

The main goal of the present study was to test narratives of young women who immigrated to Israel alone from developed and developing countries through aspects of personal identity, quality of life and future orientation.

The participants included 16 young women who immigrated to Israel alone at age 20+. These participants were born and raised in developed and developing countries.

The study was based on the Autobiographical Memory Model (Bryant & Bali, 2018; Conway, 2003; Harris et al., 2014; Nelson & Fivush, 2020). This model plays an important role in understanding a person's personal and social narrative, by presenting three main functions in the personal narrative: identity – memory of events from the past helps a person understand himself as a consistent individual over time; communication and society – remembering events from the past and expressing them through narrative to a significant other helps in the development of meaningful social relations that may contribute to improvement in the quality of life; learning and future planning – comprises the basis for constructing a life story and serves as a tool for learning lessons for solving current problems and for planning the future based on past lessons.

The research was performed using a qualitative narrative design with a quantitative basis and semi-structured interviews with the aim of producing the participants' life stories with reference to the three foci of the research: their personal identity, the quality of their lives in the present and their future orientation.

Analysis of the findings was performed in three stages: the preliminary analysis stage, the mapping analysis stage and the theoretical-themes stage (Shkedi, 2003; Tracy, 2019). Quantitative (mixed method) analyses were also performed.

The preliminary analysis stage produced 27 different categories. In the mapping analysis stage, focusing and organizing the preliminary categories found in the first stage led

to 11 inclusive categories. Statistical tests for testing differences in the various categories were performed in order to validate the findings produced in the mapping stage, and as a priming process for the third analysis stage, between immigrants from developed countries and those who immigrated from developing countries. The results of the first two analysis stages and the results of the statistical tests yielded a theoretical conceptualization which comprised the third analysis stage (the theoretical stage) and led to the three main research themes: personal identity, current quality of life and future orientation.

**From the aspect of personal identity,** it was found that the participants who immigrated from developed and developing countries made a decision to leave their country of origin, immigrate to Israel and establish their residence in Israel. The motives for the participants' immigration are consistent with motives from immigration theories, such as: the Structure Theory, the Globalization Theory and the Social-Functional Theory (Lee, 2009) which includes pull and push motives for immigration. This theory is compatible with the different motives for the immigration of the young women in the present study from the developed and developing countries who speak about the pull to Israel for personal, environmental and ethical reasons and considerations. Additional unique motives were found in our study, such as the ideological-religious motive. It was found that the participants' personal identity is based on religious and Zionist ideology, as well as on a sense of belonging and connection to the Jewish People, and that these are the main motive for the immigration to Israel of the participants from the developed and the developing countries. These elements exist in the personal identity of the participants from the developed countries and are derived from the master identity that is prevalent among Jews in the countries of origin of all the participants. However, they are more prominent among the participants from the developing countries. In the developed countries, education is pro-Israel, but reflects duality and affords legitimization for alternatives to immigration to Israel such as donations and identification with Israel,

demonstration of support, sympathy for IDF soldiers, etc. In contradistinction, the education of the participants from developing countries is clearly oriented to immigration to Zion, the Holy Land, as the only practical alternative.

**From the aspect of quality of life**, it was found that the quality of life of most of the participants (14) in Israel is positive. The highest number of mentions is for the category “strengths” of the factor of inclusion, followed by the factor “difficulties” experienced by the participants in their processes of inclusion in Israel. These factors are in line with the Assimilation Theory which includes the classical assimilation theories that refer to processes of inclusion of immigrants in the absorbing country. The third highest number of mentions was “social and technological relations”. This factor reflects the Social Capital and Networks Theory which stresses the ability of the participants from the developed countries to enjoy and use social, digital and human capital, contrary to participants from developing countries who only benefitted to a small extent from social human capital. The fourth factor, “cultural-ethnic boundaries” parallels the Ethnic Group Boundaries Theory and stresses the fact that only the participants from the developing countries experienced this rigid and complex ethnic cultural boundary. The last factor was the “transnational” factor, which is consistent with the Transnationalism Theory that enables continuation of relations with the country of origin, indicated that only participants from the developed countries benefitted from the ability to implement these relations. The prominence of the factor of inclusion in the strengths category among all participants indicates a high motivation to immigrate to Israel which comprises a source of ongoing support in the face of the inclusion challenges. The category of the many difficulties experienced by the participants strengthens the insight on the importance of this study, where one of its operative goals was to test how to improve and increase the effectiveness of the process of absorption in Israel, since this is a significant component which influences numerous processes in the absorption of the immigrants and in their blending into

Israeli society. Another important conclusion pertains to the cultural boundary experienced by participants from developing countries. These participants experienced many obstacles to blending into Israeli society and culture and indicates the need for self-examination of Israeli society on the level of acceptance and containment of the “other” in spite of the strong common denominator of Jewish-Israeli religion and nationality.

**From the aspect of future orientation,** it was found that the future orientation of 14 participants was directed toward life in Israel, and they made the decision to stay and settle in Israel. The factors on which the participants’ decision to remain in Israel is based rely on and stem from the same motives that are reflected from their personal identity and the factors for assimilation in Israel, including the Social-Functional Theory (Lee, 2009), “pull” and “push” motives, as well as the strong inclusion factors and the social capital. These motives influence and direct the participants’ sense of satisfaction and quality of life in the present, in spite of the difficulties and challenges they experienced during the inclusion process.

The study limitations, future research and practical recommendations are presented.