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Between the Inside and the Outside World: Coping of Ultra-Orthodox Individuals with Their Work Environment After Academic Studies

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Abstract
This study has explored how ultra-Orthodox individuals cope when facing secular norms and values in their work environment. The study was conducted in Israel, where 614 ultra-Orthodox adults answered questions regarding demographic characteristics, identities, openness to the workplace, social environment, Brief Cope, community sense of coherence (CSOC) and Employee Satisfaction Inventory. Individuals in the main sectors of the ultra-Orthodox society reported higher CSOC and stronger religiosity while individuals from the minor sectors reported greater openness to the job's social environment. Demographics, coping strategies and CSOC were significant in explaining job satisfaction. The results will be discussed based on stress and coping theories and on the salutogenic theory.

Keywords Ultra-Orthodox · Coping · Community sense of coherence · Job satisfaction

In the past two decades, ultra-Orthodox men and women have started to study in the higher education departments at universities and colleges as part of their attempt to improve and upgrade their economic status and thus, to raise their standard of living. Encountering secular people during their higher education studies is limited, because many universities and colleges set aside special segregated environments for the ultra-Orthodox who wish to gain an academic degree. Thus, the first real intensive and ongoing encounter with the secular environment starts after graduating university and starting to work in their new jobs. Many graduates choose to work outside the ultra-Orthodox enclave since they can make more money than at jobs within the enclave. The process of meeting the 'outside' world is relatively new and has not yet been intensively studied. Therefore, this research will try to explore how these individual cope with their new jobs against the backdrop of the new social environment. More specifically, we will try to find out what coping strategies and resources are used by ultra-Orthodox men and women when facing secular norms and values in their work environment. Additionally, we will ask whether there are differences in coping resources and strategies between those who are working within the enclave and those who are working on the outside? Lastly, we will try to assess how satisfied the ultra-Orthodox are with their jobs, once completing their academic educations and what factors contribute to this satisfaction.

Ultra-Orthodox Society

The ultra-Orthodox in Israel number about 1,000,000 people, or approximately 12% of Israel's population (Cahaner et al. 2017). They represent a significant minority group in Israeli society. The ultra-Orthodox are not different from the majority group in race or nationality, but are separated by ideological, religious and social motivations, which unite its members (Brown 2017).

Researchers of ultra-Orthodox society usually divide this sector into three main religious movements: Hasidic, Lithuanian (Misnagdim), and Mizrahi (Brown 2017). The differences between these three groups are well-known and obvious, both in dress and in community lifestyles, including differences in community membership, rabbinical leadership, worldview, educational system, attitude towards types of livelihood and others.

The Hasidic group—The Hasidic movement developed in Eastern Europe during the eighteenth century and created

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a significant change in the traditional Jewish way of life. A number of features characterize the Hasidic movement, but two are especially prominent: The first is devotion to God, and a lifestyle in the framework of the Hasidic "community" with the Hasidic rabbi (Admor) at its head; he serves as the leader of the community and the mediator between the individual and God (Elfassi 2006). The admor, as community leader, has complete authority and the community members consult with him for requests and blessings, as well as solutions to personal matters. Due to his absolute authority, every personal or public behavioral decision is brought to him (Brown 2017). Through the years, every individual Hasidic community has behaved differently in decisions about higher education acquisition and professional studies.

The second feature of Hasidic society is the belief that the divinity exists everywhere and in everything, whether corporeal or spiritual and thus, the practical is sanctified alongside the spiritual (Mazor 2002). The sanctity of the practical in Hasidic society could lead to more contact with the surrounding society. The approach to different values, and among them, acquiring higher education, is viewed with a certain degree of openness.

In general, the Hasidic community is perceived as more conservative than the Lithuanians both in their dress and in maintaining tradition. Nevertheless, the number of Hasidic men who work is greater (Elfassi 2006). Hasidic people tend to receive professional training in a relatively short time, enabling them to earn their livings immediately. A large number of Hasidic community members earn their livings from independent businesses, small enterprises and wholesale trade. In this community, although men's employment is more accepted than in the Lithuanian community, women's employment is looked upon with hesitancy and reservation. Thus, through the years, there has been no official opposition to men's plans and employment, while at the same time, the rabbis have tended not to encourage women's work (Kalagy 2014).

The Lithuanian group—The Lithuanian doctrine is based on opposition to the Hasidic movement. The Lithuanians represent the ideal of conservatism alongside placing study of the Torah as the central and constitutive value of Judaism. The founder of this movement is the Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Elijah ben Solomon Zalman, who was active at the end of the eighteenth century in Lithuania (Brown 2017). A student of the Vilna Gaon, Rabbi Chaim Volozhin, adopted his rabbi's doctrine when he established the Volozhin Yeshiva. Through the years, this yeshiva has served as a constitutive model for many Lithuanian yeshivas. This movement actually represents a way of life which took form in Poland and Lithuania at the end of the nineteenth century, in the framework of the large yeshivas similar to the Voloshin, in which there was relative openness to modernity (Friedman 1991).

