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Faculty of Economics and Business Administration
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DOCTORAL THESIS
SUMMARY

Strategies and Policies for Minimizing Dropouts
From the Education System
Case Study: Israel

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ABSTRACT

The main goal of this study is to propose a managerial model enterprise for the education systems, which can reduce the school dropout rate by bringing dropouts' back into the education system formal or un-formal learning paths. This issue of dropout from the education system has constituted to this day one of the major challenges of numerous countries in the world. Many efforts are being exerted worldwide in order to prevent and/or at least minimize the phenomenon of youth dropping out of the education system. Nevertheless, many adolescents are dropping out of the education systems that are offered to them by their country, without completing their formal education (UNESCO, 2002).

The research adopted a mixed-methods research approach and a case study - the Youth At-Risk Advancement (YARA) units, that provides special services for dropouts in Israel. This approach simultaneously uses both qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research employed a documentary analysis, questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions. The data were content analyzed, using ATLAS for a systematical analysis of qualitative data and SPSS for statistical measurements of quantitative data.

The findings indicated the dropout's difficulties of functioning in various life areas, not only in the academic context, difficulties which have to be addressed by the service policy and operational management. Additionally, the findings facilitated the design of a management strategy applied by the service managers of the case study regarding the principles that guide the policy and the management methods used in order to implement that policy. The research illustrated the diversity of actions that the service (The YARA) has to perform in the context of forming interfaces and partnerships with complementary and other services in the community and the region, aiming to expand the repertoire of responses and opportunities for each of the dropouts, according to their need.

Finally, the research contributed to knowledge in the area of strategic educational management by offering a model of intervening and minimizing dropout phenomena in Israel and worldwide.

Key words: Educational management, operational management, operational strategy, human services organization, human services delivery, child/youth at-risk, dropout (hidden and overt dropout), case study.

1. Introduction

The main goal of this study is to propose a managerial model initiative for the education systems –. This model can reduce the school dropout rate by bringing dropouts back into the education system's formal or informal learning paths. This issue of dropout from the education system has constituted to this day one of the major challenges of numerous countries in the world. Many efforts are being exerted worldwide in order to prevent and/or at least minimize the phenomenon although many adolescents are still dropping out of the education systems (UNESCO, 2002).

The study explores the dropout phenomenon, analyzing and examining the policy and strategy that are required today in order to cope with it on both the national and community level. The objective is to propose principles and processes that can underlie organizational managerial models designed to cope effectively with the dropout phenomenon and bring the dropouts back to a path of learning and education. The study investigates and analyzes the Israeli case study of addressing this phenomenon. This choice was made based on my own background in the last 20 years as the director of the Youth At-Risk Advancement (YARA) services in the Israeli Ministry of Education. This combination of personal experience in the decision-making pyramid regarding the policy and strategies pertaining to dropout in Israel, and an attempt to learn from this case study about other cases in order to improve the services, constitutes a challenge that has many advantages in the process of investigating the phenomenon.

Finally, the research can contribute in the area of policy and strategic of educational management by offering a managerial model of intervening and minimizing dropout phenomena in Israel and worldwide.

Gap of knowledge

Many studies have addressed issues that are related to the education managing for prevention the dropout phenomenon (Cohen-Navot, Elnebogen-Frankowitz and Reinfeld, 2001; Crain-Dorough, 2003; Donmoyer & Kos, 1993; Dynarski, Clarke, Cobb & Finn, 2008; Graeff-Martins, Swald, Comassetto, Kieling, Gonçalves, & Rohde, 2006; Hayward and Tallmadge, 1995; Wilkinson & Griffith, 1994). Few have addressed issues that are related to caring for dropouts after they have left school. Thus, a gap in knowledge exists in the area of managing the services provided to minimize adolescents' dropout from educational systems. This is usually the last opportunity for the education system to implement the national educational policy in an attempt to exhaust and materialize education for all adolescents (Bloom, Gardenhire-Crooks, & Mandsager, 2009; Reyna, 2011; Steinberg & Almeida, 2012).

The study attempts to refine a theoretical and practical perspective to the dropout issue, as well as the policy and strategy required to reduce and minimize it. At the same time, it aims to acknowledge the action necessary for bringing dropouts back to the educational frameworks, and/or to offer a meaningful educational alternative for them. Thus, they will be able to complete their formal education. The principle reason for this great effort lies in the price that the state and society pay due to this phenomenon. (Rumberger, 1987; U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2000).

Research goals

The research goals were:

- a. To examine and analyze the Israeli Education's policy in coping with the phenomenon of adolescents who drop out of the formal education system, in order to minimize and prevent it as a case study.
- b. To examine and analyze the implications of this policy for the operational management of services developed in Israel on the local-municipal level in order to cope with the phenomenon
- c. To propose the list of principles and courses of action that services coping with the dropout phenomenon are required to underline? When planning dropout intervention programs.
- d. To develop and propose a managerial model for the education systems that will reduce the dropout rate and bring back the dropouts into the mainstream or alternative education routes in order to integrate them into the normative life of their peers.

2. Literature Review

Managerial Aspect of research

The research reviews systematically the literature that addresses management theory and practice aspect in general and in human service organizations in particular (since they are the subject of our research). The research contains a review of the extant literature on policies, strategies and operational management functions necessary in the complex reality of the organizations providing human services to a multi-problematic Population that consists of with many different needs. These services are directed at adolescences with educational, social and psycho-social problems, who need a wide variety of services in order to help them to adjust and cope with the basis demands of everyday life. Special attention is paid to issues of management and strategy in an era and areas of changes and complexities occurring in clients and their living environment, Things that affect organizations and services they produce for their target population (Drucker, 1954; Abell, 1978; Handy, 1989; Hamel, 2000). Jacobides (2010), For example developed a tool that does not use

mathematical (numeric) formulas in order to analyze the environments and the challenges, but rather uses a script (in words) in order to express the characters and scenarios that act in the field (on the stage) including the personal and interpersonal relations between them in order to give expression to a totality of considerations: emotional, social, political, religious and economic, of all the characters who are involved in the script (consumers, suppliers, competitors, legislators, managers, etc.) and who eventually affect the planning and implementation of the organization's strategy. This creative and innovative thinking model adds a stratum to the mix of strategic management that is required today, in the global and dynamic era in which we carry out this research – the dropouts.

Several theories and approaches are used such as the 'Complex Systems' theory (Wheatley, 1992), to understand the implications of the management complex services for complex populations. The 'Personalized Services Approach' (Michelsson, 2005; McNeill, 2006; Vesanen, 2007; Stuart & Gharabaghi, 2010; Morgan, 2010; Hatton & Waters, 2011; Evans, 2012), introduce us to one of the key component for delivery services to complex populations by using "tools" like 'case manager' approach (Maguire, 2002), 'wraparound' approach (Behar, 1986; Bruns & Walker, 2010) to cope with the challenges. Based on these theories and approaches we can understand the significance of the changing and complex reality in which the organizations are operating, and in particular the ways that allow coping with this complex reality. The study then presents the literature concerning the development and provision of inter-organizational and inter-professional services in order to enrich and diversify the mix of responses to the needs of clients - in our case, the dropout population (Eriksen, 2002; Harris, Maloney & Rother, 2004; Mehr & Kanwischer, 2007; Burger, 2011).

Educational Aspect of research

A special section is devoted to the literature relating and explaining the dropout phenomenon and the ways of the Education system to cope with the issue. Among them: Comprehensive review of the dropout phenomenon development around the world, and the price the dropouts and the society in which they live pay for it (Egyed, McIntosh & Bull, 1998; UNESCO, 2009; OECD, 2011, Rennie Center, 2012); dropout definitions (Howard & Anderson, 1978; Caliste, 1984; Cairns, Cairns, & Neckerman, 1989; Finn, 1989; Stoll, 1990; Franklin, McNeil, & Wright, 1990; Cohen & De Bettencourt, 1991; Dupper, 1993; Atkinson, Halsey, Wilkin & Kinder, 2000; Janosz, Le Blanc, Billerica, Tremblay, 2000); and dropout causes (Allensworth, 2004; Orfield, 2004). Then the research presents the dropout process (Finn, 1989; Epstein, 1990; Jessor, 1993; Roderick & Camburn, 1999; Swanson & Schneider, 1999; Rumberger, 2004; Neild & Farly, 2004; Lahav, 2004) and development of the phenomenon based on the 'eco-systemic perspective theory' (Bronfenbrenner (1979).

A special paragraph is devoted to the units' policy and strategy for handling the dropout phenomenon (Junek & Thompson, 1999; Chmelynski, 2006; Kourkoutas & Xavier, 2010; Klein, 2010). Later, the research reviews the literature dealing the two main approaches to the dropout phenomenon. The first approach is focused on the prevention of dropout (Griffith, 1994; Hayward & Tallmadge, 1995; Ben-Rabi, Baruj-Kovarsky, Konstantinov, Rotem & Cohen-Navot, 2012), and the second focuses on the post-dropout intervention (Reyna, 2011; Lahav, 2012). This brings us to the policies and strategies presented in the past regarding these issues of educational units for coping with dropouts (Miller, 1978; Junek & Thompson, 1999; Chmelynski 2006; Hammond, 2007; Smink, 2007; Klein, 2010).

