UNIVERSITY OF DERBY

BREAK TIME VIEWED THROUGH PEDAGOGIC GLASSES: A STUDY OF THE EFFECTIVE UTILIZATION OF BREAK TIME WITHIN PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN ISRAEL

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This work is dedicated with love

to my husband Zvi,

my partner and my solid rock. Thanks for the support

and encouragement!

To my daughters

Yael, Michal, and Ayala.

My Jewels. My grandson Bar and my granddaughter

Healy. You are all the light of my life.

To my parents,

from whom I have learned that giving enriches even

more than receiving.

To my advisors

Dr. Julia Ibbotson and Dr. Val Poultney. Thank for

your professional advice and personal support.

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Abstract

The main goal of this study is the development of comprehensive strategies aimed at improving break time practices in Israeli schools. The issue of school break time as an integral part of the school day has not yet been addressed in educational research in Israel. This qualitative case study involved more than 200 participants from 2 Israeli primary schools, representing 3 groups – principals, break time supervising teachers, and pupils. The study examines the perspectives of the research stakeholders on the purpose and implementation of break time. The recruitment of participants was carried out using purposive and convenience sampling methods. Five data collection tools were employed: documentary analysis, individual semi-structured interviews with the three groups of stakeholders, focus group with teachers, observation of school yards and lobbies, and a questionnaire for pupils. Data were analyzed through thematic analysis, in which inductive coding was used.

Study findings reveal that break time is perceived by teachers and principals as an energy-consuming, ill-planned part of the school day. Their main concerns are safety and disciplinary matters. A sense of frustration caused by break time duty problems, deteriorating discipline in schools, and lack of hope for improvement in teacher authority, was dominant in teacher responses. Little consensus was found on whether or not break time should be structured. Both principals and teachers underestimate the role of pupil-initiated free play. Most teachers underestimate the meaningful educational opportunities present during break time. Pupils perceive break time as a time for rest, game playing, and freedom from teacher control. Findings suggest that the preferred way of spending break time and the role of a duty teacher are perceived differently by pupils of different ages and gender groups. This study identifies a number of break time issues that have not yet received attention, such as enjoying a meal as a part of peer socialization, and ethical problems related to free play or involving playthings brought from home. Compared to previous research, this study suggests that feelings of loneliness experienced by pupils during break time increase as they grow older, reinforcing the idea of using break time as a platform for practice and improvement of social skills. The study concludes with recommendations for making social education a significant and planned part of the school curriculum,

using the break time environment as a natural setting, integrated with the classroom. In addition, break time should be dealt with as part of the teacher-training process.

Break time viewed through pedagogic glasses: a study of the effective utilization of break time within primary schools in Israel.

1. Introduction

Since the late 1980s, an interest has arisen in school break time, which has offered researchers a variety of educational issues to explore. The evidence accumulated in studies of school education in Britain (Bilton, 2010; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Blatchford, 1998) and the USA (Kellert, 2005; Lillard, 2005; Nabors et al, 2001; Schneider, 2001) has demonstrated that pupils spend a great deal of time in the schoolyard. Schoolyard interactions of pupils with peers and teachers are claimed to be important because they allow pupils to experience firsthand the social and cultural messages which the school is attempting to pass on (Alerby, 2003; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Blatchford, 1998; Pellegrini, 1995), and children's experience in the schoolyard is no less important than the information they receive within the classroom walls (Kellert, 2005; Piji, Meijer & Haggarty, 1997).

However, the significance of break time as an integral part of the school day has scarcely been addressed until now in educational research. Researchers claim that break time is the only part of the school day which is insufficiently planned and funded and without consideration of the changes that have occurred in the social life of children over the past decades (Blatchford & Baines, 2006). It has also been discovered that intervals between classes, when pupils are allowed to rest from learning and to socialize with peers, and teachers can prepare for the next lesson, are associated with a number of problems. Most reports about violence in schools are connected with the schoolyard (Epshteun, 2008; Blatchford and Baines, 2006; Behre et al., 2001; Astor et al., 1999; Slee, 1995). It has been noted in break time-related research that teachers often feel frustrated over the challenges of fulfilling break time duty (Wyra & Lawson, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Recess rules, 2007). Until

now, studies in Israel and abroad have not advanced a comprehensive understanding of the role of break time as an integral part of the school day, when pupils can not only release stress, but also develop socially and culturally. Existing research has delved into issues such as break time violence and safety, social interaction, and physical education and health. The goal of this research is to investigate the educational role of break time (including the teacher-pupil interactions taking place) within the context of the school day as a whole.

The problems outlined above suggest that changes are required in order to ensure that break time promotes physical activity and social skill development. The main goal of this study is the development of comprehensive strategies aimed at improving break time practices in Israeli schools. An important aspect of this task is the development of principles of social education of pupils, based upon the regulatory guidelines, the existing research into break time, and the data collected in the course of this study. The latter have provided additional detail into knowledge generated by previous research, and illuminated ways in which existing concepts of break time could be applied to public primary school practices in Israel.

The main research question was set as follows:
What can be done to incorporate break time into an effective part of the social education of pupils?

In order to address the question, a number of sub-questions were considered:
1. How are the purpose and organization of school break time understood by regulatory bodies and school population?
2. How do boys and girls spend their free time between classes?
3. What issues are associated with fulfillment of break time duty?
4. What issues may affect break time quality?
5. What measures are considered necessary in order to achieve break time quality?

The current study was undertaken in the educational setting of a public primary school (ages 6-12). The multi-cultural nature of Israeli society, dictates a framework to the educational system which includes four groups: state secular schools attended

by the majority of pupils from the Jewish population; state religious schools emphasizing Jewish studies, tradition, and observance; Arab and Druze schools, with instruction provided in Arabic and special focus on Arab and Druze history, religion, and culture; and private schools operating under various religious and international auspices (Israel Ministry of Education: primary and secondary, 2010). In my position as a public primary school principal, my attention was naturally drawn to break time practices in public primary school and the ways in which they can be improved.

This is the first study to explore perception of break time by the three groups of the school population — principals, teachers and pupils. It is also the first research that examines the manner in which different perspectives on school education and management impact on the implementation of break time, particularly the performance of duty teachers. Providing an opportunity for principals, teachers and students to discuss their perceptions of break time is critical for improving the quality of break time in Israeli schools as a whole. The body of Israeli research into social issues in schools (Shavit, 2009; Soen, 2002; Rolider, 2001) as well as discourse maintained through the media suggests that exploration of break time issues might be more effective when all groups of the school population are involved in the process. My professional experience along with discussions held with teachers and school principals at professional meetings and seminars have led me to argue that there is a connection between the approaches of each party to break time. Having heard the views of the pupils, teachers and principals involved in my study, I raised the issue of teaching the pupils a proper balance between discipline and freedom in their behaviour.

An examination of the way in which children spend break time (research sub-question 2) also included a check of whether age and gender differences exist in pupil perception of free time between classes and in the behaviour exhibited during break time. The findings corroborated by previous research on break time were incorporated in the educational recommendations developed as a result of this study. The results are also discussed in terms of their significance as the subject for further research.

The key goal of this study is set within the framework that has integrated various concepts taken from several areas of childhood education, including those studies concerning school-based and extracurricular education, schoolyard environment, and research into behaviour management techniques. The main concept is that school break time represents a valuable opportunity for the social education of pupils (Blatchford & Baines, 2012; 2006; Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). On this basis, I claim that social education of pupils in Israeli schools, as a compulsory facet of the school curriculum, can and should be provided through use of break time for teaching children proper communication skills, conflict resolution, stress management, setting and following rules, and leadership development skills.

The idea of social education in schools has a long history. Almost a century ago, Dewey (1916, 1938) emphasized that the traditional way of delivering knowledge needed to be balanced with much greater concern for students' actual experiences and active learning. He argued that because of wider and deeper knowledge and matured experience, the teacher should be an intellectual leader of a social group (Dewey, 1938, in Neil, 2005). More than sixty years later, Leadbeater (2000, p.226) argued that the goal of education should not be merely teaching literacy and numeracy, but development of the capability "to act responsibly towards others, to take initiative and to work creatively and collaboratively". According to Heath (2001), the school social environment, which exists along with the process of learning, creates unique educational niches within the formal school education.

As stated, it was about thirty years ago that researchers began to focus their attention on the educational opportunities emerging during the time between classes. Through study of pupil interactions in the schoolyard, researchers revealed that break time is one of the few real-world situations in which children can learn and practice a wide variety of social skills (Blatchford & Baines, 2012; 2006; Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). Although research documents children effectively practicing cooperation and conflict resolution when interacting with peers, adults can teach children many of these skills. It has been agreed by many researchers that use of behaviour management techniques can create a positive educational environment in which pupils can develop social skills which will serve them throughout their lives, (Miltenberger, 2011;Cowley, 2010; Waguespack et al, 2006; Dwyer, 2003).

Development of social skills is one of the main goals of the educational process. Attainment of this goal is achieved both within the classroom setting and without (schoolyard). This research strives to examine break time within the context of the formal school day. Therefore, when measuring achievement in instilling social skills in children, it is important to consider the complete ecological system within which the social processes are taking place (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

In addition, I have concluded that comprehensive research conducted in Israel by Kahane (2000; 1997; 1975) can be a valuable contribution to the ideas of social education promoted in this study. The ideas developed by Kahane were based on the study of various extra-curricular activities, and created the ground for his theory of development of social skills both within and beyond the school curriculum. The model of Kahane (2000; 1997; 1975) includes a number of approaches, which exist both in parallel to and within existing formal school education, and is based on the principles of voluntarism, moratorium, multidimentionalism, and symmetry (a more detailed explanation is provided in the Literature review chapter, section 2.1.7). Kahane (2000; 1997; 1975) advocates the increase in pupils' involvement in school life, particularly in social processes within the classroom. He argues that enabling pupils to voice their opinions in the organization of school activities enhances their social skills and thinking and creative abilities which, as Kahane claims, can also be applied to areas beyond the classroom setting. It may be suggested therefore, that development of social skills can benefit break time practices particularly in terms of reducing disciplinary problems.

It should be noted that an increasing public and professional discourse on the role of break time in Israeli schools has emerged only over the past decade. In the late 1990s, the Israeli Ministry of Education developed the "Active break" recommendations that suggested implementing a range of structured break time activities aimed mostly at reducing violence among children and youth in schools (The Ministry of Education of Israel, 2000). However, these recommendations have never become part of the Education Ministry's guidelines. Furthermore, the opinions advocating the educational significance of break time, as well as discussion of the problems related to break time duty, have appeared on the internet sites maintained by various schools,

associations or professional group forums, but have not yet gained the full attention of academic thinking in Israel. The need has become evident for development of research-informed, educational strategies for ensuring break time quality. Within my research dissemination activity, I have highlighted the main ideas and rationale behind this study on the internet forum of the city in which I live, and have received many responses from colleagues in the Israeli educational system supporting this endeavor. When interviewed by the monthly Education Ministry publication, I discussed the place of break time as an organized part of the school day, its effect on the school day and upon achievement of educational goals. In the article published in "Hed HaHinuch" (Teachers Union Monthly Magazine) in 2007, I focused on the teacher-pupil relationship during break time. In another article published in a quarterly teacher's magazine "Hidushim BaHinuch ("What's New in Education") in 2009, I discussed the differences in perceptions of break time between pupils, teachers, and principals, and highlighted the main discrepancies.

I claim that considering break time an essential component of the educational process is expected to contribute to achievement of educational and social goals and development of values in Israeli pupils. On this ground, time spent in the schoolyard (one fifth of the school day) can be viewed as an extension or derivative of activities and social education provided during classes. Given the fact that, over the past decades, Israeli schools have been perceived by children as an insecure environment (Shavit, 2009; Rolider, 2007; 2001; Yariv, 1999; Dykeman, 1996), it is crucially important to increase the educational value of the free time between classes. I suggest that ignoring the educational aspect of break time activities serves only to perpetuate a problem. Additionally, more thinking is required in order to create a proper balance between pupils' right to spend break time as they wish and implementation of supervised, structured activities during breaks.

My intention to study the subject of break time and the schoolyard from a managerial and pedagogical vantage point has fallen on receptive ears. Both teachers and principals have responded positively. A general disappointment exists with the present state of affairs described above, and a need has arisen for true integrative management of the educational process, which should create an organizational culture to best achieve established educational goals in Israel (Lavie & Tirosh, 2003).

My intention is to raise the quality of school management, based on the changes that have occurred in Israeli society over recent years and an increasing awareness of the necessity to reorganize public school education (Taub Center, 2010; Lavie & Tirosh, 2003), (See Literature Review – 2.2, 2.3). I believe the conclusions reached will be practical both for improving the educational process in Israeli primary public schools and will enrich my knowledge and capabilities as Head of the Division of Education for the City.

The Ministry of Education in Israel has revised and laid out several basic goals of education in Israeli schools (Office of the Minister of Education, 2009). My research is based on attainment of four of these stated goals, those concerned with development of democratic values, development of character and personality to seek out quality of life, development of skills necessary for conducting oneself in adult life, and provision of equal opportunity to both genders. My argument claims that these goals can be more effectively achieved when break time becomes a more well thought out and organized part of the school's educational strategies. Perceptions and comments from research participants will later be analyzed and used in order to develop strategies for achieving just that. The next chapter will present the literature dealing with previous research which has been carried out in the field of my study and which I consider to be relevant to my investigation.

2. Literature review

2.1 Introduction

This review covers a period of approximately 30 years of research. A great deal of publications comprise studies conducted in Britain, where the educational significance of break time was already highlighted by Blatchford in the late 1980s, emphasized in further studies (Baines & Blatchford, 2011; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Blatchford, 1998), and in the research done by American scholars (Kellert, 2005; Lillard, 2005; Nabors et al, 2001). The works of Israeli researchers highlighted in the review have adopted philosophical and ideological concepts of the Western research (Oplatka, 2006) and explored the major problems emerging within the domain of school education (Shavit, 2009; Soen, 2002; Ruskin & Sivan, 2002).

The chapter begins by determining the place of break time in Israeli educational research and in the regulatory policies for social education of children in schools. The conceptual framework of this study is based on the studies of various areas of childhood education. The key concept rests upon the premise that school break time serves as a valuable opportunity for the social education of pupils (Blatchford & Baines, 2012; 2006; Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). Therefore, this review includes the literature related to the nature of pupil interactions during break time, the role of structured and free play in development of social skills in pupils, and other aspects concerning the quality of break time. In addition, this chapter concerns research conducted by Kahane (2000; 1997; 1975), who developed the principles of social education of children and teacher-pupil relationships by drawing on his rich experience in the area of extra-curricular activities.

The body of literature reviewed in this chapter relates to issues concerning various aspects of break time implementation. A number of publications (Shavit, 2009; O'Neil, 2008; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Schonfeld, 2006) are dedicated to the issue of schoolyard violence and the problems encountered by duty teachers and school principals in maintaining discipline and the safety of pupils during break time. The review also includes research discussing the reasons for loneliness experienced by

children in school (Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003; Kochendefer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001) as some pupils interviewed in this study complained about feelings of loneliness and social problems. Attention was paid to research into measures for tackling break time problems (Recess rules, 2007; Pellegrini, 2005). Looking to enhance the educational strategies developed for this study, examination of behaviour management techniques was also included in this review (Martin & Pear, 2007; Waguespack et al, 2006).

2.1.2 Break time within the context of educational research in Israel

Within the domain of educational research in Israel, break time remains an under-researched subject, although its significance has been mentioned across several studies with regard to various aspects of school education. Research on physical education in schools (Yalon-Chamovitz et al, 2006; Smyth & Anderson, 2000, 2003; Tilman, 2002; Aharon, 2002) demonstrated that physical activities, including those occurring during break time, are believed to play an important part in the development of motor and social skills. A number of studies dedicated to disciplinary problems in schools (Shavit, 2009; Soen, 2002;) as well as those dealing with the school climate as a whole (Rolider, 2008; 2001; 1998) pointed out that anti-social behaviours such as violence and bullying, have been observed principally during break times. Research on leisure education in school systems (Ruskin & Sivan, 2002) suggests that there is still little or no perception of the schoolyard as a physical, sociological, and educational environment, neither by principals and teachers, nor by policy makers.

The significance of this study derives from the fact that the social importance and educational value of school break times have not been explored by Israeli authors. The subject of social education in schools is considered by Israeli educational research mostly in conjunction with disciplinary matters and in light of escalating violence in schools (Shavit, Blank & Fast, 2012; Shavit, 2009; Rolider, 2008; 2001). Some studies claim that the role of the school is understood as a supplier of knowledge, with no attention paid to social education (Semyonovich & Cohen, 2011; Van Leer, 2010). Semyonovich & Cohen (2011) argue that, as long as the school mission is seen as training students to be well prepared for examinations, research thinking on social and emotional development of pupils will not affect their

behaviour. While the authors argue that pupils must acquire the tools that will develop flexibility and efficiency in working with peers, they do not explore the opportunities break time offers for developing social competence in children. Therefore, the necessity emerges to weigh the opportunities break time provides for the social education of children.

2.1.3 The place of break time in the Israeli government's educational policies

Over the past decades, Israeli educational policies have regarded social education in schools as a broad concept, referring to a wide range of social skills in pupils, including such issues as citizenship, national values, political systems, and ethical values (The Ministry of Education, 2010). The educational plan "Mafteah Ha-Lev", developed by the Israeli Ministry of Education over the years 2008-2009, set goals to bring up children as members of a democratic, values-based society and prepare them for active and considerate involvement in family, social, economic and civil life. These principles underpinned the core program for curriculum based education hours that were to be implemented through democratic lifestyle education, fostering solidarity and social responsibility and youth leadership; instilling Zionist values for Jewish children and preserving Arab and Druze identities within commitment to Israel. At the same time, the concept of school break time as a valuable time for developing social skills in children has been left out of the "Mafteah Ha-Lev" plan's considerations. When much government attention is directed towards providing opportunities for raising children's social competence, the importance of break time is obviously undervalued.

Approximately a decade ago, increased attention on school break time was noted on the part of the Israeli regulatory bodies. The Ministry of Education of Israel presented its "Active break time" recommendations as part of its promotion of healthy life-style at school. The recommendations were aimed at implementing structured activities, which increase the learning significance of break times, and at reducing anti-social behaviour in schools. Increased supervision of students during breaks was recommended, since many school educators are against uncontrolled activities, due to a high incidence of disciplinary problems. An additional purpose of the recommendations was to increase social cohesion and rapport between students and the educational staff. It has been recommended to strengthen cooperation among the

school staff and students in planning break time activities and to promote a friendly and informal educational climate. However, the "Active break" recommendations were never included in the ministry's circulars as a mandatory part of the social education in schools. The question arises as to how a tight supervision of students, with free play being frowned upon, is compatible with a friendly and informal educational climate? However, as stated, the "Active break" recommendations were never included in the Education Ministry circulars as a mandatory part of social education in schools, and therefore were not subject to thematic analysis conducted in this study.

2.1.4 Social significance of the processes taking place during break time.

Establishing relationships within peer groups as an important factor of the development of children's social skills was acknowledged by many researchers (Baines, & Blatchford, 2011; Bilton, 2010; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). It has been claimed that break time offers pupils an opportunity to reveal abilities beyond those expressed in the academic learning taking place within the classroom. During break time, a widening of the social circle is taking place (Gray, 2010).

In their broad research survey on the role of break time in school, Blatchford & Baines (2006) point out a number of significant changes in children's social lives beyond school, including decreased opportunities for informal peer contact and social interaction outside school and homes. Changes were mostly attributed to increased involvement of children in home computer-based entertainment. The significance of school break time increases in light of the survey findings that almost a third of children do not see friends outside of school more than once per week (Blatchford & Baines, 2006). The study by Blatchford & Baines (2006) is mainly concerned with the regulatory tendencies of cutting back on break times. It points to the reduction in children's opportunities for developing social skills within break time, defined as "one of the few remaining contexts for relatively safe pupil-pupil interaction" (ibid, p.2). While developing recommendations on optimizing the role of break time was not within the study's objectives, the authors suggested briefly that the problems arising during this time could be the basis for discussions with pupils and for their greater involvement in school decisions.

Existing research into break time suggests that the composition of a peer group and equality, cooperation and reciprocity between its members are the result of the pupils' free choice, compared to the interactions initiated by teachers during classes (Gleave, 2009; Isenberg & Quisenberry, 2002; Jarrett, Farokhi, Young & Davies 2001; Derries, 1997). Social skills are acquired through structured or free play (Bilton, 2010; Gleave, 2009; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Pellegrini & Smith, 1993). An important idea emerging from the research on break time is that children develop social skills through the processes of trial and error, reciprocity, and flexibility (Jarrett, 2003). At the same time, some researchers had a different perspective on the role of break time in school education (Margo J., Dixon, M., Pearce, N. & Reed, H., 2006). True to their belief that break time is the period during which the majority of disciplinary incidents occur, the authors emphasize the significance of extra-curricular, structured activities and believe that children should spend more time under supervision of responsible adults in order to reduce anti-social behaviours. There has been a more positive view of break time with regard to disciplinary problems. Drawing upon the studies of school break time and observation of children's behaviour in the playground, Gordon (2013) claims that break time can actually reduce bullying and improve learning because it gives children a healthy outlet for negative feelings and emotions.

Another important aspect of pupil interaction between classes is lunch time, characterized by Baines & Blatchford (2012) as an important time for socializing with peers and friends without the close intervention or control of adults. They add that for the large majority of children, school lunchtimes are important periods for developing relationships and social skills. However, lunchtimes are not considered by educators as occasions for learning experiences, mostly because teaching does not take place during this time, and they are not part of the formal curriculum (ibid). The findings of my study also demonstrate that children seek to socialize with peers while having a snack during break time. These practices were taken in account when developing the recommendations on creating school lunch rooms.

2.1.5 Break time as an opportunity for rest and freedom from classes

The most obvious characteristic of break time is that it constitutes a break from the classroom routine (Bilton, 2010; Jarrett, 2003; Jarrett & Maxwell, 2000; Blatchford, 1998). Compared to the rest of the school day, break time is when children are allowed the most freedom to choose what they want to do and with whom (Jarrett, 2003; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Blatchford, 1998). An important observation has been made by Pellegrini (2002) who states that break time fulfills children's need for novelty. He explains that children need a break from classes because they are temporarily bored with their immediate classroom environment. When they go outdoors for recess, they seek novelty by interacting with different peers in different situations. When the novelty of the recess environment begins to wane, children again need to change the setting, and actually pay closer attention to classroom issues (ibid).

The arguments presented by Pellegrini (2002; 1992) might be supported by the findings of an experimental research project on memory and attention conducted by Toppino, Kasserman, & Mracek (1991). It was found that recall is improved when learning is spaced rather than presented all at once. Their findings are compatible with what is known about brain functioning, that attention requires periodic novelty, with the brain requiring "downtime" to recycle chemicals crucial for long-term memory formation, and that attention involves 90- to 110-minute cyclical patterns throughout the day (Jensen, 1998).

It has been argued that children value playing outdoors (Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 1998; Smith, 1993). Break time provides a more "open setting" where children are free to leave the play situation (Jarrett et al., 2001). According to the findings of the study conducted in Australia, primary school pupils who frequently used public open space claimed they liked doing so because they enjoyed the active play, equipment available and the natural setting in which they play. Older children argued that open spaces gave them the feeling of freedom away from adult supervision (Veitch, Charles, Farley, & Newsham, 2007).

The time spent in the schoolyard between formal lessons was characterized by research participants, pupils and educators alike, by the free choice of pupils concerning its utilization. This point demonstrates the importance of using this

opportunity to nurture and develop pupils' social and independent decision making skills. Individual expression takes place out of free will driven by internal desire, satisfaction and reward (Pianta & Stuhlman, 2004; Kieff, 2001; Alexander, 2000). Many researchers suggest that children associate their free time with freedom, independence and choice (Bilton, 2010; Gleave, 2009; Blatchford, 1998; Pellegrini & Smith, 1993). Free choice is generally understood by researchers as an opportunity to select a game or game participants, or choosing peers for a chat. It is less associated with the wish of children to remain idle during break time and spend their free time between classes uninvolved in any activity organized from within the school. Some researchers argue that providing children with free choice regarding free time between classes may result in just milling or sitting around idly and chatting with peers (Rink et al., 2010). The authors believe that pupils should be mostly involved in active play during break times; sitting or milling around with peers is regarded as a worthless activity.

2.1.6 Developing social skills through game playing in the schoolyard

The large majority of researchers have claimed that game playing during break time is important both for academic achievement and development of such social skills as co-operation, negotiation and compromise, and teamwork skills (Baines, & Blatchford, 2011; Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Davies, 1995). Eighty-four percent of 11 year old children interviewed during the survey conducted in the USA pointed to game playing as their preferable way to spend time (Blatchford, Creeser & Mooney, 1990). There have been two main perspectives on the role of games in child development (Play for a change, 2007). Both are connected to development of social competence of children. One perspective views the main purpose of childhood as preparation for adulthood. This purpose can be achieved if correct interventions are identified, examined and implemented at the right time in each individual child's life (Moss, 2007, in Play for a change, 2007, p. 1). According to this perspective, play is tightly supervised by adults in order to ensure that it is productive and socializing (Meire, 2007).

Looking at play from another perspective implies that there are aspects of playing that might be more relevant to the experiences of childhood than to preparing children for adulthood. Games are claimed to afford children the opportunity to

explore, discover, construct, materialize and review, present, imagine and create, and, in addition, maintain social relations (Baines & Blatchford, 2011; Play for a change, 2007; Wood & Bennett, 2000). The second perspective involves a recognition that children deliberately seek out physical and emotional uncertainty in their play (Sutton-Smith, 2003; Spinka, Newberry & Bekoff, 2001). This uncertainty can be manifested in behaviour that may be considered anti-social, as it includes teasing and bullying, rough and tumble play with fighting, use of obscene language, as well as hazardous play that could potentially be harmful to children. The importance of this kind of play is in its provision of a relatively safe context for experiencing such "raw, primary emotions" as joy, sadness, fear or even shock and disgust (Play for a change, 2007, p.2). Developing regulation of emotions and attachment to peers and places is claimed to strengthen resiliency in children, and their emotional health can be improved by the feelings of joy and pleasure experienced during play (ibid). Pellegrini (2009) argues that play provides a good example of the ways in which biology and cultures influence each other, especially during childhood.

Another aspect of free play is resolution of ethical problems and learning about rules that enable children to be accepted in peer groups. Meire (2007) argues that children refer in their play activities to the wider social world in which they live, and that their behaviour patterns are shaped by the education they receive both at home and at school. Child-initiated games with peers are believed to be both motivating and demanding for children, since they increase use of complex social cognitive strategies that have an impact on schooling and life (Baines & Blatchford, 2011; Meece & Eccles, 2009). On the personal level, games contribute to the social involvement of children who, with the help of games, grow accustomed to roles in society (Bilton, 2010). While playing, children learn how to become involved in the game and manipulate rules and partners in order to benefit personally (ibid).

In spite of the notion that the playground should be considered "an extended classroom" (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002, p. 62) and the argument that learning is facilitated through playing (Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini, 2005) it was noted that, in primary schools, children are not provided with games that sufficiently stimulate learning (Bilton, 2010). Other research confirmed that the list of teachers' priorities did not include playing such games during break times (Corsaro, 2005). Teachers

supported the notion that learning was facilitated through game playing, but in practice, play was often considered something to be done after the learning tasks had been completed (Bennett, Wood & Rogers, 1997, in Kay, 2005).

2.1.7 Rough and tumble play as a social free play experience

My analysis of the observation and interview data suggested that, for young children, rough and tumble play (R&T) is a very popular activity incorporating physical behaviour ranging from running and chasing to tagging and wrestling. Current research concurs (Carlson, 2009; Pellis & Pellis, 2007; Javris, 2007). It was suggested that such play might have developed as a way in which children learned the fighting skills they would need to survive (Jarvis, 2007). Rough and tumble play creates scenarios for complex social interactions needed by children in order to become socially mature adults (Carlson, 2009; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998). Carlson (2009) claims that participation in this kind of free play requires children to become adept at both signaling and detecting signals, social skills children will need and use throughout their lives. Through rough and tumble play, children are also involved in the moderate to vigorous physical activity which is needed for improving their physical health (Carlson, 2006).

It has been claimed, however, that the development of post-industrial Western society over the past 25 years has resulted in an increasing reduction of the time and space allocated for children to engage in such play (Javris, 2006; Stephenson, 2003; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). Javris (2006) argued that one of the reasons for the decline in R & T play was Western education which, during the 1980s and 1990s, had tended to be focused on the development of cognitive skills, with little attention paid to the social development of children. Drawing upon ample evidence generated through research into animals and humans, the author notes that a decrease in rough and tumble play activities has negative consequences for developing the social competence of children (Javris, 2006).

A review of research into children's play activities (Tannok, 2008; 2005; Pellegrini, 2005; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Pellegrini & Smith, 1998; Johnson, 1998) leads to the conclusion that the nature and importance of rough and tumble play are often

unappreciated by teachers who do not see rough and tumble play behaviour as a state of play, but rather one of anarchy that should be controlled. Although parents and teachers distinguish the signs of rough and tumble play from play fighting, there often is a concern that the play will become fighting and may result in injuries. Both the research into rough and tumble play (Tannok, 2008; 2005) and the evidence from the current study suggests that joyful play can quickly turn into aggressive behaviour. It has been argued that managing rough and tumble play can be difficult because it requires quick and complex judgments by adults (Hill, 2010; Tannok, 2008). Therefore, it is much easier to reduce this sort of play, and this is the option many teachers are taking.

2.1.8 Structured and unstructured break times

The concepts of play will be further discussed in terms of break time organization. It has been claimed in existing research that one reason break time must be structured is due to safety maintenance when dealing with large numbers of children in a large open area (Jackson, 2008). Furthermore, structured play generally refers to situations in which adults regulate the social interaction among pupils, either in the school building or in the playground (Pellegrini, 2009; 2005; Hoffman, 1997; Pellegrini & Glickman, 1989). Structured play provides pupils with an opportunity to participate in meaningful games and physical activities, which are taught and led by a trained adult.

Some advocates of structured play have assumed that not all children know how to play (Stephen, 2006; Hofman, 1997; Corbin, 1979). Some children lack game playing skills and self-confidence, others are conforming to rules they may feel are unfair, or are excluded from games entirely. Often games end in a fight and children end up on the sidelines, disengaged (Steffen, 2006; Hofman, 1997). It has been claimed that without continual reinforcement in the form of an educator's guidance in a structured learning environment, some children may never get involved in the game activities.

Unstructured play refers to those activities in which an adult is not involved in the social interaction, neither indoors nor outside, between children in a regular school day (Pellis & Pellis, 2012; Baines & Blatchford, 2011; Hoffman, 1997). Unstructured play as well as break time, is children-centered: games are selected voluntarily by

children, who also organize their own games and determine the rules of these games (Bilton, 2010; Meire, 2007; Council for Physical Education and Children, 2001). Furthermore, it has been argued that unstructured break time periods afford perhaps the best opportunities to monitor anti-social behaviour and identify chronic bullies and their victims (Sprague & Walker, 2005).

An important factor in favouring structured break time over unstructured, is a decrease in disciplinary problems (Baines & Blatchford, 2011). Pellis & Pellis (2012) have noted that, over the past decades, the opportunity children have had for free play has eroded due to an increase in structured activities (e.g., sports, music or dance lessons) and an increasing fear of anything that may be construed as aggression. The situation aggravates when negative social behaviour is carried over from break time into the classroom, then creating a serious student management problem before, during and after school (Recess rules: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, 2007). It seems however, that those who support structured break time have little consideration for providing children the opportunity to develop creative approaches to play situations as well as to negotiate with each other in an attempt to resolve their conflicts (Pellis & Pellis, 2011; Lester & Russell, 2007; Meire, 2007).

2.1.9 Difficulties in using outdoor games according to the schedule

The issue of how and when outdoor games should be used was raised in a number of studies (Bilton, 2010; Hurst, 1996; Gura, 1992). It has been suggested that game playing should be allowed inside and outside the school, with a free flow in both directions simultaneously. A problem may arise if outdoor games become part of the formal schedule. Researchers claim that if games are limited by the schedule, their quality might be affected (Bilton, 2010). Seen by school as less important to children, outdoor game playing is fragmented, and eventually children cannot derive as much benefit (Valentine, 2004; Hurst & Lally, 1992; Gura, 1992). Limiting the time allotted for the outdoor games to 15-20 minutes, demonstrates that these games are regarded as a kind of short relaxation rather than an extension of the learning process in the classroom (Hurst & Lally, 1992).

It has been suggested that children need to play without interruption. Interrupting children who are concentrated on their activity may have a negative effect (Bilton,

2010; Jackson & McAuly, 1992). When playing an outdoor game, children need much time to adapt to their surroundings, and cannot use this time to learn new things (Cullen, 1995). When the time allocated for playing is limited, children prefer to play in the schoolyard on their lunch time or other activity, as these outdoor games are most attractive to them. Children also need time to decide which game to play, and when they finally choose the game and players, it is already time to return to the classroom. It has been suggested that children do not reach the expected level of assertiveness and other skills due to the fragmentation of their outdoor activities (Valentine, 2004; Bilton, 2002; Cullen, 1993), who confirm that fragmented and poorly planned break time games may affect the children's assertiveness and motivation to be involved in the structured activities.

Only some children seem to adapt to the conditions created by the limitation on their time for outdoor games, and not all the children are in the mood to play when the bell rings (Bilton, 2010). In addition, the pressure caused by the limitation on play time may trigger quarrels and result in behaviour patterns which are based on the recurrence of actions lacking purpose and meaning. If children know in advance that they have enough time to play, they will be more motivated and focused on the game and have more success (ibid).

2.1.10 Break time duration
The data collected in this study contained different opinions with regard to break time duration. Blatchford & Bains (2006) claim that children especially value lunchtime break when it is longer and provides them with a better opportunity to feel freedom from the rules and regulations of the rest of the school day. Over recent years, however, playtime in many schools has been reduced as a way of increasing time available for academic learning (Barros et al., 2009; Pellegrini & Holmes, 2006; Blatchford & Baines, 2006). Break time has come under criticism in both the UK and the USA and has been viewed as an unproductive use of time which could be better spent on more meaningful activities. It has been found in the USA and the UK that the duration of recess is determined by district or individual school policies, and appears to be diminishing (Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Lopes et al., 2006).

Arguments have been made that cutting back on break time is not supported by any empirical evidence (Recess rules, 2007; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Waite-Stupiansky & Findlay, 2001; Jarrett & Maxwell, 2000). Researchers claim that break time should be lengthened, as the empirical evidence shows the positive implications not only for academic achievement, but also in terms of social skills and cognitive development. Similarly, other academic literature suggests that excessive structured learning with little time for breaks decreases rather than strengthens learning ability (Patte, 2006). He draws on teachers' and administrators' perceptions of playtime in the US and points to overwhelming support for the importance of break time, arguing that shortening them is both unjustified and counterproductive.

A number of researchers (Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini, 2009; 1993; Blatchford & Baines, 2006) noted that generally, there was no explicit policy in existence regarding break time, either at the school or local level. The closest thing referring to such policy might be school or local rules regarding bullying behaviour that may occur during break time. Pellegrini (1993) recommended that an important and necessary step to be taken is a description of various configurations of break time. Further studies should provide a classification system providing information on the relations between break time configuration and pupils' classroom and playground behaviour. It was also found that both teachers and students agreed that valuable class time was often used to resolve disciplinary problems arising during break time, and that such problems seemed more numerous after the long afternoon break (Hoffman, 1997). Her study suggests that substituting an afternoon break with a teacher-structured activity class might be the way to optimally use the class time and avoid wasted periods, while still providing students with a break from their studies. However, none of my study respondents voiced the idea of substituting the time intended for a rest from learning with any structured activity.

