The multifaceted nature of mentors’ authentic leadership and mentees’ emotional intelligence: A critical perspective

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Abstract
The aim of the study was to investigate, from a critical perspective, mentees’ perceptions regarding the persons they view as their influential mentors — whether they regard them as authentic leaders and whether these mentors affect the development of mentees’ emotional intelligence (EI). Using a sample of 62 teacher-mentees from different school levels and different sectors in Israel, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore participants’ perceptions of mentoring processes that had influenced them professionally. A qualitative analysis, based on a confirmatory approach using ATLAS.ti, revealed that the influential mentors were perceived as authentic leaders, acting within different dimensions of authentic leadership (AL) at different levels. In addition, it was found that mentees perceived their influential mentors as contributing to the development of the mentees’ EI, including different relationships between the various dimensions of AL and the different dimensions of EI. This led to the generation of a multifaceted model which may develop a critical perspective regarding the difficulty of mentoring, considering the uncertainly in mentors’ works. The findings support this critical review of mentoring and, it is argued, will encourage educational leaders to focus on advancing different dimensions of authentic leadership during mentors’ professional development programs, in order to develop different dimensions of mentees’ EI.

Keywords
Authentic leadership, emotional intelligence, mentees, mentoring, mentors, schools

Introduction
The design of the present study was based on a variety of critical reviews regarding mentoring, authentic leadership (AL) and emotional intelligence (EI). Considering the multiple critical perspectives, the main goal of this study was to explore whether mentees’ perceive their influential
mentors (formal or informal) as authentic leaders, and whether their mentoring has affected the mentees’ EI. According to Darwin (2000), mentoring is much more than giving advice; and the literature describes mentors having little insight into mentees’ emotions, although they are clearly involved in mentoring.

Moreover, although the educational world has changed, traditional mentoring practices are still to be found in schools. According to Crisp and Cruz (2009), definitions of mentoring have largely been based on curriculum issues rather than on broad forms of assistance to the mentees. In addition, methodological tools used to quantify mentoring experiences have not been theoretically based; and, furthermore, while previous studies focused on mentoring benefits, we would argue that research should also investigate the cases where mentoring is not beneficial for mentees, and the reasons for that.

According to Gardner et al. (2011), greater attention to the basic components of theory, including conditions about values, time and space, is required, especially when we consider that assessment of AL revealed gaps between the theoretical and the empirical framework. In addition, while most conceptions and measures of AL (e.g., Walumbwa et al., 2008), posit that these are multidimensional constructs, research which examines the separate relationships of these dimensions is rare, and sometimes suspect (Spitzmuller and Ilies, 2010) due to the use of single items to operationalize AL dimensions.

According to Humphrey et al. (2007), the term ‘Emotional Intelligence’ has consistently defied a clear and consensual definition – a basic scientific requirement. Furthermore, it is still unclear whether EI represents anything more than a combination of personality variables and certain aspects of general cognitive ability (Schulte et al., 2004). Thus there seems to be little agreement as to how the construct should be assessed.

Based on our critical review above, we focused on the following main questions.

(1) Can mentors’ AL dimensions be identified by their mentees’ perceptions?
(2) If the answer to question (1) is yes, which AL dimensions were identified, and at what level?
(3) Did mentors’ AL affect mentees’ EI? (4); and if the answer to question (3) is yes, which dimensions of EI emerged, and at what level?

Finally, considering questions (3) and (4):
1. Which specific dimensions of AL relate to specific EI dimensions?

Mentoring: a critical perspective

In different countries around the world (e.g., USA, Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand), extensive resources are allocated to the professional development of personnel employed in the educational system, through the use of the mentoring system (Clayton et al., 2013; Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). However, despite the significant value attributed to mentoring, it is a controversial issue, as is evident from several studies (e.g., Ehrich et al., 2004; Gagen and Bowie, 2005; Mertz, 2004; Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2012).

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These studies included the multiple definitions and aspects of mentoring that describe the mentor’s role as complex and varied, leading to ambiguity. This is especially relevant in Israel given that the concept of ‘mentoring’ in that country sometimes includes formal mentoring (with formal appointment by the Ministry of Education) and sometimes informal mentoring (without formal appointment, based on school experience and senior role in the school), which may call for a critical perspective as to whether formal mentoring is needed when there is already informal mentoring in schools.

The literature identifies the importance of mentoring in implementing educational reform (Bouquillon et al., 2005), and its essential role in supporting teachers at different stages of their professional development (Ingersoll and Strong, 2011). According to Douglas (1997), mentoring is an intense relationship in which a senior person oversees the career and psychosocial development of a less-experienced person. Mentors support their mentees, providing counseling, feedback and information that they would otherwise not have (Ehrich et al., 2004).

Today, in the field of mentoring, less focus is being placed on individual cognition, and more on a ‘situated learning’ perspective. The focus is on the whole person, within the social context and the socio-cultural community, where learning is seen as a process of participation in ‘communities of practice’, while the relation between mentor and mentee comes into focus (Sundli, 2007).