3. The 'Case Study': Israel

The organization that was chosen for our case study was established at the beginning of the 1970s in the Ministry of Education in Israel. It operated as a "security net" that the Ministry of Education spread in the municipalities, for coping with 14-18 years old teenagers who have dropped out of the formal educational frameworks (overt dropout), or who found it difficult to function and adapt to these frameworks (hidden dropout). Today, the 'Youth At-Risk Advancement' (YARA) units constitute a well-known unique educational framework that aspires to educate and complete the education of teenagers who are not in any of the mainstream or alternative educational frameworks. The unit aims to identify and integrate these teenagers in one of the alternatives offered by the community today – mainstream schools, alternative schools or a temporary or permanent stay with the framework of the 'Youth At-Risk Advancement' units in the community, until they complete their education. The goal is to provide the opportunity to apply the Compulsory Education Act to the dropouts, until they complete 12 years of education, as well as the option to enlist in the army or national service. Making the transition to an adult life of an active and useful member of society (Ministry of Education, 2014a).

The 'Youth At-Risk Advancement' (YARA) units are directed at attaining four principles goals:

- a. From disconnection to integration - reintegration of the disconnected adolescents within the normative activity array of their age group includes learning, work, professional training, society, culture and leisure and military service.
- b. Compensation and advancement - compensating and advancing disconnected adolescents who are not integrated educationally, socially and professionally - towards their integration as efficient and useful adults in the community and society.
- c. Actualization of the personal potential - exhausting and materializing the positive personal potential that is inherent in each of the adolescents, for their personal advancement, for their own benefit and for the benefit of their society.

d. Preventing disconnection and alienation - preventing these adolescents from becoming disconnected and alienated from the community and from the society in which they live, and preventing risk behaviors among them.

The 'Youth At-Risk Advancement' (YARA) Units Today, this service encompasses 150 municipalities (out of the 250 existing municipalities in Israel). The service operates approximately 750 various educational-therapeutic workers who handle the social-therapeutic aspects. Moreover, it comprises approximately 1500 teachers who handle academic-educational aspects of the intervention and provide the service to the clients.

The service functions in various sites that signify the life arenas of the teenagers who require it. Furthermore, every municipality manages a center to which the youth can be referred in order to receive additional assistance on a personal or group level. The service caters to approximately 12,000 teenagers (aged 14-18) a year, who receive multidisciplinary and multi-organizational intervention programs. It is a service that is directed at all sectors of the population in Israel. The service offers a variety of solutions for the various needs of these adolescents who find it difficult to survive the education system, as well as for many who have to leave the system before completing their formal schooling (Ministry of Education, 2014b).

4. Conceptual Framework of the Research

The study attempts to examine the issues concerning the dropout phenomenon. At the same time it investigates the existing organizational-managerial policy and strategy that are required for effectively coping with the identification and reintegration of students who drop out of the education system .

The study is based on two knowledge bases - theoretical and practical - that are expected to affect each other on the way to examining and constructing the optimal operational (managerial-organizational) model adapted to coping with the dropout phenomenon. **On the one hand**, the knowledge accumulated by investigating the dropout phenomenon in the professional literature - the characteristics, the processes and the implications thereof for the adolescents themselves. **And on the other hand**, the knowledge accumulated by developing and managing social educational services and making them accessible, in order to cope with the dropout phenomenon. The study strives to present an optimal organizational managerial model that is based on the theoretical and practical knowledge that exists in the field. Moreover are presents principles, thinking modes and ways of coping systemically with the phenomenon on the national and municipal (community level). The investigation process is based on analyzing and considering the case study (Yin, 2003);

of the Israeli model - the 'Youth At-Risk Advancement' units, as a foundation for identifying the principles and processes that guide the decision-makers and managers on the various levels (national/community), and from them to build the desirable model for coping with the phenomenon today.

In this research, we attempted to identify the components that pertain to the dropout phenomenon, and those that pertain to the organization and management of services granted in order to cope with that phenomenon:

The first and central component that relates to the research is the target population - The "dropouts". They are the clients of the service and its principal efforts are directed at them. This is a population characterized by a wide range of factors that affect the decision to leave school and/or to return to it after dropping out.

The second component that pertains to the research is creating a 'diversity of responses/services' that the organization requires in order handling the phenomenon. This component relates to a variety of the target population' life areas and affects their leaving the system or the option of returning to it on some level or another.

The third component that pertains to the research is the 'Case Managers'. These are the education and therapy workers who should connect and mediate between the dropouts and the education system that is trying to reach them for the purpose of reengaging them in a learning-educational path.

The fourth and fifth components that pertain to the research relate to the processes that take place: **First**, the 'process' that takes place between the organization and its organizational environment, in order to create the variety of holistic and complex responses that are required for coping (from various areas of life and from various specialization areas). The central process in this case is establishing inter-professional and inter-organizational 'partnerships'.

Second, the process of creating the 'Wraparound' and the process of 'granting' the services that were developed in the organization to the target population (the clients = the dropouts).

The goal is to adapt a "customized suit" to all clients, solving their problems and returning them to a path of academic or professional studies.

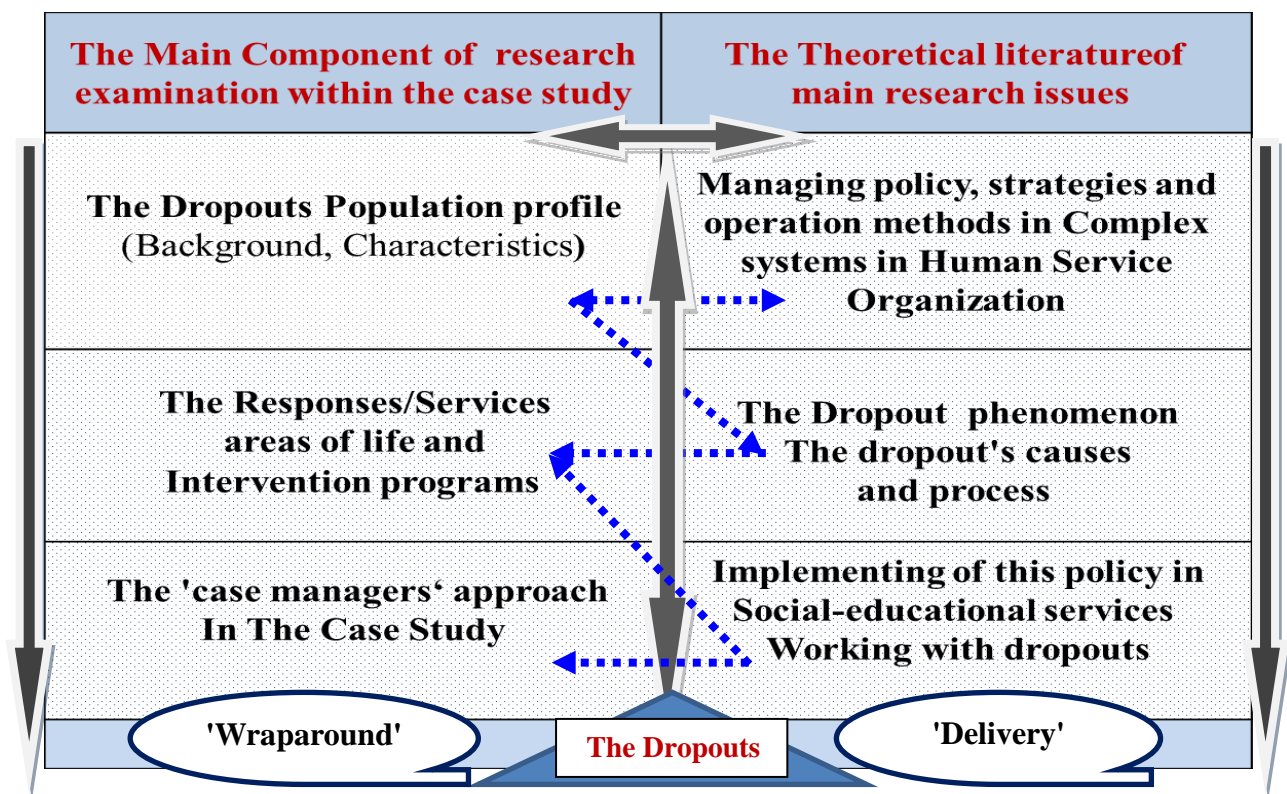


Figure 1: Conceptual framework of the research's theoretical layout

5. Methodology

Research Hypotheses

The research hypotheses are based on three main issues discussed by the relevant professional literature:

First – the complexity and variance of the population, which dictate the need for providing a personal response (a "customized suit" solution), adapted to each and every client – in our case, education system dropouts (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; Junek & Thompson, 1999; Schonert-Reichl, 2000; Rumberger & Rodrigues, 2002; Brown & Rodríguez, 2009; Orfield, 2004; Allensworth, 2004; Kourkoutas & Xavier, 2010).

