

**Strengthening Students' Emotional and Social Aspects:
Parental Attitudes to Educational Goals in Normal
Circumstances and Following the Events of October 7th in
Israel¹**

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Abstract

This article traces parents' attitudes regarding educational goals both in normal circumstances and in times of crisis. It presents findings from data collected in 2023 a few weeks after the outbreak of the horrifying October 7th events in Israel, concerning the degree of importance that parents attribute to various educational goals. These findings were compared to previous data, collected in 2021. A quantitative questionnaire was administered to a diverse sample of 502 participants from the Jewish population in Israel. They were also presented with an open question. The findings indicate that in 2021, parents ranked imparting knowledge and improving educational achievements as the most important educational goals. However, at the height of the crisis following the October 7th events, they ranked strengthening emotional and social skills and developing tolerance as the most important educational goals. Strengthening democratic values and Jewish identity were ranked as the goals with the lowest importance. The research conclusions point to a trend of a shift in parents' attitudes

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regarding educational goals, in which the emphasis has shifted towards the social and emotional aspects. This position is consistent with the recommendations of experts in Israel and around the world regarding the desired educational goals in the current era. Considering this, it is important to strengthen the knowledge and professional skills of educators regarding the social and emotional aspects of students – both in normal circumstances and especially in times of crisis – thereby also strengthening their constructive partnership with the parents in these aspects.

Keywords: educational goals, parents' attitudes, crisis, trust, hysteresis.

Introduction

The current study was conducted shortly after the outbreak of the horrific events of October 7th, 2023, when Hamas terrorists invaded communities in southern Israel and committed brutal massacres, including the kidnapping of hundreds of civilians – women, men and children – to Gaza. These events ignited the Israel-Gaza war, which was underway when this research was being conducted: Israel was under extensive missile attacks, frequent alarms were sounding across the country, and hundreds of thousands of residents of the south and north were evacuated from their homes. Citizens were filled with a sense of deep emotional upheaval, unprecedented loss and uncertainty, which was expressed in shock and anger that various civil groups directed at the government and security forces. Even before the outbreak of the war, Israeli society experienced a deep civil fracture, which undermined the trust of broad social groups in the state's systems. This crisis of trust continues to threaten Israel's social stability and its character. The study's starting point is derived

from classic sociological perspectives, which see the degree of trust of individuals and groups in the education system and its goals as a reflection of general civil trust (Borgonovi, 2012; Uslaner, 2012). However, situations of civil crisis in general and war conflict in particular are liable to change the degree of civil trust and thereby to indicate a demand by individuals and groups to reshape and reformulate the goals of education (Davies, 2004).

The issue of educational goals has occupied many thinkers throughout history (e.g., Avinun, 2002; Lamm, 1972, 2002; Postman, 1998; Peters, 1973; Noddings, 2003). It is considered an issue of enormous importance in order to focus educational activity, its direction and its evaluation (Avinun, 2002; Harpaz, 2004).

In line with the ecological approach, according to which the child is surrounded by many circles of influence (Bronfenbrenner, 1986), it is now known that both environments – the educational and family surroundings – have significant implications for children's development (Noy, 2014). Therefore, it is important to promote a constructive partnership between educational staff and parents regarding educational goals. In order to do so, it is necessary to better understand parents' views on educational goals, and empirical knowledge on this aspect is lacking.

Moreover, the current study also seeks to expand knowledge about parents' attitudes regarding the goals of education both in normal circumstances and in extreme situations, that is, at a critical historical point of time in a deep civil and security crisis, in which attitudes tend to change or become clearer and more nuanced. Understanding these attitudes in normal circumstances and after

October 7th will help to strengthen the parents' constructive partnership with educational staff on this issue for the best advancement of students.

Theoretical Background

The Goals of Education

The goals of education are defined as support for the development of individuals so that they can develop society while preserving human rights and economic development (Husremović & Koso-Drljević, 2021). Although the distinction between aims or goals and tasks or objectives is not absolute, Avinun (2002) explains that, unlike objectives, goals are inherently intangible and long-term and they connect intentions with actions.

The concept of educational goals is included in many articles and policy documents in the field of education (e.g., Flum & Kaplan, 2006; Ministry of Education, 2022; Tel-Or, 2021; Ten Dam & Volman, 2007). However, surprisingly, its definition remains somewhat vague, perhaps because the goals of education are anchored in complex normative judgments, some of which are not explicit, about who a worthy person is or what a worthy society is (Lamm, 2002). Noddings (2003) maintained that the dimension of educational goals is absent from educational discourse and Postman (1998) also claimed that there is a tendency to evade this issue and instead deal only with the level of educational means. Another criticism of educational goals is that they are often formulated in a general and vague manner and are therefore insufficient to guide actions (Peters, 1973).

The ambiguity in the context of educational goals stands in stark contrast to their great importance. Noddings argues that dealing with the goals of

education is of utmost importance, as it is, in fact, *the profound question of education: what do we aspire to achieve?* (Noddings, 2003). Harpaz (2004) also warns that educational goals are of immense importance, and adds that if they are unclear, educational activity is liable to be devoid of purpose and meaning. Goals are the cornerstones of education; they are intended to direct activity, encourage it or even evaluate it (Avinun, 2002).

Types of Educational Goals

Modernist and postmodernist sociological paradigms offer different perspectives on the goals of education. For example, the modernist functional paradigm assumes that the main goal of education is to maintain a consensus on social values. This paradigm sees change in education as a process that takes place from the outside inward through political and social steps in which the system operates. It therefore sees education as a social system whose mission is to accustom individuals to social conventions so that they can integrate into society. In contrast, the conflict paradigm sees education as a process that enables hegemonies and dominant social classes to reproduce and strengthen their power and status (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Collins, 1979; Sabbagh & Biberman-Shalev, 2014).

