

UDC: 37.07

**DRUZE COMMUNITY IN ISRAEL - ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT**

**COMUNITATEA DRUZE ÎN ISRAEL - DEZVOLTARE ECONOMICĂ ȘI  
EDUCAȚIONALĂ ÎNTRE TRECUT ȘI PREZENT**

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***Annotation:** Israel is considered a strong economically developed country in the Middle East. This article is dedicated to the examination the economics and especially educational changes that took place in the Druze minority of Israel, considered a traditional and patriarchal society. The sociological study revealed that more Druze today are interested in higher education and the society helps both men and women, the inequality between the genders is decreasing.*

***Adnotare:** Israelul este considerat o țară puternic dezvoltată din punct de vedere economic în Orientul Mijlociu. Acest articol este dedicat examinării schimbărilor economice și mai ales educaționale care au avut loc în minoritatea Druze a Israelului, considerată o societate tradițională și patriarhală. Studiul sociologic a arătat că mai multe reprezentanți Druze astăzi sunt interesate de învățământul superior, iar societatea ajută atât bărbații, cât și femeile, inegalitatea dintre sexe scade.*

***Keywords:** Druze sector, higher education, army service*

***Cuvinte-cheie:** sectorul druzelor, învățământul superior, serviciul military.*

### **Introduction**

Israel since its establishment in 1948 had witnessed economic growth despite some periods the country had went through economical crisis, which might be due to the world economic and security situation, which had become a tide process. In additional to other reasons that is connected to industrial and technological development. However, it is vital to argue that Israel is considered one among countries of strong economy in the Middle East [4].

The Druze sector consists of 130 thousand citizens of Israel, which means 7% of the total Arab population in Israel and about 1.8% of the total citizens of the country. In 2003 the percentage of Druze students had reached 41% compare to the Jewish sector which reached 51% [3; 4].

For centuries, Druze were traditional society lining from agriculture. Most of its population were peasants and quite poor, there were some rich leaders. The women were not supposed to study or work, they were mostly home keepers. The state of Israel was established in 1948, and since the month of May in 1956 the Druze young men joined the Israeli army as compulsory service. A huge

number of men still take part in army service and had reached very important positions in the system. Because of the army service, the Druze had many more jobs and could make a better living than they did before. Especially in the nineties of the 20th century, many lived on military salary. The percentage of the Druze serving in the military had decreased for different reasons that included Jewish newcomers from outside Israel and other reasons. When the Druze community saw that the country secure the members of the community and provide them with respect strengthen the relationship between the community and the country and between the two civilizations - the Jewish and the Druze [2; 5]. When integration and cooperation was taking place between the two civilizations, this opened the doors for Druze men to open different fields like factories, or in the government institutions like social security ,banks, and transportation which led them to receive high positions within these institutions [4; 5].

In addition, people within the community became more educated, they started working in the education department, and engineering factories, law firms other fields, on the other hand the agriculture and herd raising started slowly decreasing.

### **Materials and methods of research**

The main research methods for writing the article were: a correlation approach, namely, obtaining data on independent and dependent variables, analysis of scientific and information materials in print and electronic media on the topic of the study.

### **Results and considerations**

We should not forget that in the beginnings of the 80s of the 20-th century, in most Druze villages clothes factories were opened, Like Delta clothes factory that opened in Beit Jan and Horfeish and Sharlina factory in Yanoh. In most of these factories the workers were Druze females, thus the unemployment rate for Druze girls decreased and increased the living status. Since the Druze community considered a conservative one , so, having the factories inside the villages had encouraged girls to go to work. However, in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century many of these factories were shut down because the investors started moving it to Jordan and Egypt because of low salary for workers, and low taxes. But the Druze women because of modernism started going outside the country to work and study, therefore, one can see the increase of educated Druze women which included lawyers, teachers, engineers and other fields. This of course was happening side by side with men, which added knowledge and higher living status. Another increase within the community was huge-sized stores that brought additional work places for men and women in the community [1; 2; 3].

