

Educational Beliefs of Special Education Teachers and Principals Working in Short-Term Emergency Shelter On-Site Schools

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Abstract

The present study qualitatively explored, via semi-structured interviews, the educational beliefs of 12 Special Education Teachers (SETs) and eight principals working within Emergency Shelter On-site Schools (ESOSs) throughout Israel. Findings of the Deductive-Qualitative Approach (DQA) focus on the following educational belief categories: 1) the professional role of SETs within ESOSs; 2) the ESOS context/environment; 3) ESOS students' special needs, diversity, and abilities; 4) the content/knowledge taught within ESOSs; and 5) the teaching practices incorporated within ESOSs. A broad perspective of the findings revealed three novel continuums, titled: 1) mono-multi, 2) independent-integrated, and 3) structured-flexible, upon which SETs' and principals' educational beliefs are situated. Study findings enhance the research fields of both educational beliefs and ESOSs, for the ultimate benefit and positive trajectory of ESOS students.

Keywords

Child Welfare, Special Education Teachers, Principals, Educational Beliefs, Emergency Shelter On-Site Schools

1. Introduction

Within the educational psychology literature, the concept of *educational beliefs* refers to a subset of beliefs and attitudes that educators as humans hold, relevant to their work and professional context (Choi et al., 2021; Buehl & Beck, 2015; Buehl & Fives, 2009; Fives et al., 2019). This is so, as educators' beliefs underpin the cognitive, affective, and behavioral aspects that they manifest at work (Hoffman & Seidel, 2014). Moreover, educational beliefs serve as filters for interpreting and understanding reality, framing and defining problems, and guid-

ing actions (Fives & Buehl, 2012).

Understanding teachers' educational beliefs is a priority as their educational beliefs lie "at the very heart of teaching" (Kagan, 1992, p. 85) and have a powerful effect on teaching (Hoffman & Seidel, 2014). Teachers' beliefs can thereby be seen as a lens for probing teachers' professional behaviors and practices, students' outcomes, and as an important key in the improvement of teaching performance (Choi et al., 2021; Eđmir & Çelik, 2019).

Alghamdi and Prestridge (Alghamdi & Prestridge, 2015) reported a strong alignment between principals' and teachers' educational beliefs. They stated that while teachers' beliefs are themselves important, identifying the connection between teachers' and principals' beliefs may be even more relevant. Principals' beliefs can significantly affect teachers' beliefs within the workplace and are key factors in shaping schools' overall environment (Siddiqui et al., 2021). For example, principals' educational beliefs have been shown to be central to leading successful teacher professional development (Dery & Reingold, 2021), special education and inclusive reforms (DeMatthews et al., 2020), as well as enhancing school learning and teaching (Alghamdi & Prestridge, 2015). On the other hand, misalignments between principals' and teachers' educational beliefs may be detrimental, as when principals' beliefs are incongruent with teachers' beliefs and/or when teachers' beliefs are ignored by principals (Claro et al., 2017).

Furthermore, existing research describes a wide range of educational beliefs, relevant for both principals and teachers, which can be classified into dichotomous categories such as core vs. peripheral beliefs, explicit vs. implicit beliefs, isolated vs. clusters of beliefs, occurrent vs. dispositional beliefs, personal/individual vs. collective beliefs, positive vs. negative beliefs, primary vs. derivative beliefs, and situated vs. generalized beliefs (e.g., Fives & Buehl, 2012; Wilson-Ali et al., 2019).

2. Theoretical Framework

In their extensive review of the field, Fives & Buehl (2012) introduced a broad framework wherein they identified educators' beliefs as encompassing the following six categories: 1) *beliefs about self* which include educators' beliefs about their professional role. This category may also involve educators' beliefs about their professional choice (Ayçiçek & Toraman, 2020), self-efficacy (Keppens et al., 2021), and teaching motivation (Chan & Lay, 2021); 2) *beliefs about context/environment* which include educators' beliefs about professional collaboration, school climate (Beets et al., 2008), social dynamics and institutional culture (Windschitl & Sahl, 2002), and beliefs about parent involvement in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002); 3) *beliefs about students* which include educators' beliefs about working with students classified as at risk (Calabrese et al., 2007); and educators' beliefs about students' special needs, diversity, and abilities in general. For example, this category of beliefs may encompass educators' beliefs about positive characteristics of students, such as enjoyment in school, valuing teachers and peers, expectation to succeed in school, and feelings of pride

in achievement (Lavigne, 2014); 4) *beliefs about content/knowledge* which include educators' beliefs about the subject matter taught in school. Such beliefs can involve various school curriculum content areas such as science (Enzingmüller & Prechtel, 2019), math (Thurm & Barzel, 2022), integrated language arts (Weaver et al., 2021), and curriculum design orientations (Bas & Sentürk, 2019); 5) *beliefs about practices* which include specific educational practices such as cooperative learning, inclusive teaching practices (Keppens et al., 2021), and assessment practices (Alonzo et al., 2021); and 6) *beliefs about teaching approaches* which include beliefs about trauma-informed care in schools (Wendel, 2018) and holistic teaching approaches such as constructivism vs. traditionally oriented instructional methods (Keppens et al., 2021).

Furthermore, educational beliefs may be influenced by internal or external factors. Internal factors such as self-awareness and self-reflection may influence beliefs about self such as educators' beliefs about their capacity and self-efficacy while pedagogy knowledge may influence beliefs about content/knowledge or beliefs about practices (e.g., Buehl & Beck, 2015; Buehl & Fives, 2009). External factors such as classroom (e.g., class size), school (e.g., school culture), district, state, and national-level factors (e.g., education policies) may also influence educators' beliefs (Buehl & Beck, 2015). That is, educational beliefs may differ in accordance with the school context. Therefore, it is important to explore educators' beliefs especially in short-term Emergency Shelter (ES) and On-site Schools (ESOs) where students at risk temporarily reside and present unique emotional, social, behavioral, and academic needs (McGuire & Jackson, 2018; Sebba et al., 2015).

