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## **Collaborative and Traditional Practice-models as Perceived by Preservice Teachers: The Potential Impact of Culture**

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*Abstract: A differential cultural aspect manifested when we compared the experiences of 96-Jewish and 107-Arab PSTs who participated in a collaborative academy-class-practice- model (ACPM), or a traditional-practice-model (TPM). The attempt to implement the collaborative ACPM was hesitantly accepted by Jewish-PSTs, whereas the Arab-PSTs welcomed it warmly. This led us to question whether culture played a role in the groups' perceptions of the ACPM\TPM. A mixed methods questionnaire has been used to examine PSTs' pedagogical knowledge, the perceived benefits they gained during the practicum, and the importance they attributed to the advice of staff members and peers. Although the PSTs from both groups assessed the knowledge variable to be higher in the ACPM than in the TPM, an opposite trend in the benefit dimension was revealed when comparing the experience of ACPM\TPM. The potential cultural impact of collaboration, involvement, and self-consideration as perceived by the two societies is discussed.*

### **Introduction**

#### **Cultural Diversity in Israel's Education System**

The education system in Israel deals with the linguistic complexities of multiculturalism related to differences of language and dialect, as well as with a range of issues related to behavioural norms and societal patterns (Azaiza, 2006). This complexity of cultural characteristics is seen as part of the struggle for social justice in education, and thus also in teacher practice. It is a universal issue linked to the PSTs' national, cultural, religious, and linguistic identity (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2014), which is also evident at teacher-education colleges.

The Arab society in Israel has a traditional, collective, and conservative orientation, even though it has undergone some degree of modernisation, while in the Jewish culture, traditional-hierarchical is a less predominant cultural characteristic (Azaiza, 2006). Ilaiyan, Zedan and Toren (2007) asserted that in Arab society, economic motives for choosing a profession prevail, because of the desire to join the larger Jewish labour market. Hence, the professions of medicine and education are in high demand. However, there are also internal reasons for choosing the teaching profession, such as intellectual development, creativity, a sense of enjoyment, satisfaction, and social commitment, while the most decisive factors are family and society.

Conversely, Jewish PSTs typically demonstrate a low demand for the teaching profession; rather, internal motivations, such as creativity, intellectual development, and social commitment are the principal factors that drive those who choose it (Blass, 2010). The study conducted by Blass found that since the year 2000, there has been a decrease of about 24% in the number of Jewish PSTs in state-run, teacher education institutions, as opposed to an increase of 32% in the number of Arab PSTs in similar institutions. Relative to the size of the Arab society in Israel, Arab students are under-represented in all higher education institutions, except for teacher-education institutions, where they are over-represented. Nevertheless, there are several obstacles that adversely affect the educational experience of Arab PSTs, such as the absence of equitable physical infrastructure and economic hardships. Moreover, teacher-education programmes lack a specialisation framework to enrich and enhance the Arab PSTs' knowledge of and skills for teaching the cultural heritage of the Arab minority in Israel. Despite having a separate school system that caters to the Arab population, there is no representative body with an autonomous and systemic perspective of Arab education that can serve this population (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2014).

The ACPM is the outcome of a joint initiative of the school system and the academic administration and there was funding for both Jewish and Arab teacher-education colleges to partake in this initiative.

## **Literature Review**

### **Collaboration within Culture**

Teacher collaboration is currently an important topic of research related to teaching and teacher education (Lee, 2018). Researchers have studied the effects of collaboration in different contexts: in the relationship between PSTs and teacher educators (TEs) and its effect on the PSTs' learning process (Tillema & Orland-Barak, 2006); in relationships among teachers and its effect on the planning and conducting of lessons; and in the relationship between teachers and academic researchers and its effect on curricular design (Chen, Cone & Cone, 2007). Collaboration projects that included inservice teachers have been shown to enhance learning and social support among PSTs (Seifert & Manzuk, 2006), and to encourage learners to be self-critical while promoting deep learning strategies (Lee, 2018). However, studies have also identified challenges inherent to collaboration, as the effects of conflict, commitment, control, respect, and individual differences (Seifert & Manzuk, 2006) can be crucial to the success or failure of the collaboration.

In this study, the collaborative activity implemented during the PSTs' practicum involved a joint problem-solving task, which the researchers designed as a cultural process that develops over time. The definition of "culture" adopted in this study is based on Hofstede's (1984, 260) "...Collective programming..., which distinguishes the members of one human group from another." Hofstede suggested that culture is comprised of five dimensions (power-distance index, individualism versus collectivism, masculinity versus femininity, the uncertainty avoidance index, and long-term orientation versus short-term normative), which we assumed could also shed light on the differences between a hierarchical-traditional culture and a collaborative culture. However, it should be noted that an individual's practices involving a task component would be affected primarily by the professional and group cultures (Karahanna, Evaristo & Srite, 2005), which may explain the unusual combination found in this study, whereby PSTs from a hierarchical-traditional culture preferred a collaborative-practice model.

It is assumed that the exposure to professional experience, particularly when linked with specific coursework i.e., school system, behaviour management, and method courses

can influence the PST's pedagogical beliefs (Sheridan, 2016). Indeed, changing pedagogical beliefs is a complex process, it requires an understanding of the purpose, content mastery and strong foundation in subject pedagogy to enable connections and influence the PST's approach to classroom teaching (Penso & Shoham, 2010).