There is no doubt that the economic level increased in the last three centuries and the unemployment rate had decreased. If we take for example the town of Yarka which is considered one of the pioneer places not only on the community level, but on the state level. A huge industrial factory was opened in Yarka and absorbed workers from villages around like Yanoh, Jolis, Gath and other Druze villages, in addition to women that are not considered Druze, Jewish and Arabs from other villages [5].

**The authors hypothesized** that the level of high education in the Druze sector is still quite low, but the motivation to get a higher education is high, especially in younger and non-religious part of the society. Also, it was assumed that women are less supported by their parents when they plan studying than men, since the society still encourages women to be more involved with the family.

The authors of this paper asked a sample of 108 Druze citizens of Israel to describe their education, their motivation to get a higher education and the canals helping them in the process. There are 31% males, the rest are females. 99% of the subjects were born in Israel. The age range is wide, between 18 to 60, average age is 32. 49% state that there was a change in their education status, 46% report change in social status, 47% live with parents, 14.4% see themselves as religious, 29% state there was a change in the religion, 14.4% a single family. Figure 1 presents the age frequency of the sample: most of the respondents are younger than 20, the rest are equally distributed.

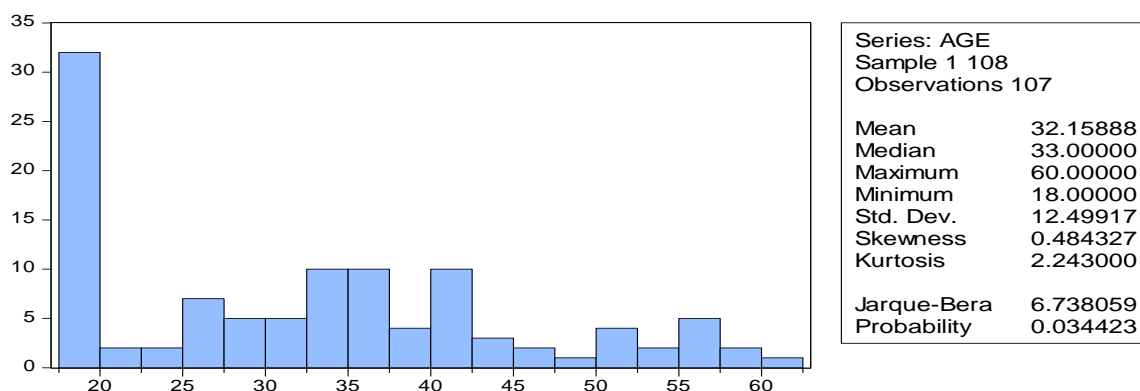


Figure 1. Frequency chart of age [elaborated by the author]

Figure 2 presents the answer to the question: “Does learning matter?” It is not surprising that most of the respondents strongly agree, which makes sense since most of them are very young, and this is exactly what the authors hypothesized.

