

# **Abstract**

## **1. Theoretical Background**

The Holocaust of the Jews of Europe that occurred during World War II is one of the most difficult and significant events in the history of the Jewish people. The reference to this significant event, which is perceived as a critical and formative event in the Israeli identity, has experienced many changes in the State of Israel since its establishment.

In the beginning, the reference to the Holocaust was as the embodiment of the Diaspora and the reference to the survivors was as representatives of the Diaspora, while the State of Israel in its beginning esteemed courage and power (Vaytz, 1990).

The main turning point in the attitude of the Israeli public to the topic of the Holocaust was the Eichmann Trial of 1960-1961. The Eichmann Trial transformed the Holocaust from the personal matter of the survivors to a national interest (Ofer, 1996) and it built the bridge between the Diaspora and the State of Israel. This was the stage in which people began to listen empathetically, and not in a contemptuous or humiliating manner, to the survivors (Feldman, 2000).

Another change in the attitude towards the Holocaust occurred in the period between the Six Days War (1967) and the *Yom Kippur* War (1973). The Holocaust became a formative event of the State of Israel and the Holocaust victims were associated with the IDF<sup>1</sup> victims who had established and defended the country (Guttman, 1989). Over the years, the interest in the topic of the Holocaust has steadily increased and it is employed in political discourse, according to some people excessively so, and every party in the political spectrum in Israel uses it to establish its arguments (Bar-On, 1994).

Despite the segmentation and politicization of the topic of the Holocaust, the interest of the public and primarily of young people in the topic is increasing. According to the change that occurred regarding the attitude towards the Holocaust in Israeli society, changes and developments are seen in the reference of the educational system in Israel to the topic (Shalem, 2002).

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<sup>1</sup> The IDF stands for the Israel Defense Forces, the Israeli military.

Until the beginning of the 1970s, Israeli students obtained most of their knowledge on the Holocaust (in the framework of the educational system) through the memorial ceremonies held in the schools, although these only became mandatory in 1958. The information on the Holocaust for Israeli students was disconnected from the context of general history and was primarily intended to create among the young people an emotional response and was not intended as a cognitive challenge. The Eichmann Trial also did not lead to the creation of a methodical curriculum on the topic of the Holocaust on the part of the Israeli Ministry of Education (Ofer, 1996).

In the 1970s the media expressed the strengthening of the awareness of the Holocaust but only in 1980 was it decided in law to base and strengthen the awareness of the Holocaust primarily from a Jewish and Zionist outlook. The amendment to the State Education Law (State Education Law, Amendment 1980) in essence established the mandatory obligation to teach the Holocaust in the educational system in all secondary schools and it constituted an important point in the process of the introduction of the teaching of the Holocaust into the educational system in Israel (Keren, 1985). The increase of academic research on the topic of the Holocaust contributed to the creation of appropriate learning materials and extended the knowledge in the field. After the enactment of this amendment, changes occurred in the teaching of the topic of the Holocaust in the schools. Today the topic of the Holocaust is taught in the high school very extensively and all students must be tested on it in the framework of the high school matriculation examinations in history (Keren, 2002).

In the framework of the events to commemorate forty years since the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, in 1983, the first groups of young people went to Poland on behalf of the *Kibbutz* movements. When they returned, it was clear that this is a profound and complex educational process of emotional power and in the *Kibbutz* movement the decision was made to continue it.

From 1988 groups of young people go to Poland in the frameworks of schools, youth movements, the IDF, etc. The Israeli Ministry of Education released special general circulars (Israeli Ministry of Education, 1991, 1999) devoted to the journeys of youths to Poland and to the Czech Republic. In these circulars, the Ministry describes its positions on the topic, its principles, and its requirements. In the

beginning it is written: “The educational system in Israel sees itself obligated to inculcate the utmost historical, moral, and educational meanings, both Jewish and human, of the Jewish fate” (Israeli Ministry of Education, 1999).

The journey is presented as the apex of the scholastic educational process that lasts over time and is performed in a number of stages:

1. The preparation of the students and those who accompany them for the journey.
2. The journey to Poland.
3. Educational processing of the emotional and learning experiences during and after the journey.
4. The involvement of the members of the community in experiences following the journey.

