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MODELING THE PROCESS OF EDUCATIONAL MANAGEMENT IN SCHOOLS IN SOCIALLY AND ECONOMICALLY VULNERABLE REGIONS OF ISRAEL

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Abstract: *Ensuring effective educational management in socially and economically vulnerable regions of Israel is crucial for reducing inequality and promoting equal access to quality schooling. This study examines the challenge of developing an adaptive educational management model for schools in disadvantaged areas of Israel, where multiple factors undermine educational resilience. Existing literature lacks a comprehensive model tailored to such conditions, highlighting the need for a data-driven, flexible management approach. This research employs a mixed-method approach, combining theoretical analysis of educational governance structures with empirical statistical data reflecting the state of school education in Israel. The findings indicate that a multi-component model enhances school resilience, optimizes resource allocation, and improves decision-making processes. The key contribution of this study is the introduction of a management framework based on modeling, enabling real-time data-driven adjustments. Schools implementing this model improve managerial efficiency. The proposed model serves as a practical tool for policymakers and school administrators, offering a scalable solution to address systemic challenges in Israel's vulnerable educational environments.*

Keywords: *Educational management, school education, regions of Israel, school management, process model.*

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1. Introduction

Effective educational management plays a significant role in ensuring equitable access to quality education, especially in countries where disparities exist between developed and socio-economically disadvantaged regions. In such contexts, the ability to adapt governance structures to local conditions is essential to sustain educational institutions and improve student outcomes. Israel, like many other countries, experiences significant regional disparities in its education system. Schools in economically disadvantaged areas face persistent challenges including underfunding, high staff turnover, and low parental involvement, all of which negatively impact educational quality and student achievement [14]. Despite the growing recognition of these challenges, there is a lack of a clear and generally accepted definition of educational management in the academic literature. Instead, scholars have approached the concept from a variety of perspectives, including pedagogical, managerial, performance-based, systemic, environmental, and societal approaches [25]. While these perspectives provide valuable insights into specific aspects of educational

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management, no comprehensive model has been formulated to address the unique challenges faced by schools in vulnerable regions. The absence of a clearly defined and structured model of adaptive educational management necessitates the development of a management framework that can optimize decision-making, resource allocation, and policy implementation in challenging educational environments.

The central challenge addressed in this study is to find an optimal structure for an educational management model that can adapt to the diverse circumstances of disadvantaged regions while ensuring equitable access to education and long-term institutional sustainability. Given the socioeconomic disparities within Israel's education system, it is essential to develop a data-driven, flexible, and resilient management approach that accounts for regional differences, resource constraints, and policy limitations.

The purpose of this study is to lay the foundation for developing an adaptive educational management model that will promote the sustainability and resilience of school education in socially and economically vulnerable regions of Israel. The study aims to develop a framework that enables schools to dynamically adjust management strategies based on real-time data, thereby improving learning outcomes and reducing inequalities between developed and underdeveloped regions.

Thus, the research in this paper is based on the following hypotheses: an adaptive model of educational management in schools increases institutional resilience through improved decision-making and smart resource allocation; a decentralized management approach increases the autonomy of Israeli schools, resulting in more effective management structures in economically weak regions; an adaptive model of educational management should be a multi-component structure integrating financial management, human resource management, academic strategy, digitalization, and community engagement, providing a comprehensive and flexible approach to school management in socially and economically vulnerable regions.

A mixed-method approach, combining theoretical and empirical analysis, was employed to test the research hypotheses. The theoretical study consisted of a review and analysis of existing approaches to educational management, including their conceptual foundations and practical application in Israel. The empirical study consisted of a statistical analysis of educational performance indicators in vulnerable regions of Israel, combined with case studies and qualitative assessments of school governance structures.

2. Literature Review

The development of educational management is influenced by the complexity of educational systems, globalization, technological progress, and the need for accountability. The significance of human capital necessitates effective resource management to ensure quality education. Social changes and the increasing diversity of needs call for an innovative approach. Educational management integrates pedagogy and management, raising the question of their compatibility within a single conceptual framework [29]. These foundations define the content, goals, objectives, subjects, objects, principles and functions of management in education. The interdisciplinary nature of educational management stems from its dual foundation.