2.1.11 Impact of gender and age differences on pupils' school activities

One of the purposes of this study was to examine whether age/gender differences exist in children's perception of break time and behaviour exhibited during this time. Researchers point to a difference between the two genders in the development of both learning habits and children's self-perception as pupils (Rhoads, 2004; Baron-Cohen, 2003; Maccoby, 2002). Figueroa (2000) claims that girls perform much better in the

first years of their school life, mostly because they are quicker to shape their standpoints within the context of the educational system. Boys adapt more slowly to the framework of class activities. They tend to be more active than girls and more restless when they have to sit for long periods (Maccoby, 2002). Educational researchers (Bronson, 2000; Millard, 1997) believe that boys are also more reluctant to comply with a school behaviour code in general and teachers' instruction in particular, and educating them is more time consuming. In contrast, girls are quieter and quickly adapt to the school environment. Freeman (2004) claims that, on average, girls are better motivated than boys to perform well in school.

During relaxation, boys more often tend to form large groups, either in the playground or in the school lobby. Their interactions often include significant amounts of rough and tumble play as well as organized and partially organized competitive games or sports (Rhoads, 2004; Maccoby, 2002). Girls are more likely to seek and maintain one or two close friends and play in smaller groups (ibid). Research finds that boys are dominant in the schoolyard and they demand and receive more teacher attention, both positive and negative, and it appears that girls already take this for granted (Kelly, 1993). It has been found that the schoolyard is a desirable place for boys, since they love more open spaces and movement while girls prefer spending time in quieter places (Bilton, 2010; Bates, 1996).

A large amount of gender-related play research is conducted in school playgrounds (Stromquist, 2007; Javris, 2006; Thomson, 2005; Pellegrini et al., 2004; Riley & Jones, 2005; Blatchford et al., 2003; Ackerley, 2003). As Meire (2007) points out, boys and girls are often observed playing in distinct same-sex groups. Most gender segregation becomes apparent around the age of 5 and increases in elementary school. Over 80% of the observations made by Blatchford, Bassett, Goldstein, & Martin (2003) in British school playgrounds, showed children being observed playing in a predominantly same-sex play group. No type of game was more likely to be a mixed-sex than a single-sex activity. Research concerning break time has shown that boys and girls have different play repertoires (Blatchford et al., 2003; Pellegrini et al., 2004). Rough and tumble play and ball games are considered to be typical boy games, whereas girls are involved more in sedentary play, skipping rope and verbal play.

There is an expanding body of research which relates the salience of sexuality in children's gender cultures and children as active agents in shaping their gender and sexual identities (Renold, 2005; Wallis & VanEvery, 2000; Epstein & Jonson, 1998). Only recently have studies on pre-teenage relations/identity begun to explore how sexuality impacts on and is shaped by gender. One of the main claims is that the primary school is identified as a key site for the production and regulation of sexuality (Renold, 2005; Robinson, 2005). Several studies have suggested that as children grow older, the size of their social group enlarges (Ridgers, 2007; Blatchford et al., 2003; Smith, 1994). Boys' networks seem to be significantly larger than girls', and they are more likely to play with same-aged peers (Blatchford et al., 2003).

2.2 Problems emerging during break time

Analysis of data in the current study revealed a number of issues related to discipline in the schoolyard, solitary behaviour in children, and schoolyard environment. These issues are outlined below.

2.2.1 Violence and abusive behaviour in schools

Research suggests that, over the past decades, aggressive behaviour is on the rise in schools (O'Neil, 2008; Reuters, 2008; Shonfeld, 2006: Olweus, 1999). Most reports about bullying and violence in schools are connected with the schoolyard (Epstein, 2008; Blatchford and Baines, 2006; Behre et al., 2001; Astor et al., 1999; Slee, 1995) which is referred to in the literature as a potentially violence-prone place. Many researchers, (Rigby, 2007; Wilson, 2006; Riley & Roustique-Forrester, 2002; Neven, 2000) note that the reasons and causes of violent behaviour at school do not begin at school. Typical developmental problems or destructive situations at home all contribute to acting out and bullying behaviours (Wilson, 2006; Elinoff et al, 2004). Research conducted over several years also revealed the presence of racism in break time violence (Rolider, 2008; 2000; Boulton, 1992; Mooney et.al., 1991; Besag, 1992; 1989). Furthermore, pupils are concerned by the lack of teachers' desire to become involved in violent schoolyard events (Shavit, 2009; Beaty & Alexeyev, 2008). Quite often, teachers become involved only after injuries have been sustained. In addition, teachers in the schoolyard during break time find it difficult to distinguish

between Rough & Tumble play (R & T play) and violence disguised as aggressive playing (Tannok, 2008; Javris, 2007; Furman, 1994).

Research on school education in Israel reveals that the age of aggressors, victims, and witnesses has steadily decreased (Shavit, 2009; Rolider, 2008; Benbinishti & Zeira, 1998; Horowitz & Frankel, 1990). According to Benbenishty et al (2006), nearly 80% of students in grades four to eleven have been exposed to recent verbal or indirect social violence; about 60% have been exposed to moderate physical violence, and about 20% have suffered from severe physical violence (ibid). Regulatory documents discussing school discipline and violent behaviour point to lack of teacher authority as the main reason for growing disciplinary problems in Israeli public schools (Shavit, 2009).

Research on bullying has revealed that it is entirely motivated by malice (Ridge, 2007). He claims that bullies do not always appear to be hostile and there may be no history of their having been physically or psychologically abused at home. According to the study by Pellegrini & Long (2002) bullying mediated children's dominance status during the transition from primary through middle school, and this might be the method by which children manage peer relationships as they make the transition into new social groups. It has also been noted that some children perceive teasing as a game, from which they derive some sort of pleasure, largely "from a sense of belonging to a group that approves of that sort of thing" (Ridge, 2007, p. 18). Ridge (2007) argues that this kind of bullying is mindless, because typically this child does not understand the harm he or she is causing. Some children have more powerful personalities; they are mentally tougher, more assertive, and sometimes less sensitive.

2.2.2 Gender differences in bullying and aggressive behaviour

Researchers found that both boys and girls are capable of expressing negative behaviour under cover of game playing (O'Neil, 2008; Davies, 2003; Marano, 1995). This manifests itself at school, both within the classroom and in the schoolyard, where physical activity often leads to both physical and verbal violence (Rigby, 2007; Furman, 1994). This is further shown and discussed in the findings section.

Research conducted in a variety of schools showed that boys from various social classes and ethnic groups were involved in bullying or aggressive behaviour (Pellegrini & Long, 2002). A large, nationally representative study conducted in the United States (Nansel et al., 2001) found that boys reported perpetrating and being victimized by bullying more than did girls. The studies examining the effects of density in crowded schoolyards suggested that the level of boys' aggressiveness and the tendency to unite into large groups changes in direct proportion with the rate of density (Bates, 1996).

Research on abusive behaviour points to an increasing number of girls exhibiting negative behaviour in a variety of ways (O'Neil, 2008). In spite of the fact that evidence shows that girls are not merely victims but aggressors as well, there is a tendency to relate to such violence with a lesser degree of seriousness (Astor et.al, 1997). There is increasing evidence that girls experience more emotional rather than physical victimization (Cullerton-Sen & Crick, 2005), and are more relationally victimized than boys (Cullerton-Sen & Crick, 2005; Ostrov & Keating, 2004; Crick & Bigbee, 1998).

There is growing evidence as well those adolescent girls are increasingly involved in violent and aggressive acts both as victims and perpetrators (O'Neil, 2008; Moretti et al, 2004; Bryant et al, 2000). Girls display in particular, "hidden" and "indirect" aggression in the form of rumor spreading and/or social exclusion, and they are increasingly using forms of verbal violence by communicating through the internet (O'Neil, 2008).

2.2.3 Children experiencing loneliness in school
There has been scant research into the experience of loneliness in childhood, particularly within the school setting. Some correlational studies have shown that loneliness is associated with shyness, poor social skills, low self-esteem and social dissatisfaction (Ames, Ames & Garrison 1997; Demir & Tarhan 2001). A greater amount of studies have been focused on children aged ten years or above. The frequency of peer victimization and degree of loneliness has been studied (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001). With regard to gender, researchers found that boys seem to experience less loneliness than do girls (Cassidy & Asher, 1992).

Research conducted by Berguno et al (2004), interviewed forty-two children aged between 8 and 10 years, about their experience of loneliness at primary school. Children's accounts of loneliness were related to break time and included descriptions of losing a best friend, of being excluded from play and from interpersonal situations, as well as being inactive and preoccupied with their own thoughts. Examination of the descriptions of loneliness given by the children revealed that they considered the main characteristic of loneliness to be a lack of interpersonal connectedness. Particularly, loneliness for a child was described either by the lack of a playmate or the absence of a very special friend. This fact is supported by previous research (Ladd & Troop-Gordon, 2003; Kochendefer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001). A child perceived by peers as alone may become the target of bullying, an experience which is likely to lead to an intensification of his\her experience of loneliness (Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop, 2001; Cassidy & Asher, 1992). Alternatively, most children claiming no experience of being victimized reported large numbers of friends (Berguno et al, 2004).

2.2.4 Teachers' wellbeing affected by schoolyard experiences

Blatchford (1989) has found that teachers view schoolyard activity as something that must be accepted as a given, like a school building itself. Too often though, break time is viewed by teachers as a liability a drain on teaching time and a behavioural headache (Recess rules, 2007: Shonfeld, 2006; Hoffman, 1997). The common complaint among teachers is that they must deal with pupil disputes occurring during break time which then often carry over and disrupt learning within the classroom (Recess rules, 2007; Public agenda, 2004; Pellegrini, 2005; Hoffman, 1997). While teacher wellbeing is believed to be of great importance for the proper functioning of schools (Wyra & Lawson, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007), little research has been undertaken to explore the interactions and roles of teachers in the schoolyard. Wyra & Lawson (2008) argue that even less information is available concerning the wellbeing of teachers while fulfilling yard duty. While education systems are dealing with issues of teacher retention (Pillay et al., 2005), the wellbeing of teachers needs to be diligently considered. Teachers frequently dealing with experiences affecting their wellbeing, face significantly rising stress levels. With long years of experience behind them, stressful situations may lead to "teacher burnout" (Wyra & Lawson, 2008, p. 12), a phenomenon which is well researched and reported in the literature

(Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Pillay et al., 2005; Jennett et al., 2003). Wyra & Lawson (2008) point out in their study that in response to questions posed, teachers also mentioned the positive aspects of schoolyard duty, including the opportunity to chat or kick a ball with pupils, chat with other teachers, and interact with nature.

Another neglected area of research is the interactions occurring between teachers and pupils in the schoolyard (Blatchford & Sharp, 1994). In his study conducted in three Australian schools, Evans (1990), details principal-pupil initiated interactions as reporting on dispute or injury between pupils, as well as bringing something personal to the attention of a teacher. Many of the teacher-initiated interactions were directive or punitive, although chatting with children or joining games also took place. Teachers took a poor view of schoolyard duty, regarding it a "necessary evil" (Evans, 1990, in Blatchford & Sharp, 1994, p. 30). Evans concluded that schoolyard contact tended to be officious and managerial.

Research conducted in Israel over the past three decades points to conflicting expectations concerning teacher authority both in the classroom and during break time (Shavit, 2009; Avinun, 2002; Omer, 2002; Freidman & Lotan, 1987). Public Opinion Survey among Teachers in Israel shows sixty four percent of teachers claiming to be ill-equipped to handle disciplinary and violence problems, and requesting greater authority in dealing with these issues (Smith & Pniel, 2003). The teacher is required to control without exercising the traditional tools of control. This leads to a weakening of teacher authority, both within the classroom and in the eyes of the public (Avinun, 2002). This is one of the leading causes of erosion of teacher morale (Omer, 2002; Freidman & Lotan, 1987).

Researchers (Shavit, 2009; Omer, 2002) claim that weakening of teacher status has led to greater control of the classroom environment by misbehaving pupils, which manifests itself most powerfully in the schoolyard. Uniforms are not required in most Israeli schools, and pupils are allowed to call teachers by their first names. Within classes, pupils speak not by raising hands, but by spontaneous outburst (Shavit, 2009). The rate of student absenteeism is higher in Israel than in any of the other 41 countries participating in the project (Kramarski & Mevorach 2004, in Shavit, 2009). Research on school discipline in Israel claims that the ethnically divided and conflict-

ridden Israeli society, and school system in particular, contributes to the erosion of school discipline (Shavit, 2009; Kramarski & Mevorach 2004; Smith & Pniel, 2003). A study of fifty two countries found that the lowest regard for authority exists in Israel (Hofstede, 1994, in Shavit, 2009). Many Jewish and Arab residents of the state, both secular and religious, subscribe to "an oppositional culture that is contemptuous of authority and of discipline and which celebrates defiance and cutting corners" (Shavit, 2009, p.1).

From the vantage point of teachers and school management, ever increasing disciplinary problems in schools were also attributed to improper parental education (Riley & Roustique-Forrester, 2002; Uziel, 2001; Rudduck et al., 1996; Friedman & Luten, 1993). Factors mentioned refer to poor parenting, disordered home life and negative parental attitudes towards school. A lack of support from parents is particularly mentioned (Riley & Roustique-Forrester, 2002; Uziel, 2001). When disciplinary problems arise, parents believe and take the side of pupils, who are well aware of this attitude (Riley & Roustique-Forrester, 2002; Uziel, 2001). At the same time, research in the UK has found that parents want a fuller, more frequent picture of their child's progress (Millar, & Wood, 2011). According to the figures, almost half of parents participating in the survey wanted more information on teaching quality. The parents required information on their child's happiness, social and emotional development, and the way in which bullying and poor behaviour was being managed. The views highlighted above suggest that parental support of the school is an important factor in creating a positive educational environment, including addressing of disciplinary issues.

2.3 Tackling break time problems

Addressing problems arising during break time will be viewed from several aspects. Consideration will be given to the concept stemming from research dedicated to the pedagogical methods determining the character of teacher-pupil relationships and interactions. A review of research on behaviour management is provided. Addressing break time problems effectively requires a change in the schoolyard environment. Various intervention programs are also considered as measures for improving break time quality.

2.3.1 Authoritarian pedagogy versus critical pedagogy approaches

The manner of reciprocal activity between teacher and pupil is believed to be shaped by both parties' behaviour (Bar-el, 1996). This behaviour is influenced by various factors, including each side's perception of the roles of both parties involved (Adelman & Taylor, 2000, 1998). A teacher's perception of the pupil could potentially determine the way in which the teacher relates towards the pupil, and further, affect the behaviour and development of the pupil (Knoell, 2012; Black et al., 2003; Bar-El, 1996). Research demonstrates that pedagogical practices differ, depending on the methods employed. Traditionally, support of strict, authoritarian pedagogical methods has followed a demand to ensure student safety and maintain classroom order (Knoell, 2012; Arum, 2005). Jagodzinsky & Greenwood (2006), point to a positive side of this approach, arguing that the student's role is to try to follow the directions of the experienced person in authority. Bracher (2006) argues that the main idea of authoritarian pedagogy is to support the authoritarian's identity by satisfying the individual without actually permitting his/her identity to be authentically expressed.

Critical pedagogy, on the other hand, (Giroux, 2011; Freire, 1998; Shor, 1980) aspires to free the student from the oppressive and formal structure, and is evident when a teacher desires to develop a strong identity in the student (Bracher, 2006). Within the classroom environment, one of the potential outcomes of such pedagogy is that students themselves assume more responsibility for the class (Shor, 1980). Humanistic psychologists (Maslow, 1998; Rogers, 1980; Montessori, 1936), promoted education of the whole child, including intellect and self-esteem, and ability to set and achieve appropriate goals. Some scholars emphasized voluntary, non-hierarchic teacher-pupil interactions based on a meaningful dialogue between the two parties (Kahane, 2000; 1974).

Discussion on different pedagogical approaches raises the issue of teacher authority (Harjunen, 2009; Jagodzinsky & Greenwood, 2006). Researchers argue that understanding of teacher authority is often narrow and restricted and the term is often used as a synonym for control (Macleod, MacAllister & Pirrie, 2012: Arum, 2005; Wrong, 2002). Macleod, MacAllister & Pirrie (2012, p. 505) argue that coercive authority as well as authority by inducement seem to be associated with a traditional

concept of education, which places a greater emphasis on control rather than discipline. The authors suggest that teachers find in personal authority "most optimism for their profession". Other researchers claim that teacher authority is the combination of professional and personal qualities which foster the creation of a community of learners instead of a power struggle within the classroom, and for provision of the care and needs of individual students (Pace, 2007; 2003; Galton, 2007).

The issues of different pedagogical approaches have been examined by researchers only with regard to the relationships taking place in the classroom setting. Apparently, most researchers into school education believe that the manner in which teachers and pupils relate to each other during classes should be similar to that occurring during break time. The findings from research into break time (Fletcher, 2007; Blatchford & Sumpner, 1998; Blatchford, 1998) demonstrate that pupils perceive break time as freedom from formal tasks demanded of them during formal class time. Pupils believe that break time allows for more personal freedom, thus altering the rules of conduct from those in place during the time of instruction. The issue of interactions between teachers and pupils in the schoolyard is considered a neglected area of research (Blatchford & Sharp, 1994). I suggest that some aspects of the teacher-pupil relationships and the pedagogical methods shaping them should be discussed, as these relationships take place both during and between classroom times.

I suggest that there is a striking lack of studies discussing positive experiences of teachers on schoolyard duty. Teacher-pupil interaction in the schoolyard is considered in the literature only in terms of schoolyard supervision of pupils and tackling disciplinary problems (Evans, 2001; Neven, 2000). Authoritarian pedagogical methods seem to prevail in the schoolyard. Evans (2001, p.48) notes that teachers often complain that schoolyard duty "continually forces them into a managerial and policing role" which adversely affects the possibility of developing positive interactions with pupils.

The proper training of teachers assigned to supervise pupils during free time between classes was considered an effective measure for making break time a resourceful way to give children a rest from the classroom and tackling behavioural problems which

might arise (Lester & Russell, 2007; Pellegrini, 2005; Hoffman, 1997). Teachers should receive training including definitions and types of bullying, effects of bullying on victims, school code of conduct and expectations, and intervention methods when witnessing bullying incidents or when these are reported to them by students (Burnham, 2011).

2.3.2 The principles of social education developed by Kahane

Based upon acquaintance with Kahane's (2000; 1997; 1975) work with youth, I have concluded that his work can be a valuable contribution to the ideas of social education promoted in this study. Comprehensive research conducted by Kahane (2000; 1997; 1975) was based on the study of various extra-curricular activities, and created the ground for his theory of development of social skills both within and beyond the school curriculum. His educational model is based on the following principles:

Voluntarism - a free choosing of goals or connections; running a class in such a way as to allow pupils a good deal of autonomy;

Moratorium - straying temporarily from established norms, trial and error are legitimate, and no sanctions are imposed for "mistaken" activities.

Multidimentionalism - the expression of the individual within the framework of a wide range of activities, differing in content but equivalent in value (academic studies, dance, sports, and social activities); setting similarly weighted goals in multidimensional situations in order to express individual interests and abilities;

Symmetry - reciprocal relationships and enjoyment of similar resources; tasks assigned by teachers are arranged in such a way as to prevent undue influence of stronger pupils over weaker ones.

Kahane refers to a unique system of teacher-pupil relationships, according to which the interactions between teachers and students are mostly voluntary, non-hierarchic, and multi-dimensional. This approach is more child-centered, rules and norms of behaviour are more flexible, and actions are not highly monitored and supervised by

teachers. Such an approach encourages a unique educational process, with the potential to reach goals unachievable by more formal approaches (1997). Four main principles, described below, underpin the system of teacher-student relationships: voluntarism, moratorium, multidimentionalism and symmetry. Similar ideas were articulated in works by other educational researchers (Maker, 2008; Martin, 2007; Darling & Bransford, 2005; Sizer, 1992; Bossert, 1979; Bennett, 1976).

2.3.2.1 Voluntarism

Voluntarism may be described as a free choosing of goals or connections (Kahane, 2000). The extent of the voluntarism directly affects the negotiating power of the participants, and their commitment to ethical behaviour. The informal teacher tends to run his class in such a way as to allow pupils a good deal of autonomy. This autonomy may be seen in many ways, including seating arrangements, and in independent pupil initiatives, both academic and social (Sizer, 1992). Pupils are motivated to identify with subjects in the curriculum (Gardner, 1993). In addition, weaker pupils are more likely to take part in the learning process, as opposed to the more formal environment (Bossert, 1979; Bennett, 1976).

2.3.2.2 Moratorium

Moratorium allows for straying temporarily from established norms (Kahane, 1975). This is a stage in Erikson's developmental theory, in which trial and error are legitimate and indeed often encouraged, there being no sanctions against normative, "mistaken" activities (Erikson 1987). Moratorium is situated between two extremes: unbridled permissiveness on the one side, and rigid boundaries on the other (Kahane, 2000). Teachers give attention and rewards, distinguishing between pupil behaviour and feedback given on said behaviour, in order to enable pupils to understand what is expected from them. This principle has been elaborated by other researchers (Martin, 2007; Lyster & Ranta, 1997; Gardner, 1993). Instead of using the scheme "teacher asks - pupil responds", these teachers allow additional pupils to participate in the response and delay judgment (Page, 1991). In so doing, they allow for realization of developmental processes which become possible under moratorium conditions (Plowman, 2003; Bennett, 1976).

2.3.2.3 Multidimensionalism

Multidimensionalism is the expression of the individual within the framework of a wide range of activities, differing in content but equivalent in value (academic studies, dance, sports, and social activities). People tend to set similarly weighted goals in multidimensional situations in order to express their interests and abilities, and to achieve power and influence through these goals (Kahane, 2000).

The teacher tends to organize lessons in such a way so as to enable pupils to learn through use of varied material, with varied degrees of difficulty (Gardner, 1993; Maker, 2008). Bennett (1976) points out that these teachers avoid uniform lessons and tasks. The classroom becomes a place in which success is multidimensional and is measured against varied aspects. Sizer (2001) presents the rationale and logistics of "personalizing" instruction to meet the needs of students in today's classroom. He addresses leadership needs to personalize instruction. Even when tasks are similar, the teacher prepares lessons in which different pathways to success become evident (Darling & Bransford, 2005; Bidwell & Kasarda, 1980).

2.3.2.4 Symmetry

Symmetry refers to reciprocal relationships; participants enjoy similar resources, and notions of "give" and "take" are balanced (Sahlins, 1972: 147-148 in Kahane, 2000). Symmetrical situations preclude the ability of one side to impose its will on another and foster the mutual acceptance of universal behavioural codes.

The teacher organizes classroom activity, bringing about cooperation through a balanced use of power and influence, (Glew et al, 2005). Tasks assigned to groups are arranged in such a way as to prevent undue influence of stronger pupils over weaker ones. The teacher tends to make lesson plans somewhat flexible, allowing them to fit the needs and interests of pupils (Glew, 2005; Demore, 2006; Bennett, 1976; Schmuck & Schmuck, 1971).

2.3.3 Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory

Time spent by children both within the classroom and in the schoolyard, comprises two components of the school day, providing two separate environments in which the child grows and develops. My view of the school day as the sum of its parts is

influenced by Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory. Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) developed his ecological theory in order to explain how a child's development is affected by what is occurring around him and by the environment in which he lives. He stresses the effect of the environment on development of the person, and of the person on the environment as well.

2.3.3.1 The five environmental systems

The ecological systems theory holds that we encounter different environments throughout our lifespan that may influence our behaviour in varying degrees. These systems include the microsystem, the mesosystem; the exosystem, the macrosystem, and the chronosystem (See detailed explanation on page 34) .

The ecological developmental perspective sees the child in all his biological detail, with genetic make-up, temperament, and rate of development at the centre. The child exists in differing environments, connected through interdependent systems and occurrences. The child's development is dependent upon the level of interaction between the physical, economic, social, emotional, and cultural environments, in which he is immersed, and his temperament, needs, and abilities at a particular point in time. The environment affects the child and the child has an effect on his environment as well.

In addition to the interaction between the child and his environment, development is also affected by interactions between different social systems. Attention given to the interaction between the social system in which the child is immersed, and alternative social systems, enables prediction of the effect of the system on future events (Dayan, 2001).

Bronfenbrenner (1979, 1986), established the ecological model, focusing on the relationship between development and environment. He described a person's ecological environment as concentric circles, with the person standing in the centre point. His central premise is that identification and comprehension of the interactions between the child's "environmental circles" is vital to understanding his development according to five environments\systems:

Microsystem: The system in which the child grows up, having direct influence on his development (family, school, social).

Mesosystem: The relationships between the Microsystems in one's life. (School relationships may be affected by family relationships.)

Exosystem: The setting in which there is a link between the context wherein the child does not have any active role, and the context wherein he is actively participating.

Macrosystem: The system reflecting the culture and ideology of the society in which the child lives.

Chronosystem: Transitions and shifts in one's lifespan.

2.3.4 Behavioural approaches

The environment in which a child develops includes geographical aspects, climatic, political, public, cultural, and psychological. Every aspect affects child development.

An atmosphere encouraging learning, development, and cooperation among students themselves and between students and teachers, is essential for fostering the educational process (Yariv, 2010). Students who find it difficult to maintain the behavioural framework expected of them, disrupt the learning and social processes of themselves as well as of their friends, and pose a challenge to the educational staff (Oplatka, 2007; Zidane, 2008). Disciplinary problems also negatively affect teacher-student relationships (Almog, 2002). The issue of disciplinary problems has been extensively studied in Israel (Bar-Lev & Frenkel, 1995; Yariv, 1999; Binbinsti at el; 2004; Zidane, 2008), as well as throughout the world (Aronson, 2000; Kern at el, 2002; Ornstein, 1990; Bear, 2001; Losen et al, 2011).

Several approaches exist for explaining the causes of behavioural problems:

Psychoanalytic approach

Behavioural approach

Social learning approach

Humanistic approach

Cognitive approach

2.3.4.1 Psychoanalytic approach

Freud, who puts forth this approach, reasoned that two major innate instincts exist, which guide human behaviour. He felt that aggression is so innate in all humans, but that through the process of personality development, the child learns to curb his natural aggressive tendencies. This restraint is necessary in order to be able to live in family and society. Freud's detractors argued that his theory paints man as passive, shorn of his free will and his psychological freedom. Freud had emphasized the unconsciousness of man's motivation, and denied his rationalism (Rolnik, 2002). Other critics of Freud claim that his work is based upon late 19th and early 20th century elite population samples, and it is not possible to apply this work to the overall modern population. In addition, basic factors of the theory such as libido cannot be measured objectively.

Despite the above arguments, Freud explains human behaviour better than any other personality theory through identification of human behaviour often representing a compromise between our wishes and fears. Identifying the unconscious process, playing an important role in many of our behaviours, is today almost universally accepted (Caligor et al, 2007).

2.3.4.2 Behaviourist approach

The Behaviourist approach emphasizes the importance of the environment or other stimuli that shape behaviour. According to this approach, behaviour is the result of continual interaction between personal and environmental variables (McLeod, 2007). Environmental conditions shape behaviour through learning. A person's behaviour, in turn, shapes the environment. People and situations influence each other. In order to predict behaviour, one must understand the manner in which characteristics of the individual interact with the stimulus (Skinner, 1953, 1974; Heward & Cooper, 1992; Morris, 1993). This approach describes human action in functional rather than mentalist terms. Attributing a particular behaviour to will power, fear of failure, instinct, or passion, does not provide sufficient evidence without additional connected environmental factors (Skinner, 1969, 1974). As of today, the behaviourist approach is called the "social learning approach" or "social cognitive approach".

Proponents of the Behaviourist approach point out that it has brought us to understand human actions as reactions to a person's surroundings. This has enabled us to focus upon the manner in which the environment influences human behaviour, and how environments might be changed in order to amend behaviour. Those arguing against this approach claim that it places too much value on the influence of surrounding environmental factors. In addition, other important factors such as emotion, self image, desire and inspiration, are ignored (Lejeune et al, 2006).

2.3.4.3 Social Learning approach

Albert Bandura is considered the founder of the approach (Haggbloom, 2002). Considered a moderate behaviourist, he did not agree with the psychoanalytic approach which claims that a person is driven only by internal forces, nor with Skinner's view that a person is only driven by external forces. Bandura believed that the individual is affected by external factors. According to this theory, behaviour is influenced not only by internal cognitive processes, but also by viewing the behaviour of others and the environment in which the behaviour occurs (Bandura, 2008). The uniqueness of this theory over other behaviourist approaches is as follows:

A. Human personality and behaviour are not solely influenced by environment, but this Influence and interaction is mutual.

B. Human behaviour is influenced, in addition to environmental factors, by cognitive processes. Thinking and processing information enable human ability to predict behavioural results, and consequently to control behaviour.

The Social Learning approach, as opposed to the Psychoanalytical approach, gives much less credence to biological behavioural factors. The main focus is placed upon environmental issues. Both the Behaviourist and Social Learning approaches share an optimism concerning the possibility to manage human behaviour through changes in the surrounding environment (Mun at el 2003).

2.3.4.4 Humanistic approach

This approach was developed by the Association of Humanistic Psychology, as an alternative to the Psychoanalytic and Behavioural approaches. The Association has adopted certain central principles (McLeod, 2007):

<u>The individual undergoing the experience</u>: In order to fully understand the individual, he must be viewed within the context of his subjective opinions about the world, his perceptions about himself and his sense of self-worth.

<u>Human choice, creativity and self-actualization</u>: Individuals are motivated not solely by basic physiological needs, rather by the need to develop potential and abilities.

Humanist psychologists do not argue that biological and environmental variables can influence behaviour, but they emphasize the role of the individual in determining and creating his own destiny. They believe in the ingrained goodness in people, and that individuals vary and strive for growth and self-realization (Dryden at el, 2008).

Supporters of this approach point out that it has returned the individual's own experiences to play an important part in any evaluation concerning his or her personality. Critics of the approach claim the values upon which it is based; placing satisfaction and self-realization at the top of the hierarchy of values may provide a justification for egotism (Berrigan et al, 2003).

2.3.4.5 Cognitive Behavioural approach

The Cognitive Behavioural approach emphasizes the connection between thinking and motivation, and learning and behaviour. This approach was developed during the 1970's by a number of researchers (Ellis, 1980; Beck et al, 1976; Bandura, 1977; Kanfer, 1976; Lazarus, 1982 ;Maichenbaum, 1977).

George Kelley was one of the original psychologists who claimed that cognitive processes influence an individual's functioning (Clark, DA, & Beck, AT 2010). Reality is perceived by the individual according to the meaning and significance with which it has been attached. The individual's feelings, conclusions, and attitudes, are derived as the result of the above processes. This approach examines the way in which thought and information processing come into conflict and occasionally cause behavioural problems (Beck et. al. 2011).

Proponents of the Cognitive Behavioural approach base their claim on its use of empirical information. In addition, the approach utilizes cognitive structures in order

to explain behavioural differences. On the other hand, critics of the approach claim that its terminology is vague (scheme, personality pattern), and that behaviour can be explained without any need for cognition.

2.3.5 Behaviour management techniques

Behaviour management assumes that methods can be developed for observing and measuring behaviours and designing effective intervention measures. It has been agreed by many researchers that modeling positive behaviour helps create a positive environment, in which pupils feel safe and are able to develop social skills which will serve them throughout their lives, both during and after their studies (Miltenberger, 2011; Cowley, 2010; Waguespack et al, 2006; Dwyer, 2003). Particularly in primary school, the pattern of a pupil's school career is being set, and if parents do not fully appreciate the need to provide their children with positive behaviour models, it becomes the teachers' primary task to model appropriate behaviour (Cowley, 2010). Negligence in monitoring pupil activity results in development of antisocial behaviour (Shavit, 2009; Pellegrini, 2005; Olweus, 2003). Children interpret this negligence as apathy (Olweus, 2003).

Research claims that intervention measures can be precisely defined and management techniques can be applied in everyday life (Miltenberger, 2011; Martin & Pear, 2007). Behaviour management techniques are context-dependent and intervene at all levels (Miltenberger, 2011; Martin & Pear, 2007; Waguespack et al, 2006). Intervention techniques include methods for impacting on an individual's current environment in order to encourage him\her to function better. When a behaviour pattern has a specific trigger, then an educator may develop a set of measures intended to neutralize this trigger, or an alternative behaviour may be introduced and programmed to occur within the context of the trigger (Waguespack et al, 2006).

Although specific limits exist, such as temperamental or emotional impacts related to Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) or depression, children tend to behave more effectively under the right set of consequences: reinforces are consequences that strengthen behaviour while punishments are consequences that weaken behaviour (Mather & Goldstein, 2001). Pupil behaviour is managed and altered by the consequences of classroom behaviour. Several steps were identified in

this process (Mather & Goldstein, 2001; Bear, 1990): definition and description of the problem; designing a way to change the behaviour; identification of an effective reinforcer and consistent application of the reinforcer in order to shape or change behaviour. Reinforcement and punishment techniques are based on sets of principles (Miltenberger, 2011; Walker & Shea, 1991); reinforcement or punishment must follow the target behaviour as soon as possible; reinforcement or punishment should fit the target behaviour and must be meaningful to the child; multiple reinforcements or punishments are more likely to be effective than single reinforcements or punishments.

Teachers use a significant degree of positive reinforcement for desired behaviours (Mather & Goldstein, 2001). When a desired behaviour is exhibited, teachers frequently respond with a consequence which might increase the reoccurrence of that behaviour. However by middle elementary school and through secondary school, teachers begin paying increasing attention to negative behaviours and less to appropriate behaviours. Attention paid to the undesirable behaviour might bring it to a stop in the short run, but it will occur more frequently in the long run (Walker & Walker, 1991).

Positive reinforcement programs should begin at the level at which children can succeed and be positively reinforced (Goldstein & Brook, 2007). Often, teachers set up good behavioural programs, but set initial criteria for success at too high a level. Positive reinforcement should immediately follow appropriate behaviour and should be specific and continuous (ibid). Problem behaviour must be defined operationally after which a level of baseline occurrence must be determined. Over the course of time, if the child succeeds, the necessary criteria for reinforcement can be gradually increased (ibid). Mather & Goldstein (2001) argue that it is easier to increase than decrease behaviour. Therefore, when choosing target behaviour, it is preferable to focus on behaviours to be increased rather than on those to be decreased.

2.3.6 Addressing schoolyard environment problems
The educational process is characterized by many factors, including a fair amount of disciplinary issues. While these issues occur at school in general, they have a tendency to arise with greater prevalence during break time (Rolider, 2008).

According to Slee (1995), the schoolyard too often appears to be a dull place, with little to capture the imagination and interest of the children. Other researchers (Bilton, 2010; Rivkin, 1995; Higgins, 1994) concur, adding that boredom is a major factor in contributing to anti-social behaviour during break time. Children need versatile equipment and play environments, and are easily bored if the schoolyard provides few opportunities for them to engage in activities they enjoy.

Researchers argue that children prefer schoolyards offering a variety of activities and allowing them to manipulate the setting (Evans, 2001; Rafferty, 1999; Groves & Mason, 1993). Research showed that children desired locations in which they could climb, explore, and take risks, and the most popular equipment was that which allowed them "to adapt it, to place new meanings into it" (Tillman, 1994, p. 47). Neven (2000) notes, those schools adopt a policy of 'defensive education' whereby, in order to deal with schoolyard problems, they adopt a punitive approach and reduce or restrict play opportunities. Within the belief that safety and ease of supervision have come to dominate school management thinking about the schoolyard, Evans (1994, p.34) states: "The playgrounds and school environment discourage creative play. There are rules defining where balls may be kicked and where running may or may not occur. Children are not allowed to run on paths or jump off walls. Trees are not to be climbed and natural materials are not to be used for building cubbies … These rules are designed to make our supervision easier".

Tillman (1994) found that, when children were actively consulted about what they would like to see in the playground, they felt that the school cared about them. When they were not consulted, children saw this as an implication that school management did not care. The children reported that the only thing they were supposed to do in the schoolyard was to rush around chasing each other, or participate in organized activities. Higgins (1994) concurs, noting that a school that has a bleak and barren schoolyard does not create the impression that it is a caring environment.