The Israeli Ministry of Education phrased and published in a circular (Israeli Ministry of Education, 1999) the goals of the journey, which can be summarized as follows:

1. Knowledge on the topic of European Jewry before the Holocaust, understanding of the extent and severity of the destruction, the struggle and lack of chances of the Jews, and the knowledge of Nazi ideology and the brutality of Nazi actions.
2. Strengthening of the relationship to the Jewish people and to the land of Israel.
3. Increase of the Jewish and Israeli identity of the students and the clarification of Jewish, Zionist, and humane thinking patterns.

The journey has a regular structure that includes (Israeli Ministry of Education, 1999):

1. Emotional, learning, and social preparation that the journey participants experience before they go, held in one of the Institutes for the Research of the Holocaust in Israel.
2. A regular staff that accompanies the participants and consists of the journey head, an accompanying teacher, an instructor from the Ministry of Education, Israeli security people, and a Holocaust survivor who tells his story to the participants.
3. ‘Compulsory sites’ that all the journey participants visit: Warsaw, Lublin, and Krakow and the Treblinka, Majdanek, Auschwitz, and Birkenau death camps.
4. The obligation to include participation in the ceremonies in the death camps and in the recommended sites.

The visit to Poland is intended for students in the eleventh and twelfth grades. The participation is voluntary, according to the person's desire and interest in the topic. The guidelines presented in the circular (Israeli Ministry of Education, 1999) state that the choice of the young people is according to their social suitability to the group, their ability to involve others in the experiences of the visit and to contribute to the educational framework from where they came, and their emotional ability to cope with the experiences of the journey.

The journey participants are adolescents who are characterized by the ability of moral and social thinking and cognitive flexibility and who have a mature perception of time and yet still have difficulty disconnecting from the personal and emotional element (Ziv, 1984). The question of the identity is found at the focus of their questions and the crystallization of the 'self' is the main topic on their agenda (Erikson, 1968). The powerful exposure to the topic of the Holocaust, as expressed in the journey, may sharpen questions and conflicts and influence the participants' Jewish Israeli identity, values, and principles.

The journey to Poland constitutes experiential learning with cognitive and emotional elements. Carver (1996) defined experiential learning as a process of four pedagogical principles: (1) *authenticity*: relevance to the student, (2) *active learning* – requiring the student himself to be active, (3) *experience of learning* – instruction to process the experiences on the emotional and cognitive level, and (4) *means for experiences connected to the future* – the reference is to the future life. In the journey to Poland all four of these principles are found. The students bring the names and stories of those who are close to them, they are found with a Holocaust survivor who presents his testimony, they have support conversations and process emotions before, during, and after the journey, and these are supposed to help them in the future.

The journey to Poland has many opponents and they can be divided into four groups:

1. People who object because they do not want to help the economy of Poland (Aviner, 2004).
2. People who object to the reference to the Holocaust in the Israeli – Jewish dimension as opposed to the universal dimension (Feldman, 1998, 2001).
3. People who object to the process and educational product entailed by the journey (Balberg-Rotenshtreich, 2004).

4. People who have religious objection based on the *Halacha* (Jewish religious law) (Aviner, 2004; Gottel, 1993).

In the 1990s there was a considerable increase in the reference to the topic of the Holocaust in Europe. In many countries of Europe the nucleus of activity on the topic of the Holocaust was created and this was extended primarily in the educational dimension (Bad-Kaplan, Imber, and Lapid, 2003). In addition, 1998 a ‘task force’ was established at the initiative of the Swedish Prime Minister Göran Persson for international cooperation for the education and research of the Holocaust (Stockholm, 2000). The goals of all these activities are to promote the adoption of democratic values and a fair attitude towards people who are different, and in parallel, to identify with the victims of the Holocaust and with the Jewish people and primarily to prevent the recurrence of genocide in the world.

A research study conducted in Israel in 1997 (Rommi and Lev, 2003) examined the knowledge, emotions, and attitudes towards the Holocaust and Jewish identity among 94 young people a short time after they returned from the journey. It was found that there was a significant rise in the level of knowledge of the journey participants in comparison to a control group that consisted of 53 young people from the same schools who did not go on the journey. In regards to Jewish identity, it was not found that the journey had an impact. Immediately upon the participants’ return from the journey, they felt very strong feelings of pain, shock, and anger, emotions that lessened after the journey.