2.1. Short-Term Emergency Shelters (ESs)

The various terms, *emergency shelter care*, *emergency center*, *emergency treatment shelters*, *residential emergency care*, *emergency youth shelter*, and *crisis shelters*, most usually refer to short-term emergency out-of-home placements in a congregate care setting during which time a permanent placement is being planned (e.g., Gottfried & Ben-Arieh, 2019; Hébert et al., 2018; Yitzhak Cohen & Ben-Arieh, 2021). As such, short-term ESs are designed to provide a temporary safe haven, while all other options are being considered (Hébert et al., 2018).

ESs are employed by child protection services to ensure the safety of vulnerable children who are unable to continue to reside in their homes, most typically due to child maltreatment (Hébert et al., 2018; Poe, 2006). The removal of a child from their home takes place in emergency situations when the child is threatened with imminent physical abuse, sexual abuse, egregious neglect, abandonment, and/or other family crises such as the arrest of a parent (Lamponen et al., 2019). Due to the emergency and unplanned nature of ES placements, children may feel stressed, shocked, and confused (Hindt et al., 2019). The lack of sufficient time for children and families to prepare for the separation, insufficient information prior to the transition as well as uncertainty about the length of stay may also be perceived as traumatic (Storhaug & Kojan, 2016). Note also that the relatively short duration of emergency placements may limit both the

child and placement caregivers' efforts to form attachments (e.g., Hartnett et al., 1999). This is in accordance with findings that suggest that children who experience placement instability are identified with a range of adverse outcomes, including a diminished capacity for close interpersonal relationships and trust (Robinson, 2020).

Furthermore, research demonstrates that children involved with child welfare services tend to be educationally disadvantaged compared to the general population (Sebba et al., 2015). For example, children associated with maltreatment investigations are more likely to score significantly lower on standardized reading and math tests and to be identified as needing special education (Ryan et al., 2018). Experiences of maltreatment have also been linked with students' poorer social and behavioral adjustment at school (Hindt et al., 2019; Sebba et al., 2015).

2.2. Short-Term Emergency Shelters in Israel

In Israel, ESs are crisis-oriented out-of-home facilities that function as protective, inclusive, diagnostic, short-term therapeutic and educational, as well as long-term planning centers (Gottfried & Ben-Arieh, 2019). To date, there are 17 short-term ESs operating in the country. All in all, seven ESs participated in the present study (i.e., shelters from the non-religious Jewish sector, religious Jewish sector, and ultra-orthodox sector). ESs serving the Arab population did not take part in the study, due to language barriers. Likewise, ESs serving children between the ages of 2 to 5 that operate preschools rather than ESOSs, did not participate in the study. Note also that the ESOSs recruited for the purpose of this study each comprised 15 - 20 children aged 5 - 15 years old, and that the average length of stay in ESs has been reported as 5.9 months (INCC, 2017).

Staff working in the ESs vary and include doctors, psychologists, social workers, therapists, SETs, and Direct Care Workers (DCWs). Each ES has a director—a social worker by profession who manages the ES and serves as the principal of its ESOS. In each ESOS there are two classrooms, comprising around 10 students, led by SETs. The schedules are mostly the same in all ESOSs. Teachers join breakfast in the ES dining room and receive an update from the DCWs about the children's behavior during the past day. Then the children move to the ESOS, which is located within the ES, and study subject matter lessons in small groups and/or individually. During school hours the DCWs serve as teacher assistants. School hours end in the early afternoon, at which time the children return to the ES living quarters.

2.3. Emergency Shelter On-Site Schools (ESOSs)

Changes in placement often lead to changes in schools; children entering ESs need to adjust to a new school setting, including new teachers, expectations, curricula, and friends. In ESOSs, students likewise need to adjust to the limited period of time of their stay, and to the fact that they do not know in advance how long they will reside in the ES and study in the ESOS. Moreover, children entering ESOSs need to adjust to studying in classrooms with students of varying

ages, which can lead to difficulty in assigning educational frameworks and differences in academic levels (Poe, 2006; Yitzhak Cohen & Ben-Arieh, 2021). It is important to note, as well, that due to confidentiality laws, communication between the child welfare and education systems may be hindered, thereby possibly delaying/preventing an easy educational transition which includes the prompt transfer of students' educational records from one school to another (Poe, 2006).

Supporting educational services within ESOSs represents an important opportunity to promote a positive trajectory for children residing in ESs (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Hindt et al. (Hindt et al., 2019) stated that more research focusing on ES care is therefore essential to inform child welfare policies and practices. This includes research focusing on the educational beliefs of ESOS principals and SETs, as educational beliefs have a crucial effect on educators' ability to address students at risk, and can positively impact students' academic persistence and motivation (Silverman et al., 2021).

3. Research Aim and Research Questions

The aim of the present study is to expand knowledge focusing on the educational beliefs of SETs and principals working within ESOSs in Israel. This study seeks to identify similarities and differences between SETs' and principals' educational beliefs. Differences in the educational beliefs of school principals and teachers can pose significant obstacles while shared educational beliefs can help integrate beliefs into action (Claro et al., 2017). By examining both ESOS SETs' and principals' educational beliefs according to Fives & Buehl (2012) theoretical framework, this study makes a distinct contribution to teachers and school leadership, and subsequently to ESOS students as well.