The focus of this study was on the features that Jewish PSTs and Arab PSTs perceived as differentiating the collaborative ACPM from the hierarchical TPM.

### **Collaborative and Traditional Practice-models**

One of the characteristics of traditional education, as described by Scardamalia and Bereiter (2006), is that learning is judged by an authority. They contrast this culture with learning as part of a collaborative knowledge-building endeavor in a community, which is driven by the "desire to connect with what is most dynamic and meaningful in the surrounding society" (p. 112). This research and other studies (e.g., Guillen & Zeichner, 2018) illustrate several features that distinguish between two practice model cultures, the collaborative ACPM model and the hierarchical TPM model.

In TPM training, the pedagogical instructors, who represent academia, are mainly committed to the PSTs, while the teachers, who represent the school, are mainly committed to the class and the school. However, in the ACPM, the reciprocity is more obvious, as is the commitment to collaboration between academia and the school staff; thus, the school becomes the focal point in the professional development of everyone involved. The reciprocity is also expressed in a joint theoretical professional knowledge, which combines the cultures of academia and school in ways that are sensitive to the PSTs' needs as well as to the school's goals.

All participants in the training process are committed to advance learning-teaching processes while bridging between academic and school knowledge through practice. The core of the practicum focuses on long-term collaboration, improved training processes, and adaptation to the reality of school life (Lee, 2018).

Compared to one day a week training in the TPM, a three-day practice in the ACPM applies various teaching methods, enabling: (a) co-teaching, in which two or more experts teach together (Friend, Hurley-Chamberlain & Shamberger, 2010), where the experienced teacher offers peer review and establishes the teaching profession as one of reflective practice; (b) individual learning together with small group learning and investigative learning (Corte, Kamp & Bergen, 2013); (c) observation of and experience with a variety of teacher's roles and school activities; (d) acquaintance with the school's organizational culture, which is likely to facilitate the PSTs' transition to their roles as in-service teachers; (e) the development of an ongoing dialogue between all the participants; (f) meaningful experiences that reflect the materials learned in the PSTs' courses and demonstrate their applicability to classroom practices (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018); (g) PSTs to gain confidence in their professional abilities and view their role as agents of change, even before they start working. In their first years of in-service work, graduates of collaborative practice programs demonstrate strong abilities in planning lessons, generating motivation for learning, encouraging pupils' involvement in the lesson, and using innovative teaching methods (Ronen, 2018). They are also prioritized in terms of school placement, and they have also been found to endure longer as teachers in the education system (Jenset et al., 2018).

The cultural challenge in the collaborative setting encourages the PSTs' involvement in and exposure to the school climate and the school community. These were found to contribute to them personally, cognitively, conceptually, culturally, behaviourally, and practically (Terry & Panter, 2010). On a personal level, activity in the community enhances

the PSTs' confidence, sense of efficacy, and trust in their ability to have an impact in the "real world". They are aware of and involved in social problems, they learn to understand and respect diversity, and they acquire high-level communication skills and interdisciplinary knowledge. In terms of cognition, the activities contribute to the promotion of content knowledge, the development of conceptual models, and even to specialization in teaching (Levitt & Schriehans, 2010). Culturally, behaviourally, and practically, the PSTs acquire service skills, based on a cultural-behavioural toolkit typical of the community (Govekar & Govekar, 2008).

In contrast to the many advantages described, such collaboration is complex and requires a great deal of knowledge, trust, sharing, and everyone's readiness to act and be involved (Ronen, 2020). Establishing cooperation between the two independent settings, with their different professional cultures and the resulting gap between the teachers' and the PSTs' perspectives (Lee, 2018; Patrick, 2013), emphasises the cultural, organizational, and personal differences between the groups. Coping with these challenges requires effective bridging between theory and practice (Mordal-Moen & Gree, 2014) and adherence to two main goals: creating a meaningful learning experience for the learners (Patrick, 2013) and shaping a culture that integrates both academia and school (Lee, 2018).

Implementing the ACPM requires a high level of involvement in the work processes and in the relationships between the partners (Latham & Vogt, 2007), which in turn entails coping with additional challenges: added stress related to the heavy workload and time constraints at school (Cozza, 2010); ambivalent job definitions of the mentoring teacher and the pedagogical counsellor, in the context of the essence of practising, and in the definition of the scope of the PSTs' practice work (Guillen & Zeichner, 2018); differences between the expectations during practice and those that come into play in the role of in-service teachers; difficulty solving problems jointly; and the creation of a culture that employs sensitive feedback processes (Corte et al., 2013). Furthermore, the PSTs' perseverance is linked not only to the practicum and the nature of the training but also to their motives for choosing the teaching profession, which may be different for the Jewish PSTs and Arab PSTs in Israel.

This study explores differences between two cultures of practice (collaborative ACPM and hierarchical TPM) and social-pattern affinities (more collaborative or more traditional-hierarchical), to respond to the following research question: What are the differences between the ACPM and the TPM as perceived by the Jewish PSTs and the Arab PSTs?