The studies of Took (2011), Broda (2007) are examples of a comprehensive work that provides educators with practical suggestions on how to make the schoolyard a positive and enriching experience for pupils. The main concept of these studies is a

use of the outdoors as an instructional tool and creation of a schoolyard in which pupils can engage in a variety of meaningful activities. Many researchers believe that children should be actively and genuinely involved in decisions about schoolyards (Evans, 2001; Rafferty, 1999; Freeman, 1995; Tillman, 1994). Tillman (1994) and Rafferty (1999) claim that children have definite ideas about what constitutes a good schoolyard and are capable of translating their ideas into practical outcomes if given an opportunity. With regard to children's involvement in improving a schoolyard, Rafferty (1999, p. 5) concluded that "Giving children a voice helped in personal and social development, raising confidence and encouraging good citizenship".

2.3.7 Implementing school-wide programs

Measures for addressing pupil behavioural problems arising during break time can be implemented through a range of various intervention programs. A widely known program for decreasing bullying among school children is the intervention model described by Olweus (1993). This program includes three levels. The first level refers to school-wide interventions, including surveys of bullying; monitoring of suspected bullies; school-wide policies addressing issues of aggression, and teacher training to increase awareness about bullying. Secondly, classroom-level interventions include implementation of classroom rules against bullying; regular class meetings to discuss abusive behaviour in schools; and meetings with parents to teach them how to identify the signs which might indicate that their child is either a bully or a victim. At the third level, individual-level interventions are used, involving discussions with students identified either as bullies or as the target of bullies. This program has been widely adopted, and has been proven effective in reducing bullying and other forms of antisocial behaviour among students at primary and middle schools (ibid).

Some researchers connect the level of violent behaviour in children and adolescents to their inability to spend their free time meaningfully (McCarroll et al, 2008). While leisure programs can contribute greatly to the development of the physical, intellectual and emotional development of young people, they should be designed with due care and concern in order that they not be used as a means for excluding youth from participating in other aspects of social life (United Nations World Youth Report, 2005; World Leisure Association, 2000). The school system should take

responsibility for development of suitable programs that instill the culture of leisure, and make this process part of the school curriculum (Ruskin & Sivan, 2002).

Results from the Study of "Playworks" activities in Eight Bay Area Schools (USA) showed that with successful program implementation, "Playworks" could improve school climate. "Playworks" is a national non-profit organization whose mission is to improve the health and social well-being of children through increasing opportunities for physical activities and safe, meaningful play. The organization provides schools with full-time coaches who teach students games with a common set of rules and provide conflict resolution tools. This reportedly led to improved student engagement and reductions in conflict during recess and also reduced teacher stress levels while on yard duty. One teacher reported that schoolyard duty became "a lot more relaxing…you actually enjoy yard duty now" (Malloney et al., 2011, p. 5).

Some researchers claimed that obtaining the skills required for peer conflict resolution, building positive teacher-pupil relationships, and a school climate that encourages normal development of children depends on the level of the pupils' participation in school activities and decision making process (Benbenishty & Astor, 2005; Welsh, 2000; Smith & Sharp, 1994). Pupils should participate in task groups which initiate and implement measures to prevent and reduce school violence. In this way, schools provide pupils with the skills to be assertive, to be supportive of each other, to resolve conflicts constructively, and thus eventually help themselves (Smith & Sharp, 1994, in Benbenishty & Astor, 2005, p. 122).

2.4 Conclusion

Existing research suggests that recess can play an important role in the education, social development, and health of elementary school children. One may conclude that, as break time represents part of a school day, it concerns many aspects of childhood development. Education in schools has traditionally been measured in terms of teaching a curriculum that is driven by year-long preparation for tests (Malone, 2006; Schneider, 2001). Still, the issue of break time has not been sufficiently addressed as a component in the comprehensive education of children (Blatchford & Baines, 2006). Both existing research (Bilton, 2010; Kay, 2005) and the findings of the current study demonstrate that teachers make little effort to

provide children with games that stimulate learning. The result has been a disregard for the schoolyard as an area for educational purposes and a tendency to disconnect break time-related issues from school education. This has had implications upon development of the yearly curriculum, in which much emphasis is placed on classroom teaching and learning processes.

The significance of the research reviewed for this study is that school break time is viewed as a complex matter with a number of factors that need to be taken into account. Further, I outline a number of issues which need to be addressed with regard to break time purpose and implementation.

School break time has already been characterized as an informal part of the formal education process due to the free choice of pupils concerning the utilization of this time (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Blatchford, 1998). The question is whether the pupils' understanding of free choice is always compatible with that of educational researchers and school educators who associate it with an opportunity to select a game or game participants or choosing members for a peer group. Data collected in this study revealed that, during break time, children desired freedom from rules of conduct and from break time activities imposed by the school. One might ask how often pupils are taught about the difference between freedom and anarchy, and about the relationship between freedom and discipline. Until now, no research has been devoted to the use of free time between classes in order to explain the balance between freedom and discipline.

A great deal of research is dedicated to the advantages of structured break time and play (Blatchford & Bains, 2006; Pellegrini, 2005; 1995; Blatchford et al., 2003; Blatchford, 1998) while unstructured recess is too often associated with incidents of poor discipline and antisocial behaviour (Epstein et al., 2008; Recess rules, 2007; Schonfeld, 2006). The question remains as to how to allow for unstructured play, free from bullying and violence, without placing it back within the framework of an organized break time. In light of the research evidence supporting the importance of R & T play (Carlson, 2009; Tannok, 2008; Pellis & Pellis, 2007), the issue of balancing structured and unstructured break time should be addressed.

Research demonstrates that over the past decades, aggressive behaviour is on the rise in schools (O'Neil, 2008; Shonfeld, 2006: Gentile, 2004; Olweus, 1999). The question arises as to what methods should prevail in addressing this problem. Should teachers intervene immediately or, as some teachers from the current study have suggested, allow pupils an attempt to resolve their conflicts independently, thus enabling them to acquire necessary social skills? Another important question is when and how the issue of conflict resolution should be addressed when the dispute is carried over from break time into the classroom?

There has been little research on peer interactions taking place during free play, in particular on the interactions involving playthings brought from home and resolving ethical problems pertaining to these interactions. By so doing, children use an additional opportunity to gain social experience. While bringing playthings from home should be prohibited by school management, it is questionable whether this measure can be completely eliminated. One can suggest that providing pupils with a versatile playground (Bilton, 2010; Evans, 2001; Tillman, 1994) will effectively reduce the practice of bringing playthings from home.

Enjoyment of a snack and conversation as part of social life within peer groups was scarcely addressed in the research literature (Baines & Blatchford, 2012) and was entirely overlooked in the Israeli research into school education. The problem of creating an attractive eating environment, which would allow pupils an opportunity for free social interaction, is still to be addressed by Israeli schools.

While outdoor break time activities take place in the presence of duty teachers and, in many cases, with the involvement of school principals, there has been little research exploring interactions between teachers and pupils from the vantage points of both these groups. Very little research is available that investigates the interactions and roles of teachers in the school yard and the wellbeing of teachers while engaging in schoolyard duty (Wyra & Lawson, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007). Except for meeting the demands of assuring pupil safety and prevention of violent behaviour, little has been done in developing policies for the teachers involved in the fulfillment of schoolyard duty in Israeli schools. More research is necessary to examine how the concept of meaningful dialogue developed in the field of informal education can be

used for the improvement of teacher-pupil relationships. In addition, the role of school principals in break time organization has not been studied in Israeli research.

Research supports the notion that behaviour modeling plays a key role in the socialization of children who incorporate behaviours and strategies from various models into their own behavioural repertoire, and modify them according to their experience (Cowley, 2010; Waguespack et al, 2006). While a great deal of research into behaviour management techniques is focused on the modeling of children's behaviour in the classroom, more thinking is needed on how the measures for observing, determining and modeling proper behaviours can be applied to development of appropriate pupil behaviour during school break time.

I claim that break time has many aspects, as defined above that have not yet received the attention they warrant. These aspects will be addressed in later chapters. The data collected in this research might fill gaps and provide signposts for further investigation.

3. Methodology of research

The main goal of this study is to improve the quality of school break time by developing research based strategies for social education. My professional experience and the research evidence accumulated over the past three decades have enabled me to suggest that break time at school is not simply free time between classes, but rather time which may be socially beneficial to pupils. The main concept is that break time represents a valuable opportunity for the social education of pupils (Blatchford & Baines, 2012; 2006; Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). My argument is that the ideas obtained through this investigation, together with those discussed in previous research into break time, would provide the grounds for creating a workable model for social education.

The main research question I have aimed to address in this inquiry is: what can be done to incorporate break time into an effective part of the social education of pupils? In order to seek out answers to this question, a number of sub-questions were posed:

1. How are the purpose and organization of school break time understood by regulatory bodies and the school population?
2. How do boys and girls spend their free time between classes?
3. What issues are associated with fulfillment of break time duty?
4. What issues may affect break time quality?
5. What measures are considered necessary in order to achieve break time quality?

3.1 Choice of the research method

Selection of the research paradigm and methodology is the issue any researcher must address when embarking on research. Given the concept that research methods should be congruent with a philosophy of knowledge (Cohen et al., 2011; Bryman, 2004; Guba and Lincoln, 1994), the question arose as to how to determine the paradigm framework within which this research would be conducted. Guba and Lincoln (1994) characterize the inquiry paradigms according to their stance toward the following

three aspects – ontological, epistemological and methodological. The ontological aspect concerns the form and nature of reality and what can be known about it. The epistemological aspect requires addressing the nature of the relationship between the knower and what can be known. The frameworks of research differ on the basis of their grounding in epistemology which provides the foundation for research and its theoretical perspective (Cohen et al, 2011; Bryman, 2004; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Based on the preceding ontological and epistemological assumptions, a researcher then decides in what way the research can be designed (a methodological aspect).

Addressing the research questions of this study is concerned with exploring the social phenomena of school break time. Social research distinguishes between two major philosophical traditions - positivist and interpretivist - which are based on different assumptions about the nature of reality and the nature and scope of knowledge. Positivism implies that social phenomena and categories exist beyond the control of the social actors and their actions. (Cohen et al., 2011; Williamson, 2006; Bryman, 2004; Marsh & Stoker, 2002). The positivist epistemology makes the assumption that knowledge remains unaffected by the act of observation. The role of researchers is neutral; they do not influence what is being observed (Charmaz, 2000; Bruner, 1996). Positivist research usually starts with theories and models, determines variables for study, and predicts their relationships through framing hypotheses which are to be tested. The positivist approach adopts a research methodology based on either physical or statistical controls and translates into quantitative research which aims largely at statistical generalizability sought through a deductive method (Cohen et al, 2011; Williamson, 2006; Bryman, 2004; Patton, 2002; Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

The philosophy of interpretivism, into which the constructivist paradigm fits, takes a different stance on reality (Cohen et al, 2011; Williamson, 2006). Interpretivism represents a broad term that encompasses several different paradigms concerned with the meanings and experiences of human beings (Williamson, 2006; Bryman, 2004; Webber, 2004; Bruner, 1996; Guba and Lincoln, 1994). Whereas positivism is based on the logic of discovery, constructionism is based on the logic of interpretation (Bryman, 2004). The interpretivists consider themselves part of the research process, in contrast to the positivists' position of being external to the research process. "The observer is a part of the observed. What he sees affects the way in which the

researcher defines, measures, and analyzes" (Charmaz, 2000, p. 525). Interpretivists favour field work done in a natural setting and within a specific context; they embrace an inductive style of reasoning and qualitative data collected in order to gain insight into each individual's experience of a phenomenon (Williamson, 2006; Bryman, 2004; Patton, 2002; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Before understanding a situation, researchers need to understand the context: situations affect behaviour and perspectives and vice versa (Cohen et al, 2011). I studied the break time issues within the context of two Israeli schools, and therefore, the matter of school break time can be characterized as "socially situated, context-related, context-dependent and context-rich" (Cohen et al., 2011, p. 219). As stated, the comprehension of break time issues is closely connected to the manner in which they are articulated by research stakeholders. Such a standpoint advocates the interpretivist approach to the perception of social reality, emphasizing the importance of the subjective experiences of individuals in the creation of the social world (Cohen et al, 2011).

In order to understand how people perceive their experiences as well as how they interact with one another and interpret these interactions within the context of the social world, researchers engage with qualitative methodologies (Padgett, 2008; Johnson & Waterfield, 2004). A major strength of the qualitative approach is the depth to which explorations are conducted and descriptions are written (Bruner, 1996). Given that my research interest was driven by the needs of the school community and cultural understandings, and focused on situations and behaviour patterns pertinent to break time practices, this study involved the methods considered central to qualitative investigation: prolonged stay in the field and in-depth interviewing. My argument is that collection of and listening to the research participants' words, along with observation of their interactions within a natural setting allows me to better understand the processes taking place. Problems emerging in the pupil-peer and teacher-pupil interactions are revealed through use of this method. Data collection was also aided by review of documentation related to break time implementation and a questionnaire administered to pupils. While questionnaires are not considered to be among the most prominent methods utilized in qualitative research, they can be useful as a means of collecting information from a wider sample than that reached by personal interview (Woods, 2006). A questionnaire was used in my research to enable quick collection of data from a large number of respondents

within a short period of time, and therefore provided me the opportunity to examine a wide range of children's views , revealing their perceptions on break time.

As stated, my investigation was conducted within the setting of two public primary schools. It has evolved as an attempt to study "a phenomenon of some sort occurring within a bounded context (Miles & Guberman, 1994) and therefore has the features of a case study. Yin (2003) argues that case study methods can be employed when "how" or "why" questions are addressed, when the researcher has little control over the events studied, and when the research is focused on a phenomenon within the real-life context. A more comprehensive definition of case study research would be one that encompasses a broader perspective that includes such features as exploring a case (a bounded system) or multiple cases over time, using detailed, in-depth data collection, involving multiple sources of information (Creswell, 2012). In this way, it is viewed as a methodology, a type of qualitative research, or as an object of study, and as a product of the inquiry. The study of break time practices in the two Israeli primary schools represents a multiple case study, in which one issue is selected, but two case studies are combined to represent the issue.

One of the main criticisms of case study research is that the data collected cannot necessarily be generalized to the wider population. To best generalize, the researcher needs to select representative cases for inclusion in the qualitative case study (Creswell, 2012). The schools I selected as the research settings were regarded as typical public primary schools in urban areas in that they meet the nationwide standards for state secular schools serving Jewish populations.

The researchers involved in conducting case studies tend to collect mainly qualitative data (Creswell, 2012). It has been claimed that a disadvantage of qualitative data is that it is difficult for other researchers to reproduce, and that the results and research bias is unavoidable (Shakedi, 2004; Merriam, 2002). In order to have an effect on educational theory or practice, educational research studies must be rigorous and present results that are acceptable to other educators and scholars (Merriam, 2002). Researchers (Walsh, 2003; Maxwell, 1992) claim that generalizability, or transferability (Guba & Lincoln, 1985) of qualitative studies implies the ability to generalize the findings of qualitative research to other contexts or settings. Qualitative researchers ensure transferability by doing a thorough job of describing

the research context in order to help readers form a decision concerning the applicability of these findings to an alternative situation (Guba & Lincoln, 1985). This is dependent as well on the extent to which the researcher's claims are supported by convincing evidence (ibid). Employing a variety of data collection tools, I sought to obtain the amount of information adequate to ensure a detailed description of the issues being studied. In addition, in order to enhance the generalizability of this study, my investigation involved studying different factors related to the implementation of break time in Israeli schools, including policies of the Israeli national and local regulatory bodies and internal school organizational issues (Shavit, 2009; Soen, 2002; State of Israel. Ministry of Education, Directive of CEO, 2009; 2005; 2003). In order to gain more insight into break time practices, opinions of principals and teachers from several public primary schools were also sought.

My role as a professional researcher was driven by my many years as a teacher and subsequently school principal, dealing daily with the issues discussed here. In my current position as Head of the Department of Education for the city in which I live, I find myself in a position of influence to put into action many of the ideas that I have been developing over the years. This research has enabled me to better understand the complexity of the issues and to develop properly based recommendations. Within my role as a professional researcher, engaged in a qualitative study, I was faced with potential problems of bias and subjectivity. Qualitative methodology recognizes that these issues are inherent in any qualitative investigation (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Drapeau, 2002; Peshkin, 1988). They are claimed to impact the entire research process: choice of topic for study, selection of methodologies, and data collection and analysis. From this point of view, the researcher's values define the world that is studied to a great extent. I explored the processes taking place during break times and their comprehension by the school population, guided by the concept that break time is a valuable period of time for the social education of pupils. This concept had an impact on the research process. Alternatively, I tried to objectively comprehend the stakeholders' perspectives on break time and to be constantly reflective regarding the influence of personal perceptions on the research setting.

3.2 Ethical questions

Cohen, Mano & Morrison (2011) emphasize that social researchers must take into account the effect of the research on the participants, and act in such a way as to

preserve their dignity as human beings. The authors point out that the researchers must recognize their obligation to those who help them and should be constantly prepared to use alternative techniques if the ones employed prove controversial. This research was conducted in accordance with principles of good practice laid down in such documents as the Declaration of Helsinki (1964) and the Code of Practice on Research Ethics (University of Derby, 2007) as well as the Israeli 1981 Privacy Protection Act.

The fundamental principles regarded as the cornerstone of ethics in human research, are beneficence (do positive good) and non-malfeasance (do no harm). The Code of Practice on Research Ethics developed by the University of Derby (2007) articulates that beneficence means serving the interests and wellbeing of others, including respect for their rights, and is based on the principle of "doing good in the widest sense" (ibid, p.2). When embarking on this research project, I was fully aware of the obligation to conduct my study "within an ethic of respect to any persons involved directly or indirectly in the research" (BERA, 2004). Beneficence also means that the purpose of research should contribute to knowledge. Particularly in my case, this study has been driven by the necessity to improve break time quality, and as such it is expected to contribute to the body of knowledge on school education .

Non-malfeasance refers to the principle of "doing, or permitting no official misconduct" (Code of Practice on Research Ethics, 2007, p.2). The concern for the interests of participants and maintenance of basic ethical standards of integrity and respect must always prevail over the interests of science. Participation in the research should be on the basis of fully informed consent, with the rights of privacy of participants guaranteed (ibid). Written consent should be obtained where appropriate and there should be no coercion of any kind. According to the principle of informed consent, each potential participant must be adequately informed of the aims, methods, anticipated benefits and potential hazards of the research. In advance of the data collection, I requested informed consent from the school principals, teachers and parents of the pupils involved in this study (see Appendix 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4) and participants were informed of the nature of the research prior to work carried out. With regard to ethical issues, I informed participants that any problems arising would be discussed in order to achieve solutions appropriate to all parties.

Pursuant to the protection of personal privacy, participants' confidentiality and anonymity should be maintained (Code of Practice on Research Ethics, 2007). Ensuring the privacy and discretion of the participants was achieved through anonymity, both in the research field and in the dissemination of research. Pseudonyms were used, beginning with the first letter of the names of the participants. Names of schools were also changed, thus making it impossible to form any connection between findings and participants. I was obliged to conform to legislation relating to data protection (Confidentiality/Anonymity), as per provisions of the Israeli 1981 Privacy Protection Act which represents the main part of the Israeli data protection law and includes chapters on data protection (Section B) and public sector data sharing (Section D). According to the 1981 Act, information that may identify individuals should not be disclosed unless explicit consent is given by those concerned.

Building a rapport of trust and mutual respect with participants was necessary for successful fieldwork and facilitating access to information (Robben & Sluka, 2007; Klatt, 1999; Glesne, 1989). My efforts to find principals and teachers interested in improving break time quality brought fruitful results. During recruitment of participants, a good deal of time was invested in explanation of the objectives of the study, emphasizing that yielding reliable results and developing effective measures for improving break time quality might be beneficial in schools nationwide. I assured potential participants that their inclusion in this study was voluntary and they would be able to withdraw at any time and for any or no reason. They were also assured that their rights to confidentiality and anonymity would be preserved, unless expressly waived (Code of Practice on Research Ethics, 2007).

I realized that during my time at the schools, which would serve as the research setting, contacts with staff and pupils would be inevitable, and therefore special provisions should be made so that findings would not be affected. Care was taken throughout the data collection process, to note exact times and locations and to transcribe word for word, with no judgment, what was viewed and what was said to me by participants. Keeping to my role of impartial researcher at all times was strictly adhered to. Another issue concerned minimizing any disturbance or

inconvenience to participants as well as efforts to avoid disruption of the research setting and thereby rendering findings unrepresentative (Perez-y-Perez & Stanley, 2011; Davidson, 2008). At the onset of my study, I discussed the issue of my position as a researcher during the meetings with the potential participants. The qualitative researcher seeks understanding and may negotiate with the participants in order to reach understanding (Davidson, 2008). As Wasserman & Clair (2007) have stated, researchers need to develop a reputation for consistency and integrity in order to gain the trust and acceptance of stakeholders. Conversely, it was necessary to consider how to manage the "intimacies" that might develop within the field as a result of friendly relationships (Perez-y-Perez & Stanley, 2011), and to what extent these are considered data (Davidson, 2008; Murphy & Dingwall, 2007).

(Perez-y-Perez & Stanley, 2011; Bourjois, 1990) suggest reconciling participation with truly informed consent. During my investigation, I was guided by the suggestion of Bourjois (1990, p. 52) who stated that to maintain truly informed consent "we should interrupt controversial conversations and activities to re-announce our presence and to make sure everyone is aware of the implications of what they are saying or doing". The issue of my presence in the research setting was discussed in detail and agreed upon at my meetings with the school staff and management. It was suggested that preservation of balance in researcher-participant relationships would allow cooperation and solicitation of respondents' help when needed, while at the same time prevent development of "intimacies" within the fieldwork and corruption of data collected. A problem occurred upon a chance encounter at one of the schools, with a former relative of mine who had been recommended as a teacher to be interviewed. I felt it necessary to disqualify her for sake of research purity.

3.3 Research design

This research expands upon existing research and thesis on teacher – pupil interaction during break time from my Masters degree at Haifa University in Israel. For this reason, I did not see any reason for a pilot study, as the basis for my research was already in existence. The research commenced with the identification of the research objectives, types of data needed, and methodological approach best suited to study of break time issues. I thoroughly studied the literature related to break time implementation, social education of pupils, and various methodological approaches.

After I had obtained the authorization of the Israeli Ministry of Education to conduct this study, I began the search for potential participants. Further, ethical issues were considered and steps were taken to obtain informed consents from research stakeholders.

My ideas and assumptions were translated into the key research question and sub-questions and decisions were made as to which data capture methods would be used to address the research questions. In the course of the study, the sub-questions had been altered in order to better articulate the study objectives (Cohen et al, 2011; Bryman, 2004) and the processes taking place in break time practices. During the qualitative investigation, research questions are often refined as part of the process of data collection and analysis, as stated by Braun (2006). I reviewed the exactness of the questions during collection of data, and amended where necessary. One original question to teachers and principals, ("What is your perception of break time?") was found to be too general in nature and drew numerous requests for clarifications. This question was subsequently broken down and amended to:

1. "What issues are associated with fulfillment of break time duty"?
2. "What issues may affect break time quality"?
3. "What measures are considered necessary in order to achieve break time quality"?

In addition, the questions used in the data collection tool became more finely honed during the process. My goal was to achieve the most exact phrasing of the questions, in order to elicit the clearest and most accurate responses. During the process, one question to which responses tended to be general or vague in nature was broken up into two different, more specific questions.

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, upon which this research is based, states that the different environments in a child's school life, affect and are affected by each other. Therefore, my intention is to understand perceptions of break time from as many angles as possible. This has led me to collect data from a number of different sources (policy makers, principals, teachers, pupils). The composite data were expected to provide a holistic picture of the current state of break time in schools today.

I commenced data collection by studying the documents related to the Education Ministry's policies in school education and determining the purpose of school break time as it is understood by policy makers. Further, I conducted the observation of the participants' behaviour during break times. At the same time, a questionnaire was completed by pupils in order to quickly provide a large amount of data. To deepen the understanding of the children's break time perceptions, I decided to conduct in-depth interviews with children. At the advanced stage of the observation, I began conducting in-depth interviews with the teachers on duty as well. This was completed by the focus groups with teachers. This data collection tool was used in order to understand how the collective perspectives on the break time-related issues fit together (Fern, 2001; Krueger & Casey, 2000). The purpose of focus group interviews is to collect data in a setting which allows people to compare and contrast their views with the views of others (Patton, 2002). In particular, I expected the discussion to enlighten me on teacher awareness of the problems arising while carrying out break time duties in other schools. At the same time, I began to interview the principals from the eighteen public primary schools situated in urban areas in the north of the country. Principals articulated their views on the implementation of break time and offered some constructive ideas regarding the organizational aspects of break time. According to the principle of qualitative investigation, analysis and data collection took place simultaneously (Cohen et al., 2011; Richardson & St Pierre, 2005; Bryman, 2004; Patton, 2002). Thematic analysis began almost immediately: the development of codes and themes initiated in the process of fieldwork, analysis and writing were conducted simultaneously. The results of the last phase of the analysis and interpretation of the data accumulated in the course of the study provided the basis for the recommendations set forth in a thesis paper.

The table below shows which data collection tools were used to address these questions: (See table 1 on the next page)

Table 1

Question	Data collection tool
1. How are the purpose and organization of school break time understood by regulatory bodies and school population?	Study of regulatory documents.
2. What factors may impact the way in which children spend break time?	A self-administered questionnaire among pupils. Semi-structured interviews with all participants and a focus group interview with teachers. Conduct of observations.
3. What issues are associated with fulfillment of break time duty?	A self-administered questionnaire distributed among 180 pupils. Semi-structured interviews with all participants and a focus group interview with teachers. Observations were conducted in two schoolyards over the course of one year.
4. What issues may affect the quality of break time?	A self-administered questionnaire among pupils. Semi-structured interviews with all participants and a focus group interview with teachers. Conduct of observations.

One can see a variety of data collection methods employed, with emphasis placed on interviews enhanced by focus groups with teachers. Use of interview as a dominant mode of data collection is substantiated by the interpretivist epistemology which underpins my study.

A diagram was created to display the various aspects of this research process, showing the interrelation between the goal of this study, its conceptual framework and paradigm in which this research is located (Figure 1). One can see the connection between the research paradigm and methodology in using an interview, both in-depth and focus group, as the main data collection tool.

Figure1. The diagram of the research design

Research purpose
Creation of comprehensive strategies for implementation of break time in Israeli schools.

Conceptual framework		Research paradigm
Concepts of social education of children developed by research into school education and extra-curricular activities (Pellis & Pellis, 2012; Sprague & Walker, 2005; Kahane, 2000; 1974)		Interpretive approach to social reality. The ideas about break time among school population are considered critical in achieving the research goal.

Research methodology
Qualitative research in the form of case study. Using an interview as a main data collection tool (both in-depth and focus group interview) according to the interpretivist paradigm of the study. Conducting overt, non-participant observation sessions. Studying regulatory documents. Traditional qualitative methods are completed by administering a self-completion questionnaire to pupils. Carrying out thematic analysis of the data. Using the principles of deductive and inductive coding.

Research fieldwork				
				Ensuring the validity and credibility of the study
Studying research literature	**Analysis of data:** thematic analysis	2008	Studying regulatory documentation	
		2008	Conducting observation sessions	**Prolonged field experience**
		2009	Administering questionnaires	
		2009	Conducting interviews with pupils	**Triangulation**
		2009-2010	Conducting in-depth interviews with teachers	**Reflexivity (field journal)**
		2009-2010	Conducting focus group with teachers	**Respondent validation**
		2009-2010	Conducting interviews with principals	**Peer examination**

3.4 The research sample and setting

Time and resources available for this project did not allow me to conduct a study on a nationwide scale. Recruitment of research participants was thus carried out in the northern region of Israel across the 18 urban primary public schools situated in the three municipal areas – Afula, Yokneam and Nazareth (the school for which I am responsible was not included in the study).

In qualitative studies, purposeful or criterion-based sampling is often used, that is, selection of cases that meet some predetermined criterion of importance (Patton, 2002). A sample framework was developed, based on available literature pertaining

to the research field, to my practical knowledge, and the participants' professional characteristics (Wilmot, 2005; Creswell, 2002; Bryman, 2001; Marshall, 1996). Since a qualitative approach requires the study of actual people in natural settings, the sampling procedure has taken into account not only the individual's characteristics, but also the context of the study (Bryman, 2001; Marshall, 1996). Schools selected represented the natural break time setting, and participants (pupils, teachers, principals) are the specific individuals I am undertaking to study.

Recruitment criteria for this study considered the factor that in construing the educational model it would be important to take into account the opinions of the three groups of school population — principals, teachers and pupils. I followed the principle of purposive sampling to achieve "the maximum variation within the sample and in order to represent as wide a variety of views as possible …" (Merriam, 2002) The key purpose of this study concerned the development of the educational strategies which would be applicable in other schools. Therefore, the sample should be large enough to assure that most or all of the perceptions that might be important are included in order to allow for more generalizability of the findings (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2005; Creswell, 2002). Another factor in consideration was convenience in reaching the participants and observation setting. The large majority of participants and schools for conducting observations were chosen in the area in which I reside. Due to time and budget constraints, there is an element of convenience sampling in many qualitative studies (Wilmot, 2005; Marshall, 1996). Schools selected for my study were located in the city in which I live, in order to minimize time and distances.

However, in order to engage participants in this study, I tried to outreach to all the public primary schools in the region, looking for teachers and principals with different professional experience and seeking to involve pupils of different ages and genders. I suggest, therefore, that using the method of purposive sampling helped me to minimize the factor of convenience in sampling strategies.

In my recruitment activity, I was aware of the bias inherent in purposive sampling whereby the researcher makes judgment on the informant's reliability and competency (Lewis & Sheppard 2006; Bernard, 2002; Marshall, 1996). It was critical to be certain of the knowledge and skill of the informant when doing purposive

sampling, since inappropriate informants will render the data meaningless and invalid (ibid). In order to examine the opinions of children of different ages, a questionnaire was distributed subsequent to receipt of a letter of consent from parents, and interviews were held with pupils aged 7 – 12 (grades 2 – 6). The ratio of the boys and girls participating in this study (50%) represented the actual ratio of boys and girls in the school grade. According to Israeli Education Ministry regulations, the gender balance between boys and girls in the secular classroom should be as closely balanced as possible, thereby enabling social development to take place.

Consistent with the above principles, I applied to the principals, teachers and pupils of the public primary schools situated in the urban areas in the North of the country. Eventually, ten principals from eighteen schools agreed to be interviewed. Among them were professionals with differing years of experience and different professional backgrounds prior to management work (eight were teachers prior to school management, the other two worked previously as school counselors). They represented more than half of those approached and their number was considered sufficient to reflect managerial thinking regarding break time. The teachers participating in interviews and focus groups had Bachelor's degrees in education and professional experience ranging from 5 to 20 years. This wide range of differing years of experience reflected the average perception of the school staff and the situation as it exists.

Purposive sampling was also used in selecting sources for documentary analysis. Since one of the research sub-questions concerned the manner in which the purpose and organization of school break time was viewed by the Israeli regulatory bodies and primary public schools, it was necessary to find the documents related to formulation and implementation of the policies on break time. These include circulars issued by the Education Ministry of Israel over the last decade and school circulars. Protocols of debates of the Knesset (the Israeli Parliament) Committee for Education, Culture and Sports were also included in documentation reviewed in order to determine whether this body had addressed break time issues.

My search for schools suitable as a setting for observation, as well as for teachers to be interviewed, was conducted within the area in which I work and reside. It contains

5 primary public schools (one in which I worked at the time and another religious school). Out of the 3 schools I approached, two principals agreed that their schools, "Razim" and 'Ronim" (names are anonymised), would serve as a setting for observation. While these two schools are of different size and profile, they may be regarded as typical primary public schools in urban areas in that they meet the nationwide standards for state secular schools serving Jewish populations: "large" school populations 350 – 650 pupils each; "small" schools: 250 – 350 pupils; there should be 12 – 18 classrooms in school and 32-36 pupils per class. The educational objectives and budget are determined by the Ministry of Education as well as by regional regulatory bodies. Based upon these characteristics, I decided that use of these schools as research settings would be consistent with the factor of diversity and be representative of schools in Israel. The "Razim" school, populated by 520 pupils from middle class families has a school staff comprised of principal and 42 teachers (40 female and 2 male teachers). The school was established about 10 years ago and since then has been led by the same principal. To date, 30 children of new immigrants from Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union have been studying at the school. Its profile is officially defined as a school for natural sciences, as this aspect of the curriculum is especially emphasized. The school staff constantly studies under a continuing education program ("hishtalmut" in Hebrew) designed to improve teachers' professional level. The program has recently included the "Gishur" ("bridging" or "unification") component that concerns the resolution of conflict between students and teachers .

The second school, "Ronim", is much smaller, comprising 265 pupils, a principal and 23 female teachers, aided by a part-time school counselor. The principal began her work seven years ago with no prior management experience. Built about 30 years ago, "Ronim" is located in the heart of an old neighbourhood .Most of the pupils come from middle or low-income groups of society, including 40 children of new immigrants. The school curriculum attaches more importance to arts, but not to the extent to be qualified as a school of the arts. "Ronim" has one schoolyard (smaller than that of the "Razim" school) for all the pupils and a ball field used by pupils of each grade once a week.

Pupils from grades 2 through 6 (ages 8-12) in both schools were offered to participate in this study and complete a questionnaire. Five groups of children were eventually arranged, with more than 30 children representing each age/grade group and with an equal number of boys and girls. Further, in order to enrich information obtained through the questionnaire, 10 children of the same age groups from both schools (an equal number of boys and girls) were interviewed. Teachers from the above schools were approached with an offer to participate in the study. Among them were those involved both in instruction and class mentoring, with work experience ranging from 5 to 20 years. The sample included a greater number of teachers who had worked in school for over 10 years and could therefore provide more information on the issues being researched, particularly on performance of break time duty. According to the above criteria, 12 teachers were selected for participation in the focus group.

Overall, more than 200 participants have been involved in this research: 185 pupils, 13 teachers and 10 principals. Thirty three interviews have been conducted. It is recommended that in ethnographic research 30-50 interviews be conducted (Creswell, 2002; Morse, 1994). It has been assumed that the number of participants involved will be sufficient to create a sample allowing adequate response to the research questions and achievement of research credibility.

3.5 Data collection tools

Data collection process requires rigorous and systematic design and implementation, the success of which depends on thorough planning, well considered development, effective piloting, weighted modification, deliberate implementation and execution, and appropriate management and analysis (O'Leary, 2005). I held to a program of systematic data collection schedules (observations, interviews and focus groups.), while taking into consideration unexpected events in the research field. Solutions arrived at were always in line with execution of the research. I had originally intended to record conversations with children during break time. However, as I found that this was too unwieldy and just not feasible, I wrote these conversations down in detail.

Validity and credibility of the study have been enhanced through use of several data collection methods: study of documents, completion of a questionnaire, conduct of

observations and two types of interview - an in-depth interview and focus group. Thematic analysis was applied to the data collected by these tools since this type of analysis is considered a flexible research tool that can organize and describe the data set in rich detail (Broun & Clarke, 2006).

3.5.1 Documentary analysis

Thematic analysis of regulatory documentation was expected to provide the themes which would allow understanding of how the issue of break time is viewed by the Israeli regulatory bodies, as suggested by Merriam, (1998). She states that data found in documents can be used in the same manner as data from observation and interviews. The way in which documents differ from interviews, for instance, is that in most cases they are not produced in response to research questions, but are used to enrich and enhance investigation utilizing other qualitative methods (ibid).

Protocols of Knesset debates (the Israeli parliament), Committee for Education, Culture and Sports (further: Committee) were examined, and I reviewed the directives set forth in the letters of Director General's Circular (2009 – 2005; further: DGC) which formulate the concrete policies of the ministry. The documents examined included written minutes of principals' regional meetings, which reflected the manner in which break time problems were addressed at the school management level. In addition, a number of school circulars were examined with regard to disciplinary measures during break times, in order to see how DGC regulations are interpreted at the school level. Texts from the documents were coded and themes were developed to gain insight into the policies and practices.

