Jerusalemite Students: Challenges in Israeli-Occupied Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract

An educational system has the potential to uplift occupied societies, yet it can also serve as a "soft" weapon prolonging ignorance, particularly when under the control of an occupying force catering to a minority, as seen in Jerusalem. This study aimed to explore the challenges and discriminatory practices encountered by Palestinian students from Jerusalem as a minority within Israeli-occupied higher education institutions. Utilising a descriptive design, qualitative data were obtained by surveying the experiences of 23 Jerusalemite students studying in Israeli colleges through online open-ended questions. The gathered data underwent content analysis, revealing themes that were grouped into challenges and types of apartheid acts faced by the participating students. The findings exposed numerous challenges, including cultural, academic, political, and financial hurdles, along with issues related to enrolment policies, acceptance examinations, the preparatory year, and facility provisions. Additionally, the study revealed various discriminatory acts experienced by Palestinian Jerusalemite students within Israeli higher education.

Keywords: apartheid; Jerusalemites; higher education; occupation

Background and Overview

For oppressed people, education remains an essential pillar in developing societies and shaping national identities. Higher education and being educated can be of value to minority groups in their fight for social, economic, and political rights (Borgonovi and Burns 2015; Idris et al. 2012; Robbins 2010; Schulz et al. 2016). Although the education system can be an anchor for saving societies under occupation, it can also be a two-edged sword that may foster ignorance, particularly when it is administered by the occupying nation itself over a minority of students, such as in Jerusalem (Al-Haq 2006; Bamberger, Yan, and Morris 2023; Halabi 2016; Muhareb et al. 2022; Musa and Ziatdinov 2012).

Since Al-Nakba (1948), when the departure from their homelands was compulsory for most Palestinians, education has existed as the essence of life and has been embraced for freedom and development (Nofal et al. 1998). Throughout this period, Palestinians under occupation have been fighting to educate the generations who witnessed oppression and massacres to sustain their lives in parallel with their struggle for freedom. Even though they were divided into refugee camps in Palestine or in the diaspora, education was among the top priorities for the next generations, yet the provided instruction varied based on the region in which they settled (Baramki 1996; Nofal et al. 1998). Educating the Palestinians who flew to neighbouring countries, for instance, has been conducted in the refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria with the assistance of the United Nations Relief and Work Agency (UNRWA) (Ahmadzadeh et al. 2014; UNRWA n.d.). The educational system for the Palestinians who existed in the West Bank and Gaza, on the other hand, was supervised by two Arab countries (Jordan and Egypt) (Nofal et al. 1998). As for the Palestinians who did not leave their homelands and stayed as a minority, the responsibility of educating them was controlled by the Israeli occupation (Al-Haq 2006).

Afterward, in 1967, which has been known as Al-Naksa year, education in Palestine including the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem came under the control of the Israeli authorities and was supervised by the military administration, with the Jordanian and Egyptian syllabi applied in the West Bank and Gaza, respectively (Nofal et al. 1998; Shakhshir 2011). Following the Oslo Peace Process Accords between Palestinians and Israelis in 1993, the Palestinian National Authority was officially created in 1994 and granted limited control over education in the West Bank and Gaza (Nicolai 2007; Shakhshir 2011). As for the Palestinians living in Jerusalem as well as those who live in the occupied areas, their education following the Israeli occupation has been administered with different tracks dedicated to Arab and Israeli students (Alian 2016; MIFTAH 2021).

Jerusalemite students, who tend to pursue their education either in school or higher education under Israeli occupation, have not been granted the same privileges and rights that Israeli students have (Muhareb et al. 2022). From elementary to high school, Palestinians suffer under a discriminatory system that prevents them from having the

right to preserve their nationality as Arab students by adopting Israeli curricula (BDS 2014). According to Abu-Saad (2019), it was confirmed that the Israeli occupation regards curricula and textbooks as an instrument for social and political control. Thus, the Israeli educational system has been striving to adopt the Jewish history that glorifies the Israeli nation and portrays Palestinians as violent and uncivilised people. The conditions at Arab schools under the supervision of the Israeli occupation are not the same as those in schools for Israelis. Multiple deficits in Arab schools reflect a state of discrimination that Palestinian students experience, which affects the quality of teaching they receive, such as a lack of schools, crowded classes, and poor school infrastructure, in addition to the shortage of facilities and services (Ali 2013).