Fletcher (2000) underlines the importance of personal and professional engagement in the relationship between mentor and mentee. Thus mentoring means guiding and supporting the trainee to ease the passage through difficult transitions; it is about enabling and reassuring as well as directing, managing and instructing, while unblocking the paths to change by building self-confidence, self-esteem and a readiness to act, as well as to engage in on-going constructive interpersonal relationships. However, most previous studies did not focus on the informal aspects of mentoring.

From a critical perspective, one of the major problems in school mentoring is the stress and pressure placed on mentoring. This pressure comes largely from the structure of the routines, codes and expectations that have been established in the schools (Sundli, 2007). Additional problems associated with mentoring could arise from differing ethics, possible misuse of power or excessive control by the mentor, or from exaggerated emotional dependence by either mentor or mentee (Rhodes and Beneicke, 2002). It has also been found that school culture could play a role as both a barrier, in the case of a culture that does not accept a new learning process, or an enabler, in the case of a culture that supports professional development (Thornton, 2014).

**Mentoring from the international perspective**

Most previous studies on mentoring have focused mainly on mentoring novice teachers, which supports them in their personal and professional lives (Glenn, 2006; Harrison et al., 2006), assists their entry into the work environment (Hobson et al., 2009), and plays a crucial role in reducing dropout among novice teachers in the first few years of work (Rajuan et al., 2007; Strong, 2009). Studies have indicated that mentoring makes an invaluable contribution not only in the first stages of the teaching career, but also later on. For example, studies that focused on mentors’ and mentees’ perspectives have identified the significant contribution of mentoring to mentees with regard to classroom management, coping with students’ differential needs and teaching content (Fletcher et al., 2008). In this context, the aim of mentoring in schools is to reduce fears among experienced teachers by helping them cope with the new challenges, as well as increasing novice teachers’ self-confidence and self-esteem (Hagger and McIntyre, 2006).
Across the globe (e.g., Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, United States and Israel), since the mid-1980s, the number of mentoring programs has increased (Howe, 2006). In effect, there has been a shift in the notion of the roles of the mentor and mentee, from veteran and novice to co-learners and colleagues in a more collaborative environment. While effective teacher mentoring programs vary, reflecting different cultural, social, geopolitical and economic contexts, there are still some common features. An analysis of teacher mentoring programs in Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand and the United States (Howe, 2006) revealed several such features: one was that the most successful teacher mentoring programs include opportunities for experts and novice teachers to learn together in a supportive environment, promoting time for collaboration, reflection, and acculturation into the teaching profession.

**Mentoring in Israel’s educational system**

In Israel, the concept of ‘mentoring’ may cause confusion, since it may be perceived as either formal mentoring, in the case of a mentor who has received formal appointment from the Israeli Mentoring Division, and enjoys financial reward for mentoring (e.g., math mentors, language mentors and mentors that lead pedagogical reforms), or as informal mentoring, in the case of pedagogical functionaries (e.g., coordinators) who have neither formal appointment nor financial reward for mentoring but provide personal, professional and pedagogical support to teacher colleagues in their schools, based on their educational experience.

The main goal of mentoring in the Israeli educational system, whether formal or informal, is the development of the mentees’ ability to function to their full professional potential in educational institutions, and to ensure the provision of high-quality teaching to enhance students’ achievements. Reforms in the Israeli educational system are introduced largely by mentors, who serve as a bridge between the policy makers and the teaching staff who implement the policies (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2012). The increasing public pressure on the leaders of Israel’s educational systems has led to an array of reforms directed toward teachers’ professional development (e.g., ‘New Horizon’ and ‘Courage to Change’). The frequent changes in Israel’s educational system highlight the need for strong educational leadership that can lead and implement pedagogical reforms: teacher mentoring is an important part of this leadership (Israeli Educational Management Circular, 2004).

Most Israeli teachers who mentor, formally or informally, do so typically in addition to their regular teaching jobs, in order to provide ongoing assistance and support to both ‘novice teachers’ as well as to experienced teachers on specific issues (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2012). In this way, the Israeli educational system endeavors to support teachers at different levels, occasionally even at the level of subject coordinators who are thus further empowered and better equipped to serve the educational goals of the system. The role of a formal mentor may in fact be defined with a certain latitude, as described in the guidelines of the Israeli District Mentoring Division (2006: 21). Thus it is recommended that the final definition should be based on an exchange of ideas that includes the superintendent, the principal and the mentor, with a view to customizing it to the particular needs of each school and the educational team of each subject.

Because the roles of both formal and informal mentors are complex and diverse, mentors find themselves maneuvering between different, sometimes conflicting, interests. For example, the Israeli mentor’s role of developing mentoring suited to the school’s agenda through dialogue (Israeli District Mentoring Division, 2006), may raise the problem that different functionaries in the school system (e.g., principal, mentor, inspector) may have differing ideas about what is
‘good’, leading to questions of whose viewpoint should be accepted. In this case, formal and informal mentors may find themselves forced to make decisions against their conscience when dealing with multiple and sometimes contradictory interests of different people in the school. At the same time, they must also provide a response to the dilemmas experienced by mentees at the various stages of their careers, as well as respond to the needs of superintendents and school principals (Shapira-Lishchinksy, 2009).

