Social Entrepreneurs Wanted: Quality of Life Approach as a Basis for Recruitment Practice in Beit Ekstein Schools in Israel

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The following paper examines the relationship between the Quality of Life approach and the recruiting practice of Beit Ekstein special education school managers. First, the paper explores three main fields: the Beit Ekstein Quality of Life model relative to quality of life concept; the role of school managers in general and specifically at Beit Ekstein; teachers as social entrepreneurs. Through a content analysis of data gathered in interviews with Beit Ekstein school managers, the article aims to identify the special characteristics that the school managers are looking for in their recruiting practice. Findings show that Beit Ekstein school managers have a specific perception of their teams and seek to hire people with the characteristics of social entrepreneurs, since the qualities held by such recruits will play a significant role in the development of their special needs pupils. Moreover, findings bring an understanding of the school manager's perception of the Quality of Life model.

Keywords: social entrepreneurship, quality of life, special education, recruiting practices, HRM.

Poszukiwani przedsiębiorcy społeczni – jakość życia jako podstawa praktyki rekrutacyjnej w szkołach Beit Ekstein w Izraelu

Przedmiotem artykułu jest związek pomiędzy podejściem uwzględniającym aspekt jakości życia a praktyką rekrutacyjną stosowaną przez dyrektorów szkół specjalnych Beit Ekstein. W artykule przede wszystkim zbadano trzy główne obszary: przyjęty w Beit Ekstein model jakości życia a koncepcja jakości życia; rolę dyrektorów szkół ogólnie i w Beit Ekstein; nauczycieli jako przedsiębiorców społecznych. Celem jest wskazanie konkretnych cech poszukiwanych przez dyrektorów szkół podczas rekrutacji, czego dokonano za pomocą analizy treści danych z wywiadów przeprowadzonych z dyrektorami szkół Beit Ekstein. Wyniki wskazują, że dyrektorzy tych szkół w sposób szczególny postrzegają swoje zespoły i zatrudniają osoby o cechach przedsiębiorców społecznych, gdyż cechy takich pracowników mają istotne znaczenie w rozwoju uczniów o specjalnych potrzebach. Ponadto wyniki pozwalają zrozumieć sposób postrzegania modelu jakości życia przez dyrektorów szkół.

Słowa kluczowe: przedsiębiorczość społeczna, jakość życia, edukacja specjalna, praktyki rekrutacyjne, ZZL.

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1. Introduction

Beit Ekstein is a leading organization in Israel specializing in the field of education, rehabilitation and treatment for people with disabilities and special needs. At the heart of Beit Ekstein's philosophy lies the belief that every person has a recognized and valued place in his or her close community and family. The mission of Beit Ekstein is to create a positive quality of life process wherein each individual has the opportunity not only to realize his or her wishes and desires but also to integrate into society in a meaningful way.

For this purpose, Beit Ekstein operates and manages according to the Quality of Life model, developed by Schalock in 2004 and later adapted by the Beit Ekstein organization for its own specific needs. The Quality of Life model enables individuals to build on their strengths while dealing with their weaknesses and by doing so to rise above limitations and barriers. Through a personal support plan designed for each person according to his or her needs, individuals receive a wide range of skills and tools to achieve their goals.

This vision has become the backbone of Bet Ekstein and all of the organization's special education school managers manage their schools within the framework and language of this approach. It influences how they perceive their schools and everything that occurs within them, including their role and the criteria they look for when recruiting new team members.

Since the Quality of Life approach requires a special attitude for its implementation, the managers seek people of a young age with the characteristics of social entrepreneurs. For this reason, the calling: 'Wanted, social entrepreneurs!' stands not only as a slogan but as a very real need for the approach to succeed. In order to explore this understanding further, the literature review explores three main topics: the Beit Ekstein Quality of Life model, the role of special education school managers, and teachers as social entrepreneurs.

The main purpose of this article is to examine the relationship between the Quality of Life approach and the recruiting practice of Beit Ekstein special education school managers. The central assumption of this research lies in the understanding that during the process of hiring teachers, the managers of Beit Ekstein schools, which are operated according to the Quality of Life model, will seek to hire people with the characteristics of social entrepreneurs, since the qualities held by such recruits will play a significant role in the development of their special needs pupils. This research lies in the fields of social entrepreneurship, the Quality of Life approach, and HR management in schools.

2. Literature Review

The literature review explores the Beit Ekstein Quality of Life model and how it affects and influences the role, perceptions and significance of the managers at Beit Ekstein special education schools. Immersed in an approach which calls for a special attitude, language and characteristics, the managers have a specific set of criteria for the teachers they seek to recruit, teachers as social entrepreneurs (Fig. 1).
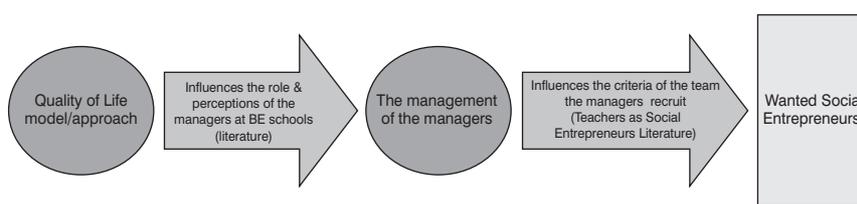

Fig. 1.