## **2. The Research Objective**

The research objective is to examine whether the journey to Poland influences the students who participated in it and the population who went on the journey as students seven and more years ago in the following areas: the participants’ emotional involvement and knowledge regarding the Holocaust, their relationship to the land of Israel and the people of Israel, their Jewish Israel identity, and the lessons they draw from the Holocaust in the Zionist, Jewish, and universal aspects, which are the main goals of the Ministry of Education as presented in the circular (Israeli Ministry of Education, 1999).

### **3. The Research Assumptions**

1. The journey to Poland constitutes unique experiential learning, which incorporates emotional, cognitive, and social experience and which influences the participants in their coping with the topic of the Holocaust even after a period of at least seven years.
2. The influences of the journey will be significant in the fields of the knowledge, the attitude and feeling toward the Holocaust, the relationship with the Jewish people and the land of Israel, the Jewish and the Israeli identity, and the lessons learned from the Holocaust.
3. The significant influences are related to the goals that the Ministry of Education wants to achieve in the journey to Poland.

### **4. The Research Questions**

1. Does the journey to Poland contribute to the participants to the increase of their knowledge on the topic of the Holocaust, to their enhanced emotional coping, and to a greater sense of Jewish-Israeli identity?
2. Is it possible to find the same contribution of the journey among the group that went seven and more years ago?
3. Does the journey to Poland achieve its objectives according to the perception of the Ministry of Education?

### **5. The Research Hypotheses**

1. Differences will be found in the emotional expressions towards the Holocaust between those who went on the journey to Poland, immediately after they returned and at least seven years afterwards, and their classmates who did not go on this journey.
2. Differences will be found in the level of the knowledge on the topic of the Holocaust between those who went on the journey to Poland and their classmates who did not go on this journey immediately after the former returned from the journey and at least seven years afterwards.
3. Differences will be found in the level of the relationship to the land of Israel and the Jewish people, in the Jewish and Israeli identity, and in the Zionist, Jewish, and universal lessons that those who went on the journey to Poland conclude immediately after they

returned from the journey and at least seven years afterwards as opposed to their classmates who did not go on this journey.

## **6. The Research Population**

- Research Group Number 1: 100 students who went on the journey and who were born in the years 1987-1990, in other words, who are sixteen to eighteen years old.
- Control Group Number 1: 100 students who did not go on the journey who were born in the years 1987-1990, in other words, who are sixteen to eighteen years old.
- Research Group Number 2: 56 adults who went on the journey to Poland seven or more years ago in the framework of their high school studies.
- Control Group Number 2: 46 adults who did not go on the journey to Poland when they were in high school although their classmates went on the journey seven or more years ago.

## **7. The Research Instruments**

To examine the research questions and research hypotheses, two research methods – quantitative and qualitative – were employed.

In the first part of the research, information was collected using quantitative instruments, in light of the experience that exists in research in the use of these instruments and the possibilities of processing them, with the drawing of conclusions and generalization from the information based on an extensive sample of the population (Tzabar Ben-Yehoshua, 2001). In the second part of the research, the information was collected according to the qualitative research method so as to collect information from the research subjects and to discover perspectives and processes that are not visible (Tzabar Ben-Yehoshua, 1990, 2001).

The **quantitative research instruments** were as follows:

1. Emotions towards the Holocaust Questionnaire composed by Bar-On and Sela (1991) for their research on the reference to reality and the reference to the Holocaust among young Israeli people. Reliability of this questionnaire in the present research: Cronbach's alpha = 0.740.
2. Knowledge on the Holocaust Questionnaire, composed by history teachers and graduates of the instruction course for trips to Poland,

who were judges in the instrument construction process. The questionnaire that has validity according to the judges (Lev, 1998). Reliability of this questionnaire in the present research: Cronbach's alpha =0.800.

3. Jewish Israeli Identity and Lessons from the Holocaust Questionnaire, composed by Oron (1993) in his research on the attitude of student teachers of all educational sectors to contemporary Judaism and Zionism. For the purpose of the present research study the questionnaire was divided into three parts:
  - Part 1: Questions on the relationship that the young people feel towards the Jewish people and the land of Israel. Reliability of this questionnaire part in the present research: Cronbach's alpha=0.718.
  - Part 2: Questions that examine the Jewish and Israeli element in the Jewish Israeli identity. Reliability of this questionnaire in the present research: Cronbach's alpha=0.431.
  - Part 3: Questions that examine attitudes towards possible lessons that are drawn from the Holocaust. These lessons can be divided into three groups:
    - Zionist lessons: The Land of Israel as a solution for the Holocaust. Reliability of this questionnaire in the present research: Cronbach's alpha =0.521.
    - Jewish lessons: Jewish unity as a solution. Reliability of this questionnaire in the present research: Cronbach's alpha =0.448.
    - Universal lessons. Reliability of this questionnaire in the present research: Cronbach's alpha =0.444.

