

Brain Drain or Brain Circulation? The Impact of Gaza's 7th October War on the Displaced Academicians and Personnel of Higher Education Institutions

**Asmaa Abusamra
University of Oslo**

The unprecedented Gaza war in October 2023 had a catastrophic impact on the Palestinian higher education sector in the Gaza Strip: deaths, injuries, psychological trauma to educators, and destruction to educational premises and their facilities. Major concerns include displacement, diminished access to education, and the subsequent exodus of qualified professionals from the country. These factors are exacerbated by increasing reduction or complete cessation of education, and infrastructure degradation in the war zone areas. This study aims to explore and examine the impact of the Gaza war crisis on higher education academicians and personnel which has intrinsically hampered education, research, and science. This study adopts a qualitative method by interviewing university academicians from Gaza addressing the impact of the war crisis on their careers. These interviews scope the barriers and sketch the scale and nature of challenges for the higher educational sector during the war aiming to record the most important decisions and interventions to maintain the continuity of the education process forward.

Keywords: war, Gaza, higher education, crisis management, displacement, academicians, safe education

INTRODUCTION

The education system has suffered significantly since Israel bombarded the Gaza Strip. The unprecedented war in October 2023 had a catastrophic and negative impact on the Palestinian higher education sector in the Gaza Strip: deaths, injuries, psychological trauma to educators and students, and destruction to educational premises and their facilities (Obe, Khan, Jewell, & Jameel, 2024). All educational institutions in Gaza have been damaged and no university has survived the Israel military's days of onslaught. Premises of higher education, including universities, have been completely paralyzed. Palestinian news agency Wafa reported that 12 higher education institutions in Gaza have been partially or completely destroyed, disrupting university education continuation. According to the Palestinian Ministry of Education MOE, since October 7, over 239 employees have died, and over 800 teachers have been injured. According to the Geneva-based non-governmental organization Euro-Mediterranean Human Rights Monitor (Euro-Med), several professors in Gaza have been killed by deliberate strikes, particularly those with advanced degrees. More than 100 university deans and academics have been targeted. Since many fatalities probably go unreported, the full scope of these losses is still unknown. Those targeted academicians studied and taught across a variety of academic disciplines, and many of their ideas served as cornerstones of academic research in the Gaza Strip's universities. MOE declared on February 19, 2024, in its most recent statement that since the aggression began in October 2023, 5213 students have died and

8,691 have been wounded. Furthermore, Israel occupied and used university campuses as military bases and detention facilities for months before destroying them.

The increasing chaos of war makes it a questionable matter regarding the status of displaced academicians, educators, and higher education personnel in general after evacuation and witnessing nonstop and aggressive death and killing. Most of the destroyed universities lacked communication with their staff, therefore, they do not have updated data concerning the number of martyred or injured staff. Furthermore, university personnel suffer harsh physical, psychological, and economic conditions resulting from the continuous displacement and the termination of their salaries due to the closure and destruction of the majority of banks' branches. Respectively, it becomes crucial to anticipate the status of the Palestinian academicians' struggle in times of war crisis and uncertainty. This will draw a future picture of the post-war condition in higher education premises and guide policymakers to take the necessary actions to set the ground for solutions and reform. To the researcher's knowledge, this is the first study during the Israel-Hamas war that copes with the Gazan academicians' opinions and sketches the difficulties they faced during the ongoing war after facing displacement and losing their permanent homes and jobs. The researcher has taken into consideration the scenario of the ongoing conflict in Gaza and the Israeli occupation's increasing atrocities without seeing clear intentions for a near ceasefire.

GAZA STRIP AS A WAR ZONE AND HIGHER EDUCATION

The experiences of from war zone settings, Palestinians, Syrians, and Ukrainians as examples, demonstrate the significant impact that wars and conflicts have on the people's main necessities (Webster & Neal, 2022). A humanitarian catastrophe of never before seen exists in Gaza as a result of Israel's massive siege. According to (Jebril, 2023), Gaza is considered an area of conflict under occupation. Despite the Peace Accords of 1993, the (*Report on UNCTAD Assistance to the Palestinian People: Developments in the Economy of the Occupied Palestinian Territory*, n.d.) states that "Gaza's airspace, maritime space, and land crossings' remain controlled by Israel. The Gaza Strip has been significantly impacted by decades of occupation, conflict, and embargo". Israel invaded and occupied Gaza in 1967, and then withdrew in 2005. In 2007, when Hamas took control of Gaza, Israel imposed a land, air, and sea blockade, isolating the area from the West Bank and the rest of the world. Israeli occupation is challenged, with claims of disengagement refuted by the reality of blockade control (Barakat, Milton, & Elkahout, 2018). Since 2008, the Gaza Strip has been profoundly impacted by several wars and political changes that have changed the current humanitarian and sociopolitical scene. This time witnessed the commencement of Israel's harsh siege, which severely restricted the movement of people and goods into and out of Gaza.