## **Methodology**

In this study, we suggest using the academy-school collaboration framework as a type of professional development school, which we refer to as the academy-class practice-model (ACPM). When we first introduced this collaborative ACPM, it was offered as an option alongside a traditional practice-model (TPM). We expected a high level of PST response to the new practice-model framework. However, the attempt to implement the culture of the collaborative ACPM was hesitantly accepted by Jewish PSTs, whereas the Arab PSTs welcomed it warmly. This led us to investigate the role the cultural factor in the Jewish and Arab PSTs' perceptions of the ACPM and the TPM.

## Research Method

A mixed methods design has been used to describe relatively separate methods that combine the qualitative and quantitative approaches within different phases of the research process, and serve as different ways of seeing, interpreting, and knowing (Greene, 2007). Data analysis that includes factor analysis of MANOVA Likert scaled items from one portion of a survey, plus use of the constant comparative method to analyse narrative responses to open-ended questions theoretically linked to the Likert scales (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2003). In such fused data analysis, the same sources are used in different but interdependent ways to enhance validity through triangulation. Using triangulation involves verification through multiple types of data about the same phenomenon which might make multiple inferences corresponding to different worldviews and better served the research problem (Greene, 2007).

The Likert-type questionnaire was an adaptation of that used by Zuzovsky and Donitsa-Schmidt (2014), which focuses on a traditional-practice model. Assertions related to the collaborative model of practice (e.g., co-teaching, involvement in school aspects, and collaborative experiences) were added to fit the ACPM. The questionnaire included a set of 57 statements that examined the PSTs' attitudes toward and self-assessment of their participation in either the TPM or the ACPM. The statements were related to three key dimensions: knowledge acquired, benefits gained, and decision-making considerations, and were ranked on a five-point scale (1- exceedingly-small extent; 5- great extent). When interpreting the results, we considered average scores higher than 4.0 as indicating a high level of the dimension and average scores lower than 3.0 as indicating a low level of the dimension (the reliability score was over 0.79 Cronbach's alpha as detailed below).

### *Knowledge Dimension*

The PST participants were asked about the knowledge they had acquired about various topics. (1) The factor of content (e.g., "I know the content I have to teach; I know how to teach this subject; I know how to plan the learning topics") had a reliability score of .82 Cronbach's alpha. (2) The factor of teaching methods acquired (e.g., "I implement alternative assessment methods; I know how to improve pupils' academic achievements; I know how to integrate a discussion about solving issues into the study materials") had a reliability score of .84 Cronbach's alpha. (3) The factor of adaptation to pupils' needs (e.g., "I know how to adapt the curriculum to the needs of the pupils; I know how to advance pupils according to their needs; I know how to encourage pupils to engage in independent learning") had a reliability score of .79 Cronbach's alpha. (4) The factor of contact with pupils' parents ("I know ways to share the educational work with the parents").

### *Benefits Gained*

We examined the PSTs' benefits from (1) The staff (e.g., acquiring teamwork skills, better acquaintance with colleagues, better acquaintance with teachers at the school) for which the reliability score was .92 Cronbach's alpha; (2) School-related pedagogical aspects (e.g., initiatives in school organisation, developing co-teaching procedures, developing a school-based syllabus), for which the reliability score was .93 Cronbach's alpha.

### *Decision-making Considerations*

This dimension was defined as the importance the PSTs attributed to the advice of other participants and to their own considerations when they faced problems during the practicum. This measure assumed that considering advice from others was an indication of productive interaction among the team members and an increased sense of shared responsibility (Mansfield & Gu, 2019), indicating the strengthening of the partnership, which in turn contributes to optimal outcomes. The other part of this dimension, i.e., attributing importance to one's own considerations when deciding, was viewed as indicating the PSTs' growing confidence and increased self-reliance.

The question was worded as follows: "When making decisions in the course of the practicum, how much importance (on a scale from 1= very little, to 5 = a great deal) did you attribute to advice from each of the following: (a) staff - including school teachers and the school principle (.84 Cronbach's alpha); (b) general-pedagogical instructor - including coaching-teacher of the class to which you were assigned and general-pedagogical instructor (.83 Cronbach's alpha); (c) discipline-pedagogical instructor and the discipline-teacher (.90 Cronbach's alpha); (d) your own considerations. It is worth noting that the knowledge dimension refers to PSTs' teaching skills and content knowledge in the disciplines they taught, while the dimensions of benefits gained, and decision-making considerations refer to teaching skills involving collaboration among the PSTs and with the other practicum team members.

The open-ended questions rendered a description of the PSTs' experiences, thoughts, and ideas at the end of the ACPM and TPM participants: "What do you think are the main goals of the [ACPM/TPM] practicum for PSTs? What factors do you think had the greatest effect on your practicum at the school and on your training in general? Explain your answer. What perceptual changes did you experience during the practicum? What would you consider a successful practicum? What difficulties did you encounter during the practicum? Can you suggest changes that could improve PSTs' practicum experience?"

The analysis was tailored to the data obtained from the different research instruments and is mentioned with reference to each of them. Given that either the ACPM or the TPM is the PSTs' major pedagogical experience, it is reasonable to assume that their assessments are mainly based on the specific practicum and can be attributed to each of the models, respectively.