3.5.2 Observation

This method of data collection was intended to offer a close-up look at the occurrence of break time events. This allowed me to gather data from the most authentic setting possible. I had the opportunity to talk with people in the yard as well, and thus to verify whether I was interpreting correctly what I was seeing. As per Patton (1980), the participant observer not only sees what is happening but feels what it is like to be a part of the setting. The type of observation I selected for this research was overt, non-participant observation aimed at recording as much detail as possible within a natural setting (Bryman, 2004). The main challenge was to maintain objectivity while

observing the events taking place during break times, thus eliminating the observer's effect on data being collected. Bryman (2004) argues that observers must be receptive, insightful and aware of their potential bias.

Observations were conducted over the course of one year in the two schools described above. The observation was conducted in the two schools simultaneously, as was the coding of the field notes. Children were informed about my presence in the school yard by teachers and principals. In order to collect a sufficient amount of information, I chose the longest break time (25 min.) which enabled me to learn about most activities taking place. I conducted 32 unstructured non-participant observation sessions, attempting to record as many events and actions as possible in order to produce a general picture of a school break time and capture pupil and teacher behaviours as they occur in a natural environment. I decided not to conduct structured observations aided by a coding scheme, as I did not want to deflect attention from unimagined and unanticipated activities that might help to understand a phenomenon and a setting (Cohen, 2011; Bryman, 2004). At the same time, the observations I conducted were not completely unstructured, but rather focused on the issues I had outlined in my observation plan: implementation of organized games, pupils involved in free play, pupils interacting with peers during play; pupils chatting with peers; teacher-pupil interactions; duty teachers dealing with disciplinary issues. When making observational notes, I also indicated the gender and grade of children involved in a certain kind of activity. With regard to group play, I used the timetables of organized activities which helped me to provide the grade/age characteristics of children. Regarding pupils involved in free play or those remaining idle during break time, I periodically asked the duty teachers about the grade/age of the children. These procedures were employed in order to capture the differences in the pupils' perception of break time and behaviour patterns.

Another 14 observation sessions were planned as focused and aimed at recording the presence of duty teachers in the schoolyards from the aspects of a teacher's choosing an observation point during break time, the arrival to the school yard and leaving at the end. In conducting these observations, I was inspired by the methods known as "time" and "event" sampling which allows for focusing on a specific act observed over a specific time period, (Bryman & Bell, 2007; Slee, 1987; Ianotti, 1985). The

reasoning behind employment of this method was to provide additional information on the quality of the break time duty performance. Jotted observational notes (key words or phrases) were transformed into detailed field notes which were treated as the text analyzed through use of thematic analysis.

3.5.3 Self-completion questionnaire

Use of a questionnaire was based on the intention to reach out to a large number of participants and provide swift collection of data within a short time. Questionnaires were distributed among pupils of grades 2 through 6 in the schools researched, with 30 children represented in each group, divided equally among boys and girls. Pupils were guided in filling out questionnaires by teachers, who explained their task but did not help them in responding to questions.

The only question where the answer was partially imposed was the first, which implied that pupils do need a break time. The purpose being to capture the individual point of view and help discover new qualitative material, I felt it preferable to have more open, unobtrusive and unstructured questions (Cohen et al, 2011; Woods, 2006). Thus, the questions were intended to identify the positive and negative characteristics of break time and outline perspectives for change.

The questionnaire included 4 open-ended questions composed to find out what the pupils think about break time and the duty teacher's task:

Why do you think you need break time in school?

What do you like to do during break time?

What do you dislike about break time?

What you think about the task of a duty teacher?

Potential disadvantages in use of questionnaires include little researcher control over the situation, as well as no way of telling how much thought participants invest in their answers (Popper, 2004). In my case, the main challenge was that respondents were primary school pupils whose ability to articulate their thoughts in writing was not yet well developed (this was the main reason for not engaging the 1st graders in completing the questionnaire). Nevertheless, the main advantage in using open-ended questions (in comparison to closed-ended questions which encourage short or single-

word answers) is that they are less leading than closed-ended questions and elicit insights and ideas (Cohen et al, 2011; Ferguson & Dettore, 2007).

3.5.4 Interviews

It was decided that conduct of in-depth semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions would provide detailed information about the research subjects. Bryman (2004) argues that, by using this type of interview, the interviewer can benefit from any opportunity where the participants elaborate on the point of interest and learn about the ways in which research participants view their social world. As stated earlier, in this study the interview was regarded as a main data collection method since, according to the interpretive approach, I sought to explore the meanings that participants attach to their experiences and the manner in which they interpret situations (Williamson, 2006; Bryman, 2004; Patton, 2000; Guba & Lincoln, 1994). This formed an important basis for my analysis and understanding of findings.

While the interviewer can create a friendly atmosphere of informal conversation, a set of pre-determined questions prevents straying from the subject. Since semi-structured interviews were preceded by other data gathering tools, I was able to deepen the understanding of the research subject and develop relevant and meaningful questions for the interviews.

I interviewed teachers with differing years' experience in instruction and education. Interviews included questions aimed at providing personal information such as experience in instruction, position held in school, and decision to choose the teaching profession (see Appendix 2.2). Main questions were concentrated on the character of teacher-pupil interaction and the task of a duty teacher during break time. The correlation between the social education provided within the school curriculum and pupils' behaviour during break time was highlighted.

Principals interviewed were those in charge of primary schools with at least three years of experience. Apart from pupil-teacher interactions and the role of a duty teacher, the main questions highlighted break time management issues, including security, organizational problems and so on. Interviews were tape-recorded and transcripts were provided for analysis.

Qualitative research studies have demonstrated that young children can provide important insights into their daily lives (Johnson, 2005). The interviews with five boys and five girls were pre-planned (one pupil from each grade from both schools).They were conducted at the advanced stage of the study after administering questionnaires. Given that in questionnaires participants may answer superficially (Popper, 2004), the interviews were intended to provide deeper insight into views of pupils of different age and gender regarding their free time between classes.

3.5.5 Focus group

Break time is a subject which is not researched by studying exact numbers or percentages. A focus group is considered a method which can provide trustworthy data that highlights important insights about the phenomena under study by allowing all participants to speak up freely in front of an entire group, (Bryman, 2004; Creswell, 2002; Spradley, 1979). I conducted a focus group, led by the purpose to derive information about issues that may not have arisen through use of other data collection tools. The rationale behind this kind of interview stems from the dynamics of the group, which enable a balance of views and identification of factual errors or extreme opinions; differences of opinion, and emotions and tensions which may help to confirm or reject the facts discussed (Krueger & Casey, 2000). In my study, I did not elucidate an explanation of emotions as psychological phenomena. The participants' emotions rather, emphasized those issues highlighted by themselves, and facilitated me in concluding which of these issues were most problematic in the implementation of break time. The emotions I observed in the participants were recorded in my field journal and helped me understand which issues were most salient to the focus group members.

The focus group comprised 12 teachers from both schools, selected by purposive sampling (see section 3.4). The session lasted almost two hours, and was audio recorded. I was particularly interested in what teachers said to each other and the impact of the group on individual opinions. Since the fulfillment of break time duty is an untouched subject in Israeli educational research, I sought to examine the teachers' collective perspectives on break time issues and to deduce whether a focus group discussion could raise issues previously unidentified. The purpose and format of

discussion were outlined prior to conducting the group in order to allow for its smooth and respectful running. Guidelines included ensuring confidentiality, respecting any and all opinions, and enabling every teacher to express her opinion freely. Drawing upon the research questions and results of the observation, questionnaire and previous interviews, I prepared the discussion guide, indicating the issues and topics to be explored. Open questions were used in order to enable the participants to express their opinions freely and provide fuller responses (see Appendix 2.2). My role as moderator was to guide the discussion, keep it focused, and ensure all participants voice their opinions. I avoided giving any personal opinions so as not to influence participants towards any particular point of view.

3.6 Analysis of data

Data collected through use of the qualitative tools detailed previously, were descriptive in nature, thus necessitating use of qualitative analysis tools.

Qualitative analysis aims to provide a rich and consistent description of the collected data in order to make them meaningful (Miles & Huberman, 1994). A range of approaches to qualitative data analysis is complex and diverse, including discourse analysis (DA) interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), narrative analysis, and grounded theory. Each applies a different theoretical point to the interpretation of data.

I decided in this study to employ thematic analysis of data. My considerations were supported by the claim that thematic analysis provides a flexible research tool which can organize and describe the data set in rich detail (Broun & Clarke, 2006). Among different kinds of qualitative analysis, thematic analysis should be seen as a foundational method (Broun & Clarke, 2006). Holloway & Todres (2003, p. 347), consider "thematizing meanings" as one of a few shared generic skills across qualitative analyzing. Its flexibility can be seen from different vantage points. Unlike such analytical approaches as interpretative phenomenological analysis, discourse analysis, or grounded theory, thematic analysis has theoretical freedom in that it is not attached to any pre-existing theoretical framework, and it can be used within different theoretical frameworks (ibid). Thematic analysis can be conducted in many ways (i.e .quantitatively or qualitatively; inductively or deductively; theoretically or

descriptively driven) (Mays et al, 2007). As discussed earlier in this chapter, interpretive/constructivist researchers rely upon the participants' views of the situation being studied (Cohen et al, 2011; Creswell, 2003; Bryman, 2004; Guba &Lincoln, 1994). My analysis was intended to achieve a rich thematic description of the entire body of data collected, resulting in the development of a wide range of themes reflecting participants' experiences and relevant meanings attached as well as settings in which participants act.

A number of tables were created to display the themes distributed across the research questions and data collection tools (see Appendix 3), the most salient themes identified through the within-method triangulation (Appendix 4), and distribution of themes across grade/age and grade/gender groups of pupils (Appendix 5). The latter was developed in order to show the differences in the children's perception of break time and behaviour patterns.

Subsequent to transcription of data, they were studied to identify key ideas and concepts (Broun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman 1994; Miles & Huberman, 1994). Manual coding was used in the analysis process, data was broken down into meaning units, and codes applied. I strived to code for as many potential themes as possible in order to capture a variety of details and provide the basis for rich description of the issues studied. A simple sentence was identified as a meaning unit for coding. I used inductive or open coding in the analysis of the questionnaire answers, as well as observation and interview texts. Analysis through open coding, which is strongly linked to the data being analyzed, was conducted in order to produce a rich description of participants' behaviour, their concepts and beliefs (Cohen et al., 2011; Broun & Clarke, 2006; Coffey & Atkinson, 1996; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Strauss &Corbin, 1990). Thematic analysis bears similarity to grounded theory in this way (Broun & Clarke, 2006).

Miles & Huberman (1994, p.58), argue however, that "open coding is context-sensitive, its ultimate objective … is to match observations to a theory or set of constructs, and therefore is not at all a 'completely unstructured' process". Bryman (1994) holds that the development of a thematic framework is carried out by drawing upon priori issues and questions determined by the aims and objectives of the study

as well as issues identified from the responses of the participants themselves. A number of thematic domains/concepts were suggested in the thematic analysis I performed in this study, and by research literature: "break time is a time for rest and relaxation", "break time is a time for social education of pupils", "ensuring pupils' safety in the school buildings and grounds", "game playing as a main activity during break times", "disciplinary problems affecting the quality of break times", and others. Within these broad thematic domains (see examples in Appendix 6), some codes and themes referred to the issues which emerged from the context of this study and were not discussed by other authors.

A code can be assigned to discrete objects, events and various phenomena, and should be understood in relation to the context (Graneheim & Ludman, 2003). The principle of "loose, inclusive coding" (Bryman, 2001; Becker & Geer, 1960, in Hardy &Bryman, 2004, p.539) was applied. Accordingly, the boundaries of text segments are left "deliberately wide, but subject to revision, presumably based on an understanding of context" (see appendices 6 and 7). In some cases, use of the principle of inclusive coding allowed for a different interpretation of the same text data (see Appendix 7). Coding involved contrasting and comparison of the codes, followed by grouping similar codes into themes. Boyatzis (1998, p. 161) defined a theme as "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon". The themes identified were used to examine the research questions, which were altered in the course of the study, and involved continuous refinement in the course of the data collection and analysis process .

The entire data set was reviewed constantly for two purposes. The first was intended to ascertain whether the themes fit in relation to the data set. The second was to identify any additional data within themes that had been missed in earlier coding processes. Some segments of data were coded with more than one code (see appendices 6 and 7). Since a large amount of data has multiple meanings, many themes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Therefore, a meaning unit and codes identified can fit into more than one theme and sub-theme (Graneheim & Ludman, 2003; Downe-Wamboldt, 1992). A very small amount of data was coded as "other" since they did not seem to fit into main themes developed. Broun & Clarke (2006),

hold that there may be a number of codes that do not seem to belong anywhere. Such codes were re-examined across the whole set of data and some were ultimately discarded.

Leedy & Ormrod (2001), contend that qualitative data interpretation tends to be subjective in nature and many times can be influenced by the researcher's biases. For instance, some themes developed in this study appeared to be influenced by the concept that break time should be used for the social education of pupils (see an example in Appendix 7). To minimize bias, the researcher must collect more than one kind of data and apply many different kinds of perspectives to the events being investigated, purposely looking for contradicting information and acknowledging biases which relate to the final research report (ibid). In order to reduce biases related to their interpretation, some such themes were highlighted when submitted to peer reviewing. The results of the entire analysis process are presented in the Findings chapter of this study.

In conclusion, I present a number of criteria used to ensure the reliability of coding and analysis of data:

- Assigning equal attention to each meaning unit in the coding process.
- Analysis as a recursive process with movement back and forth throughout the entire data set.
- Use of the principle of loose and inclusive coding (Becker & Geer, 1960).
- Ongoing analysis of refining the specifics of each theme.
- Adherence to the principle that themes should be internally coherent, consistent, and distinctive (Broun & Clarke, 2006; Bryman, 2004; 2001; Boyatzis, 1998; Strauss& Corbin, 1990).

3.7 Research trustworthiness

The goal of trustworthiness in a qualitative investigation is to support the argument that the inquiry's findings are "worth paying attention to" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p.29). In qualitative inquiries, the notion of discovering truth through measures of validity is replaced by the idea of trustworthiness, which establishes confidence in the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

It has been stated that researcher bias and subjectivity are inherent in qualitative study (Williamson, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 2004). This is reflected in the choice made concerning the topic of the study, literature to be reviewed, and the content arising from material amassed through theoretical reasoning. The sources of bias are the characteristics of the interviewer, the characteristics of the respondent, and the substantive content of the questions (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004). As a good deal of subjectiveness, perhaps subconsciously, enters in (Fontana et al, 2000), measures should be taken to achieve greater validity by minimizing the amount of bias as much as possible.

Qualitative research is believed to be a creative and interpretative process whereby the researcher not only collects data in the field and writes up findings, but rather constructs qualitative interpretations (Williamson, 2006; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Bryman, 2004; Crotty, 1998). As discussed earlier, there is an issue of potential interference of the researcher's personal experience. My responsibility was to refer constantly to my concepts of education and make sure that they did not blind me to the issues I was focused on. Through use of written methodological memos, I considered what should be done further and how to do so. The researcher must be constantly self-critical and reflective so as to ensure the analytical description and interpretation of the case (Walford, 2007; Hatch, 2002).

One can see in the examples of text encoding, the way in which issues of researcher subjectivity and objectivity arise in the course of data analysis (see appendices 6 and 7). Appendix 6 contains an example in which the codes emerged through inductive, "inclusive" coding and consequent themes serve the goal of the objective reflecting the stakeholders' opinions and behaviour. Coding systems developed through inductive approach are regarded to have high internal validity, as they are close to the text and to the research question (Kortendick & Fischer, 1996). Another example (Appendix 7) demonstrates that, while the same type of text encoding was applied, the development of themes was influenced by the concept that school break time is valuable for social education of pupils.

Each study has to attain high levels of external and internal validity. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2011) claim that internal validity seeks to demonstrate that the

explanation of particular events, issues or sets of data provided by each piece of research may actually be sustained by the data. It concerns accuracy which could be applied to both quantitative and qualitative research. The findings must describe accurately the phenomenon being research (ibid). The external validity has been determined as the degree to which the results can be generalised to the wider population, cases or situations (ibid).

One possible way for the validation of this research was provision of sufficient evidence of the themes within the data, through inclusion of enough illustrative extracts to show the prevalence of the theme, and choice of "particularly vivid examples or extracts which capture the essence of the point" (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 23).

An additional method suggested for validation used in this study was documentation of the chain of events, step by step over the entire research process (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My research work involved self-awareness and critical self-reflection on my potential biases which could affect the research. The chain of events comprises the entire process of raw data gathering, different facets of data analysis, and culminates in conclusions.

The continuous revision of the pieces of evidence in the cyclical analysis of data was intended to check whether my interpretation is true to the data. During the analysis and presentation of data, each attempt was made to be true to the personal style of each subject, regarding both the issues emphasized and the language used (save profanity, which is not quoted). My analysis and interpretation was planned to be checked with both the academic literature and with the population I researched by involving a "critical reference group" (Wadsworth, 1997) which included some stakeholders critical to the study. In pursuing the research validity, I followed the principle of complete transparency of the research process. Bryman (2004) emphasizes that credibility of research depends on respondent validation and the extent to which the research process can be audited by outsiders (transparency). According to Lincoln & Guba (1985), the researcher cannot specify the transferability of findings, but rather can provide sufficient information that can then be judged by

the reader who will determine whether the findings are applicable to the new situation.

I believe I have achieved credibility for my research through utilization of Shakedi's, (Shakedi, 2004) three conditions:

1. Maintenance of an available data base at all times, for researchers and colleagues, allowing for direct access to information sources beyond the final report.

2. Preservation of analytical documents; this will allow researchers to retrace the analytical process and thus examine research credibility. I keep the coded transcripts of the interview texts and observation field notes in order to retrace the analysis done.

3. A final report should be presented with an ample amount of relevant interviewee quotations, allowing for readers to follow the process of conclusion made through every phase of the research. The final report includes a considerable amount of quotations, so that any reader concerned can check the consistency between the quotation and the theme it illustrates.

In qualitative studies, an additional method for research validation is triangulation - the use of a number of sources of information in order to enhance the support for findings (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Cohen et al, 2011; Creswell, 2003). Triangulation implies the use of different data sources, examining evidence from the sources and its use to build a coherent justification for themes (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007; Creswell, 2003). Use of interviews, observation and questionnaires in my study served the purpose of the within-method triangulation (Denzin, 1970). An additional method of triangulation was validation of findings through feedback and discussion of my interpretations and conclusions with actual participants and other members of the participant community.

This chapter has been aimed at highlighting the research philosophy and shaping the methodological approach applied in this study. Data collection tools have been identified in accordance with the theoretical and methodological paradigm. The next chapter is intended to present the findings obtained through use of the above methods.

4. Findings

This chapter presents the results of analysis of data collected by means of a variety of data collection tools: examination of documents published by the Israeli regulatory bodies; observations conducted at the school settings during break time; questionnaires, and interviews with each group of research participants - children, teachers and principals. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis which was considered a flexible approach, useful across a range of theoretical frameworks (Mays et al, 2007; Broun & Clarke, 2006; Todres, 2003; Boyatzis, 1998) and capable of organizing and describing the data set in rich detail (Broun & Clarke, 2006; Miles &Huberman, 1994). As a result of the encoding process, main themes and sub-themes were developed to reflect the complexity of school break time phenomena and to provide rich, contextual information for answering research questions. The presentation of my findings is structured around the seven main themes which are displayed as thematic sections with relevant sub-sections. The chapter concludes with the findings summarized at several levels: the result of triangulation of themes developed through different data collection tools; identifying the relevance of the themes to the research questions; an impact of the research conceptual framework on the analysis of data, and presenting the results of thematic analysis with regard to different age and gender groups of children.

Below are the main themes arrived at through analysis of findings, together with sub-headings showing the viewpoints, including quotations of pupils, teachers, and principals. Each quotation is attributed to its originator, and is followed by a number, which refers the reader to Appendix 2A, in which the context of the quotation may be found.

4.1 Break time is a time for rest and relaxation.
4.1.1 Having a break from learning

Director General Circular (further: DGC) instructions (2009; 2005; 2003) briefly characterize break time as being of great importance, as pupils are allowed to rest, release stress, socialize with peers through game playing, and satisfy their physical needs within the territory of an educational institution. Questionnaire (See Appendix 2.4) responses suggested that girls from all grades are better learners than younger

and older boys, since they express a greater need for a break from learning (74 girls against 47 boys). The number of older and younger boys characterizing break time as "pleasure" and "fun" is almost equal. Compared with girls from grades 5 and 6, their peers from grades 2-4 have more pleasure and fun during break time. The majority of pupils interviewed acknowledged the need for a break from learning, for a better performance during classes, and for satisfying their physical needs.

"Learning is tiresome. We need a break to concentrate better during classes. Break times are not just a quiet rest. I don't know how to explain... It is something absolutely different from learning; it is like running wild. Then we can keep our minds sharp during the lessons" (a 6th grade boy- 1).

Both teachers and principals report that pupils view break time as free time between requirements imposed during classes. The free time in the schoolyard gives them an opportunity to release the pressure of the classroom.

"…Break time is actually a break from the things demanded from them during lessons. It is a time for physical and emotional release. Some of them behave like animals released from cages …" (a teacher - 2).

4.1.2 Having freedom from classroom routine
Pupils reported that they needed freedom from classroom routine, emphasizing the wish to relax physically and the desire to run, jump, and shout, or as the respondents put it, "go wild". The feeling of freedom was connected to being in open space for younger respondents.

"At the end of the second lesson, I look at my watch and count the minutes left before the break. I feel as if my entire body is blowing apart ...It needs freedom. I just can't restrain myself. It's not fair that we have two lessons without a break ..." (4th grade boy- 3).

"When the bell rings, I am literally dying to leave the classroom, to be in the open space …" (4th grade girl- 4).

The themes developed from observational data reflected the way in which children behaved and allowed to suggest that they experienced feelings of relief. The large majority of children seemed to enjoy the break between classes: they showed a lot of excitement, bursting into laughter and shouting, and participating in vigorous physical activities. The data from questionnaires show that fewer girls than boys are tired of classroom routine (56 girls against 75 boys) and fewer of them are annoyed by duty teachers who limit their freedom (12/17).

It appears that "tiredness" is not brought on solely by the learning process, but by the requirement to be under the control and demands of the teacher as well. This will be shown in data on children's perception of duty teachers' presence in the schoolyard. (See 4.4).

4.2 Game playing is the main activity during break time

Children do not necessarily choose to relax by physically resting. Game playing was the main activity observed during break time. Play equipment was used during both organized activities and free play. Some children found other ways to organize their time between classes, busying themselves with albums of stickers, gogos toys and other playthings. Questionnaire and interview data showed that group game playing (including sports) was rated by children as their preferred activity, with children from grades 2-4 being more involved in game playing than their older peers. In non-sport games, a difference is noted between genders: girls interviewed showed a preference for playing in groups of 2-3 while boys preferred larger groups and seemed better able to form play groups.

"*The entire lesson, I think about break time. When the bell rings, Ofir, some other boys and I play together*" (A 2nd grade boy - 5).

"*The teacher suggested that we vote in a democratic way on which game to play. However, as usual, the girls failed to decide: some want to play alone, and others didn't care about that at all. ...It's different with boys. They are more concerned with playing. They vote, say, for playing soccer, (that's what they almost always choose) and they play it*" (A 4th grade girl - 6).

Using school play equipment (soccer balls, skip ropes, hula-hoops, CD players), either borrowed from school or brought from home was reported by boys and girls from all grades. Pupils from grades 2 through 5 described game materials they brought from home: popular toys, all kinds of balls or collections of stickers or gogos toys. These practices might demonstrate that children try to independently decide how to spend their free time between classes.

"*If they* (boys) *don't play soccer, they play with gogos. Every day, they have "gogos competitions*" (A 2nd grade girl - 7).

"*During break time, I exchange stickers. I have two albums of stickers. My mother buys me stickers almost every day. In one album, I keep expensive ones, in the other one there are stickers for exchange*" (A 4th grade girl - 8).

4.2.1 Freedom to choose how to spend break time

As a way of preserving their personal freedom, pupils manifested their desire to decide by themselves what to do during breaks, without being controlled or instructed by teachers ("*take a break from class and teachers*"). The 5th and 6th graders indicated that they enjoyed independently choosing games and players; the girls have also mentioned that having a rest also meant being involved in no activity. Unlike their younger peers, more questionnaire respondents of both genders complain about limits placed upon their freedom by duty teachers. Boys from grades 5-6 are more annoyed by the duty teacher's supervision than girls of this age. All of the interviewed teachers argue that breaks between lessons are the time when pupils can enjoy relative freedom in their actions.

"*During classes, teachers expect me to help my classmates and be nice to everybody. When I have a break, I want to behave differently. I want to decide with whom to spend time and with whom to be nice and not to be afraid of being reprimanded by teachers*" (A 5th grade girl - 9).

"*During breaks, I don't want to think about learning or anything serious. I just want to relax and hang around with friends, sometimes without even talking*" (A 6th grade girl - 10).

"…At break time, they make their own decisions. I think we decide enough for them during classes." (A teacher - 11).

During observations, some children were seen staying or sitting idly at the sides of the schoolyard or in the school corridors. Their behaviour might indicate that these pupils either wanted to be involved in no activity or had social problems.

An additional aspect of children's freedom of choice during break time is their engagement in recreational activities.

4.2.2 Use of break time for structured activities

Data collected demonstrated that the schoolyard was seen as a wide field for activities and children's initiatives, both individual and group. Observational data demonstrate that a considerable amount of activities were structured. I also observed a structured break time, with games organized by members of the Pupils Committee. During some sessions, I watched girls dancing to music from tape recorders placed on the ground. In comparison with 5th and 6th graders of both genders, boys and girls of grades 2-4 are more involved in structured activities and games, including playing with items brought from home, as well as interaction with peers through game playing. Almost all the children interviewed acknowledged that, during break times, they were periodically involved in structured activities including organized game playing. Some of them noted that they enjoyed the days when break time activities were organized by school. Organized sports were preferred by boys from all grades, with football being the most popular.

"I like very much when the Student Council organizes activities. They bring the play equipment and everybody gets involved. I hate the other days, when I have nothing to do during break time" (A 4th grade boy - 12).

"The boys are always in their team. As soon as the bell rings, they rush to play football. Yes, football, they love football" (A 4th grade girl - 13).

4.2.3 Use of break time for unstructured activities

Free, pupil-initiated play activities appeal to pupils as well. Boys from grades 2-4 were most seen playing in unpermitted places and being involved in unsafe play. According to the interview data, outdoor, rough-and tumble games were highly enjoyed by boys from grades 2 and 3, while two girls from grades 2-4 mentioned skipping rope.

"What I like the most is the time when the bell rings. I then turn into a "thief" who runs away from persecutors. I like the game "policemen and thieves" very much, and I like to be a "thief". I flee from the classroom and they shout and chase me. They grab and push me when they catch me, but I kick them and try to escape ..." (A 2nd grade boy - 14).

Some teachers believed that the initiative of children in the schoolyard should be the dominant force during break time, in contrast to teacher dominance in the classroom. They referred to break time as "children's time", and thus expected children to occupy themselves and to be independent.

"…During break time, children are drawn to non-organized activities because in the classroom everything is within a framework. In the yard they want the opposite. When the pupils' council tries to organize games, not everyone wants to participate…" (A teacher - 15).

Freedom of choice is also expressed in the schoolyard by a pupil deciding with whom he wishes to spend his time.

4.2.4 Spending time in peer groups

One can discern from the participants' responses that break time offers opportunities to develop social skills and test them out. Among younger children, both girls and boys have reported that they relate with peers by playing team games.

"When the bell rings, I rush outside to meet Yigal and Daniel, my friends from the 3rd grade. We hang around every day in our neighbourhood and play on the ball field" (A 4th grade boy - 16).

"Yesterday, I met a girl in the school yard. She played with a red skipping rope. I asked her whether she would share it with me and she did. We then played together" (A 3rd grade girl - 17).

The older children are, the more they prefer chatting with friends over playing. Interviewees from the 5th and 6th grade reported a preference for eating and drinking in the company of their peers. This is supported by the questionnaire data, whereby more girls than boys spend time by socializing through conversation (58 girls against 48 boys) and are less involved in game playing (40/59).The observational data showed that, in comparison with younger children, boys and girls of grades 5 and 6 were seen spending more time chatting with peers and socializing when eating and drinking. More girls than boys were seen sitting in the school lobby, chatting with peers, and sometimes eating sandwiches. More 5th and 6th grade pupils, mostly boys, were seen staying idle in the schoolyard.

"When *in the 2nd grade, I liked to run and shout like crazy*, said a 6th grade boy. *Now, I am almost an adult, he laughs, and I'm not interested anymore in running and jumping. I prefer ...* (he is confused a bit) *chatting with girls. They are quieter and more pleasant to talk to. We can speak and listen to music without shouting".*
"Sometimes, we've got some things to gossip about. We take our sandwiches and drinks and go to some quiet place" (A 6th grade girl - 18).

Teachers report that a great deal of pupil activity during break time is affected by their relationships within peer groups, and the interactions within groups contribute to the development of social skills and team spirit. Principals also noted that break time provides an opportunity for children to spend time interacting with peers, particularly while playing games.

"…The majority of children enjoy and learn many things from interaction with peers. They meet new children and make new friends. Their communication skills improve over the course of time…" (A teacher -19)

"*They* (children) *need the break in order to develop friendships and other social connections and to participate in group activities…*" (A principal - 20).

4.2.5 Involvement of children in cross-age and cross-gender interactions

Children interviewed reported on their wish to expand their friendships, including peers from other grades. A 4th grade boy and a 5th grade girl said that they preferred to play with older peers while a 6th grade girl reported that she periodically took care of younger girls by helping them resolve their conflicts or defending them from aggressive boys.

"*When we were young, we played in groups, but only with children from our own grade. Now that we are older, we want to meet pupils from other grades and add new friends to our group. We play less, mostly talk and laugh*" (A 5th grade girl - 21).

Observations revealed that, in comparison with younger children, boys and girls of grades 5 and 6 were seen spending more time chatting with peers of the opposite sex. Interviewees from grades 2 through 6 reported spending time in same-sex groups. The older they are, the more interest is shown in peers of the opposite sex.

"*When a break comes,* reports one of the 6th grade girls, "*my friend doesn't want to spend time with me. She does leave the classroom when she sees Afi because she flirts with him and she wants to talk to him*" (22).

Along with the positive way in which break time is viewed, it appears that there are also problems associated with its implementation.

4.3 Break time is a stressful time for pupils

The atmosphere of relaxation and release of energy does not appeal to all pupils during break time. Questionnaire responses demonstrate that girls from grades 2-4 are more annoyed by the noisy and overcrowded schoolyard than pupils of other age and gender groups. Some interviewees (2 girls and 1 boy) have reported their preference for avoiding the noisy setting of the schoolyard or school lobbies. Several younger children expressed their fear of noise and overcrowding, as a duty teacher would not be able to hear them if they needed help. Second and third graders fear being injured

during breaks, mainly from falling down while running, but also due to being pushed by peers, purposely or accidentally. Interview and questionnaire responses demonstrate that, unlike their older peers, boys and girls from grades 2-4 express fear of being injured during play.

"Sometimes, when in the school yard, I feel like I am in a Luna Park. Everything moves, there is a lot of noise and I am scared. Once, when in the first grade, somebody pushed me in the school yard and I fell down. I cried, but nobody heard me. Then my girlfriend saw me and helped me to the office and they put a plaster on my leg" (A 3rd grade girl - 23).

"I don't really like break time. I prefer to stay in the classroom during breaks. Children go wild and run to and fro with no purpose" (A 6th grade boy - 24).

"Boys run all the time and push other children. The girls try to stay away from them, but there is always someone who is injured" (A 3rd grade girl - 25).

The interviews with children reveal that, for some of them, the time between classes is a busy time. Three girls and one boy from grades 4-6 acknowledged that because of their failure to prepare homework or perform better during classes, they spent their free time going over the next lesson:

"When I was in the 3rd grade, I ran out of the classroom as fast as I could when the bell rang. Now, I sometimes stay in the classroom during an entire break to look through my homework or prepare for a dictation test" (A 5th grade boy - 26).

4.3.1 Children's socializing problems during break time

During observations, some children were seen sitting idly at the sides of the schoolyard or in the school corridors. Their behaviour might indicate that these pupils either did not want to be involved in any organized activity, or had social problems. Some children fail to choose partners for games or chatting. According to the questionnaire data, boys and girls from grades 2-4 have a greater fear of being alone during break time than their older peers. More girls than boys in grades 5 and 6 reported in interviews about problems in finding friends with whom to spend break

time, as they spend more time on building relationships and less on playing. Three interviewees, a 5th grade girl and 2 boys from grades 2-4, expressed feelings of frustration resulting from a failure to play with other pupils and fear of being alone during break time.

"I am not so popular among my classmates. In the classroom, they seem to be my friends when a teacher is watching us, but nobody seeks my company during breaks, and I feel alone" (A 5th grade girl - 27).

One may see from the findings, that most children desire the company of other children during break time, out of sight of authority figures. That said a small minority find this time to be threatening and overwhelming. In all cases, the necessity for the presence of the duty teacher manifests itself.

4.3.2 Dealing with ethical issues through peer interaction
Interviewed pupils of different ages reported about ethical issues with which they had to deal and about rules imposed on those who wanted to be accepted among peers. The responses demonstrate that an ethical problem emerges when a duty teacher is called to tackle a disciplinary problem in the schoolyard and some pupils do not feel comfortable asking for help. No one, however, reported discussing their ethical challenges with teachers, and children seemed to resolve ethical issues on their own.

"My classmate brought her collection of stickers to the school. She said if I wanted to see this collection, I had to give her two stickers. I asked her why I should do this; it seemed as if she wanted me to pay for seeing her collection" (A 2nd grade girl - 28).

"Dolev (pseudonym) *snitched on us; she told the duty teacher that we played with paper and a lighter. She also told that I brought the lighter but it wasn't me, believe me. I was only there because otherwise I wouldn't be accepted in their company"* (A 5th grade boy - 29).

 "When asked why I don't call for a duty teacher when someone bullies me, I explain that I don't want to be called a snitch, and also I'm not a baby who needs to cry for help" (A 5th grade boy - 30).

4.3.3 Pupil disciplinary problems arising during break times.

Analysis of data collected from interviews revealed that one of the main problems related to break time was deteriorating discipline among pupils. Lack of discipline was obvious in both schoolyards observed. Arguments among older and younger children were noted over a place to play, and jostling or fighting over something was a common sight. Interviewees' responses demonstrate that bullying is a common phenomenon during break time. Almost all questionnaire respondents rejected abusive behaviour and expressed a wish for conditions conducive to a normal rest. The rate of complaints on verbal and physical bullying is higher among respondents from grades 2-4 than among older pupils. Interviewees of both genders reported violence in the schoolyard, with more complaints arising from girls (4 girls against 2 boys).

"There are no breaks without violence. I try to avoid those pupils who I consider to be violent, but there's always someone who punches you. Liad from our classroom curses everybody and anytime" (A 3rd grade girl - 31).

"It doesn't go without hitting when playing "policemen and thieves". The teacher didn't notice that Adir hit someone because he pretended that he was playing" (A 4th grade boy - 32).

Observations showed that, compared to the girls from grades 2-4, boys of this age group exhibited more aggressive behaviour, both verbally and physically. Regarding older pupils, physical and verbal aggressive behaviour was more evident in boys from grades 5-6. Questionnaire responses demonstrate that boys and girls from grades 2-4 complain more about physical and verbal abuse than older pupils of both genders. Three out of the five interviewed girls complained about boys' aggressiveness. Boys appear to be more dominant and aggressive in the schoolyard. In addition, older children assert their dominance in the places in which they choose to play. Director General Circular (2003) (further: DGC) noted that one of the reasons for disciplinary problems during break time is the presence of a large number of pupils of different ages in the same area. These data were supported by principals and teachers who believed that an additional cause of misbehaviour is the concentration of different age and gender groups together in the same setting. Observational data showed that, even

in the larger "Razim" school that has two ball fields, disputes were noted over the privilege to play in the field. Overcrowding was significant in the "Ronim' school yard; more abusive behaviour was observed there as well as more incidents of children bumping into each other and falling down.