Stemming from the aforementioned points, the following overarching research question was considered for this study: "What are the characteristics of ESOS SETs' and principals' educational beliefs, according to Fives & Buehl (2012) theoretical framework? If there are similarities and differences between ESOS SETs' and principals' educational beliefs, what are their characteristics?"

4. Method

Data for this qualitative study were collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews and analyzed in a Deductive-Qualitative Approach (DQA; Gilgun, 2019). The semi-structured interview questions were guided by Fives & Buehl (2012) educational beliefs framework. Sample questions for both SETs and principals include: 1) Questions aimed to reveal educators' beliefs about self: a) Tell me about your educational experience and why you chose to work in a short-term ESOS; b) How would you describe your role? (Principals were also asked to describe the SET's role); and c) How would you define your own educational beliefs? 2) Questions aimed to reveal educators' beliefs about context/environment: a) Describe your collaboration with staff members; With parents; With external experts and/or organizations; and 3) Questions aimed to

reveal beliefs about students, content/knowledge, and practices: a) Describe a typical day at school – schedule, students, subject matter, and teaching methods.

4.1. Participants and Procedure

The current study took place during the 2020-2021 academic year and was approved by the researchers' institutional review board and by the head scientist's office of the Ministry of Education. The sampling consisted of seven active principals, one newly retired principal, and 12 teachers from seven different ESs (a total of 20 educators approved participation. The gender distribution consisted of five male participants and the remaining were female. Among the SETs, eight held Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) degrees from academic colleges, while all principals had Bachelor's and/or Master's (MA or MEd) degrees in Social Work. Concerning experience, six SETs and 4 principals had 1 - 5 years of experience, five SETs and 3 principals had 6 - 10 years, and one SET and one principal had more than 10 years of experience.

Table 1 provides a list of the pseudonyms assigned to the participants, and includes an overview of the educators' gender, higher education, and years of experience in ESOSs. For clarity, a number was assigned to each ES in order to protect anonymity.

Table 1. Overview of participants.

Pseudonym	Role	ES num	Gender	Experience in ES	Higher Education
Adam	Principal	1	M	13 years	B.A. and M.A. in Social Work
Ben	Principal	1	M	6 months	B.A. in Psychology and M.A. in Social Work
Gila	Principal	2	F	8 years	B.A. and M.A. in Social Work
Dan	Principal	3	M	6 years	B.A. and M.A. in Social Work
Hadas	Principal	4	F	30 months	B.A. and M.A. in Social Work
Vered	Principal	5	F	7 years	B.A. and M.A. in Social Work
Ziv	Principal	6	M	1 year	B.A. and M.A. in Social Work
Tali	Principal	7	F	2 years	B.A. in Social Work and M.A. in Public Administration
Yafa	Teacher	1	F	6 years	B.Ed. in Special Education
Carmel	Teacher	2	F	3 years	B.Ed. in Education and Geography
Lili	Teacher	3	F	14 years	B.A. in Geography and M.A. in Special Education
Miri	Teacher	3	F	6 years	B.Ed. in Education
Nira	Teacher	4	F	5 years	B.Ed. in Education
Sima	Teacher	5	F	6 years	B.A. in chemistry
Anat	Teacher	5	F	6 months	B.A. in History and Social Science
Pnina	Teacher	6	F	4 years	B.Ed. in Special Education
Zeev	Teacher	6	M	2 years	B.A. in Psychology
Karen	Teacher	6	F	2 years	B.Ed. in Special Education
Romi	Teacher	7	F	10 years	B.Ed. in Education and Science
Shir	Teacher	7	F	7 years	B.Ed. in Special Education

A research assistant contacted ESOSs' SETs and principals and explained to them the research procedures, goals, and measures taken to protect anonymity. All participants signed an informed consent form prior to the interviews. The research assistant received guidelines from the researchers for conducting the semi-structured interviews which were designed to tap into components of [Fives & Buehl \(2012\)](#) educational belief framework. Interviews were conducted via Zoom and were recorded locally on the research assistant's password-protected personal computer. Interviews lasted between 60 and 75 min and were transcribed verbatim. After conducting the first interview the researchers watched the recording and gave the research assistant feedback and recommendations for further interviews.

4.2. Data Analysis

To explore and establish [Fives & Buehl \(2012\)](#) educational beliefs framework, transcripts were analyzed using DQA—which is a conceptual procedure that is carried out by moving back and forth between themes and their indicators, or between theory and data. This analysis explores themes based on theoretically driven coding and allows for modification, refutations, and reformulations of the theory ([Emery et al., 2018](#)). This ongoing procedure involves both deduction and induction analysis. The deductive process begins with theory which requires researchers to set aside their own thoughts and interests. The induction process then leads researchers to purposely search for data that flushes out from the emerging findings ([Gilgun, 2019](#)).

Findings were analyzed using ATLAS.ti 9.1 ([ATLAS.ti, 2016-2018](#)). The researchers developed a code manually by highlighting statements from the interviews, labelling, defining, describing, and matching them to the educational beliefs framework. In reverse, the researchers focused on a theme from the educational beliefs framework and searched for matching statements. This analysis and coding procedure deepened the understanding of the educational beliefs framework and revealed the themes and new subthemes as described in [Table 2](#).

4.3. Reliability and Validity

The analysis approach was designed to maximize reliability. At first, all three researchers analyzed 30% of the interviews by coding statements according to the categories of the educational beliefs' framework both forward and backward. That is, from theory to data and from data to theory. This procedure enabled the researchers to establish and verify a coding scheme. Disagreement between the researchers was resolved by discussion to understand the different opinions and to reach consensus. After reaching a consensus, two researchers continued to analyze the interviews. Interrater reliability was used as a verification tool to ensure coherence in and alignment with the educational beliefs' framework. The third researcher checked 30% of the codes for conceptual accuracy; Inter Observer Agreement (IOA) reliability was calculated at 100%.