2.1. Beit Ekstein Quality of Life Model

Beit Ekstein was founded in 1987 and currently provides services to more than 3000 clients, employing around 1500 employees in over 40 facilities all over Israel. As one of the largest leading organizations in Israel in the fields of education, treatment and rehabilitation of disabled people, Beit Ekstein operates special education schools, develops housing solutions, seeks employment and provides services for diverse populations, including those handling learning disabilities, adaptation difficulties, autism and intellectual disability (http://www.b-e.org.il/).

The organization strives to bring about a real improvement in these people's lives while fulfilling their wishes and desires. To achieve this vision, Beit Ekstein decided to adapt and adopt the Quality of Life model created by Schalock in 2004 as a management approach and tool for the organization. The decision to do this has affected the Beit Ekstein organization as a whole, and each of its schools, employees and clients as a part of it.

The Quality of Life approach affects almost every aspect of the schools' management and running, enabling a spiral process with a bottom-up perception which starts at the beginning of every school year when data is collected regarding each pupil. The data includes diagnoses, mappings, prior schools reports, house calls, observations and everyday experiences with the pupil on a personal and social basis, as well as therapeutic information observed in personal and collective treatment. Based on this data, the educational and therapeutic team fill in a Quality of Life questionnaire

for each pupil. The underlying questions that guide this process are what is important <u>to</u> the pupil and what is important <u>for</u> the pupil.

According to the information revealed in the questionnaire, the team develops a personal support plan based on the pupil's strengths, each support coordinated with goals, strategies and targets. The support plan is presented to the pupil for approval and adjusted accordingly until it reaches a place of accuracy. The final support plan is presented to the pupil and his or her parents on a festive parents' day.

The efficacy and efficiency of the support plan is examined at a special team meeting that takes place every three months. If necessary, the support plan is updated and adjusted to complete a spiral process that continues each year (Fig. 2).

In the literature, there are several attempts to define the Quality of Life approach in the fields of social work, psychology, sociology and medicine (Gurin, Veroff & Feld, 1960; Patrick & Erickson, 1993). Subjective quality of life is generally defined as a person's feelings about himself or herself and his or her place in the world, and the distance of visible or invisible standards. The axiom for this definition is that a person's satisfaction comes from the way he or she appreciates different aspects in his or her life according to significant standards. Quality of life is determined by the gap existing between one's lifestyle and various comparative standards, such as past expectations, future expectations, aspirations, needs, past experiences, others' conditions and personal values (Keng & Hooi, 1995).

According to Schalock (2004), the quality of life of a person with disabilities includes a number of fields and personal supports connected to that person in his or her natural surroundings. In order to adjust the model to a specific person, it is necessary to map his or her specific needs, available resource management and the ability of an organization to provide the service, while considering governmental policy and this person's legal rights. According to this model, in order to improve a person's quality of life it is necessary to take intentional actions that suit each person's individual needs and personal abilities. The main goal is to minimize the gap between the person's subjective perceptions about his or her life, and the objective assessment of his or her ability. Programs aimed at narrowing these gaps are examined using evaluation and measurement tools according to their effect on the person's life and their applicability within the environment.

In order to create a significant effect on a person's quality of life, there must be a correlation between all program components and all of the people involved in executing it, including the person him- or herself. When all this exists, it is possible to observe significant improvement in various life domains of people with disabilities. The core domains referred to in the Beit Ekstein Quality of Life model are: learning technologies, behavioral-emotional, social, self-advocacy, close natural community, self-direction and pedagogy.
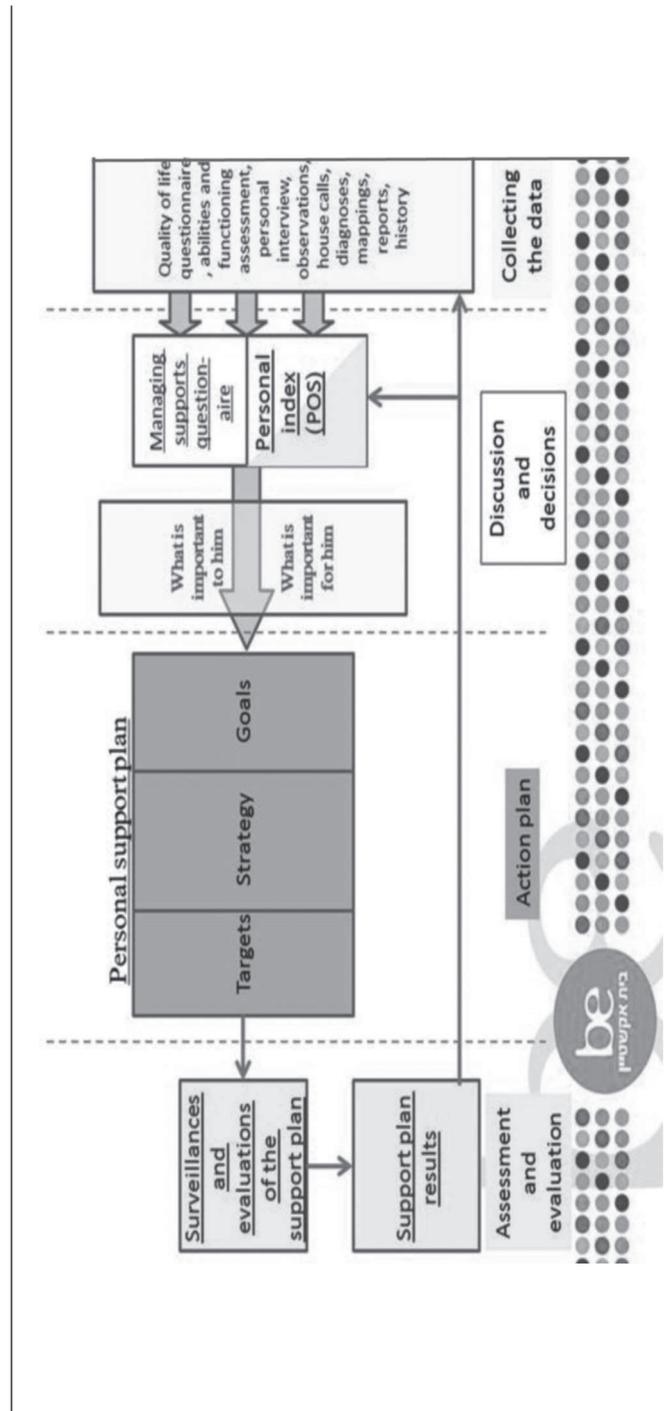
Fig. 2.