The **qualitative research instruments** included:

1. Interview with four students who went on the journey, held immediately upon their return.
2. Interview with four adults who went on the journey to Poland seven and more years ago.

The qualitative research instrument was the focused guided interview, which gives both the interviewer and the interviewee freedom and enables a broader picture of the researcher reality to be attained. (Gabay, 2006; Tzabar Ben-Yehoshua, 1990).



The first part of the interview included general questions on the interviewee's opinions on the importance and necessity of the journey to Poland and on his reference to the goals that the Ministry of Education wanted to achieve on the journey. To conclude this part, the interviewee was asked to say how the journey influenced him. The second part of the interview engaged in the presentation of the quantitative research findings and how the interviewee explains them. In the last part, the interviewee was asked to draw general conclusions regarding his current perception of the journey to Poland after the research results were presented and to propose corrections/changes in the journey and in the teaching of the Holocaust, as he sees fit.

## **8. The Research Findings**

### **Quantitative Findings**

**Research hypothesis number 1** was not wholly confirmed statistically.

Analysis of the data obtained regarding research group number 1 and control group number 1 regarding all the feelings showed:  $F=2.426$ ,  $P=0.121$ ,  $T=-0.285$ ,  $DF=195$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.776$ . Analysis of the data obtained regarding research group number 2 and control group number 2 regarding all the feelings showed:  $F=0.59$ ,  $P=0.809$ ,  $T=-1.247$ ,  $DF=100$ , \*  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.215$ .

Study of these data shows that there is no statistically significant difference between research group number 1 and control group number 1 and between research group number 2 and control group number 2. In other words, hypothesis number 1, which maintained that differences would be found in the emotional expressions between the youths who go on the journey to Poland, immediately upon their return and their classmates who didn't go and between the adults who went on the journey seven or more years ago and the adults who didn't go on the journey, was not confirmed.

Since the research hypothesis was not confirmed, the statements that comprise Questionnaire A were examined to see whether it is possible to find statistically significant differences between research group number 1 and control group number 1 and between research group number 2 and control group number 2.

For research group number 1 and control group number 1 the following data were obtained for expressions of pride and distress:  
Pride:  $F=.414$ ,  $P=.521$ ,  $T=3.910$ ,  $DF=190$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=.000$   
Distress:  $F=1.527$ ,  $P=.218$ ,  $T=-3.0131$ ,  $DF=191$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=.003$

These data show that there is a statistically significant difference between research group number 1 and control group number 1 in the expression of pride and distress. In other words, it was found that students who went on the journey to Poland evinced immediately upon their return a level of pride and distress that is higher in relation to the Holocaust in comparison to the classmates who didn't go on the journey.

In regards to research group number 2 and control group number 2, the following data were obtained in regards to the feeling of indifference.  $N=102$ ,  $F=8.325$ ,  $DF=100$ ,  $P=.005$ . In the other expressions there are no significant differences.

Study of these data shows that there is a significant statistical difference between research group number 2 and control group number 2 in the expression of indifference when control group number 2 evinced more expressions of indifference in the topic of the Holocaust than did research group number 2.

To sum up, it was not found that those who went on the journey to Poland evinced a higher level of emotional involvement on the topic of the Holocaust than did those who didn't go on the journey. The exception was the feeling of pride and distress, in which a significant statistical difference was found for the students who were examined immediately upon their return, and the feeling of indifference, which was found to be higher among the adults who didn't go on the journey in comparison to their classmates who went on the journey seven and more years ago.

**Research hypothesis number 2** was statistically confirmed. It was found that the level of knowledge on the topic of the Holocaust evinced by those who went on the journey to Poland is higher than the level of knowledge on the topic of the Holocaust evinced by those who didn't go on the journey, immediately upon the return of the first and even after seven and more years.