In some studies, moreover, it is asserted that the general Israeli educational system has adopted a policy that aims at isolating Arab Palestinians in Jerusalem from Israeli citizens socially, politically, administratively, and educationally to make them a minority (Abu-Saad 2019). According to a report prepared by MIFTAH (2021), the Israeli occupation has been performing a systematic Judaisation policy in all sectors, as they aim at obliterating national and cultural awareness of Jerusalemite Palestinians by following different agendas, such as Israelising the school curricula, attacking schools, arresting underage students, and increasing classrooms' congestion. Since the Israeli occupation government established municipalities to supervise education for Israeli citizens, Jerusalemite students' education has been neglected (Awawda, Yatiban, and El-Awaisi 2019).

In terms of Jerusalemite students in Israeli higher education institutions, their situation is not any better. Although college education has been regarded as significant in acquainting students with professional and social skills, multiple obstacles confront Jerusalemites in Israeli-occupied colleges, which cause the low representation of Arab students at such institutions (Ali 2013). Arab students and families living under occupation tend to perceive higher education as a substitute for their lost lands, which they can use to preserve their dignity and formulate future opportunities to earn a living and achieve political, social, and economic mobility. However, their low representation at higher education institutions, as well as the under-representation of Arabs in academic and administrative positions in such institutions, raises multiple concerns about the reasons behind this issue (Alian 2016). Halabi (2016) concludes that Israeli universities have been considered as a tool to build the Jewish Israeli essence. Consequently, Palestinians who study at Israeli universities may have the experience of minority students under the control of a majority group. It was confirmed that there are mental and physical pressures and stress that Palestinian students may face in conjunction with encountering racism and discrimination from the administration of the university, lecturers, and other students.

In a similar vein, the Palestinian-led movement Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS 2014) states that multiple barriers have been imposed on Jerusalemite students to prevent them from pursuing their college education, and this is described as a systematic

Judaisation policy to force them to leave Jerusalem. It is also asserted in some studies and reports (Ali 2013; Alian 2016; BDS 2014; MIFTAH 2021; Muhareb et al. 2022) that Arab students who study at Israeli-occupied higher education institutions may encounter challenges and experience discrimination in the institutions administered by the Council for Higher Education in Israel. Besides, Arab students have not been allowed to establish an Arab university that teaches all disciplines in Arabic and addresses students' cultural and social interests. Bamberger, Yan, and Morris (2023) claim that education at Israeli universities has been designed to consolidate the national forms of identity and to extend the state control over "troublesome" minorities in Jerusalem, so the Israeli occupation tends to utilise higher education as a tool to control parts of the nation. Additionally, it was revealed that Jerusalemite students in Israeli universities have been experiencing feelings of isolation and alienation (Halabi 2016).

Palestinian educators are urged to raise warnings regarding the situation of Jerusalemite students who study under occupation at Israeli colleges and universities and who have not been granted Israeli citizenship due to political reasons. Investigating and highlighting such obstacles that hinder Arab students from pursuing their higher education can voice this issue to the international community and instigate supportive campaigns worldwide.

In other words, Arab students and their families in Jerusalem tend to cling to education as the core of their standing in the political and social battle that they face. In contrast, their enrolment in higher education is still limited, although the Council for Higher Education in Israel (2019) reported an increase in Arab student numbers in Israeli universities (Council for Higher Education 2018). As there are such blurry and biased reports that explain the situation of Arab students under occupation in support of the Israeli perspective, investigating the real situation of the Jerusalemite students who study in Israeli colleges has become vital since this issue has rarely been examined in previous studies based on Arab students' perspectives. The current study aimed at identifying the challenges that Arab students have been encountering at Israeli-occupied higher education institutions in Jerusalem from their perspectives, and it researched the types of discrimination that Jerusalemite students have been confronting at such institutions.

Questions of the Study

Two questions guided this study as follows:

RQ1: What are the challenges Jerusalemite students face at Israeli-occupied higher education institutions?

RQ2: What types of discrimination do Jerusalemite students experience at Israeli-occupied higher education institutions?