In war zones, the relationship between conflicts and education is complicated. Palestinian Higher education has been conceived as "important not only by the Palestinians but also by their occupiers" (Jebril, 2023). Historically, Palestinian universities have been leaders in building resilience, defining national identity, and advancing local development. However, this job is increasingly difficult without a foundation of justice and freedom (Abusamra, 2023; Kapeliouk, 2024).

Gaza conflicts impacted higher education in various ways. Several studies have focused on higher education in the Gaza Strip in the war context (Abusamra, 2023; Kapeliouk, 1985, 2024; Paz, 2000, 2009). Research on higher education in Gaza after 2007 has often overlooked the impact of the siege and violence on the university system and university community. (Jebril, 2018) analysis of educationalists in Gazan universities from a development perspective offers a thorough understanding of the imposed siege. The impact of continuous attacks and invasion on higher education can be further conceived in several damages such as physical and psychological.

First, there is severe physical damage to higher education institutions HEIs. In 2008, many HEIs were demolished, with three colleges destroyed, six university buildings leveled to the ground, and 16 damaged (Marchenko, 2023; Marshall, 2016; "The New Humanitarian | Tough Times for University Students in Gaza," 2009). The Islamic University of Gaza IUG was most affected, with six separate Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) airstrikes destroying three colleges and damaging over 75 laboratories ("One Year After - Gaza Early Recovery and Reconstruction Needs Assessment - Occupied Palestinian Territory | ReliefWeb,"

2010) Furthermore, Al Aqsa University suffered the destruction of an under-construction facility. The IUG and thirteen other HEIs were targeted again in 2014, resulting in damages that exceeded 16 million dollars (Ramallah, Kostelny, & Wessells, n.d.; “Rapid Assessment of Higher Education Institutions in Gaza,” n.d.). The main faculty building, the groundswell, and the main entrance of Al-Azhar University were destroyed due to the attack on the Faculty of Agriculture. Al Aqsa University sustained damage to many structures, including its 285,000-dollar headquarters. Moreover, the University College of Applied Sciences UCAS’s major technological institute in Gaza suffered damage to its labs, study halls, and main offices due to bombardment (“A Gaza Vocational College Devastated by the War,” n.d.). Second, there are additional mental effects alongside the physical ones. According to (Kostelny & Wessells, 2010), research conducted during the 2008–2009 conflict revealed serious psychological issues that had an impact on the students’ ability to learn and the educators’ ability to teach and cope with persistent situations. These issues included anxiety, fear, increasing addiction, daily misery, and hopelessness. According to their study, there is a high frequency of stress among faculty members and an unfulfilled need for psychological assistance, which lowers productivity and puts pressure on university resources. Moreover, scholars report that among the most detrimental consequences of war are the psychological ramifications of oppression, despair, and dissatisfaction.

Destruction and Reconstruction

Violent assaults have a detrimental effect on higher education premises globally, including depletion of resources, infrastructure devastation, and barriers to access and quality (Jebril, 2023). The bombing of Gaza universities, the hub for higher learning and research, not only halts academic progress but also reduces the intellectual capital of the region (Abed Alah, 2024). First coined by Karma Nabulsi, an Oxford University scholar, the term “scholasticide” was used to ensure and describe the deliberate willful destruction and demolition of academic premises and infrastructure. Israel’s Gaza war has systematically targeted the education sector with the intention of displacement and marginalization. Scholasticide as a term was popularized during Israel’s 2008–2009 invasion of Gaza. This term was widely up to the surface again hence the greatest amount of damage and casualties, especially in education, have come from the ongoing conflict that began in the October 7 war. As part of a well-established and long-standing pattern of intentional attacks against the creation of knowledge and cultural heritage carried out as part of colonial occupation policies to deter the Palestinians from resisting, researchers now contend that the Israeli army’s current attack on educational institutions in Palestine is considered a blatant example of scholasticide (Abusmara & Triwiyanto, n.d.; Baramki, 2010b; Maira, 2018; Marchenko, 2023; Minoia & Taher, 2024; Omar, 2024).