 "The boys go wild and push others all the time. The girls try to keep away from them, and there are always pupils who are injured because they are pushed and fall" (A 3rd grade girl - 33).

"The older boys always push us off. They yell at us that we should get off the field because it is their place. Once, I argued with them, but finally they kicked me off" (A 2nd grade boy- 34).

"…I worry principally that the break will end peacefully. Lots of children of different age groups, without direct supervision, create a real problem. Violence is a result of all that…" (A principal - 35).

Involvement in free play along with a willingness to explore new things, leads many children to disregard their safety and endanger themselves. Such behaviour was reported by pupils from grades 3 through 5 and supported by teachers and principals.

"The most frightening thing during breaks is that boys go wild. Once, one boy almost jumped over my head! They climb everything in sight. I remember that once a teacher stopped one boy who tried to climb the wall" (A 4th grade girl - 36).

"…Children search out secret hiding places…Most of them run around and the rest of them hide somewhere in the school building, where God knows what can happen" (A principal - 37).

4.3.4 Regarding violence as becoming a behavioural norm of pupils

Children's violent behaviour was a main worry among most teachers interviewed. They admit that it has become a behavioural norm among pupils. According to teachers, what is occurring in the schoolyard today is evidence of how little respect children have for adults. Children do the opposite of what they are told and behave

aggressively. Teachers point out that while only their own class is in the yard, being on duty goes much easier. They complain that most children care little about the classroom or other school property and point to pupils' desire to vandalize and destroy.

"First graders are still afraid of the teacher. Break times ruin our authority though. There are always confrontations with sixth graders, for instance. I speak with them, but they don't listen, and I have to physically stop them from hitting someone..." (A teacher - 38).

"You have to keep them from tearing down decorations, and vandalizing tables and chairs. Lately we've been locking the classrooms during break times. Discipline has gone way down. Pupils write on the walls, tear off pictures, etc." (A teacher - 39).

Teachers believe that the high incidence of conflicts can be explained by a lack of communication skills in children and a failure to compromise. An opinion was expressed that a majority of fights could be avoided if children would talk things out before they begin punching each other. Some express belief that pupils act impulsively and often jump to ungrounded conclusions. Principals noted that students fail to utilize social norms learned in the classroom.

"Outside they run around and don't necessarily intend to run into each other. Then one thinks that the other ran into him purposely and hits him back. If they would only stop for a moment and discuss the matter between them, it would all seem different..." (A teacher – 40).

"We discuss serious occurrences in staff meetings. I attempt to reach agreement on standard procedure for common occurrences. I ask teachers to discuss behavioural issues in the classroom as well, but when in the school yard, children do not seem to utilize the norms they learn in the classroom" (A principal - 41).

Questionnaire and interview data enabled me to understand the pupils' perception of break time duty and pedagogical methods used by teachers.

4.4 Pupil perception of a duty teacher

4.4.1 Duty teacher as a provider of assistance and order

Teachers' presence during breaks seems to be particularly necessary for the interviewees of both genders from grades 2 and 3. Children described in their responses, situations in which they needed adult assistance to resolve their problems, such as referring to a school nurse when they feel sick, dealing with minor problems like forgotten keys from home, an urgent need to speak with parents on home-related issues, and so on. More than the half of the respondents expressed the opinion that a duty teacher should be a provider of order during break time. Pupils from grades 5 and 6 were united in their belief that prevention of abusive behaviour is more important than dealing with it subsequent to its occurrence.

"*I believe that duty teachers are necessary for younger pupils who are frequently scared and need more attention. I remember myself crying at school because I missed my mom, and I used to run to a duty teacher who calmed me down*" (A 6th grade girl - 42).

"*If there is a mess, a duty teacher comes and restores order*" (A 3rd grade boy - 43)".

4.4.2 Failure to properly fulfill break time duty.

Pupils were particularly critical of those duty teachers who do not like or fail to perform their task and have little concern for pupils approaching for help. Interviewees from grades 4 - 6 have voiced the opinion that the presence of a duty teacher is of little or no use. Children mentioned teachers who were lenient toward pupil misbehaviour. They expressed their dislike for those teachers who lose control and yell at pupils. Among the teachers interviewed, there were those whose attitude was closer to apathy, a result of helplessness or lack of belief that a teacher is empowered to improve things.

"*Once, when I had a problem and looked for a duty teacher, I couldn't find her. When I entered a teachers' room and asked for help, another teacher started shouting that there should be a duty teacher around. Finally, we found her sitting on*

the bench and speaking on the phone outside the school, in a crowd of children. So how could I see her?" (A 6th grade girl - 44).

"*I don't even call for a duty teacher, and if I do, they sometimes don't come. They are so busy with their own problems that they have little time for us*" (A 5th grade boy – 45).

"*So you are asking about being on duty during break time. I've never really thought about it. I'm there because I was told to do so. Sometimes, I'm approached to break up a fight between children, and I try to separate them. Generally there isn't much to do. We discussed break time violence once during a teachers' conference. That's the behaviour children see at home. They are still children and they need to run wild and blow off energy and they do it during break time*" (A teacher - 46).

Principals criticized the teachers' perception and fulfillment of break time duty. They acknowledged that the difficulties they encounter stem from the contradiction in which teachers ostensibly go out into the schoolyard, but do not perform their duty there as required.

"*I show my teachers how to respond to children's needs during break time, but some of them just don't get it. Some of them seem to be rather indifferent to what is happening in the school yard*" (A principal - 47).

Another problem mentioned was tardiness to duty in the schoolyard. One of the principals interviewed tried to solve it by requiring the teaching staff to be present in the yard immediately at the beginning of break time. In order to facilitate this, duty teachers were given permission to end the lesson several minutes before the bell. This however did not solve the problem completely, and teachers continued to be late. Fourteen observations were conducted in order to examine how teachers fulfill their break time duty. Several aspects were considered: entering and leaving the schoolyard and choosing an observation point in the schoolyard. I found that in 11 observations, teachers were late to the school yard, ranging from 4 to 10 minutes. Only in 3 observations, the duty teacher remained a few minutes after the bell rang for classes, supervising those who entered the building and addressing remaining

break time issues. Teachers entered the building exactly upon the ringing of the bell in 5 observations. During 6 observations, the teachers completed their break time duty at least 3 minutes before the bell signaled for classes. More arguments were noticed among pupils and also delays in entering the building when the teacher was absent. In two cases, pupils searched for a duty teacher to address a problem, but the teacher was already unavailable. During 10 observations, the duty teachers remained in fixed positions. Only during 4 observations, did the teacher attempt to supervise different sections of the schoolyard. Less incidence of pupil misbehaviour was noticed in these cases, and fewer pupils were sent to the principal for resolving a disciplinary problem, as compared with observations in which a duty teacher preferred a fixed observation point.

Having completed my presentation of findings on children's perception of break time, I shall now move on to the teachers' point of view.

4.5 Teachers' perceptions of break time duty

The dominant impression received from the individual and focus group interviews with teachers, was that they perceived break time duty as a burden. The challenges faced by teachers during break time duty cause them to feel exhausted and deeply frustrated. One of the most salient complaints expressed by the focus group participants was that each time they went on duty they knew that they were going to face an almost impossible task – to ensure the safety of each pupil in the area for which they are responsible. Teachers commented a great deal on the necessity to act as judges and stand between two warring sides. They feel uncomfortable emotionally, having to assume this role so often, both when on duty in the yard and in the beginning of classes after a break. Some of the teachers acknowledged that it is difficult to discern whether there is just a dispute or an incident requiring intervention.

"*These break times are like an edict from above. We teachers just have to learn to survive in this job. I am grateful to God each time my duty shift ends peacefully*" (A teacher - 48).

"…. You complain that your duty is difficult! On my floor, it's a real mad house! I also don't know the names of many of them, and this gets on my nerves" (A teacher - 49).

"I start my break time duty with many good intentions…I patrol the yard, talking to those children who are alone. When I see something that looks violent, I ask myself whether I need to intervene or not. It isn't always easy to tell whether it is violence or just an aggressive game" (A teacher - 50).

4.5.1 Teachers' perceptions of break time duty as the provision of order

During the interviews, we spoke about fulfilling break time duty. Teachers acknowledged their role as providers of order and discussed their efforts to tackle disciplinary problems by finding appropriate solutions.

"I want to talk about a pupil who used to hit other children during break time. He had a problem. I considered what I needed to do in order to stop him from getting into fights. There were a lot of discussions with the principal and the school psychologist. During the first half of the year, I engaged some pupils as "big brothers" accompanying him during break time. At first it went well. As time went on, the other children began to refuse the job of "big brother". Truly, it was hard to blame them because he fought with them as well. I continued to search for a solution ...." (A teacher - 51).

4.5.2 Use of authoritarian pedagogical methods by duty teachers

Some teachers favored strict discipline. They believed that a teacher has to create an aura of authority and domination, setting out strict demands. When faced with a conflict between children or violation of a behavioural code rule, these teachers were quick to impose punishment. In addition, most of the teachers have opined that the principal, who does not determine clear hierarchical relationships with pupils, decreases the teacher's authority and ability to deter violent and antisocial behaviour.

"…We have to keep a tight hold over them. If not, a lot of time is wasted on disciplinary problems. I don't give in and if I need to punish someone then I do so. It isn't always effective, as they often are backed up from home. I even work with them

on not to interrupt someone else speaking. I'm tired of their rudeness and lack of culture..." (A teacher - 52).

"*…The lack of discipline and respect for teachers does not depend on pupils, but rather on who is principal. ... There must be pre-determined boundaries, and we do not need a principal who talks with children about soccer...*" (A teacher - 53).

Remarkably, different pedagogical approaches were identified even within the words of the same teacher who, on the one hand, supported the non-involvement approach and granting children more freedom and the opportunity to independently resolve their conflicts. On the other hand, she claimed that there should be strict discipline in schools and no negotiation in case of breach of the behavioural code.

"*Why should I separate two warring parties? They know better the reason for their arguments. Of course, there has to be someone on guard ...*" (A teacher - 54).

"*… But there must be strict norms, with no room for negotiation. Some teachers enter into arguments with pupils. I don't argue. If they don't like it, they can go to the principal. That's what I tell them*" (A teacher - 55).

In some school circulars I reviewed, the school staff preferred to deal with disciplinary problems only in an authoritarian way. One of the circulars included such requirements as "Intervene promptly in incidents of violence or even in situations which may escalate into violence". Teachers are required not to shout, and to speak shortly and clearly, as: "Stop it immediately!" They are to look "straight into a pupil's eyes" and require a pupil to "look straight at the teacher". It is stated expressly that the teacher should not be lenient on the pupils involved in the incident. Such a way of handling conflict situations is believed to "ensure pupils' feelings of security" and "decrease the number of incidents of violence and vandalism", as stated in the "Expected results" section of the above circular.

By way of comparison, I reviewed a number of school circulars and conduct codes elaborated by schools worldwide, some of which attracted my attention. For instance, codes posted by Emma King School (Canada) and St. Jones County School (USA)

explain the reasoning for expected behaviour, and consequences for misbehaviour are explained in a lucid, convincing and respectful manner. Emphasis is placed on such values as honesty, fairness, caring relationships, and their importance to the wellbeing of individuals and society.

4.5.3 A flexible approach to education as a creative way of teaching

Few teachers, however, were against authoritarian methods and supported creating a meaningful dialogue that leads to academic and social achievements. They tried to find time and means to teach subjects beyond strict curriculum requirements, paying a great deal of attention to fostering good social skills.

"…It's not my style to remain "inside the square". I've been teaching for many years and I've seen a lot of schools, and they all have this blind drive to finish the curriculum. The whole idea of social skills falls outside the curriculum... We get these standardized, statewide tests and must prepare them for examinations (A teacher - 56).

These teachers expressed themselves as being in favor of understanding and consideration. They preferred flexibility with regard to the code rules, and allowed much freedom during break times, shifting a great deal of responsibility to pupils concerning their actions. They followed the principle of equality in relationships with pupils, and in the event of conflict or disobedience, they believed that children should be allowed to learn and practice social skills in solving their problems independently. These teachers believe in encouraging their pupils to maintain a dialogue within peer groups and encourage them to solve conflicts rationally and responsibly.

"According to my principle, I give children time and room to express themselves. I impose punishment rarely and only after careful consideration of all the circumstances. I believe that punishment should be used rarely in school. I know that my way can shake up the boundaries because I do not accept a rigid framework, but this is my way of thinking" (A teacher - 57).

"For me, listening is very important, with a high level of attentiveness to the problem. I try to fit myself to the child's way of thinking, to speak with them as with adults, not

in the baby talk style. I let them face challenges, supporting them and showing confidence in them. I also know for whom the boundaries exist only when someone is watching, and I always make it clear to them. I believe that punishment in our schools is too frequently used without much consideration. We have to change the way we work with children if we want our break times to be different ...." (A teacher - 58).

Pupils are seen as individuals, each with special talents and abilities. The teacher believes that the main challenge is to develop each child's individual potential.

"*… The child is in the centre. I relate to pupils as equals, but without losing my teacher authority. I don't teach just to finish a curriculum. My permanent goal is to allow a child to develop and give him or her space for personal growth. I expose children to challenges and make clear that I believe in their ability to deal with them…*" (A teacher - 59).

"*…If teachers would realize that different rules apply at break time, there would be much less teacher-pupil clashes. When I was a teacher, I saw break time as an opportunity to learn about the social side of my pupils' personalities by discussing many things with them ...*" (A principal - 60).

Another side of the flexible approach to teaching concerned the idea of break time providing an opportunity for a real-life skills exercise. Some of the teachers suggested that such things as foul language and physical abuse are inevitable elements of children's interrelations. They have maintained that this is one of the ways in which children prepare themselves for dealing with conflict situations they will encounter later on in life. It has been acknowledged that conflict resolution is an important part of developing children's social skills. This was supported by pupils who noted that there were teachers who preferred not to intervene in disputes, believing that small incidents should be handled by children themselves. Some principals argued that children should have more independence in resolving conflicts, since they believed that conflict solving is an important part of social development.

"This is their time. They have to relax and even go wild and release negative energies. This is possible by means of various games, but also through clashes with other children. This can help them to learn about real life situations" (A teacher – 61).

"Last year, teachers still believed that we were little kids and ran to help as soon as someone was bullied. Now, we have been told that we are more mature and have to resolve some of our problems alone" (A 4th grade boy - 62).

"Break time is the time they spend together, exchange news and resolve their conflicts. This helps them develop socially" (A principal - 63).

Adoption by teachers of such conflicting strategies is seen by pupils as a lack of method in instilling discipline on the teachers' part, and worse, a failure (See 4.4).

4.5.4 The time of instruction and break time are mutually affected

Interviewees from grades 3-6 expressed their views on the amount of time allocated for break times: breaks were considered either too short or, as some pupils opined, were shortened by teachers. Complaints of children of both genders indicate that some teachers disregard the bell ringing for a break. The issue was raised of the interdependence of break time events and of classroom processes. Almost all focus group participants complained that in case of a disciplinary incident during break time, part of valuable classroom time is spent on resolving the arguments begun outside.

"The teacher steals from our recess time. She talks and talks as if she doesn't hear the bell. It's very annoying, and she is also angry with me because I am eager for a break. However, if I am not the first to the field, they don't include me into the game" (A 3rd grade boy - 64).

"You have no idea how much lesson time is wasted on talking about the problems occurring during break time! Sometimes, I even have to look for a duty teacher to clear things up!" (A teacher- 65).

Teachers report that the problems occurring during break time affect the classes that follow and often affect their quality. Classes frequently begin with the need to first resolve the arguments begun outside. Most teachers interviewed did not favour the idea of increasing break time duration.

"…I arrive in the classroom and hear from the children that problems which arose in the yard were not resolved. I refer the complaints to the teacher who was on duty, but it is of no help. A part of the lesson is lost after break time. We have discussed this and it was decided that the teacher on duty would take care of conflicts when they occur. We decided that we would not deal with these issues during classes. We refer the pupil back to the teacher who was on duty at the time the incident occurred. However, the child then says something like 'I tried to tell her but then the bell rang…' and there is no choice in the end but to deal with it in class and waste lesson time…" (A teacher- 66).

It appears that the complexity of the break time environment, with teacher duty being seen as a burden, might explain the "shortening" of the allotted time.

4.5.5 Compensation of teachers for break time duty

Almost all teachers claimed that they fulfilled break time duty with no proper compensation for this kind of work. They believed that there should either be special teachers for break time or that teachers should be compensated for their break time duty shifts. Principals also brought about the idea of financial compensation of teachers for break time duty in addition to their basic salaries.

"They cut my recess time for fulfillment of break duty". I should be paid for that similar to those who are paid for the instruction of subjects. They talk about specialization in different areas of instruction, so let teachers specialize in break time duty and get paid for it" (A teacher - 67).

"Teachers have no time to breathe during the day. If they were paid for working during break time, it would improve the situation. Teachers need a solution for their own break period. If they knew they were getting paid for working during the period, their work would be more thorough and professional…" (A teacher - 68).

The viewpoint of school principals is necessary in order to complete the presentation of findings.

4.6 Break time demands energy-draining work from principals

Principals have depicted break time as energy-consuming, since it occupies a good deal of their time. This demand on their time results from the physical nature of pupils' behaviour in the yard. Teachers are not able to cope, thus their presence becomes necessary. Upon conclusion of the break period, the teacher on duty must return to the classroom while the principal is left to deal with any issues as yet unresolved.

"*The lesson after break time is always difficult. Children are still upset over losing at a game. Strong teachers are experienced in moving children along into the lesson, but not everyone is capable. After a break time I walk through the halls, and I know that certain teachers will always call me into the classroom…*" (A principal - 69).

Principals reported that due to break time problems, their day occasionally becomes disrupted. Break time crises can affect pre-arranged plans, and as the above quote shows, this has become the accepted norm. Principals stress the necessity for being physically present at the school during break time and being involved in resolving problems, specifically in the yard.

"*As principal I am present during break time. I almost never remain in my room, never. I want to be outside, where I feel more sure of what's going on. I see things better than the teacher on duty. I'm there because I want to be, not because someone told me so…*" (A principal - 70).

"*I know that I have to be at school during break time. I thought at first it would only be necessary during the first year. However, after three years I still feel the same…*" (A principal - 71).

During some observation sessions, I observed a school principal patrolling the school grounds and sometimes intervening in disputes between duty teachers and pupils. With regard to break time, the role of the school principal was seen by children from the two aspects: a routine check-up of the school yard or lobby territory and being called to resolve a disciplinary problem. Children acknowledged that they did not feel constrained in the school yard because of the presence of the principal. The interviewees from grades 4-6 also reported incidents in which duty teachers failed to deal with disobedient pupils and called for a principal, or they themselves approached a principal, particularly when they believed that the teacher regularly failed to perform her duty during breaks.

"We've got a principal - a new one. Sometimes, I see her hanging around in the schoolyard and I greet her. She talks to a duty teacher and sometimes children speak with her. Once, I saw her reprimand pupils who were running wild near the entrance" (A 6 grade girl - 72).

"There are some teachers who are not worth much regarding their duty during breaks. They do nothing. If you ask them for help, your break is wasted. If there is a problem and Daniela, our class tutor, is absent from school, I go straight to the principal. There is nothing else to do, only the principal can deal with some crazy pupils" (A 5th grade boy - 73).

4.6.1 Poor break time organization is a source of disciplinary problems

Principals' perception of break time is affected by a sense of frustration, stemming from the energy expended without any clear results. They feel that much energy goes into break time and acknowledge that this part of a school day is still poorly organized. Teachers have supported the notion that, in addition to children's tendency to test and cross the established behavioural borders, they do not know how to spend their free time meaningfully, and therefore often do nothing, or spend time triggering conflicts with peers and teachers.

"I invest a great deal of time in break time matters. I open every staff meeting with a discussion about the importance of being on duty during break time. Still, I feel that

we aren't doing enough, we aren't going forward. Break time is not a part of the pedagogic school day…" (A principal - 74).

"I think often on how break time might be more effectively utilized, instead of wasted. I would like to see more organized sports, dancing, and other points of interest. I don't mean for it to turn into a formal lesson, but half an hour of unplanned time is just a waste…" (A principal - 75).

"If children have nothing to do, they eventually become violent. They find it difficult to use their free time in a positive way…" (A teacher - 76).

Responses of some of 5th and 6th graders have demonstrated that they do not know how to spend their time between classes, and that organized activities appear to be the only solution for those who are bored during break time. These data were supported by the teachers interviewed.

"On those days when we don't play football, it's really boring. This week, the teacher used our schoolyard for rehearsals. It was really annoying. OK, this time it was necessary, but we haven't much to do without playing in the schoolyard" (A 6th grade boy - 77).

"…The problem is that they don't manage by themselves. I tell them to bring games from home if they like, and to learn how to play. They're not in nursery school anymore. In fact, the schoolyard is pretty empty, and pupils don't have much to do…" (A teacher - 78).

Teachers' remarks show that even when decisions were reached on how to resolve break time problems, implementation of these decisions was not systematic. According to the protocols of the Committee for Education, Culture and Sports (further: Committee) between the years 1998-2008, the matter of school discipline was examined in six sessions but only two sessions dealt with deteriorating school discipline, including incidences of violent behaviour. In fact, the manner in which the guidelines on discipline are provided in the DGC circulars leaves interpretation to the discretion of each school when handling incidents of abusive behaviour and conflict.

Moreover, there was a clear tendency in actual legislation (Students' Rights Law, 2000; 2004) and policy directives that promotion of students' civil rights was occurring in place of teachers' and principals' capabilities to enforce discipline in schools. The Committee's protocols determined that the main reason for disciplinary problems in Israeli public schools is a lack of teacher and principal authority in enforcing discipline. Schools were required to take a stricter approach to disciplinary matters and adopt tougher sanctions against undisciplined pupils. Since then, however, there has been little effort on the part of the Israeli Education Ministry to ensure that policies concerning disciplinary problems are sufficiently resourced and that school management is given the authority it requires. As a result, the school staff and in particular duty teachers, must deal with problematic situations on their own, selecting appropriate policy for the class for which they are responsible.

4.6.2 Lack of clear decisions on the use of structured and unstructured break time

Principals, in their responses, were confronted with a dilemma: free and unsupervised time, or structured and supervised. Free play during break time was perceived by principals as an important part of child development. At the same time, they have reported that organized and supervised break time is more beneficial for children who avoid anti-social behaviour by being involved in planned activities. Some principals feel that the freedom children enjoy during unstructured breaks leads to complex situations referred to in such terms as "a battleground", or "nightmare".

"Break time is for the children, they need it. It's true that this is valuable time which goes unplanned, but I don't know whether we have to control it. It's the children's time and they need their running around..." (A principal - 79).

"...They shouldn't waste time. Instead of just throwing a ball around and fighting, it is preferable to provide them with organized games, dancing, and other activities. When the activities are organized, fewer conflicts arise. On the other hand, children should have the opportunity to choose how to spend their free time..." (A principal - 80).

4.6.3 Lack of consensus on how to include break time issues into the curriculum.

The participants have agreed that the school staff's authority should be increased in order to better enforce discipline. I voiced the idea that pupils in the classroom should be provided with guidance on how to spend their free time between classes (an opinion expressed by one of the teachers during the individual interview). Few teachers spoke in favor of such guidance, which, from their perspective, should be better achieved by developing a meaningful dialogue with pupils and would prevent many disciplinary problems. While all the teachers have agreed that break time education should be provided during educational hours, the large majority vehemently rejected the idea of discussing break time problems during regular lessons, arguing that too much instruction time is already being devoted to break time issues. During focus group discussions, only two teachers saw the time allocated for breaks as part of the curriculum plan, implementing in the schoolyard those principles which were discussed during classes. Some teachers expressed the belief that a special body should be concerned with break time and that class time should not be taken up with break time problems.

"*It's impossible! Too much instruction time is being wasted on break time matters*" (A teacher - 81).

"*Break time and instruction should be separated completely. There should be a school committee to take care of break time issues.*" (A teacher – 82)**.**

4.6.4 Impact of external factors on school break time

All principals interviewed complained at the increases in external demands, which place schools under pressure, particularly the requirement to raise pupils' achievements. Alternatively, they reported that the regulatory bodies seem to be detached from what is taking place in schools, and fail to empower school staff with tools for decreasing antisocial student behaviours.

"*The Education Ministry has declared war against violence in schools. A lot of money has been invested in brochures and many beautiful words have been spoken. When an incident occurs that requires the support of the Ministry, a principal does*

not receive it. Nothing can be improved without real support from the Ministry and local authorities" (A principal - 83).

Tension of principals at break time also stems from their responsibility to pupils' parents over what occurs at school. The principals report that parents have expressed their concern over what happens during break time, particularly as they send their first child to school, and they demand more adult supervision. Teachers complained that a lack of backup and support from school principals was caused by the principals' wish to avoid unnecessary conflicts with parents.

"…We conducted a survey as a result of several complaints, and found that children expressed feelings of insecurity. These feelings seem to stem from the home, where parents express doubt concerning the teacher on duty, who they do not always know. It was no help that I added an additional teacher. I go outside every break period. It isn't easy, but parents pass by and see me there, and the teachers are aware of me as well. My presence there improved the general atmosphere…" (A principal - 84).

"…The principal avoids conflicts with parents. I can understand this, but what can you do when your hands are tied. The children don't listen to us" (A teacher - 85).

According to some teachers, too frequently violent children are affected by the violent behaviour of their parents. Teachers notice that sometimes violent behaviour results from the problems experienced by children who see little help from both parents and teachers in addressing these problems.

"The children are not brought up at home with discipline. Children, who are used to not being criticized for negative behavior by their parents, won't listen to their teacher." (A teacher - 86).

There was a perception amongst teacher respondents that parents are not involved in school life as in the past and are not teaching their children proper values:

"Parents at one time invested time and energy in instilling values in their children. Now they mostly invest in material things." (A teacher - 87).

In addition, teachers have expressed a general feeling that children growing up in a materialistic society, with a great importance placed on personal achievements and success, do not sufficiently learn how to deal with a failure to succeed. Competitiveness affects teachers as well. Former great ideals have given way to competitiveness and survival. Some teachers believe that violent behaviour is a result of the cultural norms accepted by society.

"*They (*children – S.*) are sore losers. They know how to play very well, but to lose? They don't know how to behave when they lose, and they deal with this problem through violence*" (A teacher - 88).

"*Violence between them seems like part of their generation's culture. They grow up watching violent television shows and wearing violent ninja costumes and the like. I don't get this talk about preventing violence. It's like preventing them from living. That's the life they know…* (A teacher - 89).

Four pupils from grades 2-5 have reported that their parents are worried about their children's safety during break time, particularly when they are informed that class tutors or duty teachers are not present. Parents also did not hide their disapproval of some teachers' behaviour and sided with their children when they heard that a duty teacher was absent or unable to resolve a disciplinary problem.

"*… My mother has told me that if they blame me that I have hit someone, she will take my side and won't punish me because she understands that some children want to pick fights and I have to defend myself if a duty teacher is not around*" (A 6th grade boy - 90).

4.6.5 Diversity in principals' managerial and pedagogical thinking

4.6.5.1 Different aspects of managerial vision

All principals interviewed reported having a different managerial vision. Five of the ten principals were found to have an "internal" orientation. They lead by first attending to the needs of their teaching staff or the pupils' needs. The principals realize that break time duty, while being a part of the overall workplace and time frame of the teacher, represents a significant extra burden on their shoulders. This may at times compromise teachers' effectiveness in the classroom.

"I appointed one of the non-teaching staff to make coffee for the teacher on duty. I realize that teachers dread being on yard duty. I allow them to rest and get some air during break. They have a smoking area outside the school. It wasn't always so. I know they need their smoke to calm down and if I don't allow it, it affects the next lesson ... Ofek Hadash (the educational reform program) has eliminated a lot of free time for teachers. The educational system loses out on good people because it does not provide the most basic of decent working conditions" (A principal - 91)

Some of the principals are rather task-oriented:

"The thing I worry about most is the children and their safety during break time. Six hundred children are together in the school yard". I want to provide them with what they need. I mapped the area, and held a workshop with my teaching staff, in which I explained what the children feel and experience during recess. I demand a reaction to every significant break time occurrence, a well thought out, respectful reaction. As a principal, I am very present in the yard during break time. I rarely stay in my office. Occasionally children refer directly to me with a problem instead of to the teacher on duty. This is due to the fact that they know I respond with understanding" (A principal - 92).

Some of the interviewed principals had an orientation which I would define as "external". They are chiefly concerned with the surrounding environment and cater less to the needs of the staff than to the expectations of outside sources.

"I am physically present during almost every break time. It seems like I fulfill a break time duty. Have you seen such a thing – a principal performing a break time duty? But this is the only way to shut the parents up. When the parents see me in the schoolyard, together with a duty teacher, or their children tell them at home that the principal hangs around in the school yard during breaks, they calm down. The parents simply don't trust duty teachers, and they tell me that they are happy to see me in the school yard" (A principal - 93).

The attitudes of some of the interviewees may be described as combined, or "fully attentive". They take into account both the needs of the teaching staff as well as the expectations of the surrounding environment.

"*Many parents are not cooperative, but very demanding. This imposes additional challenges on teachers in dealing with disciplinary problems. What tools do they actually have to cope with disobedient pupils? They need me to support them, to encourage them. If I don't do it, who will? On the other hand, we have also to listen to the parents. We are bound by their demands; we have to examine upon what these demands are based and to address them*" (A principal - 94).

4.6.5.2 A view of teaching as a profession of value and a mission

Within their capacity as leaders, principals view teaching as a profession of value, a mission. They expect teachers to be completely committed to the educational process and to instilling values in children. In order to enforce this commitment, principals attempt to show teachers that their hard work, both within the classroom and without, is of utmost importance, and different from any other profession.

"*I tell my teachers: Education is not a place of work. It is an opportunity to be at the heart of changing the world. However, my feeling as principal is that most choose the profession for the comfortable work hours…*" (A principal - 95).

"*They show you how to teach in college, but they don't show you how to be a teacher. To be a teacher is something else. It involves everything. It is shaping the next generation. Not everyone understands that…*" (A principal - 96).

Values often stand in contrast with everyday reality. Alongside belief in higher values, material needs are present. Teachers expect principals to make sure they are adequately compensated for their efforts. Principals find themselves at times unable to deliver.

"*Teaching is not a job where you count the hours and say 'I deserve'. Or 'It's my right to have a break'. I really believe in this, but it's difficult at times. I had a teacher who had a problem at home and requested to be released early, during break time, and I*

couldn't grant the request. I found myself asking myself, 'Why should a teacher have to donate 20 minutes of her own time to her job?'...” (A principal - 97).

4.6.5.3 A dilemma over the reconciliation of flexible teaching and close teacher supervision during break time

The principals were faced with a dilemma. They have acknowledged that, on the one hand, children should be taught to think and gain knowledge independently. By encouraging teachers to employ fewer teacher led classroom lessons, they intend to maintain less intensive monitoring. A more flexible teaching process is encouraged, with children learning more independently. Some respondents projected this notion to the schoolyard processes. On the other hand, the Education Ministry directives concerning close adult supervision in the schoolyard are enforced. While principals believe that this is done for the protection of the children, they pose the question of how gaining knowledge independently can co-exist with close teacher supervision during break time.

“*We encourage independence and acceptance of responsibility. I constantly remind teachers of the importance of supervision during break time, and then ask myself what about the classroom. What's the difference between the classroom and the schoolyard?”* (A principal 98).

4.7 Measures for improving the quality of break time

Principals have expressed a desire and willingness to invest more time and effort in planning and implementing break time. A number of recommendations were made to this end. They would like to see a change from teachers' reactive behaviour to a proactive attitude based on established school values. Another recommendation given had to do with the word "break time" and its meaning: principals suggested, for instance, that changing the name "break time to "flexible time" might make break time a more integral part of the actual school day and learning process. A suggestion was made to lessen the number of breaks and their length. However, although principals interviewed see this as a viable solution to break time problems, clearly this is only a technical solution. A number of issues, which were addressed in ministerial documentation and in the interviews with teachers and principals, were

considered in developing the recommendations resulting from this study and are presented below.

4.7.1 Provision of safety in the school buildings and grounds.

The paragraph "Organization of recess" (DGC, 2005) includes sufficient safety provisions. Pupils are prohibited from leaving the school area without special permission. Pupils must not be left alone in classrooms (except those on duty). Use of hazardous objects and playing dangerous games must be expressly prohibited. According to the DGC, a school principal is liable for the security and effective supervision of the school buildings and grounds, as well as for appointing duty teachers to supervise pupils. Principals have held that, in view of dangerous situations that might arise out of increased physical activity of children, one of their key tasks is ensuring physical protection and safety of children. The principal, whose worry over lack of adult supervision mounts, invests a great deal of time in arranging all the pupils so as to be within view of the duty teacher. This is achieved physically and by establishment of appropriate procedure:

"…*The schoolyard is a pretty, tree-filled area, with a lot of steps. Everything takes place at a frenetic pace. Life becomes difficult, due to the danger of accidents occurring. Children are running and carousing, and the halls are crowded, which increases stress. I am always on edge. Children are also pushing each other by the water fountain. It's a period waiting for an accident to happen…*" (A teacher - 99).

The following paragraphs will show that teachers and principals agree that social skills should be a primary educational goal. They differ concerning the place of break time in achievement of this goal, and as to assignment of responsibility.

4.7.2 Use of break time for social education of pupils.

Many teachers expressed the belief that educational hours are one of the most important resources available for fulfilling the school curriculum and are important for instilling social skills in pupils. Only few, however, saw the time allocated for breaks as part of the curriculum plan, implementing in the schoolyard those principles which were discussed during education hours. One teacher suggested that children

must be taught how to play. She stressed that teachers do not deal with this issue, due to the common belief that learning and playing are different processes.

"*…There is a close connection between the class and the schoolyard. If the child does well in lessons and the teacher encourages him, he can then continue outside to employ what he/she has learned…*" (A teacher - 100).

"*We must teach them how to accept different views, how to resolve conflicts peacefully and what real friendship is. I want to teach them to be people with values, to be honest people. I invest much effort in discussions with children and I am glad when they become actively involved …*" (A teacher - 101).

"*… As part of a change, I would recommend discussing the subject of playing in the classroom. They need to learn how to play. This is an important process, and if teachers take it seriously in the classroom, it will have a positive effect during break time*" (A teacher - 102).

Some principals recommended instituting a formal lesson dedicated to break time issues, to become a part of a school-wide program. Such a lesson plan would deal with the special nature of break time. Constructive use of one's free time would also be a part of the program. There was a recommendation to involve pupils in some organizational decisions, particularly in some schoolyard activities instead of teachers. This suggestion was accompanied by conditions.

"*I am not saying that we should convert break time into a lesson, but we should definitely bring break time into the classroom. We should discuss how to make better use of this time, to make better choices…*" (A principal - 103).

"*Children don't know what to do during break time. They need to be taught to fill time with something meaningful. The difference in behaviour between the classroom and the schoolyard is also something that should be discussed*" (A principal - 104).

"*Children are an important resource. We need to get them involved. We used to have organized football teams and such, and tournaments. The children were occupied and*

it made things easier on the teachers. There were complaints though about foul language. Questions arose as to whether it was a good idea…" (A principal - 105).

4.7.3 Hiring external employees to organize break time activities

The recommendation for improvement most commonly cited was the hiring of external employees to act as social coordinators, whose responsibility would be to organize group activities during break time. Principals recommended that the social coordinator would provide a wide range of possible activities and he would then ensure the proper behaviour of the pupils and the presence in the yard of the teacher on duty. Teachers also recommended bringing in external help to maintain order during break time.