Method

The current study aimed to determine the challenges that college Jerusalemite students have encountered at Israeli-occupied higher education institutions. The objectives of this research effort were performed following a descriptive design, as students' responses and perspectives were collected using a qualitative method (online, open-ended questions) and were content analysed, categorised into and displayed as main themes (Creswell 2014; Krippendorff 2018).

Context and Participants

Based on statistics collected in 2019, it was shown that there were 10 universities and 53 colleges accepted and academically directed by the Council of Higher Education in Israel. In Jerusalem, there is one university, the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, in addition to 14 colleges (Council for Higher Education 2019). At Hebrew University, which has 23,500 students, there were only 580 students who were Arab (Hasson 2019). The participants in this study were 23 Arab Jerusalemite male and female students who were studying at Israeli universities and colleges in Jerusalem in the 2022–2023 academic year.

The participants in the current study were selected from the 580 Arab students to participate in this investigation based on convenience sampling, which is a sampling method where the participants can be included as the easiest for the researcher to access due to geographical challenges, availability, or willingness to take part in the research (Fraenkel, Wallen, and Hyun 2018). It is worth noting that the participating students (23) represented the Palestinian minority students who were studying under the occupation, and they have not been granted Israeli citizenship due to political issues. Table 1 shows the distribution of the participants based on gender and academic degree.

Table 1: Frequencies and percentages of the participants according to gender and academic degree

Variable	Level	Frequencies	Total
Gender	Male	5	23
	Female	18	
Academic Degree	Bachelor	15	23
	Master's degree	7	
	PhD	1	

As displayed in Table 1, the participating students were 23 male and female students who were studying at Israeli universities and colleges in Jerusalem, and their degrees varied from bachelor's degrees and master's degrees to PhD degrees.

Data Collection and Instrument

Data collection was conducted by surveying the participating students who volunteered for this study on their experience in Israeli colleges using online open-ended questions. It is worth noting that the online open-ended questions were prepared using Google Forms due to difficulties in accessibility, such as Israeli checkpoints, which hindered the researchers and the Jerusalemite participating students from holding face-to-face interviews. Besides, the conflict between the researchers' and the participating students' weekends made arranging online interviews with such students difficult as some of them apologised multiple times for not being able to attend online meetings and interviews; consequently, using the online open-ended questions was the most suitable and feasible option.

The online open-ended questions utilised in this study were suggested in a way that elicited the participants' experience as Palestinian students studying under occupation in Israeli colleges. The trustworthiness of the procedures and the questions were validated and confirmed by being reviewed by a jury of experts. The online open-ended questions, for example, were prepared in two languages (Arabic and English) to obtain valid results (Creswell 2014). Besides, the inter-rater reliability of the data analysis was also achieved by involving more than one analyst (the researchers) in coding and analysis (Krippendorff 2018). Table 1 below displays a sample of the open-ended online questions used in the current study.

Table 2: A sample of the online questions used in the current study

A Sample of the Open-Ended Online Questions
- Describe your enrolment experience at Hebrew University (Acceptance examinations and policies).   - How did you find the enrolment policy and examinations? What were the challenges?   - Why do you think it is compulsory for Arab students to have a preparatory year?   - What are the challenges Arab students face at the Hebrew University? (In terms of the teaching language, academic level, curricula, pedagogy [teaching methods, assessment methods, context], fairness and assessment methods).

Table 2 presents a sample of the open-ended questions used to obtain data regarding the challenges and obstacles that the participating students encounter in studying at higher education institutions under Israeli occupation.

Data Analysis

The obtained qualitative data were content analysed using latent as well as manifest analysis (Krippendorff 2018) pertinent to the challenges and apartheid acts the participants (students) have encountered under occupation. The responses (transcript) were coded and organised into ideas and themes. After that, the frequencies and the

percentages of each theme were calculated. It is worth noting that the participants' responses were grouped into seven challenges: cultural challenges, academic challenges, challenges in the enrolment and acceptance procedures, preparatory year challenges, political challenges, challenges in facilities provision, and financial challenges. Regarding the apartheid acts, the responses were categorised into four main aspects: cultural and religious, political, psychological, and academic. Overall, the analysis went through certain steps as follows:

- Participants' responses (ideas and concepts) were extracted and organised in separate lists.
- The responses were grouped into categories and gathered in main and sub-categories.
- The categories were prepared into themes and ordered based on the numbers and percentages of the participants' responses.