Table 2. Code manual.

Themes and Definitions for Coded Statements	Number of Codes from Principals' Interviews (N= 8)	Number of Codes from SETs' Interviews (N= 12)	Example
1) Beliefs about Self Statements on SETs' professional role, metaphors, successes and overcoming barriers, self-efficacy	48 M= 6.0 ST = 3.7	94 M= 8.4 ST = 3.2	"I need to be flexible, to be soft on one hand, rigid on the other hand, a mother on the third hand and a teacher on the fourth." (Romi)
2) Beliefs about Context/Environment			
a) Beliefs about the ESOS's role Statements on ESOS physical environment, schedule, school climate and culture, expectations and goals	74 M= 9.2 ST = 2.8	108 M= 7.3 ST = 4.7	"It is important to understand the school's role in the children's' rehabilitation process." (Pnina)
b) Beliefs about professional cooperation Statements on cooperation and collaboration between ESOS staff and ES staff, parents, external experts and organizations, communication paths and information sharing	77 M = 9.6 ST = 2.7	177 M = 12.4 ST = 4.2	"The direct care workers are always in the class. We are hardly ever alone, unless they have to leave. They support us in extreme situations; they are there to help us and help the students." (Shir)
3) Beliefs about Students Statements on students' special needs, diversity, abilities and exceptionalities	29 M = 3.6 ST = 2.2	66 M = 5.0 ST = 2.6	"The children that arrive at the shelter are of diverse ages, with academic gaps, emotional, mental and behavioral difficulties." (Adam)
4) Beliefs about Content/Knowledge Statements on content, knowledge, subject matter, objectives and goals	12 M = 1.7 ST = 0.4	32 M = 2.9 ST = 1.9	"We take the students to the library. I encourage them to read. Also, we have agriculture lessons. It's important that they will touch the soil." (Ziv)
5) Beliefs about Practices			
a) Beliefs about academic practices Statements on academic practices, procedures and instruction	49 M = 5.8 ST = 3.6	64 M = 5.7 ST = 3.7	"Some lessons I start teaching frontally and then I adapt the lesson to the student's goals and needs." (Miri)
b) Beliefs about emotional-behavioral practices Statements on classroom management techniques, coping with emotional and behavioral problems and intervention	30 M = 3.7 ST = 1.9	58 M = 6.1 ST = 3.1	"We have a program of 'star of the day'. Students that accumulate five stars every day win a golden star at the end of the week." (Vered)

5. Results

The thematic analysis in the current study identified ESOS SETs' and principals' educational beliefs with respect to the first five categories included in [Fives & Buehl \(2012\)](#) framework. Moreover, similarities and differences were stressed. The sixth category, *beliefs about teaching approaches*, which was not directly addressed by SETs and principals, is referred to in the discussion section.

5.1. Beliefs about Self

Beliefs about self were described both by SETs and principals with regards to SETs' professional role. Analysis revealed four sub-themes associated with be-

beliefs about SETs' professional role: 1) *maternal figure*—this role is characterized as empathetic, inclusive, reliable, warm, tolerant, caring, loving, thoughtful, familiarity with students' backgrounds, and having a holistic approach toward students; 2) *authoritative figure*—this role is characterized as setting boundaries, setting high academic expectations, showing initiative, and believing in students' abilities to reach their goals; 3) *educational figure*—this role is characterized as responsible, consistent, taking initiative, and being a professional expert who advances students' academic, behavioral, and emotional skills; and 4) *resourceful figure*—this role is characterized as adaptive, flexible, creative, and able to solve problems.

The following quote by one of the SETs exemplifies how SETs described their roles as incorporating multifaceted skills and responsibilities that target a wide range of students' needs as Romi described.

Our role is not just teaching; there is also a maternal and emotional aspect to teaching. However, I do not give up on them [students], educationally, behaviorally, or academically. You have to demonstrate flexibility; to be soft on one side, and tough on the other; a mother on the third and a teacher on the fourth.

Similar to SETs' beliefs, principals also believed that the SETs' role should integrate different sets of skills. However, principals related to fewer roles in their descriptions compared to SETs, as they described the need to integrate maternal with authoritative skills in the teaching profession. Gila said, "Teachers must have a high ability of warmth, support, and containment. They must be both flexible and tough. Not to pity the students, but rather to demand, to meet the time schedule and implement the rules."

The above examples illustrate the multifaceted nature of SETs' role. Both SETs and principals believed that SETs' role is a dynamic one that combines different and sometimes opposing/complementary roles. However, SETs also believed their role to be more complex and consisting of a wider range of skills while principals described fewer aspects of SETs' professional role.

5.2. Beliefs about Context/Environment

The analysis revealed two sub-themes of SETs' and principals' educational beliefs about context/environment: *beliefs about the ESOS role*, and *beliefs about professional collaboration*.

5.3. Beliefs about the ESOS Role

SETs emphasized the need to distinguish between the ESOS and the ES, as Pnina described: "The house [shelter] should be separated from the school. In the future, the house should not be the school, the house has its place, and the school should have its own place." In contrast, principals viewed the ESOS as an integral component of the shelter, as Ben claimed: "...the school is a significant and inseparable element of the shelter."

A clear distinction between the ESOS and ES seems to be important for SETs, possibly because of the shelter being perceived as an unconventional environment for children to grow up in. Principals agreed with this perception, as Gila stated: “In fact, a shelter is not a normal place to grow up in; locked inside the shelter, with clear rules and a strict schedule; when to sleep when to eat, and you need the supervisor’s permission for everything.”

