

A Teaching Career: Mobility and Stagnation

By Sara Zamir*

The definition of "career" has undergone various alterations. In the past, people believed a career was a sequence of promotions up an organizational ladder, but over time, this definition has changed to "all of one's work-related experiences". The study aimed to examine teachers' attitudes towards the term 'career' and the factors influencing their perception of mobility and stagnation in teaching. Via an open-ended questionnaire, 18 women teachers were asked about the definition of 'career' and the factors affecting its mobility and stagnation. Findings show that most teachers only see teaching as a career in the declarative sense of the word.

Keywords: career, empowerment, stagnation; mobility, teaching, principal-staff relations.

Introduction

The definition of a career has undergone many changes in the recent years. The main change is in the meaning that people attribute to this concept. In the past, people tended to give the concept a positive linear meaning, i.e. a sequence of promotions up a hierarchical organizational ladder. Expressions such as "have a career" meant a rapid rise up the ranks of an organization. It was used to refer to hierarchical professional advancement within prestigious professions. The problem with this meaning of the concept of career is that it fits a small group within an organization that, actually, rises up the ranks, and in a certain sense, this definition of career leaves advancement as the responsibility of the organization and does not allow the individual to manage his own career. Moreover, according to this traditional definition, most members of an organization have no "career", because they do not rise up the ranks (Vardi & Nadiv, 1994; Oplatka, 2010; Bar Haim, 1988).

In contrast, Arthur and Russo (1996) defined career as a continuous sequence of all experiences connected with work during one's life. Their definition allows for the inclusion of different styles of career such as moving from one position to another, temporary work and so forth. Similarly, Hall (2002) defined the concept of career as a "sequence of personal positions and behaviors in a person's life that are linked to experiences and activities at work" (Vardi & Nadiv, 1994). It was

Hall (2002) who coined the term "Protean career", in which the career is driven by the person and not by the organization. Individuals will be responsible for managing and constantly reinventing their own careers, taking into account the changes taking place around them, and may have several careers, either in sequence or in parallel. Current research claims that the term "career" is not

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parallel to occupation, but rather a process that is unique to each and every person both in the professional sense and in daily life.

In the old organizational world, the measure of a person's career success referred only to the advancement up the organizational hierarchy – vertical success. In contrast, in the modern era, career success can also be defined primarily in the psychological sphere. It is the sense of self-worth a person derives from the attainment of important life goals: personal achievement, happiness etc. The most significant aspect is subjective and internal rather than objective and external (Oplatka, 2010).

In light of the above, the term 'career' may have four different interpretations:

1. Career as advancement – this interpretation claims that career is an upward climb within an organization or in a particular field. This does not necessarily mean that a person has to remain in the same field, but the aspiration is towards a senior position.
2. Career as a profession – this interpretation claims that not every occupation is a career. In order for it to be so, there has to be a learning process that enables advancement. Occupations that are called professions have prestige.
3. Career as a series of positions throughout life – this interpretation claims that anybody who works has a career. Our career is the sequence of roles filled and the manner in which we perceive the path of our work life.
4. Career as a series of work-related experiences throughout life - according to this view, a person may remain in the same job throughout life, but there will be changes in perceptions and aspirations within the position held (Oplatka, 2008; Bar Haim 1988).

Scholars usually combine these interpretations and it is worth noting that the concept of career does not relate to success or failure at work, but to experiences throughout life that may be either objective (positions held) or subjective (aspirations and feelings).

Career management is important both to the individual and to the organization. They are mutually interdependent, with individuals depending on the organization for career management and the organization depending on the people to carry out its role.

In 1978, Edgar Schein formulated a new concept which he termed 'career anchor'. In his definition, a career anchor is the driving force behind the career, a kind of internal calibration mechanism encompassing the ensemble of ambitions, values and self-perceptions that guide one's career management that the person is not willing to abandon, even when having to make choices.