In the Israel-Hamas war, much of Gaza’s minimal scientific infrastructure has collapsed. Israeli air attacks have severely damaged two major institutions: the Islamic University of Gaza and Al-Azhar University. Many students and faculty are dead or wounded. The impact of the war on Gaza’s higher education system is immeasurable. The psychological, intellectual, and cultural fabric required for a healthy academic community has been torn apart, and it will take years, if not decades, to repair (Chabin, 2023). In the aftermath of the war, reconstructing these institutions and restoring educational systems will be critical in meeting the population’s cognitive demands. The long-term impact of this interruption on a generation’s intellectual development in Gaza is a major worry, emphasizing the importance of significant support and investment in the region’s educational infrastructure and resources (Abed Alah, 2024).

HIGHER EDUCATION PERSONNEL AND THE OPEN-ENDED STRUGGLE

The onslaught on Palestinian cultural and educational institutions did not start as a reaction to the incident on October 7. Throughout that history, Palestinian intellectuals, Academicians, and higher education personnel have been subject to continuous attacks. Gaza experienced a steady decline in educational standards and career opportunities (Cordesman, 2009). Challenges and daily hardships stipulate the fact that most of the academicians and personnel of higher education alongside all Gazan citizens are struggling to survive.

Physical, psychological, economic, and mental problems are part of the daily challenges in this struggle. For the Palestinian case, this struggle exceeds other challenging constraints. The continuous struggle for survival and the lack of control over their environment have significantly eroded personal dignity and self-respect. Moreover, Israeli forces have been arresting Palestinian men and women in Gaza subjecting them to mistreatment and humiliation undermining their dignity. Opportunities for personal achievement and mastery are severely limited due to the disruption of educational and professional avenues, fostering a sense of stagnation and frustration (Abed Alah, 2024). In addition to hundreds of university students, Israel has killed hundreds of academics, including numerous internationally respected scholars, deans, and presidents, thus serving a harsh blow not only to the physical infrastructure of higher education in Gaza but also to its intellectual infrastructure (Minoia & Taher, 2024).

It worth mentioning that both male and female academics and personnel struggled to preserve the identity of the Palestinians with the universities' campuses and study halls. Male scholars in Gaza often hold senior positions in universities and research institutions. They play a pivotal role in shaping educational policies and driving research initiatives. Their work is crucial in maintaining the academic rigor and standards of Gazan institutions. Women in academia face additional hurdles such as societal expectations and balancing family responsibilities. However, their increasing presence in higher education and research is a testament to their resilience and dedication. Female academicians often serve as role models and advocates for other women, promoting greater gender inclusivity in academia (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2009).

Prior to the present conflict, Israel's blockade of Gaza made it impossible for Palestinian scholars to acquire funding and attend international conferences, as well as for foreign researchers to operate in Gaza's institutions. Israel frequently prohibits the importation of scientific equipment due to security concerns (Chabin, 2023). Israel has tightened visa laws since 2007, restricting travel and cutting off colleges from the West Bank, where thirty-five percent of students formerly studied, and the outside world. Only three Gazan students were admitted to West Bank universities between 2000 and 2012 (Hass, 2012). Israeli court decisions that restricted Gazan students' access to the West Bank described Palestinian universities as "greenhouses for breeding terrorists" and classified them as a "dangerous category" (Alzaroo & Hunt, 2003). Furthermore, living in a conflict zone might negatively influence one's capacity to concentrate on academic and intellectual development. Witnessing continuous destruction and termination of the education process imposes uncertainty and distrust of occupational safety for full and part-time workers.

Higher education in the Gaza Strip has suffered during four wars and more than a decade of blockade. Teachers and students have died as university infrastructure has been attacked, rebuilt, and then destroyed again (Barakat et al., 2018). According to (Leach & Dunne, 2007) and (Paulson, Barakat, & Karpinska, 2008) research on education and conflict is limited and cannot be easily compared. Higher education is perceived as a luxury in conflict zones, hence research on it is sparse. Due to limited access, most research on education and conflict is conducted through library studies or relief and humanitarian organizations (Leach & Dunne, 2007). Alzaroo & Hunt (2003) discovered that the most accessible research was conducted following the conflict periods. As a displaced academic working in a respected university in Gaza, the researcher tries utilizing research to be an eyewitness for the academicians' experience in the ongoing conflict after 250 days of onslaught. Through exploring literature, the study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. What is the status quo of the displaced Palestinian academicians in the Gaza Strip amid the ongoing conflict?
2. What specific challenges do academics at universities in Gaza face as a result of the war?
3. How do academics perceive the future of higher education in Gaza in the post-war period?
4. What are the urgent needs of the displaced Palestinian academicians in the Gaza Strip during the ongoing conflict?

