Department of Educational Policy and Administration

Characterization of educational networks in Israel

Thesis submitted for the MA Degree of Humanities

By

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study is to describe the schools owned by educational networks, present the trends of these networks in the Israeli education system during the last ten years, and compare educational networks to other schools owned by municipalities and non-network organizations. The study compares several aspects among the different types of schools, including socio-economic, organizational structures, and academic achievements of students.

In recent decades, the decentralization process has influenced educational policy by introducing privatization models and transferring autonomy from the state and local authorities to the schools and other external educational organizations. (Ball, 2012; Glatter, 2003). The reason behind this process is that external organizations, characterized by high resources and industry experience, can improve the Israeli educational system and other global systems mentioned in the study (The Israeli Ministry of Education, 2019). This study shows the development of the Israeli educational policy, represents the influence of internal and external processes on the system's diversity (Greany & Higham, 2018), and focuses on three ownership approaches: education networks, municipalities, and independent schools.

The study uses the quantitative research method based on administrative data from the Israeli Ministry of Education from 2008 to 2018. It includes 1,151 middle schools and high schools of the two main sectors of Israeli education: secular education (Jewish and Arab) and the religious Jewish modern-orthodox education.

According to the study's findings, 46% of schools founded in the last two decades are owned by networks. This finding suggests that educational networks in Israel are becoming more dominant. Another finding shows that educational networks consist of two main profiles characterize these schools. The first profile consists of high academic achievers from the high socio-economic schools, who mostly come from secular Jewish education or the modern-orthodox education. The second profile consists of youth-at-risk students with low academic achievements who mostly attend professional school. Finally, although the percentage of matriculation submissions is higher in the educational network schools than in other schools, another finding suggests that educational networks' final academic achievements (measured by matriculation score) are lower than schools owned by municipalities and non-network schools.

In summary, according to the study, educational networks in Israel serve a wide range of players in the education system, including the Ministry of Education, students' parents, and students from youth-at-risk status. The study's main conclusion is that the state must supervise the educational networks' dual role of cultivating social solidarity and providing equal opportunities for students under its responsibility. The study argues that this approach might improve the **efficiency of the Israeli education system.**

This research is exploratory. It brings new data regarding educational networks based on the variables mentioned above that were never studied before. The findings of this research can contribute to further research on educational networks in Israel.