Dahan (2018) also argues that, according to the perception of parents and policymakers, the main goal of the education system is to provide students with knowledge and skills so that they can become part of the labor market. This is, of course, an instrumental goal that is related to the economic sphere. Dahan also asks, “What should be the goals of the education system in a multicultural society that includes religious, national and ethnic minority groups, some of which oppose liberal democratic values?” (ibid., p. 108). As part of the answer

to this question, Dahan describes the goals of education proposed by philosophers, sociologists and thinkers belonging to various schools of thought. Thus, for example, Dahan presents the liberal movement with emphasis on the ideas of Levinson and Brighthouse and the way they describe education for autonomy as the primary goal of the education system; the liberal-political movement, and within it Rawls' ideas about the goals of education with emphasis on promoting social justice; as well as the multicultural liberal movement, while referring to the four political virtues that, in Kymlicka's opinion, an educational system in a democratic society should place at the center of educational goals: (1) public climate, i.e., the ability to criticize public authority, its leaders and its institutions and the ability to participate in public debate. This includes, on the one hand, listening to and tolerating different positions and views, and on the other hand, skills of persuasion to change the views of others without using force; (2) developing a sense of justice while respecting the rights of others and a commitment to preventing and correcting injustice; (3) considerate civil courtesy, fairness and tolerance; (4) a shared sense of solidarity and belonging, i.e., promoting unity among citizens through mutual responsibility and a shared perception of belonging to the collective. Dahan also briefly addresses the goals of education for patriotism, that is, students' identification with the state and its citizens. He maintains that educational goals that emphasize patriotism promote trust between citizens and thus effectively guarantee maintenance of the social order's stability, solidarity between citizens, and in the process, upholding the principles of justice (in this context, see also Gusacov, 2017).

In his famous book *Conflicting logics in teaching*, Lamm (1972) argues that education has three ultimate goals. The first is *socialization*, meaning providing students with tools so that they can optimally become part of the society in which they live. For this purpose, the school must provide them with useful skills. The second ultimate goal is to shape the students' identity, character and behavior according to a particular cultural view and to bring about internalization of these values and perceptions, i.e., *acculturation* (cultural adaptation). The third ultimate goal is to enable each student to find what is unique and authentic for them, to realize themselves, i.e., *individuation*. Lamm's argument (ibid.) was that there is an inherent contradiction between these goals.

In continuation of Lamm's (2002) view, Zohar and Busharian (2020) maintain that two main categories can be identified in the goals of education: the first is intended to promote national, social and civic goals, such as values, social cohesion and national identity. The second category is intended to improve the quality of life and well-being of individuals, for example, how they deal with change, and is related to trends of change in awareness at this time, as criticism has been made that education for personal life, happiness and mental well-being have been neglected in the goals of education (Noddings, 2003).

Based on a review of policy documents by experts from various parts of the world, Zohar (2012) maintains that in the current period there is a clear trend of change in the goals of education: from *emphasis on knowledge of disciplines* (basic facts and skills) to *emphasis on a deep understanding of ideas and concepts that include searching, observing and learning in depth*. As a result of these changing trends, a committee of experts (Zohar & Busharian, 2020) recommended adding areas of study to schools that were not previously taught,

including financial literacy, ethics, sustainability and education for physical and mental health. Thus, according to the committee members, the goals of education will more adequately reflect the needs of students in the current era. This approach fits well with reports by other experts in Israel and around the world who call for an emphasis on non-cognitive skills, for example on the social-emotional level (e.g., Dishon & Gilead, 2021; Garcia, 2016; OECD, 2018).

The Parental Viewpoint on the Goals of Education in Normal Circumstances and in Times of Crisis

Thinkers who deal with the goals of education proceed from a normative perspective and examine educational goals as determined by policymakers but tend to pay less attention to how ordinary citizens, including students' parents, perceive the importance of various educational goals. That is, parents tend to be perceived as more passive social actors in determining educational goals (Crozier, 1999; Tveit, 2009). This view is contrary to the recommendation emphasized in the professional literature in the field, according to which, in order for schools and parents to be authentic partners in children's education, the educational system must consistently invite parents to make their voices heard, for example, by collecting ongoing data on their views and addressing them (Meier & Lemmer, 2015).

Following this recommendation, research by Sagee and Gilat (2022) examined the views of a representative sample of 405 parents from the Jewish sector in Israel regarding strategic goals of the education system. In view of the inherent ambiguity in the literature about the goals of education, the goals were selected

after in-depth discussion between the researchers and in consultation with experts in the field. In accordance with the two categories of educational goals described by Zohar and Busharian (2020) following Lamm (2002) and combined with the approach of Noddings (2003), the goals included educational aspects (imparting knowledge and improving academic achievements), values (developing tolerance and a respectful attitude to every person and love of the country), life skills (vocational training), social-emotional skills (strengthening students' self-image and social skills), and fostering a safe classroom climate (preventing violence).

It was found that 30% of respondents chose imparting knowledge and improving academic achievements as the most important goal. The goal of developing tolerance and a respectful attitude to everyone was ranked first by 22%, and 13% chose preventing violence as the first goal. Strengthening love for and commitment to the country was chosen in first place by only 3%. Placing the goal of *imparting knowledge and improving academic achievements* at the head of the scale of priorities is consistent with the educational goals of the "old world" (Zohar, 2012; Zohar & Busharian, 2020), although it should be noted that at the time of the study in 2021, only a third of parents held this view.

In any case, the pursuit of educational goals cannot be separated from the context, as the goals of education are shaped within social, political, cultural and economic realities and, in fact, are provided for education by the narratives that dominate society and saturate it with meaning (Dahan, 2018; Postman, 1998). Noddings maintains that the goals of education reflect the explicit and implicit goals of the society in which they were developed (Noddings, 2003). This aspect may be particularly prominent in times of crisis, and even more so

in the wake of powerful horrors and terror. In such situations, immediate goals related to promoting resilience and providing individuals with resources to cope with feelings of fear and uncertainty may be strengthened (Perry & Daniels, 2016). At the macro level, educational goals may be expressed in the reshaping of identity and a social narrative related to social trauma (Husremović & Koso-Drljević, 2021).