The term is interpreted differently due to the absence of a unified definition of "education" and "management", as well as the relative novelty of this concept in the field. Terminological disagreements persist, particularly regarding the distinction between "educational management" and "management in education". These discussions emphasize

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the complexity of managing educational systems [20], [10], [3]. Educational management covers the management of the education system as an integrated social and institutional structure, including strategic planning, coordination, resource management, program development, and quality control [29]. Conversely, management in education is commonly understood as the application of general management principles within the educational sector, emphasizing administration, regulation, and efficiency enhancement in individual institutions or systems.

School educational management has distinct characteristics due to the unique nature of the educational process. Primarily, school management aims to achieve social objectives, such as enhancing educational quality and fostering student development, necessitating a balance between pedagogical and administrative management. In addition, schools interact with various external structures - government agencies, parents, the local community, and the labor market, which complicates management processes. The main task of educational management in schools is to create conditions for the stable functioning and development of the educational institution. This includes ensuring high quality education in the context of strict standards and limited resources, creating a favorable educational environment, supporting the professional growth of teachers, strategic resource management, introducing modern technologies, strengthening teamwork and cooperation with parents and the community [1]. A review of the scientific literature enabled the author to identify various approaches to defining 'educational management' (EM), as illustrated in Figure 1.

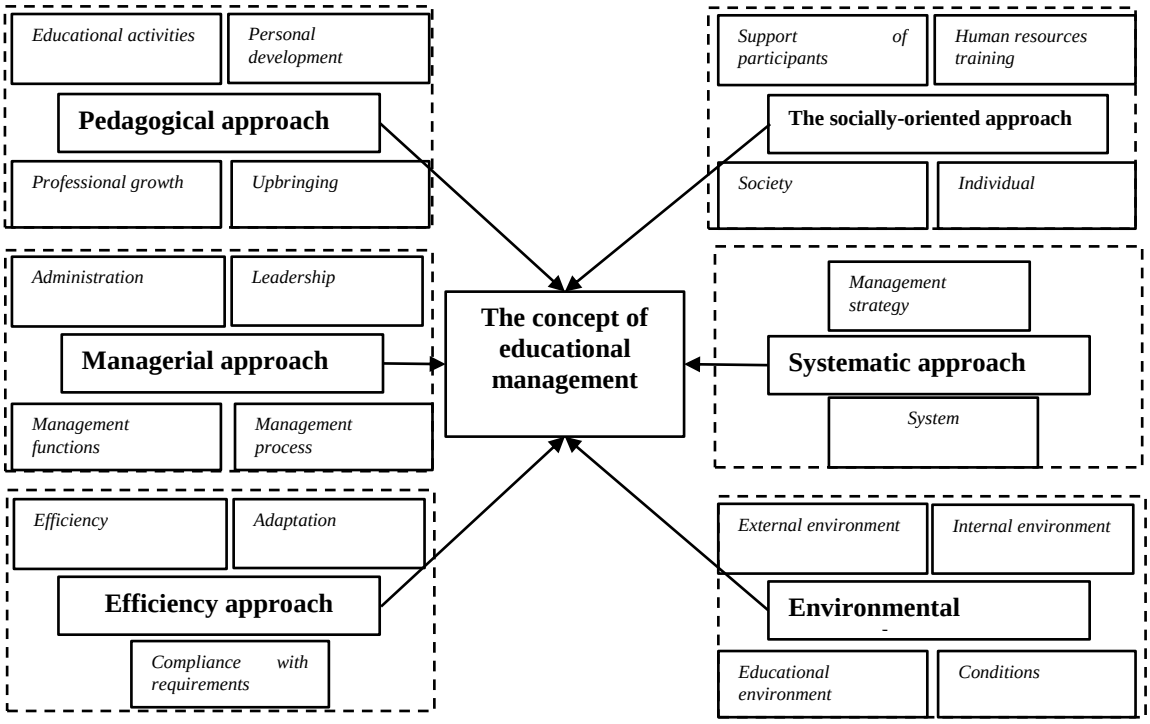

Figure 1. Approaches to the concept of educational management

Source: developed by the author based on [1], [22]

The authors examine a number of approaches to educational management: pedagogical approach, managerial approach, efficiency approach, socially-oriented approach, systems approach, environmental approach.