**Leadership and mentors**

Leadership is a concept relating to people’s ability to influence others and to motivate them to a high level of commitment to perform tasks (Avolio, 2005). In the research literature, mentors have frequently been equated with leaders (Clayton et al., 2013). One of the claims is that the nature of the mentors’ role is to act as leaders, because they require leadership and guidance skills as well as the potential to energize people to bring about change while attributing meaning to their performance. Previous studies have indicated that mentors take part in a range of tasks included in the definition of the educational leaders’ role: assisting in the development of a school pedagogical vision, mobilizing teachers to realize the goals of the educational system, spearheading and implementing changes in learning, and participating in building and evaluating learning programs and educational initiatives (Darling-Hammond et al., 2007; Pont et al., 2008).

**Authentic leadership in mentoring**

Recent research literature on mentoring has pointed to a new style of leadership, known as ‘authentic leadership’ (AL) (Avolio et al., 2009). AL is a synergistic combination of self-awareness, sensitivity to the needs of the other, honesty, and transparency regarding one’s self and others. Authentic leaders trust those under their charge and express confidence in their own capabilities and those of the people they lead (Gardner et al., 2005).

Walumbwa et al. (2008) have identified certain characteristics required of authentic leaders:

(a) **Self awareness**: a heightened awareness of the world they live in, awareness of their strengths and weaknesses, and awareness of their impact on other people and how others perceive them;

(b) **Relational transparency**: exercising behaviors that promote trust, such as openly sharing information, true thoughts and feelings while minimizing displays of inappropriate emotions;

(c) **Balanced processing**: being able to analyze all relevant data objectively and solicit sufficient opinions and viewpoints of others before making a decision; and

(d) **Internal moral perspective**: having internal moral standards and values when facing group, organizational, and societal pressures, reflecting the extent to which they are willing to fight for high standards of ethical conduct.

In the field of mentoring, mentors as authentic leaders, through their personality, guide mentoring processes directed toward the mentees’ confidence and well-being. The goal of the mentor is to listen to the mentees and to share with them as much as possible, enabling their independent adoption of leadership processes. Mentors as authentic leaders know how to set limits, to stand their ground, and to voice their honest opinion fearlessly (Ilies et al., 2005). Mentoring that is based on identifying the mentees’ needs, recognizing their strengths and weaknesses, should position the mentors as authentic leaders who increase their mentees’ motivation to internalize, implement and lead processes in their
schools. Mentors who function as authentic leaders encourage constructive learning that is based on principles of dialogue, nurturing, and inquiry (Shapira-Lishchinsky, 2014).

Based on the above literature, which indicates that authentic leadership includes emotional aspects, and based on the critical perspective (above) that previous studies have ignored the different dimensions of AL (Spitzmuller and Ilies, 2010), we will investigate in this study whether AL and, more specifically, which dimensions of AL among mentors may possibly contribute to the development of EI among their mentees.

**Emotional intelligence**

Emotional intelligence (EI) can be defined as the ability to discriminate between different emotions and label them appropriately, and to use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior (Goleman, 2000). According to Goleman (2004), EI is an array of skills and characteristics that drive leadership performance. Goleman’s model outlines five main EI constructs:

(a) **Self-confidence**: a strong and positive feeling of self-worth;
(b) **Self-regulation**: controlling or redirecting one’s disruptive emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances;
(c) **Social skill**: managing relationships to move people in the desired direction;
(d) **Empathy**: considering other people’s feelings, especially when making decisions; and
(e) **Motivation**: being driven to achieve for the sake of achievement.

Given the critical perspective regarding the absence of an agreed definition of EI (Humphrey, et al., 2007), in addition to the paucity of agreement as to how EI should be assessed (Schulte et al., 2004), in this study we will consider all five different dimensions of EI.

**Can emotional intelligence be developed?**

Based on our critical review, a key question often posed is, ‘Can an individual’s EI be developed, or is it an inherited or enduring trait?’ Findings by Jušovec et al. (2001) support a genetic component of EI, the evidence of which is brain activity patterns that differ between high EI and average EI individuals. In support of the influence of family environment on the development of EI, Tiwari and Srivastava (2004) found a positive relationship between EI and perceived environmental quality of home and school, such as the individual’s living or working area and support by parents or teachers.

According to Zeidner et al. (2002), limited research shows whether programs offered as EI interventions are actually effective in enhancing the kinds of skills included in current models of EI. Moreover, where evaluation is possible, outcomes tend to be mixed or moderate (Topping et al., 2000). For example, many of the programs (and subsequent evaluations) cited by EI lobbyists were not specifically designed to address EI, and thus their EI ‘content’ is often meagre (Zeidner et al., 2002). This raises the questions of what is in fact taught in such programs, and the relationship of this to EI outcome measures. Moreover, although the study by Greenberg et al. (2004) clearly supports the notion that EI can be taught, a few cautionary notes were found, for example with regard to the outcome measure used, for which to date there is little in the way of published psychometric information (Humphrey et al., 2007).