In direct connection to this, the horrific events of October 7th created a traumatic social and emotional reality, which may be reflected in the degree of trust in the education system and the perception of educational goals in the short and long term. The roots of social instability in Israel date back to the coronavirus pandemic crisis (Ariely, 2023), but intensified with the government's decision to make significant changes to the judicial system. Diverse individuals and groups in Israeli society, mostly belonging to the secular Jewish sector and the religious Jewish sector, perceived this move as an abrogation of the values of democracy, which have been the cornerstones of the state of Israel since its founding. In the spirit of functional theory, perceptions of distrust among broad groups in the population towards the government's conduct and the functioning of its institutions, and in particular the undermining of democratic values, have led to an acute social crisis, threatening the survival and stability of Israel as a state (Gidron, 2023). The sense of distrust in Israeli society, which began at the height of protests against the government's move, increased even more when the events of October 7th occurred. The distrust by individuals and groups of the institutions of the civil system and their ability to ensure their security and survival has grown stronger following the shocking attacks that resulted in the abduction and brutal

massacre of the children, women, men and elderly people living in the communities of the Gaza Envelope (or, by its new name, the "Israel Envelope"), and following the failure of state institutions, including the army, to provide a rapid response to their distress (Hermann & Einabi, 2023b). It may be possible to see the characteristics of this reality as what Alexander (2012) calls "cultural trauma." Cultural trauma occurs when individuals within a collective feel that they have been subjected to horrific events that leave indelible marks on their collective consciousness that forever direct and shape their memories and alter their future identities in fundamental and irreversible ways.

To deepen understanding of the aspect of traumatic reality and its connection to the education system, we propose adopting the term "hysteresis" in its sociological sense. This term recently became established in the context of education during the coronavirus crisis (e.g., Alam & Hoon, 2021; Graham, 2020). Hysteresis is a kind of spatial or dimensional disconnect or mismatch between structures and expectations.

The terrorist attacks of October 7th, which Israel had not experienced on such a scale in the past, undermined the perception of the state's borders and the interior of private homes as the safest and most protected places. In the reality that was created, civilians were evacuated from their homes to evacuee complexes and became like refugees in their own country. Meanwhile, the educational system's frameworks were also closed, at first throughout Israel and in the second stage only in the evacuated areas while alternatives were found. These events can be characterized as a critical, traumatic situation that created an unfamiliar reality for individuals and social groups. This situation may express hysteresis with regard to experiences and feelings of

disconnection and disorientation in the new reality, as assumptions or expectations that were self-evident before the events seem less relevant and people feel as if they are living in other times, in which there are risks on the one hand but also opportunities (Fowler, 2020). However, the institutions of the defense system, led by the Israel Defense Forces, quickly pulled themselves together and took control of the Gaza Envelope settlements, while eradicating terrorists and attempting to save and extricate civilians, thus restoring trust in this system (see the findings of the lightning survey in Hermann & Einabi 2023a; 2023b). Also, in light of the slow recovery or the dysfunction of other state institutions, including the education system, a substitute emerged of voluntary and informal civil organizations to assist citizens who have become refugees and displaced persons. In direct relation to our research, perceptions of the goals of education, which in normal circumstances tend to be spontaneously replicated while adapting to familiar structures, may change and become clearer or sharper in the newly created reality. For example, findings indicate that following the events of October 7th, the family unit of evacuated parents underwent an upheaval and crisis, alongside the development of factors of parental resilience (Meoded Karabanov & Aram, 2024). These significant changes may have implications for parents' perceptions of educational goals.

As a result, the current study seeks to examine parents' attitudes regarding the goals of education during normal times. It also seeks to examine whether the reality of the October events reflected a trend of a shift in parents' perceptions of the goals of education. Furthermore, the study seeks to provide an answer to the question: What are parents' expectations regarding the goals of

education in the period after the war? These questions will be examined in relation to the parents' demographic characteristics.

The Research Method

The main part of the study was conducted using a quantitative methodology, which enables generalization of the findings from the sample to broader populations (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The research design also included a limited qualitative component, with the aim of illuminating and deepening understanding of the quantitative findings, especially given the lack of a structured questionnaire in the field. The data used in the current study are part of broad surveys on political education conducted annually among representative samples from within the social groups belonging to the Jewish population in Israel. It should be noted that the study, in both years, did not include the Arab population in Israel, as the issues included in the questionnaire may have different meanings in the Arab population and this would undermine the validity of the comparison and necessitate a separate study.

The Research Population

In 2023, 502 respondents participated in the survey, balanced in terms of the percentages of men and women, aged 23–68, to represent a diverse sample of the adult Jewish population in Israel; 75% of the respondents have one to three children, of them, 40% have children in preschool, 64% in elementary school, 55% in high school and 4% in special education. Among the respondents, 59% have academic education and 13% work in education, 48.6% are secular, 27.9% are traditional, 13.3% religious and 10.2%

are ultra-Orthodox. Politically, 52.4% define themselves as right-wing, 37.9% as center and 9.7% as left-wing. The residential area is consistent with the "traffic light policy": 5.4% of respondents live in the red zone (no studies), 36.7% in the yellow zone (studies according to readiness), and 58% in the green zone (studies as usual). The "traffic light policy" refers to a policy implemented by the government during the war, the aim of which was to keep citizens safe while maintaining an adapted routine. The regions of Israel were divided according to their supposed level of risk. Among the respondents, 22.36% had relatives or friends who were physically harmed on October 7th. Parents were asked to relate to the educational institution which their child attends, when responding to the questionnaire: 19.9% related to preschool, 49.4% to elementary school, and 30.7% to secondary school. In 2021, 504 participants answered the questionnaire. The distribution of demographic characteristics was similar in both samples.

The Research Tool

A questionnaire was administered, based on the one conducted in 2021 and adapted to the reality of the Israel-Gaza War. The following items from the questionnaire were used in this study.

Part A – socio-demographic characteristics: gender, age, education, number of children, religious definition, political opinion, area of residence in relation to the "traffic light" policy, field of occupation (education/other), relatives who were affected by the October 7th attacks, and the school attended by the child referred to in the questionnaire.