### **Participants**

The study involved 203 PSTs from four (two Jewish and two Arab) colleges of education, who were majoring in a variety of subjects, and were in the third year of their teacher education programme. Of the initial 203, 107 PSTs responded to the questionnaire upon completion of the TPM-based practicum (67 Arab PSTs, 40 Jewish PSTs), and 96 PSTs responded to the questionnaire upon completion of the ACPM-based practicum (57 Arab PSTs, 39 Jewish PSTs). In the Jewish group, PSTs' ages ranged from 21 to 28 (with a mean of 25 years) among them 5% were male; and in the Arab group, PSTs' ages ranged from 18 to 23 (with a mean of 21 years), among them 5% were male. The schools where the practicum took place were chosen by the colleges as part of their practice programme. This population was selected recruited using a convenience sample, which might undermine the external validity of the study, due to the statistical heterogeneity. However, this profile matched the expectations in terms of the representation of the typical student population (Jewish and Arab) in Israeli colleges of education. The participating colleges responded to

our request and agreed to participate in this study, which was approved by the ethics committee of the college with which the researchers are affiliated.

### **The Research Procedure**

The questionnaires were administered to the PSTs upon completion of their ACPM or TPM. To enable the PSTs to express their opinions frankly and without bias, they received an explanation about the purpose of the study and the importance of truthful reporting for improving the practicum and PSTs' professional development in the future. Furthermore, they were assured that their confidentiality would be maintained. Based on similar studies (Ronen, 2020), we found that the PSTs were willing to share their experience and that their responses were focused and relevant to the progress and improvement of the research process.

### **Data Processing**

A 2X2 Multivariate-Analysis-of-Variance was performed to examine: (a) the differences between the practice-models (ACPM/TPM), and (b) the variance of the ACPM/TPM X (Jewish/Arab) society, as perceived by the Jewish PSTs and the Arab PSTs. The PSTs' responses to the open-ended questions were content analysed using the Narralyzer software. The analysis was performed similarly to the demonstration mode analysis (Corbin et al., 2014), in which, part of the data is analysed according to predetermined theory-driven categories, in this case, PSTs' knowledge acquisition, benefits gained, and the importance the PSTs attributed to the various sources they considered when making practice-related decisions. The remaining categories were based on grounded theory, i.e., they were formulated because of the analysis and classification of the themes that emerged (Corbin et al., 2014), namely, the categories of collaborative, cultural, and involvement effects.

The thematic analysis was performed by the three researchers separately, and a high interrater reliability score was found. The analysis procedure began with a general reading of the PSTs' responses to the open-ended questions, followed by an analysis based on the open-coding approach while employing the constant, comparative method (Corbin, Brok, Kamp & Bergen, 2014). The subsequent phases of coding were focused on the most significant or frequently occurring codes, which led to the identification of three overarching themes in the PSTs' experience during their practicum.

## **Findings**

### **The PSTs' Knowledge**

The 2X2 MANOVA analysis (practice-model X group) with repeated measures analysis showed significant differences between the PSTs' assessments of the ACPM and the TPM: [ $F(4,196) = 6.29, p < .001, \eta^2 = .11$ ]. Similarly, significant differences were found between the Jewish PSTs' and the Arab PSTs' assessments: [ $F(4,196) = 10.34, p < .001, \eta^2 = .17$ ]. However, no significant interaction was found between (the variables of practice-model and group in the knowledge dimension (Appendix-table-1).

The mean score that the PSTs in the ACPM assigned to knowledge was higher than the score assigned by the PSTs in the TPM. The  $\eta^2$  coefficients showed that the difference between PSTs' knowledge of pupils' need, and their content knowledge was greater than the difference between their knowledge of teaching methods and their knowledge pertaining to



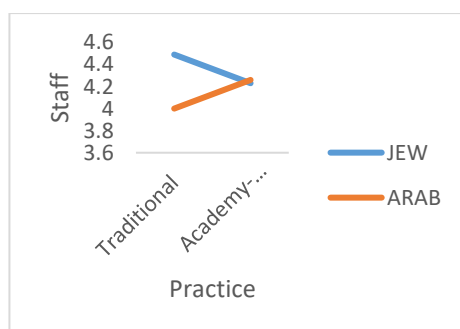
pupils' parents. Moreover, the variance analyses conducted for each parameter separately showed significant differences between the assessments of the Jewish and the Arab PSTs on all parameters (Appendix-table-2).

The mean on the knowledge dimension was higher among the Arab PSTs than among the Jewish PSTs. The Eta2 coefficients showed that the differences between Arab and Jewish PSTs on the variables of parent-related knowledge, content knowledge, and teaching-method knowledge were higher than the difference between the groups regarding their knowledge of pupils' needs.