A career anchor is composed of the self-perception of talents and skills, basic values, motivation and needs as expressed during a person's career. These anchors are formed and acquired during the person's career. Schein (1985) claimed that just as there are constant changes in the world of careers, so must one expect changes in these anchors for different people. He identified five career anchors, and following further research he added another three. These

anchors are:

1. Professional expertise–motivations are the person’s talents and satisfaction with the expertise in the given line of work. It is based on a particular expertise in that field.
2. Management–motivation is the desire to become a manager and the aspiration is to advance in an organization to be one of the leaders in setting policy, making decisions and the success of the organization.
3. Autonomy–motivation is the need to do things according to one’s own standards, not to be bound by procedures and processes, schedules, norms or any other restrictions.
4. Security–a person needs to know that his/her career is assured and settled and that there is no need to worry about the future. The permanent connection with the employing organization reduces uncertainty.
5. Entrepreneurship/creativity – motivation is the need to set up one’s own business, to develop/produce products or services independently.
6. Service–motivations are social values, the desire to serve the community, to care for social wellbeing, to act for the general good.
7. Challenge–motivation is the desire to confront great difficulties successfully; to solve problems and overcome obstacles.
8. Life style–motivation is the ability to combine one’s own needs, ones family’s needs and the requirements of the job.

The anchors show what a person considers important and will not concede when making decisions. Every person has one fixed career anchor over time along with others that accompany it.

Today teaching is treated as a career expressed by learning and life-long professional development. Whatever the framework or format of development or reform, teachers accumulate knowledge and change, pay attention to changes and develop according to the topics and skills they wish to take away in order to advance and make changes to the expansion or definition of the job (Paz & Salant, 2012; Oplatka, 2010).

In the modern era, people have many attractive options and many people, including teachers, do not believe in a single career or in loyalty to a single organization. The image has changed in public discourse from someone who is loyal to one company to someone who is entrepreneurial, free and independent.

This change also affects teachers. When one investigates teachers’ perceptions of their career, one can distinguish between two major mindsets regarding teaching as a career. People become teachers for a variety of reasons. Some expect it to be their career for life, but many see it as just one of several careers they will have (Peske, Liu , Johnson, Kauffman & Kardos, 2001).

According to the ‘stages’ approach, people progress through a series of stages during their career, and people in different stages are expected to express different goals, dilemmas and desires. It seems that each stage has its own attitudes, behaviors, relationship patterns and particular aspects and that people who are in the same stage act similarly.

Scholars have proposed different models for the career stages among teachers and principals. Paul Burden (1983) focused on the professionalization of the teacher and identified three phases during a teacher's life:

1. Survival – year 1, in which a teacher has limited pedagogical knowledge and lacks basic skills.
2. Adjustment – 2-4 years on the job, the teacher may accumulate greater pedagogical knowledge and has greater professional confidence.
3. Maturity – 5 years and over on the job, the teacher feels great personal and professional confidence and self-efficacy, and tends to focus on students as the object of teaching.

Huberman (1989, 1993) also defined three main phases in the teacher's professional life cycle: 1. Novice 2. Mid-career 3. Late career. Within these three phases, Huberman (1989, 1993) further identified six stages according to seniority:

1. Survival and discovery: teachers confront the complexity of managing their teaching; they are overly concerned with themselves, the gap between ideals and daily reality in the classroom, and the large number of teaching tasks to be performed. Discovery is connected to the initial enthusiasm of "being responsible for my students, my classroom and my plan for the year" and the feeling of being a colleague among peers. The elements of survival and discovery exist side by side, the latter enabling the survival of the novice teacher.
2. Stabilization: here teachers make their final choice in favor of commitment to the teaching profession (joining the professional community and forgoing other options) and the sense of control and comfort with teaching grows.
3. Investigation and diversity: teachers attempt to increase their impact on the system; these attempts raise their awareness of the difficulties that limit such influence. Teachers try out different teaching methods, experience new areas of responsibility in the school, and look for new challenges.
4. Evaluation and doubt: the "mid-career crisis", this begins with a sense of being worn down by routine, which can lead to an existential crisis relating to the question of whether to remain in the profession or to leave it. There is a growing sense of repetitiveness and sobering up from the illusion that comes after all the efforts to change work at the school. Teachers realize that if they don't act fast, alternative careers will be out of reach.
5. Serenity: moving from energetic activity to a more mechanical style, in which the gradual loss of energy and enthusiasm is compensated, as it were, by the growing feeling of confidence and self-acceptance.
6. Disengagement: the gradual decline of investing in one's work. This often accompanied by a feeling of bitterness deriving from external pressures to vacate one's place to younger colleagues and new ideas. In the final phase of their professional life cycle, teachers will gradually withdraw, have

few regrets and spend a great deal of time outside the school. Disengagement begins in the conservatism phase: A teacher may want to preserve the benefits that seniority brings, such as a convenient schedule and salary, without having to make any new investment in teaching the students.