Part B – goals that the education system should focus on: The statements that made up the original survey (Sagee & Gilat, 2022) were compiled by the researchers, due to the difficulty of finding structured questionnaires to examine the goals of education. The development was processive and included various stages, including observation of statements from studies that dealt with related topics (e.g., Allès-Jardel et al., 2002; Meier & Lemmer, 2015; Zohar & Busharian, 2020), consultation with experts and in-depth discussion among the researchers until a consensus was reached. In a similar study, a researcher-designed questionnaire was also developed (Meier & Lemmer, 2015).

In both years, the participants were presented with seven goals that the education system should focus on. Of the seven goals, five were the same for both years: imparting knowledge, developing tolerance, strengthening love of the country, strengthening social and emotional skills and preventing violence. In the 2023 questionnaire, two objectives were changed due to the Israel-Gaza War. These were: strengthening democratic values and strengthening Jewish identity. In 2021, the goals were: strengthening the students' self-image and providing vocational training for students. Participants were asked to rank the goals from the most important to least important. In order for a high value to indicate great importance, the statements were reversed, so that a choice at level 7 indicates great importance and a choice at level 1 indicates little importance.

Part C – open question: What are the most important expectations you have from the education system for the period after the war? The purpose of the open

question was to obtain clarifications and expansions from the parents in order to better understand the meaning of the quantitative findings.

The Research Process

Participants were sampled in November 2023 – about a month after the outbreak of the war – through a professional survey company. They completed the questionnaire online and anonymously in their free time using a computer or mobile phone. The questionnaire stated that they are free to not fill it out at all or not answer parts of it. The respondents received a modest financial compensation in recognition of their participation.

Data Analysis

To answer the questions, we conducted various tests using SPSS software. A repeated-measures analysis of variance was conducted, accompanied by a Bonferroni-type analysis for multiple comparisons, to examine the question: Are there differences in the perception of the importance of the various goals? To examine differences in goals in accordance with demographic characteristics of the study population, independent samples *t*-tests and ANOVA analyses of variance were conducted, accompanied by Duncan post hoc analyses to examine the source of the differences.

Qualitative data analysis was performed using deductive (etic) content analysis to shed light on the quantitative findings (Neuendorf, 2017).

Findings

The Goals of Education

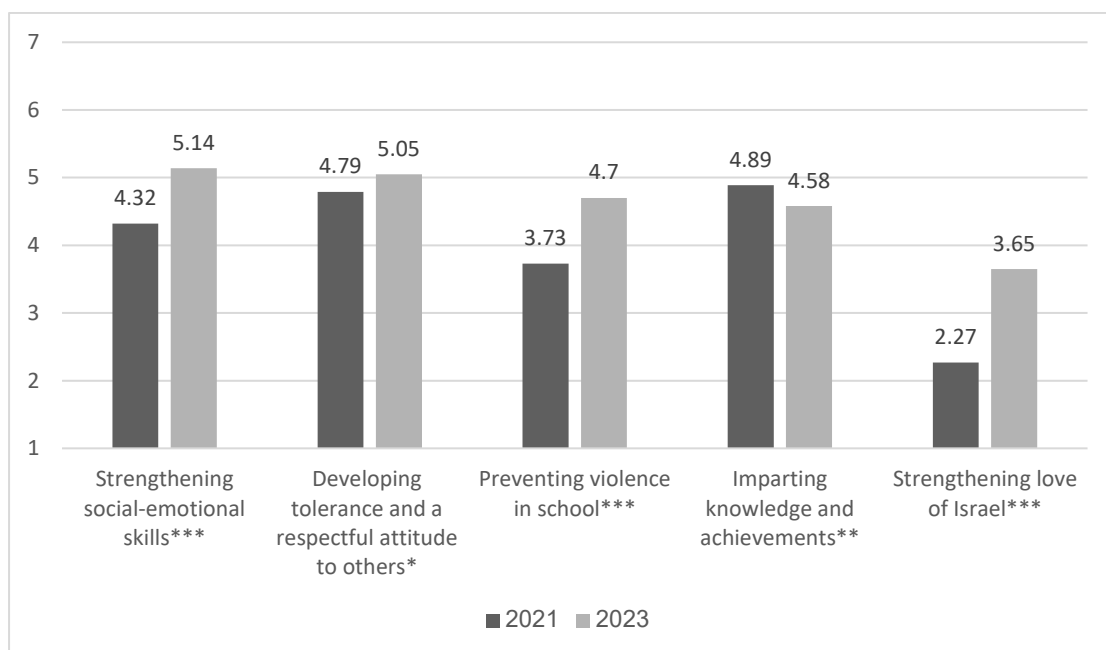
Participants were presented with seven strategic goals of the education system in normal circumstances and were asked to rank them in order of importance. In order for a high value to indicate a high level of importance, the ratings were reversed, so that 7 indicates choosing the most important goal and 1 indicates choosing the least important goal. The findings only show the five common goals for the two years. Figure 1 describes the findings of *t*-tests comparing the findings in 2023 – the period of the October events – to 2021. Table 1 shows the quantitative findings in detail.

**Table 1: The Degree of Importance of Five Goals of the Education System:
The Percentage Who Chose the Highest Importance, Averages of
Choices, Standard Deviations and T-Values in 2021 and 2023**

	2023 (N = 502)				2021 (N = 504)				t values
Goal	% who choose the most important	Mean	Standard Deviation		% who choose the most important	Mean	Standard Deviation		Cohen's d effect size
Developing tolerance and respect for every person	27.7	5.05	1.80		22.2	4.79	1.80	*2.29	0.14
Preventing violence in school	17.3	4.70	1.75		13.4	3.73	1.93	***8.34	0.52
Strengthening students' social and emotional skills	18.1	5.14	1.44		9.4	4.32	1.65	***8.39	0.53
Strengthening love for and commitment to Israel	4.6	3.65	1.57		2.9	2.27	1.67	***13.50	0.85

Imparting	24.3	4.58	1.84	28.9	4.89	1.85	**2.66	0.16
knowledge								
and improving								
academic								
achievements								

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$



* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

**Figure 1: The Importance of Five Educational Goals (Scale of 1-7):
Comparison between 2021 and 2023**

The table and diagram show an increase in the perception of the various goals over the years, except for the goal describing the acquisition of knowledge and achievements, for which the perception of its importance has decreased. It should be noted that the effect size, as shown in Table 1, indicates that the

significant changes in the goals of developing tolerance and acquiring knowledge stem from the sample size.