Since the Quality of Life model assumes that quality of life is affected on two levels: micro, relating to the person and his or her immediate surroundings, and macro, relating to cultural, socio-political trends, it has been considered valid and credible in many studies (Rent & Roeyers, 2006; Kamp-Becker, Schröder, Remschmidt & Bachmann, 2010).

Indeed, due to the academic validation of Schalock's Quality of Life model (2004), it was chosen by Beit Ekstein as the professional model to lead the organization's activity in all aspects. As such, the role, perception and significance of Beit Ekstein's special education school managers have been greatly influenced. In order to understand this, it is important to examine the role of school managers in contemporary schools and the significance of school managers at the Beit Ekstein organization.

2.2. The Role of School Managers in Contemporary Schools

In the last decade, significant changes have taken place in the way school managers manage their schools. One of these changes is connected with the perception of education as a business and professional service. A school manager is perceived as a CEO and his or her job is, among other things, to please the customer – parents and pupils, and to adjust the system to their wishes. This approach is based on the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) (Bar-Haim et al., 2011; Macdonald, 1996). TQM is a management philosophy that puts the client's (parent/pupil) needs at the center of the school's attention. The role of the school is to design and develop a given product or service and to improve it according to the clients' needs.

Therefore, up-to-date professional literature relates to school management like private organization management, dealing accordingly with the demands, needs and roles of school managers in relation to modern enterprise management theories (Hallinger & Heck, 2010). This literature deals with the importance of a systemic vision, while relating to the learning organization, which deals with changing environments, contradictions and complexities (Bright, Turesky, Putzel & Stang, 2012). Nowadays, the qualities of school managers as leaders are accentuated more than ever, including the decisions they make, their daring and resourcefulness while dealing with changing environments and the challenge of leading change.

Effective and efficient leadership by school managers can be observed and measured in several specific areas. Firstly, in designing the future image of the school and forming its vision. According to Oplatka (2007), the most important role of the pedagogical leader is in defining the educational vision of the school and its execution. The vision is an expression of the world-view of the school and of the main purpose of its existence, where the school serves as an adhesive, attaching people to each other and to the organization, creating optimistic feelings, and a basis for daily activity based on moral values (Sergiovanni, 2002).

Another aspect, and the one which stands at the center of this research, concerns the recruitment and leadership of the pedagogical and professional school team. In this context, a school manager has two major roles: to create a solid work environment that learns from actions and develops an organizational culture of mutual learning, and to manage the pedagogical team and organize professional development processes for teachers (Fiedler and House in Gaziel, 2000). In this context, they claim that efficient school management is expressed through three main management strategies: (1) Delegation of power – meaning that the school manager delegates responsibilities to other staff members and gives them the feeling of having a significant management role and responsibility for the school achieving its goals; (2) Cooperation and teamwork – managing while cooperating with the staff and encouraging teamwork in all activities at school. The school manager needs to assure that the team will work in full cooperation, dividing the work between themselves, debating and helping each other; (3) Support and empowerment of professional staff – the school manager needs to challenge the teachers intellectually in order to assure personal and professional development. Furthermore, he or she needs to be open, honest and attentive to the educational team's criticism (Inbar, 2000).

Hence, school managers who perceive teachers as innovators and entrepreneurs, and understand their significant value in advancing social and educational goals, tend to look for innovative and entrepreneurial personnel to achieve their educational vision (Drucker, 1985).

2.2.1. The Significance of School Managers at Beit Ekstein Special Education Schools

Beit Ekstein special education schools are in high demand with pupils coming from far and wide to attend them. In one Beit Ekstein school, pupils come from 36 different areas covering a radius of approximately 150 kilometres. Each year the Ministry of Education adds more class budgets to Beit Ekstein schools and each year they fill up (Fig. 3).

Bearing this in mind, it is interesting to note that none of the current Beit Ekstein school managers held the qualifications required by the Ministry of Education for school management when they were hired for their position and began work. Leaving no room for doubt, it is clear that the Beit Ekstein organization recruits school managers with an alternative set of skills, qualities and characteristics which can fit in with its philosophy and professional approach: the Quality of Life model.

The Quality of Life model (Schalock 2004(, which was adapted for implementation in Beit Ekstein schools, provides a broad space for the quality of life of the school manager on both a professional and personal level. Using this approach, the organization invites and enables its managers to bring themselves in all aspects, including their passions and ambitions, to fulfil their visions and heal their own past personal experiences as school pupils.

