Longitudinal study of change and stability in future orientation toward higher education, perceived parenting, and self-esteem in adolescence and emerging adulthood

**Abstract**

This study examined stability and change in adolescents’ future orientation toward higher education, perceived parenting, and self-esteem during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood. The stability of these variables were tested separately for female and male participants. Data were collected at three time points across a 5-year period from 279 female (73.20%) and 102 male participants aged from 15 to 20 years old, recruited from three Palestinian high schools in Israel. The questionnaire administered had three parts,focusing on future orientation toward higher education, perceived parenting, and self-esteem. The results indicated a decline with age in all the variables examined, except in perceived mother parenting, and this decline occurred immediately upon graduation from high school and at entry into emerging adulthood. It was found that adolescents recalculate their future paths, but this did not signify an end to the role of future orientation role in individual development.

 **Introduction**

Both theoretical discussion and empirical results have found future orientation to be important factors in adolescents’ development. It has been argued (Bandura, 2001; Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Zimbardo, & Boyd, 1999) that future orientation is a bridge to adulthood and regulates present behavior; further, its influence on present behavior increases during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood (Seginer, 2009). Empirical studies have shown that higher future orientation scores are associated with fewer violent behaviors, better academic achievement (Gollwitzer, Ottingen, Kirby, Duckworth, & Mayer, 2011), better planning ability, and a stronger ability to overcome obstacles (Peetsma & Van der Veen, 2011).

However, the unspoken premise of stability and continuity in future orientation from adolescence to emerging adulthood underpins the work in this area (Seginer, 2009). However, to the best of our knowledge, no longitudinal study has examined stability in future orientation. This study was conducted to close this gap by examining the stability of future orientation in the higher education domain from late adolescence to emerging adulthood to determine whether adolescents’ future plans continue to serve them as a road map as they enter adulthood, when they face crucial decisions regarding higher education (Arnett, 2015).

In addition to examining the stability of future orientation in the higher education domain, we also investigated perceived parenting and self-esteem. Previous studies (Seginer, 2009; Seginer & Mahajna, 2018; Mahajna, 2017a) have shown that these variables are linked to components of future orientation, indicating that they might affect the development of future orientation. A longitudinal study was conducted with three time points. Data were collected across a 5-year period, and the subjects’ ages ranged from 15 to 20 years during this time.

**Future orientation**

Future orientation refers to individuals’ subjective image of their near and far future (Markus & Nurius, 1986; Peetma & van der Veen, 2011; Seginer, 2009). Individuals commit to goals and purposes that guide their developmental path and regulate future behaviors (Nurmi, 2004; Nuttin & Lens, 1985; Seginer, 2009). Across time and culture, adolescents describe their personal future with reference to the domains of education, work and career, and marriage and family (Seginer, 2009; Seginer & Mahajna, 2018).

The assessment of future orientation’s importance in adolescence draws on two considerations. First, adolescence is seen as a bridge to adulthood (Nuttin & Lens, 1985) and is the period when the influence of future orientation on behavior intensifies (Seginer, 2009). Second, future orientation toward education is particularly relevant to the path toward productive adulthood (Gollwitzer et al., 2011). It has been found that adolescents with more of a future orientation toward higher education are more motivated to involve themselves in school life (Simons, Vansteenkiste, & Lens, 2004), achieve higher grades (Oyserman, Bybee, & Terry, 2006; Seginer, 2009), and better understand the relationship between current behavior and future consequences (Blustein et al., 2010).

**Three components of future orientation**

Future orientation consists of motivational, cognitive, and behavioral components (Seginer, Vermulst, & Shoyer, 2004; Seginer, 2009). Motivation prompts the construction of subjective cognitive representations of the future (Bandura, 2001)and isindicated by the variables of value, pertaining to the importance of the given life domain; expectance*,* describing the appraisal of the attainability of hope in the given domain; and internal control, which is related to subjective belief in the individual’s power to realize those hopes (Seginer, Vermulst, & Shoyer, 2004; Seginer, 2009).

Thecognitivedomain relates to the tendency to express hopes and fears of the future and relates to how often individuals think about each (Moller & Roberts, 2017; Trommsdorff, 1983). The frequency of hopes and fears indicates the salience of the life domain.Hopes and fears for the future inducethe behavioral components of explorationandcommitment, identify how individuals translate their future thinking into action or the extent to which they seek to explore future options and commit themselves to pursuing one or another particular option.