Beginning with the third stage, the picture becomes complicated and the teacher's development forks off into several tracks that eventually merge into one (clear disengagement or bitterness).

According to Oplatka (2010), there is a close correlation between the age, career and generational affiliation of the teachers and their involvement, reactions and perceptions of educational change. Young teachers are more optimistic, enthusiastic about changes and adapt in a society in which uncertainty and job insecurity are on the rise.

In contrast, teachers in a later stage of their career experience a decline in functioning and, in the sense that the roles offered them are repetitive, this causes them to resist change and stick to what they already know. Teachers in mid-career are very critical of changes and tend to sort and select the changes that suit them, but at the same time, they do remain open to change (Oplatka, 2010).

In recent years, there has been increased interest in the concept of professional development during a career in general and in teaching in particular. In the current era, professionals in any field have to engage in life-long learning as this is necessary to remain updated. This learning contributes greatly on a personal level – financial and hierarchical advancement and the acquisition of new knowledge that provides satisfaction, novelty and a sense of empowerment. The learning also contributes to colleagues and to the organization itself (Avidov-Ungar, 2013; Tal & Avidov, 2002).

Professional development is a process whereby teachers manage to change via learning throughout their professional life, as a result of aspects relating to personal biography and individual characteristics regarding the demand for autonomy and the attitude towards any change in work modes. This is a process that results from the development itself and the work in the profession, and involvement in various formal programs in the work place.

Professional development is necessary because of teachers' obligations both to themselves and to their students. Teachers must refresh their knowledge, avoid burnout and repeatedly examine their perceptions of teaching and their desire to make teaching a respected profession. They must develop new approaches to learning, modernize the curricula and update their teaching practices. In contrast, in terms of the obligation to the students, it is being in touch with the students' needs (teaching thinking skills, relevance, multicultural diversity, involvement in learning), structuring knowledge for the students, developing social processes and the skills to adapt to life, and developing a set of values and morals as an anchor. These are not things that can be learned during pre-service training since they are dynamic and change over time (Avidov-Ungar, Rosner & Rosenberg, 2013).

Professional development involves several aspects – psychological, professio-

nal and sociological – as well as a combination of psychology and sociology in change processes. These aspects contain the following phases: starting the job – choosing a profession, acquiring skills; stability in the job – the teacher’s self-confidence, settling into the job, and finally maturity, which leads to self-efficacy and enthusiasm. The next phase is the routine that might lead to burnout and then preparation for retirement and leaving the profession (Avdor, 2008). Other researchers offer different descriptions of the stages of professional development. Some claim that development refers to long-term processes throughout the teacher’s professional life as an ongoing part defined by stages and that corresponds to changes in technology, in globalization and in the knowledge-based society.

Professional development means personal growth, self-actualization and creative functioning leading to a sense of satisfaction and enjoyment vis-à-vis one’s profession. This process is accompanied by mixed and changing feelings among teachers, each according to their own professional development and the changes experienced regarding their sense of ‘self’. These feelings are significant for professional development within the process of change. Others claim that after training and job entry, professional development is composed of three phases: of initial settling in, more advanced establishment, and expertise. Interestingly, according to all scholars, at any stage along this continuum, teachers need help, guidance and direction that changes from one phase to another (Oplatka, 2010; Alkad-Lehman & Grunsfeld, 2008; Beck, 2013).

Mobility and stagnation in a teacher’s career are immanent to the progress of that career. **Mobility** is a process whereby a teacher has the opportunity to develop both personally and professionally. The secure teacher feels confident where she is and wishes to learn and advance. At the same time, for there to be mobility, the teacher needs a sense of personal and organizational empowerment. Someone who feels appreciated, whose opinion is worth something within the organization, will develop the desire to grow within it. Mobility does not occur necessarily in a bottom-up process, in other words it is not necessarily a job promotion to a more senior position, and it may also be lateral mobility expressed in greater professionalization within the teaching field. Sometimes this kind of mobility leads society to sense that the person is ‘treading water’ career-wise, even though that person doesn’t actually feel that way (Steffy et al., 1999).