The Lithuanian ultra-Orthodox grant authority to the ultra-Orthodox Lithuanian leadership to determine questions relating to public policy, education, and medicine, among others. In their appearance and in their language, the Lithuanian stream is more modern than the Hasidic stream.

One of the prominent characteristics of the Lithuanian movement which sets them apart from other movements is that the young are educated to adopt the ideal of studying Torah as an exclusive value, while relating critically to secular professions. This ideal is strikingly expressed in the "kollels", within which most of the learners are Lithuanians, even at advanced ages. Researchers often point out that if the Lithuanians were forced to choose a professional path, they would probably choose to gain higher education, enabling them to have prestigious and relatively high-quality professions (Gonen 2000).

The Mizrahi group—This movement is considered relatively new in ultra-Orthodox society. Until the 1980s, the Mizrahi ultra-Orthodox were subject to the two Ashkenazi movements. In addition, at the same time, they had no independent educational system and their Mizrahi rabbinical leadership was marginal in comparison to that of the Ashkenazi movements (Leon 2010). In the 1980s, this changed with the development of the Shas movement, which adopted the rallying cry of "restoring themselves to their former position of splendor" under the leadership of the charismatic rabbi, Ovadia Yosef. Today the Shas movement has its own wide-ranging educational system, its own Kashrut[1] system and a respected leadership (Feldman 2005).

The Mizrahi movement is not uniform, and two central groups may be identified. One is identified with the worldview of Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, and their children study in schools identified with the Shas movement (Zohar 2003). This stream emphasizes the study of *halacha*, Jewish law, rather than in-depth interpretations and casuistry, as in Lithuanian study. The halachic tendencies of this stream are more lenient rather than strict. The second stream of Mizrahi ultra-Orthodox includes a public which tries to emulate Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox society in terms of arranged marriages. They also tend to be stricter about halachic rulings and adopt Ashkenazi ultra-Orthodox behavior, including critical attitudes towards Zionism and the State of Israel (Lupo 2004).

In a general sense, when relating to these three groups (the Hasidic, the Lithuanians and the Mizrahi), we may point to two identical characteristics, common to all three: studying Torah as a constitutive value, and social isolation. These two values are central, but in recent years, social and economic changes have affected ultra-Orthodox society,

[1] Kashrut is a set of Jewish religious laws. Food that may be consumed according to Jewish law.

stretching the borders of the communities, and the effects of these changes are still in progress.

The changes have left many of the ultra-Orthodox wondering about their religious and social identities, or in other words, whether it is possible to integrate a working life with Torah, what the role of gaining higher education is, and how isolated from contemporary Israeli society the ultra-Orthodox should be. These questions and others are now common, especially among people who have decided to take their places in academia and to find places of employment that are not within the ultra-Orthodox world. Thus, their perceptions of their ultra-Orthodox identities are not as they were in the past. They define themselves as ultra-Orthodox in a general sense, but when they are forced to respond to the question of which specific stream they belong to more than to any other, whether they prefer to define themselves as "lacking a clear identity".

Considering the difficulty in clearly defining membership to the various streams in ultra-Orthodox society, we have decided to provide an additional category for the participants in the research, defined as an unidentified stream. This relates to those who do not define themselves under one narrow category and who have adopted a variety of identity levels, sometimes even borrowing from all of the groups mentioned above.

The Coping Model

The importance of coping has been stressed throughout research (Lazarus and Folkman 1984). Coping can be defined as the actual effort that is made in the attempt to render a perceived stressor more tolerable and minimize the distress induced by the situation. Most models of coping assume that individuals who cope more effectively with stressful life events show lower levels of anxiety or depression and a greater sense of well-being. Moreover, coping strategies have been found to mediate the relationship between exposure to stress and psychological outcomes (Braun-Lewensohn et al. 2009). Thus, different studies show that emotionally focused strategies tend to be associated with more psychological problems while problem-solving strategies or active coping tends to be linked more to well-being (Lewis and Frydenberg 2002).

Coping in Different Cultures

Research of cultural influences on coping behavior is sparse and inconclusive. Relatively few studies have compared coping across cultures (e.g., Frydenberg et al. 2003; Gelhaar et al. 2007). Much of the research has been done in two or more countries and has assumed the cross-cultural universality of coping behavior. However, in neglecting cultural influences one might miss a full understanding of behaviors, emotions and cognitions (Gelhaar et al. 2007). In Israel, most studies that have addressed the issue of coping across cultures have dealt with political violence (e.g. Gelkopf et al. 2008; Somer et al. 2009).