METHOD

To achieve the results of this study, the researcher conducted qualitative research. Using in-depth semi-structured interviews, the data was collected from 28 displaced educationalists of academic staff from different faculties at different Gaza universities (17 males and 11 females). The interviews were conducted via different methods due to the overlapping challenges of war consequences including shortage of appropriate electricity and internet. Interviews were conducted face-to-face, via email, and WhatsApp. The obtained qualitative data, focusing on the people's experiences and opinions, are well suited for determining the meanings they assign to events and processes. This study adopts (Maxwell, 2012) interactive research design model by which the way the relationships among the research's components are analyzed and conceptualized. The researcher employed purposeful sampling to reach the academic staff, striving for equal distribution across gender, age, and institutional affiliation. The interviews were conducted primarily in the southern areas of the Gaza Strip, including Deir al-Balah, Al Mawasi, and Rafah, where many individuals had evacuated. Due to the ongoing military invasion, accessing Khan Yunis posed significant challenges during the research period.

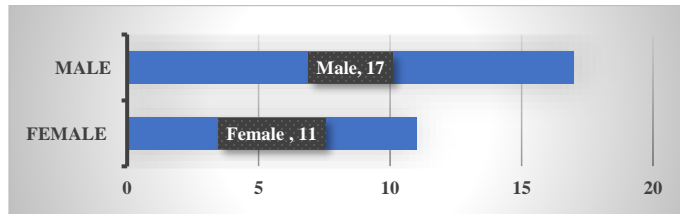
A self-interview protocol was meticulously developed and utilized before the commencement of the research. A power-relations analysis sheet was also created to serve as an interview guide, enabling the researcher to approach interview situations with heightened awareness. Notes and insights were documented through a digital journal maintained on Scrivener Software. To ensure the safety and anonymity of participants, the researcher designed risk assessment forms specifically tailored to the Gaza Strip's context and implemented a secure storage system. Pseudonyms were used for all participants and institutions to protect their identities. For reference within this article, universities are denoted as A, B, and C. Academic participants are identified by their first names and institutional affiliation, for example, 'Khaled UB' indicates an academic from University B.

Using the social constructionist-interpretive paradigm to analyze the data, the researcher combined insights from the analyzed literature, the researcher, and the participants to construct the findings, by linking the subjective and the objective. Atlas-Ti software was used to transcribe and code the recorded interviews into categories. The justification for this selection is that ATLAS.ti software makes qualitative evidence more visual and compact and facilitates the theoretical analysis process (Friese, 2019). The coded data was printed out and analyzed thematically using the traditional piling and sorting method. The analysis focused on interpreting participants' views of themes rather than each other. The findings were constructed from all responses to gain an overwhelming perspective into the present status of HEIs academicians at Gaza's universities. To minimize any personal bias on the results of this study, member checks were utilized during and after interviews to increase the credibility, validity, and transferability of the study results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). During each interview, the researcher also restated and summarized information, questioning participants on the accuracy of the information. After the interviews had been transcribed, the researcher asked each participant to review the content of his or her transcript for accuracy. In addition, the researcher consulted resources and faculty advisors throughout the evolution of this study. In addition, the researcher included ample and relevant quotes from the participants' interviews.

RESULTS

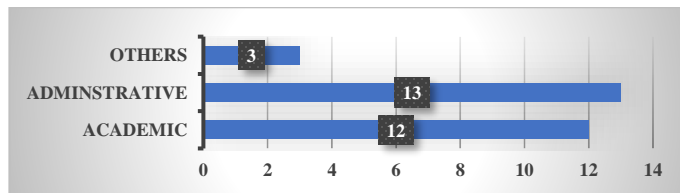
The researcher interviewed 28 respondents between January 2023 and April 2024 amid the ongoing war. Seventy-six percent of the respondents were affiliated with private higher education institutions, while 23% were from public institutions. The researcher reached some participants sheltered in schools, tents, rented apartments, or rented stores. Others visited the researcher's shelter for informal interviews. Of the respondents, 17 were male, comprising 61%, while 11 were female, accounting for 39% (Figure 1).

**FIGURE 1
POPULATION ACCORDING TO GENDER**



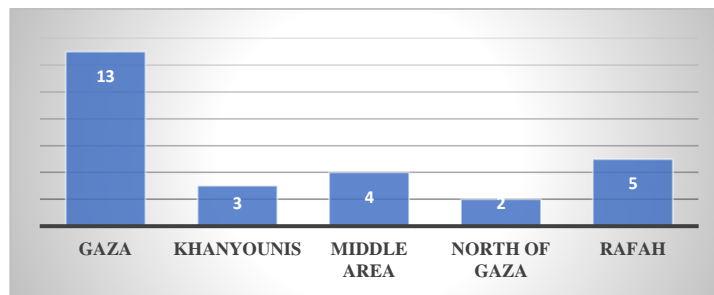
The respondents included 46% academicians, 43% administrative staff, and 11% who identified their job positions as “other,” indicating they do not fall into these typical categories (see Figure 2).