**Context of the development of future orientation**

Taking an ecology of human development approach (Bronfenbrenner, 1979), we test how future orientation, perceived parenting, and self-esteem change over time. The inclusion of parenting and self-esteem as variables draws on previous work showing that they have a positive relation to future orientation and are considered to be antecedents of future-oriented thinking (Seginer, 2009; Seginer & Mahajna, 2018; Mahajna, 2017b).

**Development of perceived parenting and its relationship to future orientation**

Three prominent results have been consistently reported in relation to perceived parenting. First, much of the work has focused on three factors: acceptance vs. rejection, autonomy granting vs. psychological control, and behavioral control vs. lack of control (Barber, Stolz, & Olsen, 2005). It has been found (Seginer, 2009; Seginer, Vermulst, & Shoyer, 2004) that perceived parenting only relates to future orientation in terms of acceptance and autonomy granting.

Second, adolescents’ perceived parenting has shown a stronger relationship with adolescents’ own development than to the aspects of parenting reported by the adolescents’ parents themselves (Cheung, Pomerantz, Wang, & Qu, 2016; Collins & Laursen 2004; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Daddis, 2004). Third, previous studies have investigated how girls and boys experience parenting. For example, adolescents, regardless of gender, are reported to consider their mothers the primary parenting figure, regardless of gender, fathers are perceived to be more involved with their sons than their daughters, regardless of age, and mothers are reported have a closer relationship than fathers with both daughters and sons (Branje, Laursen, & Collins, 2013; Van Lissa, Keizer, Van Lier, Meeus, & Branje, 2019).

Further mothers’ acceptance has been found to play a main role in how their adolescent children perceived parenting (Van Lissa et al., 2019). Girls receive greater acceptance from their mothers and greater behavioral control from both parents than boys do (Keizer, Helmerhorst, & van Rijn-van Gelderen, 2019; Van Lissa et al., 2019). Previous studies have presented an inconsistent picture as regards autonomy. Some studies have indicated that both parents grant more autonomy to their sons than to their daughters (Eagleton, Williams, & Merten, 2016), while others have found the opposite (Wray-Lake, Crouter, & McHale, 2010), and others have reported no large differences (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Daddis, 2004). Daddis (2011) found that boys desire more autonomy in early adolescence, and girls desire more autonomy in late adolescence. Overall, autonomy increases with the adolescent’s age, the parents’ schedules for granting autonomy, and the adolescent’s schedule for autonomy requests, all of which vary over time and across domains (Eagleton, Williams, & Merten, 2016).

The importance of perceived parenting in the context of the development of future orientation in adolescents reflected parents’ relevance to development in both the present context and in the accumulative past history (Masten, 2015). Seginer and Mahajna (2018) reported that higher perception of parental acceptance and granting of autonomy by adolescents facilitates the task of weighing prospective paths and dealing with the inherently uncertain future.

**Development of adolescent self-esteem and its relationship to future orientation**

Self-esteem relates to the extent to which a person thinks of him- or herself in a positive way (Harter, 2012; Orth, 2018; Rosenberg, 1965). In general, self-esteem is moderately stable across time and contexts, but it is subject to change to a certain extent, especially during developmental transitions (Hutteman, Nestler, Wagner, Egloff, & Back, 2015). In a meta-analysis, Orth, Erol, and Luciano (2018) showed that self-esteem increases in early and middle childhood, remains stable in adolescence, and again rises in adulthood. However, other studies have found contradictory results. Wagner, Ludtke, and Trautwein (2016) found that self-esteem is stable during the college period, but Shim, Ryan, and Cassady (2012) reported a significant decrease in self-esteem during the first year of college.

The results for self-esteem in relation to gender differences are inconsistent. Some studies have found that across ethnicities (Bleidorn et al., 2016) and age groups, boys tend to report higher self-esteem than girls (Mageea & Upenieksb, 2019; Orth, Erol, & Luciano 2018; Wagner, Ludtke, & Trautwein, 2016). However, other studies have shown differences in favor of girls (Chung, Hutteman, van Aken, & Denissen. 2017; Wang, Wu, Song, Wu, & Cai, 2018), and still others have found that gender differences in self-esteem are not significant (Orth, Maes, & Schmitt, 2015).