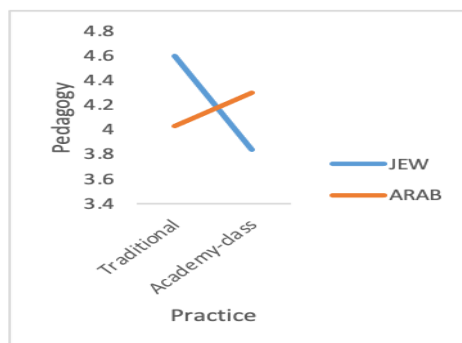
### The PSTs' Benefits

Results obtained from the 2X2 MANOVA analysis (practice-model X group) illustrated significant differences between the PSTs' assessment of their benefit from the ACPM and the TPM: [ $F(2,198) = 8.58, p < .001, \text{Eta}^2 = .08$ ]. Significant differences were also found between Jewish and Arab PSTs regarding this dimension: [ $F(2,198) = 4.52, p < .05, \text{Eta}^2 = .04$ ]. Moreover, a significant interaction was indicated for (practice-model X group): [ $F(2,198) = 15.32, p < .001, \text{Eta}^2 = .13$ ]. The variance analyses for each parameter separately (Appendix-table-3) showed significant differences between the PSTs' assessments of the ACPM and the TPM only on the parameter of pedagogical benefit, where the means for ACPM were lower than those for the TPM. A significant difference between the Jewish and the Arab PSTs on the same parameter was also showed (Appendix-table-4). Variance analyses performed for each parameter separately showed a significant difference between the Jewish and the Arab PSTs only on the parameter of staff-related benefits, whereby the mean was higher among the Jewish PSTs than among the Arab PSTs.

As mentioned, a significant interaction (of practice-model X group) for the parameter of team-related benefits was showed: [ $F(1,199) = 5.36, p < .05, \text{Eta}^2 = .03$ ] and for pedagogical benefits [ $F(1,199) = 21.49, p < .001, \text{Eta}^2 = .10$ ]. Fig. 1, 2 provide graphic representations of these interactions.



**Figure 1: Means for staff benefit for traditional and the academy-class practice model as assessed by Jewish and Arab PSTs.**



**Figure 2: Means for pedagogical benefit for traditional and the academy-class practice model as evaluated by Jewish and Arab PSTs.**

Fig. 1, 2 illustrate that the Jewish PSTs assessed the benefits on both parameters as higher in the TPM than in the ACPM, while the Arab PSTs assessed the ACPM benefits as higher than the TPM benefits (Table). Simple effect analyses to test the origin of the interactions among the Arab PSTs indicated a significant difference between the two practice-models on the parameter of staff-related benefit:  $[F(1,199) = 3.64, p < .05, \text{Eta}2 = .02]$ , and for the parameter of pedagogical benefit  $[F(1,199) = 4.01, P < .05, \text{Eta}2 = .02]$ . Conversely, among the Jewish PSTs, a significant difference was found between the two practice-models only on the parameter of pedagogical benefit  $[F(1,199) = 18.69, p < .001, \text{Eta}2 = .09]$ .

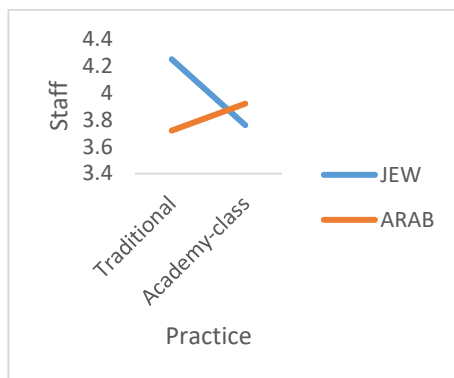
Dimensions	a. Practice models		b. Groups	c. Interaction
	ACPM	TPM	Jewish PSTs, Arab PSTs	(ACPM, TPM) vs. (Jewish-PSTs; Arab-PSTs)
Knowledge	ACPM	> TPM	Jewish-PSTs < Arab-PSTs	-
Benefits	ACPM	< TPM	Jewish-PSTs > Arab-PSTs	ACPM < TPM; ACPM > TPM
Considerations	-		Jewish-PSTs > Arab-PSTs	ACPM < TPM; ACPM > TPM

**Table: Summary of significant findings a. differences between practice models (ACPM, TPM) as perceived by Jewish and Arab PSTs; b. differences between groups` (Jewish PSTs, Arab PSTs) evaluation of the practice models; c. interaction between practice models (ACPM, TPM) and group (Jewish PSTs, Arab PSTs).**

**Considerations: The Importance Attributed to the Advice of the Participants**

In the PSTs` assessments of the importance they attributed to the advice of other participants in the TPM compared to the ACPM, no significant differences were found  $[F(4,185) = .82, p > .03]$ . However, significant differences were found in this dimension between the Jewish and Arab PSTs:  $[F(4,185) = 6.11, p < .001, \text{Eta}2 = .12]$ . Likewise, there was a significant interaction between the type of practice model and the group:  $[F(4,185) = 2.37, p < .05, \text{Eta}2 = .05]$ . Appendix-table-5 presents the means and standard deviations for the variables of this dimension and the results of the variance analyses, comparing the assessments of the Jewish and Arab PSTs. The assessments of the Jewish PSTs were higher than the assessments of the Arab PSTs for the variables of the general-pedagogical instructor`s considerations, the discipline-pedagogical instructor`s considerations, and their own considerations. Additionally, The Eta2 coefficients demonstrated a higher value on the general pedagogical instructor`s considerations regarding the value attributed to the discipline-pedagogical instructor`s considerations, and one`s own considerations.