The pedagogical approach is aimed at creating conditions for the personal development of students and the professional growth of teachers [15]. It is focused on the

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design of curricula, the implementation of innovative educational practices and support for teachers. *The managerial approach* focuses on the structured management of resources and processes. The main elements are planning, coordination, motivation, control and optimization of resource use [9]. *The efficiency approach* focuses on achieving measurable educational results, such as knowledge, competencies and success of graduates [9]. Includes strategic planning, process optimization and economic sustainability. *The socially-oriented approach* emphasizes the social role of education, ensuring equal opportunities, inclusiveness and support for vulnerable groups. It is focused on the accessibility and social responsibility of educational institutions [5], [18]. *The systematic approach* considers educational management as a set of interconnected elements [21]. It strives to form long-term strategies that ensure sustainability and adaptation to change. *The environmental approach* takes into account the influence of the external and internal environment on education management [16], [26], [13]. Emphasizes the need to adapt to social, economic and technological changes in order to effectively engage with stakeholders.

Each approach to educational management reflects different aspects of educational process management, allowing for pedagogical, managerial, social and economic factors to be taken into account. The comprehensive application of these approaches contributes to the effective development of educational institutions and improvement of the quality of education.

3. Methodology

This study employs a mixed-method approach that integrates theoretical analysis, empirical research, and system modeling to develop an adaptive educational management model for schools in socially and economically vulnerable regions of Israel. The research design is structured to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the challenges faced by schools, identify key management variables, and validate the proposed model through data-driven simulations. The study consists of three stages: theoretical analysis, which involves reviewing existing educational management structures and governance approaches; empirical research, which includes data collection and statistical analysis to assess the current state of educational management in vulnerable regions of Israel; and modeling, which focuses on the development and evaluation of an adaptive educational management model. A combination of descriptive statistics and system modeling is used for data processing and interpretation. System modeling is applied to simulate the educational management process within schools, enabling the design of a resilient school education system in vulnerable regions of Israel.

Although the study involves the development of a comprehensive model, several limitations must be acknowledged: reliance on secondary data may lead to bias based on existing reporting structures, the adaptive educational management model assumes rational decision-making in school management, which may not fully capture the complexities of the real world, and the long-term effects of the proposed management interventions require further theoretical and practical research beyond the scope of this study. This methodological approach provides rigorous, data-driven insights into optimizing educational management in socio-economically disadvantaged regions of Israel.

4. Results and Discussion

The authors conducted an analysis of the current state of educational management in vulnerable regions of Israel over the past five years. Economic and social issues of the regions were identified, along with the shortcomings of existing management models in

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regional schools. The authors also presented their conclusions and established trends that lay the foundation for future research in this field. As a result of the analysis, the authors identified an imbalance in the distribution of educational resources. There is a significant gap in school funding between developed regions and socio-economically vulnerable areas of Israel, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Imbalance in the distribution of educational resources in the regions of Israel, 2020

Municipality	Annual expenses per student (shekels)
Tamar Regional Council (богатый регион)	≈100,000
Tel Aviv (город)	≈34,600 (city hall invests ₪8,650 per student)
Kiryat Bialik (city)	≈34,000 (city invests ₪11,000 per student)
Shfar'am (Arab city)	≈26,000 (city invests only ₪1,300 per student)
Al-Batuf (Arab reg. council)	24,400
Jerusalem (city)	≈23,000 (city hall invests ~₪3,000 per student)

Source: https://www.shomrim.news/eng/336#:~:text=however%2C%20since%20the%20two%20localities,provided%20by%20the%20Education%20Ministry