One review (Fischer et al. 2010) aimed to understand differences in coping among Christians and Muslims and emphasized the collectivist vs. individualistic paradigm. To this end, the authors suggested differences between more Westernized cultures and traditional collectivist cultures, such that the Muslims, perceived as the 'collectivists', used more intrapersonal coping and turned more often to strategies such as prayer and improving relationships as opposed to the 'individualists' who use more interpersonal and cognitive coping (Hobfoll et al. 2006; Fischer et al. 2010; Frydenberg et al. 2003). In Israel, a few studies have compared coping strategies among Jews and Arabs, but these have been inconclusive. Some studies (Cohen and Eid 2007; Braun-Lewensohn 2014) have shown that coping strategies might also have different meanings in different cultures; for example, sharing feelings was found to be related to higher distress only for Jews but not for Arabs (Cohen and Eid 2007). However, other studies have shown similar usage of coping strategies as well as similar explanations of stress reactions by coping (Braun-Lewensohn et al. 2010).

A very small number of studies have examined coping strategies among the ultra-Orthodox (Bitton 2014; Pirutinsky et al. 2011) in several contexts. However, none of them have referred to the present context of going out to work after an academic education.

The Salutogenic Model

The salutogenic model, the origin of health, suggests that life is full of stressful events, no matter how hard we try to prevent people from encountering stressful situations. In other words, stressors are inherent in human lives, and the subjective meaning and the individual's perception of an event have more important consequences than the event itself (Antonovsky 1979, 1987). Therefore, this model would appear to be valuable in understanding what resources lead an individual to the subjective meaning and perception of an event, as seen through a salutogenic lens. To answer this question, Antonovsky (1987), suggested two main concepts: generalized resistance resources (GRRs) and sense of coherence (SOC). These resources are both cognitive and emotional, and may be psychological, cultural or social. The availability of these resources plays a role in the individual's ability to overcome a stressor and therefore, also impacts the movement towards the healthy end of the ease-dis-ease continuum. The most fundamental concept of the salutogenic model is sense of coherence (SOC). SOC reflects the way individuals perceive the world and the events that happen to them, as well as the extent to

which they perceive these events as manageable and meaningful. It is a global orientation, an enduring tendency to see the world as more or less *comprehensible* (the cognitive aspect—the extent to which the world is perceived as ordered and the problems facing us are clear), *manageable* (the instrumental aspect- the sense that, aided by your own or interpersonal resources, you will be able to cope), and *meaningful* (the emotional aspect—the sense that life makes sense emotionally, that at least some of the problems and demands posed by living are worth investing energy in, are worthy of coping with, of commitment and of engagement). Therefore, SOC has important implications for the ways an individual responds to various kinds of stressful situations (Antonovsky 1987).

Sense of Community Coherence

Following Antonovsky's work, several researchers have elaborated the concept of sense of coherence into more collective contexts, family and community (Antonovsky and Sourni 1988; Braun-Lewensohn and Sagy 2011). Thus, sense of community coherence includes the perception of the community with regard to the three components of Antonovsky's concept- comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness (Elfassi et al. 2016). The assumption is that in all cultures a person who perceives his/her community as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful will have another resource to rely on when needed. Community comprehensibility relates to resources in the community that advance the sense that life in the community is predictable and safe. Community manageability resources are those which can assist individuals in times of crisis and distress; for example, treatment providers and group programs run for young people by the Social Services Department. Lastly, community meaningfulness resources enable individuals to express and to realize themselves, to feel satisfaction, challenge and interest. This could be the sense of pride in their community as well as a meaningful existence in the place where they live (Elfassi et al. 2016).

Sense of coherence has been found to be related to wellness in a variety of contexts, especially in Westernized populations (Nilsson et al. 2010). Furthermore, in the context of job environment, stronger SOC was related to more satisfaction from work and better quality of life (Van der Colff and Rothmann 2009). It should be noted that the literature still lacks examinations of these issues in the context of ultra-Orthodox academics who have joined secular job environments after graduating university.

Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction has important implications for employee well-being (Koustelios and Bagiatis 1997) that derive from a need to believe that one's actions within the framework of one's work are important and significant (Malach-Pines 2002). One of the definitions of job satisfaction focuses on the perceptions of fulfilment as a result of day-to-day activities. This fulfilment is associated with job commitment and also, therefore, with higher levels of performance at work (Judge et al. 2001). It seems that one of the contributors to better job satisfaction is high income (Dolan et al. 2008). Additionally, job satisfaction has been found to be important to the physical and mental health of the employee (Smith et al. 1969). Studying job satisfaction has led researchers to understand the importance of looking at it from a multi-dimensional angle. More specifically, Koustelios and Bagiatis (1997) suggested six sub-dimensions of job satisfaction: working conditions, supervisor, pay, the job itself, the organization as a whole, and promotion.