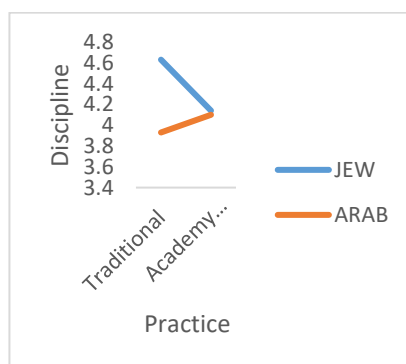
As stated, a significant interaction was found between the type of practice-model and the group regarding the parameters of the school staff considerations [F(1,188) = 6.19, p <.05, Eta2 = .03], the general-pedagogical instructor`s considerations [F(1,188) = 7.22, p <.01, Eta2 = .04], and the discipline-pedagogical instructor`s considerations [F(1,188) = 5.45, p < .05, Eta2 = .03]. (Fig. 3-5).



**Figure 3: Means for the staff considerations parameter in the traditional and the academy-class practice model as assessed by Jewish PSTs and Arab PSTs.**



**Figure 4: Means for the general tutor considerations parameter in the traditional and the academy-class practice model as assessed by Jewish PSTs and Arab PSTs.**



**Figure 5: Means for the disciplinary tutor considerations parameter in the traditional and the academy-class practice model as assessed by Jewish PSTs and Arab PSTs.**

Fig. 3–5 show that among the Jewish PSTs, TPM participants ranked others' considerations higher than did their Jewish counterparts in the ACPM, whereas among the Arab PSTs, ACPM participants ranked other participants' considerations higher than did their counterparts in the TPM (Table). Simple effects analyses among the Jewish PSTs showed significant differences between the two practice-models on the parameter of staff considerations [ $F(1,188) = 4.87, p < .05, \eta^2 = .03$ ] and discipline-pedagogical instructor's considerations: [ $F(1,188) = 4.61, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$ ]. By contrast, among the Arab PSTs, there was a significant difference between ACPM and TPM participants only on the parameter of the general-pedagogical instructor's consideration: [ $F(1,188) = 4.25, p < .05, \eta^2 = .02$ ].

### The Collaborative Aspect

To understand the differences between the two practice-models as perceived by the PSTs from the different groups, we turned to the content analysis and the unique features that participants emphasised as differentiating between the collaborative and the hierarchical practice models. Based on the questionnaires, this analysis revealed three differentiating aspects: the collaborative, cultural, and involvement aspects.

The PSTs mentioned that the collaborative time spent in the ACPM allowed for exposure to a variety of collaborative activities, such as class management and pedagogical learning strategies: 'Spending three days co-teaching enabled us to organise a "math day", a class marathon. This allowed me to acquire new instruments and strategies, which, in turn, gave me confidence to stand in front of a class and teach independently'. (Arab PST). Furthermore, the collaborative activities led the PSTs to establish a close relationship with the pedagogical instructors and the coaching-teacher. It also enabled the PSTs to become very well acquainted with the school space and develop the skills of class management, assessment, and reflection.

One PST also mentioned the challenge of co-teaching, standing alongside an experienced teacher, and getting to know the school climate. These gave rise to a sense of belonging that enabled freedom of action combined with responsibility:

*I practised classroom management skills and I learned to create a stimulating and supportive environment. I also learned to develop learning and auxiliary materials suited to the contents and objectives of the lesson and acquired strategies for improving my teaching abilities. This experience provided an opportunity to participate actively and to assess the outcomes, while receiving reflective feedback from the pedagogical counsellor and the teacher. The strong interaction with the teaching staff led to close relationships, integration, and learning, thanks to the supportive behaviour of the principal (I usually never meet with the principal) and the teaching staff, I felt I was part of the school and its staff throughout the year (Arab PST).*

The Jewish PSTs also mentioned the advantage of getting to know the school culture and the learning contents, although they did so with less frequency than did their Arab peers. They attributed an additional meaning to their role as teachers, namely shaping a generation:

*Learning the curriculum and knowing how to work with it throughout the year, I got to know the school space and climate, to be more involved in school life – to be part of something so big that has an impact on the next generation.*

Along with the positive experiences, the PSTs also had trouble as they attempted to reap the potential advantage of collaborative teaching at the school, without appropriate mediation. They described a sense of frustration due to the need to cope independently with

pedagogical challenges during the practicum. In their assessment of the ACPM's pedagogical aspects, both the Jewish and the Arab PSTs mentioned the programme's insufficient attention to pedagogical content and to age-appropriate teaching materials, as described in the following excerpt:

In terms of pedagogy, the material does not match what we studied at the college, and it was necessary to make up for what we did not address at the college ...  
Moreover, when I taught on my own, the children's behaviour was out of control – it was frustrating (Jewish PST)

An Arab PST said: "Despite all the knowledge I acquired from the teacher, I did not get a chance to practice co-teaching, I taught on my own". These statements illustrate the importance of collaborative teaching as perceived by both groups. Yet, compared to the Arab PSTs, the Jewish PSTs attributed greater significance to the advice of the general and discipline- pedagogical instructor, as well as to their own judgements (Appendix- table-5). This might be due to previous experience of equitable interactions of the Jewish PSTs with the staff, which enabled them to fully benefit from the ACPM's advantages, compared to the Arab PSTs who did not mention a similar attitude. A possible explanation for this may be related to cultural differences.