In any event, in much of the literature relating to EI there is a strong consensus that EI is a trait that can be developed. For example, according to Goleman (1998) individuals are born with a general EI that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies. Thus emotional
competencies are not innate talents but, rather, learned capabilities that can be developed to achieve outstanding performance (Boyatzis et al., 2000).

More specifically, research provides the support that while EI is amenable to development, interventions during childhood are the most effective (Dulewicz and Higgs, 2004; Goleman, 1998). In addition, Höpfl and Linstead (1997) point out that although the core capabilities are developed within childhood these are malleable and thus capable of being developed and changed. Moreover, according to Qualter et al. (2007), EI is an umbrella term that certainly includes social-cognition, so that the teaching of social cognitive skills may possibly help develop specific aspects of EI.

Based on the different critical perspectives regarding whether and how EI might develop, in this study we will explore mentees’ perceptions regarding the possible effect of mentors’ AL dimensions on the development of their EI dimensions.

**The multifaceted nature of interrelationships between AL and EI**

AL includes emotional processes which may affect the mentees’ EI. Based on our critical review regarding the terms of AL and EI (above), we will describe the possible effect of the mentees’ perception of their mentors’ AL on the development of their EI, while considering the different dimensions of each factor. For example, self-awareness, referring to mentors who are aware of their influence on others (Walumbwa et al., 2008), may affect the EI self-confidence among mentees; that is, the ability to raise their mentees’ sense of positive self-worth (Goleman, 2004).

Balanced processing, which may refer in our case to mentors who are willing to accept opinions that contradict their own (Avolio et al., 2009), may evoke the EI empathy among mentees, which means thoughtfully considering students and colleagues’ feelings – together with other factors – in the process of making decisions. In such a case, the mentee must be able to sense and understand the viewpoints of everyone in the team, and the mentee’s empathy will allow them to understand the team’s emotional makeup. The mentee will then be able to judge more aptly when to push for better performance and when to hold back (Goleman, 2000).

Relational transparency, which includes authentic presentation of the self to others (Gardner et al., 2005), may draw out the EI social skill among mentees by teaching them to build networks in their team, and exercise their ability to find common ground. As a component of EI, social skill is not just a matter of friendliness. Rather, social skill is friendliness with a purpose: moving colleagues in the direction the mentee desires (Goleman, 2004).

Internalized moral perspective, which is expressed through behaviors and decision making in accordance with the leader’s internal values (Brown et al., 2005; Kernis, 2003), may bring out the EI self-regulation among mentees, which includes the ability to control or redirect disruptive impulses and moods, and the propensity to suspend judgment – to think before acting in the event of critical ethical incidents. Thus self-regulation is essential for mentees, because people who are in control of their feelings and impulses are able to create an environment of trust and fairness (Boyatzis et al., 2000). When a new program is announced, they are able to suspend judgment, seek information, and listen to the administrators as the new program is explained. As the initiative moves forward, these mentees are able to move with it. In addition, self-regulation enhances integrity, which is not only a personal virtue but also an organizational strength, reflected by the ability to say no to impulsive urges.

The AL internal moral perspective may also generate the mentee’s motivation, a propensity to pursue goals with energy and persistence, a passion to work for reasons that go beyond money or
status (Walumbwa et al., 2008). These mentees may be motivated by a deeply rooted desire to achieve for the sake of achievement itself (Goleman, 2000). Such motivated mentees may seek out creative challenges, love to learn, and take great pride in a job well done. Mentees with such energy often seem dissatisfied with the status quo. They are persistent in their questions about why things are done one way rather than another, and are eager to explore new approaches to their work.

**Method**

**Participants**

For the purposes of the study, we approached teachers in Israel who were at different stages in their careers and who had experienced mentoring in schools. The teachers were chosen randomly from each career stage level: ‘Early career’ (1–7 years tenure), 20 teachers; ‘Mid-career’ (8–19 years tenure), 22 teachers; and ‘Later career’ (20–35 years), 20 teachers: they were selected from one of the Ministry of Education districts in central Israel. These categories of career stages were based on previous international research (e.g., Hargreaves, 2005; Ornstein et al., 1989), and on the Israeli educational system. Up to seven years in the Israeli system, teachers consider that they are still learning how the system works, and in their seventh year are allowed to take a sabbatical. The mid-career includes the period until the teacher is allowed to take early retirement from the system (from 50 years of age). Finally, the later career includes teachers who choose to continue in the system in order either to receive higher compensation when they retire, or because they want to continue contributing to the system.

The sample included 62 teacher-mentees, each from a different school, who consented to participate in the study. All of them had additional roles (such as pedagogical coordinators, subject coordinators, homeroom teachers). The mentees belonged to different levels of educational systems: elementary, junior-high, and high school teachers in the different sectors (state religious and state secular schools). The teacher-mentees’ ages ranged from 24 to 62 (mean age 41.7 years). Of the 62 teacher-mentees interviewed, 47 were women (76%) and 15 were men (24%), which is representative of the gender distribution of the teaching population in the educational system (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2013).