Transitioning to an unconventional setting such as an ES may be perceived as an additional traumatic/stressful event, adding to students’ pre-existing trauma/stress. First, the trauma students endured in their family environments and second, a potentially traumatic transition from home to the ES. Ben explained: “When children come to the shelter, besides the trauma they endured [at home], there is the traumatic experience of coming to the shelter, which is a trauma in itself.”

By contrast, the ESOS was viewed by SETs and principals as a normal environment within the unconventional environment of the ES. As Gila described,

The time in school gives the children a little normality in their life, like most of their age-group, who go to school, learn, and then return after school to their homes. The most normal aspect of this place is the learning time, which is the same as in other schools.

Despite SETs’ attempt to distinguish between the ESOS and ES, the distinction between these two environments seems to be ambiguous on a day-to-day basis. SETs are involved in their students’ therapeutic needs, even though therapy treatments are given by staff members working in the ES and not in the ESOS. SETs initially refer students to para-professional therapists for supportive care; they are in constant contact with the social worker who is in charge of accompanying the child and his/her parents, and they participate in weekly staff conferences. In addition, SETs begin their daily work (the morning routine) at the shelter, while the DCWs work as teacher assistants during the school day. Sima explained that “the DCWs serve as assistants. They sit by the students during lessons, work with them individually and play with them during reassess... they also help students with their emotional state, being with them in the relaxation room.”

In summary, SETs’ and principals’ beliefs about the educational context/environment differed according to the degree to which the ESOS and ES were perceived as one establishment or as separate and distinct entities aimed to promote students’ rehabilitation. SETs’ beliefs focused on the importance of conceptualizing the school as a separate entity; however, they are also involved in the shelter’s activities and daily routines. Contrarily, principals’ beliefs focused on the school as an integral component of the shelter.

5.4. Beliefs about Professional Collaboration

Within the category of beliefs about the ESOS context/environment, SETs’ and principals’ beliefs refer to professional collaboration among SETs, and between SETs and other professional staff such as social workers, psychologists, therap-

ists, and DCWs. SETs emphasized the importance of collaborating, as Romi said, “The communication with the DCWs, social workers, therapeutic staff, and with the principal is extremely important. It is a reoccurring process.”

The thematic analysis found four sub-themes that represent collaborations among SETs at the ESOSs, between SETs and other professional staff inside the shelters, and between SETs and outside professionals. These sub-themes include 1) emotional support, 2) academic guidance, 3) professional development outside the shelter, and 4) DCWs as teaching assistants. **Table 3** summarizes educators’ beliefs regarding these four sub-themes.

Table 3. Educators’ beliefs about professional collaborations.

Sub-themes	Teachers’ Beliefs	Principals’ Beliefs
Emotional Support	“I have a meeting with a social worker every two weeks, which is a gift. Without it I would not have survived these years. If she had not guided me in the first few years on how to separate between what happens at school and at home, I would not have been able to keep this job.” (Miri)	“The teachers receive one weekly hour of training from a social worker. It is very helpful with the difficult and complex situations and intensive emotional outbursts that need to be coped with. I think the teachers have a sense of togetherness and nurturing, which is also helpful.” (Dan)
Academic Guidance	“Our previous consultant was really strong in pedagogic understanding. With her I could break into units, what would suit the pupil, what was right for her, and what method to use. I would consult her on what to do now on how to step forward or what is the right response in a certain situation.” (Miri)	“What’s sorely lacking in shelters is professional guidance in the academic field... In shelters, there are no experts on how to teach Hebrew and math.” (Adam)
Professional Development Outside the Shelter	“There is a large forum, where all the teachers of the shelters meet. We talk among ourselves and share ideas concerning various subjects, and it’s very productive. We all have something in common.” (Nira)	“The teachers receive training consultants from professionals at the Ministry of Education. A supervisor from the Ministry of Education also comes twice a year for general thinking on ongoing matters.” (Tali)
DCWs as Teaching Assistants	“When a student has a behavioral problem, we call a DCW, who simply takes the student out. The DCWs help us in the morning with anything we need; whether someone wants water, or a child is cold and needs a jacket. I cannot leave the class to do these things so the DCWs are my assistants.” (Carmel)	“Often the homeroom teacher works individually with a child, so there has to be a DCW in the classroom. Although part of the lesson is frontal, the student often needs restraining or assistance to sit down, or help with learning.” (Ziv)

The examples provided in **Table 3** emphasize both SETs’ and principals’ beliefs about multiple goals for professional collaboration between SETs and additional professionals inside and outside the ESs. Noteworthy is that these SETs and principals did not view parents as a present, involved, and influencing factor in the educational process of the students in school. As Zeev stated, “I can’t pick up the telephone and talk with the parents because there are no parents to address,” and Vered explained, “We have a policy that only the ES social worker is in touch with the parents. We need to protect our staff.” This approach derives from the fact that the parents are frequently the factor endangering and/or neglecting their children. Hence, precautions are taken to protect both the students and SETs, and only supervised visits with parents are allowed at the shelter with the ES social worker.

In summary, SETs strive to create a separate entity for the ESOSs; on the other hand, they also work intensively together with the ES staff, indicating a partnership between the ESOS and the ES. Principals believed SETs to be an integral part of the ES and said they would like to enhance the academic professional guidance they received.

5.5. Beliefs about Students

Results show that both SETs and principals believed it was their duty to address and promote students' academic and social-emotional learning needs, although students come to the ESOS for a short, limited period of time. ESOS classrooms include a heterogeneous group of students of varying ages, backgrounds, skills, abilities, and knowledge. This makes learning at the ESOS a dynamic and complex process, as Karen described: "Learning is complex because the students change all the time and the class is heterogenic; students come from different grade levels and learning backgrounds." Carmel elaborated,

Students who come here have big learning gaps, I think because they didn't go to school on a regular basis for a long period of time, or if they were at school no one noticed their academic needs because of their behavioral problems.