Increase classrooms and students

2012-2013		2013-2014		2014-2015		2015-2016		
Number of Students	Number of classes	Number of Students	Number of classes	Number of Students	Number of classes	Number of Students	Number of classes	שם בית ספר
17	3	26	5	30	6	40	8	Beit Ekstein School, Hof Ha'Sharon
92	8	100	8	88	8	80	8	Beit Ekstein Elementary School, Givatayim
158	14	174	14	180	15	170	15	Beit Ekstein High School, Givatayim
0	0	–	–	15	3	25	5	Beit Ekstein School, Ramat-Gan
117	11	124	11	132	11	140	12	Beit Ekstein School, Rishon LeZion
104	15	108	15	119	17	140	19	Beit Ekstein School, Yad Rambam
86	9	123	10	150	12	155	13	Beit Ekstein School – Kfar Malal
127	11	139	12	136	12	144	12	Beit Ekstein School, Or Yehuda
108	15	113	15	112	15	112	15	Beit Ekstein School, Even Yehuda
83	12	105	13	112	14	120	15	Beit Ekstein School, Ruppin
207	17	221	19	236	20	249	20	Beit Ekstein Experimental School, Kibbutz Ga
125	12	111	12	112	12	130	12	Beit Ekstein School, Derech Lamerchav
25	2	42	7	60	9	66	11	Beit Ekstein School, Ofakim
0	0	13	2	26	4	32	6	Beit Ekstein School, Dror Pardes
1,249	129	1,399	143	1,508	158	1,603	171	סה"כ

Fig. 3.

This attitude comes from the belief that when managers fulfil their potential and receive relevant responses to concepts such as role, representation, authority, leadership (and followership), anxiety, boundaries, relationship and relatedness, it has a direct and indirect impact on all school employees and pupils, as reported by Cilliers & Koortzen (2000).

In keeping with this attitude, the Beit Ekstein organization gives its school managers autonomy in budget management, including operating and human resources management, and makes sure that they are assisted and supported as much as possible. The Education Division Manager (EDM) at Beit Ekstein who is the direct manager of the school managers provides the managers with professional and emotional support, organizes professional seminars, and helps with issues connected to the municipality and the Ministry of Education and more. To ensure that the school managers are on track, they are evaluated once a year by the EDM and by each of the school's employees who take part in a manager's performance survey.

Understanding that school managers are central to the success of the organization, a Quality of Life approach and <u>all</u> of the above, Beit Ekstein looks for a specific DNA in its school managers. This DNA, which was actually compiled by Beit Ekstein's school managers in a special meeting dedicated to the issue, holds the following qualities: initiative and innovation, commitment to the organization, independence in managing and executing, personal responsibility, respect for others, professionalism, managing with passion (with a spark in the eyes), balancing social and business needs, managing with a team approach and collaboration, leadership and courage, motivating and encouraging employees.

With so much weight on the significance of the manager in Beit Ekstein special education schools, the managers are very much aware of the kind of team they want to work with. In fact, many of the qualities that the managers hold in their DNA are present in varying amounts in their team members, for it is these qualities which the Quality of Life approach requires for its successful implementation. They are the qualities of social entrepreneurs, people who want to make a difference and are prepared to do what it takes to make it happen.

2.3. Teachers as Social Entrepreneurs

Social entrepreneurship is a term that has been discussed more and more since its emergence in the last decade (Prahalad, 2005; Levi-Feldman, 2010). Leading non-government organizations (NGOs) in the field, like Ashoka, the Skoll Foundation and the Schwab Foundation, market social entrepreneurship by emphasizing the individual achievements of social entrepreneurs (Dacin et at., 2011), who are defined as inspirational people, visionary and able to execute their visions, even though the goal of the vision is not based on profit but is part of a social project (Martin & Osberg, 2007).

In the last decade, a growing number of social entrepreneurship centers have been established at universities around the world, and new scientific publications about social entrepreneurship, social initiatives and innovations have been initiated (Choi & Majumdar, 2014). This growth of interest and activity has reached governments who have begun to support social entrepreneurships by developing new organization systems for the purpose of encouraging, supporting and financing their creation (Xu, Song & Song, 2014).

In the educational arena, the concept of social enterprise is highly significant since this domain is usually characterized by a lack of resources on the one hand, but as having a big potential for growth and return of investment on the other through the pupils' success (Gordon, 2005; Bornstein & Davis, 2010). This argument is far more acute when talking about pupils with special needs, a population which is highly demanding treatment-wise, requiring multi-disciplinary staff to address its emotional, social and academic needs (Cale, Delpino & Myran, 2015).

Social entrepreneurship is very important in education. In his writings (1932), George Counts, American educator and influential education theorist, encouraged social entrepreneurship in education. Counts called teachers to act as a public body, to lead society, cope with harsh social realities, develop a social theory of welfare, establish relations with communities and articulate a challenging vision of human respect. He emphasized that schools do not necessarily lead to better social order, and for that to happen teachers need to take an active role, using existing resources to initiate significant social change for the student population. This calling later led to the recognition of teachers as agents of change and members of social justice groups (Borasi & Finnigan, 2010).