An analysis of per-student funding in different municipalities of Israel reveals significant disparities in the allocation of resources, directly related to the economic development level of the regions. While wealthier municipalities, such as the Tamar Regional Council, invest up to 100,000 shekels per student per year, poorer Arab regions, such as Al-Batuf, receive four times less - only 24,400 shekels per student. There is also a notable gap between cities with high and low local incomes. For instance, Tel Aviv and Kiryat Bialik can afford to add 8,650 shekels and 11,000 shekels per student, respectively, from the municipal budget, increasing total education spending in these cities to 34,600 – 34,000 shekels per year. In contrast, Shfaram (an Arab city) allocates only 1,300 shekels from the local budget, resulting in a significantly lower overall funding level - only 26,000 shekels. However, it is important to note a positive trend - despite ongoing municipal disparities, government funding has become more evenly distributed. Over the past 8 years (2014–2022), the gap in government funding for secondary schools between the Arab and Jewish sectors has halved, from 32% to 16%. In 2022, Arab high school students received an average of 31,000 shekels from the state budget, still lower than the 37,000 shekels in secular Jewish schools and 44,000 shekels in religious Jewish schools, but the difference is no longer as critical. Thus, the government's differentiated funding policy has indeed started to equalize educational resources in Israel, though local economic factors still lead to significant imbalances in the quality of education. Sectoral differences in education funding in Israel, 2014-2022, are presented in Figure 2.

The graph clearly shows the positive trend of narrowing the gap in public funding for high schools between the Arab and Jewish sectors in Israel over the period 2014–2022. In 2014, funding for Arab high school students was 32% lower than in secular Jewish schools and 39% lower than in religious Jewish schools. By 2022, this gap had narrowed to 16% and 29%, respectively, indicating a significant improvement in the availability of educational resources for Arab students.

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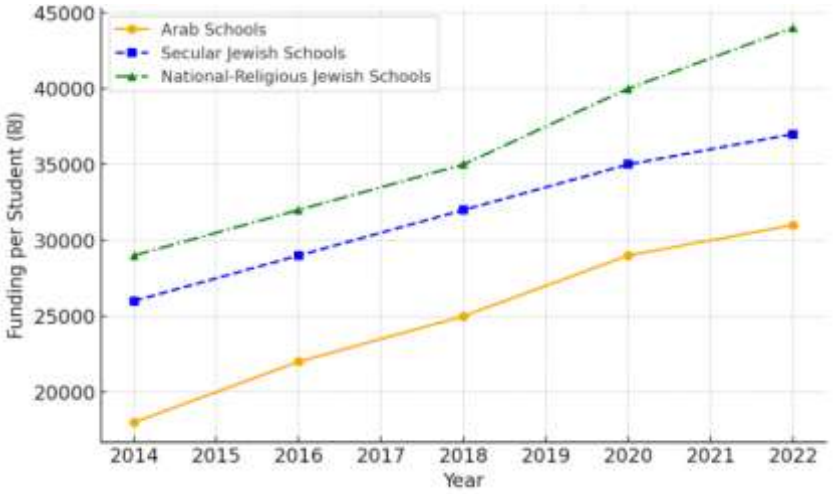

Figure 2. Sectoral differences in education funding in Israel, 2014-2022

Source: https://www.taubcenter.org.il/en/research/highschool-expenditure/

From 2014 to 2022, government funding per student in Arab schools increased by 73%, while in secular Jewish schools it rose by 41%, and in national-religious schools by 51%. This demonstrates that government policy has prioritized increasing the budget for the Arab sector, which helps address educational inequality. Despite the narrowing of the gap, inequality persists. In 2022, the average government budget per student was: 31,000 shekels in Arab schools, 37,000 shekels in secular Jewish schools, and 44,000 shekels in national-religious schools. Although the gap has decreased, Jewish schools still receive more funding, especially in the religious sector.

In recent years, due to increased government funding, educational inequality between Arab and Jewish schools has become less pronounced. However, full equality has not yet been achieved - funding for Arab schools remains lower, continuing to create disparities in the quality of educational services and learning opportunities.

In addition to economic factors affecting the implementation of educational management, social and demographic challenges in various regions of Israel can be identified. These challenges also contribute to the differences between regions and impact the sustainability and effectiveness of school education, as shown in Table 2.