**FIGURE 2
POPULATION ACCORDING TO POSITION AT THE UNIVERSITY**



Before October 7th, the respondents were located as follows: 13 respondents in Gaza, 2 respondents in the North of Gaza, 4 respondents in the Middle area, 3 respondents in Khan Younis city, and 5 respondents in Rafah (Figure 3).

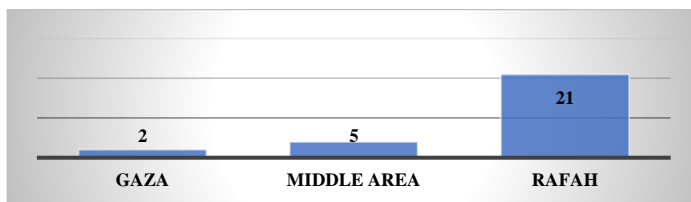
**FIGURE 3
POPULATION ACCORDING TO THEIR ORIGINAL AREA IN THE GAZA STRIP BEFORE THE 7TH OF OCTOBER**



After enduring harsh circumstances, including forced evacuations due to ongoing military attacks on Gaza and the northern areas, the respondents were displaced to the southern Gaza Valley area. Most interviewees were located in Rafah (21 respondents) and the Middle area of Gaza (5 respondents). These cities became densely populated with displaced Gazans after the IDF declared them safe areas. However, conducting interviews was challenging due to continuous bombings that disrupted some of the interviews in these two cities.

For those who remained in Gaza City, conducting interviews was also difficult due to poor communication and weak or nonexistent internet connections caused by the severe and aggressive siege imposed since October 2023. Nevertheless, the researcher conducted interviews with only 2 respondents via WhatsApp call (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4
POPULATION DISTRIBUTION AFTER THE 7TH OF OCTOBER



Approximately 67.7% of the respondents are currently displaced, residing in rented homes, apartments, or stores in southern cities like Rafah and Deir al-Balah. Following this, 23.5% of respondents are displaced and living in tents. Another 15% have been relocated to UNRWA and government school shelters, while only 5% have remained in their homes despite the ongoing military escalation. Regarding injuries and casualties, 17.4% of the respondents reported being injured during the war. Additionally, 65% of the respondents experienced the death of close relatives, friends, or both.

Regarding communication with their higher education institutions, most respondents (58.8%) stated that the university administration and human resources did not communicate with them since the start of the war. On the other hand, 23.5% reported that their institutions made efforts to communicate and monitor their status during the war. Many respondents (64.7%) also agreed that no clear crisis management plan was in place at their institutions to address their needs in light of the war's consequences. However, 35.3% of respondents acknowledged their universities' modest efforts to maintain operations and implement an urgent crisis management plan. This involved communicating with their employees and staff through WhatsApp groups and key coordinators led by emergency committees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study addressed the primary research questions using supporting evidence, including participant quotations and feedback. Responses were categorized into themes based on frequency, with an analysis of outliers or noteworthy conditions. A comprehensive analysis of the study themes was provided. The researcher utilized these emergent themes and sub-themes as practical tools to construct their interpretation of the data. The following themes are defined based on their contribution to understanding the data.

The Status Quo of the Displaced Academicians and Personnel in the Gaza Strip

The purpose of the research's first question was to ascertain the main perspective, of those working in academic or administrative higher education contexts, to what first comes to their mind when being asked about their status quo concerning the ongoing conflict. Based on the respondents' results and according to the open, axial, and selective coding process, major themes emerged from the repeated codes. Based on the interviewees' replies, the main themes arose as the following: (1) Unemployment and Economic hardship with a percentage of 80.2%, (2) experience of displacement with a percentage of 70%, (3) Financial constraints, and (4) consideration for migration with equal percentage yielding 76.5%. They are followed by (5) Psychological burdens and (6) career transition considerations where they were represented less than the previous themes with an equal percentage of 50%.

Unemployment and Economic Hardship

The highest replies from the participants denoted the agreement on the focus on their off-job status and the fear of unemployment at this stage in life. For (Mohammed, UA) who was forced to leave Gaza and evacuate to the southern areas, the fear of losing a job at the age of 43 is the biggest nightmare. He emphasized that:

Enduring the constant fear of aggressive assaults is not the sole challenge we face; there are other battles to endure. For the past six months, we have not received adequate salaries, and our university has failed to respond to this crisis. Like my colleagues, I am apprehensive about the security of our positions at the university post-war.