In addition to the teacher's ability to quickly adjust to changing situations in class and school, the teacher also needs to see change when it occurs and to deal with it. It is the teacher who stands at the head of the educational activity, who has the power to influence and improve the educational field. Furthermore, the humanistic teacher is a moral person, sensitive to social justice and sees him- or herself as a leader of social change. Looking back, schools and the education system have clearly become more socially involved and perceive themselves more and more as agents of social change within the community (Levi-Feldman, 2010).

In Israel, a general expansion and development of social entrepreneurship has taken place hand in hand with its growth in the educational system. The Ministry of Education in Israel describes the goal of educating for entrepreneurship in the following words: to develop and nurture the entrepreneurial skills of the pupils, including intellectual, emotional, social, creative and executional skills. These skills appear in entrepreneurial approaches and set a standard of qualifications, expertise, and entrepreneurial behaviors.

Another example of integrating a vision of social entrepreneurship in the field of education in Israel is reflected in the regulations set by the

Ministry of Education which emphasize that 'educating for entrepreneurship is an opportunity for self-expression, encouragement of the individuality of pupils, and the development of their abilities to realize autonomy: to choose, to recognize personal interests, to take initiative, to define personal, social and academic goals, and to act in order to execute them'. According to the Ministry of Education, social entrepreneurs have what it takes to be business entrepreneurs but prefer to channel their efforts for the public good rather than their own private wealth.

Interestingly, social entrepreneurs in education take similar approaches to solving problems as their business entrepreneur counterparts: innovativeness, effectiveness, taking risks, and outcome intentions (Yemini, 2014). However, for teachers, the basic vision for themselves as social entrepreneurs is to improve aspects within society while aspiring to be agents of change in the social sector. To this end, the Israeli Ministry of Education operates several ventures to encourage entrepreneurial thinking among young teachers both formally and non-formally. Some of these ventures take place in teacher training colleges which run varied programs for social entrepreneurship (Chen, 2004).

Social entrepreneurship has significant importance within special education, since the requirements of children with special needs are expansive and complex on academic and social levels. Moreover, the difficulties parents encounter while raising special education children can be extremely demanding, making the task of educating them very challenging. Hence, the potential for creating significant change, including social change, by entrepreneurial actions is significant, especially for children in special education.

With a greater understanding of the Quality of Life model adapted and implemented at the Beit Ekstein organization, the role of school managers and their significance at Beit Ekstein special education schools, and the need for teachers to act as social entrepreneurs, it is now possible to go out into the field to check, even if only on a small scale, how all this is affecting school managers recruitment of human resources.

3. Research Design and Methodology

3.1. Purpose of the Study and General Approach

The main purpose of this article is to examine the relationship between the Quality of Life approach and the recruiting practice of Beit Ekstein special education school managers. The examination and analyses relate to the commonalities found in the interviews.

The general approach in this study is based on a qualitative narrative theory. Qualitative research methodologies present a research paradigm which is different from quantitative research methodologies. According to Shkedi (2012), a paradigm is a world-view, a general and wide perspective

on phenomena overlooking the specific details. The central assumption of the qualitative research methodology is that the truth lies very much in the way people construct their subjective reality by their thoughts, feelings and behaviors. Hence, in order to follow this truth it is best to observe and question the interviewee (or the informant, meaning the source of knowledge) who will present his or her perspective in a rich way. This approach is opposed to quantitative methodology which is based on the positivistic assumption that most phenomena are quantifiable (Denzin, 1995 in Shkedi, 2012).

The methodology for a narrative based theory uses data that researchers collect directly from informants. In comparison to the traditional 'field based theory' which gives equal value to different data, a narrative based theory is based first and foremost on the informants' narratives. The process of creating a theory involves identifying descriptive categories, central categories and sub-categories branching from them, created in the first stages of analysis (Skedi, 2004).

3.2. Research Field and Sampling

In keeping with the research of Cote (1999), who created a model for choosing sports talent based on qualitative research and included four interviews, this research is based on four in-depth narrative interviews with four Beit Ekstein school managers. They all manage schools for students with mental, emotional, behavioral disorders and borderline intelligence. The interviews were recorded over 6 hours, and after typing, included 50 pages. This research, which quotes the four school managers, represents the views of the rest of the school managers. Details regarding the school managers interviewed in the study are as follows:

Avi: School manager at Beit Ekstein school for pupils with mental difficulties with borderline to normal intelligence. Catering to pupils aged 6–21, each class has up to 8 pupils.

Anat: School manager for 7 years at Beit Ekstein high school for adolescents dealing with mental difficulties and normal intelligence (9th grade and up). The school has 110 pupils.

Sagi: School manager at Beit Ekstein high school for pupils with learning disabilities and ADD, with normal and above normal intelligence (9th–12th grade). Each class has 12 pupils.

Yaron: School manager at Beit Ekstein school for pupils with learning disabilities and ADD, with normal and above normal intelligence. The school has c. 150 pupils (7th–12th grade).

3.3. Method and Organization of the Research

The main research method for gathering the data was in-depth, narrative interviews. Czarniawska (2004) claims that an interview is two people seeking knowledge and understanding in a common conversational endeavor. The

term 'narrative' is often used synonymously with 'story' (Riessman, 2008). The main idea behind narrative interviewing is to invite an interlocutor to tell a story in his or her own words about something that is interesting for a researcher. The purpose of such an interview is not only to get answers to questions or to examine assumptions, it is the desire to understand the experience of other people and the meaning they give to this experience. The interview provides accessibility to cultural aspects of people's behavior, hence giving scholars ways to understand the meaning of this behavior (Seidman, 1991 in: Shkedi, 2012). The main goal is to see how reality comes across through other people's eyes and meanings, since qualitative research methodology tries to interpret the way people grasp reality.