Both SETs and principals described students' lack of academic, emotional, behavioral, and social readiness as a consequence of trauma, low engagement in learning, separation from home, and the need to adjust to a new environment. For example, Tali said,

These students come from complex backgrounds of neglect and abuse. They lack self-regulation skills so they cope with confusion, resistance, depression, violence, tantrums, and outbursts of crying. It is difficult to establish a benevolent relationship with them because they didn't experience good and trusty relationships. No one really recognized their needs throughout life; some have not visited a school at all. Their academic and emotional difficulties did not really allow them to succeed. They are so afraid of school.

In Summary, SETs and principals acknowledge their responsibility to address the academic and social-emotional needs of ESOS students during their brief stay, navigating the challenges of a diverse and dynamic classroom environment. They attribute student difficulties to factors like trauma and low engagement, underscoring the significance of intra/interprofessional collaboration to handle students' academic, behavioral, and emotional gaps.

5.6. Beliefs about Content/Knowledge

Results show that SETs and principals believed students should learn a variety of academic disciplines such as language, math, sciences, geography, bible, sports, agriculture, home economy, carpentry, and cultural studies (i.e., general know-

ledge and cultural-religious studies). SETs explained that the aim of the academic disciplines is to enhance students' knowledge and language skills. Lili believed that it is important "to give students plenty of knowledge, to expose them as much as possible to culture, and to enrich their vocabulary." Romi stated that "mostly the schedule focused on language and math. Students have fun classes like science, art, or agriculture. But language can be taught as a topic; it can be taught through books, talking with friends, and obviously by reading and writing."

Principals agreed with this description and suggested students' knowledge gaps were affiliated with their lack of learning skills. Ben explained, "We meet students here with very limited general knowledge; children who don't know how to read and don't know how to write; not because they have low IQs, but simply because they never learned."

In summary, both SETs and principals believed ESOS students should learn a variety of academic disciplines with the aim of minimizing their learning gaps, broadening their worldwide knowledge, and teaching them learning skills. However, they emphasized different areas of content/knowledge; SETs emphasized language skills while principals emphasized cultural and general knowledge.

5.7. Beliefs about Practices

The analysis highlighted two sub-themes focusing both on SETs' academic practices and on their emotional-behavioral practices.

Beliefs About Academic and Emotional-Behavioral Practices

SETs and principals presented similar educational beliefs regarding academic practices. As presented in **Table 4**, results displayed two main sub-themes that described such practices: 1) differential learning practices, and 2) learning as a facilitator for students' emotional wellbeing.

The examples presented in **Table 4** describe practices designed to advance students' academic learning skills and achievements which can subsequently also help promote emotional wellbeing. Both SETs' and principals' beliefs regarding academic practices are in line with their beliefs on student diversity and the use of differential instruction to address students' diverse needs. In addition, despite students' academic difficulties, both SETs' and principals' beliefs relate to learning as an integral component of the student's therapeutic process. That is, helping students take part in normative school routines and gain success as a means of achieving therapeutic goals.

Results present three specified sub-themes related to SETs' key emotional-behavioral practices. These emotional-behavioral practices include 1) forming a meaningful relationship with students, 2) reinforcing students' positive behavior, and 3) improving students' emotional-behavioral regulation. Conversely, principals did not describe in detail emotional-behavioral practices, but rather described in general the importance of improving the students' sense of self-efficacy.

Table 4. Educators' Beliefs about Academic and Emotional-Behavioral Practices.

Sub-themes	Teachers' Beliefs	Principals' Beliefs
Beliefs about Academic Practices		
1) Differential Learning Practices	"I simply make adjustments to every lesson. I start teaching frontally and then I begin to adjust the lesson to the student's goals and needs. It's being flexible all the time." (Miri)	"Every child here is different; his/her learning progress is different. If two third-grade children arrive and both of them still don't recognize letters, their progress can be entirely different and the way you work with them is going to be completely different." (Gila)
2) Learning as a Facilitator for Students' Emotional Wellbeing	"The goal is to return to the normative circle, the life mission is to learn in school, this is the expectation from children of their age group, and this is also our expectation, which is ultimately a therapeutic goal." (Lili).	"The school is beyond learning; it is a message. It is a message of routine; it is a message of health. This is what children in the world and in this country do; they learn". (Hadas)
Beliefs about Emotional-Behavioral Practices		
1) Forming a meaningful relationship with students	"First of all, I need the child to trust me, believe in me and to know that I am here to help him. I am not here to make him fail or be mad at him. I'm not criticizing him." (Carmel)	
2) Reinforcing Student's Positive Behavior	"At the end of the day we look at the reinforcement table and see what occurred during that day and we choose a child as the star of the day. At the end of the week some of the children receive a star of the week." (Sima)	"The teachers' goal is to restore a sense of self-ability in the children. When a child feels that he/she is able to solve a problem or do an assignment and is reinforced for it, it can later effect all aspects of their life." (Tali)
3) Improving Students' Emotional-Behavioral Regulation	"We teach the students several strategies of what to do when it's difficult, what to do when they are angry. At the same time, I keep telling them: we are here to help you but you have to agree to receive help." (Sima)	

In summary, SETs used a wide range of academic, social, and emotional-behavioral practices to address the diverse needs of their students. It is apparent from the examples included in **Table 4** that there is a discrepancy between SETs' and principals' educational beliefs regarding classroom practices. It seems that principals focused primarily on students' motivation and self-efficacy to learn while SETs reported implementing a wider variety of academic, social-emotional, and behavioral practices.