Second – the need for a response that refers to the totality of the adolescent's life areas affecting the phenomenon; areas that pertain to learning / work / social life and leisure / family and friends / community (Allensworth, 2004; Orfield, 2004; Bridgeland, Dilulio & Burke Morison, 2006).

Third – in order to create personally-customized unique responses for each client in the totality of these areas, it is necessary to form inter-organizational and inter-professional partnerships, aimed at producing a complete and effective response (Burns & Goldman, 1999; Maguire, 2002; Case Management Society of America, 2009/2010; Suter & Bruns, 2009).

This leads to the following research Hypotheses:

- a. The more complex and difficult the characteristics of the dropout population are and pertain to the adolescents' varied life areas, the more complex and difficult is the re-organization of the unit that should adjust a "personal mix" to each and every dropout youth.
- b. The more diversified services the unit is required to provide (and adapt to each client in a "personal mix") in various life areas, the more professional and organizational varied collaboration in these life areas the unit is required to establish.
- c. The more inter-professional and inter-organizational partnerships the unit develops in adolescents' varied life areas, the more mechanisms for synchronizing and integrating the different professionals and organizations the unit is required to set up. The objective is to design a comprehensive and integrative holistic intervention program for facilitating adolescents' return to the learning circle, limiting the number of dropouts from the education system.

Research Questions

The main questions guiding the research:

- Q1. What policy components underlie the organizational model of the services that cope with youth who dropped out from the school system in Israel?
- Q2. What are the implications of this policy for the operational management of these services so that they deal effectively with the dropout phenomenon in order to reduce it?

The sub-questions that investigate the main questions:

- q3. What are the special characteristics of the dropout population (the customers), which affect policy and strategy of the dropout services?
- q4. How do these special characteristics affect the development of a range of responses to a variety of needs that the services which cope with dropouts should provide?
- q5. Do cultural differences (Jews, Arabs) and size of the settlement influence the policies and practices of managing the services?

Research Field

According to Shalsky & Alpert (2007), the research field is the physical or human site into which researchers aspire to bring their readers. The idea is to enable readers to enter in image and emotion, into the researched place and to experience its landscape, its people and its occurrences. According to Strauss & Corbin (1994), this approach of using a large circles of belonging in the 'research field' gives us a wide range of indicators of the phenomenon and ways to deal with. All organizations in the circles affiliation – present other administrative-managing field in the community arena. In our "case Study", the participant in our sample represents the following circuit's broad research field.

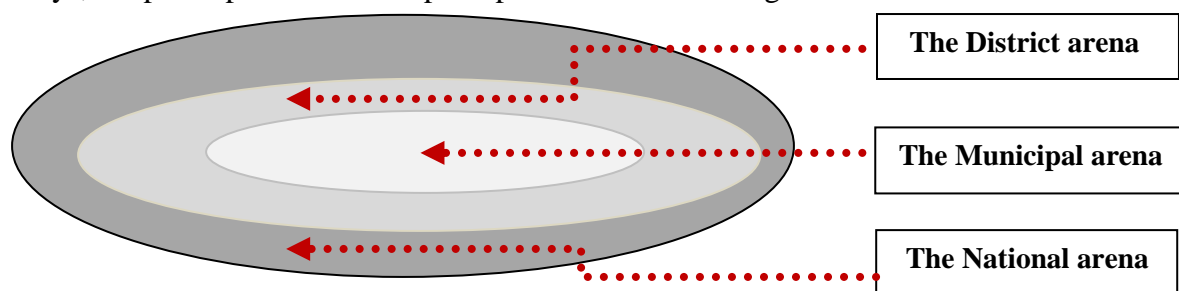


Figure 2: The circuit's broad research field

The municipal service is at the center of the 'case study', from which we attempt to learn about the policy and strategy guiding organizations that operate programs and services for dropout youth.

Research Paradigm

The research methodology is based on the mixed methods research approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative elements in order to understand complex phenomena that are interrelated and cannot be separated (Rist, 1982; Stake, 1995; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Creswell, 2009). This mixed methods approach is one of the developments of the last decade quantitative research in general and in the Constructivist-qualitative methodology in particular.

Creswell (2009, p. 216) contends that today it is possible to connect and combine the qualitative and quantitative methodologies whenever there are data and materials that support and substantiate the understanding of the whole picture in order to obtain sharper and clearer insights. This combination is extremely popular today, and is applied in the required proportion, mainly for reinforcing the findings and making it possible to study the conclusions better and deduce to other cases (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 2003; Morgan, 2007; Alpert, 2010).

This research uses this method of triangulation design – it is a one-stage design which use both quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously, and they are attributed equal and complementing importance in the analysis of the results (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2010; Alpert, 2010). The integrated research uses two categories of research the Case Study and the Grounded

Theory Principles. This model of analysis and presentation of data is based on: Sabar Ben-Yehoshua, 1990; Kaplan & Duchon, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 2000; Yosifon, 2002; Shkedi, 2003; Creswell, 2009;

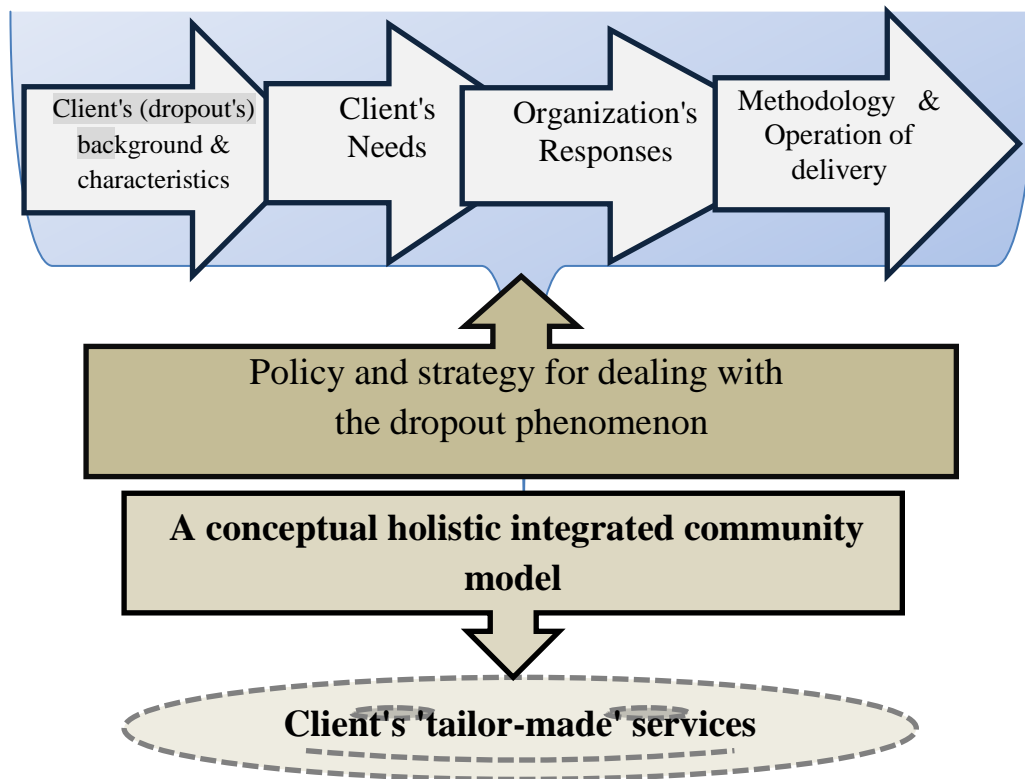


Figure 3: The process of identifying policy & strategy dealing with the dropout phenomenon

In our case, the qualitative constructivist research leads and alongside it the quantitative research serves as a secondary facilitating factor. According to Alpert (2010, p. 335), this is a combined model that is defined as QUAL/Quan (qualitative research with quantitative components), which is implemented in a consequential way. This enables the integration of research tools and research methods in order to attain wider and more accurate interpretations. According to Creswell & Plano Clark (2010), this mixed methods approach has four alternatives of research design:

- a. The triangulation design – whereby researchers use quantitative and qualitative methods simultaneously, attributing equal value to each of them in the research process and in analyzing its results .
- b. The embedded design – whereby researchers choose one preferred method to which they integrate the second method according to need. Thus, they enhance the clarification and interpretation of the data.
- c. The explanatory design – whereby researchers collect quantitative data and only later on collect qualitative data that will help them to analyze and interpret the quantitative data .

d. The probing design – whereby researchers begin with qualitative data in order to be able to construct quantitative tools that do not exist in the context of the researched topic.

We chose to conduct the present research according to the **embedded design**, with the quantitative data constituting the basis for identifying the trends of the researched fields. The qualitative data make it possible to get in deeper and understand the managers' considerations when choosing a policy and strategy for operating the services provided to dropout youth in one way or another .