During the interviews, the school managers were asked the following questions:
1. Describe your school.
2. How is your school similar to and different from other Beit Ekstein schools?
3. When was the first time you got to know the system of supports? How do you apply this method in your school?
4. How do you use this method to manage school staff?

All the school managers were relaxed and cooperative during the interviews which took place in their homes. There were no unusual disturbances during the interviews.

After the interviews were conducted, they were analyzed according to a content analysis method which identified main themes throughout the interviews, including similar themes appearing in some way in all the interviews (Shkedi, 2012). This was followed by the identification of categories and the merging of relevant data within each of the categories. Analysis was aided by ATLAS.ti software and went through several stages: primary stage, mapping analysis, focused analysis and theoretical analysis (Shkedi, 2012) (Fig. 3).

4. Findings

The central theme of this research is to examine how the Quality of Life approach is used as a basis for recruitment practice in Bet Eckstein special education schools in Israel. In presenting the findings, attention is drawn to the perceptions and preferences of the Bet Eckstein school managers interviewed regarding this issue. Two main themes were found following analysis of the interviews, each one holding two sub-themes.

The first main theme addresses the manager's perception of the Quality of Life model. The study finds that the managers perceive the model as providing an ideology and a measurable practice for their management. In addition, they perceive the Quality of Life approach as creating a process of empowerment, development and change in the pupils, the team and the

managers themselves. With so many benefits attached, it is not surprising that all the managers interviewed reported that the Quality of Life model is an integral part of their school management, an approach which the team are required to adopt and adapt to their educational practice.

The second main theme addresses the managers' preference regarding their team members in order to implement the Quality of Life model. The study finds that the managers prefer team members who hold the qualities of social entrepreneurs and who are young in age and spirit. Working with the Quality of Life approach calls for flexibility, creativity, tolerance, commitment, responsibility and more. Thinking out of the box and allowing processes to unfold and develop are part of the practice and call for special team members with special skills and attributes. The findings show how Bet Eckstein special education school managers seek to hire young, open and motivated people such as these.

First Theme: Managers' Perception of the Quality of Life Model

The Bet Eckstein managers interviewed hold two main perceptions regarding the Quality of Life model:
a) It provides an ideology and a measurable practice for their management;
b) It creates a process of empowerment, development and change in the whole school population – pupils, team and managers.

These perceptions form the attitude and state of mind necessary for the successful implementation of the model. They touch on areas of value and belief within the managers, propelling them beyond the everyday issues involved in school management to a place of calling and vision.

a) Ideology and measurable practice for all aspects of school management

When used as an integral part of the school system, the Quality of Life model provides a unified school framework and a whole approach to special needs pupils. Highly practical, this model brings theory directly into the school. The common terminology and language shared between the manager, the team and the pupils facilitate life-changing educational processes. Indeed, the support system, paramount to the Quality of Life model, invites real and practical expressions of compassion and devotion by the team, translated into actions which empower and advance the pupils.

> *The Quality of Life model is actually the spine of the organization and of my school for that matter. It is like a kind of central axis around which we work with the children… it helps us to organize our work. It gives us an organizing axis that does not let us stick to speculations or assumptions, but takes us to something more scientific, more measurable. In this respect, I acknowledge the great value of this tool.* (Anat)

Day to day school management is very much affected by the Quality of Life model and gradually becomes internalized into the way the school is run. Calling school managers to bring qualities of entrepreneurship involving characteristics of flexibility, creativity and enormous faith in their teams

and pupils, the model organically invites a deep knowing of the pupils and their situation, the school and its condition, the team and their position. Moreover, it enables the managers to bring themselves and their educational beliefs to observe changes and hopefully improvements in the quality of life of all these parties.

> *I think the Quality of Life approach, which is very broad and open to interpretation, allows Bet Eckstein's diverse school managers to interpret it in the way they think is best. In this way, it gives a lot of freedom to the manager and his team to channel their understanding of how to show the pupil that he is loved.* (Sagi)
> *Maybe no one here can say exactly what the quality of life approach is, not even a senior teacher at Beit Ekstein. But they all do it. I mean, they are actually thinking with Quality of Life terms.* (Yaron)

Using the Quality of Life Model involves the use of a new language, a language that holds concepts, measurable criteria, supports and more. Although not always easy to work with, this language, which connects all parts of the model and all of the participants, forms the basis on which change can occur.

> *The goal is to expand his sense of belonging, to teach him the language of self-advocacy and self-direction and the ability to make decisions, to learn how to ask for help. By steadily building his ability to succeed in his studies and to believe in the world of adults, we hope that he will eventually finish school with a full matriculation certificate… We have a unique team which loves students, has a spark in their eyes, fights for them and with them, carries them, talks to them. This team talks this language, the language I have just presented, the Quality of Life language, and they realize that all this way needs to go through a dialogue with the students and the parents.* (Sagi)
> *Even the new staff that we recruit need to speak this language, especially the language of supports. They need to use the words: provider, staff evaluation, summarizing evaluation – all of these terms and more. No, I have to tell you, it is not 100 percent, but it is our aspiration. We generally speak in this language.* (Avi)
> *We have a multi-professional staff, and it calls for an interesting and challenging dialogue, one that creates some kind of tension which is very fruitful between education and therapy. This dialogue experiences storms and battles. But today we are in a much better place regarding the speaking of a common language.* (Anat)

b) A process of empowerment, development and change

The Quality of Life approach, with its integral use of a support system, provides a practical basis on which to build an empowerment system for each pupil based on his or her resources, wishes and the limited framework in which he or she operates. The program gives school managers clearer understandings regarding each pupil, and takes the school's management to a very personal place with the pupil population. This personalization of management creates a deep involvement of the managers in the educational processes taking place in their schools, and requires that each pupil be seen as a whole person.