Stagnation is the opposite of mobility; it is a state in which the teacher feels confident where she is, and thus does not feel the need to advance and realize her full potential. This state of stagnation might derive from lack of empowerment by the organization she works for, or from a lack of possibilities for professional development. As a result, the teacher feels weak and of little value, which then affects her desire to advance within the system. People like this will find themselves in the same job for a long time, and even if they do not like their position, they will find it hard to leave.

Mobility and stagnation in many instances depend on the personality of the teacher, so that there are teachers who may choose to remain stagnant and are quite happy to do so; that is their personality and they are not looking for mobility, while for others, mobility is part of their personality and even if they

are not empowered externally, they learn and develop professionally and are not ready to give up on themselves. Mobility and stagnation are both linked to the degree of commitment the teacher feels towards the job.

Lacey (1997) defines commitment as the investment in a particular career, in this case, teaching. Commitment is a sense of fidelity and adherence. The sense of belonging at the core of commitment constitutes a certain connection between the organization and the individuals, gathering them around a common value, aim and culture.

As stated, empowerment is a key concept affecting mobility and stagnation. Personal empowerment is an interactive process that takes place between the individual and his or her surroundings; it is expressed in the transition from a state of helplessness to a state in which the individual feels able to cope with the surrounding influences. This concept includes the sense of self-efficacy, mainly in situations in which power develops and is acquired. There is now recognition of the importance of empowerment of the individual and of the organization as one that develops values of empowerment (Avidov-Ungar & Friedman, 2011; Avidov-Ungar, Friedman & Olshtain, 2011).

Empowerment improves the individual's sense of confidence and satisfaction with work and increases self-gratification. Empowerment also helps cultivate a positive organizational climate and enables coping and goal attainment; it also paves the way for positive dialogue between members of the organization and between them and their environment. Empowerment among teachers involves expanding knowledge, since this is a source of professional power and insights, and hence of smart behavior. An empowered teacher is one who undergoes a process of personal and professional development that takes place mostly at school. A teacher who is proactive and confident will also act that way outside school and go beyond the job description to initiate, refresh and contribute to the success of the school. Principals can empower their teachers to develop, become less dependent, and more open to personal and organizational growth and renewal. The more a teacher is party to the definition of the aim and policies of the school, and to its decision-making, the more empowered the teacher will feel, and as a result, the more independently she will perform tasks (Avidov-Ungar & Friedman, 2011; Avidov-Ungar, Friedman & Olshtain, 2011). In Israel's education system, over 20% of the teachers hold other positions at school in addition to being homeroom and subject teachers. According to various studies, the more authority teachers have, the greater their satisfaction. Consequently, as one can see, there are many instances of empowerment which cause the individual to act and to initiate, but there are teachers whose personality this does not suit, and this empowerment does not help them.

Professional development has also been closely linked to teacher mobility, with various scholars offering different descriptions of the stages of professional development. Some claim that 'teacher development' refers to long-term processes throughout the teacher's professional life, development as ongoing and defined in stages. It also corresponds to changes in technology, in globalization and the knowledge-based society.

The aim of the Research aim is to examine the causes of mobility and

stagnation among teachers. The research question is What are teachers' perceptions of the causes of mobility and stagnation in a teaching career?

Method

Research sample: 18 teachers from elementary and secondary schools in Israel at different stages of their work career.

Research method: A qualitative methodology was employed, based on a structured questionnaire relating to teachers' definition of career, and the causes of mobility and stagnation during their own careers and among teachers in general.

The focus of a questionnaire is a very important tool for gathering data in qualitative research. It aims to understand the experience and meaning attributed to it by the subjects, while open-ended questions enable understanding of what the subjects think and how they see things (Shkedi, 2003). In order to enhance the dichotomy of the responses, subjects were asked to focus on one response they felt was essential, and if several responses were given, we related to the first response or argument given. In this manner, responses were collated into 18 per category to match the number of our research subjects. The questions included:

1. Would you define your work as a career? Explain.
2. What is the main factor that empowers teachers in their job?
3. What might block a teacher from advancing in the job?
4. What encourages mobility in a teacher's job?
5. What are your ambitions for the future?

The reliability of this research tool stems both from the profound theoretic background which has been the basis of its formulation as well as the researcher objectivity.