6. Discussion

Educational beliefs are the foundation for teaching practices (Hoffman & Seidel, 2014). Research focusing on educational beliefs in ESOSs remains practically nonexistent despite increasing attention to the multifaceted educational consequences of child maltreatment and child welfare services involvement (Sebba et al., 2015). Hence, it is important to explore the topic of educational beliefs in the context of ESOSs, which are unique educational settings characterized by short-term learning goals and a dynamic routine (Storhaug & Kojan, 2016).

This study focused on ESOS SETs' and principals' educational beliefs, based

on Fives and Buehl (2012) theoretical framework. Findings revealed the following categories of beliefs about 1) the professional role of SETs within ESOSs; 2) the ESOS context/environment; 3) ESOS students' special needs, diversity, and abilities; 4) the content/knowledge taught within ESOSs; and 5) the teaching practices incorporated within ESOSs. Fives and Buehl (2012) sixth category (i.e., *beliefs about teaching approaches*) is not included in the results section as SETs and principals did not directly refer to their beliefs regarding teaching approaches. However, educators did relate to the latter category while focusing on teaching practices, emphasizing the need for differential teaching to address students' diverse needs.

Extensive research describes teachers' educational beliefs as separate and dichotomized beliefs (Fives et al., 2019). Contrarily, our main finding revealed continuums upon which SETs' and principals' educational beliefs are situated. We discuss the findings according to Fives and Buehl (2012) theoretical framework from a broad perspective and describe three main continuums: 1) beliefs ranging from mono to multi, 2) beliefs ranging from independent to integrative, and 3) beliefs ranging from structured to flexible.

6.1. Continuum between Mono and Multi Beliefs

On one side of the continuum are what we term *mono* beliefs that represent a specific and unified perspective regarding educational beliefs, while on the other side of the continuum are *multi* beliefs that represent a variety of diverse beliefs. This continuum will be demonstrated based on findings from Fives and Buehl (2012) categories: *beliefs about self* and *beliefs about practices*.

With regard to beliefs about self, both SETs and principals believed that SETs' work comprises a diverse and dynamic combination of roles. This is as SETs need to integrate different and sometimes contradictory/complementary roles to address ESOS students' multifaceted needs and to respond effectively to dynamic classroom situations. SETs described a wide range of their roles (i.e., maternal, authoritative, educational, and resourceful roles). This finding is consistent with studies on beliefs about self, which help teachers facilitate various cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills of students in the classroom (Fives et al., 2019; Hoffman & Seidel, 2014). Principals in the current study related to fewer SETs' roles in their descriptions (i.e., maternal and authoritative roles). It is possible that principals, as social workers, mentioned fewer roles, because they were not aware of the wide range of practices SETs implement in the classroom. As such, on the continuum ranging from *mono* to *multi*, SETs' beliefs are closer to the *multi* end of the continuum, while principals' beliefs tend toward the *mono* end of the continuum.

Regarding beliefs about practices, SETs believed their role was to reduce academic gaps by teaching students' basic skills such as reading and writing; and promoting students' emotional, behavioral, and social well-being. These findings are in line with the notion that school is a resource for potential enhancement of

posttraumatic growth after trauma and adversity (Brunzell et al., 2016; McGuire & Jackson, 2018). Contrarily, principals mainly stressed the importance of imparting worldwide knowledge and fostering a strong connection to the country's culture, without relating to students' academic, emotional-behavioral, and social skills. This is in line with Jones and Cater (Jones & Cater, 2020) who found a lack of understanding regarding social-emotional learning among principals, and therefore recommended comprehensive training in this area at the administrative level.

6.2. Continuum between Independent and Integrative Beliefs

The second continuum ranges from independent beliefs that emphasize an autonomous and distinct role to integrative beliefs that highlight a collaborative and inclusive role. Based on the findings from the category *beliefs about context/environment* (Fives & Buehl, 2012) it seems that SETs' beliefs about the ESOS role lean toward independence emphasizing the need to distinguish between the ESOS and the ES physically (i.e., separate buildings), ideologically (e.g., ESOS as a normal environment vs. ES as an unconventional environment), and therapeutically (i.e., promoting success in learning in the ESOS vs. emotional-psychological therapy in the ES). This may be a way for SETs to express their unique professional identity within the ES.

Despite SETs' desire for independence, they carry out diverse collaborations with internal and external professionals, by participating in joint meetings, building work plans, attending ES morning routines, and collaborating with the DCWs during school hours. These multidisciplinary collaborations deal with multiple goals (e.g., professional development, emotional support, and academic and behavioral guidance). Moreover, such cross-sector collaboration follows the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA, 2014) recommended guidance for implementing a trauma-informed approach. Stemming from this information, it seems SETs' beliefs are fluid and cover the continuum between *independent* and *integrative*, rather than being stable and dichotomous.

Contrary to SETs, principals did not believe ESOSs should be independent from ESs, as they viewed the school as an integral component of the shelter and believed in intra-collaborations between the SETs and other ES professionals. As such, compared to SETs, it seems that principals were situated closer to the *integrative* end of the continuum.

6.3. Continuum between Structured and Flexible Beliefs

The third continuum ranges from *structured* beliefs that describe the need for a stable, systematic, and consistent environment to *flexible* beliefs that relate to adapting and adjusting to a dynamic environment. Findings indicate that for both SETs and principals, beliefs about context/environment are positioned closer to the *structured* end of the continuum, whereas beliefs about self and beliefs about practices are closer to the *flexibility* end of the continuum.