Research Population

As mentioned above, the research is based on the 'case study' of a central department in the education system in Israel, which is in charge of the development and accessibility of services for youth who have dropped out of the formal education system in Israel. Thus, the research population focuses on this department and includes three groups of managers/workers at various operational levels which the 'case study' was conducted, including:

a. The first group – consisting of managers on the national Ministry of Education level, who are involved mainly in setting the department's policy and strategy (3 out of the 3 national level managers that exist on this level).

b. The second group – comprises managers on the intermediate (regional) level, who are in charge of adapting the national policy to the local municipalities under their jurisdiction (10 out of the 32 regional level managers)

c. The third group – includes managers on the field (municipal) level, who are in charge of operating the Unit directly for the clients – the adolescents (54 out 150 managers in the municipalities).

The sampling of the first and second group of respondents was chosen according to the Purposive/Judgmental Sampling model. This method is grounded in information that researchers have about the researched topic. It helps them to define the sample of the group in which they are interested. The research group was chosen according to uniform criteria (role in the organization / place in the hierarchy, etc.). In this research, the sample encompasses all (100%) of the national headquarters staff and all (31%) of the regional headquarter staff of the research unit in our case study.

The third group of respondents sample comprised the unit managers in the field all over the country. This group was chosen according to the Cluster Sampling approach. This method is customarily used in qualitative research, in which researchers define the sample in a number of clusters according to the relative part of these groups in the total examined research population . The group is comprised of several communities types, among them 35% are towns of over 50,000 residents,

53% are municipalities of 10,000-49,000 residents, and another 12% are municipalities with less than 10,000 residents .

The respondents sample chosen out of the entire managers' group (150) consists of 54 managers, who constitute more than a third (36%) of the total number of practicing managers. As aforesaid, the group was chosen by means of the Cluster Sampling method, in order to properly demonstrate the diversity between the communities types according to their size (large, small) and culture characteristics (Jewish, Arab). Questionnaires were administered to these various groups.

Table 1: The participants of the sample were divided according to cultural sectors (N = 54)

Managers from the Jewish sectors :	39 managers (72% from managers sample)
Managers from the Arab sectors :	15 managers (28% from the sample)

Table 2: The participants of the sample were divided according to municipalities (N= 54)

Towns with population of : between 20,000 – 49,999 / 50,000 +	Towns with population of : - 10,000 / between 10,000 - 19,999
18 municipalities (33.3% from the sample)	36 municipalities (66.7% from the sample)

In addition, in-depth interviews were also conducted with some of the managers for the purpose of identifying, the principles according to which they determine the policy and the ways of implementing it when granting the services to youth who have dropped out of the education system.

The research Tools

The main tools that are used in the research: (a) Documentation of existing material; (b) Questionnaires; (c) Semi-structured interviews; (d) Focus groups; (e) ATLAS software - qualitative data analysis [The "Atlas" is qualitative software that was first developed in the University of Berlin, Germany. It is a work tool for qualitative analysis of data that include: text, graphical material, documents, interviews, etc. ATLAS helps managing, shaping and making sense of unstructured information in three levels: on the organization level, on the text level and on the conceptual level]; (f) SPSS - quantitative data analysis.

Research Design

Table 3: The Research scheme according to the working stages

Research Stages	Goal	Source of information	Type of information	Research tool
Stage A. Quantitative Data on Research	Identifying & describing of the profile dropouts population-through social Socioeconomic Background & Characteristics of the dropout population in our 'case study' . .	The dropouts' data Was taken from the Ministry of Education's databases – reported by the Youth Advancement (Y.A.R.A) units in Israel	Official documents - about variables of functioning, behavior and risk of the dropout population	Official documents computerize data & analyzing computerized material that is partly updated online provided to the headquarters according to requirements of the organization's one's a year (using 01/2014 data)
		Profile mapping data – in demographic and personality terms, through ongoing reports of the Y.A.R.A units in municipalities , using the organization's database (part of this is also manifested in the quantitative research)	Mangers reports – on profiles according to various life areas, including: behavior/ Functioning/ & background	Survey of data from, the Ministry of Education's computerized system; monthly report By the Y.A.R.A, units in the municipalities (of the case study) + Managers Computerize electronic Questionnaire
Stage B. Qualitative Data on research	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Identifying & describing the needs of the dropout population *Identifying & describing the responses that the dropouts require & Receives * Identifying & describing the Components & principles of Operations Management of the services for dropouts in the 'case study' 	Perceptions and positions of the managers of the 'Youth At-Risk Advancement units YARA, on the national, Region and local levels of the case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Perceptions, positions and reference to the Questionnaire of the needs and responses that are required & delivered to the Dropout * Collection of life stories of patients - Report of a random sample of managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Computerized electronic questionnaire – given to group 1+ 2 + 3 (see Table 5) * Semi-structured interviews with research sample respondent, from group 2+ 3 (see Table 5) * focus group Discussion with sample of group 3 (see Table 6)

6. Findings and discussion

In order to form a logical sequence of the findings, the research presents them according to the order of the research design and by order of the research questions. Since the research is grounded in the mixed method approach, part of the data was obtained by qualitative methods and part by quantitative methods. The mixed methods approach facilitates getting a fuller picture, both quantitative and qualitative, of the complex dropout phenomenon that we are addressing.

Findings related to the first research question (Q1): *"What policy components underlie the organizational model of the units that cope with youth who dropped out from the schools system in Israel?"*

Table 5: policy components of the YARA units in the Israeli case study

<p>The main goals of the unit:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Reengagement of the dropouts within the normative activity variety of their peers, in paths of studies, work, professional training, social life, culture and leisure as well as military service. (b) Compensating and advancing dropouts who did not reached formally Educated according age. (c) Exhausting and actualizing the positive personal potential. (d) Preventing dropout and alienation from the community and society in which they live.
<p>The operational principles of the units:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The out-reaching to client principle; (b) The "youth as a whole" principle; (c) The "transitional stage" principle; (d) The 'orientation towards solution and empowerment' principle; (e) The 'from disconnection to integration' principle; (f) The 'customized suit' principle.
<p>The operational managing of services delivery:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) The personal level intervention process; (b) The group level intervention process; (c) The community level intervention process

Findings related to the second research question (Q2): *"What are the implications of this policy on the operational management of these units for dealing effectively with the dropout phenomenon in order to reduce it?"*

(a) Managers' perception of the importance of cooperation:



Figure 4: A flowchart of relationships with which the YARA unit forms interface and partnerships

There are 3 paths of effort for creating interfaces and partnerships:

First path – pertains to interfaces with community organizations that provide human services for youth in the community, such as policy services, welfare services, schooling services, work places, etc.:

Second path – pertains to interfaces with national and regional organizations that provide human services for youth, such as educational services, welfare services, health services, etc. ;

Third path – pertains to three additional important elements in the community that are connected to this issue. These are the families, business people from the business sector and NGOs who develop unique services for youth