"If it could be budgeted, I would appoint a social coordinator, who would deal only with break time. He would organize activities, more varied than at present, in sports, dance, and everything else the children enjoy doing. He would make sure nothing untoward occurs and that the teacher on duty is present…" (A principal - 106).

"Due to the level of violence in schools, our task becomes similar to that of police. I think it would be good to hire people who would act like policemen and would be able to chase violent children. And you know what? Let's involve parents in school yard duty! They know how to criticize school, so let them come and help in this mad house." (A teacher - 107).

Findings reveal that the way to bring about necessary change within the existing Israeli educational framework must begin through changing paradigms to 2 issues: the structure of the teacher's working day, and planning the schoolyard as part of the school itself, not just an afterthought.

4.7.4 Break time as an opportunity for teachers to rest and socialize

Principals have also claimed that teachers need to have a rest as well. An additional issue arising is that of the closeness between members of the teaching staff, which develops in the teachers' lounge. Principals realize the importance of this, and report that they invest a great deal of time in instilling this togetherness. Break time offers the opportunity for colleagues to discuss things and to build closer relationships.

"Break time is also for the teachers. They need the teachers' lounge for more than just a rest. The most intimate conversations take place during the break. Informal friendships develop, conversations, and a kind of support group takes place…" (A principal - 108).

4.7.5 Making schoolyards more attractive places

Remarkably, neither the Israeli Education Ministry's guidelines nor school circulars reviewed paid any attention to the school playgrounds and equipment which would enable children to both release their energy through intensive movement and be involved in creative play. This issue was addressed in the interviews with principals. A recommendation was made to add permanent equipment to the schoolyard. Principals believe that more and newer equipment would give children more to do in one place, and eliminate the pointless and dangerous running around.

"I would bring in a social coordinator who would arrange activities, but also add more equipment. We need to set out games, swings and climbing bars and more. Teachers say that the kids have nothing to do during break time. We need to add more and better equipment, so as to avoid arguments and fights over what little we do have. Then of course we will have to worry about safety and accidents…" (A teacher - 109).

4.8 Summary

The research sub-questions directed the collection of data in the following aspects: understanding the purpose and organization of break time and break time duty by the three groups of school population (sub-questions 1 and 3); the ways in which break time is actually implemented, including pupil and teacher behaviour patterns observed in the school (sub-questions 2, 3, and 4), and the stakeholders' perception of the problems associated with break time and the measures for improving break time quality (sub-questions 4 and 5).

The thematic framework included the themes developed by using the inductive approach to text encoding. The names of main themes as well as many sub-themes were suggested by the issues illuminated in the research into school break time and

research questions. They concern such areas as break time purpose and organization, break time duty, child disciplinary problems, and provision of pupil safety. The use of inductive coding allowed for development of themes that indicated various aspects of broad thematic domains, including the themes linked to the context of this research. They also reflected the issues that were not or only scarcely discussed in previous studies of break time (themes highlighted in green, see Appendix 3). I attempted to code for as many potential themes as possible in order to provide rich description of break time practices. Of the 142 themes developed from data collected (including main themes and sub-themes), 51 themes are specific to the context of this study.

Analysis of data revealed that the majority of themes were obtained through interviews and focus group which reflected the stakeholders' perception of the time between classes and their interactions during break time. The themes developed from the interview texts enhanced understanding of break time perception and practices identified initially by means of a questionnaire. The focus group discussion confirmed many issues highlighted in individual interviews and sharpened the problems related to pupil discipline and performance of break time duty. The themes developed through observation sessions allowed for identification of a variety of behaviour patterns and details of break time practices that were described in the interview and questionnaire responses. The Education Ministry and school circulars and the Knesset protocols highlighted pupil safety measures, problems related to pupil discipline and the school staff authority in dealing with disciplinary problems. One can conclude that for regulatory bodies, the issue of social education of pupils remains within the area of dealing with disciplinary problems.

The use of within-method triangulation (Denzin, 1989) enabled me to identify the most salient main themes and sub-themes which were developed from the data obtained by 3-5 data collection tools (see Appendix 4). The themes included in the table indicate the issues that are most significant in perceiving the purpose and organization of break time and in understanding the problems and measures for ensuring its normal implementation.

According to these themes, break time is perceived by all participants, as a period for rest and relaxation for pupils, satisfying physical needs and providing organized

activities. The themes indicate the main pupils' activities during break time (game playing and peer interaction) and the performance of break time duty is, first and foremost, associated with provision of order and assistance to pupils. (See Appendix 4, Table 2). The themes point to the preference for using authoritarian pedagogical methods and a failure to deal with disciplinary problems. They suggest that the most salient problems interfering with the normal implementation of break time are associated with pupil discipline, stemming from the presence of a large number of pupils of different ages and genders in a confined area, and little authority for duty teachers in enforcing discipline. Measures deemed most important for maintaining a good quality of break time, appear to be solely related to providing pupil safety and for addressing disciplinary problems. One can see that free play is not among the most salient themes. Disregarding the high number of disciplinary problems affecting the implementation of break time, the social education of pupils is not on the list of measures needed for improving break time quality.

Analysis of the interview and focus group data reveals inconsistencies in the participants' perception of certain important break time issues. Principals and teachers agree that pupils should have a break from classroom routine, but are uncertain about the extent to which this freedom should be respected, since the children's perception of freedom collides with the required disciplinary rules. Noticeably, the themes "freedom to choose how to spend break time" and "enjoyment of free play" appears only in the interviews with children while principals and teachers seem not to address this issue. The latter acknowledge the importance of free play for the development of children, but prefer organized break time activities, mentioning the disciplinary problems occurring during unstructured break time. Some teachers are in favor of flexibility in complying with rules and giving independence to pupils in resolving their conflicts, however, authoritarian pedagogical methods seem to be preferable over flexibility. The approach of non-interference into conflicts among pupils is interpreted by some principals as a misunderstanding and a failure to properly fulfill schoolyard duty. Principals describe their belief in teaching as a profession of value and a mission, while teachers on duty perceive their tasks as a burden.

Review of the main themes and sub-themes against the research sub-questions suggests that there is more understanding of break time purpose and problems across

all the participant groups than of the ways to improvement (sub-question 5). The majority of recommendations are offered by principals, while teachers exhibit less initiative, except for citing use of educational lessons for improving break time implementation. Regarding children, there is only one theme that indicates a measure for improvement: the belief that bullying should be prevented by duty teachers. Noticeably, pupils place all the responsibility on teachers, but do not acknowledge that they are also responsible for their own behaviour.

Some of the context-linked themes appear only in the interviews with children. These are the themes indicating children remaining idle during break time, pupil-initiated play involving playthings brought from home (both themes are confirmed by the observation data), and fear of being alone during break time. Evidence gathered through the interviews with pupils demonstrates that children, who bring playthings from home in order to organize their free time between classes, are encountered with various ethical problems which children have to resolve by themselves and which remain beyond the attention of the school staff. While some children declare that remaining idle during break is part of relaxation, the observation themes suggest that while this may be so, the child might be expressing a difficulty socializing with other children. Both principals and teachers have acknowledged that many children do not know how to organize their free time between classes, but this is only related to the disciplinary problems occurring during break time.

The method of inclusive coding (Bryman, 2001; Becker & Geer, 1960) was used in text encoding. The development of codes was based on the understanding of context (see appendices 9 and 10). Some sentences or a group of them (context) were coded with more than one code, so that the same sentence can provide the source for different themes. The examples provided in Appendices 6 and 7 demonstrate that encoding the text within the context allows for different interpretation of the same data. This example also demonstrates the impact of this research conceptual framework on the interpretation of the data. Since break time is considered a valuable time for the social education of pupils, the theme indicating the duty teachers' leniency toward pupil misbehaviour is interpreted as the teachers' failure to properly fulfill break time duty.

As a result of the analysis of observation field notes, questionnaire and interview responses, differences were identified in boys' and girls' perception of break time and in their behaviour patterns exhibited during this time. A consolidated table was prepared (see Appendix 5) in order to make these differences clearer. The themes were distributed across 5 grade/gender groups of pupils. The table includes the number of interviewees and questionnaire respondents who articulate the theme. The difference between the different grade/gender groups of respondents was identified by using arithmetical calculation. In the "Observation" part of the table, the asterisks indicate the grade/gender group in which a type of activity or behaviour occurs. The number of asterisks depends on which activity/behaviour is more prevalent with regard to different grade/gender groups.

The table shows that the most salient themes emerging from the data obtained by three data collection tools (the total number of the interview and questionnaire respondents who articulated the theme, and the results of analysis of the observation field notes). These themes suggest the most popular activities taking place during break time and problems of anti-social behaviour in the schoolyard:

- Interaction with peers through game playing (the total number of the interview and Questionnaire responses (111).
- Interaction with peers through conversation (111).
- Game playing in the schoolyard (109).
- Physical and verbal abuse among pupils (88).
- Satisfaction of physical needs (eating and drinking) (77).

In addition, a triangulation of the findings obtained through two data collection tools (interviews – questionnaire; interviews - observation) allowed for arrival at additional conclusions on children's perception of break time and their behaviour.

Among all grade/gender groups, boys from grades 4-6 were found to be most involved in interaction with peers through game playing. Outdoor, rough-and tumble games are most enjoyed by this group. Characterizing break time as "pleasurable and fun" appears most in their responses. Compared with girls from grades 2-4, they derive greater enjoyment of freedom from classroom routine. They do not complain about limits on their freedom by duty teachers. They are more afraid of being alone

during break time, and not being included in a play group. Boys are more involved in physical activity then girls and, therefore, more afraid of being injured, they seem to tackle their problems with less need for assistance from duty teachers. Fewer boys than girls from grades 2-4 became annoyed by a noisy and overcrowded schoolyard, and they complained less about their peers' abusive behaviour.

Among all the children, girls from grades 2-4 report the highest level of annoyance by the noise and overcrowding in the schoolyard and suffer the most from physical and verbal abuse. These groups had the highest number of respondents believing that duty teachers must provide assistance to children. They did not complain that duty teacher supervision limits their freedom and expressed the least fear of being alone during break time.

Groups of boys from grades 5 and 6 comprised the highest number of respondents requiring freedom from classroom routine and complaining about limits placed upon their freedom by duty teacher supervision. Compared with girls from the same grades, they are more involved in game playing, and therefore achieve more relaxation through physical activities. These groups register more complaints on abusive behaviour from peers.

Girls from grades 5 and 6 lead in such activities as eating and drinking in the company of peers and interacting through conversation. Girls more than boys are annoyed by the bustling schoolyard and spend time in the school lobby, eating and chatting.

The findings suggest that, as children of both genders grow older, they are more involved in satisfaction of physical needs, interaction with peers through conversation, including eating and drinking in the company of peers. At the same time, older children are less involved in structured activities, game playing (including involvement in non-sports games, rough-and-tumble play, and using playthings brought from home), and interaction with peers through game playing. Unlike younger children, they show an interest in peers of the opposite sex. As pupils grow older, the number of complaints about physical and verbal abuse decreases. It should be noted that, in spite of complaining about abusive behaviour, boys and girls of all

ages were seen using obscene language and fighting over a place to play or playthings. It seems that as time goes by, children accept abusive behaviour as a norm in their schoolyard interactions.

In the next chapter, the findings described above will be corroborated with the results presented in the research on break time in order to decide which of them can be used in development of recommendations on break time organization.

5. Discussion

The current research project was defined in the previous sections, as a qualitative case study which enabled me to examine the way in which research stakeholders perceive the role of free time between classes and the problems emerging during this time, and which measures are recommended for ensuring the quality of break time. The three groups of the school population – principals, teachers and pupils – have been involved in the study in order to examine break time issues from the vantage points of both pupils and their educators. Data collected by four data collection tools were analyzed through use of inductive coding, following the principles of thematic analysis (Broun& Clarke, 2006; Holloway and Todres, 2003; Boyatzis, 1998). The methods of within-method triangulation (Denzin, 1989) respondent validation and peer examination were employed as the strategies for improving the validity and reliability of research (Cohen et al., 2007; Shakedi, 2004; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). A number of thematic schemes were developed, reflecting the relation of the themes to the research tools and questions; the process of inclusive coding; an impact of the research conceptual framework on the analysis of data; and the differences between the pupils of different grade/gender groups in terms of break time perception and related behavioural patterns. Following, the findings will be corroborated with the break time issues discovered in research literature and will be discussed, following the order in which the research sub-questions are set.

5.1 *Research sub-question 1: How are the purpose and organization of school break time understood by regulatory bodies and school population?*

An examination of the Israeli policies in school education and comparison thereof with the regulatory tendencies mentioned by a number of Western authors in their studies of break time (Baines & Blatchford, 2012; Blatchford & Baines, 2006; Barros et al., 2009; Pellegrini & Holmes, 2006; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002) reveals some common tendencies. The regulatory bodies across the world acknowledge the importance of school break time as a time for rest and relaxation, but seem to undervalue its significance for the social education of children. This part of a school day is affected by either cutting back (mainly for reducing disciplinary problems) or by a lack of policies for a better organization thereof (Blatchford & Baines, 2009; Patte, 2006).

Examination of the DGC guidelines issued over several years in Israel (2009; 2005; 2003) has revealed that the main subject of their concern is the provision of pupil safety, with the main responsibility falling on school principals and duty teachers, and social issues are associated with handling disciplinary problems. Schools in Israel vary slightly in incorporating the regulatory guidelines in developing their safety plans and behavioural codes for pupils, but in none of the behavioural codes reviewed has there been an explanation to pupils concerning why compliance with the school conduct code is socially important.

The first research sub-question also concerns the perceptions of pupils and the school staff of the role of free time between classes. All respondents agreed that break time is critical for physical and emotional relaxation and having freedom from classroom routine. Physical and emotional freedom felt by pupils during break time is claimed to be necessary to maintain their school routine (Jarrett, 2003; Bilton, 2002; Blatchford, 1998; Pellegrini & Smith, 1993). An insignificant number of pupils who spend break time preparing home work only demonstrate that in the eyes of pupils, as well as other participants, the main goal of break time is to have a rest, which is necessary for better performance during classes. This claim is confirmed by educational research (Sandaram, 2011; Jarrett, 2003; Blatchford, 1998; Pellegrini, 1995). For the younger respondents (grades 2-4) interviewed in this study, the feeling of freedom was also connected to moving from the classroom to an open space. Pellegrini (2002; 1991) explains that recess fulfills children's need for novelty. Other researchers concur that when pupils go outdoors for recess they seek novelty by

interacting with different peers in different situations, out of the control of teachers (Veitch et al, 2007; Jarrett, 2003).

The interviews with children showed (See Appendix 5), that the notion of freedom did not necessarily imply involvement in some recreational activity, but also the decision to distract from learning by doing nothing, either sitting idly or watching other pupils or hanging around silently with a peer. Many researchers suggest that children associate their free time with freedom, independence and choice (Gleave, 2009; Bilton, 2002; Blatchford, 1998; Pellegrini & Smith, 1993), but this freedom is associated with selecting games and game partners. Some authors believe that pupils should be mostly involved in active play during break time while sitting or hanging around with peers is regarded as a worthless activity (Rink et al., 2010).

It should be noted that the issue of freedom allowed during break time is scarcely addressed by the teachers and principals interviewed. Existing research into social education in schools deals extensively with disciplinary problems (Shavit, 2009; O'Neil, 2008; Blatchford & Baines, 2006;   Roustique-Forrester, 2002), but does not consider the free time between classes as an opportunity for explaining to children the difference between personal freedom and anarchy and about the balance between discipline and freedom in human society. I would suggest that educators face a dilemma in that they must encourage pupils to be physically active during break time, but at the same time they have to acknowledge that non-involvement in any play activity is within pupils' rights to spend free time on their own terms. The question is to what extent the practices of an organized break time can be imposed on children. I also suggest that pupils' decision to be inactive during break time might be explained by structured activities that do not fit their interests and preferences.

According to the data from the questionnaire and interviews with children, there is a higher rate of girls believing the primary goal of break time to be a rest between lessons (79 against 49). This suggests that girls are more intensively studious than boys, and likely more concentrated during classes, consequently needing more relaxation during break time. These findings are compatible with the claim that there is a difference between the two genders in the development of both learning habits and children's self-perception as pupils. Bilton (2010) suggests that the contemporary

school framework is more designed for girls than for boys. Wragg (1997) also holds that girls appear to be more prepared for school than boys at the start of their schooling. Girls conform more quickly to the context of the educational system, and perform much better in the first years of their school life, while boys adapt more slowly to the framework of class activities (Walkedine, 1996). It has been suggested (Millard 1997) that reading, which is one of the principle activities in the first years of school, is more appropriate for girls than boys. Educational researchers (Millard, 1997; Burstall, 1997) believe that boys are also more reluctant to comply with a school behavioural code in general and teachers' instruction in part, and educating them is more time consuming. In contrast, girls are quieter and quickly adapt to the school environment.

As reported by the children in my study, younger pupils seemed to enjoy the interaction with their classmates during break times, both during structured and free play. The evidence I have gathered shows that free, pupil-initiated play activities, particularly outdoor, movement-based games appeal to pupils. Children from grades 2 through 4 report that they enjoy jumping, running after each other and "just going wild". Data from my observations confirmed that younger boys (grades 2-4) were involved in rough-and-tumble play while girls of the same age were mostly seen skipping rope. The importance of free play was also confirmed by some teachers and principals interviewed, as well as by many studies of free play (Carlson, 2009; Pellegrini, 2009; Play for a change, 2007; Meire, 2007; Sutton-Smith, 2003). However, a problem emerges when educators have to decide how to combine free and structured play, since the latter provides participating in meaningful activities and ensures fewer disciplinary problems (Stephen, 2006; Hofman, 1997). Previous research confirms that not all children know how to play. Some of them lack game playing skills and self-confidence and should be guided by educators in a structured environment in order for them to be able to enjoy play activities (Recess rules, 2007; Stephen, 2006; Pellegrini, 2005; Hoffman, 1997; Pellegrini and Glickman, 1989; Corbin, 1979).

5.2 *Research sub-question 2: How do children spend their free time between classes?*
Data collected by all data collection tools demonstrate that game playing is one of the most important aspects of break time (see appendices 6 and 7). The importance of

playing games during recess, both for academic achievement and development of social competence, was often emphasized in educational research (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Bilton, 2002; Jensen, 1998; Davies, 1995; Gallahue, 1989). Enjoyment of play has been reported mostly by pupils from grades 2 through 4 (see Appendix 5). A difference is noted in organizing games among pupils of different genders. Observation data show that girls prefer to play alone or in groups of 2-3 members while boys prefer playing in larger groups. It has been reported by the girls interviewed that boys are more proficient at organizing groups for play. This corresponds with data presented by Pellegrini (2005): girls tend to play in small groups and boys prefer larger groups. Data on play repertoires collected from my observations correspond with those from previous research (Blatchford et al., 2003; Pellegrini et al., 2004). Rough and tumble play and ball games were preferred by boys, whereas girls were involved more in skipping rope or in sedentary play. The interview data also demonstrate that over the last years new play accessories, like gogo toys or stickers, have become popular among sedentary activities.

Data obtained through all research tools demonstrate that during break time, maintaining friend and peer relationships is taking place, either through game playing or through chatting with peers. Establishing relationships within peer groups as an important factor of developing social skills was acknowledged by several researchers (Baines & Blatchford, 2011; Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Derries, 1997). The composition of a peer group during break time and equality, cooperation and reciprocity between its members are the result of the pupils' free choice, compared to the interactions initiated by teachers during classes (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). Derries (1997) points to the pupils' awareness of peer group importance, which increases as they grow older. It may be concluded that the older pupils are, the more they prefer chatting with peers as opposed to spending time in the playground. Development of peer relationships becomes more important than game playing (Baines & Blatchford, 2011; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002).

As children grow older, they desire to expand their friendships by including peers from other grades, particularly from higher ones. A number of studies have suggested that as children grow older, the size of their social group enlarges (Ridgers, 2007; Blatchford et al., 2003; Smith, 1994). Boys' networks seem to be significantly larger

than girls, and they are more likely to play with same-aged peers (Blatchford, Baines & Pellegrini, 2003). In addition, the pupils I interviewed reported that they were encouraged to participate in cross-age interactions, taking on roles of leadership and peer tutoring. According to Stone & Lozon (2004), cross-age interactions provide more opportunities for pro-social behaviour (helping, caring) and for leadership. Older children, even those with less noticeable leadership qualities, can act as leaders of younger children.

Data from interviews and observations have demonstrated that children from grades 2 through 6 prefer to spend break time in same-sex groups. This concurs with the argument that social interaction among peers constitutes a major determinant in the gender socialization process in schools (Stromquist, 2007; Goetz & Grant, 1988). As Meire (2007) points out, boys and girls are often observed playing in distinct same-sex groups. Most gender segregation becomes apparent around the age of 5 and increases in elementary school. According to Blatchford, Baines & Pellegrini (2003), children being observed in British school playgrounds played in a predominantly same-sex play group. The evidence I have collected in Israel shows that while boys of all age groups were actively involved in playing soccer or hockey, older children showed more interest in interacting with peers of the opposite sex. Research suggests (Pellegrini, 2001) that adolescent boys seemed to change their play styles so as to include girls, and they used these opportunities to explore heterosexual relationships. Both mixed-sex interactions I observed in the school yard and the interview data pointed to the clear intention of attracting attention of peers of the opposite sex. Research dedicated to the development of child sexuality (Wallis & VanEvery, 2000; Epstein & Johnson, 1998) holds that primary school is identified as an important site for the production and regulation of sexuality (Renold, 2005; Robinson, 2005).

Evidence collected reveals that pupils deal with various ethical issues which occur during their break time interactions. This corresponds to the findings of the research on social education of children during playtime (Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002; Davis, 1995). During the course of my interviews with pupils, I found that when they encounter such things as cheating during games, or having to bargain for seeing a collection of stickers, they express their dislike of such deeds. Nevertheless, children seemed to accept such behaviour. The responses of some pupils interviewed reflect

their belief that, in order to maintain relationships with their schoolmates and to be accepted in peer groups, they must learn to compromise their principles and conform to certain rules. On the other hand, a consensus was noticed among respondents of different ages and genders on the non-acceptance of snitching on peers. There has been little research investigating the behaviour patterns of children challenged by ethical problems within peer interactions in school. Meire (2007) argues that children arrange their play activities, referring to the wider social world in which they live and grow up. While playing, children learn how to be involved in the game and manipulate rules and partners in order to benefit personally (Bilton, 2010). According to my evidence, pupils did not seek help from teachers in addressing ethical problems and preferred to deal with these issues on their own.

The older pupils grow, the more they regard eating and drinking as part of peer socialization. Combining snacking with chatting in the peer group has been scarcely mentioned in the literature concerning break time at school. The interview responses and observation data show that for older children, having a snack in their peer group becomes part of socialization. In the schools, in which I conducted observation, the restriction against eating outside the school lunchroom was seemingly not effective, and therefore I observed children eating in the school corridors and yard. Current research concurs: already in primary school children adopt the practices maintained by adults – making meals a part of socialization (Baines & Blatchford, 2012).

5.3 *Research sub-question 3. What issues are associated with fulfillment of break time duty?*

The pupils and principals' perceptions of a duty teacher as a provider of order and assistance to pupils during break time are among the strongest themes developed in this study (see Appendix 6). Children have acknowledged that they respect the teachers who provide timely assistance and are constantly present in the schoolyard. At the same time, children expressed a great deal of criticism towards those teachers who do not like or fail to fulfill their schoolyard duty and have little concern for pupils requiring help. Children's attitudes toward duty teachers revealed the issue of teacher authority which will be discussed further with regard to the pedagogical methods used by teachers.

Analysis of interviews and observation field notes revealed existence of differing pedagogical approaches adopted. Most teachers interviewed favoured strict discipline and undisputed authority and domination. In case of violation of the behavioural code rules, these teachers impose punishment with no hesitation. In addition, the majority believe that non-formal relationships between principal and pupils lead to adoption of a disrespectful attitude towards teachers. According to the children's responses, the authoritarian behaviour they see from some teachers is mostly yelling, which has little to no effect. At the same time, they have reported on the strict teachers who are able to maintain discipline, so that pupils "do not dare to cross the limits".

Only a few teachers interviewed supported use of non-authoritarian pedagogical methods. These teachers may be characterized by a high level of creativity in their attempts to educate pupils, particularly in disciplinary methods. They also believe that in certain cases, children should be allowed to exercise social skills in solving their problems independently. It should be acknowledged that the above pedagogical methods were reported on in the interviews, but rarely seen during observation sessions. Quite often, duty teachers observed in the schoolyard remained in fixed places, paying little attention to what was occurring, particularly to incidents of pupil misbehaviour. In many cases, yelling at pupils was the only disciplinary method observed.

Discussion of different pedagogical approaches in the research literature leads to the issue of teacher authority (Macleod, MacAllister & Pirrie, 2012; Harjunen, 2009; Pace, 2007; Jagodzinsky & Greenwood, 2006). There has been a consensus that teacher authority should be understood as an ability to exercise power without using authoritarian methods and by exhibiting care for the needs of individual pupils. Drawing upon the responses of pupils interviewed, I conclude that children respect careful teachers, but I question whether they respect those who instill obedience by invoking fear, and to what extent the latter method is sustainable.

5.4 *Research question 4 : What issues may affect break time quality?*
Many respondents have reported that time between classes can be associated with negative experiences. Analysis of data has revealed that, among the themes indicating break time problems, the most salient are those related to physical and verbal abuse

among pupils and demonstration of disobedience toward duty teachers. These data are confirmed by the figures on school violence, which show that over the past decades aggressive behaviour has been on the rise (O'Neil, 2008; Shonfeld, 2006: Gentile, 2004; Olweus, 1999). Research on violence in Israeli schools reveals that approximately 80% of Israeli pupils in grades 4 through 11 have been exposed to verbal or indirect social violence; approximately 60% have been exposed to moderate physical violence, and 20% have suffered from severe physical violence (Benbenishty, Khoury-Kassabri & Astor, 2006). It was noted that the schoolyard is crowded during break time, and playing in such an environment may trigger aggressive behaviours both within the same age and gender groups as well as bullying in cross-age and cross-gender interactions.

While pupils expressed almost unanimous dislike for physical and verbal bullying, they suggested that this misbehaviour might be an inseparable part of break time, and probably of school life in general. Perhaps those children rejecting bullying and violence but who believe that such behaviour has become part of school life, just let themselves go with the flow, many of them having themselves adopted aggressive behaviour to a certain extent. I would also suggest that acting out in a violent manner might indicate that children experience psychological problems of some kind. These could be typical developmental problems, as well as more serious problems such as anxiety, depression, and stress caused by home situations (Ridge, 2007; Tamhne, 1997). Acting out or bullying others is a method for children to try to gain relief from anxiety or stress and draw attention of peers and teachers. Data from observations showed that not only boys bully their peers. Girls were also seen behaving aggressively, pushing, cursing and yelling at one another. Research on bullying points an increasing number of girls demonstrating negative behaviour in a variety of ways. They become involved in violent and aggressive acts both as victims and perpetrators (O'Neil, 2008; Moretti et al., 2004; Bryant et al., 2000).

The problem of poor discipline in schools and particularly during break time may be caused by several factors. Research on school discipline in Israel (Shavit, 2009; Kramarski & Mevorach, 2004; Smith & Pniel, 2003) pursues the idea that Israeli society as a whole and its school system in particular contain all the ingredients that cause the erosion of school discipline. A study of fifty two countries has found that

Israelis have the lowest regard for authority (Hofstede, 1994, in Shavit, 2009). Israeli children enjoy much freedom, both within school and without. In most Israeli schools, uniforms are not required, pupils call teachers by their first names, and talking in class is done not by raising the hand, but by spontaneous outburst (Shavit, 2009). The findings based on the 2002 PISA data showed that the rate of student absenteeism was higher in Israel than in any of the other 41 countries participating in the project (Kramarski and Mevorach, 2004 in Shavit, 2009). According to data presented by Shavit (2009) and teachers' and principals' responses, pupil disobedience and rude behaviour toward teachers can be explained by the manner in which the teaching profession is perceived in Israeli society. It has been argued that, since the teaching profession is not highly valued in Israel, teachers do not receive due respect from pupils.

Most teachers and principals argued that disciplinary problems in schools may also be attributed to poor or lack of collaboration with parents, who are often seen as part of the problem rather than part of the solution (Riley & Roustique-Forrester, 2002; Ruddok et al., 1996). Uziel (2001) holds that teacher-parent relationships are often characterized by animosity which frequently runs both ways. Pupils in my study reported their parents' dissatisfaction with the absence of duty teachers during break time, or with failure to address disciplinary issues. Teachers blame pupils for not taking responsibility for their own behaviour, and insist that parents do not teach their children to behave appropriately. At the same time, research has found that parents want a fuller and more frequent picture of their child's progress. According to the report by Millar & Wood in the UK (2011) almost half of parents participating in the survey want more information on teaching quality; parents require information on their child's social and emotional development, and the manner in which bullying and poor behaviour is managed.

Analysis of interview and observation data revealed that many disciplinary problems result from lack of conflict resolution skills in children. Teachers interviewed attributed this problem to a lack of proper parental education and the impact of society, in which a greater importance is placed on personal achievement and success, while less attention is paid to instilling the ability to resolve conflicts amicably. Research dealing with children's behaviour during game playing suggests that

handling conflicts amicably, and particularly the ability to lose with dignity, is not an inborn trait, and should be instilled in children as part of the process of fostering their social skills (Arbiv, 2011; Tolider, 2010; Satterfield, 1999).

Data collected from the questionnaire and interviews with children demonstrate that as children grow older and begin to prefer socializing as opposed to physical activity in the schoolyard, complaints about bullying decline (see Appendix 5). This is particularly true concerning girls, who over time show less interest in playing in a crowded school yard. The schoolyard has been seen to be a desirable place for boys since they enjoy more open spaces and movement, while girls prefer spending time in quieter places (Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini, 2009; Bates, 1996). The latter studied the effects of density in crowded schoolyards and suggested that the level of boys' aggressiveness and the tendency to unite into large groups changes in direct proportion with the rate of density. In contrast, girls prefer a quieter surrounding and tend to play in smaller groups.

Break time also presents challenges for children who experience difficulties in establishing interactions with their peers. Feelings of loneliness and an inability to maintain friendships were reported by boys and girls of all age groups when asked what they disliked about break time (see Appendix 5). Researchers who investigated this problem attributed it to communication problems in children (Berguno et al, 2004; Demir & Tarhan 2001; Ames, Ames & Garrison 1997). Loneliness experienced in schools was associated with problems caused by shyness, poor social skills, low self-esteem and social dissatisfaction (Demir & Tarhan 2001; Ames, Ames & Garrison 1997). Research conducted by Berguno et al (2004) involved children aged between 8 and 10 years, however the correlation between the age of pupils and level of loneliness was not identified.

Findings from the current research suggest that there is a difference between boys and girls, as well as between different age groups, with regard to feelings of loneliness experienced at school, particularly during break time. Replies to the questionnaire reveal that while this difference between girls and boys is small in grades 2 through 4, it becomes significant in grades 5 and 6 (ages 11-12), when a greater number of girls express feelings of loneliness (see Appendix 5). Interview responses show that among

5th and 6th graders, only girls express such complaints while among younger children only boys complain about loneliness. These feelings were attributed by children to problems in establishing and maintaining relationships with peers. I suggest that this is because younger pupils spend more break time participating in organized activities, which facilitate peer interaction, whereas older pupils are less interested in play. The observation and interview data show that boys are more involved in structured games, and are characterized by girls as better at organizing groups. At the same time, young boys reported more problems in finding a game partner during free play. Unlike the evidence collected by Kochenderfer-Ladd & Wardrop (2001) and Berguno et al., (2004), which correlates the degree of loneliness with the level of peer victimization, respondents in my study did not attribute feelings of loneliness to being bullied.

The problem reported by all the stakeholders was the inability of duty teachers to perform their task appropriately. Pupils' responses to the questionnaire and interviews reveal that some duty teachers do not want to or fail to perform their tasks. Some teachers themselves have acknowledged that they are not prepared to engage in the education of children during this time and consider break time duty a burden. Principals believe that duty teachers misunderstand their function and do not work on instilling values during break time. Many teachers believe that break time duty, including the running around the schoolyard involved, represents a real physical difficulty and an unfair demand. An additional difficulty pointed out by teachers was insufficient training in dealing with disciplinary problems.

The above claims were documented in Western and Israeli research (Shavit, 2009; Epstein et al., 2008; Pellegrini, 2005; 1995). The low motivation of duty teachers is explained by an overloaded schedule and stressful working conditions that lead to "teacher burnout" (Wyra & Lawson, 2008; Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2007; Pillay et al., 2005), however, teacher disengagement might also be the case. It has been suggested that the quality of school education is reduced by the inappropriate work of disengaged teachers who may adversely affect the behaviour of pupils (Riley & Forrester, 2002). They claim that the quality of teachers, particularly those working in elementary schools, is an influential factor when it comes to children's performance in school, and no less critical than the level of instruction, funds allocated for education, or number of students per class.

Both teachers and principals I interviewed emphasize that while pupils enjoy much freedom in school, the capability of the school administration to handle disciplinary matters has been weakened. In addition, teachers argued that they suffer from lack of support from principals and explain this by the principals' wish to avoid unnecessary conflicts with parents. Teacher responses showed that even when decisions on resolving break time problems were made, the implementation thereof was not systematic. Teachers complain that educational hours do not lead to desirable results: children seem to understand the behavioural norms taught during lessons, but not during break times. These boundaries are constantly crossed. Public Opinion Survey among Teachers in Israel shows that sixty four percent of teachers claimed that they are ill-equipped to handle disciplinary and violence problems, and would request more authority to deal with these issues (Smith and Pniel, 2003).

Another group of stakeholders challenged by break time problems were principals. Principals see break time as time and energy-consuming because it occupies a good deal of their work. All of them reported that their daily routine is often interrupted due to this reason and sometimes affected by it. The findings of my study show that a significant part of principals' work concerns ensuring safety of children on the school site. They are under great stress during break time since pupils are involved in increased physical activity during break time, with the accompanying potential for dangerous situations. Break time necessitates the presence of the principal in the area, either because of the pupils engaged in unsafe physical activities during free play or incidents of violent behaviour. As stated by Cotton (1990), principals in orderly schools should be visible in hallways, classrooms, and should be generally accessible to parents, teachers, and students. Increases in external demands place schools under pressure, particularly the requirement to raise academic and behavioural achievements.

Some themes emerging from analysis of the interview data indicated children's complaints on shortening break time and teachers' claims that, too often, instruction time is affected by lingering break time problems. Disciplinary incidents were found to be the main reason mentioned with regard to altering break time duration (Pellegrini & Holmes, 2006; Hoffman, 1997) or the recommendation to substitute a

long afternoon break time with a teacher-structured activity class (Hoffman, 1997). One can suggest that the problems related to break time duration mostly stem from poor organization of this time. A number of researchers (Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini, 2009; 1993; Blatchford & Baines, 2006) pointed to the lack of explicit policy regarding break time, either at the school or local level. Children interviewed in this study reported that they did not have enough time to play when break time is shortened. Researchers claim that, by limiting the time allotted for outdoor games, the school administration demonstrates that these games are regarded as a kind of a short relaxation rather than an extension of the learning process in the classroom (Bilton, 2010).

5.5 *Research sub-question 5. What measures are considered necessary to have a quality break time?*

The themes developed from the data collected demonstrate that the measures intended for improving the quality of break time are focused on several areas: provision of pupil safety, including addressing disciplinary problems; social education of pupils and such strategies as creating a school-wide recess program, compensation of teachers for break time duty, schoolyard design. This section also highlights key issues in the management and pedagogical thinking of principals which may influence their activities in pursuing the quality of break time.

Provision of pupil safety and measures for addressing disciplinary problems, are among the most salient themes developed from analysis of data. With this regard, the Committee protocols' guidelines concur with the Israeli research (Shavit, 2009; Rolider, 2008), determining that the main reason for disciplinary problems in Israeli public schools is lack of teacher authority. This determination was followed by the requirement to elaborate clear policies concerning school discipline.