**Ethical consideration in data collection**

The research was carried out according to the ethical principles of psychologists and code of conduct (see Fletcher, 2000). First, we received approval for the study from the departmental ethics committee at our university. We then described our study goals and the need for mentee-volunteers to participate in this study, which we publicized through the school principals’ website in the Ministry of Education’s Central district. We also asked the principals to spread our message among their school teachers through the school email system, and to encourage their teachers to participate in this study.

The principals then sent us lists of teachers who had volunteered to participate: we contacted these individuals, met them and explained the research aims and methods. We assured participants that all identifying details would be excluded from the published study. In addition, participants received a letter explaining the aims of the study, our commitment to preserve confidentiality and anonymity, and their right to leave the study at any time. Participants were asked to sign an informed consent form regarding participation in the study, based on the letter of explanation. Data collection was based on interviews conducted during 2012 by the authors, who have in-depth
knowledge and experience in qualitative research. The interviews took place in the study participants’ schools, either during free periods or at the end of the school day.

**Research tools**

Semi-structured interviews were used to study participants’ perceptions regarding their mentors’ impact, as experienced by them during their professional career. For the purpose of the interview, we prepared the following basic questions in order to evoke mentees’ perceptions regarding the persons they perceived as their mentors and who influenced them:

- Can you tell me about a significant mentor whom you encountered during your professional career?
- Can you tell me how this mentoring influenced you?
- Can you tell me about an event linked to this mentor that was significant for you?
- Can you tell me about any new learning or insights that you gained as a result of the mentoring?

During the course of undertaking the interviews we chose which additional questions we should ask.

**Data analysis**

In this study we used confirmatory data analyses, which can help to evaluate legitimation or to increase legitimation in a qualitative study. As outlined by Onwuegbuzie (2003), confirmatory thematic analyses can be conducted in which replications of qualitative studies are conducted to assess the replicability (i.e., external generalizability) of previous emergent themes or to test an extant theory, when appropriate. Such confirmatory techniques will help in providing corroboration for previous findings and interpretations regarding AL and EI in a new context – that is, mentoring.

We used ATLAS.ti.5.0 software (Muhr, 2004) to analyze phrases from several files simultaneously (Crego et al., 2008). Several steps were taken to ensure research validity:

(a) Analysis of the data by each of the present authors;
(b) Use of member checking, a process in which the findings were returned to the study participants enabling them to respond and even to contribute to the interpretation (Lincoln and Guba, 1985); and
(c) Once data analysis had been completed by each of the researchers separately, we met to cross-check data and to characterize the central findings of the study (Boardman and Woodruff, 2004).

More specifically, while reading the transitions, we attempt first to identify whether there are main recurring phrases and ideas of mentors’ AL and mentees’ EI dimensions in the same narratives, based on confirmatory thematic analyses, as suggested by Onwuegbuzie (2003). Second, in the same narratives, we included a process of additional inquiry, comparison, and labeling, which evoked the different dimensions of AL and EI. Finally, third, we linked the different dimensions of mentors’ AL and mentees’ EI according to the shared narratives.
Findings

First, we found that when describing an influential mentor, the study participants related both to formal mentors, namely, those who had been officially appointed by the Ministry of Education, as well as informal mentors, those in other positions in the educational system who had not been officially appointed, but had served in mentoring roles in accordance with needs that had arisen in the school. For example, one of the interviewees described how the principal immediately identified her need for mentoring in preparation for her transition to teaching third and fourth grades, and paired her up with a third and fourth grade coordinator. The coordinator was her mentor and assisted her in the transition from first and second grade teacher to third and fourth grade teacher:

I asked the school principal to pair me with someone professional. She immediately referred me to the language coordinator in school. Even though she isn’t an official mentor, she could certainly be relied upon to help and to give her best. Her availability was worth so much more than if an external pedagogical mentor had come to school once a week. (Female, second grade homeroom teacher in a state religious elementary school, with 3 years’ seniority)

Second, while investigating the different narratives, we found that when asking about influential mentors, narratives emerged among the 62 participants which referred to 30 formal mentors and 32 informal mentees. In addition, in analyzing the emerging dimensions of mentors’ AL and mentees’ EI and their relationships, no significant difference between the narratives regarding formal or informal mentors was found. These findings support our study approach, to examine mentees’ perceptions regarding their influential mentors as a group, about whomever they considered as a mentor, whether formal or informal, without distinguishing between narratives of formal and informal mentors.

Third, we found that the different dimensions of AL and EI focus on the informal aspects of mentoring (e.g., supporting the mentee in case of a personal issue), in addition to the professional subjects of mentoring (e.g., supporting the mentee in a case of stimulating a new curriculum).