(b): Areas of life that oblige the management to develop cooperation

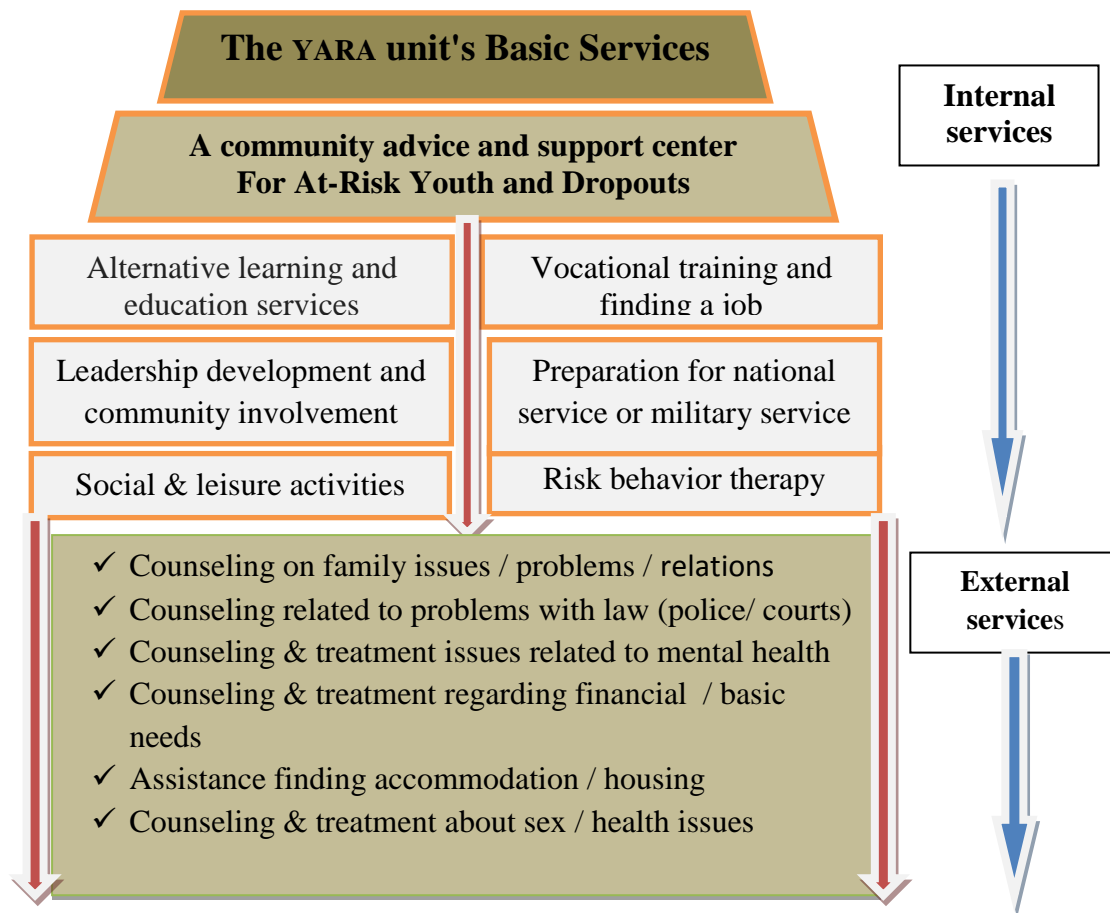


Figure 5: The YARA unit's community services for dropouts

(c): Methods required for developing and maintaining partnerships:

First course of action - directed at creating **internal cooperation** within the unit itself and within the community in the municipality. This course of action focuses mainly on creating the mechanism of a 'case manager'. This 'case manager' is responsible for planning a personal intervention program for each dropout boy/girl, in order to return them to the education system and to studying, or to design a meaningful qualitative alternative for them and for their future life as adults.

The second course of action – directed at creating **external cooperation** with organizations and services on the regional or national level, which can provide professional assistance for developing ideas and programs for the dropouts. In some cases it is even possible to receive unique resources in order to implement these ideas and programs. These resources are allocated by various governmental Ministries that are connected to youth in general and to dropout youth in particular.

(d): Methods for delivering services to clients (dropouts), using those strategies

- Inter-professional coordination team within the unit
- Inter-professional coordination team within the municipality/community
- Creating an inter-professional therapeutic wraparound focusing on the youth
- Appointing a case manager who is responsible for managing the case and coordinating between the services
- Creating a shared managerial organizational roof for all the units that handle at-risk and disconnected youth.

Finding regarding the sub-questions:

[1] The dropouts are a very complex client population, with a wide range of needs, coming from a very complex socioeconomic background and environment. This population requires a broad view of the issues and the design of a wide range of responses .

[2] The managers invest a great deal of effort in forming a meaningful personal connection with the clients and their family, based on relations of trust, transparency, attentiveness, consistency, etc.

[3] This operation requires special preparation of the organizations.(a) identifying and reaching out to the target population and gaining its confidence. (b) implementing personal plan to each dropout ("to sew for each customer his/her own suit"). (c) granting at the Right time and Right Place the Right mix of services that the dropouts need for getting back to leaning and completing their studies.

[4] Each dropout can have risk conditions in one, two or all the areas together. There can be seven different combinations (Szabo-Lael & Hasin, 2011), and each combination constitutes a profile of a dropout that has to be differently treated.

[5] This reality has direct implications for solutions and plans aiming to deal with the dropout phenomenon as well as for the policy of the organization and its operation of services granted to this population.

[5] Planning a variety of solutions as well as multiple accessibility methods and technologies for the dropouts (the clients); oblige the managers to seek professional partnerships with various organizations and different professions.

[6] The research identifies: (a) the importance of cooperation for providing a holistic and meaningful response to dropouts. (b) the areas of life in which it is necessary to develop partnerships with other organizations and community services. (c) the methods required for developing and maintaining these partnerships.

The discussion and interpretation of the findings were performed in relation to the research hypotheses and in accordance with 'The Grounded Theory' principles for deriving the main themes

(categories) of this research. This process allows a discussion that identifies the key elements from which we can draw the main conclusions of the study. Accordingly, this stage of examining and discussing the themes (categories) of research, dictates the formulation of the policy and management strategy of the research findings in organizations dealing with dropouts.

The process of analyzing and discussing the findings underwent a preliminary stage of identifying and forming the central categories of the research (which are compatible with the research questions), in order to focus on the central themes that affect the phenomenon. The process of choosing the central categories was performed according to the criteria set by Strauss (1987), for identifying the "central category". The criteria are as follows:

[a] The central category has to be principal, i.e. related to a large number of other categories and their properties. [b] The category appears at a high frequency in the data and findings. [c] The category contributes considerably to the general explanation of the researched phenomenon.

These criteria guided us in identifying the central categories of the present research, which ultimately constitute the central themes that underlie the phenomenon and affect it and the ways of coping with it. At the end of the process, the central themes/categories that emerged were in line with the professional literature that addresses the topic, and were also verified in the research field of the case study. In organizational-managerial terms of the unit's policy and management strategy, these are: (a) Complexity of the unit's target population ("clients"). (b) Needs of the client population and their implications for the products of the unit for dropout youth ("unit products"). (c) Implications of the first two categories: complex population + complex needs, for the array of services that are to be provided to the population in order to minimize the phenomenon and bring the adolescents back to the path of learning (adapting the product to the client – 'customizing a personal suit' for each client). (d) The organizational-managerial principles that guide the range of services for handling the dropout phenomenon, in order for the desirable change to actually take place (policy of operating the unit for the dropouts).

At the end of the process of analyzing these findings, the aim is to examine whether it is possible to identify an optimal managerial organizational model which can minimize the dropout phenomenon and return the dropouts to the life paths of learning and contributing to society.

7. Conclusion and Implications

The conclusions drawn from the findings yield an interesting picture in relation to the operational management model of the units which cope with the dropout phenomenon:

[1] Managers of units that provide the intervention services for dropouts greatly depend on the interpersonal foundation established between the service provider and the client. Furthermore, it depends on the relations between the service managers, the professionals within the organization, and the professionals at the communal organizations that are related to at-risk youth and dropouts.

[2] Optimal management of an organization for the purpose of minimizing the dropout phenomenon stems from the regular setup of identifying clients and getting connected with them. The aim is to reach the population that has disconnected itself from the educational establishment, and to regain their trust in people and in the education system's programs. This operational setup for identifying, connecting and monitoring the dropout and at-risk populations (both "hidden dropout" and "overt dropout") constitutes a milestone in the functioning of a dynamic and 'client focused' unit.

[3] Among the programs of an organization that works with dropouts - a multi-problem population has to develop within it a method of social-psycho-didactic diagnosis, in order to identify the profile of each client who comes to receive the service. The goal is to perform a quick diagnosis and adaptation of the specific intervention that the clients require. In most cases, this is a personal mix of services that addresses the totality of the adolescent's life areas, adapted to the clients according to their unique needs, tendencies and capability.

[4] The findings corroborated the first research hypothesis (A) : *"The more complex and difficult the characteristics of the dropout population and the more they pertain to the adolescents' varied life areas, the more complex and difficult is the re-organization of the unit that has to adapt a "personal mix" to each and every dropout youth"*.

[5] The conclusion drawn from the discussion of the findings illustrates that the complexity of the organization's target population necessarily leads to a reality of complexity in managing the organization and its services. Particularly in issues that are related to human services and complex populations of at-risk youth and dropout youth.

[6] In relation to the ecological theory (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), the findings illustrate that managers should operate according to the holistic systemic approach, in order to create a whole "envelope" of services for dropouts. The idea is to provide responses in a variety of life areas in which the client requires help. The findings significantly indicate (more than 60% of the approaches and actions of the managers in the case study – The YARA units) the importance that the managers attribute to the

operational perception and principles, which are rather essential for the organization and management of complex services for complex population.

[7] The findings corroborated the second research hypothesis (B): *"The more diversified the services that the unit is required to provide (and adapt to each client in a "personal mix") in various life areas, the more professional and organizational varied collaboration the unit is required to establish in these life areas"*.

[8] The conclusion drawn from the discussion of findings indicates that at this point, the variety of services that should be provided pertains to many areas of life. For that purpose, the organizational system is required to create a professional response which does not always exist within the organization itself. Thus, the solution found in our 'case study' is establishing regular and occasional partnerships with various professionals and organizations that grant services in areas that cannot be provided for by the organization itself.

[9] The most prominent conclusion drawn from the discussion of these findings is that the organization attempting to minimize the dropout is committed to a strategy of forming partnerships with professional organizations in the environment as an integral part of its policy and its everyday operation. Such activity requires the presence of managers who know and are capable of collaborative work with professionals from various disciplines and various organizations.

[10] A conclusion drawn from the discussion of the findings indicates that managing the partnerships in an organization that addresses this phenomenon requires the use of a wide range of methods and technologies in forming the inter-professional and inter-organizational partnerships. This relates to the context of both the shared planning, maintenance and monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of these programs and services.