### The Cultural Aspect

Although the PSTs from both groups assessed the knowledge variable to be higher in the ACPM than in the TPM, the Arab PSTs mentioned the importance of equitable interactions, and the contribution of the pedagogical instructor and the co-teacher to their self-confidence and self-esteem four times more frequently than did the Jewish PSTs:

*There was an excellent collaboration between the teacher and the pedagogical mentor ... as a preservice teacher I took part in the homeroom teacher's activities, through co-teaching, being treated as an equal by the teacher, I felt confident, and I translated my knowledge into practical activities in the field (Arab PST).*

While the Arab PSTs related to a sense of equality, confidence, and even the new pedagogy, the Jewish PSTs described the development of knowledge. They emphasized the importance of being ready and committed to the main roles of teaching and the prevention of dropout: "We acquired thorough knowledge of the school-year curriculum and felt ready to teach, I believe that none of us would drop out of the education system, we will continue working as a teacher for many years".

The Arab PSTs described an experience of personal development in the ACPM, while the Jewish PSTs drew conclusions about its general contribution to the prevention of teacher dropout in the future. Differences were also found in the description of the difficulties experienced by the PSTs during the ACPM. Jewish PSTs discussed difficulties attributable to external organisational factors (e.g., 'There were problems scheduling the precise days and hours of practice'), whereas the Arab PSTs described coping with the following difficulty: "The difficulty was the workload, studying and working seven days a week; it was hard for me to combine the studies and the practice, but slowly and surely, I managed to do it ... I went with the flow" (Arab PST). Depicted these differences between Jewish and Arab PSTs, they all described a sense of deep involvement in the staff work during the ACPM.

### **The Involvement Aspect**

The sense of involvement stemmed from an in-depth acquaintance with the school space, exposure to the school culture, management skills, assessment, and reflection processes. The Arab and Jewish PSTs emphasized the principal's involvement in helping to acquaint them with the school culture, while the Arab PSTs also mentioned the principal's involvement in their activities.

*Developing the ability to participate actively and getting to know the school space and climate, we felt involved in school life, functioning as equal partners in the educational effort, and appreciated by others, instead of being seen as mere visitors at the school (Arab PST).*

### **Discussion**

Although the PSTs from both groups assessed the knowledge variable to be higher in the ACPM than in the TPM, an opposite trend in the benefit dimension was revealed when comparing the way, the two groups experienced each model (Table 6). How can these differences be explained? Despite the limited sample size (103 PSTs out of a total of 800 PSTs participated in the ACPM), we cautiously suggest that based on the findings of this study, a cultural effect resonates in the preference for one of the two training models examined in this study, which is related to the school culture's tendency toward a collaborative vs. a traditional model.

#### **Collaborative vs. a Traditional Model**

The finding that the Arab PSTs in the ACPM ranked the knowledge gained, the programme's benefits, and their consideration of others' advice higher than did their Arab peers in the TPM could be attributed to the greater range of opportunities that the ACPM offered for cultivating teaching behaviours, as perceived and described by the PSTs. For example, in the traditional teacher-student relationship, as manifested in the TPM, the teacher is the source of knowledge, and the communication is unidirectional.

This framework thus imposes a more traditional (and hierarchical) context. Conversely, in the ACPM, multidirectional communication is required between all participants in the learning process, oriented to the demands of the learning task (Schwarz, Dreyfus & Hershkowitz, 2009). Hence, this framework sets the stage for collaboration and involvement among participants of equal status.

#### **The Cultural Aspect**

*Collaboration: Professional self-development vs. understanding the system*

The findings which identify the advantages of collaborative practice as leading to a sense of belonging and a deep approach to learning, are described also in other studies that examined training in a collaborative framework as compared to traditional training (Cozza, 2010). Yet, despite its advantages, the collaborative framework presented the PSTs with a more variable experience of coping with the challenging aspects of teaching. Compared to the ACPM, the PSTs in the TPM encountered fewer situations that are typical of the educational setting, as the latter framework afforded the participants only a partial and limited depiction of the teachers' role. Although the practice in both models enriched

participants' knowledge, one Arab-PST described her frustration with the insufficient exposure to co-teaching opportunities, which in turn made it more difficult for her later to cope independently with the pedagogical challenges she encountered. This finding underscores the importance that the PSTs attributed to the collaborative experience that the ACPM affords.

The difference of the Jewish PSTs' descriptions of the ACPM advantages compared to their Arab peers could reflect the nature of participants' expectations vis-a-vis their prior experiences with collaboration versus individualism (Hofstede, 1984). The Jewish PSTs, who are more familiar with collaborative interactions (Azaiza, 2006), viewed the ACPM as a platform for learning about the yearly curriculum and realised the long-term the impact of the school culture on the younger generation. Conversely, the Arab PSTs considered the exposure to the school's culture as a short-term opportunity for developing their sense of responsibility and commitment, and for creating deep personal interactions with the teaching staff (Figure-3), which they found exciting.