Fourth, while extracting the different dimensions, we found that one participant might mention several dimensions of AL and EI. In addition, we found that the most dominant dimension of AL was self-awareness (48 participants referred to this dimension) and, second, balanced processing (43 participants referred to this dimension), followed by relational transparency (36 participants referred to this dimension) and, finally, internalized moral perspective (28 participants referred to this dimension). Regarding EI, we found that the most dominant EI dimension was self-confidence (52 participants referred to this dimension) with, second, empathy (46 participants referred to this dimension); third, social skills (42 participants referred to this dimension); then motivation (28 participants referred to this dimension); and, finally, self regulation (21 participants referred to this dimension).

Lastly, based on the mentees’ perceptions, we investigated the relationship between the different dimensions of AL and EI which appear in the same narrative. The following are the different relationships that emerged.

The relationship between mentor’s self-awareness and mentees’ self-confidence

We found that mentees perceived their mentors as being aware of their ability as mentors to influence others (AL self-awareness), affecting their (the mentees’) sense of positive self-worth dimension (EI self-confidence). For example:
In one of our meetings, we discussed how to deal with students with difficulties in learning Bible studies. We discussed learning strategies, and checked how we can improve our teaching aimed at leading the students to succeed in understanding a Bible text, which is not a simple text. We understood that we needed to become close to the students’ world in the 21 century. Through the mentor tools and my knowledge, integrated with relevant and meaningful teaching, we helped the students to succeed. I felt that the mentor’s amazing process helped me to understand about myself and how I can impact my students. (Male, Bible studies teacher and subject coordinator, secular state junior high school, 5 years experience)

Or another example:

I was teaching in an old school, a traditional school. One day I got an offer to instruct a special needs class in a new school, with many options for promotion. I spoke with my school coordinator. We discussed my strengths and my weaknesses, and she encouraged me to take the position, telling me that it is a ‘window of opportunity’ for me, and she preferred that I be promoted, instead of standing in place, although it will be not easy for her to find another good teacher. During our conversation I understood that I was afraid to change schools, because I felt comfortable in the old school. (Female, Special Education homeroom teacher in secular state high school, 3 years experience)

It seems that in both cases, mentees perceived their mentors, either formal (in the first case), or informal (the coordinator in the second case), as being aware of their ability to have an effect on their mentees – for example, by improving their teaching (in the first case) or by taking a position in order to get a promotion (in the second case), reflecting AL self-awareness. In these two cases, the mentees perceived the mentors’ revelation of self-awareness in order to arouse their sense of positive self-worth through the effect on their students (in the first case), or by getting a promotion (in the second case), reflecting EI self-confidence.

The relationship between mentors’ balanced processing and mentees’ empathy

We found that mentees who perceived their mentors as willing to consider and accept a variety of opinions and viewpoints (AL balanced processing) may evoke their (mentees’) EI empathy, through considering students and colleagues’ feelings. For example:

I remember one time when I hadn’t prepared my work plan, even though he had requested it, and nearly everyone else had prepared. The school pedagogical coordinator wasn’t angry with me, but sat and listened to me talking about different directions for actions, and accepted my opinion, which, in the end led me to create a work plan for my team that received a lot of praise. This mentor taught me how to demonstrate concern for my colleagues’ difficulties. (Female, History teacher and 6th-grade coordinator, religious elementary school, 3 years experience)

Or another example:

At his suggestion, I allowed my teaching colleagues to observe my science lessons, to express their opinions, and to suggest new ideas . . . he [the pedagogical coordinator] gave me the confidence to do this and told me about his successes as a result of peer learning, which contributed to greater efficiency and innovation . . . a concept called “encounters” was introduced into the school. After the distribution of the report cards, I held structured, individual conversations with each student. I listened to
their feelings and understood them while setting operative goals for the next quarter. (Male, Science teacher and homeroom teacher, secular state junior high school, 10 years experience)

In both cases, the mentees perceived their coordinators as informal mentors who were encouraging and willing to consider and accept a variety of opinions (AL balanced processing), which led to concern for colleagues (the first case) and listening to their students’ feelings (the second case), reflecting mentees’ EI empathy.

The relationship between mentors’ relational transparency and mentees’ social skill

We found that mentees who perceived their mentors as openly sharing information, thoughts and feelings (AL Relational transparency) may draw out mentees’ EI social skill, by teaching them to build networks in their school team, and exercise their ability to find common ground. For example:

When my daughter was born, the mentor came to school and gave me a card with good wishes. Then she joined our conversation in our weekly professional meeting. That made a wonderful impression. Today, I am happy to be mentoring the special education teachers who work with me in good relationships in school, in a personal learning program and a class-based learning program. And recently it was also decided to introduce an experimental pilot into my class. (Female, special education homeroom teacher, state high school, 8 years experience)

Or another example:

The social coordinator helped me on the ideological and academic levels and opened up a new world for me . . . I started to work differently with the children and his mentoring had a long-term impact. I often make decisions based on stories that he told me from his professional life, from our long discussions, or from examples that he gave me. I felt as though he was a wise old man passing on his theory of life to me. He amazed me. Besides that, he was very sympathetic to me, and all of this affected my relationships with the other teachers and my position as a professional teacher who knows how to create an atmosphere of trust among my team. (Female, Homeroom teacher, religious junior high school, 12 years’ experience)

Both these cases indicated that mentees perceived their formal mentor (in the first case) and their informal mentor, the coordinator (in the second case), as promoting an open school atmosphere (AL relational transparency), which helped them (the mentees) to promote EI social skill, which is not just a matter of friendliness but, rather, friendliness with a purpose – to promote learning and professional teaching.