Findings

Defining Teaching as a Career

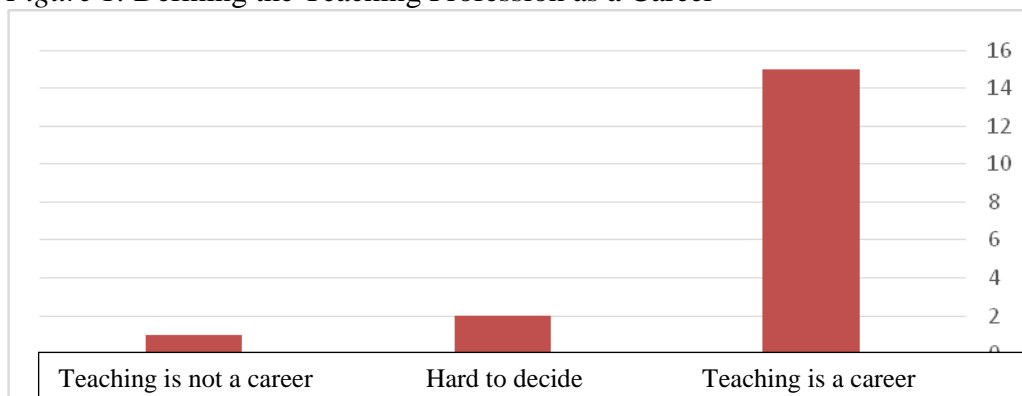
Subjects were asked to define whether teaching is a career. 15 of them answered unequivocally that in their opinion teaching is, indeed, a career. Sample statements: "I see teaching as a profession you work in and it gives professional and personal satisfaction, you can develop and enhance your professional knowledge", "Of course, I do a job that interests, challenges and satisfies me. I develop in terms of teaching practices and creativity", "It is a serious career with a great deal of responsibility, I feel that my work is not a job and a living, but fills my need to give and contribute to others", "The very desire and urge to advance in the profession is an indication of career orientation", "For me teaching is a lifelong profession, somewhere I can develop, learn and

fulfill different roles".

In contrast, two teachers claimed that teaching is not a career. One of them explained that this was because of her newness to the education system: "... since a career is the sum total of all the jobs in my life and I have just started teaching", while the other related to ambitions according to which she believed a career is measured: "I see career as a professional job that aspires to high salaries and not so much in educational/therapeutic fields. A career is more in hi-tech, management and so forth."

Only one teacher did not see teaching as a career: "I find it hard to see the horizon or to define ambitions. Just teaching in class is not what I define as a career."

Figure 1. Defining the Teaching Profession as a Career



Findings show that most of the teachers agree that teaching is a career.

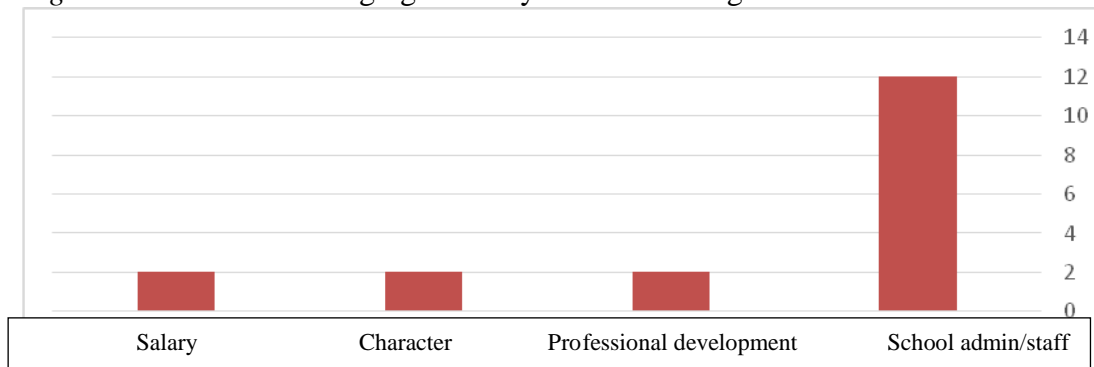
Factors Driving Mobility within the Teaching Profession

Twelve subjects expressed the need for a good feeling coming from the school administration and staff in terms of encouragement, mutual stimulation, empowerment, giving a sense of self-efficacy, trust and satisfaction. Sample statements: "A teacher must feel that it is pleasant at work. That doesn't mean that everything comes easily, but she should feel worthwhile and that she is contributing", "It is important to legitimize the fact that a teacher should bring herself and her belief system...", "... belonging to the staff and getting support from them".