For research group number 1 and control group number 1 the following data were obtained:  $N=200$ ,  $F=8.317$ ,  $DF=198$ ,  $p<0.05$ :  $T=5.819$ ,  $P<0.01$ . Study of the data shows that there is a significant difference in the level of knowledge on the topic of the Holocaust between research group number 1 and control group number 1. The journey to Poland can predict the level of knowledge among the students:  $p<0.05$ . Hence, the first part of research hypothesis number 2, which states that differences would be found in the level of knowledge on the topic of the Holocaust between those who went on the journey to Poland immediately upon their return and their classmates who didn't participate in the journey was confirmed.

For research group number 2 and control group number 2 the following data were obtained:  $N=102$ ,  $F=8.300$ ,  $DF=100$ ,  $p=0.05$ ,  $T=3.714$ ,  $P<0.01$ , Effect size  $>0.05$  standard deviation. Study of these data shows that there is a statistically significant difference in the level of knowledge between research group number 2 and control group number 2. Hence, the second part of research hypothesis number 2, which maintained that differences would be found in the level of knowledge on the topic of the Holocaust between adults who went on the journey to Poland seven or more years ago and their classmates who did not participate in the journey, was confirmed. Going to Poland in this case cannot predict a higher level of knowledge,  $p=0.05$ .

**Research hypothesis number 3** was not statistically confirmed. Differences were not found in the level of the relationship to the land of Israel and the Jewish people, in the Jewish and Israeli identity, and in the Zionist, Jewish, and universal lessons drawn by those who went on the journey to Poland, immediately upon their return and after seven and more years, as opposed to their classmates who didn't go on the journey.

For research group number 1 and control group number 1 the following data were obtained.

**Table Number 1:**  
**Differences in the Level of the Relationship to the Land of Israel and to the People of Israel, in the Jewish Israeli Identity, and in the Zionist Lessons, Jewish Lessons, and Universal Lessons between Research Group 1 and Control Group 1**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means				
Questionnaire C:		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
C1: Relation to Land of Israel / Jewish People	Equal variances assumed	.191	.662	.086	198	.931	.005	.058
C2: Jewish Israeli Identity	Equal variances assumed	2.688	.103	-1.593	198	.113	-.099	.062
C3: Dimension 1 – Zionist Lessons	Equal variances assumed	7.075	.008	1.284	198	.201	.074	.057
C3: Dimension 2 – Jewish Lessons	Equal variances assumed	1.872	.173	.882	197	.379	.070	.079
C3: Dimension 3 – Universal Lessons	Equal variances assumed	.478	.490	.540	198	.590	.038	.071

This table presents differences in the level of the relationship to the land of Israel and the people of Israel, the Jewish Israeli identity, the drawing of Zionist lessons, Jewish lessons, and universal lessons, between research group 1 and control group 1. The values of the table:

- Questionnaire C1: Relationship of the students from research group number 1 and control group number 1 to the land of Israel and people of Israel,  $F=0.191$ ,  $P=0.662$ ,  $T=0.86$ ,  $Df=198$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.931$ .
- Questionnaire C2: Jewish Israeli identity of the students from research group number 1 and control group number 1:  $F=2.688$ ,  $P=0.103$ ,  $T=-1.593$ ,  $DF=198$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.113$ .
- Questionnaire C3, Dimension 1: Zionist lessons drawn by the students from research group number 1 and control group number 1:  $F=7.075$ ,  $P=0.008$ ,  $T=1.284$ ,  $DF=198$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.201$ .
- Questionnaire C3, Dimension 2: Jewish lessons drawn by the students from research group number 1 and control group number 1:  $F=1.872$ ,  $P=0.173$ ,  $T=0.882$ ,  $DF=197$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.379$ .
- Questionnaire C3, Dimension 3: Universal lessons drawn by students from research group number 1 and control group number 1:  $F=0.487$ ,  $P=0.490$ ,  $T=0.540$ ,  $DF=198$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.590$ .

To sum up, study of this table shows that statistically significant differences were not found between research group number 1 and control group number 1. In other words, differences were not found in the level of the relationship to the land of Israel and the Jewish people, in the Jewish and Israeli identity, and in the drawing of Zionist, Jewish, and universal lessons concluded by those who go to Poland, immediately upon their return and their classmates who didn't go on the journey.