Asmaa, UF added that:

We are engulfed in chaos and uncertainty. After seven months of unprecedented conflict, my university sent us a shocking message: it has gone bankrupt and is unwilling to address its financial burdens. Consequently, it declared that we are free to resign or travel without requiring administrative permission. What does this mean? I read the email multiple times, and it felt more devastating than the war itself. After dedicating over 20 years to this institution, I am left wondering where to go and what to do next.

Hassan, UF added that:

As an academic, I have dedicated my career to research and teaching generations of students. With the destruction of all higher education institutions in Gaza, I am left pondering my next steps. Even after a ceasefire, it will take years to rebuild these institutions. Should I seek another job or consider relocating? Making a decision is incredibly difficult, given the lack of alternative career opportunities amidst the devastation and terror. Leaving would mean sacrificing my career and starting anew.

For Inas, UD:

We were already under significant financial strain before October 7th. Most university academics and personnel received only 40% to 70% of their monthly salaries following the imposed siege on Gaza after Hamas took control. These partial payments were not sufficient for savings. Consequently, once the war began, many academics faced difficulties in accessing their savings or utilizing the limited funds they had accumulated over the years to leave Gaza.

Financial Constraints

As most respondents asserted the off-job status which leads to financial burdens, academicians struggle to cover their families' needs amidst the danger. Most of them ascertained the transition from financial stability to uncertainty regarding paid salaries. Ameen, UD declared:

As we approach the eighth month, the university has only provided three financial advances, each covering a mere 2% to 5% of our main salary. This has left us in a dire financial situation. The basic supplies and aid convoys fail to meet the needs of over a million displaced people in Rafah. The growing demand has forced some individuals to sell the food packages they receive to cover daily expenses. Prices have now tripled, leaving people helpless and unable to afford items that were once part of their daily lives.

Soad, UA further claimed that:

After delivering lectures and working at a prestigious academic institution, I now find myself cooking and selling food to provide for my children's basic needs, such as drinking water and bread.

Leena, UB declared that:

I am acutely aware of the financial status of all universities in Gaza, which will inevitably have a negative impact on their employees, with no resolution in sight. The uncertainty surrounding a potential ceasefire exacerbates concerns about future financial stability. This raises the critical question: on the day following the end of the war, how will the universities operate, and under what conditions?

Consideration of Migration

Associated with the preceded theme. Academicians and staff, like the rest of the Gazans, want to flee Gaza to save their souls and their loved ones. Associated with the precedent theme, financial constraints stand in the middle hence they need to pay unjustified vast amounts of money to cross the borders. For Mohammed, UH:

I need to pay \$35,000 to certain travel agencies to coordinate my travel out of Gaza. Although this is a substantial amount of money, the well-being of my loved ones is far more valuable. Additionally, I need to find safety to be able to work again and rebuild my life. This war does not define my existence.

Ali from UA, who works as an academic engineering lecturer, received a PhD scholarship he has sought for years. He stated that:

I need to travel, an opportunity I have sought for years. A major concern is that the borders are closed. Despite my communications with the university and the embassy, there is little they can do to grant me a permit to leave or to coordinate with the Egyptian embassy. This situation is extremely frustrating. Furthermore, the scholarship I received does not cover my family or relatives, which adds additional pressure, as I cannot leave them behind in the midst of this conflict.

Omar, UC declared that:

I completed both my master's and doctorate degrees at prestigious international universities in Europe and the USA, where I was frequently offered highly coveted positions. However, I consistently declined these opportunities to return to Gaza, driven by a commitment to securing a forward-looking future for my students. Regrettably, the recent destruction of universities in the ongoing conflict has obliterated that vision. My primary objective was always centered on Gaza, but now, mere survival has become paramount. I am left contemplating whether those previously declined opportunities might still be accessible.

Experience of Displacement

“There is no safe place in Gaza” replied (Abdullah, UA) as he was forced to leave Gaza with his sick father, wife, and children. He did not want to evacuate and depart, but the destruction of the medical premises raised concerns about offering the needed medical help for his father. Abdullah added: *Although I am currently in Rafah, the ongoing bombardment continually jeopardizes the safety and security of myself and my family. This situation underscores the absence of a safe haven without an official ceasefire.* Abdullah, as many of the interviewees, highlighted the theme of displacement in their replies.