Two subjects expressed an opinion regarding professional development - "something that encourages a teacher to advance is her belief in the job and her contribution to the children, her professional advancement".

Two subjects claimed that the individual teacher's personality is what enables mobility: "A teacher who is ambitious and wants to change will initiate things and thus bring about her own advancement", "... our strengths empower us". Two subjects mentioned salary as an important factor in the desire to advance.

Figure 2. Drivers Encouraging Mobility in the Teaching Profession



Findings show that a clear majority of the subjects indicate the school administration and staff as drivers of mobility.

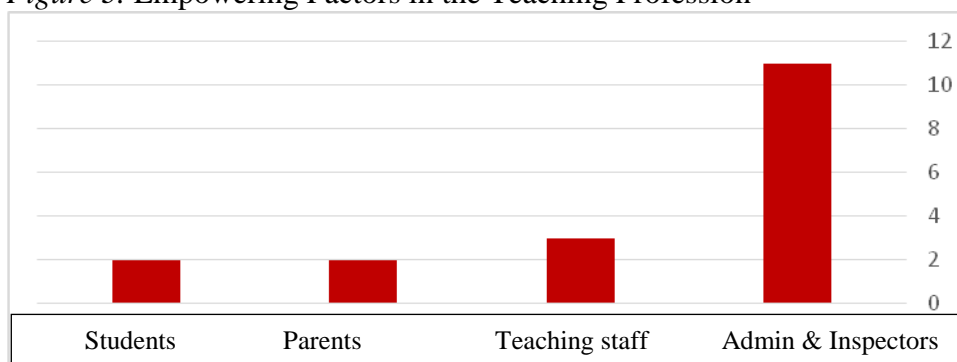
Factors that Empower the Teaching Profession

Most of the subjects (11) mentioned in the first place that the school administration is the primary factor that empowers a teacher. "I feel appreciated and empowered by the principal and the staff...", "The principal and her deputy appreciate my professionalism ... they trust me and praise me to outside bodies", "A principal who enables me to act as I see fit, who trusts me...", "A principal who demanded that I take on other roles besides teaching...", "...tremendous empowerment from a one-of-a-kind principal!"

Three subjects mentioned the importance of the staff as a decisive factor in their sense of empowerment: "A staff that always gives support, veteran teachers who advise the new ones...", "Knowing that my opinion is important to the staff...", "I feel that my opinion counts, it is taken into account, and my talents are used...", "In my staff there is room to move and flexibility, there is room to express an opinion, suggest ideas and grow".

Two teachers mentioned that parents are also an empowering factor: "... warm feedback from parents ... feedback from parents strengthens and empowers..." Two subjects also gave credit to the children and their successes as an important source of empowerment: "The progress of the children is very empowering...", "Sometimes it comes from the children, who give me a sense of confidence, they trust me, they chose to share and consult..."

Figure 3. Empowering Factors in the Teaching Profession



Findings indicate that most of the subjects mentioned the school administration and the inspectorate as an enhancing factor.

Causes of Stagnation in the Teaching Profession

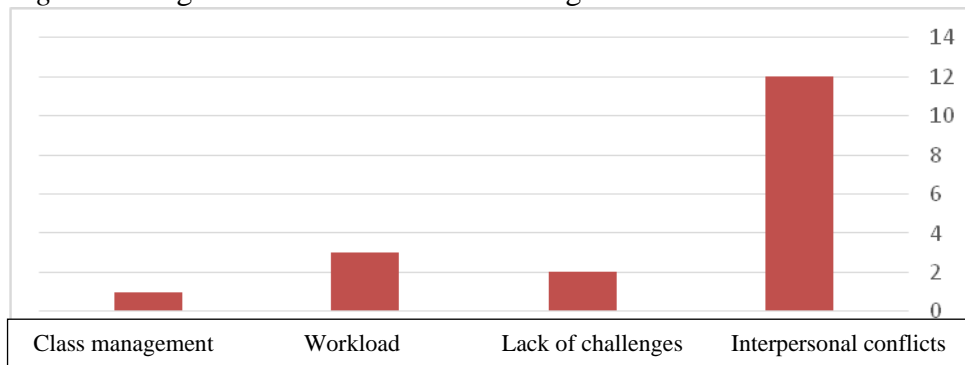
The main factor that arose in most of the interviews as a cause of stagnation was the nature of the relationships with the school administration and with other members of the teaching staff.