The importance of self-esteem to future orientation depends on its role as a linking factor between the parental environment and future orientation. In adolescence, the direct impact of parental behavior decreases and instead produces effects after being processed by the self (Harter, 2012). According to Seginer and Mahajna (2018), the self interprets and gives meaning to the messages transmitted through significant relationships and helps to match an individuals’ view of the present with their future orientation.

***The developmental setting of Palestinian adolescents in Israel***

Palestinian citizens in Israel are a little over 21% of the population (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019), and the majority reside in all-Arab towns and villages. The life of this group is marked by three distinct characteristics. First, there has been continuous political tension between the government of Israel on the one hand and the Palestinian authority and the governments of neighboring Arab nations on the other. Consequently, Palestinians in Israel experience oppression and conflict between their dual identities as Israelis and Palestinians. Second, there are significant gaps between Palestinian citizens and the Jewish majority in almost all aspects of life: economic development, housing, infrastructure, and education (Seginer & Mahajna, 2018). Israeli Palestinians are often poor, with about of 45% of families living below the poverty line (National Insurance Institute, 2019). Third, Palestinian society in Israel is a young community, with only about 4% of the population above the age of 65 years and about 35% below 14 years (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018). A particularly salient statistic is that the 18- to 35-year-old age group accounts for approximately 28% of the Palestinian population in Israel, and approximately half of these are young adults aged 18–24 years (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2018).

***Relevance of future orientation to the higher education domain, perceived parenting, and self-esteem to the Palestinian community in Israel***

Two aspects in particular underlie the relevance of the higher education domain for the Palestinian community in Israel. First, Palestinian parents and adolescents, like other groups in industrial societies, understand education as an important means of obtaining a high-status occupation. It also education serves two ancillary functions, replacing the capital inherent in the land that was expropriated by the State of Israel and facilitating integration into Israeli society (Arar & Mostafa, 2009; Khattab, 2005). Second, the data that we have been collecting for close to three decades show a consistent growth in the percentage of students in higher educational institutions are female, reaching 70% female in the most recent data (Israel Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019). For Israeli Palestinians, higher education facilitates personal development and grants empowerment (Mahajna, 2017a).

In the Palestinian community in Israel, perceived parenting depends on the collectivism of that community, expressed by individuals’ dependence on their families (Haj-Yahia & Lavee, 2017; Sabbah-Karkaby & Stier, 2017; Seginer & Mahajna, 2018). Studies that have examined boys’ and girls’ perceived parenting have indicated similarities between them; both groups report relatively supportive parenting, expressing similar levels of perceived acceptance and perceived autonomy (Mahajna, 2017a). Similarly, Palestinian female and male adolescents’ reliance on self-esteem in relation to higher education has been underscored. These studies have shown that both groups use their own self-esteem to bring them to be able to seek higher education (Seginer, 2009).

**This study**

This study examines whether adolescents’ future orientation toward higher education, perceived mother and father parenting, and self-esteem are stable from adolescence through to emerging adulthood.

Stability is differentiated into two types: absolute stabilityrefers to differences from one measurement point to another, andrelative stabilitydescribe a relative position within a reference group over time (Alder & Scher; Collins & Laursen, 2004).

No longitudinal study has yet examined the stability of future orientation, which makes this study particularly important, but this same fact will limit our ability to us to postulate hypotheses related to future orientation toward higher education. However, studies have shown that acceptance and autonomy in perceived parenting vary over time (Eagleton, Williams, & Merten, 2016). Some studies have shown that both parents grant more acceptance and autonomy to their sons than to their daughters (Eagleton, Williams, & Merten, 2016), while others have shown the opposite (Wray-Lake, Crouter, & McHale, 2010) or no great difference between treatment of male and female offspring (Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Daddis, 2004).

In general, self-esteem is moderately stable across times and contexts (Hutteman, Nestler, Wagner, Egloff & Back, 2015; Orth, Erol & Luciano, 2018), but inconsistent results have been found for gender differences. Bleidorn et al. (2016) and Mageea and Upenieksb (2019) indicated that boys tend to report higher self-esteem than girls, while Aken and Denissen (2017) and Wang et al. (2018) observed that girls reported higher self-esteem than boys, and Orth, Maes, and Schmitt (2015) found no differences between them.