The analysis of socio-demographic challenges in vulnerable regions of Israel shows that economic instability, high poverty rates, and unemployment directly affect the accessibility and quality of education. Poverty is a key factor in educational inequality. In the Arab sector, 58% of children live below the poverty line, leading to a shortage of educational materials, lack of private tutoring, and poor academic performance. These conditions contribute to a high dropout rate—although it has decreased from 15.8% in 2003 to 8.1% in recent years, the issue remains significant. The gap in the Bagrut exam results is narrowing, but there are still notable differences. The pass rate for the Bagrut exam among Arab students in the 2021/22 academic year was 75.6%, nearly equal to the rate among Jewish students (77.2%). This is significant progress, indicating successful reforms in the education system. However, the Bedouins in the Negev remain at high risk, as only 64% of them obtain a high school diploma. This underscores the need for additional investments in infrastructure and teacher training in the Bedouin sector. Additionally, unemployment and migration exacerbate the educational challenges in the regions. Unemployment among young Arab men (before COVID-19) increased by 7% over two years due to a mismatch between education and labor market demands.

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Table 2. Socio-demographic challenges to education in vulnerable regions of Israel

Factor	**Statistical data**
Poverty levels in Arab communities	58% of Arab children live below the poverty line
Dropout Rate Among Arab-Israeli Youth	Decline from 15.8% in 2003 to 8.1% in recent years
Bagrut exam pass rate – Arab students	75.6% in the 2021/22 school year
Bagrut exam pass rate – Jewish students	77.2% in the 2021/22 school year
Bagrut exam pass rate – Druze students	Higher than Jewish students, slight advantage
Bagrut exam pass rate – Negev bedouins	About 64% in the Negev
Unemployment rate among young Arab men (pre-COVID-19)	Up 7% in two years due to skills mismatch
The impact of migration on education	"Brain drain" in Arab cities, overcrowded schools

Source: https://taubcenter.org.il/wp-content/uploads/educationinequalityinisraeleng.pdf

In peripheral Arab cities, there is a “brain drain” - many educated families move to the center of the country, which worsens the socio-economic balance and reduces the tax base for local schools. At the same time, the high birth rate in Arab cities leads to overcrowding in schools, creating a shortage of educational spaces. Educational problems in vulnerable regions of Israel are closely tied to the socio-economic situation. Improving funding is important but not enough. A comprehensive solution, including poverty reduction, labor market development, crime prevention, and expanded educational infrastructure, is needed to break the cycle of socio-economic instability affecting education. Israel's education system faces serious issues, including bureaucratic barriers, insufficient crisis adaptability, and lack of digital tools. The high centralization and administrative complexity slow decision-making, creating obstacles, especially in vulnerable communities [19]. The Ministry of Education controls most budgets, curricula, and staffing decisions, leaving local authorities and school principals with limited autonomy. Processes such as opening new schools or adding classes require passing through multiple levels of bureaucracy, which delays their implementation. Political instability between 2019 and 2021 worsened this issue, as the lack of an approved state budget delayed investments and hiring of staff [6]. Frequent changes in education ministers shifted priorities and delayed reforms, hindering long-term projects. The system also suffers from outdated, fragmented management processes, causing inefficiency in budget execution and data management.

The last five years have revealed the system's insufficient adaptability to crisis situations, particularly in disadvantaged areas [11]. The COVID-19 pandemic was a major test: the shift to remote learning exacerbated digital inequality [12]. Many students from poor or rural areas had no access to computers or the internet, effectively excluding them from the educational process. The lack of prior planning and inadequate teacher preparation for digital learning exacerbated the situation, increasing the performance gap between students from different socio-economic backgrounds. Other crises, such as political instability and conflicts, also highlighted the system's insufficient readiness to ensure continuity of education and support students in challenging conditions [8]. Despite Israel’s reputation as a "startup nation," its education system lags in the digital transformation of management, especially in disadvantaged sectors. Management, monitoring, and forecasting in education were conducted with minimal use of modern

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digital tools until recently. The lack of integrated data systems led to inefficiency, delays, and limited opportunities for monitoring and analyzing key indicators such as attendance and performance [7]. The implementation of digital tools at the school level was uneven, and many schools in poorer areas continued to use outdated management methods, hindering the timely identification of issues and informed decision-making.