To answer the question of whether there are differences in the perception of the importance of the seven different goals, a repeated-measures analysis of variance was conducted, accompanied by a Bonferroni-type analysis for multiple comparisons. Differences were obtained in the ranking of the aspects ($F(6,496) = 199.44, p < .001$) resulting from the fact that strengthening social-emotional skills and developing tolerance were perceived as more important goals than all the others, and strengthening democratic values and Jewish identity were the lowest. The averages (range 1–7) are shown in Figure 2.

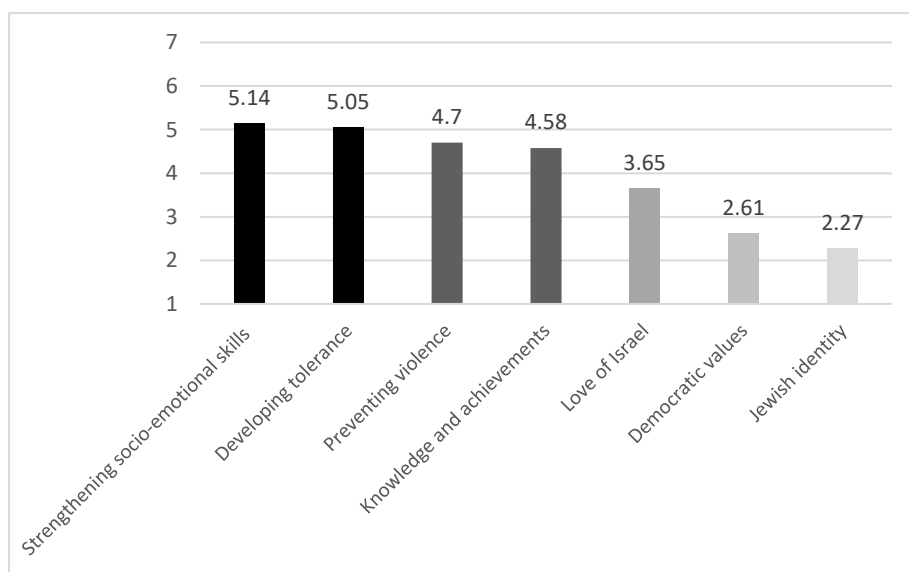


Figure 2: Perception of the Importance of the Various Goals (2023)

The open question addressed parents' expectations of the education system for the period after the war, and parents were asked to relate to the expectations that were most important to them. Below are some quotes from what they said:

Strengthening the children socially and emotionally: "To strengthen the children's resilience, cohesion"; "To provide a safe environment for social

connections, a study routine, promote communication skills and deepen the emotional connection between the children"; "Emotional support for the children"; "They should know how to support children emotionally and socially and not focus solely on academic excellence and achievements, especially in elementary school."

Developing tolerance for different opinions: "To teach them to accept other opinions, more connection between secular, religious and ultra-Orthodox"; "To place more emphasis on dialogue and good behavior"; "To teach more about unity, acceptance of others, respect and values that have been lost"; "More tolerance and respect for each other, it is possible to express different opinions and recognize each other's rights, but not to cause inflammatory discourse or fight about it."

Preventing violence: "To give children personal safety from violence"; "To calm all violent discourse"; "To educate students to be tolerant and reject violence as a course of action."

Reinforcing knowledge and academic achievements: "To provide extra study hours"; "To close academic gaps. The children do not have a command of the material and they are a long way behind in their studies"; "From an academic point of view, adapt the study material to the time remaining until the end of the year. Shorten the vacations and complete the material. Quality learning, to close the gaps."

Strengthening love of Israel: "Education for love of Israel and meaningful service in the army"; "To instill values in students with an emphasis on love of the country"; "To learn more about the right of the Jewish people to the land of Israel."

It is important to note that approximately 21% of those who define themselves as religious referred to this aspect in the open-ended answer, while the proportion of the remaining respondents who referred to this aspect was less than 2%.

Strengthening democratic values: "To emphasize the values of democracy and the importance of a strong judicial system. To eliminate racism"; "Education for democracy and citizenship"; "Democratic, social education. "Education for values exactly as was expected before the war"; "To strengthen understanding of how important democracy is to the future of the country." "To teach the values of equality, democracy, love for others, tolerance"; "To promote liberal democratic values, recognition of the values of liberal Judaism, Middle Eastern studies and Arabic as a compulsory language, to encourage conscription/national service in all sectors."

It is important to note that approximately 13% of those who define themselves as secular referred to democratic values, while the proportion of the remaining respondents who referred to this aspect was less than one percent.

Strengthening Jewish identity: "To strengthen Jewish identity and unite the Jewish people"; "To emphasize our being the Jewish people and to strive to deepen the history of the Jewish people among students."

Differences in Educational Goals in Relation to Sociodemographic Characteristics

Gender – differences were found regarding: *developing tolerance and a respectful attitude* ($t(500) = 2.29$; $p < .05$), the differences stem from the higher importance that women attribute to this goal; *strengthening social-emotional*

skills ($t(500) = 3.14, p < .01$), the differences stem from the higher importance that women attribute to this goal; *imparting knowledge and achievements* ($t(500) = 1.95, p < .05$), the differences stem from the higher importance that men attribute to this goal; *strengthening love of the country* ($t(500) = 2.29, p < .05$), the differences stem from the greater importance that men attribute to this goal; *strengthening Jewish identity* ($t(500) = 2.40, p < 0.1$), the differences stem from the greater importance that men attribute to this goal; the averages are shown in Figure 3.