For research group number 2 and control group number 2 the following data were obtained:

Table Number 2:  
Differences in the Level of the Relationship to the Land of Israel and People of Israel, the Jewish Israeli Identity, and Zionist, Jewish, and Universal Lessons between Research Group 2 and Control Group 2

**Independent Samples Test**

Questionnaire:		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-Test for Equality of Means				
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
C1: Relation to Land of Israel / Jewish People	Equal variances assumed	.419	.519	-.282	100	.779	-.022	.079
C2: Jewish Israeli Identity	Equal variances assumed	.154	.695	-.398	100	.691	-.030	.075
C3: Dimension 1 – Zionist Lessons	Equal variances assumed	1.296	.258	1.756	100	.082	.115	.066
C3: Dimension 2 – Jewish Lessons	Equal variances assumed	.357	.551	.870	99	.387	.077	.089
C3: Dimension 3 – Universal Lessons	Equal variances assumed	2.638	.108	-.639	99	.525	-.065	.101

This table presents differences in the level of the relationship to the land of Israel and the people of Israel, the Jewish Israeli identity, the drawing of Zionist, Jewish, and universal lessons between research group number 2 and control group number 2. The following are values from the table:

- Questionnaire C1: Relationship of the subjects from research group number 2 and control group number 2 to the land of Israel and people of Israel, F=.419, P=0.519, T=-0.282, Df=100, P(2-tailed)=0.779.

- Questionnaire C2: Jewish Israeli identity of the subjects from research group number 2 and control group number 2:  $F=0.154$ ,  $P=0.695$ ,  $T=-0.398$ ,  $DF=100$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.691$ .
- Questionnaire C3, Dimension 1: Zionist lessons drawn by the subjects from research group number 2 and control group number 2:  $F=1.296$ ,  $P=0.258$ ,  $T=1.756$ ,  $DF=100$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.082$ .
- Questionnaire C3, Dimension 2: Jewish lessons drawn by the subjects from research group number 2 and control group number 2:  $F=0.357$ ,  $P=0.551$ ,  $T=0.870$ ,  $DF=99$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.387$ .
- Questionnaire C3, Dimension 3: Universal lessons drawn by subjects from research group number 2 and control group number 2:  $F=2.638$ ,  $P=0.108$ ,  $T=-0.639$ ,  $DF=99$ ,  $P(2\text{-tailed})=0.525$ .

To conclude, study of this table shows that statistically significant differences were not found between research group number 2 and control group number 2. In other words, differences were not found in the level of the relationship to the land of Israel and the Jewish people, in the Jewish and Israeli identity, and in the Zionist, Jewish, and universal lessons drawn by those who went on the journey to Poland, after seven and more years, as opposed to their classmates who didn't go on the journey. Research hypothesis number 3 was refuted.

Due to the data obtained in the research and what was said in the methodological part on the importance and value of the integration of a quantitative research and qualitative research, I decided to conduct interviews with students and adults who participated in the journey to Poland. In the interviews I sought to clarify with them how they explain the findings of the quantitative part in the present research and whether these data change their perception and attitude in regards to the necessity for the journey.

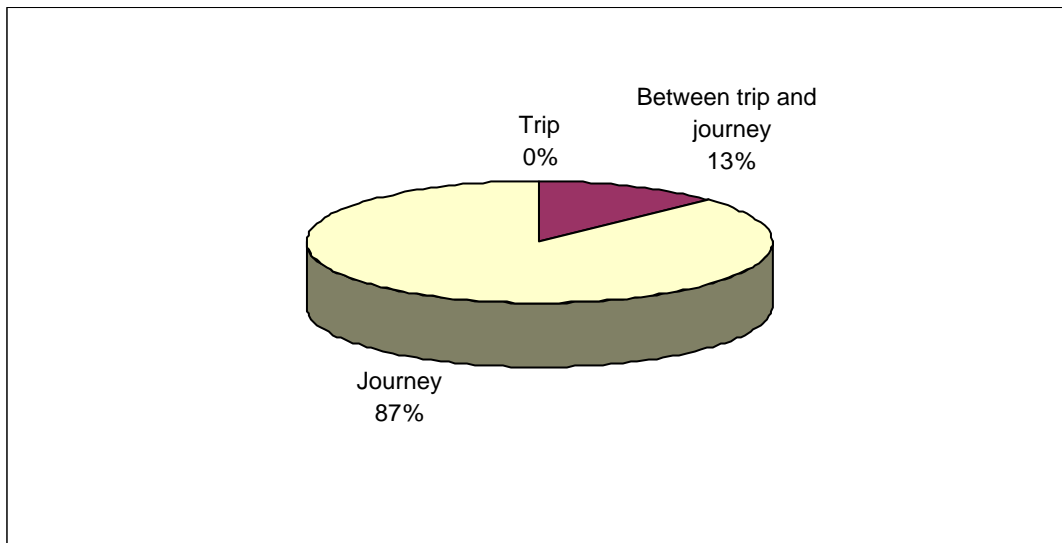
### **The Qualitative Findings**

In question number 9 in the interview the interviewees were asked to position the journey to Poland on a continuum of trip ----- journey.

