

Bar-Ilan University
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**The Needs-Based Model of Reconciliation: Teachers'
Reaction Towards their Students in Conflictual
Situations with students, within Educational
Simulation**

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Abstract

The "need-based model of reconciliation" is based on the assumption that there are emotional needs, that motivate a person to specific sorts of management when involved in conflict situations (Shnabel & Nadler, 2008; Siman-Tov Nachlieli, Shnabel & Nadler, 2013). The aim of the present study was to examine teachers' emotional needs, and to investigate how these needs are expressed during teacher-student conflict simulation.

According to the "need-based model of reconciliation", two fundamental dimensions underlay various social perceptions and judgments (Abele, Cuddy, Judd, & Yzerbyt, 2008): communion (for someone who is, for example, perceived as warm, friendly and honest), and agency (includes features as ambition and assertiveness). Leach, Ellemers, & Barreto (2007) argued that the communion dimension should be divided into two different categories: one that indicates social characteristics, and another that indicates moral features. According to their claim, there are three major dimensions: communion, morality and agency.

In the framework of the need-based model of reconciliation it was argued that if one of the dimensions is threatened during a conflict, the person involved feels a need to restore it. Thus, one who feels during a conflict that his agency is threatened, would act in order to strengthen agency. Moreover, it was found that when both agency and communion were threatened, people prefer to restore agency. (Siman-Tov Nachlieli, Shnabel & Nadler, 2013).

The present investigation comprised of two studies. The purpose of the first study (study 1) was to examine the hierarchy of teachers' emotional needs as they were expressed in their work with students. The needs were divided to three dimensions: agency, morality and communion. In addition to a hierarchy examine, a comparison was made between novice teachers and senior teachers and between teachers of humanistic subjects and scientific subjects.

The hypothesis was that the agency dimension would be found as the most needed among teachers, as it is among the general population (Siman-Tov Nachlieli,

Shnabel & Nadler, 2013), since that is (of the three dimensions) the best predictor of well-being (Buchanan & Bardi, 2014) and self-esteem (Wojciszke & Bialobrzeska, 2014).

As stated, the study targets included also examination of different groups of teachers according to seniority and teaching area. Novice teachers (1-5 years) have low self-efficacy (Tschannen-Moran & Hoy, 2007), and they feel experience of survival as a result of the challenges they face (Laron & Shkedi, 2006). Following this, the hypothesis was that novice teachers would express more need of agency than the senior teachers, and senior teachers would express more need of morality and communion than the novice teachers. Another hypothesis was that teachers of humanistic subjects, that view their profession as flexible (Rich & Almozlino, 1999) and refers to the student personality (Eluz, 2004), would express needs of communion and morality more than the others teachers.

Participants were 196 Israeli teachers, 87 novices and 109 seniors. As for teaching area, 106 teachers were of humanistic subjects, and 90 were of scientific subjects. The participants answered a self-report questionnaire, in which they were asked to indicate the importance of the three needs: morality, communion and agency during their work with students.

The research hypothesis that teachers would prefer the agency as the needed dimension was rejected. The findings revealed that the most needed dimension was the morality, afterwards the agency and the last was the communion. Furthermore, the separation between morality and communion, while the agency is in the middle, reinforced the claim that communion and morality should be treated as different dimensions. Regarding seniority, the hypothesis that the senior teachers would express more need in morality and communion was accepted, but the hypothesis that novice teachers would express more need in agency was rejected. Senior teachers reported on greater need of agency, and based on other research (Chen et al., 2015) we explained that the positive agency experience of senior teachers encourages and increases the need for more similar experiences. Regarding the teaching area, the hypothesis that

there is a difference between humanistic and scientific subjects was rejected. The findings revealed that teachers of all subjects graded the need of agency as the most important.

The purpose of study 2 was to observe teachers' behavior and to examine whether teachers' needs, as revealed in study 1, would be expressed consistently during experimental conflictual simulation. Fifteen Simulations were observed, in which six participants were novice teachers and nine were seniors. Ten teachers were of humanistic subjects and five of scientific subjects. During the observation, the expressions of the three dimension were counted (for instance, compliments were coded as communion, threats of punishment were coded as agency and clarifications of proper behavior towards friends were coded as morality).

The findings of study 2 revealed that there is no consistency between teachers' reports (study 1) and teachers' behavior, since during a conflict participants preferred to channel most of their efforts to strengthen their agency. Thus, while study 1 revealed that morality is the most important need for teachers, in study 2 it turned out that during conflict agency is the most manifested need. Based on moral-judgment theories (Bandura, 2002; Blasi, 1980), we suggested that while teachers declare that morality is their main need, during a conflict they prefer to restore first their sense of agency, which is apparently more acute.

The gap between the perception and the action may be bridged by understanding teachers' perception of their professional identity. Apparently, teachers see their role as a duty that demands professionalism and measured achievements (Hoffman & Niderland, 2010). In their perception, academic achievements and class management are expected by the educational system, and thus the effort to restore the agency becomes a just act.

According to the above idea, other differences between study 1 and study 2 were explained. In study 2, no difference between novice teachers and senior teachers was found. Although senior teachers reported in study 1 a greater need of morality, in practice they restored the agency dimension as the novices. Furthermore, teachers of

scientific subjects expressed more than the others need of agency. Although these teachers' reports were equal to the teachers of humanistic subjects, their behavior emphasized more importance of profession and academic achievements, consistently with their unique professional identity.

Finally, research limitations and directions for a future research were suggested. The main conclusion was that strengthening agency among teachers may help direct teachers' behavior during a conflict to moral and social direction. Future research directions were offered to seek means in order to strengthen teachers' agency and by that, to change their conflict management.