

**BAR ILAN UNIVERSITY**

**High-School Principals' Perceptions of their Roles and  
Abilities to Cope With the Reform "Oz Letmura"**

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## **Abstract:**

The reform "Oz Li'Tmura" (power to change) is implemented for the past five years in the educational system in Israel's high schools. The decision of launching this reform is a result of a multi-system acknowledgement of the necessity to change and promote the Israeli educational system and achievements, following a governmental decision to put education as a top priority national issue (Irgun Hamorim web site).

"Oz Li'Tmura" is intended to raise the teachers' income by at least 50%, while expanding the weekly teaching position to 40 hours. This will enable individual hours of schooling for students and will promote both teachers' performance and students' achievements, and will encourage excellence.

Teachers will be rewarded for excellence in teaching and the teaching staff will be recompensed for academic achievements, social achievements and multivalued achievements. It will also strengthen principals' status and authority.

The Ministry of Education identified in this reform an opportunity for a major pedagogic change. However, as a matter of fact, the teaching staff that is required to implement the reform does not feel it involves a pedagogic systemic conceptualized perception. They feel there is no logic in the implemented changes and that the process is fragmented, incomplete, abnormal, and is rooted inadequately in schools. Moreover, some of the teachers and principals are concerned the reform will negatively affect their income and hiring conditions.

"Oz Li'Tmura" reform faces continuous implementations difficulties, both on the Ministry of Education's side and while it is being implemented at schools. Schools are very slow with reform implementation and are quite inefficient with it.

A report supplied by RAMA, The Center of Measuring and Estimation of Achievements, found there is a good justification for dissatisfaction amongst teachers as to the reform. This was indicated in spite of the minister of Education's reservations about these findings. The ministers of Education claimed these are more a kind of labor pains along the process than real problems.

The present research investigated the reform's implementation amongst school leaders and principals and their satisfaction by interviewing them. The research will examine the reform assimilation and implementation by principals, the difficulties they are facing with the teaching team required to change his working terms, adjust individual schooling and staying at school for non-schooling hours. The research will examine the solutions suggested by school leaders and principals to ease the process and to cope with the teaching staff and the Ministry of Education.

This research is aimed at examining school leaders and principals' satisfaction with the way the "Oz Li'Tmura" reform is implemented. The study population of this research is based on 17 high school principals, leading four-year and six year schools, who have been implementing the reform for the past years. The research was carried on with semi-structured interviews, that were analyzed during the study.

The study raises a few main conclusions: principals are important and have a major role in implementing management attitudes and changes into the educational system. Therefore, their views and opinion have to be considered as to the next stages of the reform implementation. Their personality affects their functioning, their attitude towards the reform, their willingness to implement it, and their team management and cooperation along the process. Some of the principals are sticking to officiating instructions and some of them cut corners and compromise with their subordinates' needs and necessities.

This research shows that extending the teachers' labor day promoted their engagement toward schools and students, improved teaching and studying, improved students' achievements and the schools' functioning. This research also found that individual teaching hours are a valuable by-product of the reform and a resource of high standard, which improves both teaching and studying.

This research shows that since the reform was first implemented, many principals use decentralized management, delegated authority and sharing management to a certain extent with the teaching staff. This research also found that collegiality improved within the teaching staff in schools that joined the reform.

The importance of this research is in the reform is next phase and in improving its present failures and malfunctions. As found in this research, the Ministry of Education is not fully committed to the reform, it is not assimilating it properly, it does not assist and support the principals as required, it does not meet part of its commitments and it does not supervise the reform advancement. The Ministry of Education does not use a uniform policy in different schools and it should absorb the fact that it should supply to principals with guidance, data and tools to best conduct the reform.