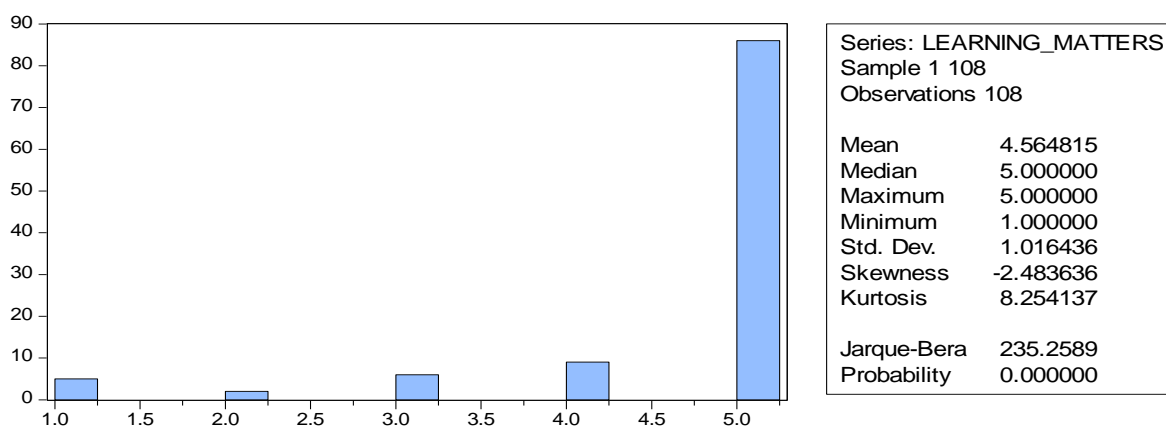


Figure 2. Frequency of answer to question: does learning matter?\* [elaborated by the author]

\*From 1 – strongly disagree to 5- strongly agree

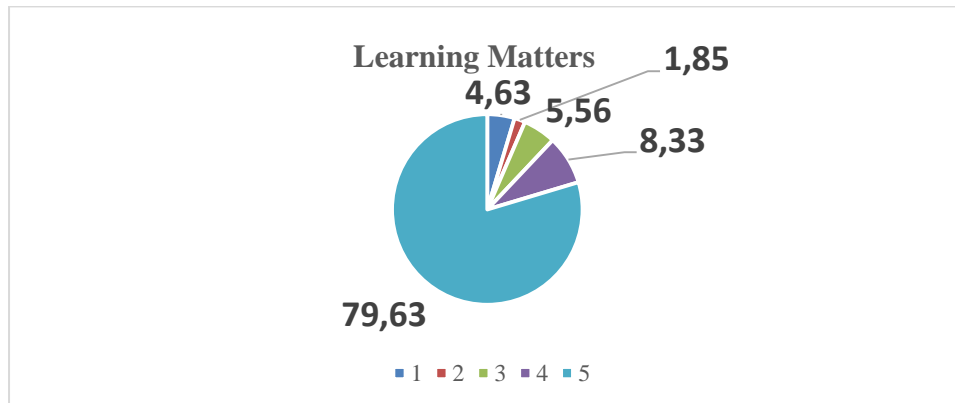


Figure 3. The pie chart describes the distribution of the respondents in answering the question: Does learning matter?\*[elaborated by the author]

\*1- not at all, 5 – matters very highly

79.6% percent of the respondents highly agree that it is important to study, as presented in figure 3. The areas of the different colors are proportional to the proportion of respondents who gave the answers of the according color. The absolute majority of the respondents report that learning matters. What about the education?

Education pie chart (Figure 4) presents the proportion of education: The biggest proportion- first degree (38.8%), about the same – matriculation and second degree (17.59% each), 25% -only graduated high school, 0.93% have a higher education. We can witness that the situation in reality is quite different from the wanted one, but it could be because most of the respondents are very young and have a change to get a higher education in the future.

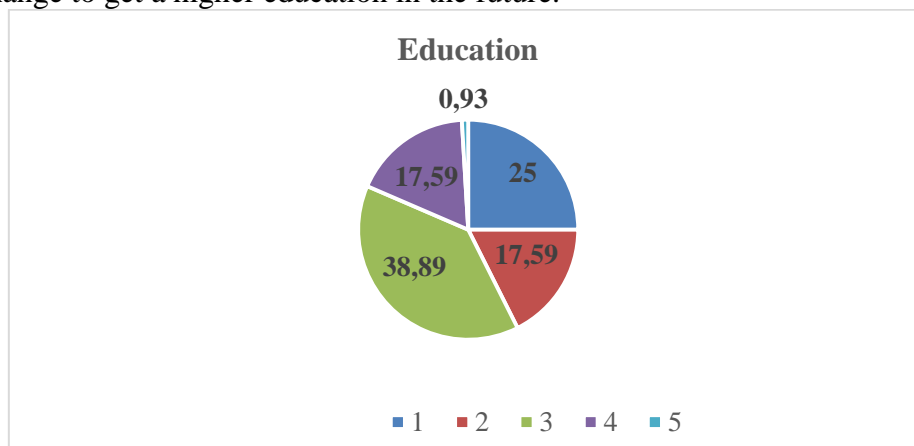


Figure 4. Pie chart for education level\*[elaborated by the author]