Results

As the current study aimed at researching the challenges and types of discrimination encountered by Jerusalemite students at Israeli higher education institutions, interviewees' responses to the questions were analysed, coded, categorised, and then organised into themes and ideas regarding the main objectives of this research.

First, it is worth noting that the majority of the participants (70%) confirmed that their experience in studying at Israeli higher education institutions was hard and full of challenges. Concerning the first question related to the challenges combatted by Jerusalemite students, distinctive challenges were extracted from the participants' responses and organised in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Challenges encountered by Jerusalemite students at Israeli-occupied higher education institutions

	Themes	Categories	
1	Cultural Challenges	The teaching language: Using advanced Hebrew and English in teaching and the acceptance examinations Most Arab students are enrolled in a preparatory year to teach them Hebrew Arabs are rejected and alienated when they use Arabic Context: Different weekends and holidays from their culture They are rejected based on costumes and hijab for females There are no places to gather or pray The Jewish perspective is imposed	80%

2	Academic Challenges	Teaching methods Types of assessment Curriculum Students are not ready for this system A gap between Palestinian school teaching and Israeli colleges Research-based Lecture delivery Using a hidden curriculum	75% 75%
3	Challenges in the Enrolment Policy and Acceptance Examinations	Complicated procedures Long process for admission Hectic and challenging A demanding system Different computerised examinations, Hebrew, English, mathematics and psychometric examinations Advanced examinations Not ready for such a level	70%
4	Preparatory Year Challenges	Disappointing period For teaching Hebrew and English Different examinations after being enrolled and requiring high scores This year is meant for unvalued Palestinian certificates	70%
5	Political Challenges	Arab students are inspected at the gates of campus Military presence (being threatened) and soldiers/lecturers armed with weapons No participation in the students' elections for Arab students	65%
6	Challenges in Facilities Provision	No facilities for Arabs to gather and hold activities No representatives for Arab students at college Not any type of activities is allowed for Arab students	60%
7	Financial Challenges	Arab students have less income than Israelis Jobless after graduation	40%

As demonstrated in Table 3, there are various challenges that can be drawn from the students' responses. The first challenge is mainly cultural and relevant to the teaching language, Hebrew. This difficulty was mentioned by the majority of the participants (80%). As one of the participants discloses, "On campus, there are no events or celebrations allowed to express the Palestinian culture and history." Regarding the academic challenge, based on the data analysis, different categories sprang from this challenge, such as the teaching methods and strategies, the adopted curriculum, and the types of assessment. This barrier received 75% of the students' consensus. One of the participants, for example, asserts, "I think this is a hidden agenda to put more pressure on Jerusalemites to join the Israeli educational system for school education which demands adopting the Hebrew language as a main language and Israelising the curricula."

Regarding the third challenge, the enrolment policy, the acceptance examinations and the preparatory year occupy the third rank among the challenges students have been confronting. According to students' responses, 70% of students agreed upon the hardship that they experienced in their enrolment in Israeli higher education institutions, and most of them were enrolled in a preparatory year to learn Hebrew and English. Reflecting on such difficulties in the enrolment and preparatory year, one of the participants says, "I think the preparatory year was meant to underestimate the Palestinian certificates and make us feel we are not ready for such a system." Another student says, "The hardship that we tend to encounter in the enrolment and the preparatory year was meant to underestimate the high school or college degrees that Jerusalemites have to demonstrate that we are incompetent."

The political challenge, on the other hand, received the fourth rank among the challenges Jerusalemite students have been meeting, which was spotted in 65% of the answers. Moreover, the lack of facilities for Arab students and not being allowed to gather and hold activities are other difficulties that were extracted from the data analysis. This challenge received the sixth rank (60%). Meanwhile, the last challenge according to the participants' replies is the financial challenge, which was emphasised in 40% of the responses. This challenge is summarised by a participating student who states, "From my point of view, the student is treated as a cash cow only, with marginalising and devaluing any Palestinian certificate regardless of their level or competence."

In terms of the second question, which pertained to the types of discrimination that Jerusalemite students have been confronting, the data analysis revealed that students have encountered different types of discrimination, as displayed in Table 4.