> *We ask him, I mean genuinely ask him, getting close to him, in this way or another, trying to see for real if there is a correlation between his wanting and the direction we sense will create a real change in his quality of life. Sometimes there is no correlation,*

because his wishes are different… we need to reach an understanding. After that, we can go ahead and decide which things we want to strengthen in him with the help of a supports provider. Supports providers can be anyone. It can be us, it can be the maintenance man, it can be the cook, and it can also be the school's guard. (Avi)

According to the quality of life concept there is a child and there is a desirable place. The desirable is his hopes, dreams, what he wants to be… and our perception tells us that this is his situation, and there is the place where he wants to be, and as much as we can support him, we will be able to close this gap between what he wants to be and where he is now, and in this way we can improve his quality of life. (Sagi)

Quality of life is a perception. To me having a person and seeing him for one moment without the circumstances, without what is happening at a specific moment around him; to see what could have happened, what could have happened with him. What stops these could-haves from existing, and what can we do to treat these splits. I mean, as a result of this, it is basically possible to look at every person as a whole world. It does not matter if this person is a teacher at school or a student. (Yaron)

In order to make these perceptions a reality, school managers seek to choose team members with specific characteristics and attributes.

Second Theme: Managers' Preference for Team Members

The Bet Eckstein managers interviewed hold two main preferences regarding the team necessary to implement the Quality of Life model:
a) Team members have the qualities of social entrepreneurs
b) Team members are young

Creating and effectively implementing the Quality of Life model through systems of supports to advance, open and enrich the pupils requires the team to be both attentive to the pupils' situation and wellbeing and to be inventive and innovative. The flexibility necessary to do this often involves willingness to change the system if necessary. According to Dees (1998), these qualities are the qualities of social entrepreneurs. Without them, it will not be possible to realize the Quality of Life concept.

a) Preference for team members with qualities of social entrepreneurs

The school managers reported looking for team members with qualities of social entrepreneurs: tolerant people who are able to deal with trial and error, bold, emotionally strong, with a spark in their eyes; willing to learn and with strong faith in what they are doing and in other people.

I need tolerant people, people with lots and lots of tolerance. There were teachers working in my school who did not know how to translate the harsh 'dictionary' of the pupils and then they used to act very harshly, very incautiously, irresponsibly, and in a way that did not understand that the needs of these pupils are completely different from what we think. They are not a regular population. And I am also looking for teachers who are willing to have a learning process. Not ones that say they know it all. I much prefer ones who do not know and want to learn, patient people, containing and loving, very loving, and people who have brightness in their eyes. (Avi)

Emphasizing the tolerance necessary for the team's work in understanding diverse and often unacceptable behaviors reflects processes with ups and

downs, in much the same way that social entrepreneurs deal with growth and withdrawal sequences (Filion, 1998). Faith is also mentioned as one of the main qualities of the entrepreneur, and is described by Schumpeter (1965) as willingness to take a risk.

It seems to me that here there is huge faith in these children. All of them have learning disabilities and it is possible to have a lot of work with them and to do many things with them. (Yaron)

Indeed, faith is mentioned by several researchers (Schumpeter, 1965; Dees, 1998; Outcalt, 2000; Carreea & Thurik, 2002) who describe the social entrepreneur as a person with the following qualities: willing to take risks and takes risks, works with uncertainty, has fire in his eyes, pursues new possibilities, and takes brave action regardless of limited resources.

The human resource is Beit Ekstein's biggest value – it is the chemistry between loving people who have faith in others, loving the children, believing in them, being empathetic and compassionate – people that are willing, day in and day out, to go into very intense emotional storms. (Sagi)

Researchers describe entrepreneurs as being first and foremost creative people, attentive to processes occurring around them, and creating other processes (Schumpeter, 1965; Dees, 1998; Outcalt, 2000; Carreea & Thurik, 2002). Likewise, the managers interviewed emphasized the importance of creativity while working with special education pupils.

It is important for me that these people will be creative, truly creative, that they will be willing to step outside the box, people that have the fire to realize their dreams. This is the place to make dreams a reality. (Avi)
Creativity is not only for art in school but also for how to approach a child, how to approach a problem, how to approach a conversation with parents, how to approach a class… I mean, people are creative here. It means I have teachers here whose solutions to situations are not always usual. Sometimes they are, but sometimes they are very unusual, sometimes they go against any kind of logic. Sometimes they even go against the law or the Ministry of Education regulations. It is as if these are things that should not be done, but they are simply the right things to do. (Yaron)

With a need for team members holding an entrepreneurial attitude, relatively free from fixed patterns set in previous school work experience, the managers often prefer to hire young and even inexperienced people. With an open attitude, unlimited by concepts of educational regulations and how schools should work, these teachers are willing to take on more responsibilities than average teachers in the education system, to use all their qualities and skills to do their job in the best possible way.

b) Preference for young team members

All the school managers reported that the team members they typically seek to hire are young, in their twenties, some even newly graduated from college. They added that from their experience, experienced teachers, or

ones who have worked for many years in the education system, are fixed in their ways and less willing to make changes, take risks and step out of their comfort zone. They emphasized that younger teachers accept the high demands of the job because they come with almost no expectations about the nature of their position and are not attached to specific educational approaches. These young recruits are willing to learn, change, take risks, be involved 24 hours a day, invest time and energy to pursue new possibilities to reach goals and move forward. All of these qualities are those of social entrepreneurs, matching the conclusions presented in Dees' research (1998), and hence they are ideal team members to implement the Quality of Life approach.