Gender Differences

Gender differences within the study's variables were found for the different coping strategies. Studies have found that women tend to report more use of all strategies in comparison to men. This includes verbal expressions to others or to oneself seeking emotional support and emotional coping, and ruminating about problems (Brougham et al. 2009; Eschenbeck et al. 2007; Tamres et al. 2002).

Sense of community or sense of belonging to a community was found to be at similar strength for men and women across cultures in a variety of settings (Cicognani et al. 2008; Freeman et al. 2007). As for job satisfaction, results are inconclusive across countries. A study focusing on Europe showed that while in most countries women were more satisfied, in the Nordic countries no differences were exhibited and in Portugal men were more satisfied than women (Kaiser 2007).

In accordance with the literature review, several research questions and hypotheses were formulated for the present study:

1. Are there differences between men and women in terms of the different study variables? We hypothesize that women will use a wider variety of coping strategies compared to men (Brougham et al. 2009); while no differences will appear with regard to sense of community coherence (Cicognani et al. 2008). Since results were not conclusive for job satisfaction, and no studies were presented for social openness to the job environment, no specific hypotheses have been formed for these variables.
2. Are there differences between the different ultra-Orthodox sectors in terms of the different study variables? Since there are no previous studies on this issue, no specific hypothesis has been formed.

3. Are there differences between those who work mostly with secular people, those in a mixed environment and those in the ultra-Orthodox enclave in terms of the study variables? Since there are no previous studies on these variables in the present context, no specific hypothesis has been formed.

Finally, we examined a model in which the socio-demographic variables (age, socio-economic status, children and working or not in your profession) were entered first. We then added coping resources and strategies (openness to the world, sense of community coherence, adaptive and non-adaptive strategies) as explanatory factors for satisfaction from work. Additionally, we examined moderation effects for both genders and sectors.

Methods

Participants

Six hundred and fourteen ultra-Orthodox adults, aged 21–55 ($M = 29.70$ $SD = 6.12$) participated in this study. Women accounted for 64% (393 participants). As for education, 520 (84.7%) had earned a bachelor's degree and 94 (15.3%) had completed an MA. Four hundred and three (65.6%) reported that they work fully in the profession for which they had studied, 128 (20.8%) partially worked in their professions and 83 (13.5%) did not work in the profession they had studied. Three hundred and eleven participants (50.7%) reported that they work mostly in a secular environment, 164 (26.7%) in a mixed environment and 139 (22.6%) work within the ultra-orthodox enclave. With regard to socio-economic status, 214 (34.9%) reported lower than average incomes, 165 (26.9%) reported average incomes and 216 (35.2%) reported higher than average incomes. The participants reported having 0–11 children ($M = 3.09$ $SD = 1.79$) and they have worked for 0–30 years ($M = 3.63$ $SD = 3.73$).

Procedure

After receiving ethics approval from the university department's IRB committee, participants filled out anonymous self-report questionnaires (via the internet) during July–October 2015. The sample was recruited using the academic institutions where participants had studied, in addition to the snowball method. Participation was voluntary and the participants were informed that the researcher was interested in their experiences of going out to work after their academic studies. Participants were free to withdraw their participation for any reason and at any time during the questionnaire procedure.

Measures

Demographic background data included gender, age, level of education, socio-economic status, and working in the profession for which one studied. Additionally, participants reported if they worked mostly in secular environments, in mixed environments, or in the ultra-Orthodox enclave.

Level of religiosity was assessed by one question—To what extent do you define yourself as religious? Answers ranged from not at all (1) to very much (5).

Identity was evaluated by a question asking participants to relate to different types of identities on a 5 point Likert scale (1-very little or not at all to 5-a lot). The possibilities were—Lithuanian, Hasidic, Mizrachi, Modern, Outsider. Each participant had to relate to all possibilities. The participants were granted the identity for which they scored the highest. Participants who had no significant identity (all identities were below 3) was assigned—'no significant identity'.

Sense of community coherence (Braun-Lewensohn and Sagy 2011). The questionnaire included 12-items on a seven-point Likert-type scale with anchoring phrases at each end. It translates the major themes of Antonovsky's personal SOC—comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness—into community resources. Examples of the items are "To what extent do you feel that you have influence in your community", "I intend to live in this community in the future". Cronbach alpha for the present study was $\alpha = .88$.