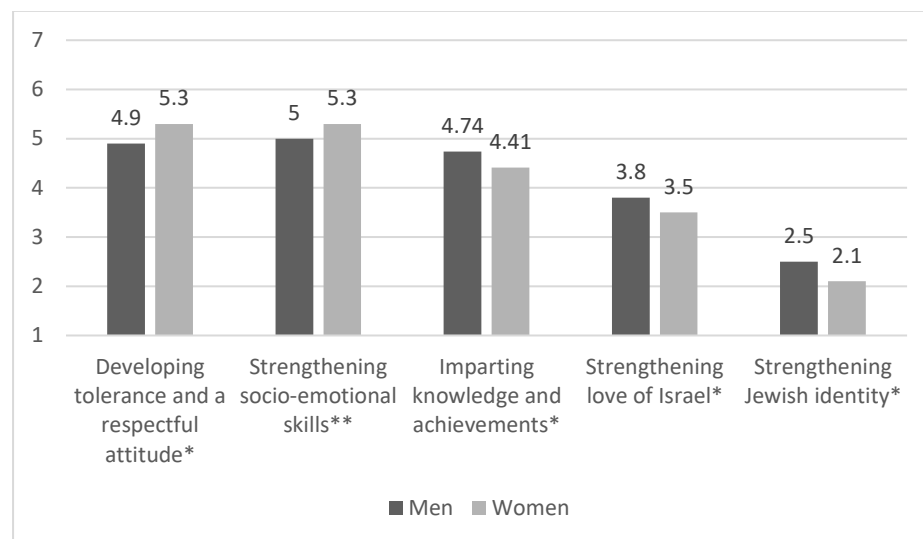


Figure 3: Educational Goals in Relation to Gender (2023)

The figure shows that men attribute greater importance to national goals and knowledge and women to social goals (developing tolerance and a respectful attitude).

Religious affiliation – in ANOVA analyses of variance accompanied by Duncan post-hoc analyses to identify the source of the differences, differences were obtained in the following goals: *developing tolerance and a respectful attitude* ($F(3,498) = 3.07, p < .05$); The differences derive from the fact that the

importance of the goal in the view of secular people is higher than in the view of religious people. *Preventing violence* ($F(3,498) = 4.22, p < .01$); the differences derive from the fact that traditional and secular Jews perceive this goal as more important than religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews. *Strengthening democratic values* ($F(3,498) = 13.24, p < .001$); the differences derive from the fact that traditional and secular Jews perceive this goal as more important than religious and ultra-Orthodox Jews. *Strengthening love of the country* ($F(3,498) = 14.16, p < .001$); the differences derive from the fact that the religious and traditional Jews perceive this goal as more important than the secular or ultra-Orthodox Jews. *Strengthening Jewish identity* ($F(3,498) = 28.24, p < .001$); the scale of perceived importance is ultra-Orthodox > religious > traditional > secular. The averages are shown in Figure 4.

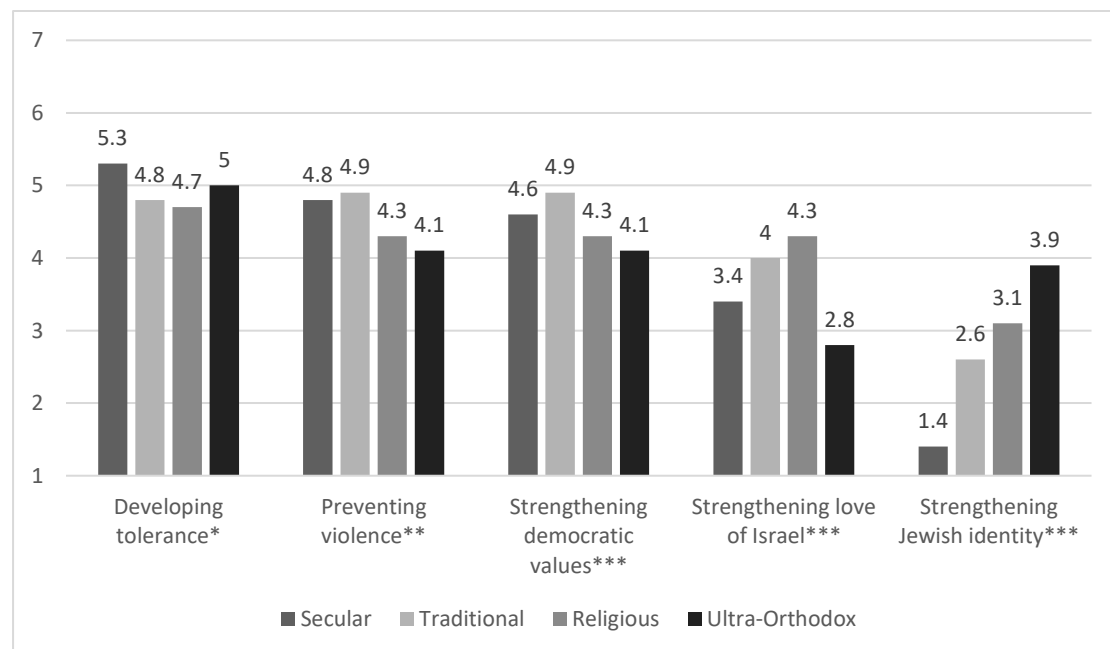


Figure 4: Educational Goals in Relation to Religious Affiliation (2023)

The findings indicate that secular and traditional Jews value social-liberal goals such as developing tolerance, preventing violence and strengthening democratic values. For religious and traditional Jews, the national goal of strengthening love of the country is important, and the national goal of strengthening Jewish identity is important for the ultra-Orthodox.