We also found several dimensions of AL related to one of the EI dimensions in the same narrative. The following are some examples showing mentees’ perceptions regarding their mentors as authentic leaders who helped to develop their EI.

The relationship between AL self-awareness and internalized moral perspective, and EI motivation

This is a narrative representing this relationship:

There was tension in our team since the principal recommended that one of the teachers who is related to her be given the education prize. The mentor persisted and was not ashamed to tell the principal what
she really thought. She knew that she might pay a “price”, but she believed that another teacher deserved the prize, and in the end, the teacher she recommended got the prize. I felt motivated. If you are good, in the end the truth will out. (Female, English coordinator, state elementary school, 22 years’ experience)

In this case the mentee perceived her formal mentor as aware of her ability to influence the principal’s decision-making (AL self-awareness) and her willingness to fight for her moral standards (AL internalized moral perspective), even though she knew that saying what she really thought might hurt her. This conduct caused the mentee to feel motivated (of EI) on the basis that the ‘truth will triumph’.

The relationship between AL balanced processing and relational transparency, and EI motivation

This is a narrative which represents this relationship:

We had a lot of discussions about this, and the vice-principal understood me, although she had an agenda. After we analyzed my needs and talked about the changes that she [the vice-principal] was bringing into the school, I saw that she understood me, accepted me, and was willing to go with my conscience. In my case, because of the nature of my class, she respected my opinion that it might not be a good idea to change over to group seating in the classroom, even though all the other teachers in the school arranged their students in groups. I felt that with such a mentor, I could continue working for the next 10 years. (Female, teacher in a secular state elementary school with 26 years’ experience)

In this case the mentee perceived her vice-principal (her informal mentor) as sharing information and thoughts through discussion (AL relational transparency), objectively analyzing the relevant data before making a decision (AL balanced processing), thus motivating the mentee to continue working (EI motivation).

The relationship between AL relational transparency and internalized moral perspective, and EI self-regulation

This a narrative representing this relationship:

The coordinator was promoted to supervisor, and I got her job. I have a lot of ethical dilemmas, stemming from school administration, teachers, parents, and every one “pushes” in his own direction, and we need to do what is best for the students. I felt free to contact her and consult with her about my ethical difficulties because she knows how to listen to her conscience when facing pressure. She taught me how to control my feelings in front of school principals and teachers. (Female, educational coordinator in a secular state elementary school with 20 years’ experience)

In this case, the mentee perceived her previous mentor as an authentic leader because she could consult with her openly (AL relational transparency) based on her experience, fighting for her internal moral standards (AL internalized moral perspective), so that in a case of conflict with principals or teachers, the mentee would know how to control her emotions (EI self-regulation).
Summary of findings

In conclusion, the present study offered new understandings regarding the influential mentor as an authentic leader. Figure 1 illustrates the main findings of the study regarding relationships that were found between the different dimensions of the mentor as authentic leader and the different dimensions of EI that were developed among their mentees, generating a multifaceted structure. The study findings show that different levels of AL dimensions among the mentors may lead to development of different levels of EI dimensions among their mentees.

Discussion

In light of the critical review regarding AL, EI and mentoring described above, in this study we attempted to understand whether mentees perceive their influential mentors as authentic leaders, and whether these mentors affect the mentees’ EI development. While previous studies focused on authentic leadership among school principals or principal trainees (e.g., Begley, 2007), no previous published study could be found that has investigated AL in mentoring, and its effect on the mentees’ EI development, as well as considering the different dimensions of AL or EI.

We found that mentees perceived their mentors as influential, whether they were formal mentors (appointed by the Israeli Ministry of Education), or whether they were mentors without any formal appointment but who, because of their field experience and their senior school role (e.g., vice principal, coordinator), could provide personal and pedagogical support such that the teachers in their schools perceived them as their mentors. Thus it is clear that a ‘letter of appointment’ is not the essence of mentoring. Mentoring in the education field may emerge informally in schools, whether due to the naturally urgent need of novice teachers for a mentor as a guide, or possibly because of the need of experienced teachers for support in assimilating new educational programs. In practice, therefore, we found that Israeli educational policy considers both formal and informal mentoring as being assimilated into the educational field.

![Figure 1. The study’s multifaceted model. Note: (a) The number in parentheses shows how many participants related to the dimension; one participant may mention several dimensions. (b) The arrows (between Authentic leadership and Emotional intelligence) show the relationships among the different dimensions within the same narrative.](image-url)
From a critical point of view, it might be thought that formal mentoring could be considered unnecessary, given that effective informal mentoring is generated in the field. However, there needs to be an awareness of the fact that this study also reflects that formal mentoring (external) has its own advantages, whereby mentees may feel more comfortable in discussing their difficulties with a person outside rather than inside the school e.g., to avoid exposing their weakness to people in the school.