Brief COPE (Carver et al. 1989). This is a 28-item tool measuring coping strategies, using a four point Likert scale ranging from 1- usually don't do it at all to 4- usually do it a lot. The questionnaire is designed to fit different situations. The opening statement of this questionnaire is: "When you think about last summer when your husband served in the military operation…." The Brief COPE items are divided into 14 subscales, with two items each. The mean of each two items was used to create the subscales: self-distraction, active coping, denial, substance use, emotional social support, instrumental social support, behavioral disengagement, venting emotions, positive reframing, planning, humor, acceptance, turning to religion, self-blame. Based on previous research (Dolphin et al. 2015), we created two global coping scales: **adaptive coping** which included the items of acceptance, active coping, planning, positive reframing, emotional support and instrumental support, and **maladaptive coping** with the items of behavioral disengagement, denial, self-blame, self-distraction and venting. Cronbach alpha reliabilities of the scales were adequate: adaptive coping: $\alpha = .76$; maladaptive coping: $\alpha = .64$.

Employee satisfaction inventory (ESI) (Koustalios and Bagitas 1997). The employee satisfaction inventory is a 24 item inventory on 5 point Likert scale ranging from 1- strongly agree to 5- strongly disagree. Six subscales emerged: working conditions, supervisors, pay, the job itself,

Table 1 Differences between men and women on the study variables

	Women N ≈ 389		Men N ≈ 220		t
	M	SD	M	SD	
Community sense of coherence (1–7)	5.17	1.13	4.54	1.24	6.22***
Adaptive coping (1–4)	2.96	.55	2.79	.60	3.54***
Maladaptive coping (1–4)	1.96	.46	1.85	.47	2.78**
Openness to the job's social environment (1–5)	3.29	.91	3.71	.83	−5.68***
Level of religiosity (1–5)	4.29	.80	4.17	.85	1.70
Satisfaction with work (1–5)	3.66	.68	3.71	.68	−.83

**p < .01

***p < .001

the organization as a whole and promotion. The global ESI scale is derived from the mean score of all items. The psychometrics of the scale/s proved to be good, with adequate reliability (Koustalios and Bagitas 1997). Cronbach alpha for the global scale in the present study was α = .90.

Openness to the job's social environment questionnaire was formed especially for the present study. The questionnaire included 5 questions on a 5 point Likert scale with higher scores indicating more openness. The questionnaire assessed the level of social openness towards the job environment. Examples of questions were: Do you participate in secular workers' celebrations?; Do you speak with workers on issues that are not related to your job?; How important is it for you to have separation between men and women in the job environment? The global scale was computed as the mean score of all items. Cronbach alpha was α = .74.

Results

First, a preliminary analysis examined the frequencies of the different study variables. We found that the most frequently reported identity was Lithuanian (40.2%) followed by 'no significant identity' (23%), Mizrachi (15.3%), Hasidic (11.3%), Modern (7.2%) and Outsider (3.1%). Most of the other variables, [community SOC ($M = 4.95$ $SD = 1.21$); satisfaction from work ($M = 3.68$ $SD = .68$); adaptive coping ($M = 2.90$ $SD = .57$); level of religiosity ($M = 4.25$ $SD = .82$); and openness to the job's social environment ($M = 3.44$ $SD = .90$)] were on the higher end of the scales. The only variable that was reported as weak was maladaptive coping ($M = 1.92$ $SD = .47$).

To answer the first question, a t test for independent groups was calculated. Results are presented in Table 1.

The first hypothesis was partially confirmed. Indeed, women reported using a wider variety of coping strategies. It should be noted that they used both more adaptive and maladaptive coping. Contrary to our hypothesis, women reported higher community coherence compared to men. With regard to the variables for which we did not form specific hypotheses, men reported higher openness to the job's social environment, while no differences were observed on level of religiosity and satisfaction from work, where both women and men reported high levels of satisfaction and high levels of religiosity (above the mean score of the scale).

To examine the second question, we ran a one-way Anova and the results are presented in Table 2.

Results show that significant differences were observed between the main sectors of ultra-Orthodox society and the minor sectors, 'outsiders' and 'moderns', as well as those individuals who were not assigned a significant identity. While individuals from the main sectors (Lithuanian, Hassidic, Mizrachi) reported higher community SOC and stronger religiosity, individuals from the minor sectors (Moderns and Outsiders), as well as those with no significant identity, reported greater openness to the job's social environment. Thus, for the next steps of the study, and in order to allow more generality, we grouped the individuals into three main sectors—the main sector which included Lithuanian, Hassidic and Mizrachi, the minor sectors—Moderns and Outsiders, and 'no significant identity'.

The third question related to differences between groups that worked in different environments—one group worked mostly with secular people, one with both secular and ultra-Orthodox and the last group worked within the ultra-Orthodox enclave and only with other ultra-Orthodox people. A one way Anova was run and findings are presented in Table 3.

Results show no significant differences between these three groups on all variables except openness to the job's social environment where those who work within the enclave reported being the least open to a secular environment and norms.