Political view – in ANOVA analyses of variance accompanied by Duncan post-hoc analyses to identify the source of the differences, differences were obtained in the following goals: *developing tolerance and a respectful attitude* ($F(2,480) = 8.69, p < .001$), the differences arise from the fact that the importance of this goal in the view of left-wingers and those in the center is higher than the importance given to it by right-wingers; *strengthening social and emotional skills* ($F(2,480) = 5.66, p < .01$), differences derive from the fact that left-wingers perceive this goal as more important than right-wingers; *strengthening democratic values* ($F(2,480) = 27.79, p < .001$), the differences arise from the fact that left-wingers perceive this goal as more important than people in the center or the right wing; *strengthening love of the country* ($F(2,480) = 25.73, p < .001$), the differences derive from the fact that right-wingers perceive this goal as more important than those in the center or the left wing; *strengthening Jewish identity* ($F(2,480) = 19.16, p < .001$), the scale of perceived importance is right wing > center and left wing). The averages are shown in Figure 5.

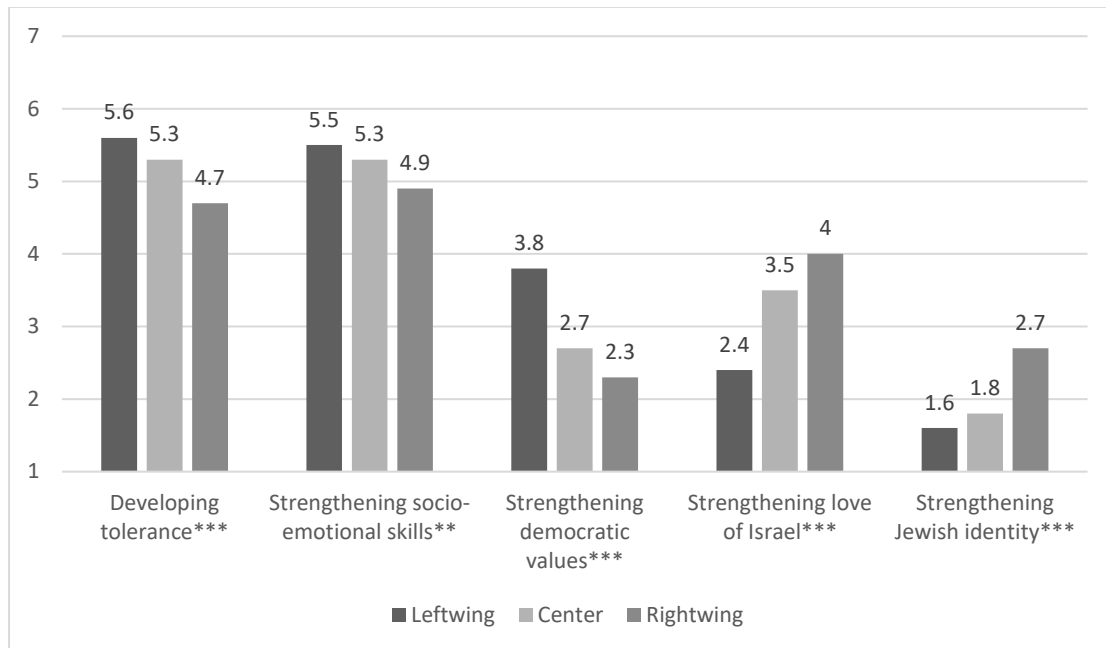


Figure 5: Educational Goals in Relation to Political Views (2023)

The findings indicate that people with a left-center perspective value the social-liberal goals of developing tolerance and strengthening social-emotional skills. For left-wingers, the social-liberal goal of strengthening democratic values is important. For right-wingers, the national goals of strengthening love of the country and strengthening Jewish identity are important.

Discussion and Conclusions

The goals of education reflect the social and cultural context in which they are shaped (Dahan, 2018; Postman, 1998). Because there is a lack of knowledge about parents' opinions regarding the educational goals they see as desirable, and because becoming familiar with parents' opinions on educational processes is of great importance in order to create a constructive educational partnership (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; Meier & Lemmer, 2015), this study focused on exploring their views. Parents' attitudes regarding educational goals were

examined during normal circumstances and during a crisis, and a comparison was made between these two points of time. The parents' views were also examined in relation to their demographic characteristics. Their expectations of the education system after the war were also examined.

While in normal times, the parents' view was that the most important goal of education is to impart knowledge and improve academic achievements, at the height of the crisis the view of most parents was that the central and most important educational goals are to strengthen children's social-emotional skills and develop tolerance. This finding is consistent with the findings of a study conducted before the war, according to which a large proportion of parents perceive the ideal teacher as someone who is responsible for the students' social-emotional aspects (Korem & Alfi-Shabtay, 2023). This reflects the trends of change that experts point to regarding the goals of education at this time, namely, the alignment between these opinions of parents and the 21st century skills that are emphasized by experts in Israel and around the world as important in a changing and unpredictable world, and chiefly the emphasis on social-emotional skills (Dishon & Gilead, 2021; Noddings, 2003; OECD, 2018; Zohar, 2012; Zohar & Busharian, 2020). According to Lamm's classic diagnosis of the ultimate goals of education (1972), it can be cautiously suggested that the scales tip toward the ultimate goals of *socialization* (development of emotional and social skills) and *individuation* (development of the individual).

It is possible that the war could be seen as a catalyst for this trend in Israel. During the crisis, a decrease was presented in the importance of the goal of *promoting learning*. In other words, quite predictably, the main goal of the education system – promoting learning – was replaced in the midst of the crisis

with a goal that emphasizes providing social-emotional support to children. Apparently, this goal expresses the children's need, which the parents identified, and the parents' perception of the education system as a helpful element in this context. However, it appears that parents' level of trust in the ability of educational institutions to provide emotional support to children is mediocre. This must be taken into account (Biberman-Shalev et al. 2025). It is interesting in this context that developing tolerance was also presented as an important goal during the crisis. It is possible that the parents made a connection between the October events and the intolerance and violence that preceded them. Consequently, they saw promoting tolerance and preventing violence as an important goal of the system at the local Israeli level. These goals have a direct connection to the characteristics of social instability, and it seems that parents see the education system as a mechanism for strengthening social stability and cohesion (Zaichenko & Kozhemiako, 2021). The least importance was attributed to educational goals – strengthening democratic values and Jewish identity – that is, the category of *acculturation* in the ultimate goals described by Lamm (1972; 2002; Zohar & Busharian, 2020). This perspective may reflect the parents' degree of trust in the state as a system and the sense of despair that enveloped them during this period in relation to the values it represents. However, it is worth noting that in the midst of the October events, the importance of promoting national goals, such as love of the country, increased compared to the importance that parents attributed to it during normal times. It is possible that the events caused parents belonging to the various sectors to entrench themselves in their positions and see the other positions as the cause of the events and, directly, the need to refocus the goals

of the education system. Another interpretation of this finding may be related to the fact that in normal circumstances, countries characterized by democratic values tend to support the resolution of national conflicts and peace agreements (Dixon, 1994); however, it is possible that the state of hysteresis following the October events undermined the perception of reality and the ability to establish peace and pushed the promotion of democratic values to the margins.