With reference to the two types of stability, the aforementioned results, and the socio-cultural reality of male and female Palestinian adolescents in Israel, we examined the stability of the above variables. Two hypotheses were postulated in relation, regarding to absolute stability, relative stability, and gender differences with respect to future orientation toward higher education, perceived mother and father parenting, and self-esteem:

*Hypothesis 1*. The first hypothesis is divided into two sub-hypotheses. (a) The future orientation to higher education is stable over time (absolute stability). Females score higher than males on future orientation toward higher education. (b) Adolescents who express higher levels of motivational, cognitive, and behavioral components of future orientation toward higher education at onset of study maintain higher levels over time with respect to their peers (relative stability). Both females and males exhibit the same levels of relative stability in future orientation toward higher education.

 *Hypothesis 2*. The second hypothesis is divided two sub-hypotheses. (a) Values for perceived mother and father parenting and self-esteem are maintained over time (absolute stability) in both female and male adolescents. (b) Adolescents who express higher levels for these variables relative to other adolescents in the sample continue to higher greater levels over time with respect to their peers (relative stability). Both female and male adolescents exhibit the same levels of relative stability in perceived mother and father parenting and self-esteem.

In addition to the two hypotheses, we analyzed the correlations across the three time points and at each time point between the components of future orientation, perceived mother and father parenting, and self-esteem.

**Method**

**Participants**

Data were collected from 381 young women (73.20%) and young men between 15 and 20 years old who participated in all three waves of the study. This group was 65.57% of the 581 who participated in the first wave and 81.92% of the 476 who participated in the second wave. There was no significant difference in the male and female percentages among the three waves; 71.40% of participants were female and 28.60% were male in the first wave, and in the second wave, 72.36% were female and 27.64% were male.

The participants were drawn from three randomly selected Palestinian high schools in Israel that represent the main Palestinian population concentrations in Israel. Two schools were located in the north of the country, and the third was in the geographical center. The relative percentages of participants by school were similar among all three waves: participation was 34.3, 32.8, and 31.5% from the first school, 35.1, 30.3, and 34.8% for the second school, and 30.6, 36.9, and 33.7% for the third school for the first, second, and third waves, respectively. The majority of the participants’ mothers (56.80%) and fathers (55.80%) had completed high school, 25.10% of mothers and 21.80% of fathers had not completed high school, and 18.10% of mothers and 22.40% of fathers had completed education higher than high school. The majority of mothers (67.80%) were homemakers, and the majority of fathers (61.10%) were unskilled workers.

**Instruments**

Three questionnaires were administered,one addressing each of future orientation toward higher education, perceived parenting, and self-esteem. All measures adopted have been used in previous studies and showed a high level of internal reliability.

***Future orientation toward higher education.***. This questionnaire, drawn from Seginer (2009), assesses three components of future orientation toward higher education.All items are assessed on a 5-point Likert-type scale anchored at 1, not at all, to 5, very much. The motivational component is indicated by three scales:value, which assesses one’s sense of the importance of issues related to higher education, expectancy, which investigates one’s subjective assessment of the chances one’s plans will be actualized, and control, which examines the attribution of success in fulfilling one’s hopes to oneself versus external influences. The cognitive component pertains to hopes and fears regarding one’s success in one’s pursuit of higher education. The behavioral component describes the exploration of options related to higher education, and commitment takes account of the extent to which adolescents have chosen or intend to choose one or another academic area. In the present study, we used only these three components. Each component was calculated as the average of its empirical indicators. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients were 074, 0.74, and 0.79 for the motivational component, 0.85, 0.85, and 0.86 for the cognitive component,and 0.76, 0.80, and 0.87 for the behavioral component in waves 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

***Perceived mother and father parenting****.* This scale (Epstein, 1983; Seginer, 1998) measures perceived parental acceptance and autonomy granting. Perceived acceptance indicates the degree to which subjects perceive their parents as accepting them. Perceived autonomy granting indicates the degree to which subjects perceive their parents as encouraging their independence. In this study, acceptance and autonomy were combined into a single variable and perceived mother and father parenting were assessed separately. The Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for perceived mother parenting were 0.83, 0.85, and 0.86, and for perceived father parenting they were 0.92, 0.93, and 0.93 for waves 1, 2, and 3, respectively.