\*1- high school, 2- matriculation diploma, 3- first degree, 4- second degree, 5- higher education. The areas of the different colors are proportional to the proportion of respondents who gave the answers of the according color

Are there gender differences in educations? T-test for equality of means of education between the genders does not validate this hypothesis- the education of women is not lower nor

higher than the one of men. Also, no significant differences were revealed between religious and unreligious respondents- both groups are educated in the same level on average.

There is a positive significant correlation of 0.776 ( $p\_value=0$ ) between the education and the age variable: the older the respondent, the higher is the education.

So, the hypotheses of inequality of genders and different attitudes by different religious groups were not validated. In this sample, the women are educated in the same manner as men, and religion does not seem to influence the education level.

The following box-plots (Figure 5) describe the level of helping by Amuta (non-profitable organization) for the genders and ages.

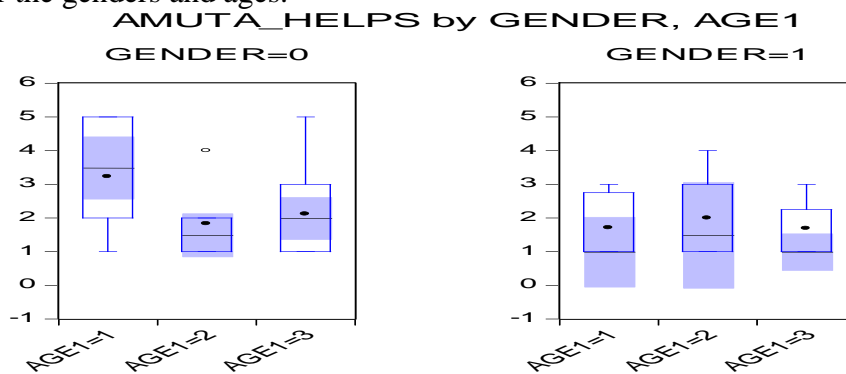


Figure 5. Box-plot of amuta helping to get education, by gender and age group\* [elaborated by the author]

\* gender=1 for males, gender=0 for females, age1 is a young group (before 21), age 2- ages of 21 till 29, age 3 is the oldest group of 30 and more.

In the female sample, the mostly helped is the youngest group (before the age of 21), whereas in the male sample the more helped is the second group (ages of 21-29).

The following box-plots (Figure 6) describe the level of helping by Army for the genders and ages.

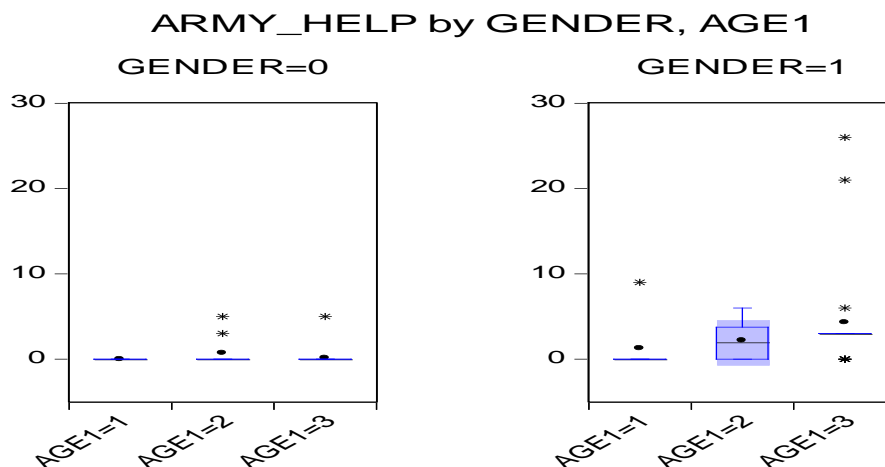


Figure 6: box-plot of army helping to get education, by gender and age group\* [elaborated by the author]

\* gender=1 for males, gender=0 for females, age1 is a young group (before 21), age 2- ages of 21 till 29, age 3 is the oldest group of 30 and more.