Regarding context/environment, both SETs and principals believed that their job was to create a stable, consistent setting for ESOS students, as a structured environment is a therapeutic tool that can promote students' rehabilitation. This is in line with Perry, as cited in Brunzell et al. (Brunzell et al., 2016), who suggests that "the classroom is sometimes the most consistent and stable place in a trauma-affected student's world and must be seen as a therapeutic milieu wherein the structured environment itself is the most consistent and effective intervention" (p. 220). Thus, in this case both SETs and principals were positioned closer to the *structured* end of the continuum. It is possible that these beliefs describe SETs' and principals' attempt to address how transitioning to a short-term ES may enhance feelings of stress, shock, and confusion among children (Hébert et al., 2018; Yitzhak Cohen & Ben-Arieh, 2021).

Alongside the structured environment, both SETs' and principals' beliefs about self specify dynamic and sometimes opposing/complementary SETs roles. Findings of the current study reveal a flexible role for SETs (i.e., the "Resourceful Role"). This role is characterized by SETs' adaptability, flexibility, and creativity for solving problems. As such, this role enables SETs to address different student needs and respond effectively to changing situations in the classroom.

In line with previous studies (Bas & Sentürk, 2019; McGuire & Jackson, 2018), these SETs believed in the importance of a wide range of practices, indicating their need for differential teaching adjusted to each individual student, closing academic gaps, and reinforcing positive social-emotional behaviors. Differentiated instruction is a teaching approach that tailors instruction to students' learning needs. By differentiating instruction, teachers provide students with opportunities to succeed in school, regardless of their unique starting points (Clohessy, 2022). Differentiated instruction is a vital component in the rehabilitation of students with histories of abuse and/or neglect who demonstrate lower academic achievement and behavioral-emotional difficulties (McGuire & Jackson, 2018).

Stemming from the aforementioned findings, SETs and principals move on the continuum from structured to flexible beliefs in line with the dynamic environment of ESOSs. On the one hand, they believe that a structured environment is a therapeutic tool for students. However, they understand that it is impossible to structure the environment without being flexible in accordance with the unique characteristics and needs of ESOS students.

6.4. Broader Implications for Practice and Theory

The main contribution of this study to the limited knowledge of educational beliefs of SETs who work with at-risk, traumatized, and neglected students assigned to ESOSs is to conceptualize these beliefs as continuums rather than as separate and dichotomized belief categories. As the journey of developing a professional identity is an ongoing process, it is important that educators' professional development programs refer to the importance of educational beliefs, and how they shape educators' work (Choi et al., 2021; Dery & Reingold, 2021), es-

pecially with students at risk. Although schools cannot undo students' adverse life experiences (Lamponen et al., 2019; McGuire & Jackson, 2018), it is important to enhance educators' beliefs about the therapeutic potential in promoting at-risk students' academic, emotional-behavioral, and social development (Shonkoff et al., 2012). Hence, conceptualizing SETs beliefs as continuums rather than as separate and dichotomized beliefs allows for a deeper understanding of teachers' professional behaviors, practices, and students' outcomes in dynamic educational settings such as ESOSs (Choi et al., 2021; Eđmir & Çelik, 2019), and may contribute to the improvement of teaching performance in these educational settings. The findings of this study suggest that principals and teachers should identify and discuss similarities and differences in their educational beliefs. The influence of principals' educational beliefs on teachers' beliefs should be examined carefully (Claro et al., 2017; DeMatthews et al., 2020).

7. Limitations and Future Directions

A few limitations should be considered. First, the sample included 20 participants (12 SETs and eight principals). Therefore, the sample was relatively small and the generalization of the results is uncertain. Second, this study investigated ESOS educators' beliefs from the Jewish sector and did not examine, for language limitations, educators' beliefs from other cultural sectors. Examining different cultural educational beliefs is important to represent the diverse cultures of educators in Israel. Future studies should investigate ESOS educators' beliefs from a variety of cultures worldwide (e.g., Dery & Reingold, 2021). Third, this study used a DQA, a deduction and induction analysis that explores themes based on theoretically driven coding. This approach may have caused a bias toward Fives & Buehl (2012) theoretical framework, possibly omitting additional themes.

8. Conclusions

Extensive research has explored a wide range of educators' belief characteristics, such as core vs. peripheral, and explicit vs. implicit beliefs (Fives et al., 2019; Wilson-Ali et al., 2019). These beliefs are dichotomized into distinct and separate categories. The present study revealed three new continuums by integrating Fives & Buehl (2012) framework categories: mono vs. multi, independent vs. integrative, and structured vs. flexible beliefs. These continuums suggest that educators' beliefs are not dichotomous, but rather fluid and changing as related to context.

Moreover, results demonstrated similarities and differences between ESOSs, and SETs' and principals' educational beliefs with respect to the aforementioned three continuums. Since principals have a critical impact on teachers' beliefs and practices (Siddiqui et al., 2021), it is important to expose the gaps between principals' and teachers' beliefs. This novel perspective contributes to the understanding of SETs' role in ESOSs and attests to the impact of the dynamic ESOS

context on both SETs' and principals' beliefs.

Conceptualizing educators' beliefs through these three continuums may help to promote students' well-being. For students coming from unstable homes characterized by maltreatment, school can and should be an environment that promotes healthy development and provides positive academic experiences and outcomes (Leonard et al., 2016). Moreover, if students can feel connected to, supported by, and successful in their schools, notwithstanding the adversity they face outside school, they may be more likely to display increased levels of resiliency in the face of their challenging life circumstances (e.g., Leonard et al., 2016). Hence, educators' beliefs that are situated on continuums and describe flexible and changeable beliefs, enable educators to adjust to different internal and external factors (Buehl & Beck, 2015; Buehl & Fives, 2009). These flexible educational beliefs are essential for unconventional workplaces, such as the ESOS, to provide at-risk students with appropriate care.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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