of inclusion is tested using 13 statements, with the answer scale being of the Likert type of 4 ranks, rank one very opposed and rank four very agreeable, rank 2 and 3 intermediate ranks. The variable creating an inclusive culture was constructed by calculating the average participants' responses to the 13 statements; each participant was given a value between 1 and 4 in creating the inclusive culture. A high value indicates a positive level of perception of the inclusive culture creation. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using intrinsic consistency by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and it was found that the alpha value is equal to 0.910 value indicating very high reliability. The second dimension is to create a policy of inclusion is examined through 11 statements, with the answer scale being of the 4-degree Likert type, rank one strongly opposing and rank four highly agreeing, ranks 2 and 3 intermediate ranks. The variable policy creation of the inclusion was constructed by calculating the average participants' responses to the 11 statements; each participant was given a value between 1 and 4 in the inclusion policymaking. A high value indicates a positive level of perception of the inclusion policymaking. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using intrinsic consistency by Cronbach's alpha coefficient, and it was found that the alpha value is equal to 0.861 value indicating high reliability. The third dimension of cultivating the inclusion is tested using 11 statements, with the answer scale being of the 4-rank Likert type, 1rank strongly opposing and four ranks highly agreeing, 2 and 3 intermediate ranks. Fostering integration

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variable was constructed by calculating the average participants' responses to the 11 statements; each participant was given a value between 1 and 4 in fostering integration; a high value indicates a positive perception of fostering integration. The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using intrinsic consistency by Kronbach's alpha coefficient, and it was found that the alpha value is equal to 0.899 value indicating high reliability.

**Findings**

**A. Demographic findings**

In the current study, 159 participants participated, and Table 1 describes the distribution of participants according to their background variables.

Table 1: Description of the distribution of participants according to personal and professional variables

variable		N	%
Gender	60	male	37
	99	female	63
Seniority	9	Up to 5 years	5.7
	30	6- 10 Years	18.8
	120	Above 11 years	75.5
Full time teacher	42	Yes	26.4
	117	No	73.6

**B. The research findings**

**\* First hypothesis:**

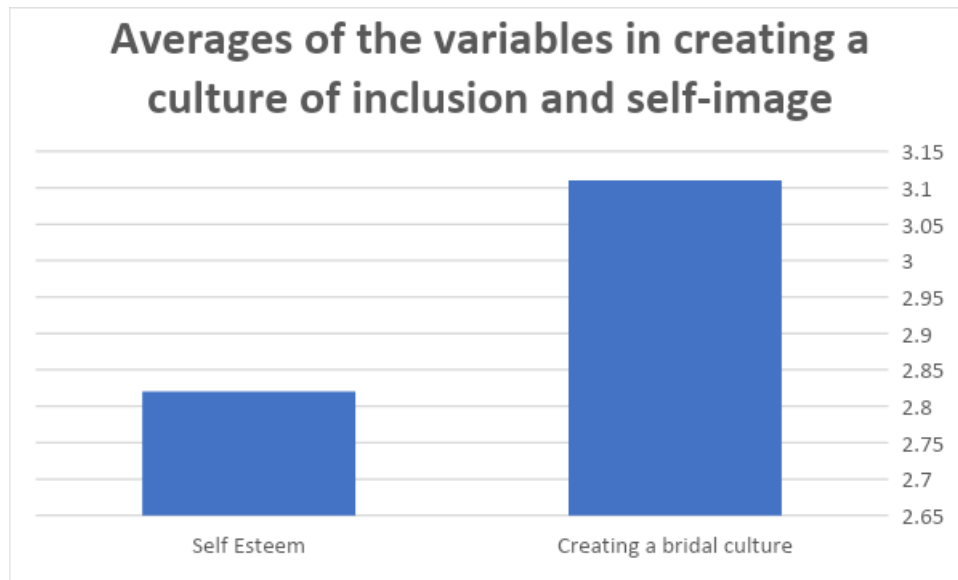
This hypothesis assumed that "a connection will be found between creating the inclusion's culture and the level of self-image among the participants." The hypothesis was tested using a correlation test by Pearson's correlation coefficient. (N = 159)

Table 2: Averages and Standard Deviations for Variables in Creating Bridal Culture and Self-Image and Pearson Correlation Value Between Them (N = 159)

	Standard deviation	Average (1-4)	r
Creating a culture of inclusion	.56	3.11	0.373**
Self-image	.36	2.82	

\*\*p<0.01

The findings presented in the table above indicate a significant positive relationship between the creation of an inclusive culture in the school and the level of self-image ( $r = 0.373$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) so that as students feel that an inclusive culture prevails in the school, the level of self-image increases. This finding clearly shows a positive relationship between creating an inclusive culture and self-image among the participants since an informed and consistent policy characterized by inclusion can certainly strengthen self-image. The study participants showed how important the generalization is in strengthening the self-image of students, especially students of 'MLA' classes.