[11] The important conclusion drawn from the discussion of the findings supports the holistic-integrative systemic approach, which is based on the professional literature and on the experience that was accumulated in the case study. First, this approach enables a wide perspective of the needs and a variety of responses. The only way to cope with the multi-problem nature and the variance of the needy population is to construct the shared roof for services and professionals in the community, which are fully and quickly accessible to the clients.

[13] Discussion of these findings. The findings support the approach of a holistic and integrative perception of the clients (dropouts) and their needs as the most effective way of minimizing the dropout phenomenon and reengaging the dropouts into the education system.

[14] The findings corroborated the third research hypothesis (C): *"The more inter-professional and inter-organizational the partnerships, the more mechanisms are required for synchronizing and integrating the different professionals and organizations"*. In this point the conclusion and objective is to design a comprehensive and integrative holistic intervention program for facilitating

adolescents' return to the learning circle, limiting the number of dropouts that stay outside the education system.

Initiative of a new organizational model for coping with dropouts

The model presented here summarizes the recommendations of this research, and is an extension of the original model conceived by Adelman & Taylor (1994, 1997). It is based on the research findings (both theoretical and practical), and extended the Adelman & Taylor model (1994, 1997) to the community 'space' for those who have already dropped out from schools (the "Overt dropout").

Summing up, we recommend a number of design principles for policy and strategy concerning operational management engaged in the reduction of the dropout phenomenon :

[1] Out-of-school youth may have several non-academic reasons for leaving school and dropping out. This is illustrated by the theoretical and practical knowledge that evolved from the study (Bridgeland, DiIulio & Burke Morison, 2006; Lahav, 2004). The principle is oriented at the need for a unit which relates to various areas in addition to learning. These areas are associated with the reason for dropping out or with the factor which inhibits the adolescents' reintegration in school. According to the present research, this concerns factors relating to the environment of the adolescents' home, friends, school itself and the community.

[2] To address returning students' needs and recovery, the organizations should offer an individualized and flexible intervention as well as an adaptable schedules of learning (open-entry and open-exit so youth may begin and complete programs at any time).

[3] To use a 'need-based' assessments for properly identifying and serve returning youth through a 'case management' approach .

[4] To design a holistic-oriented intervention plan that relies on an integration of local or regional partners and community organizations.

[5] To establish partnerships with experienced organizations working within the community and engaging the specialists to support at-risk youth as well as having the responsibility to this youth.

The recommended model reflects a perception that defines the dropouts' population, needs and responses being part of the community preparations for dealing with the dropout phenomenon. Consequently, the policy and strategy must encompass the following principles:

[1] A holistic-integrative service setup for dropout youth. This setup is managed under a common organizational-managerial 'umbrella', consisting of all the organizations which provide educational-therapeutic services for at-risk and dropout youth (first priority). In case this is not feasible, we have to strive to form a communal coordination mechanism for pooling all the community resources in order to deal with the dropout phenomenon (second priority).

[2] The service setup for the dropouts must be located in a separate building within the community space. It should be accessible to the target population and their family at all hours of the day. This location will enable the dropout population to identify the organization as a unique system designed for granting them educational-therapeutic services with the purpose of returning them back to the suitable learning path.

[3] The organizational operation model proposed following the present research is displayed in next figure; the model is a further development of a model conceived by Adelman & Taylor (1994, 1997). It includes a transition therapy for the "hidden dropout" group as well as the "overt dropout". This group (group no' 4, in figure 6) is defined as: 'Unattached youth after being given up by the education system'. For them, we offer a special pathway relating to the setup of dropout factors, not necessarily relating only to their learning difficulties and their functioning but also to those of the teachers working with them.

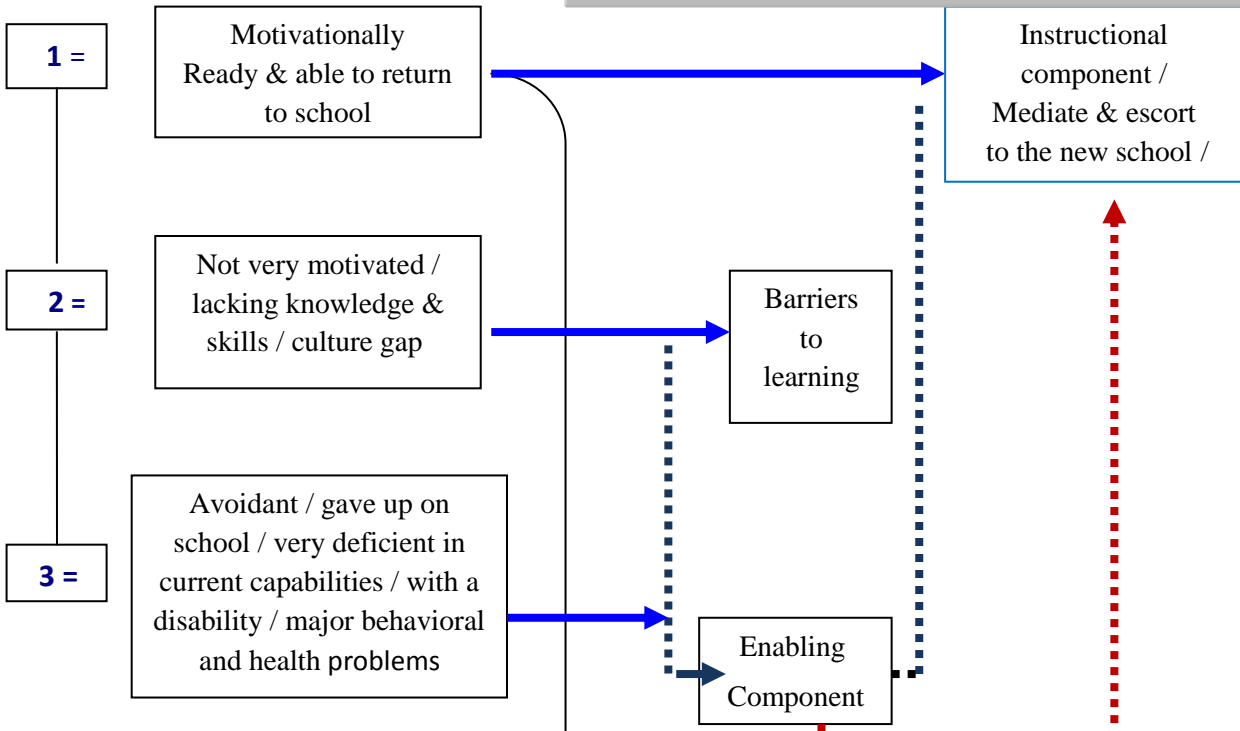
The new model - the DIRECT (Dropouts Intervention Reengagement Community Treatment) model, identifies areas of life which may cause the adolescents to leave the education system, particularly the factors that may encourage and facilitate their return to the education system. The proposal presents the need of each community authority to set up alongside the school, a system that deals with all those on whom school has given up. In addition to the systems setup for students in the schools, a parallel system should be set up in the community for identifying the actual dropouts and helping them bridge the gaps and overcome the difficulties of returning to mainstream frameworks. The objective of the extended model is to include in the efforts exerted by the communal education system also those given up by the system or who have given up on the system and left the school. The method consists of the following elements:

- a. Expanding the responsibility for coping with this population in a communal framework (outside the school) .
- b. Building a mechanism for identifying the population, contacting it and designing an individual plan for dealing with it in order to reintegrate it within the learning pathway .
- c. Extending the areas of intervention and therapy, beyond the enhancement of studies, to other areas of life which are meaningful for the adolescents' transition to adult life later on .