In addition to economic, technological, and socio-demographic factors, the effective implementation of educational management in school institutions faces several conditions that not only limit and constrain development but also present significant challenges that hinder achieving high-quality educational outcomes. These include insufficient regulatory and legal frameworks, limited digital infrastructure, weak adaptation to changes, low staff qualifications, lack of motivation, resistance to change, limited funding, inefficient resource use, difficulty in attracting additional funds, low levels of innovation implementation, weak adaptation to changes, and a lack of modern educational technologies [23], [28], [2].

Addressing these issues requires a comprehensive approach, including strategic management, systems analysis, and flexible mechanisms. An innovative educational management model, tailored to school specifics, resources, and external constraints, is essential for effective implementation and ensuring sustainability. The authors have developed an adaptive educational management model for schools in vulnerable regions of Israel. The developed model is aimed at ensuring sustainable and flexible application of educational management by schools in socio-economically vulnerable regions, considering resource shortages, high poverty rates, migration processes, staffing issues, and limited local funding. The model is presented in Figure 3.

The model developed by the authors consists of four modules, each performing key functions in the implementation of the educational management process. **The pedagogical module** is responsible for the development, implementation, and adaptation of educational programs, considering the individual characteristics of students and modern pedagogical methods. It includes curriculum development, teaching methods, knowledge assessment systems, and mechanisms for teachers' professional development. **The management module** ensures strategic planning, resource allocation, and control over the effectiveness of the educational process. It encompasses financial management mechanisms, personnel policy, regulatory frameworks, and interaction with governmental and public structures. **The organizational-technological module** supports the educational process infrastructure, school technical equipment, and the implementation of innovative solutions. It includes material-technical resources, digital educational technologies, automated management systems, and safety mechanisms for the educational environment. **The educational management subject** module defines the interaction among all participants in the educational process - administration, teachers, students, parents, and external stakeholders. It focuses on building effective communication links, involving the community in education management, and creating partnership programs to expand educational opportunities.

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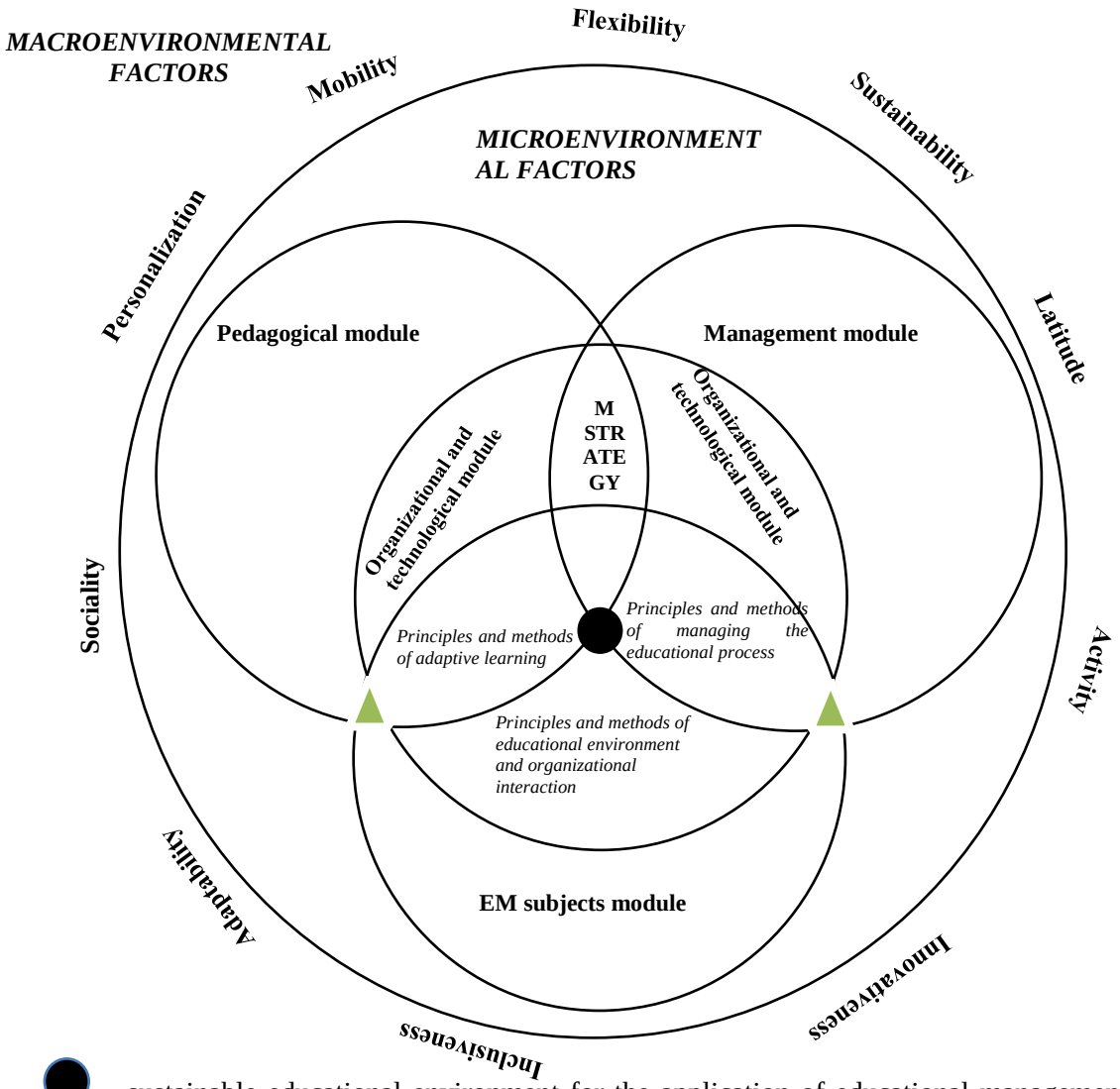