The last question was assessed by linear regression analysis. As a dependent variable we entered satisfaction with work. The different steps introduced the different independent explanatory variables. The first step included the different socio-demographic variables of the study (socio-economic status, degree, gender, number of children, age, work with and identity). In the second step, we entered the main

Table 2 Differences between the different sectors on the study variables

	No significant identity N ≈ 127		Lithuanian N ≈ 222		Hasidic N ≈ 63		Mizrachi N ≈ 85		Modern N ≈ 40		Outsider N ≈ 16		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Community Sense of Coherence (1–7)	4.19	1.26	5.36	1.01	5.31	1.14	5.24	.96	3.97	1.12	4.06	.80	29.56***
Adaptive Coping (1–4)	2.79	.64	2.99	.54	2.84	.65	2.86	.54	2.79	.48	2.90	.54	2.34*
Maladaptive Coping (1–4)	1.96	.54	1.90	.41	1.82	.49	1.90	.47	2.01	.51	1.92	.46	.96
Openness to job's social environment (1–5)	3.73	.85	3.26	.88	3.40	.94	3.39	.90	3.94	.81	3.60	.81	7.40***
Level of religiosity (1–5)	4.03	.87	4.46	.70	4.45	.84	4.31	.77	3.45	.78	3.75	.77	16.11***
Satisfaction with work (1–5)	3.69	.65	3.76	.66	3.72	.66	3.61	.68	3.52	.71	3.45	.54	1.73

Significant differences between the groups are as follows:

Community Sense of Coherence: No Identity with Lithuanian, Hasidic, Mizrachi; Modern with Lithuanian, Hasidic, Mizrachi; Outsider with Lithuanian, Hasidic, Mizrachi

Adaptive Coping: No identity with Lithuanian

Openness to the job's social environment: No identity with Lithuanian; Modern with Lithuanian, Hasidic, Mizrachi

Level of religiosity: No identity with Lithuanian, Hasidic and Modern; Modern with Hasidic and Mizrachi; Outsider with Lithuanian and Hasidic

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001

Table 3 Differences between those who work in a secular environment, those who work in a mixed environment and those who work within the ultra-Orthodox enclave on the study variables

	Secular environment N ≈ 311		Mixed environment N ≈ 164		Ultra-Orthodox enclave N ≈ 139		F
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD	
Community SOC (1–7)	4.86	1.22	4.98	1.23	5.11	1.15	2.14
Adaptive Coping (1–4)	2.87	.60	2.93	.56	2.91	.52	.73
Maladaptive Coping (1–4)	1.90	.48	1.96	.47	1.90	.43	1.03
Openness to the job's social environment (1–5)	3.55	.91	3.36	.92	3.27	.85	5.59***
Level of religiosity (1–5)	4.17	.90	4.33	.72	4.32	.71	2.63
Satisfaction with work (1–5)	3.70	.69	3.62	.72	3.68	.61	.77

Openness to the job's social environment: Significant difference between secular environment and ultra-Orthodox enclave

***p < .001

variables of the study, namely, community SOC, adaptive and maladaptive coping, openness to the job's social environment and level of religiousness. The last step included the different interactions of gender with the main variables, and identities with the main variables. Since none of the interactions were significant, the last step was dropped from the table presented in the manuscript. These results mean that all the main variables explain job satisfaction similarly for both genders and for the variety of identities. Table 4 presents the regression analysis.

Examining the factors which explain job satisfaction shows that some of the different demographic characteristics as well as the main variables explained job satisfaction with 25% of the variance. The main demographic variables which explained job satisfactions were: economic status with 11.4%, i.e., the higher the economic status was, the more the individual was satisfied with his/her work; degree level (BA/MA) explained 1.7% of the variance in job satisfaction, i.e., individuals with their MAs were more satisfied than those with BAs; lastly, age explained 1.6% of the variance in job satisfaction and the older the individuals were, the less satisfied they were.

As for the main variables, all made a significant contribution to the explained variance except level of religiousness. Maladaptive and adaptive coping were the most meaningful variables with explanations of 4% and 3.4% of the variable in

Table 4 Regression analysis explaining job satisfaction by the different study variables