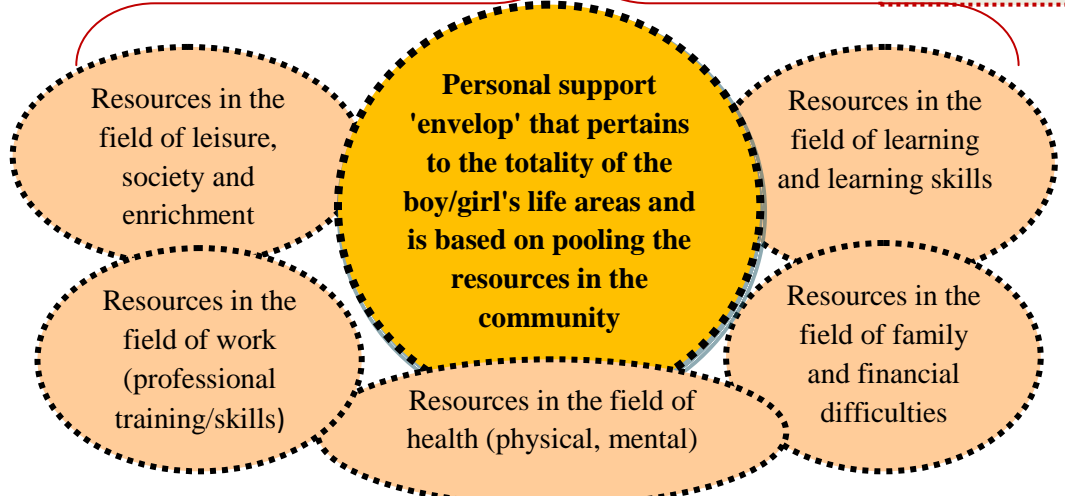
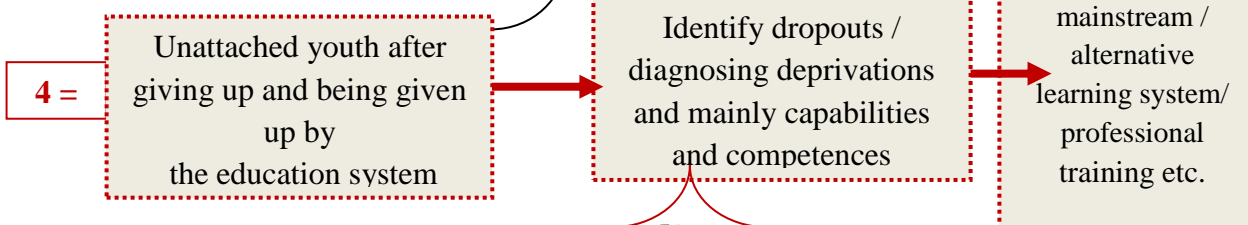
**THE DIRECT MODEL –A MANAGEMENT STARATEGY INNOVATION
(Dropouts Intervention Reengagement – Community Treatment)**

**The Adelman & Taylor (1994) proposal:
The 'Dropouts Prevention model'
Within school**

Types of dropouts



**The expanded research proposal:
The 'Dropout intervention model'
within community**



The New Innovation

Figure 6: the new flow chart of the model on dropout's reengagement within community

In conclusion - the model is based on several components that stem from the aforesaid theories and practices (from our 'case study'). The model indicates the main principles for national policy constructing a model should include coping and minimizing the dropout phenomenon:

[1] Legislature for defining the state's responsibility and commitment to provide free educational services until the completion of the 12th grade, and alongside it the responsibility of the local municipality and the family to deliver these services to the adolescents.

[2] A computerized system for identifying and monitoring adolescents who drop out of the education system and do not find an appropriate alternative framework.

[3] Creating a service system that is based on the variety of the adolescents' areas of life, and which pertains to their following spaces: the individual, the family, school and the community, and to the following areas: studies, work, leisure, social life, culture, etc. (the Wraparound Service).

[4] Determining a community/municipal integrating factor that diagnoses the unique needs of each adolescent, designing the unique response to their needs, through the use of a variety of social-educational services in the community and by mediating and coordinating between them (the Case Manager).

Within the framework of this model, several strategic plans are presented, constituting a mix with which it is possible to create the unique response for each adolescent separately. The principal action strategies include: (a). Personal coaching: This strategy is based on developing meaningful personal relations between sponsor (youth worker) and student (the dropout). (b). Developing and establishing alternative frameworks: This strategy encourages the establishment of communities' spaces that will provide dropouts with significant learning alternatives, leading to a significant and recognized qualitative diploma. (c). Family commitment to learning and success: A strategy that is directed at developing the family's commitment and responsibility for the adolescence's learning and development, and at developing their involvement in these areas.

8. Personal Contributions to the field knowledge

My personal contribution to the field in the present research was on two levels that were noted by King et al. (1994) as justifying the importance of a new research:

[1] The first was making a focused and effective effort to identify the dropouts and return them to a path of learning and education. This effort constitutes an important part of the state's strategy for minimizing the dropout phenomenon.

[2] The second was turning this important channel for handling dropouts into a special and separate unit in the framework of educational services in the community. This enables the unit to be

independent and flexible in identifying the adolescents' needs in all areas of their life, such as health and welfare – rather than focusing on learning and education alone. This is not a customary and common perspective, as it is directed at a unique and selective unit destined for a specific target population.

My years of working in the education system have made me understand that this system usually orients itself to the mainstream populations, and is not sufficiently aware of the needs and responses that are required for populations at the margin of society. This research aims first to point out the uniqueness of such a population, and second to underscore the fact that the Ministry of Education should embrace a flexible policy that is compatible with these children.

The research sets an innovative challenge on the level of policy, strategy and operational methods, an extremely meaningful insight for educational authorities coping with the dropout phenomenon in Israel and in the world. Unlike the conventional way whereby treatment of the dropout phenomenon focused mainly on preventing it before it took place, this research sets the challenge of coping with the phenomenon after it has taken place and students have already left the education system. The research presents an option of policy that focuses on minimizing the phenomenon through organizational efforts to return the dropouts to the education system, based on the assumption that this condition of dropout is not irreversible. In addition, the research presents an innovative challenge that is related to the managers' methods of managing and operating the units for dropout youth. This challenge necessitates planning a unit which integrates various experts and organizations working together to accomplish the goal of reengaging the dropouts and minimizing the phenomenon. In this case, the assumption is that the diversity of causes and problems underlying the phenomenon cannot be the professional responsibility of one professional field alone. Rather, several experts should be brought together in order to cooperate and produce an efficient and meaningful program for attaining the reengagement goal.

Finally, the research supports the theoretical perception developed by Woodside & McClam (2015) regarding the implementation on the practical level of managing organizations whose purpose is to grant human services. In our case, that means providing educational-therapeutic services to dropout youth. Such an activity has to be based on 3 central principles that emerge from the research:

- [1] Developing a network of services that are relevant to the dropout phenomenon under one organizational 'umbrella' on the community level.
- [2] Developing and creating inter-professional cooperation in order to offer a totality of responses to the dropouts in the various life areas in which they require help, and which have a direct or indirect effect on the dropout.
- [3] Appointing a Case Manager in order to find the optimal 'personal suit' for the dropouts, aimed at returning them to a path of learning.

In this case, the principal effort of the professionals in these units is to bridge between the clients (the dropouts) and various professionals in the community, who are expected to provide responses for their personal needs. Such bridging will ultimately minimize the gaps that the dropouts have developed in various areas of life (not only the academic area), leading to their return to a path of learning and minimizing the dropout.

Contributions to the theoretical knowledge

The innovations in the aspect of the research refer to several central issues that pertain to organizational-managerial coping with the dropout phenomenon:

[1] The present research recommends changing the paradigm that is accepted by most of those who address the dropout issue (Cairns, Cairns & Neckerman, 1989; Finn, 1989; Pouncy, 1999; Chmelynski, 2006; Reyna, 2011; Ben-Rabi, Baruj-Kovarsky, Konstantinov, Rotem & Cohen-Navot, 2012), and which focuses the solution to the phenomenon on components that relate to the academic world of the boy/girl. This appears to be a clear strategy, since that is where the adolescents failed and dropped out. Hence, an attempt is made to generate the change in their learning skills, in closing the learning gaps, etc. This finding clarifies that the factors that are as important to address are associated with additional life areas affecting students' academic success or failure as well. The importance that should be attributed to these areas is sometimes greater than improvement in the academic area, since they constitute the factor that projects on students' learning. The problem that arises in this change of paradigm is relevant to the responsibility of the mainstream school and the tools that are available to it, which in most cases refer to the academic area alone. Within the schools there are no content or coping components (methods and technologies) that address the other life areas of the adolescents or their family. This organization appears to be critical since it is what makes the difference between the school from which the students dropped out and The Youth At-Risk Advancement unit which takes care of them once they have dropped out in an attempt to help them get back on track.

[2] A second area in which it is possible to learn from the analysis of the present research findings relates to the "Umbrella" model (Erikson, 1981) as one of the options for dealing with the complexity of the services required of organizations that provide them. This means creating an organizational-managerial rooftop on the community level that can plan, design and grants the services to the clients (the dropout population) directly, without any need for complex mechanisms in order to coordinate between them. Today, the "Umbrella" model receives a less important place in the theoretical space of human services in general and services for dropout youth in particular.

[3] The two previous topics that emerged illustrate that it is possible and perhaps recommended making a theoretical expansion of the model developed by Adelman & Taylor (1994, 1997),

extending it into a model that contains complementary services beyond the academic area, services which are required in the rehabilitation and care of dropouts.

[4] The additional finding that can be addressed in the research is managers' need for a profile of this kind of complex services, which are intended for at-risk and dropout youth. The research indicates a challenging complexity of requirements and managerial skills that managers should possess. These include the ability to correctly manage complex, dynamic and adaptable units or businesses, a multidisciplinary perspective and flexible thinking that will enable managers to function in a multifaceted and changing reality. This point has undoubtedly been insufficiently researched. Consequently, I suggest investigating it thoroughly in further studies.

Contributions to the practical knowledge

The practical innovation in the present research is indicated in several areas:

[1] In the focus on the 'dropouts' rather than on the 'dropout phenomenon'. The research's perspective focused on the dropouts from the viewpoint of active intervention after the students had already dropped out of the education system, while, as aforesaid, most of the studies engage in the dropout phenomenon – i.e. the processes that occur before dropout actually takes place. This approach stems from a social ideological premise that affects the practice itself – i.e. the system should not give up on the students who have already dropped out. Moreover, there is a lot to be done in order to return them to a path of learning and thus minimize the dropout scope.