***Self-esteem.***This scale (Rosenberg, 1965) is a widely used 10-item scale that assesses global self-esteem by measuring both the positive (e.g., “I take a positive attitude toward myself”) and negative (e.g., “At times I think I am no good at all”) feelings the subjects express about themselves. In the present study, the Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for waves 1, 2, and 3 were 0.75, 0.76, and 0.81, respectively.

**Procedure**

After permission was obtained from the Chief Scientist of the Ministry of Education, data were collected from the three schools. The researcher contacted the schools and informed their management teams about the study. The schools took responsibility for obtaining informed consent from the students' parents. The participants were asked to complete the study questionnaires at three time points: Time 1 (T1), at the beginning of grade 10 (age = 15–16); Time 2 (T2), at the beginning of grade 12 (age = 17–18); and Time 3 (T3), 1 year after finishing high school (age = 19–20).

Data were collected during the first term of each school year. The researcher presented the questionnaire and supervised its administration, which lasted around an hour for each wave and took place in class at T1 and T2. A code was assigned to each student to preserve the anonymity of the responses while enabling questionnaire matching among the three time points. At T3, the questionnaires were administered individually at the respondents’ homes.

**Attrition**

The retention rate was good, with 81.92% of the baseline sample (*n*= 581) participating at T2 (*n*= 476) and 65.57% (*n* = 381) participating at T3.Most of the missing data in this study were due to participants’ absence at the day when a measurement was taken rather than attrition from the study. The attrition rate did not differ among the different schools.

To test whether the noncompleters differed from those who completed follow-up questionnaires, independent samples t-tests and chi-square analyses were performed across all dependent measures and demographic variables at T1. The results indicate that those who completed the instrument at T1 but do not at T2 or T3 did not differ significantly from those whose data were collected at all time points in terms of any of the variables.

**Data analyses**

Data analysis included two parts preliminary and main analyses. Two preliminary analyses were conducted. To indicate the univariate normality of the data, the skewness and kurtosis values of the variables were examined. The values for the skewness indices were between -1.69 and 0.21, and those for the kurtosis indices were between -0.73 and 2.47. These values fell within the range recommended by Mayers (2013) and Kline (2010) for acceptable normal univariate distribution. Second, initial differences between the different schools were examined with regard to the dependent variables. This was done to ensure that the values obtained for each school could be combined with the others without masking potential differences due to environmental conditions. No significant differences were found [Wilks’s λ = .803, F (3, 45) = 3.68, p = .02].

The hypothesis testing included two analyses. First, to analyze absolute stability we carried out repeated-measures analysis of variance (RANOVA) with one between-subjects factor and one within-subjects factor. RANOVA is an appropriate statistical tool for evaluating absolute stability in the comparison of changes in dependent variables across multiple data points (Caspi & Roberts, [1999](https://ezproxy.beitberl.ac.il:2208/doi/full/10.1080/02678373.2015.1126870); Mäkikangas, Kinnunen, Feldt, & Schaufeli, 2016). RANOVA was supplemented by calculation of effect sizes (partial **η2**) to determine the magnitude of change. This analysis was conducted twice. First, a two-way RANOVA was performed with gender as the between-subjects factor and time as the within-subjects factor. Second, RANOVA was conducted separately for female and male participants to examine the mean-level differences in the dependent variables among the three waves.

Second, the Pearson correlation coefficients for the three waves were assessed to measure the relative stabilityof the variables, following a common statistical procedure used for this purpose (Alder & Scher, 1994; Collins & Laursen, 2004; Holsen, Kraft, & Vitterso, 2000; Loeber et al., 2000).The differences between the correlation coefficients for the three waves were computed together for the total sample and separately for female and male respondents. In addition, the correlation coefficients for future orientation components, perceived mother and father parenting, and self-esteem were computed for the three waves.

**Results**

Six 2×3 RANOVAs were conducted to examine changes in the dependent variables. This analysis was conducted with gender as the between-subjects factor and time as the within-subjects factor. The results of Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was violated, so the degrees of freedom were corrected using Greenhouse–Geisser correction. For all analyses, the effect sizes (partial **η2**) for the mean differences were determined. At the multivariate level, the analysis revealed significant effects for time (Wilks’s λ = .62, *F*(13, 255) = 11.91, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .38) and gender (Wilks’s λ = .88, *F*(7, 261) = 4.65, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .11). However, no significant effect was found for the interaction between time and gender (Wilks’s λ = .95, *F*(13, 255) = .88, *p* > .05, partial **η2** = .04). Second, the RANOVA was conducted separately for female and male participants, with time as the repeated factor.