According to (Sanaa, UC), “Displacement is not about moving from one place to another. We leave our lives and memories in insecure situations. She added that:

During a period of one month, it became necessary for me to relocate within Gaza from one neighborhood to another. Subsequently, seeking refuge, we transitioned to the southern region. After finding temporary residence in a school shelter in Khan Younis for

a duration of two months, we were obliged to vacate once more, leaving our belongings, due to the Israeli Defense Forces' incursion into Khan Younis, which included an attack on Nasser Hospital.

Psychological Burdens

Gaza is another example of the already lengthy list of traumatic events that can negatively affect psychological and mental health. Omar, UA added: *The enduring impact of trauma on individuals who have witnessed the adverse consequences of war is noteworthy. There has been a noticeable rise in homelessness among academics and university personnel in the aftermath of the conflict.*

Seham, UC emphasized and agreed that:

Academics globally are susceptible to traumatic experiences, which consequently lead to increased medical complications, familial dysfunction, unemployment, substance abuse, and other related issues.

Career Transition Consideration

Observing a university professor selling goods and merchandise in the market to cover daily expenses is not unusual. However, does this signify a career shift? Hussam, UA wondered. According to Amal, UD:

For those academicians and staff who are unable to leave the country, whether due to a decision to remain or financial constraints, it is imperative to seek alternative sources of income since teaching is no longer a viable option.

Omar, UD shared concerns about the scarce job opportunities during the war where only human rights organizations and United Nations agencies work. He emphasized that:

In the context of ongoing conflict, job opportunities are primarily confined to sectors associated with relief projects. This creates significant stress for those in the academic sector, who must transition their careers and seek employment in other areas. Nevertheless, I know of several colleagues who are now volunteering in roles related to data collection and convoy distribution within these sectors. Their participation reflects their commitment to maintaining social and academic contributions.

The Challenges of the Academicians and Personnel During the Gaza War

The second research question aims to emphasize the challenges faced by the academics and personnel working in higher education institutions amidst the war. Different themes were grasped from the respondents' results. Based on these responses, (1) personal safety concerns become the top challenge with a percentage of 95% followed by (2) psychological impact with a percentage of 88%. (3) environmental instability, (4) economic hardships, (5) basic necessities shortage are other challenges with an equal percentage of 82% followed by (6) communication barriers and (7) mobility restrictions with a percentage of 14%.

Personal Safety Concerns

The concept of safety is missing in the war context. In this war, the IDF continuously announced for the civilians to evacuate to certain allocated areas and not return to the abundant areas. Academics depicted their struggle to seek safety for themselves and their children, although it is extremely difficult or even impossible. Omar, Ub questioned why my college Saed was Killed?

He was besieged in Gaza but managed to evacuate Rafah city with his family, including his two children. They moved to an apartment in a building that was subsequently destroyed by bombs while my friend Saed, his wife, and their two children were sleeping.

Despite seeking safety and following the purported orders intended to protect civilians, my friend was killed. Saed was a respected lecturer. How can I feel secure now, constantly fearing each night that the next explosion might kill me and my family?

Safety is a critical matter when it comes to life or death. The majority of the interviewed participants expressed that safety comes as the biggest challenge hence the lethal weapons are mass destruction hence their damage is not limited to the targeted areas.

Hind, UC said that:

We evacuated to the central area, and suddenly, during the night, there was a massive explosion. The air was filled with dark smoke and the smell of burning gunpowder. It was a terrifying experience; I felt as if the roof was collapsing over my children's heads. In that moment, I couldn't comprehend who was fortunate enough to survive. My house was not targeted; it was a neighboring house. Tragically, my colleague, a lecturer and the head of a university branch, was not so lucky. He perished along with his wife and eldest son, leaving three children orphaned.

Psychological Impact

It is normal to be afraid. This is part of human nature. According to Heba, Ub:

During wartime, fear and terror are frequently employed as weapons to disrupt the opponent's decision-making and erode their will. This is currently occurring in Gaza. The terrorizing of civilians aims to disrupt social cohesion and undermine the capacity for effective decision-making.

Academicians and staff ensured that fear itself is associated with other contexts. Soad, UF emphasized that:

For us, fear is intertwined with headline stress disorder, war anxiety, and nuclear anxiety. We are compelled to evacuate under the pretense of safety; however, in reality, no place is truly safe.

As one Professor states, 'Preventing war is beyond our control, and thus, we cannot assert that there are means of protection. The only practical measures are to suspend studies and avoid being in university buildings during periods of conflict'.

Communication Barriers

To proceed in a certain job, you will need to secure the main requirements of this job in terms of logistics and communication. Unfortunately, in the context of war, both are missing. The majority of HEIs staff asserted the communication burdens. According to Ali, UF:

Since October 7th, neither electricity nor internet has been available, making it challenging for me to work or teach online, even though this could offer some relief from the current financial instability. I feel paralyzed, and even alternative solutions, such as solar energy cells, are insufficient.