[2] The finding regarding the population's complexity may not be new, but it means that this complexity requires the operation of units that satisfy a variety of needs, in various areas of adolescents' life, much wider than what was customary in the mainstream education system (which focuses only on the academic educational aspects and whatever stems from it).

[3] The additional innovation of the research resides not only in the "combining of hands" of organizations and experts in order to construct a personal intervention program for each boy/girl according to their needs (including in financial and social terms). Such a combination should include the planning of special managerial strategies by the relevant unit managers in the community, so that the partnership between the organizations that treat these special populations actually transpires in practice.

[4] The additional finding that I consider interesting and innovative pertains to the need to think about cooperation within the community and outside of it. There are small municipalities and municipalities that are poor in resources and services. Thus, in these places the possibilities of satisfying all the clients' (dropout) needs may not be optimal. The finding that actually surprised me greatly was that no difference was found in the managers' positions between the sectors and community sizes. This indicates that apparently, the expectations of each of the managers focus on

seeing their client's possible potential, and that is where their expectation is directed in relation to the organizations with which it is possible and desirable to establish the partnerships. My conclusion is that this "bug" should be solved by enabling these managers to set up the partnership coalitions not only within their community, but also with nearby communities in the geographic area. This option facilitates the required partnerships as a condition for providing holistic and meaningful services for at-risk and dropout youth.

[5] Beyond the above-mentioned contributions, it should be noted that this is an initial research in Israel and in general, involving a group of managers, by understanding their central role in managing, operating and coping with the researched phenomenon - the dropouts. The focus on them makes it possible to examine the research themes and questions from the organizational-managerial aspect, without which it would be difficult to expect results of minimizing the dropout phenomenon in the world. Further on, I propose an optimal organizational model that is based on the model currently uses, namely that of Adelman & Taylor (1997).

Following the insights and learning of the present research I expanded it and suggested including within it a complementary units array that will take in those dropouts who cannot survive the activity channels proposed in the model of Adelman & Taylor (1997). Moreover, these dropouts could benefit from comprehensive and integrative complementary varied services provided in the community. The services would be provided adjacent to the schools and alongside them, catering to the dropouts' various life areas (beyond the learning components), and would be operated under a shared organizational 'umbrella' in the community.

Limitation of the research

Within the limits of the study we point out the limitations associated with the 'case study', with the sample regarding the theoretical base, and with the method and process of the research. This study represents a specific organization in a specific country with certain cultural, social and economic characteristics, from which we wish to learn about other similar cases around the world. The question is: "What can be learned and under what conditions?" Israel is a small country in size and population, and hence it is probably different from many other worldwide countries. Nevertheless, the special advantage that can perhaps be found in this case is in the complexity of the population that lives in it, both socially and culturally. Israel constitutes a center for immigration from many different countries around the globe, from the former Soviet Union countries to African countries (mainly Ethiopia) and North and South America. The heterogeneity of the population in the case study can contribute to certain extent to the ability of generalizing the research results to other

countries and societies in the world that are immigration countries, in which there is also a dropout phenomenon.

An additional limitation resides in the decision, as a researcher, to focus the study on the population and the services that are provided for it through a chosen and representative sample (from the Jewish/Arab sector and from various sizes of communities) of managers of the YARA units. The assumption is that were it possible to increase the participants' number and to include workers and clients, the profile picture of the needs and responses to these needs would have been wider and more complete. Since we are focusing on the management operation of the system, we have focused only on the managers.

An additional limitation is the very fact that this research simultaneously uses two research methods – the qualitative method (which was at the basis of the research) and the quantitative method (which was secondary and complemented the information in certain topics). Hence, it is necessary to synchronize the two methods so that they actually complement each other in investigating the various issues. Such a use may be complex in the first place because of the difficulty of adapting and connecting the results that were obtained from each source separately. I overcame this difficulty through the use of qualitative research, in order to identify the data that requires a quantitative component in order to understand it. From that point too we attempted to extract the qualitative meanings and interpretations in order to expand the picture and the possibilities of learning from it.

In accordance with this approach, the researcher's responsibility and commitment are to present a rich description of the case study, and the reader already knows whether or not to practice it in other situations. This study that used qualitative as well as quantitative research tools provides a broad picture of the studied realities. Hence, its conclusions and recommendations along with its existing limitations allow us to making generalization to similar realities.

Significance of the research

King, Keohane & Verba (1994) stipulate two criteria for defining topics that justify conducting a research. The first criterion is that the research presents important questions in the practical area, or in the researchers' language (King et al., p. 15): 'To set a question that is "important" in the real world'. Raising the question that preoccupies the researcher in its practical aspect and discussing its components may enhance possibilities of various organizations in various places to cope with practical issues for improving and streamlining the practice. The second criterion is that the research addresses a problem that arises in the scientific literature pertaining to the topic and in the researcher's opinion has not received sufficient attention, or can be addressed in other ways that are

less known in the professional literature. Goodall (2000) calls this a gap in knowledge or in literature.

In the case of the present research, both criteria apply. Firstly, it is a topic that relates to the operational methods of an important educational social unit that needs to function in a methodical and orderly way since it is part of a unit provided by the state, according to its laws and policy. This is a reality that is accompanied by a governmental and municipal mechanism that obliges the unit to comply with administrative organizational principles of action as well as to yield results and to adhere to timetables. All this is carried out through an ideological professional perception of the right and appropriate way of coping with youth who find it difficult to function in schools they are compelled to leave for various reasons which do not always depend on them.

Secondly, the professional literature that addresses the issue of care for at-risk youth in general and dropout youth in particular today, does not address the need to provide a wide range of solutions for various of these adolescents' needs. This concerns setting up a network of responses for a variety of needs that the adolescents experience. This perception stems from many studies that have focused on the phenomenon, and which relate it to many factors in the adolescents' life. For instance, the National Dropout Prevention Center in the United States (Hammond, 2007) divided the factors that affect dropout into four key categories: Factors that are related to the individual; factors that are related to the family; factors that are related to the school; factors that are related to the community.

The multitude of factors that affect the phenomenon of dropout, dictate to organizations that attempt to cope with it the need to offer responses that refer to the totality of factors together with solutions for coping. This complexity of the phenomenon is accompanied by a very dynamic reality in which adolescents live. This stems from both the personal aspect of undergoing the stormy and dynamic adolescence period and the environmental aspect of being part of a society that is undergoing rapid processes of change affected by many external factors. In addition, the era of globalization whereby the world in general and the western world in particular necessitates extremely complex and flexible solutions and services which can provide a qualitative and meaningful response to this complex reality.

This research attempts to understand the behaviors and patterns leading the organizational system that develops services for adolescents who have dropped out of the education system, by referring to these adolescents' varied life areas. The research aims to identify the main patterns that characterize the thinking of managers who lead the policy of education and care and its operational methods, in order to provide the complex responses necessary for coping with the phenomenon of dropout from the education system. The principal contribution of the research is the attempt to

identify structured processes - both theoretical and practical - for operating complex educational-social services for adolescents who have dropped out of the education system.

Further research and perspective

In the context of the issues that were addressed in this research, there are several future research directions that can contribute to expanding the picture obtained about the dropout phenomenon, including:

[1] In the context of the clients - it is recommended conducting an in-depth research of the "customized suit" intervention issue. A research that will stem from the client-focused (customization) approaches and individual-focused (personalization) approaches that were developed in the management field.

[2] In the context of the clients - it is recommended conducting a research that is based on the examination of the relationships within the 'Ecological model' (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). This model demonstrates how multiple environmental factors such as family, friends, NGO organizations, public organizations, religious organizations etc., can be incorporated into the development of appropriate interventions for school dropouts from the different community services related to the adolescents' life.

[3] In the context of organizations - there is room to examine and investigate the mechanism that should be created between various organizations that pertain to the life of the dropout beyond the education system; examine their commitment to providing services to these adolescents who have dropped out; and clarify who should really lead these inter-organizational processes following the dropout.

[4] In the context of the managers - leading the organizations that are responsible for planning and providing the services to dropout youth in the community, it is important to investigate the desirable profile of the managers of such complex systems, which require great flexibility, abilities to manage multi-professional and multi-organizational teams, and in particular to recruit and establish dynamic partnerships that are adapted to different cases of dropout adolescents and their unique needs. To this day, this topic has not been researched from this aspect and in the context of such organizations (educational-therapeutic organizations). Consequently, a further research directed at such an examination of the optimal managers' profile for this important task can constitute an important contribution to the field.

[5] And finally, in the context of the legislation - that promotes inter-disciplinarian, inter-sectorial and inter-organizational services. There is room for examining the legislation that exists today on the national level. This legislation is directed at establishing units whose goal is to focus on one area that is within the responsibility of that governmental office.

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