#### *Involvement: Inward vs. Outward Focus*

Despite the similarity in the content of issues mentioned by the Jewish and Arab PSTs, a difference in spirit and wording was evident. The descriptions of the Arab PSTs expressed feelings of appreciation, esteem, and gratitude compared to the more factual and laconic descriptions of the Jewish PSTs, which affected their assessment. The Jewish PSTs were preoccupied with general challenges of education: 'Being part of something so big that has an impact on the next generation', and 'None in the ACPM will drop out of the education system'. On the other hand, the Arab PSTs saw teaching as a good opportunity for personal and economic development (Jabareen & Agbaria, 2014), which is highlighted also in their assessment of the ACPM difficulties: 'The difficulty was the workload... at first, it was hard for me to work with the team, but that passed ... I took it in stride'.

The notion of taking something in stride is expressed in Arab culture as 'going with the flow', going along with the attitudes, wishes, and expectations of others, while nullifying one's own feelings, thoughts, and attitudes (Abu-Hussain, 2015). Such behaviour is defined as an external thinking vector, which relies on an external factor – socially accepted norms and behaviours, which is quite common in Arab society (Grosbard, 2013). This is compared to the internal thinking vector, which relies on an internal factor – the self. Thus, qualities such as modesty, obedience, and conformity are considered socially positive, whereas being argumentative and unwilling to accept authority are perceived as impudence (Luppy & Frish-Pelles, 2010).

According to the Arab PSTs, they had overcome their difficulties and had succeeded in the practicum due to their own ability ('I went with the flow'). Contrary to them, the Jewish PSTs attributed the difficulties to external factors, that can also account for the opposite trend in the two groups: 'The ACPM clashed with exam time, it was difficult to comply with the schedules for preparing lessons: the combination of studies at the college and the ACPM was a bit of an overload'.

The Jewish PSTs attributed greater importance than did their peers to the advice of the pedagogical instructors, the discipline- pedagogical instructors, and to their own considerations and judgements. By contrast, members of the Arab group for the most part refrained from asking for help and from addressing issues associated with feelings or acknowledging flaws (Dwairy, 2006). In the culture of the Jewish group, qualities such as displaying self-confidence, dominance, and forming one's opinions independently are

considered positive (Luppy & Frish-Pelles, 2010). This cultural difference could explain the willingness of the Jewish PSTs to work in teams, the importance they attributed to the opinions of their peers, and their readiness to collaborate with them: “Once I understood the importance and advantage of the collaborative practicum, I tried to get the most out of it.”

### *Self-confidence: Peer quality vs. Power relations*

Thus, it is possible that the values, principles, and power relations (Hofstede, 1984) underlying the behavioural norms in the learning environment (Hinton & Fischer, 2010) influenced cultural aspects related to self-directedness, which Huacong, Fernandez and Grotlüschen (2019) referred to in the context of lifelong learning. This interpretation explicitly acknowledges the individual’s workplace behaviour as a function of several cultures simultaneously (Karahanna et al., 2005). Indeed, Berthelon and colleagues (2019) have also shown that peer quality improves students’ self-confidence performance, which might influence the expected relations between learners and teachers and the expected products. The involvement required of all ACPM participants may explain this additional facet of the ACPM-related findings.

PSTs from both groups mentioned the importance of their involvement in teamwork, which contributed to their in-depth acquaintance with the school space and their development of management, assessment, and reflection skills. This perception expressed by the PSTs also highlights the critical role played by relationships and school context (Mansfield & Gu, 2019) during the practicum. Involvement in learning and sharing responsibility for its outcomes constitute the basis of collaborative learning, which in turn enables the examination of any issue from a variety of perspectives, expands the range of interpretations offered, shapes meanings, and integrates new information into existing schemas (Hinton & Fischer, 2010). These benefits were partially achieved by both groups. The intensive ACPM experience encouraged a shift in the PSTs’ perspectives, from a hierarchical environment to one with more ambiguity tolerance (Hofstede, 1984), which is characteristic of the collaborative learning style. This resonates with the claim that educators who applied this intensive classroom learning approach experienced a change in their perspective, from a centrist to a relational view of the task of teaching (Teo, 2014), while considering their pedagogical beliefs to continuously improve, since it strongly affects what and how they approach teaching in the classroom (Sheridan, 2016). Hence, the learning environment must also undergo modifications.

However, our study is focused on the emerging factors as perceived by the PSTs during each of the practice models ACPM or TPM, which is one of the limitations of the study.

### **Implementation in the Field**

This study suggest means to get the full benefit of the collaborative effect: Coping independently with pedagogical challenges, sometimes without proper mediation; learning to co-teach alongside an experienced veteran teacher; determining these goals as part of the staff’s collaborative learning process; discussing ways to foster the PSTs’ sense of confidence in their classroom activities; and getting the full benefit of interaction among the participants.

Additional studies should be conducted to examine whether and to what extent there has been an improvement from the perspective of the PSTs of both groups.



## Limitations of the Study

There were a few limitations to this study: the features of the ACPM were varied and not necessarily uniform at all four colleges, i.e., school system and pedagogical beliefs; the limited sample size of those who chose the ACPM (103 of 800 PSTs); the focus on a small number of parameters; and the possibility of bias in the PSTs' assessments, deriving from the need to justify the effort involved in the practicum. Nevertheless, the findings provide a clear indication of the advantages of a collaborative-practice-model, alongside the challenges it raises among both Jewish and Arab PSTs.

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