- sustainable educational environment for the application of educational management in schools in vulnerable regions of Israel

- zone of realization of future possibilities of OM in school (adaptability of the model)

Figure 3. Adaptive model of educational management in schools in vulnerable regions of Israel

Source: developed by the author

The interconnection of these modules ensures a comprehensive and adaptive application of educational management in schools, aimed at sustainable development and improving the quality of education in vulnerable regions of Israel. At the intersection of the pedagogical, organizational and technological modules and the module of the subject of educational management, the principles and methods of adaptive learning are formed, aimed at the digital transformation of pedagogical processes, flexible adaptation of training and the involvement of all subjects of education in the management of educational activities. At the intersection of the organizational and technological, managerial and module of the subject of educational management, the principles and methods of managing the educational process in schools are formed, ensuring effective decision-making, data monitoring and adaptation of the educational process to current challenges. At the

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intersection of all four modules, the principles and methods of the educational environment and organizational interaction are formed. Also, the core of this model is a sustainable educational environment for the application of educational management in schools in vulnerable regions of Israel, which involves the development of an educational management strategy. The adaptive strategy of OM allows for dynamic changes in approaches depending on regional characteristics. Thus, at the intersection of all modules, a dynamic and highly effective school management system is formed, based on digital technologies, strategic planning and adaptability to environmental challenges.

The formation of each module is influenced by factors of the external micro- and macroenvironment, as well as internal factors of the school educational institution. These factors form the content component of each module depending on regional conditions.

The model proposed by the authors is based on the fundamental principles that are presented in the diagram on the border between the conditions of the macro- and microenvironment: mobility, flexibility, sustainability, innovation, and others. These principles allow us to adhere to the conceptual foundations of educational management and take into account the initial conditions of economically and socially underdeveloped regions of Israel.

5. Conclusions

In this study, the authors present an adaptive educational management model developed to improve the management of schools in socioeconomically vulnerable regions of Israel. The model integrates pedagogical, managerial, organizational-technological, and stakeholder interaction modules, providing a flexible, data-driven, and technology-enhanced approach. By prioritizing strategic management, digital infrastructure, and collaborative decision-making, this framework enables schools to better allocate resources, personalize learning, and effectively respond to crises. The implementation of this model can significantly reduce educational disparities, improve administrative efficiency, and contribute to long-term sustainability in vulnerable school environments. Future research should focus on pilot implementations, long-term assessments of the impact of digital transformation, and comparative analysis with similar educational systems.

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