Twelve subjects see conflictual situations that occur within a staff of teachers or between them and the school administration as a factor that might cause a teacher's stagnation. In particular, responses brought up the aspect of lack of cooperation with the principal, lack of goodwill, lack of appreciation, and lack of trust between the principal and the members of the staff. Sample statements: "A principal who does not give us freedom of action, a staff that does not cooperate and does not share thoughts and ideas", "A teacher who feels untrusted, who does not sense any goodwill or empowerment, who feels a lack of consideration and understanding regarding personal issues, will not want to stay in the workplace or will choose to become small-minded and do only what is good for her".

Two respondents mentioned the lack of challenges and at the same time the lack of tools to deal with challenges as well as lack of support and backing of teachers who are doing their job.

Three respondents also saw the workload as a factor that can lead to stagnation: "The tremendous workload and lack of coping tools can very much affect a teacher and bring her down", "There is a problem with the overload of demands and this breaks teachers". Only one teacher mentioned difficulties of classroom management as a possible factor in career stagnation.

Figure 4. Stagnation Factors in the Teaching Profession



Most of the subjects reported personal conflicts between teachers and the administration as a career-impeding factor. A few also reported conflicts among members of the teaching staff.

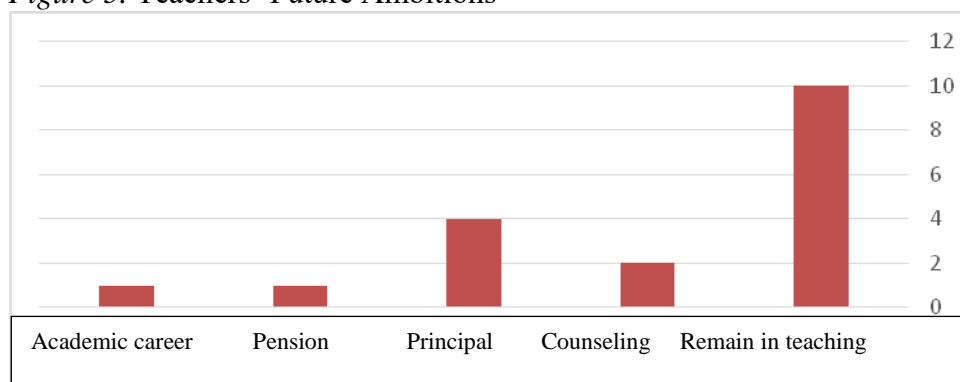
Future Ambitions

Most of the interviewees aspired to remain in the field of education and teaching. Ten teachers expressed an ambition to continue as subject and homeroom teachers, and to take on other positions at school: "Today I see myself as promoting the school's uniqueness, making the school I work in a place of real education, out of respect for the students and sharing with the community; making learning more values-oriented and meaningful", "... developing clear and effective procedures to support and help all students and staff", "I would like to advance through a sense of renewal, initiative and development of procedures, teaching programs and practices".

Two teachers expressed the ambition to move into training and counseling: "Perhaps in the more distant future I will develop a method of reading and writing for special education students and will train new teachers.", "...try to be a counselor in computers...". Four teachers said their future ambition was to become a principal: "In the next decade to take a course at Avnei Rosha¹ and become a principal". One teacher said her most important ambition was to reach her pension, and expressed no further professional ambitions: "I am at a stage in my life where I am only looking at the present and the near future ... a pension and enjoying my children and family". One teacher expressed a desire to lecture at an academic institution such as a teacher education college or a university.

¹An organization devoted to training school principals

Figure 5. Teachers' Future Ambitions



Most teachers wish to remain in education and teaching.

Conclusion

With their various responses, the teachers mentioned the Gordian knot between their subjective feelings during their career and the importance of the support of the school administration. Most of the interviewees (11) first mentioned the administration as the primary factor that empowers the teacher. In the school organization, where everyone knows everyone else, there is a delicate relationship that affects the degree of trust and the morale of the employees. Concepts that are immanent to empowerment such as appreciation, trust, goodwill, and backing reappeared again and again in the responses about mobility drivers.