	R^2	B	SE	β	t
Step 1	.15				
Gender		.01	.07	.01	.11
Age		−.02	.01	−.17	−2.35*
No. of children		.01	.02	.03	.53
Degree (BA/MA)		.31	.09	.18	3.49**
Identities		.02	.04	.03	.56
Economic status		.28	.04	.37	7.28***
Work with (secular, mixed, ultra-orthodox)		.03	.04	.04	.88
Step 2	.10				
Gender		.04	.07	.03	.53
Age		−.01	.01	−.13	−1.88^
No. of children		−.01	.02	−.01	−.21
Degree (BA/MA)		.25	.09	.14	2.94**
Identities		−.02	.04	−.03	−.64
Economic status		.28	.04	.37	7.58***
Work with (secular, mixed, ultra- orthodox)		.04	.03	.05	1.15
Religiosity		.05	.04	.06	1.23
Community SOC		.09	.03	.16	2.65**
Adaptive coping		.19	.06	.16	3.30**
Maladaptive coping		−.33	.07	−.23	−4.62***
Openness to the job's social environment		.11	.04	.16	2.92**

*p < .05

**p < .01

***p < .001

^p = .06

job satisfaction. Community SOC and social openness to the job environment added 1% and 1.6% to the explained variance.

Discussion

This study was conducted among ultra-Orthodox individuals who had graduated college or university. Higher education studies have been becoming more and more common among this population. However, it is important to note that, in spite of the changes which this sector is experiencing, ultra-Orthodox families still rely on their traditional social and religious values. One of these remains the goal of having families with a large number of children, standing at an average of 4.4 compared to 1.4 in the secular Jewish population. Another important value is the study of Torah, considered the most important mission of an adult man. Therefore, women are recruited to ensure the fulfillment of this mission and see themselves as agents who will be compensated by God. Indeed, these women work hard both inside and outside their homes.

The aim of this study was to explore and evaluate how ultra-Orthodox individuals cope with going to work after graduating from a higher educational institution. We wanted to find out how they had integrated in the new social environment, the work environment. More specifically, we assessed what coping strategies and resources ultra-Orthodox men and women used when facing secular norms and values in their work environment, with a focus on differences between those who worked within the enclave compared to those who were working on the outside, and those who reported different kinds of identities. We also examined the factors that contribute to job satisfaction including socio-demographic characteristics, openness to the social environment, coping strategies and community sense of coherence.

Our first question investigated differences between men and women, and our hypotheses were partially confirmed. As for coping strategies, as noted in the literature (Brougham et al. 2009), in this study as well, women reported using more coping strategies than men. The interesting result here is that, contrary to our hypothesis that no differences would be found, men reported a weaker sense of community coherence. This could be explained by their exit from the religious environment of the yeshiva,[2] where men study Torah and Talmud (Jewish religious law) on a daily basis. Working

[2] Yeshiva is a Jewish institution that focuses on the study of traditional religious texts, primarily the Talmud and the Torah.

men are disconnected from this environment and return only for evening prayers. That does not leave much room or time for a sense of belonging to the community or developing community coherence. In addition, in contrast to women in ultra-Orthodox society, it is not considered legitimate for men to go out to work, as they are expected to study Bible all day every day. Thus, it seems that once they leave the yeshiva world, they feel less coherence about their environment. On the other hand, as a compensation, they seem to be more open to their job's social environment and thus, the job may partially become a social replacement for the yeshiva, where they had previously spent most of their time. Contrary to men, women still take care of their children when coming home from work. That also involves going to playgrounds with other mothers, and participating in other such activities. This enables them to retain their community meaningfulness, manageability and comprehensibility.

The second question dealt with differences among the different identities as observed in the different study variables. Results showed that some of the variables, namely, community SOC and religiosity were reported as higher among the main sectors of ultra-Orthodox society (Lithuanian, Hasidic, Mizrahi) compared to the minor sectors (Moderns, Outsiders, no significant identity). This finding is not surprising since the major identity groups are very proud of their community membership. Moreover, they attribute great meaning to their community and consider these communities their extended family. On the other hand, those of the minor identities feel themselves outsiders in ultra-Orthodox society or have not found a cohesive and coherent community to belong to. This may explain why they report lower community coherence. Having weaker community coherence and sense of belonging is also tied to weaker religiosity. This could be attributed to the fact that ultra-Orthodox society is in transition. Like other societies that experience tremendous change and transition, in ultra-Orthodox society as well, during such a transition, religiosity as well as community coherence becomes weaker, especially among pioneers, those who are first to make substantial changes, such as individuals who belong to the minor sectors within the ultra-Orthodox society. The changes, which are occurring in ultra-Orthodox society and the outward movement to work could bring a new spirit, and we might see more legitimacy for these minor sectors. If so, following these changes, the minor sectors may feel that their membership in ultra-Orthodox society is more meaningful and coherent. It will also be interesting to examine whether they will also report stronger religiosity as part of a strengthening community sense of coherence.

As a mirror image to these weaknesses, the minor sectors reported higher openness to the job's social environment. These individuals were apparently looking for an alternative social environment, since they did not find one in their religious environment. Thus, going out to work gave them a new opportunity to find a social environment to fulfil this need.