***Hypothesis 1a.*** At the multivariate level, the results revealed significant effects of time and gender (Table 1). Subsequent univariate analysis indicated a significant difference in the motivational [*F*(1.75, 468.05) = 19.24, *p* < .01, partial **η2** = .07)], cognitive [*F*(1.87, 500.33) = 15.89, *p* < .01, partial **η2** = .06)], and behavioral [*F*(1.76, 471.82) = 9.36, *p* < .01, partial **η2**= .04)] components. Female subjects scored significantly higher than males at all the three time points in the cognitive component [*F*(1, 267) = 10.28, *p* < .05, partial **η2** = .04)] but not in the motivational component [*F*(1, 267) = .08, *p* > .05, partial **η2** = .000)], or on the behavioral component [*F*(1, 267) = 3.05, *p* > .05, partial **η2** = .000)].

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Table 1

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Analysis revealed a significant time effect for female participants (Table 2) (Wilks’s λ = .48, *F*(13, 199) = 16.37, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .52). Subsequent RANOVA, adjusted using the Greenhouse–Geisser correction, indicated that all three components, motivational [*F*(1.73, 366.38) = 33.45, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .14)], cognitive [*F*(1.87, 395.57) = 17.16, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .07)], and behavioral [*F*(1.71, 361.69) = 8.32, *p* < .01, partial **η2** = .04) differed significantly among the three waves.

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Table 2

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As shown in Table 3, post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that female participants presented a steep decline for all components that was confined to the period between T2 and T3. Male participants showed a significant effect of time [Wilks’s λ = .48, *F*(13, 44 )= 3.62, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .51]. Subsequent analysis with RANOVA and Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was not violated. This analysis indicated that only the motivational [*F*(2,112) = 4.28, *p* < .05, partial **η2** = .07)] and cognitive [*F*(2,112 ) = 9.32, *p* < .01, partial **η2** = .14)] components differed significantly between the three time points. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction indicated changes in these values among the male participants also only occurred between T2 and T3.

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Table 3

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***Hypothesis 1b.*** The Pearson correlation coefficients between the components of future orientation at the three measurement times for female and male participants showed relative stability only between T1 and T2 (Table 4). As seen in Table 4, correlations were not significant between T1 and T3 or between T2 and T3. However, a comparison of relative stability between T1 and T2 in the components of future orientation yielded statistically different correlations between female and male participants. The correlations between T1 and T2 for male participants’ motivational component (z = 1.52, p = .006) and their cognitive component (z = 3.48, p = .000) tended to be significantly higher than those of the female participants. With regard to the behavioral component, the correlations between T1 and T2 were significant only among the female participants.

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Table 1

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***Hypothesis 2a.*** At the multivariate level, the results showed significant effects for time and gender (Table 5). Subsequent univariate analysis revealed significant differences in perceived father parenting [*F*(1.70, 456.02) = 14.85, *p* < .01, partial **η2** = .05)] and in self-esteem [*F*(1.83, 490.08) = 38.40, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .13)] but not in perceived mother parenting [*F*(1.00, 267) = .15, *p* > .05, partial **η2** = .001)]. It was found that female scored higher than male respondents for self-esteem [*F*(1, 267) = 9.90, *p* < .05, partial **η2** = .04)] for all three waves but not for the perceived mother [*F*(1, 267) = 3.34, *p* > .05, partial **η2** = .001) or father [*F*(1, 267) = .26, *p* > .05, partial **η2** = .000)] parenting.

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Table 5

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Analysis revealed (Table 6) significant time effects among female participants [Wilks’s λ = .48, *F*(13, 199) = 16.37, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .52]. Subsequent RANOVA with a Greenhouse–Geisser correction indicated that perceived father parenting [*F*(1.65, 348.00) = 21.24, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .09)] and self-esteem [*F*(1.74, 367.58) = 67.11, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .24)] differed significantly between the waves. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction showed that female participants experienced a decline between T2 and T3.

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Table 6

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There was also a significant time effect found among male participants (Table 7) [Wilks’s λ = .48, *F*(13, 44) = 3.62, *p* < .001, partial **η2** = .51]. Subsequent RANOVA with Mauchly’s test indicated that the assumption of sphericity was not violated. Only self-esteem[*F*(2,112) = 7.50, *p* < .01, partial **η2** = .12)], differed significantly between the three time points. Post hoc tests using the Bonferroni correction revealed that changes occurred only between T2 and T3 also among males.