Table 4: Forms of discrimination encountered by Jerusalemite students at Israeli higher education institutions

	Themes	Categories	
1	Cultural and Religious	Underestimating Arabs and the Arabic language Rejecting Arab costumes and hijab for female students No places to pray in Different holidays and weekends from their culture Passing Jewish beliefs, thoughts, and perspectives	75%
2	Political	No elections or representatives for Arab students No cultural or political activities are allowed Military presence/armed Israeli soldiers on campus	65%
3	Psychological	Treated as aliens No understanding of their situation Distrusted and threatened No facilities/activities to gather as a minority Bias in assessment	65%
4	Academic	Biases in evaluation Arab students can be easily accused and withdrawn from the courses Language barrier	60%

As shown in Table 4, there are different types of apartheid that Jerusalemite students have been facing at Israeli higher education institutions. The cultural and religious racist acts occupied the first rank among the discriminatory acts, as 75% of the participating students indicated this type of apartheid in their responses. This dilemma is summarised by a participating student who declares, "I do not advise young students to join such institutions since they may not be mature enough and can be affected by the hidden thoughts that are being passed to demolish our Arab identity and culture."

Based on the data analysis, Jerusalemite students have also faced political and psychological pressure and witnessed discriminatory acts. These types of racism were registered in 65% of the answers. Additionally, it was also revealed that academic discrimination was among the other types of racism that they have been facing as Palestinian students studying at Israeli colleges. One of the participants recapped this bias by saying:

> There are discriminatory acts come from the lecturers in terms of understanding students' situation; for example, they tend to offer assistance or facilities to Israeli student, and the opportunities are not equal. … Any small mistake will make Arab students at risk and be accused of cheating and be exposed to a disciplinary committee, meanwhile the Jewish students do not comply before the committee with the same mistake.

Discussion

The current study aimed to investigate the challenges and the apartheid acts that Jerusalemite students have been encountering in colleges under Israeli occupation in Jerusalem. It was demonstrated that there are numerous challenges and racist acts that they have been experiencing. In respect of the challenges according to the results, seven challenges were extracted from the participating students' responses. These challenges were categorised into cultural and academic challenges as well as challenges in terms of the enrolment policy, acceptance examinations, and the preparatory year. In addition to these, other challenges were considered political and financial, and some were relevant to the lack of facilities that have been provided to Jerusalemite students.

Concerning the cultural challenge, it was shown that Jerusalemite students confront linguistic, contextual, and religious discrimination. As for the teaching language, it was asserted that the official teaching language at Israeli colleges for Arab students has been only Hebrew in addition to English for some courses. Advanced Hebrew has also been used in the acceptance examinations, so most Arab students in Israeli colleges tend to fail such examinations or be enrolled in a preparatory year to teach them this language. In addition, Palestinian Jerusalemite students registered feelings of alienation due to religious and contextual factors. For example, Jerusalemite students were being estranged and rejected because of their traditional costumes, such as the hijab for female students. They have demanded adjustments to the Jewish calendar regarding the weekends and holidays while studying at Israeli colleges. In contrast to them, their families and dependents have different days off and holidays that belong to their culture as Arab and Muslim students. In other words, Jerusalemite Palestinian students in Israeli colleges are culturally rejected due to their beliefs, costumes, and religious practices, such as not being granted places for praying.

Another challenge that was extracted from the data relates to academic barriers. The teaching methods, types of assessment and evaluation, modes of lecture delivery as a well as the teaching language (Hebrew) were among the reasons that made Jerusalemite students' experience at Israeli colleges tough. It was also noted previously in the results that the teaching system in Israeli colleges tends to be research-based, and such skills have rarely been promoted in Jerusalemite school education that has been affiliated with the Council of Education in Israel. Accordingly, Arab students might not be ready for such demands as a result of the gap between Arab school teaching and Israeli school education, which results in Arab students with learning losses in comparison with Israeli students. An additional remark that was listed under the academic challenge was using a hidden curriculum that adopts the Jewish perspective in the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israeli occupation.

In a similar vein, the enrolment policy, acceptance examinations as well as the preparatory year were among the challenges that were introduced among other challenges experienced alongside the academic obstacles. The enrolment policy and acceptance examinations were described as long, complicated, and very demanding

procedures. The majority of the participating students indicated that the enrolment procedures were hectic and challenging, especially the psychometric examinations for acceptance that a few of them only barely managed to pass as a result of the language barriers as they have not been fully prepared for the use of Hebrew and English, in addition to the advanced level in mathematics that these computerised examinations require. Regarding the preparatory year, although the participants agreed upon the importance of this year for freshmen Jerusalemite students at Israeli colleges to promote their use of Hebrew, it was described as a disappointing year as students feel frustrated when they spend one year learning Hebrew without being specialised in their majors.