**Figure 1: Averages of the variables in creating a culture of inclusion and self-image**

\* Second hypothesis:

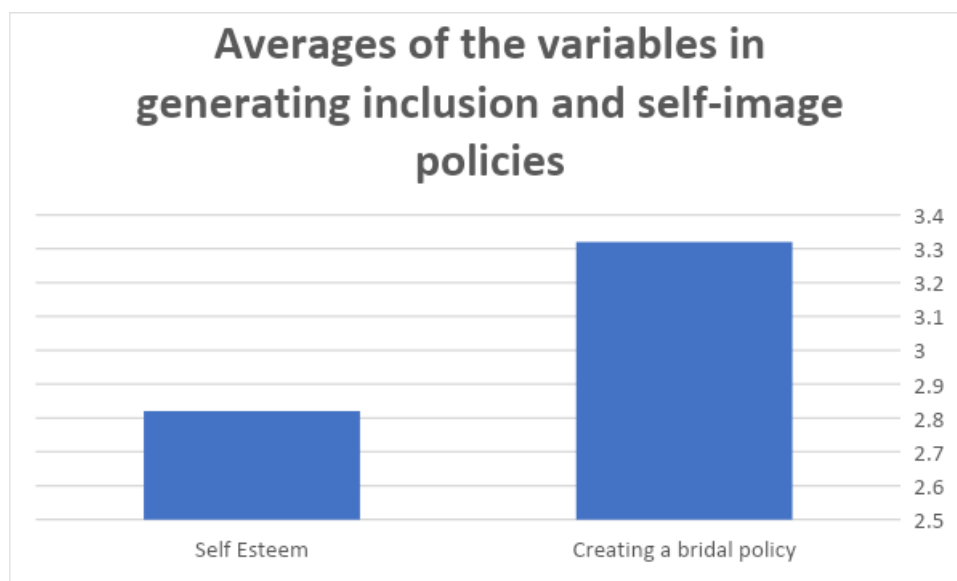
This hypothesis assumed that "a link will be found between creating an inclusion policy and the level of self-image among the participants." The hypothesis was tested using a correlation test by Pearson's correlation coefficient ( $N = 159$ ).

Table 3: Mean Averages and Standard Deviations in Creating Inclusion and Self-Image Policies and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Value Between Them ( $N = 159$ )

	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>r</b>
Creating an Inclusion Policy	.78	3.32	0.431**
Self-image	.34	2.82	

\*\* $p < 0.01$

The findings presented in the table above indicate a significant positive relationship between the creation of an inclusion policy in school and the level of self-image ( $r = 0.431$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), so that the more students feel that there is an inclusion policy and it is implemented, then the level of self-image increases. In this way, creating a school policy characterized by the inclusion of all students in a consistent manner is a central tier in the educational endeavor at the school that can undoubtedly improve and raise the level of self-image among all students, especially MLA students.



**Figure 2: Averages of the variables in generating inclusion and self-image policies**

**\* Third hypothesis**

This hypothesis assumed that "a connection will be found between cultivating the practice of generalization and the level of self-image among the participants." The hypothesis was tested using a correlation test by Pearson's correlation coefficient (N = 159).

Table 4: Averages and Standard Deviations for Variables of Cultivation Practice and Self-Image and Pearson's Correlation Coefficient Value Between Them (N = 159)

	<b>Standard deviation</b>	<b>Average</b>	<b>r</b>
Fostering the practice of inclusion	.48	3.19	0.327**
Self-image	.37	2.79	

\*\*p<0.01

The findings presented in Table 4 above indicate a significant positive relationship between fostering inclusion in school and self-image ( $r = 0.327$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ) so that as students feel there is fostering inclusion and it is applied, their level of self-image increases. Creating a school culture and policy characterized by inclusion can undoubtedly lead to fostering an activity characterized by inclusion in school, and such action can raise and strengthen self-image among students and especially 'MLA' classroom students.