> *The staff members are very young. Most of them come to us straight after college. They are just starting their way.* (Avi)
> *The staff consists of very young people. I am one of the elders here. Tomorrow I will turn 34! It is as if I am an outsider here age-wise. We have different ways of thinking here, some kind of devotion that has nothing to do with anything.* (Yaron)
> *Most of the staff members are young. Why? First, I think this is a common thing in all of our schools. It is very hard for a teacher who taught in governmental schools to fit in here, because here there is some kind of very big expectation for involvement around the clock, around the student's life.* (Sagi)

According to the Bet Eckstein special education school managers interviewed, the process of recruiting teachers is a unique experience. The schools themselves hold many challenges: limited resources, pupils with diverse and complex special needs, long hours and more. Thus, the managers look for teachers who are interested in exploring new paths, educators that seek to meet and pursue new possibilities to reach goals, and are prepared to step out of their comfort zone to do it. Working with the Quality of Life model provides a sturdy framework for these young and entrepreneurial minded teachers to bring themselves in all their creativity and flexibility. It is almost as if one element feeds the other and the spark which the managers see in the eyes of their newly recruited teachers is the same spark that shines when a pupil succeeds, when something changes in his or her quality of life, when the faith that they hold is rewarded.

5. Discussion

In order to present the relationship between the Quality of Life approach and the recruiting practice of Beit Ekstein special education school managers, the discussion will show how previous theoretical research included in the literature survey has influenced the role and perceptions of school managers, and affected the criteria of the team members which the managers seek to hire.

Concerning the role of school managers, Bar-Haim et al. (2011) and Macdonald (1996) presented the concept of Total Quality Management, where the client's needs are at the center of the school's attention. In

the findings, Yaron mentions how he "looks at every person as a whole world". Moreover, Bright, Turesky, Putzel and Stang (2012) talk about the importance of a systemic vision while relating to the learning organization, which deals with changing environments and more, just as Anat talks about "the organization model acting as a central axis", and Sagi shares how he thinks that the Quality of Life approach "which is very wide and open for interpretation allows our school managers to interpret it in the way they think is best".

Regarding the recruitment and leadership of their teams, Fiedler and House write in Gaziel (2000) that one of the major roles of school managers is to create a solid work environment that learns from actions and develops an organizational culture. Avi presents wanting to recruit teachers who are open to learning processes and do not feel that they "know it all". Since organizational culture includes language which is central to the Quality of Life approach, all the school managers mentioned it in their interviews. As Avi says, "It is not 100% but it is our aspiration. We generally speak in this language".

Drucker (1985) brings an important new concept to school management, where teachers are perceived as innovators and entrepreneurs, whose value is understood to advance social and educational goals. Avi puts it very clearly: "It is important for me that these people will be creative, truly creative, that they will be willing to step outside the box". Yemini (2014) shows the similarities between social entrepreneurs and their business entrepreneur counterparts, including qualities such as innovativeness and taking risks.

Adopting the belief presented by Cilliers & Koortzen (2000), the Beit Ekstein organization encourages its school managers to bring themselves in all aspects, thereby fulfilling their potential while having a direct and indirect impact on all school employees and pupils. To do this, the managers need like-minded teams to work with, people with flexibility and creativity. As Yaron points out, "I have teachers here whose solutions to situations are not always usual. Sometimes they are, but sometimes they are very unusual, sometimes they go against any kind of logic". This way of dealing with situations and changing environments also connects to the concept of social enterprise in education which is researched by Gordon (2005) and Bornstein & Davis (2010), who characterize education as having a lack of resources on the one hand, but a big potential for growth and return of investment on the other through the pupils' success. Sagi mentions the school team as highly significant in this process, "The human resource is Beit Ekstein's biggest value".

There is no doubt that the results of this research clarify that Beit Ekstein special education school managers perceive a direct connection between the organizational approach of working with the Quality of Life model and the need for team members holding the characteristics of social entrepreneurs. The school managers perceive creativity, passion, faith, patience and seeing

the pupil as a whole person as necessary criteria for team work at their schools, therefore affecting the personnel they seek to hire.

It is important to note that this research has methodological limitations. First, only four of the organization's school managers were interviewed. It is possible that there is a bigger differentiation amongst the other school managers regarding the application of the Quality of Life approach in recruiting practice in their schools. Second, the interviews were taken only from the school managers' perspective and no attention was brought to the perspectives of other relevant parties, such as parents, teachers, and more. Therefore, future studies should consider interviewing other parties and examining how the different attitudes relate to this issue.

Finally, it is important to point out that since the research methodology used in this research is qualitative, it is subject to the researcher's subjective interpretation. Future studies may aim to validate the findings in quantitative tools that are less subjected to the researcher's inflection.

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