Data obtained in this study demonstrate that children of all ages believe that prevention of physical and verbal bullying is more important than dealing with it subsequent to its occurrence. However, according to pupils' responses, they seem to believe that it is mainly a duty teacher's responsibility to ensure normal conditions during break time. It should be noted that only two teachers interviewed related teaching pupils to be responsible for their behaviour in the schoolyard to the issue of

social education as part of the school curriculum. They believe that the schoolyard can serve as a "laboratory", where real learning takes place within peer groups, and the place for fostering pupils' responsibility for their behaviour, but argue that "the whole idea of social skills falls outside the curriculum"(A teacher – 56). The latter argument is confirmed by that found in recent research claiming that an Israeli school sees its role as a supplier of knowledge, rather than as an agent of social education (Semyonovich & Cohen, 2011; Van Leer, 2010). The idea of teaching students to be responsible for their behaviour and self-management is supported by educational research that promotes the strategies allowing for active involvement of students in the discipline process (Kyle & Rogien, 2004; Rice, 2003; Gallagher, 1997).

Principals interviewed voiced a number of ideas for improvement of break time quality. A recommendation was made to replace the term "break time" with an alternative phrase that would aid in its perception as a more integral part of the school day. Hiring of external employees trained to act as social coordinators responsible for organization of group activities and supervision of children was another idea. Some principals believed that pupils can participate instead of teachers in some organizational decisions with regard to leading schoolyard activities. Paying teachers extra salary for schoolyard duty was also suggested. Only two of the ten principals interviewed recommended the development of a school-wide, research-informed break time program which would deal with the special nature of break time.

Certain principals interviewed see teachers as a central factor, impacting on the quality of children's behaviour during break time. They see the need to eliminate a gap between educational activity and instillation of values by teachers within the classroom, and the expression of such activity in the schoolyard. They understand that break time is perceived by teachers as an isolated part of the rest of the school day, not affecting and not affected by classroom events. It was also acknowledged that since many teachers adopt a reactive strategy and become controlled by the events to which they react, there should be a change from reactive behaviour to a proactive attitude in order to better control the situation during break time.

Upon examination of data collected, it becomes apparent that principals' management style concerning break time issues is affected by a number of factors. A principal's

actions generally reveal which of these factors has had the overriding influence. Some principals are mostly oriented towards the needs of their teaching staff or pupils' needs. Others are rather task-oriented or are chiefly concerned with the requirements of parents. There are also those who adopt a "fully attentive approach", taking into account both the needs of the teaching staff and expectations of community/parents. However, no research has been found concerning the impact of principals' management style and pedagogical vision with regard to break time issues.

In order to validate accuracy of data and credibility of findings, the results of this study were presented to other parties for review. Five primary school principals and five teachers have participated in this process. Both groups have noticed that the findings truly reflect the age and gender related-differences in the pupils' perceptions of break time. Some were surprised to discover how well children understand the processes taking place. The importance of pupil awareness of how free time between classes is critical for the replenishment of energy was acknowledged. Some reviewers noticed that games offered to pupils during break time are outdated and should be more tailored to their needs. Most reviewers believe that children do not know how to spend their free time when they are not properly guided by teachers. Reviewers were divided in opinion as to the way in which duty teachers should handle disciplinary problems. Some agreed with my interpretation of the data, by which duty teachers fail to instill pro-social values in pupils, particularly due to non-intervention in disputes. Others, however, held the opposite view and believed that pupils should be allowed to resolve their conflicts independently and that their abusive behaviour was energy release.

Principals have agreed that findings of the study reflect the complexity of the problems and dilemmas which emerge in various aspects of school management, either regarding child safety, disciplinary issues, and the attitude of duty teachers toward their tasks. The gap was apparent between the principals' perception of the duty teacher's responsibility during break times and that of the teacher. It has been argued by some principals that in contrast to their preparedness to bear an increased responsibility for the safety of children during break time, duty teachers are not willing to do so. Teachers, in their turn, have argued that there is no connection between the occurrence of accidents and duty teachers' perception of their tasks, and

that the overall situation concerning discipline in schools makes it impossible to prevent accidents or incidences of bullying.

5.6 Conclusion

Analysis of data collected by observations, focus group, interviews, and questionnaires, enabled me to identify which break time-related issues were of most importance for the research participants and to reveal similarities and differences between opinions. Examination of data from this and from previous research, aided me in determining which break time-related issues were relatively well researched and which might be promising areas for investigation. The findings of this study lay the ground for reflection on what can be practically done to improve the quality of break time.

While there is an overall consensus among the stakeholders that break time is intended for rest and relaxation, there is less understanding of freedom granted to pupils during break time. Freedom according to teachers, principals and educational research reviewed is understood as the pupils' freedom to choose games and game partners. However, pupils see here a freedom from rules and from teacher authority as well as the option of not being involved in any activity imposed by the schools. Research conducted to date has not been concerned with use of free time between classes for exploring the balance between freedom and discipline, for instilling in pupils responsibility for their behaviour, relating these issues to civic education in schools. The same is true for most principals interviewed as well (See Appendix 4, Table 2; Appendix 5, Tables 5 & 6).

A problem emerges when educators must decide how to integrate free play in the mostly structured break time, since the former is believed to create more disciplinary problems. I suggest that meaningful and non-aggressive free play is related to the way in which children interpret the concepts of freedom and discipline, but also to instilling the culture of play which was scarcely mentioned by the research stakeholders.

My interpretation of the data collected suggests that, in situations in which duty teachers must intervene and provide pro-social education, they fail to do so, allowing

pupils to resolve their problems through violence. Many duty teachers observed in the schoolyards yelled at children, or were amazingly lenient regarding pupil rudeness (See Appendix 4, Table 3). The impression received was that such behaviour was tacitly accepted as an integral part of teacher-pupil communication. Little authority for duty teachers in enforcing discipline was one of the salient themes developed from the data. It seems that few teachers understand the source of teacher authority and that teachers can be authoritative without being authoritarian. Most complained of a lack of cooperation from school management, insufficient training received on how to deal with disciplinary problems and inconsistency in implementing measures to improve discipline. However, none of the principals interviewed raised the idea of instituting a special training program geared toward proper fulfillment of break time duty - an idea which has been discussed in break time related research for almost two decades (Recess Rules, 2007; Pellegrini, 2005; Smith & Pellegrini, 2002; Hoffman, 1997; Pellegrini and Glickman, 1989).

The examination of peer interactions has identified the areas of children's social experiences which were less investigated by educational research: having a snack in school corridors or schoolyards in the company of peers, and pupil-initiated play involving playthings brought from home. The former demonstrated that, in our schools, lunch rooms are bustling and unattractive places and children therefore look for other options to socialize while having a snack. As for the latter, it is unlikely that this kind of free play will be completely eliminated from break time practices in Israeli schools, since in the large majority of schools, restrictions on bringing playthings from home are vague. In fact, these social experiences could be a true demonstration of how children interpret social norms and rules and how they adopt ethical values taught both in the classroom and at home.

One of the study objectives, related to the way in which children spend their time between classes, was to examine whether age/gender differences exist in pupil perception of break time and in the behaviour exhibited during this time. When viewing research findings through the prism of Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, the effect of the different systems upon each other is clearly seen. The vague Education Ministry policy regarding break time, leaves the issue open to much interpretation by principals and teachers. In addition, principals are influenced by

demands for school achievement from the Ministry, and this affects the importance that break time takes in their school day. Duty teachers are also influenced by lack of coherent policy and by the principal's way of thinking concerning break time. Pupils return home with their break time experiences, for better or worse, and their parents form an opinion on the school accordingly. This opinion eventually gets back to the school, and thus we see the effect of the systems upon each other.

Results of the study, which were corroborated by previous research on break time, were incorporated in the educational recommendations developed as a result of this study. Other findings may provide the ideas for further research.

6. Conclusion and recommendations

Within the framework of this research project, a large amount of data was obtained to highlight the issues pertaining to school break time. Data collected throughout this and previously conducted research provide insights into the issues which challenge policy makers and educational practitioners across different countries and contexts: deteriorating discipline in schools, increasing incidence of violent behaviour and bullying among pupils, school security concerns, teachers overburdened with many activities other than teaching, and more. The issue which has drawn the least attention of decision makers, educational practitioners and school researchers, is school break time (Bilton, 1998; Blatchford, 2002; Pellegrini & Bohn, 2005; Ridgers, Stratton & Fairclough, 2006; Ridgers, 2006). Compared to research into school education, which I have reviewed and referred to in the preceding chapters, this is the first time that the subject of break time and its ramifications have been brought to the pedagogic agenda of Israeli schools. Researching the issue through three distinct channels - teachers, pupils, and school management - is unique, and has identified break time as one of the major problematic issues at school. Data were obtained through the range of data collection tools: documentary analysis, observation, individual and focus group interviews, and a questionnaire which was used to collect data from a large number of participants over a short period of time. The combination of these tools enabled me to undertake a greater, in-depth examination of the processes taking place during break time, and look at them from a wide range of vantage points. The results provide

the basis for the elaboration of recommendations on how to make break time more beneficial for pupils.

The theoretical framework of this study integrated various concepts borrowed from the area of the education provided within and beyond the framework of the school curriculum and the educational measures developed in the field of *behaviour management research.* The main concept is that school break time represents an opportunity for children to internalize the social skills taught in the classroom (Blatchford & Baines, 2012; 2006; Bilton, 2010; Pellegrini & Blatchford, 2002). Over the last decades, Israeli educational policies have considered social education in schools an important educational goal. The education plan "Mafteah ha-Lev", which was designed by the Israeli Ministry of Education over the years 2008-2009, represented the core program for the curriculum based education lessons intended to instill a wide range of social skills in pupils. However, utilization of break time for practicing social skills obtained in the classroom was not considered by the program developers as a valuable educational opportunity.

Research on break time (Bilton, 2010; Gleave, 2009; Fletcher, 2007; Blatchford, 1998) and the results of the current study point to the pupils' belief that the time of rest between classes allows for more personal freedom, and that rules of conduct should be different from those required during the time of instruction. Studies of school discipline in Israel (Shavit, 2009; Kramarski & Mevorach, 2004; Smith & Pniel, 2003) demonstrate that Israeli children enjoy much freedom, both within school and without. Data collected in this study reveals that 5th and 6th graders, both girls and boys, were annoyed that teachers exercised control over their behaviour during break time. The pursuit of unlimited freedom, in addition to the lack of proper codes of conduct in most Israeli schools and low teacher authority, often leads to an increase in disciplinary problems, including physical and verbal abuse among pupils. Disciplinary problems particularly arise during break time, when pupils feel themselves free from classroom constraints. Among the themes indicating break time problems in the current study, the most salient are those related to physical and verbal abuse among pupils and demonstration of disobedience toward duty teachers. It was also revealed that some duty teachers failed to deal with disciplinary problems and

behaved inappropriately, either yelling at pupils, demonstrating indifference to pupils' abusive behaviour, or being absent from break time duty.

The results of the previous and current research suggest that improving the quality of school break time should be considered at multiple levels, including cooperation between teachers and school management, proper organization of break time activities, employing behaviour management techniques, and an effective use of the school premises for break time purposes. The recommendations provided below outline general strategies for making break time meaningful for pupils and teachers, and effective for the social education of pupils. My intention with these recommendations is to bring the issue of the importance of break time into a wider awareness and understanding. I wish to initiate a debate both on the academic and practical levels. I also feel it important to emphasize the inability of measuring achievement of educational goals by looking solely at the classroom or the schoolyard, as separate environments. Achievement of goals should be measured according to Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, which takes into account the mutual influences between the two environments, and between them and other environments surrounding the child.

6.1 Social education

I argue that social education should become a significant and pre-planned part of the school curriculum. Instilling principles of tolerance, teamwork and proper leadership, as well as teaching ideals and values of democracy during classes should be extended to the time between classes. Break time provides many opportunities to teach the aforesaid principles in a natural setting. During break time, a widening of the social circle is taking place (Gray, 2009). Through learning how to participate in group play and how to comply with rules, children are expected to acquire social competence. Drawing upon the results of this study, which shows that pupils want to have free choice concerning utilization of their free time and have a rest from classes, they should be taught to construct their interactions through the unobtrusive and skillful guidance of duty teachers. It has been recommended that teachers monitor activity in an assertive, friendly and supportive manner in order to achieve discipline and avoid negative behaviour (Omer, 2002). In this respect, it might be useful to implement the

principle of moratorium which implies straying temporarily from established norms, legitimizing trial and error, and non-imposition of immediate sanctions for "mistaken" activities. In fact, if an elementary school principal sets a goal of training children for the future, he must invest in inter– personal interaction. This is now considered a marginal area but can be significant during break time (Ruskin & Sivan, 2002).

6.2 Codes of behaviour

A behaviour code should be considered within the context of the school being a community which promotes a high level of cooperation between the school staff, pupils and parents, and maintaining high standards of behaviour and discipline. Teachers should be fully empowered to exercise discipline both within and without the classroom. However, an important point to be emphasized is that pupils should have the reasoning behind establishment of the school conduct code clearly explained to them. It is important to bear in mind that school education shapes the normative ways of thinking and behaviour adopted by the society in which the young generation lives (Green, 2005). A clear division of tasks between the management team and the teaching staff, the teaching staff and pupils, represents one of hierarchies that exist in all parts of society: businesses, the military, families, etc. After graduating from school, young people continue their lives in socially, economically and politically stratified society and should adjust their world views and behaviour accordingly. I argue that pupils should understand that democracy does not abolish hierarchy in the economic and political systems of society and should not be confused with anarchy and unlimited freedom for an individual. The constraints that society imposes upon its members should be taken into account when considering pupils' wishes to enjoy the freedom they have during free time between classes. Break time creates an opportunity for explaining to pupils the important principles underlying the existence of each democratic society: freedom of every person ends at the border of where the freedom of another person begins. Imposition of certain restrictions on every person's freedom ensures *the free and peaceful exercise of* that person's rights. Pupils should know that this is the reason for instituting and enforcing a school conduct code, with every individual in the school being expected to adhere to the code. Revisiting the teacher behaviour problems highlighted in this study, it should be emphasized that teachers have to follow the conduct rules by demonstrating

respectful behaviour toward pupils, keeping calm in resolving conflict situations among pupils, and adopting a zero tolerance approach to the physical and verbal abuse among pupils.

6.3 Use of behaviour management techniques

A decent standard of behaviour is necessary in order to facilitate an atmosphere that fosters learning and social growth. As most of the time spent with the children is by teachers, with scant remaining time allocated to guidance counselors and even less to school psychologists, it appears most practical to utilize behavioural management techniques as a central tool. Teachers can be trained to use these methods effectively during regular classroom activities.

Management techniques would be of great use in teaching children proper behaviour. Research on behaviour management assumes that methods can be developed for observing and measuring behaviours and creating effective intervention measures. The research evidence suggests that the combination of proactive and reactive educational methods can be effective (Miltenberger, 2011; Skiba & Peterson, 2003; Mather & Goldstein, 2001). On these grounds, pupils' behaviour can be managed and modified, following a two-stage process: focusing on prevention and correction of misbehaviour.

I recommend that preventive strategies include the following: informing students about conduct rules and the consequences of not following these rules; modeling of prosaically behaviour; role playing; training of communication and interpersonal skills, systematic reinforcement, and participation of pupils in school government.

With the use of modeling, which is considered a key part of many behaviour management programs, the correct behaviour is demonstrated to pupils (Miltenberger, 2011; Cowley, 2010; Waguespack et al, 2006; Mather & Goldstein, 2001). In the school setting, teachers draw the pupils' attention to the important aspects of the modeled behaviour that must be appropriate to the developmental level of the pupil and should occur within the proper context. Modeling is particularly important in primary school because younger children were reported more frequently imitating others than older ones (Cowley, 2010; Mather & Goldstein, 2001). Proper

behaviour can be modeled by engaging pupils in *role playing of real-life* situations during educational hours and then rehearsed during break time. In this respect, break time might serve as an indicator of how the goals of modeling are achieved. Research claims that *role playing of real-life* situations should be conducted in a variety of ways to enhance generalization (Miltenberger, 2011; Martin & Pear, 2007; Waguespack et al, 2006).   This educational process is interactive: the knowledge acquired during educational hours is tested during break time and the outcomes are discussed during educational hours.

Correct imitation of the modelled behaviour should be reinforced. Teachers use a significant degree of positive reinforcement for desired behaviours in the primary school grades (Miltenberger, 2011; Martin & Pear, 2007; Mather & Goldstein, 2001). When children exhibit a desired behaviour, teachers should employ measures that are likely to increase the reoccurrence of that behaviour. Teachers can positively reinforce pupil behaviour by offering praise or reward, showing the pupil that his/her appropriate behaviour is noticed and recognized. It is important that the target behaviour is reinforced every time it is exhibited. Researchers argue that teachers often pay less attention to appropriate behaviours and greater attention to undesirable behaviours (Miltenberger, 2011; Mather & Goldstein, 2001). Such a strategy is considered unproductive, as the inappropriate behaviour ceases in the short run, but it is likely to occur more frequently in the long run (ibid).

Preventive techniques include provision of pupils with opportunities to contribute to school management (Mather & Goldstein, 2001). An aspect of the principle of voluntarism (Kahane, 2000; 1997), as allowing pupils a good deal of autonomy, should also be taken under consideration. Pupils can participate in developing the school activity plan and assist teachers during break time. The findings of this study show that some girls aged 11-12 took care of younger pupils during break times and fulfilled this task with remarkable willingness. It may be suggested that competing useful tasks increases the feeling of belonging to the school community and teaches pupils to behave responsibly.

Correction of misbehaviour can be achieved in several ways: reinforcement techniques; classroom discussions, including social problem solving, and punishment,

including teacher's verbal reprimand and disciplinary actions. In practice, proactive and reactive methods are closely interrelated. Reinforcement or punishment should follow the target behaviour as soon as possible (Goldstein & Brook, 2007; Mather & Goldstein, 2001). Methods to reduce inappropriate behaviour should always be accompanied by those increasing appropriate behaviour. Although punishment is considered an efficient way of managing behaviour, it does not provide an appropriate model of appropriate behaviour, which should be modeled subsequent to the punishment (Goldstein & Brook, 2007). During educational hours, behaviour problems can be discussed and handled in a constructive way, so that pupils understand the relationship between their behaviour and the punishment and have an opportunity to make amends and learn from their mistakes.

Concerning the pedagogical methods applied to pupils, especially to unruly ones, I would especially emphasize speaking quietly and avoiding vague instructions. Yelling, as well as sarcastic comments or humiliation should not take place: these inadvised methods usually cause an adverse effect on pupils. Boundaries should be set in a quiet and firm manner, in order to encourage children to do something. Use of kind humor and a highly friendly attitude in the interaction with them is recommended. Use of humor during lessons has been examined by researchers, and it has been found that humor plays an important role in the emotional wellbeing of both pupil and teacher (Bar-El, 1996). The purpose of these measures is to show respect for a pupil as an individual. Through *demonstrating model behaviour,* teachers gain pupils' respect, thus fostering discipline. Differentiated programmes of support can be provided to meet the needs of those pupils who continually exhibit challenging behaviour (Imray, 2008). Teachers should make an effort to contact and discuss behavioural concerns with parents and elaborate a shared strategy for improving the behaviour of their children.

6.4 Teaching communication skills

As children mix with other children at school and in other social situations, they develop interpersonal skills based on their experiences (Baines, & Blatchford, 2011; Bilton, 2010). If primary schools set a goal of training children for the future, they must invest in inter-personal interaction (Ruskin & Sivan, 2002). Teachers interviewed repeatedly suggested that schoolyard violence can be explained by a lack

of communication skills in children. It is therefore important to use behaviour managment techniques for teaching pupils how to address problems without aggression. During educational hours, pupils should be encouraged to analyze the conflict situation, explore possible solutions, learn to use negotiation, and compromise appropriately. A proper use of behaviour management techniques and arranging meaningful activities during break time may significantly reduce violent behaviour and bullying. It has been recommended to increase pupil participation in task groups which initiate and implement measures to prevent and reduce school violence (Smith & Sharp, 1994, in Benbenishty & Astor, 2005). In this way, schools provide pupils with the skills to be assertive and supportive of each other, to resolve conflicts constructively, and eventually to help themselves (ibid). Pupils can be allowed more autonomy in making decisions concerning their behaviour, as their social skills mature. In this respect, it might be useful to implement the principle of moratorium (Kahane, 2000; 1997) which implies straying temporarily from established norms, legitimizing trial and error, and no immediate imposition of sanctions against "mistaken" activities.

6.5 Opportunities to reveal abilities

 I argue that during break time, pupils will benefit from being provided with opportunities to reveal abilities beyond those expressed in the academic environment within the classroom. This is the time when the principle of multidimentionalism allowing expression of the individual in a wide range of activities, can be implemented. To this end, playing games aimed at development of pupils' cognitive and social abilities can be of great importance. Deriving of pleasure from game playing was emphasized by the children I interviewed. It has been argued that playing meaningful games contributes to the social involvement of children who with the aid of games become accustomed to roles in society (Bilton, 1998). Particularly through playing role games, children learn to perceive things from different vantage points, which is important for their successful functioning in society (ibid). When organizing break time activities, the implementation of the principle of symmetry implies that tasks assigned to groups should be arranged in such a way as to prevent undue influence of stronger pupils over weaker ones. Teachers I interviewed recommended updating old games or adjusting them to children's quickly changing priorities. In addition, research has shown the importance for children's health of physical activity

during break time, while physical inactivity poses health threats (Waite-Stupiansky & Findlay, 2001; Pellegrini and Smith, 1998).

6.6 Structured and unstructured break time

Enabling pupils to benefit from break time effectively is closely related to the issue of its organization. This refers to the proper employment of structured and unstructured break time. Based upon my findings, I would recommend to principals and teaching staff of primary schools to use structured break times mainly for pupils aged 6 -10. Properly directed, this age group would benefit more from game playing within the limited time of recess. That said, part of the time between classes should remain unstructured, and be utilized for observation of children's behaviour during their free play, in order to identify how they adopt the norms instilled by teachers. Events occurring during observation should be registered, analyzed and used for adjustment of pedagogic methods. For the children aged 11- 12, who prefer socializing with peers over game playing, break time should be mostly child-centered. The interview and observation data collected in this study demonstrated that girls are less involved in sport activities between classes. During some observations of children in the schoolyard, girls were seen dancing to music from tape recorders. In order to improve the girls' physical health, they should be encouraged to participate in sports, in addition to dancing to music, which should also be considered and encouraged on a regular basis as a form of physical activity. It is important to emphasize, however, that pupil participation in organized activities should be voluntary and their educators should respect the children's right to remain uninvolved in any activity, as part of their freedom to choose. Teachers must examine why pupils avoid organized activities when this becomes a behaviour pattern, and address the problem.

6.7 Instilling culture of leisure

An additional measure for teaching pupils to meaningfully spend their time between classes is instilling a culture of leisure. The latter might be of great importance, as children growing in the modern world spend a great deal of time watching television or playing computer games. An implementation of programs aimed at instilling culture of leisure is believed to enable children to construct their free time in a meaningful way and contribute to their social competence (Ruskin & Silvan, 2002; World Leisure Association, 2000).

Attention should be paid to such activity as child-initiated play with equipment brought from home. As stated earlier, this is flourishing in Israeli schools lenient to such practices, and was reported by the pupil respondents in this study. The popularity of such play may demonstrate how pupils seek to organize their time between classes, while their educators fail at this task. Pupils have said that such play involves interactions as exchange of toys, or just bragging about expensive things, and these interactions are not disclosed to adults, even in case of disputes. Therefore, it is difficult for teachers to learn about and address these issues. In addition, due to security reasons, Israeli pupils are allowed to bring cellular phones to schools. Most *phones include games*, mp3 and mp4 players, high resolution digital cameras, and other accessories which are used as entertainment during break times. While it is unlikely that bringing playthings to schools will be completely prohibited (at least in the near future), children should be taught during education hours about the ethical matters entailed in these practices. The teachers' task is to discuss these matters with pupils. The main purpose is to instill the idea that enjoyment of toys should not involve bragging about them and hurting those children who cannot afford possession of desirable things.

6.8   Proper organization

Proper organization of break time might help children who complain that they feel lonely during recess.   Findings of previous research suggest that there are communication problems in those children who report that they are unpopular among their peers and are challenged by establishing peer relationships (Berguno et al, 2004; Demir & Tarhan 2001; Ames, Ames & Garrison 1997). Responses to the questionnaire and interviews with pupils in this study reveal that the number of complaints rises as children grow older and prefer socializing over game playing. I recommend that addressing this problem begin with the observation of a school setting during break time (by duty teachers or class mentors) and an unobtrusive examination of what causes children to spend the time between classes by themselves. The issues of peer relationships should be discussed during educational hours and opinions of pupils should be studied by school psychologists and school counselors in order to help those children who experience communication difficulties. A well thought out organization of break time should align with children's needs and

provide those with poor social skills with activities to both interest them and improve their social competence.

6.9 Design and use of schoolyards

The recommendations stemming from this study concern an effective use of the school premises for break time needs. The Israeli schools built according to the modern construction standards have large schoolyards which barely function as spaces for children to relax and get exercise. The research dedicated to the design and use of schoolyards (Took, 2011; Broda, 2007; Evans, 2001) offers many ideas for making these places multifunctional in their use and involving pupils in meaningful activities. The projects for transforming schoolyards are very diverse, ranging from the installation of play structures to the planting of an "edible schoolyard" which serves an educational function (Took, 2011; Broda, 2007). Many old urban schools have small playgrounds which are congested with pupils at break time (like the "Ronim" schoolyard observed in this study). In such a case, the school administration is recommended to reflect on ways in which different parts of the school premises can be used during break time. Apart from the schoolyard, the school gym can be used for organized games, including sports. The school roof (or part thereof), with a tall, fence-type barrier provided at the perimeter of the roof area, can serve as a green roof which will provide opportunities for pupils to engage in hands-on learning experiences with the environment.

This study demonstrated that pupils have a variety of preferences for how they spend their free time between classes, either being involved in organized or rough-and-tumble play or sedentary activities. During my observation sessions, I saw 5th and 6th graders eating and chatting with their peers in schoolyards and school lobbies. Enjoying a snack and conversation as part of social life within peer groups was noticed by some researchers (Baines & Blatchford, 2012). As in most European countries and the USA, Israeli pupils are required to eat and drink in designated eating areas, but none of the students I saw was reprimanded for eating in inappropriate places. The obvious solution is to enforce the requirement to take meals in designated areas. On the other hand, these areas should be designed appropriately so as to attract children and enable them to enjoy both food and relating with peers. In addition, some children reported that they were annoyed by the noisy

and bustling schoolyard and prefer to spend time by chatting with each other in a quiet place. In this study, older pupils were seen sitting in the school corridors, chatting or looking through magazines. Although it has been previously stated that involving children in physical activities would benefit their health, the pupils' wish to spend time in sedentary activities should also be respected. The school administration should endeavor to develop appropriate areas on the school premises to accommodate the pupils' preferences to spend break time in sedentary activities.

6.10 Teacher training process

This research has implications on the teacher training process. An effective educational process will be achieved when teachers are trained to see break time as an essential component of school education. It has been found that a close, human and emotional connection between a teacher and his pupils within and without the classroom is the key factor for all facets of development – physical, intellectual, emotional and social (Donald, 2003; Bar-El, 1996). The findings of this study complete these arguments with the children's reports demonstrating that they value those teachers who show respect for their needs.

I suggest that teachers should learn various techniques in order to model the proper pupil behaviour during educational hours and rehearse it when fulfilling their break-time duties. I recommend that both university students, who acquire the profession of teacher and teachers already working in schools, should thoroughly learn behaviour management techniques (Martin & Pear, 2007; Waguespack et al, 2006; Mather & Goldstein, 2001). The above particularly concerns those teachers who are engaged in their profession due to reasons other than inspiration for teaching and desire to instill values in the young generation. Although being a minority, those disengaged teachers may cause disengagement of their pupils and negatively affect their behaviour (Riley & Roustique - Forrester, 2002). Another challenge is to encourage teachers who love their profession but who are overburdened with work, to effectively fulfill their duty during break time. Many respondents in this study stated that duty teachers should be compensated for their work during break time.

6.11 Strategic thinking

In pursuing school effectiveness, quality leadership is considered to be a powerful force (Davis, 2005; Mulford, 2003; Valentin, 2001). Evidence collected from principals and teachers in this study suggested that strategic thinking, which views organization of break time as more than just a day to day issue, was lacking. There has been little cooperation between teachers and school management, and among teachers themselves. Each school should set the goal of creating an integrative managerial and planning model, taking into account the educational process taking place outside the classroom.

Prior to drafting strategies, principals need to provide detailed characteristics of the entire school population, including social and academic characteristics of pupil and teacher profiles. This is important for determining which activities address pupils' needs and which break time-related tasks should be assigned to teachers. The analysis of pupils' activities and behaviour patterns, as well as educational work with children during break time, requires additional efforts on the part of teachers, and therefore, principals should decide in what manner teachers will be compensated for their involvement. For schools with limited financial and personnel resources it is recommended to more actively involve student teachers, or community members. Management should value and welcome all suggestions for improvement, including ideas offered by pupils. School experiences in break time organization and implementation should be shared at school management forums. Another factor, which should not be underestimated, is a good parent-school partnership. According to the teachers I interviewed, parents play a key role in how their children regard school. Many complaints were voiced on the negative parental attitude toward school. It has been found that in good schools the home-school partnership works effectively (Riley & Roustique-Forrester, 2002).

Undoubtedly, the success of any educational policy depends on the willingness and capacity of schools to implement change. Given the complexities of education during break time, both policy makers and schools have to set goals built on the experiences and perceptions of all concerned and in this way make break time a meaningful part of the school day. Understanding break time from the viewpoint presented in this research has the potential for leading school staffs to perceive the necessary coupling between the classroom and the school as a whole (Robinson, 2006). This will

increase the chance to achieve a more effective educational experience, particularly in the area of social values.

7. Dissemination

As a social science, educational research is assumed to have potential significance for both strategic and tactical decisions. Davis (1999) argues that if the substantial effort in social research cannot add to the knowledge of policy-makers and practitioners, thus aiding them in decision-making and solving social and educational problems, then their decisions can only be made on the basis of political ideology or conventional wisdom. To ensure that the use of research results is maximized, they need to be communicated to the relevant people. In many senses, the dissemination of the research results is of no less importance than the research activity itself (Duffy, 2000; Crombie & Davies, 1996). Louis & Jones (2001, p. 3) hold that the goal of dissemination in education "is not simply to disperse information, but to do so in ways that promote its use". As the research is being done in the field of education, it is faced with the necessity of educational change which often takes place as a consequence of ideas rather than tangible products.

The scope of educational research is broad, covering different techniques and methodologies and many aspects of the educative process, both formal and informal Mortimore (2000). Four main tasks emerge: to observe and record systematically; to analyze and draw out implications; to publish findings; and, crucially, to attempt to improve educational processes and outcomes. Knowledge resulting from different research areas has the potential to assist in educational research and development (Tyler, 2008). Educational decision makers will willingly make use of quality sources of data and information, and add the results of their own experience to the practical research (Mortimore, 2000).

The rationale of my research is derived from the needs of the educational practice, with the aim of effecting a change for the better social education provided in the school environment. This research sets forth the goal of emphasizing the significance of a break time as means of social education in schools. The subject of break time was periodically explored in Israeli educational research in relation to such issues like physical education in schools (Yalon-Chamovitz et al., 2006; Wigman, 2003; Tilman,

2002), discipline problems (Shavit, 2009; Soen, 2002) or school climate in whole (Omer, 2002). It is for the first time that a break time is taken holistically, with a broad range of aspects to be brought to the attention of both professionals and general public: break time activities, teacher-pupil and peer interaction, discipline problems as well as pedagogical methods used by teachers. This is the first research which studies the issue of break times at the level of school management and examines how the implementation of break times depends on different organizational approaches adopted by school principals. Drawing upon the views of the pupils, teachers and principals involved in my study, I raise the issues of balance between discipline and the freedom in pupils' behaviour during break times, the correlation between social education in school and schoolyard realities as well as integrating the principles of so-called "informal" education. This study intends to raise the readers' awareness of the dilemmas which school management and teachers are faced with in terms of break time organization, resolving discipline problems and social education in school. It is the first Israeli study that shows different aspects of performing schoolyard duty and the gap between the perception of duty teacher's role by regulatory bodies, school management and pupils and the conditions in which teachers have to work, being challenged by the lack of necessary support and training.

Effective dissemination requires a plan to deliver the knowledge to the right people and at the right time (Granger, 2008). For purposes of developing a dissemination plan, I found it necessary to focus on a number of essential issues:

1. What is the ultimate research goal?
2. Who is the target audience?
3. What is the main message of the research?
4. Who needs to know what?
5. What is the best way to reach the target audience?

These issues were translated into dissemination strategies that included reaching out to educational professionals at both national and international levels and reflect a multi-directional flow of information, from the field to the policy makers, and vice versa. There are a number of possibilities:

- Presentations at professional group meetings.

- Organizing seminars for special interest groups (school educational staff, parents, primary school principals).

- Providing the information as a teaching session.

- Presenting the material at workshops and conferences

- Dissemination of research through the internet

- Professional and academic publications.

I have acted and will continue my dissemination activity accordingly, contacting educational professionals and regulatory bodies at the different stages of my dissemination program:

- I met with the director of the Community Centre, who is responsible for informal education during and after school hours and discussed with him/her various aspects of social education suggested in my study and dissemination of the study results through the workshops organized through the community Centre.

- I demonstrated research results and the draft of recommendations to the principals participating in the study.

- Two principals invited me to appear before their school staffs and present them with the main concepts of my study. The feedback was enthusiastic, commended on the relevance and urgency of the topics highlighted in the study.

- Recently, I have met with the Dean of the College for Teachers in Haifa. They found the subject interesting and relevant, and invited me to join the college and to lecture students on this subject twice a week. This offer is still being considered.

- My research work was the basis for four seminars in my school, in which the teaching staff participated, as well as the guidance counselor and the school psychologist.

- I am planning to present the results of my study at the national conference for school principals which will take place in February 2015.

- I met separately with certain professionals to discuss ways of lessening the level of violence and problems in general during break time. One conclusion was that many fights break out during football matches due to arguments over refereeing. The physical education teacher decided to train a group of pupils to be referees, and there are now no matches without a referee. Teachers have

reported that this has greatly lessened arguments during lessons immediately following break time.

- With the research results in hand, I intend to meet with the head of the teacher's union, in order to discuss teachers' complaints about break time duties and responsibilities and outline ways to resolve the problems. The structure of the school day makes it difficult for teachers to fulfill their responsibilities and also enjoy elementary workers' rights.

- Upon completing the study, I plan to contact various groups and organizations of interest abroad and discuss, through various forums (mostly on-line), to which extent my results are relevant to education environments abroad. My dissemination plans included establishing contacts and sharing my ideas with such organizations, as National School Climate Centre (NSCC) in the USA, UK-based Teaching Ideas and Resources internet forum and Sheffield forum, and some other.

Today, the internet serves as a powerful tool for dissemination of knowledge. It has been emphasized that through a growing number of e-mail newsgroups and focused discussion forums, communication can be established between researchers and research users (Duffy, 2000). They can collaborate with extensive networks of professionals and public interest groups and keep pace with many developments long before they reach a print outlet. It is this speed and flexibility of information exchange that is believed to be the most important benefit of the Internet. The international conference held in the Barcelona in 2008 focused on the new possibilities offered by ICT to actively engage people in science (New paths of scientific dissemination through the Internet, 2008). It has been noticed that getting people to participate in science is important for several reasons, such as activating scientific vocations in young generation.

It was important to me in my dissemination activities to raise the awareness of a wide public, particularly among pupils' parents, on the significance of social education in schools and relate it to the pupils' free time between classes. I decided then that I can introduce these issues to the public by means or the internet. Three levels were suggested in making research 'accessible' to people who have a professional interest in research in education but who are not specialists (BERA: Consuming research (date unknown) The first level, and most basic, is letting people know what research exists. The second one is enabling them easily to obtain copies of research articles

and reports in the areas that interest them. The third level is making sure that the material is delivered in a style and format that is comprehensible by people.