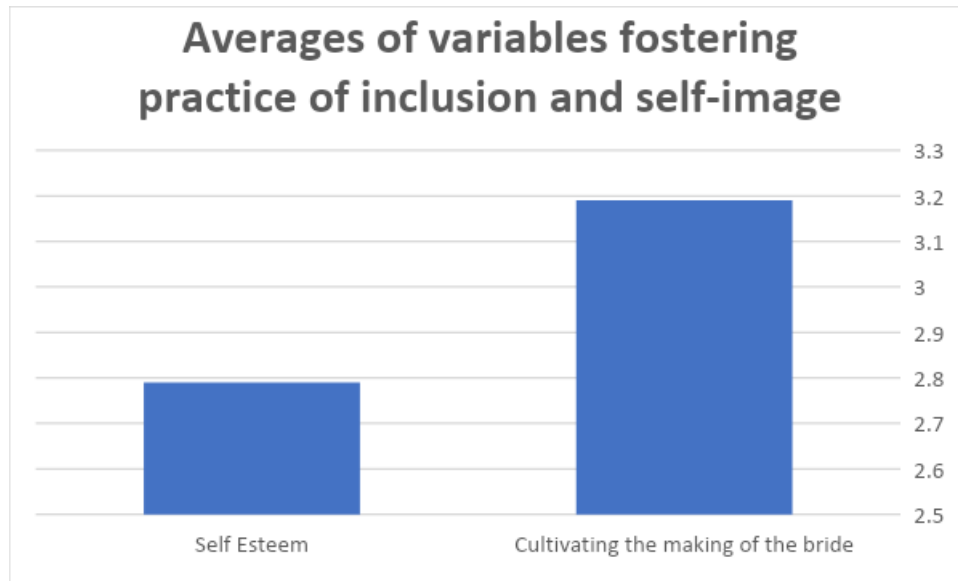


Figure 3: Averages of variables, fostering inclusion and self-image.

**\* Fourth hypothesis**

The fourth hypothesis assumed that "differences will be found in attitudes and perceptions of inclusion with its three aspects and self-image among teachers who teach in "MLA" classes and teachers who do not teach in those classes. The hypothesis was tested using a t-test for two independent samples.

Table 5: Averages and Standard Deviations for the research variables among teachers teaching in "MLA" Classes and teachers who do not teach in these classes and T-test values for differences between them:

	MLA teachers	N	Average	Standard deviation	t
Creating a culture of inclusion	Yes	42	3.25	.40	*1.917
	No	117	2.98	.55	
Creating an Inclusion Policy	Yes	42	3.79	1.22	**2.869
	No	117	3.11	.46	
Fostering inclusion	Yes	42	3.45	.49	*2.279
	No	117	3.09	.49	
Self-image	Yes	48	2.81	.40	0.034-
	No	111	2.69	.35	

\*p<0.05, \*\*p<0.01

The findings presented in Table (5) above indicate a significant difference between teachers who teach in "MLA" classes and teachers who do not teach in these classes in their attitudes and perceptions of the dimension of creating a culture of inclusion (t = 1.917, p <0.05). Teachers. In the "MLA" classrooms, the dimension of creating a culture of inclusion is perceived in a higher and more positive way. In addition, there was also a significant difference between teachers and teachers who teach in "MLA" classes and teachers who do not teach in these classes in their attitudes and perceptions of the dimension of policy inclusion (t = 2.869, p <0.01). Teachers who teach in "MLA" classes "Perceive the dimension of creating a policy of inclusion in a higher and more positive way. There was also a significant difference between teachers who teach in the "MLA" classrooms and teachers who do not teach in these classes in their attitudes and perceptions of the dimension of creating inclusion (t = 2.279, p <0.01). Teachers teaching in the "ML" classes A. "perceive the dimension of inclusion in a higher and more positive way. On the other hand, there was an insignificant difference between teachers who teach in "MLA" classes and teachers who do not teach in these classes in the perception of self-image (t = -

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0.034,  $p > 0.05$ ). Teachers who teach in "MLA" classes perceive the image dimension Self-less than the teachers who do not teach in these classes.

### Discussion

The study's findings indicate a significant positive relationship between creating an inclusive culture in the school and the level of self-image so that as students feel that an inclusive culture prevails in the school, the level of self-image increases. Confirmation of the first hypothesis clearly shows a vital need to create a school culture based on empathy and generalization, and self-image cultivation. Researcher Gilat (2007) strengthens the hypothesis and explains that the teacher can generalize and who shows empathy, encouragement, interest, attentive ear, and emotional support certainly nurture the self-image among his students and make them believe in their abilities. Clark's study (Clark, 1997) also found that teachers feel less anger and more pity for struggling students, and they also tend to reward them because they expected these students to fail in their studies compared to other students.