According to Blace (2001), the principal, who is in a position of power, can be an empowering factor but can get easily carried away by the asymmetric status in the balance of power, and become an authority figure that arouses anxiety and diminishes the teacher's functioning. Moreover, Blace and Gary (1995) report that, through the manipulation of cultural, symbolic, and ideological dimensions of school life, certain administrative leadership styles may lead to more sophisticated forms of teacher control.

A principal may affect many areas such as strengthening a teacher's confidence, helping to execute reforms, support for teachers' professional development and so forth. Hence his or her tremendous importance as an empowering factor (Blace, 2001).

Twelve of the respondents see conflict within the staff or between the staff and the administration as a potential cause of teacher stagnation. In particular, responses mentioned lack of cooperation with the principal or members of staff, lack of goodwill, lack of appreciation, and lack of trust. Only one teacher mentioned the issue of classroom management difficulties as a possible cause of career stagnation. This reinforces the sense that most teachers are at the stabilization stage: on the one hand they are confident in their work in teaching and education, but on the other, they are more concerned about their status vis-à-vis the staff and the administration.

Twelve subjects expressed the need for a good feeling coming from the

school administration and staff in terms of encouragement, mutual stimulation, empowerment, giving a sense of self-efficacy, trust and satisfaction as drivers of mobility. In contrast, only two subjects named professional development as the driver of mobility within the school hierarchy. Unlike the reports of the subjects in this study, professional literature displays evidence of a great deal of importance attached to professional development as the promoter of teacher's careers. Professional development is needed because of a teacher's commitment both to herself and to her students. The teacher has to become refreshed and avoid burnout, to constantly reexamine her perceptions of teaching and her desire to position teaching as a respected profession. She must develop new teaching practices and update her study programs. As for the student, it is the contact with the needs of the learner (teaching thinking, relevance, multicultural diversity, involvement in learning etc.), structuring knowledge for the student, developing social processes and the skills of adjusting to life, developing a moral, values-oriented perspective as an anchor. These things cannot be taught in the pre-service training stage because they are dynamic and change over time (Avidov-Ungar, Rozner & Rosenberg, 2013).

The very fact that this area of professional development was quite negligible in the teachers' responses should be seen as a worrying sign of their biased and unfounded perception; namely that they have already achieved a good proficiency and are therefore exempt from further professional development. When asked their opinions about mobility drivers, teachers hardly related at all to professional development and spoke mainly about the importance of feeling good, of empowerment and the relationships with the people they work with. Not mentioning the students in this context is a worrying sign of an early stage of certain stagnation (Huberman, 1989, 1993).

Only two subjects mentioned salary as an important factor in the desire to advance. In line with Herzberg's (1987) theory of motivation, salary is, in fact, seen by teachers merely as a 'hygiene factor' with no real significance as a mobility driver.

Most of the teachers in the study agreed at the declarative level that teaching is a career. In all the responses on this issue, there was a consensus that today a career is driven by the person, and not as in the past, when it was the organization that dictated an individual's career. Most interviewees related to the fact that one's career is a very personal thing and differs from one person to the next, with concrete reference to the specific organization they work for. At the same time, when asked about their future ambitions, most of the teachers (10) reported wanting to remain in teaching and education at school. To a great extent, this is an indication of career stagnation and acceptance of the current phase they are in. As befits 'mid-career' teachers, theirs is typically the stage of *stabilization*. Experienced teachers in this stage usually feel confident about their professional skills and knowledge and settle into a comfortable and predictable pattern of teaching.

Despite the limitations of the research sample in this study, we nevertheless obtain a worrying notion of the main danger of stagnating in the comfort zone which will lead to conservatism and eventually to disengagement and retirement

(Huberman, 1989, 1993). Only five teachers expressed a desire to climb up the organizational ladder: four of these wished to reach management positions and one wished to become an academic lecturer. Only one teacher said she wished to retire, thus positioning herself squarely in the disengagement stage.

The above findings present a distressing picture of teachers who have determined their position within the school organization and display complacency and over-confidence in their professionalism, and are mainly concerned with the fact of belonging and their acceptance by the school administration and staff. This has clear implications for damage to the teaching-learning process and the increasing desire of teachers to take an early retirement.

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