Army helps mostly to males in the oldest group of age (from 30 to 60), which is reasonable since Druze women do not serve in the Army (unlike Jewish women, who are equal to the men in the issue of the army service).

The following box plots (Figure 7) demonstrate how the economic situation can prevent a respondent's studying. As could be concluded from the answer, it could be a powerful reason for the females in the ages of 21-29, and males aged from 18 to 29. The older respondent do not think that economic situation prevents from studying.

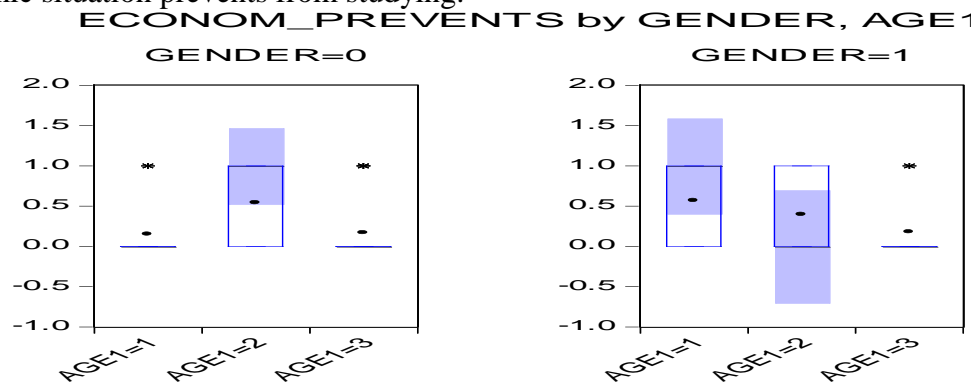


Figure 7. Box-plot of economic situation as a factor preventing getting education, by gender and age group\* [elaborated by the author]

\* gender=1 for males, gender=0 for females, age1 is a young group (before 21), age 2- ages of 21 till 29, age 3 is the oldest group of 30 and more.

The following box-plots (Figure 8) show that friends help more for young people, but their influence reduces for older people.

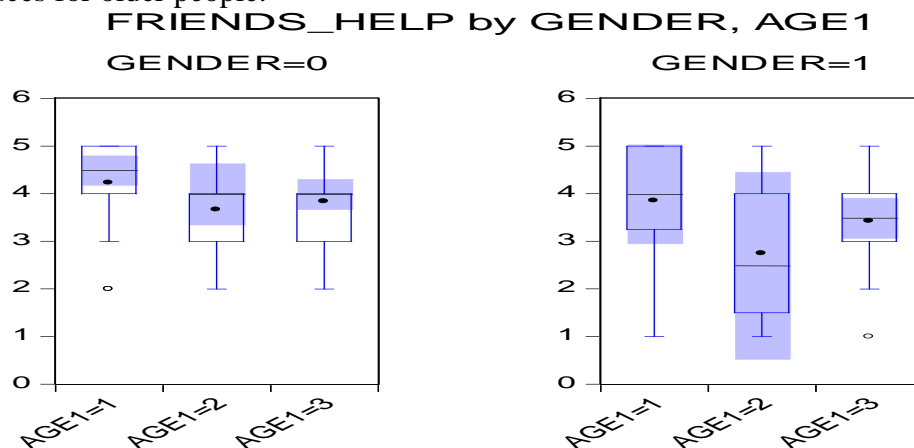


Figure 8. Box-plot of friends as a factor helping to get education, by gender and age group\* [elaborated by the author]

\* gender=1 for males, gender=0 for females, age1 is a young group (before 21), age 2- ages of 21 till 29, age 3 is the oldest group of 30 and more.