The third question asked about academic ultra-Orthodox workers in different environments: outside the ultra-Orthodox enclave, in a mixed environment and within the ultra-Orthodox enclave, and the effects of environment on the different study variables. The only difference which was observed was in the variable of social openness to the job environment, and differences were found between workers within the enclave and workers outside the enclave. It seems that those who are not willing to open up to societies other than the ultra-Orthodox have chosen to stay and work inside the enclave. This choice eliminates many dilemmas that workers outside the enclave face when encountering secular norms which constantly raise questions about religious behaviours.

Our last and main question focused on the factors which contribute to job satisfaction among ultra-Orthodox individuals who have graduated from a higher education institution and have earned an academic degree. First, we found that the different factors contribute similarly to our different groups, namely, men and women and those of different identities (major and minor sectors). As anticipated (Dolan et al. 2008), those with higher socio-economic status are also more satisfied in the present study. In addition, the higher the academic degree, the higher the satisfaction was with the job. Individuals with higher degrees seem to have been able to fulfil their ambitions and take advantage of their abilities as a result of their studies and therefore they reported more satisfaction.

The importance of all main variables, coping resources and strategies was greatly noted in the analysis. Higher community SOC, use of more adaptive coping and less maladaptive coping, as well as higher openness to the job's social environment all contributed to more job satisfaction. The results resemble those of other studies, which have indicated that higher community SOC and use of more adaptive and less maladaptive coping strategies are related to better subjective well-being (e.g. Braun-Lewensohn 2014; Braun-Lewensohn and Bar 2017). It appears that in this special group of ultra-Orthodox who choose to work after studying in colleges and universities, coping strategies and resources are also important contributors to satisfaction and well-being.

Regarding community SOC, individuals who are strongly connected to their community and feel their community is supportive of their choice to go out to work feel more satisfaction with work. When individuals feel that their community is coherent in its demands and they know how to manage these demands as result of their going out to work, they may also be more satisfied with their jobs. Lastly, the significance which community provides to its members also contributes to the meaningfulness of their jobs, and therefore their job satisfaction is high. A strong sense of community coherence could be a result of the community attitudes towards those who go out to work, meaning that the higher

the legitimacy from the most conservative groups to go out to work, the stronger the sense of community coherence. Thus, we expect that a conservative model will be developed in which ultra-Orthodox individuals will open up to the workforce while observing their religious and social values (Kalagy and Braun-Lewensohn 2017; Kalagy 2016).

The last important variable which contributed to job satisfaction was openness to the job's social environment. Perhaps those who come from the very closed ultra-Orthodox environment but have succeeded in opening themselves up to the job's social environment, have opened themselves to more opportunities which the job has to offer, rather than only doing their work. These opportunities and activities have led them to more satisfaction, as satisfaction develops in different dimensions and not only from work tasks.

On the basis of the results of this study, in future studies it would be interesting to focus on the differences between genders in ultra-Orthodox society in relation to sense of community coherence and adapting to the workforce within and outside the ultra-Orthodox enclave. From this study women seem to be more connected to their communities and have a strong ultra-Orthodox identity in spite of their integration into the workforce outside the enclave at higher numbers than men. Similar findings have been found among Arab women in Israel, who also report higher coherence and more religiosity (Kalagy & Layush, In progress). Such differences are significant for policymakers, since the workforce and various employers will have to prepare to absorb ultra-Orthodox and other conservative women according to their needs. These differences between men and women could imply different levels of preparation as far as space and working conditions are concerned.

Study Limitations

Information about their experiences was provided only by the workers themselves, and therefore, the collected data is subjective. In addition, despite the large sample, which includes diversity of genders and identities, it should be noted that it is not a representative sample of ultra-Orthodox society as a whole. In spite of these limitations, the importance of this study is in its being a field research in a context that has not yet been studied in this society.

To conclude, ultra-Orthodox society is in transition and more and more individuals are choosing to gain an academic education leading to integration into an unsegregated work environment. This study has explored how individuals who have started to work outside the ultra-Orthodox enclave encounter the new social environment. We found that individuals from the main ultra-Orthodox sectors reported higher community SOC and stronger religiosity, while those from the minor sectors reported greater openness to the job's social environment. Moreover, openness to the job's secular social environment was reported as higher among those who work outside the ultra-Orthodox enclave. Like studies from around the world in different contexts, our results showed that maladaptive and adaptive coping as well as community SOC were meaningful variables in explaining of job satisfaction. Practical implications of such results could be the design of programs within the higher education system enhancing community SOC and providing meaningful coping strategies for ultra-Orthodox who study in institutions of higher education.

Future research should more deeply examine the differences and similarities among the different sectors of ultra-Orthodox society. Further, employers should also be studied in order to clarify their perception of the ultra-Orthodox workers and their integration into different job environments.

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