In fact, it was found that both novice and experienced teachers at all career stages need mentoring, with the focus in particular on emotional and informal aspects of mentoring, in addition to the formal pedagogical aspects of mentoring. In the context of the long-term influence of mentoring, whether by appointed or by informal mentor, mentoring processes were etched into the mentees’ minds, including consideration of their emotions. The mentees identified mentors who were influential, thanks to their ability to help the mentees develop their independence, to share decision-making processes, to provide for involvement in the planning and development of stages in teaching, imparting autonomy and conferring responsibility. The present study reinforces the place of informal discourse in the mentoring processes rather than using mentoring to monitor mentees’ compliance, whether with an Ministry of Education appointed mentor or an informal mentor (such as an experienced colleague). With regard to this issue, we may invoke the critical perspective as to whether mentors are trained and capable of dealing with personal issues in additional to the learning process. It seems that most mentors’ training programs focus on curriculum issues: we found a need also to focus on personal issues.

With regard to the critical review, ignoring the different dimensions of AL and the absence of a clear and consensual definition of EI, we found for example that the most dominant AL dimensions were self-awareness, balanced processing and relational transparency, while the most dominant EI dimensions were self-confidence, empathy and social skills. The explanation for these findings may rest in the Israeli educational system, which is very centralized and bureaucratically controlled by the Israeli Ministry of Education (Tubin, 2011). In this case the mentors need to be personally aware of their strengths in order to attain their mentoring goals, in the event that they do not conform neatly to Ministry of Education goals. Moreover, mentors need to analyze all relevant data objectively (balanced processing) and share information openly (relational transparency) in order to convince the authorities to support their mentoring goals.

In fact, we found that the different dimensions of AL and EI, with varying dominance, generated a multifaceted structure, which may justify the critical review about the limitations of previous AL studies (ignoring the different dimensions) and of EI (considering its broad definition). More specifically, in the present study we found that different dimensions of AL among mentors related to different dimensions of EI among their mentees in the same narrative, a finding that was unexpected in such a multi-structured model (Figure 1). The findings may be explained by the fact that the different AL dimensions of the mentors may encourage development of different dimensions of mentees’ EI, based on the mentees’ perceptions that their mentors defend them against the centralized educational system’s control, which may then encourage and free them to develop different EI dimensions. In addition, this multifaceted structure of relationships between different dimensions of AL and EI may raise a critical perspective regarding the difficulty of mentoring, considering the fuzziness and uncertainty in mentors’ work.

Within the overall debate about whether, or the extent to which, EI can be developed (Greenberg et al., 2004; Hawkey, 2006; Qualter et al., 2007; Zeidner et al., 2002), we would argue that, based on mentees’ perceptions, the present study demonstrates that mentees’ EI may be nurtured by their mentors’ AL.
Conclusions
First, it seems that according to the mentees’ perceptions, in accordance with Israeli educational policy, ‘mentoring’ includes both formal and informal mentoring. This encompasses both formal roles such as supporting assimilation of a new curriculum and, most importantly, informal aspects such as concern for mentees, sharing true feelings or fighting for ethical conduct. In general, however, mentors are not trained to deal with informal aspects of mentoring. Second, we found a multifaceted model of relationships between different dimensions of AL and EI, which may generate a critical perspective regarding the uncertainty and fuzziness in mentors work. Third, and finally, while there is no clear answer regarding whether or what factors may develop EI, in this study we found that mentoring including AL dimensions may encourage mentees to develop their EI, especially the dimensions of self-confidence, empathy and social skills. We can therefore assert that the present study supports the approach that EI can be developed.

Contributions, limitations, and recommendations
On the theoretical level, most of the literature on mentoring focuses on the mentor—mentee relationship and on the conditions required for effective mentoring. No previous published study could be found that has dealt with the issue of mentoring from the perspective of different dimensions of AL and EI: this study does. On the methodological level, while quantitative measures of EI, such as deception, social desirability, image management, and the use of self-reports as a valid way to measure a construct that has purported to be a traditional form of intelligence (Zeidner et al., 2002), have primarily been used and have been subjected to considerable criticism, in this study we suggest another, qualitative approach, based on the work of Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2007), which has never been applied previously when investigating AL and EI, and could be used in future studies.

On the practical level, the findings of this study may assist educational leaders in the mentoring of teachers and other professionals in the educational system (e.g., coordinators), in order to focus on the multifaceted structure of AL, EI and personal relationships, which may contribute to the school’s effectiveness. Furthermore, because mentees perceive informal mentors as similar in their influence to formal mentors, educational leaders should consider extending informal mentoring in schools, by developing mentoring programs in schools, in addition to facilitating mentors to develop EI among their mentees.

Future studies are recommended to enable the inclusion of data generated outside Israel. In addition, a longitudinal study is recommended in order to provide for a deeper exploration of the relationship between mentors’ authentic leadership and mentees’ emotional intelligence development.

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