In a trip there are experiences but they do not influence and leave a mark on the conscious level on the continuation of life, on the participant, while a journey influences and leaves an impression on the conscious level (Shachar and Kassan, 2001). A journey, as Shachar and Kassan (2001) define it, needs to include a meaningful processing that is

possible when it includes six necessary elements: knowledge, understanding, emotional response, behavioral positions, and integration of all the elements (Bar-On, 1994).

Figure Number 1:  
The Interviewees' Responses regarding the Characterization as 'Trip ---  
Journey'



- 87% of the interviewees maintained that for them going to Poland was a journey.
- 13% of the interviewees maintained that for them it was in the middle, between a trip and a journey.
- Not one interview – 0% - maintained that going to Poland was completely a trip.

**To sum up the interviews**, it appears that, after a period of seven and more years and immediately upon the return from Poland, the participants perceive going to Poland as a journey that influenced them and not as merely a trip of experiences. Some attributed the influences to the values or faith oriented realm, some maintained that this is another element in the great educational process that shaped their personalities, and some maintained that this is an element that significantly influenced their attitude to life. Some noted that this is a less significant element in regards to the military service or even work, but even those who lessened the impact of going to Poland did not define it as merely a trip.

## **9. Conclusion**

The primary conclusion of the present research study is that it is necessary to continue the journeys to Poland but they must undergo structural and content changes. The structural changes need to be in the stages of the preparation for the journey, in the journey itself, and in the processing after the journey. The positioning of the journey in the learning constellation of the topic of the Holocaust needs to change and it must become one element in the methodology of the teaching of the Holocaust and not the main one or the pinnacle of the process. The participants must be classified not according to the economic criterion but according to the criterion of emotional and social suitability and the classification must be performed by professionals. The contents of the journey need also to include the Jewish faith-oriented element, the prevention of racism, and the choice of a limited number of sites, with a more in-depth focus on them. In addition, the journey objectives, as they appear in the circulars of the Israeli Ministry of Education, should be examined and re-adjusted, given the understanding that the journey to Poland is just one element in the entire teaching and education constellation and thus its impact is accordingly. In a society that extensively discusses moral issues, places emphasis on value-oriented, Zionist, and Jewish education, and studies the topic of the Holocaust over the course of years in the Jewish and worldwide context, the impact of the journey is less apparent but remains nonetheless important, although it cannot always be quantified and defined.

One of the explanations that attempted to explain why some of the research hypotheses were not confirmed was that the participants are too young for this experience. To examine this explanation, it was proposed to conduct a similar research among people who went on the journey during their term of compulsory military service or even later, so as to examine the journey influences in this stage.

One of the main limitations of the research study is the fact that most of the research population came from religious schools and defined itself as religious or traditional. Hence, it is proposed to conduct a continuation research that will compare identical populations from religious and secular schools and will examine the same hypotheses as the present research examined. Another limitation of the research derives from the fact that the journey participants finance the journey costs



themselves and thus the research population came from an intermediate and higher socioeconomic background. Therefore, it is recommended to conduct a continuation research to identify students who received donations or subsidization and went on the journey and to examine the journey influence on them.

**To conclude**, even if the quantitative research found a significant impact, primarily in the dimension of knowledge and pride and distress, in the short-term and lack of indifference in the long-term, it was still found in the interviews that this educational undertaking of the journey to Poland must continue. The journey is perceived as an important element in the teaching of the Holocaust but it is one of many and accordingly such is its influence. Furthermore, evidence arose of the existence of influential elements that could not be quantified or even defined. At this stage, an alternative to the journeys to Poland has not been found in the educational system, and therefore it is important to continue them, but it is necessary to make changes in all the components, ranging from the stages of the planning and the definition of the goals, through the stage of the classification and preparation, and to the structure and processes of dealing and support. All the changes that should be implemented must be accompanied by the performance of research studies to examine their effectiveness.

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