The findings also indicated that parents whose views are left wing or center and parents who define themselves as secular consider the social-liberal goals of developing tolerance and strengthening social-emotional skills important. Traditional and secular parents view the goal of preventing violence as more important compared to religious or ultra-Orthodox parents. Parents whose political stance is left wing and traditional or secular parents consider the social-liberal goal of strengthening democratic values more important compared to religious or ultra-Orthodox parents. For right-wingers, the national goals of strengthening love of the country and strengthening Jewish identity are important. These goals are also more important to religious and ultra-Orthodox parents than to traditional and secular ones. These findings reflect the complexity in addressing educational goals, which is not always apparent (Lamm, 2002), and the multicultural picture that characterizes Israeli society, including the sectoral division of education systems in a multicultural society which seek to promote different educational goals (Dahan, 2018; Feniger et al., 2022). Another interpretation is that it is possible that the extremes in the parents' political positions created the low importance indices for the goals of promoting democratic values on the one hand and promoting Jewish identity

on the other, while goals without political affiliation, such as social-emotional support and promoting tolerance and preventing violence, were presented as more important by parents from both ends of the political spectrum. It is fitting that further research will deepen the understanding of this context between education, religion, and politics in relation to parental views of educational goals.

Unsurprisingly, the research findings indicated that men attributed greater importance to educational goals that emphasize national advancement, compared to women who attributed greater importance to social goals (developing tolerance and a respectful attitude). This distinction is prevalent in many sociological studies that deal with differences within the gender category. These distinctions tend to be attributed to the perception of women as reproducing their gender-social role to establish peace and tolerance, while men reproduce their national-military gender-social role. In this sense, it may be possible to argue that women construct the reality of the crisis in a different voice than men and therefore attach importance to educational goals that support their perceptions (Cockburn, 2013; Gilligan, 1982). It is also possible that women's perception is more locally focused than men's (see, for example, Coffé, 2013), although there is also empirical evidence that contradicts this interpretation (Tessler & Warriner, 1997).

It is worth noting the limitations of the research. First, it was conducted primarily using a quantitative methodology to enable generalization of the findings and conclusions to a broad population. Consequently, the qualitative component is secondary and therefore does not provide a broad or rich enough foundation for deepening the understanding of the quantitative findings. Moreover, the

questionnaire was developed for the purpose of this study and therefore does not encompass the entire complex structure of educational goals, which is vague by nature. Furthermore, there are several differences between the versions of the questionnaires submitted on the two dates. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct follow-up research based on focus groups of parents in order to examine their perception of the goals of education, as also suggested by Meier and Lemmer (2015) in their study conducted in a similar setting. In addition, the study only included the Jewish population and should be expanded to include the Arab population.

Implications of the Research and Educational Staff–Parent Relationships

As a result of understanding the goals of education during a crisis in the view of parents, teacher training should emphasize developing the sense of efficacy of educational staff to provide children with a socially and emotionally supportive environment in normal circumstances, and even more so in a crisis. The findings of the current study clearly revealed that parents see the educational staff as a significant source of providing social-emotional support for their children during war. This aspect was expressed in the great importance that parents attached to this goal with the outbreak of the October 7th events. Therefore, educational staff should be exposed to these role expectations expressed by parents. Beyond understanding expectations as a means of strengthening trust between both parties, it is important to equip educational staff with tools that will enable the promotion of social-emotional resilience both in normal times and in a crisis. In this context, it is important to develop a proactive approach among educators, in which the education system will be

prepared for unexpected crisis scenarios whose characteristics differ from one another. We propose establishing such an approach among educational staff to strengthen and preserve social-emotional resilience already during their training by developing curricula related to teaching and learning in times of crisis. Therefore, the professional knowledge and skills of educators on the emotional and social aspects of students must be developed and strengthened (Tal, 2019). Moreover, the study emphasizes the need to strengthen and foster the partnership between educators and parents on nurturing social and emotional aspects (Korem, 2024; Spence, 2023). The constructive partnership between educational staff and parents on these aspects will constitute a proactive resilience resource in future crisis situations.

With regard to promoting social cohesion, the research findings indicate the connection between educational goals and political or sectoral affiliation. The education system in Israel is divided into several separate sectors: the state (secular) education system, the state-religious system and the ultra-Orthodox system. Each of the sectors maintains unique characteristics in terms of their educational worldview, subjects studied and cultural emphases. This division reflects broad cultural and social differences in Israeli society that may be related to diverse attitudes and perceptions regarding the goals of education.

Different systems are liable to promote goals in accordance with the needs of the groups being educated in them. Alongside this, it is important to identify and promote common goals for all education sectors in order to increase trust in state systems and strengthen the stability and social cohesion that are important in normal times and especially in times of crisis. In this context, all education sectors in Israel must place aspects of global education at the center

of their activities, with an emphasis on promoting understanding, respect and cooperation between the various social groups that coexist in Israel (Biberman-Shalev, 2021).

In conclusion, by leveraging insights related to the findings of the current study and in combination with future research, education policymakers and educators will be able to more effectively navigate the challenges posed by crises and conflicts, and in doing so, harness the transformative power of education for constructive partnership with parents regarding educational goals, thereby promoting student well-being.

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