The main points and summary of my study have been posted on the internet site of Yokneam, the town where I live in. I received a high number of responses both from the members of our community and other places across the country. The responses demonstrated that the issues I raised in my study were of high relevance for the people concerned about the school education in Israel. Many parents have written to me, arguing that they are worried about their children's safety in school, particularly with regard to increasing violence among pupils. In addition, I posted the research-related material on the special internet site established by the Ministry of Education of Israel in order to improve communication with the educational professionals residing in the northern region of the country. To reach out to the large Arab population in the north of Israel, I intend to translate the summary of my study into Arabic. I also actively correspond with the educational community through the Tzafonet – a nationwide internet site serving school principals.

Scientific literature offers a communication channel between researchers, academic staff and students (Bronmo, 1996). By means of publishing, scholars can achieve recognition within the scientific community and make results of research available to peers for critical assessment.

For the publication of the research results, three sources have been chosen:

1. Professional Journal

"Hed ha-Hinuch" ("echo of education")   – Journal published in Israel, by the teachers union, dealing with issues of importance to those involved in the educational field. The journal is distributed to union members.

2. Academic journal

"Megamot" – Henrietta Sold Institute, Israel

This is a publication for the behavioural sciences, including articles on education, sociology, anthropology, psychology, political science, management, media, and social work. Articles are mostly empirical, with preference given to articles with a social leaning.

3. Internet-based academic journal

"Educational Research" has a broad scope and contains research studies, reviews of research, discussion pieces, short reports and book reviews in all areas of the education field. The wide coverage allows discussion of topical issues and policies affecting education. Echo

Professional periodicals have been considered as an important method of the dissemination of research results. A previous article of mine on the issue of break time was published in "Hed HaHinuch" in 2007. This article dealt with the interaction between pupils and teachers during break time and received much reaction. An additional article on this issue is going to be published shortly. The editors have expressed their interest in the results of this research as well.

I have also chosen to present my results in an Israeli academic journal. This channel has a limited distribution, but great importance. I wish to enter into the academic world, as part of my professional development. I expect that publishing my research results in such a journal will assist in achieving this goal. The final facet of my dissemination program is an academic journal published on the internet, in English. This will enable me to reach populations outside Israel.

As the result of the meetings with various professionals and discussions conducted, the following assumptions arose:

1. Dissemination is most effective when one uses a combination of different methods.

2. The complexity of the dissemination program is a function of the research goals.

3. The dissemination program must be attuned to the needs of the target group.

4. Lectures before groups of interested parties (educational staff) are an effective method for dissemination of practical research results.

5. Internet based methods expand the volume of dissemination, and act as a ready source of information to decision makers.

6. Dissemination in English allows for reaching a large audience.

The research findings have led me to the conclusion that teaching staff is deeply aware of what the schoolyard duty problems are and where they come from, but has no clear vision of how to change the existing situation. Based on my research, I suggest that the work of duty teachers could be an effective means of social education of pupils, and for that reason teachers represent an important target group in my dissemination policy. The more teachers understand the importance of their involvement in initiating the changes and being a powerful force in effecting "bottom-up" changes, the bigger the chances of accepting and implementing the changes. As a school principal, I believe that the great educational potential of the duty teachers' work can be realized through the empowerment of schools and an education policy carefully planned by the of school management and based on the educationally informed schoolyard duty practice.

As stated above, formulation of an effective dissemination program, which utilizes a number of methods, is an important facet of academic research. In developing a successful dissemination program for my research, I took into account aspects of both targeting various interest groups and my own professional development for the greater purpose of improvement the primary school education. The level of complexity and the extent of the dissemination program were determined according to these aspects.

An accent must be placed on reaching teachers and principals through various forums. In addition to participating in educational conferences, I will attempt to reach groups of educational professionals with similar interests. My ultimate goal is instigating change, and teachers are effective agents of such change, working from the bottom up. In order to reach wider population groups, I will continue to attempt to promote my research in the international field as well, thus enlarging my chance of reaching policy makers.

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9. **Appendices**

  Appendix 1 (documents necessary for conducting the study):

1.1. Letter of Consent: (teacher\principal)-referral

Dear teacher,
Dear principal,

I Sima Nisselbaum, within the framework of my studies for a doctorate degree, am conducting a research project concerning break time at the school. The purpose of my research is to examine break time from the viewpoint of teachers, pupils, and school principals.

Dear teacher\principal, your opinions are important, and will be an important contribution to understanding the subject.

All data gathered will remain confidential. All identifying details will be altered (Your name, the name of your school, and the names of pupils and teachers mentioned).

I would therefore appreciate very much your agreeing to either being interviewed by me, or participating in a focus group. Upon receipt of your agreement, I will contact you and we will set time to meet.

Thank you very much.

Sima Nisselbaum

1.2. Letter of Consent: (teacher\principal)-response

Dear Mrs. Sima Nisselbaum,

I have received the above information concerning the research you intend to undertake on break time at the school. I am aware that all data gathered will remain confidential.

I hereby grant my permission to be interviewed\fill in a questionnaire for purposes of this research project.

Sincerely,

Name: _____

Signature: _____

1.3. Letter of Consent: (pupils) - referral

Dear pupil,

I Sima Nisselbaum, within the framework of my studies for a doctorate degree, am conducting a research project concerning break time at the school. The purpose of my research is to examine break time from the viewpoint of teachers, pupils, and school principals. All data gathered will remain confidential. Neither your name nor any other identifying detail will appear in my completed work.

Your opinions are an important part of my understanding of the issue, and I would greatly appreciate your agreement to be interviewed by me, or to fill in a questionnaire. It is important that your parents be aware of this, and give their permission as well. Please have them sign the attached agreement form and return.

After receiving your and your parents' agreement, I will contact you and we will set time to meet.

Thank you very much,

 Sima Nisselbaum

1.4. Letter of Consent (pupils) - response

Dear Mrs. Sima Nisselbaum,

We have received the above information concerning the research you intend to undertake on break time at the school. We are aware that all data gathered will remain confidential.

We hereby grant our permission for our son\daughter to be interviewed\fill in a questionnaire, for purposes of this research project.

Sincerely,

Parents of the pupil: _____

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Appendix 2

Questions for the research participants

2.1. Focus group interview

Welcome words

Outlining the purpose and format of the discussion

Questions:

1. A question for stimulating the discussion: "When you are asked about breaktime at school, what are the first things that come to you mind?"

2. How do you perceive the purpose of break time?

3. How would you describe the problems you encounter during a break time duty?

4. Do you believe that there is interdependence between the classroom time and breaktime? If so, please explain how do you understand it?

5. How do you see your role as a duty teacher?

6. What do you think should be done in order to improve the quality of breaktime?

Thanks and dismissal.

2.2. Questions for teachers (Individual interview)

1. Please tell me about your experience in instruction/class mentoring.
2. Tell me about the principles behind your educational work. What are the best ways to achieve pupils' good behaviour?
3. How do you understand the purpose of a break time?
4. How do you see your role as a duty teacher?
5. Do you get any satisfaction from this work?
6. Do you think you are rewarded appropriately for this part of you work?
7. Do you see any connection between social education provided in the class and pupils' behaviour during breaktime?

8. There has been an increasing violence at schools. How can you explain the reason for this phenomenon?

9. How do you resolve problems of pupil's misbehaviour during breaktime?

10. Do you believe that break time problems affect the quality of lessons?

11. How do you see the role of school management in handling break time issues?

12. What would you like to improve in break time organization?

2.3. Questions for principals

1. Please tell me about your experience in the school management.

2. How do you understand the purpose of a break time?

3. Is break time organization part of your managerial work? If so, please detail.

4. What do you think about the national education policy regarding school breaktime?

5. What are the most salient break time-related problems?

6. Where do you see the roots of these problems?

7. How does your school address the problem of violence and bullying?

8. By which principles are you guided in achieving discipline in your school?

9. How would you characterize the role of a duty teacher?

10. Do you think that break time duty is rewarded appropriately?

11. Are you satisfied with the way the teachers at your school fulfill their duty during breaktime?

12. Do you believe that the level of the break time organization affects the image of the school in the eyes of parents?

13. What are your recommendations concerning the organization of a break time? How to make it more meaningful for pupils and less troublesome for the school staff?

2.4. Questionnaire for pupils

1. Why do you think you need break time in school?
2. What do you like to do during breaktime?
3. What do you dislike about breaktime?
4. How would you describe the task of a duty teacher during breaktime?

2.5. Questions for interviews with pupils (Individual interview)

1. Why do you think pupils need break time in school?

2. What do you prefer to do during breaktime?

3. Do you have enough time to do things you like?

4. What do you dislike about breaktime?

5. Have you been bullied during breaktime or have you bullied someone?

6. What do you think about the task of a duty teacher?

7. How do the teachers at your school do this work? Is there any difference between them?

8. How often do you see your school principal in the schoolyard during breaktime?

9. Have you ever told your parents about what happened during a break time?

10. What should be changed to make this time more interesting for you?

Appendix 2A

Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question

1	69	Questionnaire	Why do you think you need break time in school?
2	69	interview	How do you understand the purpose of a break time?
3	69	interview	Why do you think pupils need breaktime in school?
4	69	interview	Why do you think pupils need breaktime in school?
5	70	interview	Why do you think pupils need breaktime in school?
6	70	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
7	71	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
8	71	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
9	71	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
10	71	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
11	72	interview	How do you perceive the purpose of break time?
12	72	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
13	72	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
14	73	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
15	73	interview	Why do you think pupils need break time in school?
16	73	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
17	73	interview	What do you prefer to do during break

Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
			time?
18	74	interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
19	74	interview	How do you perceive the purpose of break time?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
20	74	interview	How do you perceive the purpose of break time?
21	75	Interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
22	75	Interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
23	76	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
24	76	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
25	76	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
26	76	Interview	What do you prefer to do during break time?
27	77	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
28	77	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
29	77	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
30	77	Interview	Have you been bullied during break time or have you bullied someone?
31	78	Interview	Have you been bullied during break time or have you bullied someone?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
32	78	Interview	Have you been bullied during break time or have you bullied someone?
33	79	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
34	79	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
35	79	Interview	What are the most salient break time-related problems?
36	79	Interview	What do you dislike about break time?
37	79	Interview	What are the most salient break time-

			related problems?
38	80	Interview	How do you resolve the problems of pupil misbehaviour during break time?
40	80	Interview	Do you see any connection between social education provided in class and pupil behaviour during break time?
41	80	Interview	Are you satisfied with the way the teachers at your school fulfill their duty during break time?
42	81	Interview	What do you think about the task of a duty teacher?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
43	81	Interview	What do you think about the task of a duty teacher?
44	82	Interview	What do you think about the task of a duty teacher?
45	82	Interview	What do you think about the task of a duty teacher?
46	82	Interview	How do you see your role as a duty teacher?
47	82	Interview	Are you satisfied with the way the teachers at your school fulfill their duty during break time?
48	83	Focus group	What do you think should be done in order to improve the quality of break time?
49	84	Focus group	What do you think should be done in order to improve the quality of break time?
50	84	Interview	What do you think about the task of a duty teacher?
51	84	Interview	How do you resolve the problems of pupil misbehaviour during break time?

Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
52	84	Interview	How do you resolve the problems of pupil misbehaviour during break time?
53	85	Interview	How do you see the role of school management in handling break time issues?
54	85	Focus group	How would you define the role of a duty teacher?
55	85	Focus group	How do you resolve the problems of pupil misbehaviour during break time?
57	86	Interview	Tell me about the principles behind your educational work. What are the best ways to achieve pupils' good behavior?
58	87	Interview	Tell me about the principles behind your educational work. What are the best ways to achieve pupils' good behaviour?
59	87	Interview	Tell me about the principles behind your educational work. What are the best ways to achieve pupils' good behaviour?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
60	87	Interview	By which principles are you guided in achieving discipline in your school?
61	87	Focus group	Do you believe that there is interdependence between classroom time and break time? If so, please explain.
62	88	Interview	How do the teachers at your school do this work? Is there any difference between them?
64	88	Interview	Why do you think pupils need break

			time in school?
65	88	Interview	Do you believe that break time problems affect the quality of lessons?
66	89	Interview	Do you believe that break time problems affect the quality of lessons?
67	89	Focus group	How would you define the role of a duty teacher?
68	90	Interview	What are your recommendations concerning the organization of break time? How would you make it more meaningful for pupils and less troublesome for the school staff?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
69	90	Interview	Where do you see the roots of these problems?
70	90	Interview	Please tell me about your experience in school management.
71	90	Interview	Please tell me about your experience in school management.
72	91	Interview	How often do you see your school principal in the schoolyard during break time?
73	91	Interview	How often do you see your school manager in the schoolyard during break time?
74	91	Interview	How would you characterize the role of a duty teacher?
75	91	Interview	What are your recommendations concerning the organization of a break time? How to make it more meaningful for pupils and less troublesome for the school staff?

Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
76	92	Focus group	How would you describe the problems you encounter during a break time duty?
77	92	Interview	Do you have enough time to do things you like?
78	92	Interview	There has been an increasing violence at schools. How can you explain the reason for this phenomenon?
79	93	Interview	Is the break time organization part of your managerial work? If so, please detail.
80	93	Interview	There has been an increasing violence at schools. How can you explain the reason for this phenomenon
81	94	Focus group	How would you define the role of a duty teacher?
82	94	Interview	There has been an increasing violence at schools. How can you explain the reason for this phenomenon?
83	95	Interview	What do you think about the national education policy regarding school break times?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
84	95	Interview	Do you believe that the level of the break time organization affects the image of the school in the eyes of parents?
85	95	Focus group	What do you think should be done in order to improve the quality of break times?
86	95	Interview	How would you define the role of a duty teacher?
87	95	Interview	How would you define the role of a duty

Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
			teacher?
88	96	Interview	Do you see any connection between social education provided in class and pupil behaviour during break time?
89	96	Interview	There has been increasing violence in schools. How do you explain this phenomenon?
90	96	Interview	Have you ever told your parents about what happened during a break time?
91	97	Interview	What do you think about the national education policy regarding school break time?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
92	97	Interview	By which principles are you guided in achieving discipline in your school?
93	97	Interview	Do you believe that the level of break time organization affects the image of the school in the eyes of parents?
94	98	Interview	Do you believe that the level of break time organization affects the image of the school in the eyes of parents?
95	98	Interview	Do you think that break time duty is rewarded appropriately?
96	98	Interview	Do you think that break time duty is rewarded appropriately?
97	99	Interview	Do you think that break time duty is rewarded appropriately?
98	99	Interview	Do you see any connection between social education provided in class and pupil behaviour during break time?
99	100	Interview	There has been increasing violence in schools. How do you explain this phenomenon?

Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
100	101	Interview	Do you see any connection between social education provided in class and pupil behaviour during break time?
101	101	Interview	Do you see any connection between social education provided in the class and pupil behaviour during break time?
102	101	Interview	What would you like to improve in break time organization?
103	101	Interview	What are your recommendations concerning the organization of break time? How would you make it more meaningful for pupils and less troublesome for the school staff?
104	101	Interview	What are your recommendations concerning the organization of break time? How would you make it more meaningful for pupils and less troublesome for the school staff?
105	101	Interview	What are your recommendations concerning the organization of break time? How would you make it more meaningful for pupils and less troublesome for the school staff?
Quotation No.	Page	Data gathering method	Question
106	102	Interview	What are your recommendations concerning the organization of break time? How would you make it more meaningful for pupils and less troublesome for the school staff?
107	102	Interview	What would you like to improve in break time organization?
108	103	Interview	What would you like to improve in break time organization?

109	103	Interview	What would you like to improve in break time organization?

Appendix 3

Distribution of themes across the research questions and data collection tools

Abbreviations used in the table: "P" – principals; "T" - teachers "Ch" – children.

An asterisk (*) indicates an instance of theme in the data

Green- **Interviews**

Blue- **Questionnaire**

Orange- **Observation**

Research sub-question	In-depth semi-structured interview	Focus group	Self-administered questionnaire	Observation	Documentary analysis	Main them
1. How is the purpose and organization of break time understood by regulatory bodies and school population?	*Ch, *T, *P *Ch *Ch *Ch *Ch *Ch *Ch *P	 * *	* * * *	 * *	 * *	**1 Break tim** A break tim Having a br Having plea Freedom fro The need fo The need to Satisfaction Children re Break time socialize.

	* Ch * Ch *Ch * Ch * Ch					**2 Freedom** Freedom to Freedom to Freedom fro Duty teache freedom of The prefere breaktime.
	* Ch, T, P * P, T * Ch	*		*		**3 Use of br** Involvemen activities. Considering children The prefere
	*Ch, *T, *P *Ch * P, T	*		*		**4 Use of br** Involvemen Enjoyment Perception developmen
2. How do children spend their free time between classes?	* Ch * Ch * Ch * Ch * Ch *Ch	*	*	* * * * * *	* *	**5 Game pla** **breaktime.** Game playi Playing in s A better abi Pupil-initiat home. Use of facil activities. Pupil-initiat Involvemen

	* T, P, Ch*	*		*	*	**6 Break ti** Spending ti
	*P, * Ch	*	*	*	*	Interaction
	* Ch	*	*	*		Interaction
	* Ch			*		Showing an
	* Ch			*		Involvemen
	* Ch			*		Dealing wit
	* Ch			*		Satisfaction socializatio
3. What issues are associated with fulfilling the break time duty?	* T *T, Ch	* 		* *	* *	**7 Taking a approach.** Teachers' o relationship Use of auth teachers. The require in handling
	*P, * T * T * T * T	 * *				**8 Taking a** A flexible a teaching. Teachers' f Teachers in Maintenanc as a tool for
	* Ch *P, * Ch, T * T *Ch	 * 	* *	* * * * * *	* *	**9 Proper fu** Duty teache Duty teache Duty teache Constant pr Use of brea pupils. An attempt problems. Children's l by duty tea
						10 Failure

	* P			*	Periodic or
	* Ch			*	schoolyards
	* Ch, T				Late arrival
	* P	*		*	Children reg
					Failure of d
	* Ch, T			*	problems.
	Ch, * T			*	Principals c
					of break tim
					Duty teache
					Taking an a
					among pupi
4. What issues may affect the quality of break time?					**11 Break ti**
	* Ch, T, P			*	*	Presence of
					and genders
	* Ch		*		Annoyance
				*	yard.
	* Ch				Children sp
	*Ch				Children's p
	* Ch		*		school yard
	* Ch				Teacher's s
	* Ch,	*	*		freedom
	* Ch, T, P				Children ex
					Use of brea
					Fear of bein
					Failure of c
					12 Break ti
	* Ch			*	A school pr
	* Ch, P	*		*	break time.
					The necessi
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Appendix 4: The most salient themes identified through the within-method

triangulation.

Research question	Main theme	Sub-theme
1	Break time is time for a rest and relaxation.	A break from learning. Satisfaction of phy physical and emotional relaxation.
	Use of break time for structured activities**.**	Involvement of children in structured brea
2	Game playing is the main activity during breaktime.	Game playing in the schoolyard. Use of facilities and play equipment for o
	Break time is time for peer socialization.	Spending time in peer groups. Interaction playing. Interaction with peers through co
3	Taking a restrictive, authoritarian pedagogic approach.	Use of authoritarian pedagogical methods
	Proper fulfillment of break time duty.	Duty teachers as assistance providers teachers as providers of order.
	Failure to properly fulfill the break time duty**.**	Failure of duty teachers to deal with discip
4	Break time is a stressful time for pupils.	Presence of a large number of pupils of in the same place.
	Break time is a stressful time for the school staff**.**	The necessity to involve a principal in res problems.
	Pupil discipline problems arising during breaktime.	Physical and verbal abuse among pupils. I unsafe play. Demonstration of disobedien
	Impacts of external factors on school break time.	Lack of proper parental education.
	Poor break time organization is a source of discipline problems.	A little effort for strengthening the school enforcing discipline.

5	Provision of safety in the school buildings and grounds.	Duty teacher responsibility for children's
	Measures for addressing discipline problems**.**	The need to increase the school staff's aut
		discipline.

Appendix 5: Distribution of the main themes and sub-themes across grade/age and grade/gender groups of pupils

Interviews — an asterisk (*) indicates the pupil who articulates the theme.

Questionnaire – this part of the table includes the numbers of pupils who articulate the theme.

Observation field notes – the asterisks indicate the grade/gender group in which a type of activity or behaviour occurs. The number of asterisks depends on which activity/behaviour is more prevalent with regard to different grade/gender groups.

Themes and sub-themes	Interviews										Questionnaire Grade/gender										
	Grades						Grades				Grades						Grades				Boys (grades 2-4)
	2	3	4	2	3	4	5	6	5	6	2	3	4	2	3	4	5	6	5	6	

	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	
Break time is time for a rest and relaxation.									
A break from learning.	*	* * *	*	* *	5 6 10	15 15 14	10 16	16 14	
Having a break for a better performance during classes		*	* * *	* *					
Freedom from classroom routine	* *	* *	*	*	11 14 17	6 10 10	17 16	12 14	
Having pleasure and fun during break time.	* * *	* * *	* *	*	17 18 18	15 1 2 10	17 16	8 8	
The need for physical and emotional relaxation.	* * *	*	*	*					
The need to move from the classroom to an open space.	*	* *							
Satisfaction of physical needs (eating and drinking).	*	*	* *	*	- 4 9	- 3 7	12 14	15 10	
Children remaining idle during breaktime									*
Freedom to choose how to spend break time.									
Freedom from teacher control.			* *	* *					
Duty teacher's supervision as a factor limiting the freedom of pupils		*	* *	*	- - -	- - -	8 9	6 4	
Freedom to choose behaviour norms.			*	* *					
Freedom to choose with whom to play and socialize.			*	* *					
The preference of children to remain idle during breaktime.				* *					
Use of break time for organized activities.									
Involvement of children in structured break time activities.	* * *	* * *	* *	* *					**
The preference of children for organized activities.	* *	* * *							
Use of break time for unstructured activities.									
Involvement of children in free play.	* *	* *	*						**
Enjoyment of free play	* *	*							

Game playing is the main activity during breaktime.									
Game playing in the schoolyard.	* * *	* * *	* *	* *	16 12 14	13 10 7	9 8	6 4	**
Playing in small groups in non-sport games		*	*						
Involvement of boys in rough-and-tumble play.	* *								**
Involvement of girls in skipping rope or in sedentary play		* *	*						
Pupil-initiated play involving dancing in the schoolyard									
A better ability of boys to organize a playgroup			*						
Pupil-initiated activities involving playthings brought from home.	*	* *	* *						**
Use of facilities and play equipment for outside activities.	* * *	* * *	* *	* *					*
Break time is time for peer socialization.									
Spending time in peer groups	* * *	* * *	* *	* *					*
Interaction with peers through game playing.	* *	* *	*		14 15 16	11 11 13	9 7	6 5	**
Interaction with peers through conversation.		*	* *	* *	5 8 4	6 8 10	14 17	18 16	*
Spending time in the same-sex groups	* *	*	*	*					**
Showing an interest in peers of an opposite sex.			*	*					
Involvement of children in cross-age interactions	*		*	*					
Dealing with ethical issues through peer interaction.		* *	*	*					
Satisfaction of physical needs as part of peer socialization			*	* *					
Proper fulfillment of break time duty.									
Duty teachers as assistance providers during breaktime.	* *	* *	*		14 15 9	18 18 15	6 6	8 6	
Duty teachers as providers of order.	*	*	*	* *					
Children's belief that bullying should be prevented by duty			*	* *					

teachers.

Failure to properly fulfill the break time duty.																				
Children regarding teacher's duty as ineffective.		*				*	*	*	*											
Failure of duty teachers to deal with disciplinary problems.		*				*	*		*											
Duty teachers' leniency towards pupil misbehaviour.	*					*		*												
Break time is a stressful time for pupils.																				
Presence of a large number of pupils of different ages and genders in the same place.																				*
Annoyance by noise and overcrowding in the school yard		*	*	*	*		*	*	*	3	3	4	8	9	6	4	4	4	6	
Children spending break time in the school lobby.						*	*	*												
Use of break time for the preparation for the next lesson.					*	*		*	*											
Fear of being alone during breaktime.		*	*					*	*	6	7	9	5	4	5	4	5	12	11	
Fear of being injured during breaktime.	*	*		*						12	6	-	9	4	-	-	-	-	-	
Failure of children to organize their time during break.						*	*													
Teacher's supervision as a factor limiting pupils' freedom										-	-	-	-	-	-	7	10	4	8	
Break time is a stressful time for the school staff.																				
A school principal patrolling the school grounds during break time	-		-			*		*												
The necessity to involve a principal in resolving break time problems.						*	*	*												
Pupil discipline problems arising during breaktime.																				
Physical and verbal abuse among pupils.	*		*	*	*		*			8	8	9	10	12	12	7	5	6	4	**
A higher level of aggressiveness in boys.			*		*	*														*

The aggressiveness of older children toward younger ones.	* *		*						
An intention to play in unpermitted places.	*	*	*						**
Involvement of children in unsafe play.	*	*	*						**
An impact of external factors on school breaks time.									
Parental worries about school yard discipline.	*	* *	*						
Parental criticism regarding duty teacher behaviour.		*	*	*					
The time of instruction and break time are mutually affected.									
Children's complaints on teachers shortening duration of break time.	*		*	*					

Appendix 6: Development of themes and sub-themes through text encoding

1 Meaning units	2 Codes	Main theme and c...
Documents (Director General's Circular 2009;2005) 1 The purpose of the time between classes is to provide pupils with the opportunity of having a rest from classes, physical relaxation and spending time with peers.	a rest from learning; physical relaxation; opportunity of socializing	**1 Breaktime are t...** **relaxation** • **Having a** rest from l... • **Having fr...**
Questionnaire 1 It is pleasure to have a break time 2 We need breaktime to have a rest from learning	pleasure of having a break time a rest from learning	

3 … To do nothing, just to have a rest	a wish to remain idle	**routine** /a freedom fr
4 Break time is freedom from classes	freedom from classroom routine	
Voices of children		• **The need emotional** relaxation: emotional
1 When the bell rings, I am literally dying to leave the classroom, to run to an open space	anticipation of a break a rest from classroom routine; the need to move to an open space	
	physical relaxation; free play	• **Enjoying** **and fun d** anticipatio having a b
2 a) During break time, we play, jump, run after each other and just go wild.	pleasure of having a break time	
b)It's wonderful to have break time		
	a rest from classroom routine	
Voices of teachers		• **The need** **to an ope** an open sp
1 a) Break time is actually a break from the things demanded from them during lessons.	physical relaxation; emotional relaxation	
b) It is a time for physical and emotional release.	release of energy	
c) Some of them behave like animals released from cages		
Voices of principals		
1 a) The importance of having a rest from the class routine cannot be overestimated.	a rest from learning	
b) They can't maintain effective learning without being distracted from it from time to time	a rest from learning	
Focus group		
We understand that children have to release energy and have freedom from classroom routine, but there must be rules applied to breaktime or there will be chaos	release of energy; freedom from classroom routine; requirement to preserve behaviour norms	
Observation		
1 .. Nearby, a number of boys are running around, falling over	physical relaxation; emotional relaxation; free play; rough –	----------------------

each other, getting up, laughing and falling again	and-tumble play	**2 Freedom to cho...**
2 Then they begin to run up and down high steps leading to the emergency exit, yelling and cursing at each other.	unsafe play; free play; rough-and-tumble play; verbal abuse	**time/** A choice how to s...
--	--------------------------------	
Voices of children	requirement to preserve behavioural norms	• **Freedom** **norms** /wi... freedom to norms
1 a) During classes, teachers expect me to help my classmates and be nice to everybody.		
b) When I have a break, I want to behave differently. I want to decide with whom I want to spend time and with whom to be nice and not to be afraid of being reprimanded by teachers	a wish to behave differently freedom to choose behavioural norms; freedom to choose with whom to socialize	• **Freedom** **play and** choose wi... freedom to
2 a) During breaks, I don't want to think about learning or anything serious.	a rest from learning	
b) I just want to relax and hang around with friends, even without talking to each other	emotional relaxation; a wish to remain idle	• **A wish to** **time /** the wish t...
3 … but when we choose the game to play, we also want to choose with whom to play	the freedom to choose a player	
Voices of teachers 1 a) At break time, they make their own decisions. b) I think we decide enough for them during classes	a rest from classroom routine; the choice how to spend break time	
Voices of principals 1 a) When the activities are organized, fewer conflicts arise. b) On the other hand, children should have the opportunity to choose how to spend their free time…	preference of structured break time a choice how to spent break time	
Documents (Director General's Circular 2012) Children should be provided with the appropriate conditions and equipment for playing games …	conditions for organized play; using play equipment;	**3 Playing games** **breaktime** • **Organize** conditions
Questionnaire 1 …teacher gives us a game to play	organized play	

		organized
Voices of children	organized play	
a) On Mondays, it is the second graders' turn to play on the ball field.		• **Children** free play; pupil-initia
b) During classes, I only think about the moment when the lesson ends and I can run there	anticipation of a break	pupil-initia • **Pupil-initi**
2 a) There are some children who complain that others don't desire their company and that nobody invites them to play.	complaints on being alone	**playthings** bringing p children d plaything
b) Every day, I bring something with which to play; either a ball or a skipping rope, but some children don't bring anything	having free play; pupil-initiated play; bringing playthings from home;	
3 a) During break time, I exchange stickers.	having free play; pupil-initiated play; bringing plaything from home	
b) I have two albums of stickers.	plaything are staff for exchange	
c) My mother buys me stickers almost every day.	plaything are staff for exchange	
d) In one album, I keep expensive ones, in the other one there are stickers for exchange		
Voices of teachers	a rest from classroom routine	
1 a) During break time, children are drawn to non-organized activities because in the classroom everything is within a framework.	a rest from classroom routine	
b) In the yard they want the opposite.		
c) When the pupils' council tries to organize games, not everyone wants to participate…	a wish of free play unstructured break time	
Voices of principals	a choice how to spend break time; a wish of free play; unstructured break time	
1 It's the children's time and they need their running around…	a wish to remain idle	
Observation		
1 Some boys are sitting near the entrance of the building and watching the others to play.	organized play; play facilities; using play equipment	

2 A group of sixth grade boys dressed in white (*physical education shirts* – S.) are playing soccer on the plot in the remote part of the schoolyard.		

The first column in the table below displays a number of quotations from the interviews and questionnaire and excerpts from the documents and observation field notes chosen to demonstrate the development of the indicated above sub-themes through text encoding. The text examples are enumerated and so are the sentences within each example. The second column presents the codes which are placed next to the sentences from which they have been developed. While a simple sentence was used as a meaning unit for coding, the principle of "loose, inclusive coding" (Becker & Geer, 1960, in Hardy & Bryman, 2004, p.539) was in use. According to this principle, boundaries of text segments are left "deliberately wide, but subject to revision, presumably based on an understanding of context" (ibid). Two simple closes of the compound sentence or 2-3 adjacent simple closes create the context for text encoding. The third column 3 presents the names of the main themes and corresponding sub-themes developed from the codes. Some sentences or a group of them (context) were coded with more than one code, so that the same sentence can provide the source for different themes. The themes and corresponding codes appear in the same colour. The codes, which are not relevant for the above themes, appear in black. The codes and themes appearing in red indicate the issues that have not been explored by previous research.

Appendix 7: Examples of different interpretation of the same data through the use of inclusive coding

Meaning unit	Codes	Meaning unit	Codes
...zim school		**Ronim school**	
...he teacher turns to the group of hokey players who ...fighting amongst themselves on the playground.	playing organize game physical abuse; conflict among pupils	1 The angry voices of quarreling girls are heard somewhere in the yard.	conflict among pupils
...Those who do not participate in the game step ...le", says the duty teacher supervising the game	teacher requiring order	2 Some teacher crosses the yard and stops by the duty teacher. They talk.	teachers present in the schoolyard verbal abuse; girls being aggressive non-interference in conflict; girls being aggressive; verbal abuse; teacher responds
...wo boys who are standing on the side are suddenly ...involved into the game of hockey.	playing organized game		
...ne of them grabs a hockey stick from a smaller ...		3 The voices of quarreling girls are getting louder, but the two teachers keep talking.	no respect for the teacher; physical abuse; conflict among pupils
...he latter refuses to give in and starts fighting.	physical abuse; aggressiveness towards a younger pupil;	4The girls scream and curse each other, and the duty teacher leaves her colleague and walks quickly toward them.	authoritarian approach; leniency for misbehaviour; teacher's non-interference in confl... teacher's indifference
...he teacher stops the game and says, "Wait for your ... if you want to play."	conflict among pupils		
...wo children flashed a glance at her and burst out ...ghing.		5 One of the girls shouts angrily to the approaching teacher, pushing with her elbow another girl:	
...One - nil," one of them yells out, adding an ...cenity.	teacher requiring order		
...uddenly someone runs into him, and he responds ...hitting him very hard and cursing at him.	no respect for the teacher	6 "It's not fair that they change it".	
...t's a tie. I saw the game," the teacher says quietly ...he children who are standing around, arguing over	verbal abuse		

		7 "We always lead the dances during a break."	
game results.			
	physical abuse; verbal abuse		
"That's all," she adds.			
"Now leave the station," she says. "Whoever played finished."	attempt to peacefully resolve dispute; leniency for misbehaviour	8 "Stop yelling", the teacher responds with an annoyed expression on her face.	
"That's not fair," yells one of the children. "We en't finished yet!"		9 "I have no idea who changed it.	
The teacher responds quietly, in a friendly tone, ow it's the next group's turn. Stop making trouble be good friends. "	teacher requiring order	10 Sort it out among you".	
	no respect for the teacher demonstrating disobedience;		
	attempt to peacefully resolve dispute; leniency for misbehavior		

The two text excerpts above describe the behaviour of pupils and teachers in the schoolyards of the "Razim" and "Ronim' schools. The observation was conducted in the two schools simultaneously, so was the coding of the observation field notes. Each text provides the example of inclusive text encoding, according to which the development of codes is based on the understanding of context (Becker & Geer, 1960) which is created by two simple closes of the compound sentence or includes 2-3 adjacent simple sentences.

Inclusive coding also creates the conditions for different interpretation of the same data. In the first example (school "Razim"), the duty teacher makes an effort to provide order and attempts to find solution for the dispute among children at play (codes teacher requiring order", "an attempt to peacefully resolve dispute"). On the

other hand, she is very lenient about children's obscene language and aggressive behaviour toward younger children (code "leniency to improper behaviour").These codes create the basis for developing two contrasting themes (6 and 7) and , therefore, for a different interpretation of the text.

Appendix 8

Research design

Research purpose
Creation of comprehensive strategies for implementation of break time in Israeli schools.

Conceptual framework	**Research paradigm**
Concepts of social education of children developed by research into school education and extra-curricular activities(Pellis & Pellis, 2012; Sprague & Walker, 2005; Kahane, 2000; 1974)	Interpretive approach to social reality. The ideas about break time among school population are considered critical in achieving the research goal.

Research methodology

Qualitative research in the form of case study. Using an interview as a main data collection tool (both in-depth and focus group interview) according to the interpretivist paradigm of the study. Conducting overt, non-participant observation sessions. Studying regulatory documents. Traditional qualitative methods are completed by administering a self-completion questionnaire to pupils. Carrying out thematic analysis of the data. Using the principles of deductive and inductive coding.

Research fieldwork				
				Ensuring the validity and credibility of the study
		2008	Studying regulatory documentation	
		2008	Conducting observation sessions	**Prolonged field experience**
		2009	Administering questionnaires	
Studying research literature	**Analysis of data:** thematic analysis	2009	Conducting interviews with pupils	**Triangulation**
		2009-2010	Conducting in-depth interviews with teachers	**Reflexivity (field journal)**
		2009-2010	Conducting focus group with teachers	**Respondent validation**
		2009-2010	Conducting interviews with principals	
				Peer examination