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Table 7

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***Hypothesis 2b.*** Pearson correlation showed relative stability only between T1 and T2 for perceived mother and father parenting and for self-esteem. As reported in Table 8, the correlations between T1 and T3 and between T2 and T3 were non-significant. Moreover, comparison of relative stability between T1 and T2 for perceived mother and father parenting and for self-esteem indicated that correlations for female and male participants did not statistically significantly differ.

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Table 8

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***Relationship between future orientation components and perceived mother parenting, perceived father parenting, and self esteem***

Two findings reported in Table 9 should be noted. First, perceived mother parenting had a significant relationship with the motivational and the behavioral components of future orientation but not with the cognitive component, only between T1 and T2. Second, only perceived father parenting and self-esteem at T3 had significant relationships to the components of future orientation at T3, for both male and female participants. However, a comparison of the correlations yielded no significant differences between male and female participants nor among the three time points.

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Table 9

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**Discussion**

This study examined whether changes occurs in the future orientation toward higher education, perceived parenting, and self-esteem during the transition from adolescence to emerging adulthood. Overall, the results only partially supported the hypotheses. In the order of the hypotheses, we discuss first the results pertaining to the components of future orientation and then those pertaining to perceived mother and father parenting and self-esteem.

*Future orientation toward the higher education domain*

There were four main findings in the results pertaining to future orientation toward higher education. First, the changes pertain to all three components, all changes indicate decline with age, and female participants scored higher than male participants in the cognitive component for all waves. Second, change occurred upon graduation from high school and entering emerging adulthood. Third, female participants experienced more change, as indicated by decline in all three components, than male ones did, whereas and male participants showed continuity in the behavioral component. Fourth, relative stability only appeared between T1 and T2.

These results only partially support Hypothesis 1, which pertains to the stability of the future orientation toward higher education by showing that future orientation tends to weaken with the passage of time. We do not think that this decline signifies the end of a role for future orientation in individual development. Instead, it signifies that adolescents tend to recalculate their routes toward the achievement of their future plans. Two results support this interpretation. First, the fact that correlations between future orientation components and perceived parenting and self-esteem increased with the passing of time, reaching its highest value at Time 3, indicated that future orientation continued to play a role in individual development. Second, the fact that there was no decline in the behavioral component in male participants boys indicates that males continue to seek a suitable path in higher education after completing high school.

Nevertheless, three additional explanations can be suggested. First, by emerging young adulthood, most young Palestinian adults have already decided whether to continue their education, and some even have already begun doing so (Seginer & Mahajna, 2018). Therefore, this domain is less relevant, and they are less preoccupied with plans relating to it. Instead, it is plausible that, upon entering adulthood, other domains (marriage/family or work/career) can come to take priority in their future orientation. The fact that the behavioral component was not found to decline among males supports this view. Male adolescents and emerging adults usually make decisions about their future later and continue to look for options even after entering adulthood (author, 2018). Similar results have been reported in other contexts. Ranta, Dietrich, and Salmela-Aro (2014) reported that as individuals progress toward adulthood, they disengage from their education goals to engage in work/family-related goals.

Second, declining stability can be attributed to the sociopolitical and economic context of the study population and simply to the task of normative transition (Arnett, 2015). Several studies have indicated this tendency. For example, Fonseca, Silva, Paixão, Crespo, and Relvas (2019) showed that under economic strain, work/career was found to be the most salient domain. Kolesovs (2013) reported that occupational and family-related hopes decrease among Latvian youth during macroeconomic hard times, and Ranta, Dietrich, and Salmela-Aro (2014) found that financial concerns were especially prominent among young adults in Finland. Mahajna (2017b) showed that among Palestinian young adults in Israel who perceived discrimination, career concerns were highly prominent.

Third, it was found that that the moment of least relative stability occurred between high school graduation and the beginning of the period of emerging adulthood period. This is not surprising when it is borne in mind that the beginning of emerging adulthood is characterized by instability, change, and readjustments to future plans, which could cause fluctuations in the subjects’ relative scores in relation to their future orientation (Arnett 2000; 2015).