In addition, the findings of the study indicate a significant positive relationship between the creation of a policy of inclusion in school and the level of self-image. The school is a significant factor in the lives of children and adolescents as it is a meeting place for various aspects: the academic, emotional, and social aspects of the students. Hence the hypothesis was confirmed that creating a school policy based on inclusion can positively affect the level of self-esteem among students in 'MLA' classes. These findings are consistent with the findings of Sherman (2009), Luria, Levy, and Ben Tzur (2010), Givoli and others (2012), Ofarim (2013), Hadar-Packer (2013), Nachshon (2014), Zeidner (2010), Zeidner & Matthews (2017). It should be believed that a policy of inclusion has a positive impact on integration and an enabling and nurturing environment. In its practical meaning, a policy of inclusion refers to the integration of learners and their advancement. In regular education, while expanding their capacity for inclusion, providing a diverse response, considering their unique needs, and creating the conditions that will help them realize their ability in various fields related to the inclusion of all learners who have difficulty in regular education.

Policies of inclusion in education, emotional, social, behavioral, physical, economic, family, and more, with all professional factors, will enable a systemic approach to all students in the school. All this clearly shows a positive relationship between adopting a policy of inclusion, which is the order of the hour, and the strengthening of the self-image of all students, especially students who have difficulties (students in 'MLA' classes). There is a clear difference between creating a policy of inclusion in the school of Arab education in Israel and the level of self-image so that the more students feel that there is a policy of inclusion and it is implemented, then the level of self-image increases.

Regarding the third hypothesis, the findings indicate a significant positive relationship between fostering inclusion in school and self-image, so that as students feel there is fostering inclusion and it is implemented, then the level of self-image increases. Principals, teachers, and all those involved in the educational endeavors of the school are required to enable students with disabilities to integrate, feel a sense of belonging, and believe in their ability to succeed. These things require the nurture of inclusion because such nurture is closely related to raising self-image among students. These findings were consistent with the studies of Nasser-Abu al-Hijja and Israelashvili (2021), Haddad Haj-Yahya, and others (2021).

The findings related to the fourth hypothesis indicate a significant difference between teachers who teach in "MLA" classes and teachers who do not teach in these classes in their positions and perceptions of the dimension of creating a culture of inclusion. Teaching in MLA classes requires prior preparation, regular participation in advanced training, and regular teamwork. Students deserve equal rights and the right to study and integrate into school life and life in general by the law and educational perceptions.



Teachers who teach in these classes must be trained in order to have positive perceptions for students in these classes, which are consistent with the findings of various researchers such as (Givoli, Heiman, and Ofarim, 2012; Ben-Rabbi et al., 2014; Ministry of Education, 2019; Nasser-Abu al-Hiija and Israelashvili, 2021; Haddad Haj-Yahya and Rudnitzky, 2018).

The fact that there are differences in the perceptions of teachers teaching in "MLA" classes and teachers, who do not teach in these classes, is obtained as a result of the necessary need that teachers teaching in "MLA" classes are willing to deal with the various challenges they face successfully. There is no doubt that teachers who have no experience with these classes and are not adequately trained may fail to deal with the various challenges and difficulties that characterize working in these classes.

### **Summary and Conclusions**

The true belief in each student's ability to empower and strengthen their weaknesses requires constant effort based on continuous learning, deepening professionalism, and adapting teaching methods creatively to enable students' success. In the present study, it can be concluded that 'MLA' classes should address those students who need closer supervision and a more focused view of each student's individual needs individually. Defining personal and class goals, both at the level of academic achievement and the level of integration and success in a wide range of social and emotional issues, is done through strengthening personal faith, sense of competence, experiences of success, and sense of belonging in school. In these classes, emphasis is placed on a class program that includes deepening in value, social, and community areas and academic achievement as part of strengthening the sense of belonging and building personal discourse that strengthens and fosters self-image and belief that they can succeed.

It is essential that the school is based on mutual respect, a clear framework of management style, intelligent and consistent patterns of conduct that address all students, fundamental discipline values that can be met, and will be learning factors to facilitate students and teachers to understand what is allowed and forbidden. The school should identify the student's unique needs according to his development, interests, and value system. All this from a holistic point of view - looking at cognitive aspects alongside the emotional and social aspects of the student.

The education system in Arab-Palestinian society in Israel needs to take care of critical dimensions to provide an appropriate response to all students with all their characteristics and, in particular, "MLA" students to bridge the gaps in inputs and outputs. The state, but the gap still exists, and this reality requires support for unique curricula that will suit the needs of Palestinian Arab education in Israel.

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