Furthermore, political challenges, lack of facilities and services as well as financial barriers were among the hardships that have accompanied Jerusalemite students in their experience at the Israeli colleges. Arab students tend to be over-inspected at the campus gates. They have not been allowed to gather or even participate in the student council elections as a minority. Arab students have had no representatives at Israeli colleges, and they have been treated as inferiors. Another issue to discuss under political challenges is the presence of armed soldiers and lecturers with weapons on campus, which make Arab students feel threatened and unsafe. The lack of services and facilities provided for Arab students at Israeli colleges was also highlighted as a real challenge. Holding activities has not been allowed for Jerusalemite/Arab students. In terms of financial barriers, Jerusalemites tend to have less income in comparison with Israelis. Thus, the tuition fees were listed as an obstacle that is emphasised by the participants.

The barriers drawn from the data that Jerusalemite students have encountered at Israeli higher education institutions can be attributed to multiple reasons. Regarding the hardship that they have faced in coping with the teaching language, Hebrew, it is worth mentioning that Palestinian students in Jerusalem studied in schools using Arabic, and forcing them to master Hebrew when joining higher education institutions can reflect a political agenda of forcing Arab schools in Jerusalem to Israelise the curricula and consequently demolish their culture and heritage. This finding is consistent with previous studies and reports (Abu-Saad 2019; MIFTAH 2021) that confirm that education and curricula have been used as tools to Judaise Jerusalem to spread the perspective that glorifies the Israeli nation and justifies the political and social system of the state, while emphasising the Jewish national identity and history described as an uninterrupted record of anti-Semitism.

As for the enrolment policy and acceptance examinations, the psychometric examinations used for accepting students have not been culturally adjusted for Arab students and do not address the teaching methods in Arab schools. The Israeli occupation's ignorance of Arabs' basic and high school education may cause academic defects and learning losses, which result in a small proportion of Arab students in such institutions. Thus, a small proportion of Jerusalemite students tended to be accepted in Israeli colleges, and most of them have been enrolled in a preparatory year to address the basic requirements of universities, such as being able to use Hebrew and English.

This preparatory year was among the challenges that trigger a feeling of inferiority among them, and this corresponds with the findings of the previous reports and studies (Ali 2013; BDS 2014; MIFTAH 2021) that confirm the difficulties Jerusalemite students tend to experience in joining Israeli higher education institutions.

Other difficulties that Arab students have experienced at Israeli colleges according to the results relate to culture and social injustice. Jerusalemite students have been regarded as a minority among Israeli citizens, because culturally they belong to the Palestinian nation. This situation may cause them to experience a dilemma regarding their position in the ongoing political conflict and events that Palestinians constantly endure. In addition, the Jerusalemite students' culture and language (Arabic) tend to be disrespected at Israeli educational institutions. The cultural atmosphere has adopted the Jewish perspective, so they may find themselves forced to submit to such culture to cope with the context and to fit in. For instance, students have been required to adjust to Israeli weekends and holidays; they have felt rejected due to their costumes, especially female students, and they have not been granted places to gather or practise their religious prayers. Politically, Arab students tend to be over-inspected at the campus gates where the military soldiers who carry weapons roam. Arab students have no representatives at Israeli colleges, and they have not been allowed to participate in students' council elections. In such an atmosphere crowded with alienation, Jerusalemite students may find it unappealing to join such institutions. This result concurs with those of Ali (2013) and Bamberger, Yan, and Morris (2023) who suggest that Israeli occupation has utilised higher education as a tool of "soft power" to control the city through using hidden strategies and policies that force Jerusalemite students to adjust to the standards or to be rejected.