***Gender differences in perceived mother and father parenting and self-esteem***

Here as well, four main results can be noted. First, no change was found over time in perceived mother parenting, but significant changes were found in perceived father parenting and self-esteem. Second, the larger changes occurred after graduation from high school, during emerging adulthood. Third, female participants scored higher than males on self-esteem at all three time points. Moreover, females witnessed a decline in perceived father parenting and in self-esteem, whereas, among males, only self-esteemdiffered significantly between for the three time points. Fourth, relative stability was noticed only between T1 and T2 in perceived parenting and in self-esteem for both female and male participants.

These results supported hypothesis 2 only partially, for the stability of perceived mother and father parenting. In general, these results are similar to shown in previous studies (Belsky, Jafee, Hsied, & Silva, 2001), which have indicated that the pattern of perceived parenting during the emerging adulthood period (absolute stability) was similar for female and male participants.Likewise, the ratings presented by females and males indicated that the *relative stability* of the perceived parenting was similar.

This means that mothers retain their pivotal role by maintaining their relationships with their sons and daughters. Female and male participants appeared to reinforce this relationship equally because both groups perceived that it could help them to realize their own future plans. Previous studies have shown similar patterns. For example, Parker, Lüdtke, Trautwein, and Roberts (2012) found that during the transition to their first year in college, young adults reported an increase sense of their mothers’ importance and greater satisfaction with their relationship with their mothers, while the satisfaction from their relationship with their fathers remained stable.

These results suggest that during late adolescence a change takes place in adolescents in relation to perceived father parenting, from a relationship of dependence to an autonomous relationship. Similar results were reported by Lindell and Campione-Barr (2017), who showed that when individual reach emerging adulthood, they are considerably more autonomous, and their familial relationships are more symmetrical. Tsai, Telzer, and Fuligni (2013) found more discontinuity than continuity in the dimensions of family relationship trajectories throughout adolescence and emerging adulthood. Collins and Laursen (2004) showed thatolder adolescents generally scored higher than younger ones on the frequency of actual achievement of autonomy.

In relation to self-esteem continuity, the current study supports previous longitudinal research showing that self-esteem declines with age among emerging adults (Chung et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2018). The transition to adulthood may challenge self-esteem, making emerging adults less able to maintain their self-esteem in this difficult period. We measured emerging adults’ self-esteem at only one time point, so our data may not describe the entire picture of this factor. Chung et al. (2014) provided a more precise picture by measuring changes in self-esteem over the course of 4 years between the beginning and end of college. They found that self-esteem decreases during the first year, after which an increase is visible, resulting in no change in self-esteem overall. Results by gender have been inconsistent: studies that have shown differences have generally shown higher values for girls (Chung et al., 2014; Wang et al., 2018)

**Limitations**. There are four limitations to this study that future research should take into consideration. First, although adolescents’ perceived parenting values match reports from independent observers more than parents’ reports do, limiting data collection to questionnaires distributed to adolescents may limit results to a certain degree (Collins & Laursen, 2004). The use of multi-informant questionnaires and different sources of information could produce a clearer picture of development of future orientation during the transition from adolescence to young adulthood.

Second, this study was conducted within the Palestinian community in Israel. Different results could be expected to emerge in other cultural contexts. Cross-cultural comparisons are needed \to provide a more comprehensive understanding of continuity in future orientation continuity. Third, we only measured the dependent variables at one time point in emerging adulthood, so our results might not give the whole picture of future orientation in emerging adults. Fourth, we examined only future orientation toward higher education. The results here suggest that the career/work and family/marriage domains should be examined as well.

Despite the aforementioned limitations, the present study, the first longitudinal work carried out to analyze changes in future orientation continuity from adolescence to early adulthood, has allowed us to obtain a more in-depth view on the three dimensions of future orientation, perceived parenting, and self-esteem continuity among emerging adults. First, future orientation is a dynamic concept, which changes with context and age. It does not lose its role, but there does appear to be a change in domain priorities. Thus, the work domain becomes the most important domain after the adolescent makes a decision regarding higher education. Second, the transition to emerging adulthood, as with other transitions, can be quite sharp. For some societies, like that of the Palestinian community in Israel, this period marks the transition from a school setting to a part of life with no defined educational or work setting. Third, future orientation, perceived parenting, and self-esteem are intertwined, and all three grow stronger and weaker together.