The following box-plots (Figure 9) show that the funds help more females, especially younger ones, but not help males so much:

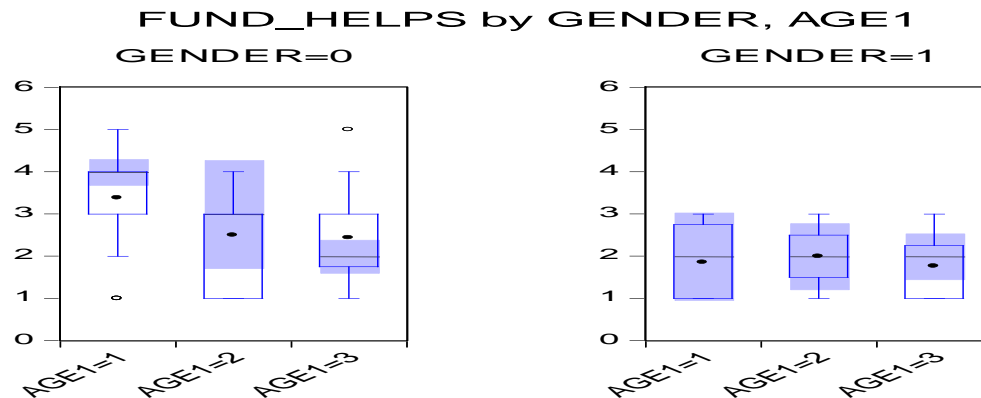


Figure 9. Box-plot of funds as a factor helping to get education, by gender and age group  
[elaborated by the author]

\* gender=1 for males, gender=0 for females, age1 is a young group (before 21), age 2- ages of 21 till 29, age 3 is the oldest group of 30 and more.

The following box-plots (figure 10) show that parents help in getting education for both young females and males, but in older ages males get less help from parents.

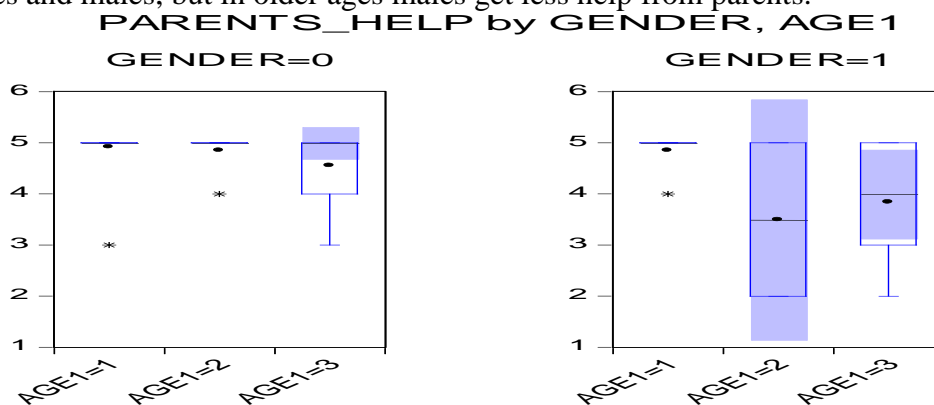


Figure 10. Box-plot of parent as a factor helping to get education, by gender and age group\*  
[elaborated by the author]

\* gender=1 for males, gender=0 for females, age1 is a young group (before 21), age 2- ages of 21 till 29, age 3 is the oldest group of 30 and more.

### Conclusions

The hypothesis of the society that tends to discriminate women is then not validated: there are funds who finance, friends and parents who support women no less than men. Only the army supports older men, presumably those who have been working for the army.

Most of the respondents do not agree that the religion prevents them from studying.

To conclude, the research examined the assumption about the tradition views in Druze society: the men are more encouraged to study and work, the religious sector does not tent to get a formal education. A sample of mostly young Druze citizens of Israel, which was conducted, did not validate most of the hypothesis: most of the young people do think education is very important, and try hard to get education. Sometimes, an economic situation prevents them from studying. But there

are funds helping young people, especially women, there are also friend who support the will to study (also among young people), and parents who support men and women at the same level.

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