Furthermore, the challenges related to the lack of facilities and financial barriers can be attributed to some practices and policies applied in Israeli colleges. Arab students, for example, have not been allowed to hold any cultural or political activities. They have no representatives to voice their demands as a minority in such institutions. The financial obstacles were additional barriers Jerusalemite students encountered. Arab families in Jerusalem tend to have less income than Israelis, which has been due to the presence of thousands of Arab college graduates who are jobless and suffer discrimination in the job market. Arab graduates, moreover, experience disparity in salaries in comparison with Israelis in similar professions. This may make Arab families comparatively poor and unable to afford the Jerusalemite students' education tuition. Arab student graduates tend to be excluded in their places of work, which may affect their motivation to pursue higher education. These results are consistent with similar conclusions listed by Ali (2013).

In respect of the types of apartheid that Jerusalemite students encounter at Israeli higher education institutions, the findings revealed that four types of discrimination have been practised against this minority of students. First, cultural and religious oppression is apparent in the participating students' responses. It was emphasised, for example, that

Jerusalemite students have been treated as inferiors, and their language and culture have been undervalued and demolished. In addition, their traditional costumes, holidays, and heritage have been rejected and alienated. Having no rights to have representatives and not being allowed to hold cultural or political activities on Israeli campuses in addition to the presence of armed soldiers may have caused Palestinian Jerusalemite students to experience political pressure and racism.

In addition to the political apartheid, psychological pressure has been exerted on the Jerusalemite students. Based on the results, Jerusalemite Palestinian students may experience feelings of being distrusted and easily accused of cheating. The favouritism shown to Israeli students over Palestinian Jerusalemite students in Israeli higher education institutions also extends to academic results, according to the findings. It was emphasised in the data analysis that Palestinian Jerusalemite students have been suffering from biased evaluation and their cultural interests or even their language (Arabic) have not been considered during the courses. They can also be easily withdrawn from courses without being given the same understanding of the conditions that may be granted to Israeli students. Finally, these types of discrimination reflect the difficult time Jerusalemite students have experienced while studying in Israeli higher education institutions, which is consistent with Halabi (2016) who concludes that Arab students in Israeli colleges may suffer from injustice in terms of grades and evaluation in addition to political discrimination acts.

Generally, the outcomes of this research effort reveal that the education policy in higher education is dominated by the Israeli occupation and has been applied systematically starting from the ignorance of the school education of Jerusalemites. Jerusalemite Palestinian students can be raised to accept the loss of their history and identity; consequently, they become prepared to submit to the high status of the Jewish people, especially when they surrender to the idea of the ignorance and inferiority in their homeland.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the results and upon a close evaluation of the challenges extracted from the data and the types of racism that Jerusalemite Palestinian students have encountered in Israeli higher education, some remarks can be highlighted to address such students' situation and the risky status of their education.

The results in this study reflect the suffering of the Jerusalemite Palestinian students as they experience multiple cultural, academic, and political challenges in addition to other types of apartheid they face as a minority at Israeli colleges. Investigating the Arab Jerusalemite students' suffering can be of significance as this presents the case of oppressed people who live in inferiority and are treated as a minority under occupation in their land. Therefore, highlighting these difficulties and obstacles can voice their challenges to the international community and human rights associations to support them in the ongoing political and ideological struggle that they constantly experience as

Palestinians. Additionally, even though Jerusalemite students' dilemmas and challenges at Israeli colleges may have started with a culture shock in an atmosphere that rejects them, this conflict extends to a struggle with a foreign language (Hebrew) and fighting an ideological agenda and a hidden curriculum that aim at defeating them psychologically as a minority. Consequently, they tend to find themselves forced to make compromises to cope with a context crowded with alienating factors.

Moreover, although the current research effort highlighted the academic and enrolment complications that Jerusalemite students tend to face at such institutions, the results also demonstrated that these challenges and discriminatory acts originated from the defects in Jerusalemite school education, and they may extend to display the Israeli policy of utilising higher education as a soft weapon to control Jerusalem and to force Arabs to leave this city by preventing them from pursuing their college education.

Overall, this study was an effort to examine the Jerusalemite students' situation based on their perspectives; in contrast, multiple biased studies and reports suggest the situation of Arab students in Jerusalem by adopting merely the Israeli perspective. Human rights organisations worldwide should take action to protect such oppressed students and work in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to review all the discriminatory policies applied to Palestinian Jerusalemite students, from school education moving to higher education. International campaigns worldwide should be instigated that support establishing a Palestinian university in Jerusalem that is recognised and supported globally to create options for students who experience such challenges and apartheid.

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