In the same context, Omar UA was frustrated when he was able to save his laptop from the rubble, but his laptop was not charged for three months. He explained that: *It is difficult to stay away from my research efforts for such an extended period. I cannot imagine that I have neither written nor read for the past four months.*

Environmental Instability

As a result of fear and seeking safety displacement becomes another challenge for the academicians. Displacement imposes leaving safety and settlement to chaos. According to Rami, Ud: *The biggest misery in life is when my wife and children ask me where to go. Alongside humiliation, displacement means insatiably, uncertainty, and lack of trust.*

For Omar, UD:

At the onset of the war, we abandoned our homes and relocated multiple times, evacuating to three different cities. Upon reaching our final destination, the IDF launched a military operation that resulted in the deaths of many innocent members of my family.

Asmaa UF said:

When we evacuated our homes, we moved empty-handed, taking only our clothes. Now, after five months of war, we have acquired blankets and kitchen tools. My greatest fear now is having to move all these items again or discard them and start over once more.

Economic Hardships

The majority of the respondents asserted that financial burdens as the biggest challenge. According to Soaad, UA: *I cannot access my financial account due to the closure or destruction of many banks. I am trapped and unable to travel.* Omar, UD added: *My children require a specific type of medicine, which I cannot afford given the current lack of appropriate healthcare and the scarcity of medical services.*

For Imad, UC:

The prices of everyday items have tripled. It is heart-wrenching to see my child cry for simple things like biscuits or juice, just like any other child would. A bottle of juice that used to cost less than half a dollar is now priced between three and five dollars. How can I possibly explain to my child that this is normal?

Agreeing with Imad, (Omar, UB) reported that:

Displacement is not the final destination. Renting a house requires paying an expensive monthly rent, and with the termination of our salaries, this is nearly impossible. Even living in a tent is costly, with prices ranging from \$300 to \$1000.

Basic Necessities Shortage

For most of us, things are at stake when it comes to the basic human needs of water and food. Ahmed, UC asserted that:

I wake up early and walk for hours to stand in long queues every day to fill our bottles with drinking water. After that, I embark on the search for food. By the end of the day, I am exhausted, and my only concern is to maintain and secure these supplies for the following day.

For Omar, UB:

The lack of cooking gas has forced me to use wood and fire, causing irritation to my lungs and problems with my eyes. This is the only way to prepare our meals. Sadly, due to the shortage of food and water, we often have to reduce our meals from three a day to just one.

Employment Insecurity

For all the intervened participants, job termination and losing a job is another war of struggle. According to Imad, UA:

During previous years of war and escalation, conflicts lasted for days or months, but life often resumed relatively quickly thereafter. However, this current war is unprecedented due to its uncertain duration, widespread destruction, and high numbers of casualties. I have been unable to work for 180 days now, with a glimmer of hope emerging amidst talks of a ceasefire.

According to Hind, UC

All my university buildings have been demolished. When I see the extent of the damage and destruction in media reports, I wonder if there will be an opportunity to resume the education process after the ceasefire. It feels like life has been paralyzed, and there is no clear outlook regarding job stability.

Mobility Constraints

According to Omar, UB:

Before October 7th, Gazans already faced significant challenges in traveling due to harsh restrictions. This situation worsened after the war, as border crossings were closed, and only private travel companies were permitted to operate. To travel through these companies, families must pay a substantial fee starting from \$5000 for each family member aged 16 and above. Given that Palestinian families are often extended, this exorbitant cost prohibits many from traveling and seeking refuge from the ongoing conflict.

However, Imad, UC has another perspective. He said:

I have the financial means to travel, but it doesn't feel right to spend it solely on crossing borders. My main concern is what comes next after crossing into a new place. Starting afresh after two decades of working on university campuses is daunting, risky, and certainly not straightforward.

The Future of the Higher Education in the Post-Israel-Hamas War Period

The third research question outlines the interviewees' perspective concerning the future of the education process in the premises of higher education in the post-war period. Based on the collected replies, the participants asserted the difficulties in reaching the (1) normal status after the end of the war with a high percentage of 88.2% followed by (2) prevailing uncertainty and erosion of trust and (3) the necessity for higher education reform with an equal percentage of 64.76%. Some responses asserted the (4) brain drain and the intellectual power loss after the war with a percentage of 41.2%. (5) 29% of the participants emphasized the Education discontinuity and DE development reaching the lack of trust in management systems with 11.8%.

Challenges in Achieving Normalcy

Respondents reflected the difficulty of reaching the normal status before October 7th. For many of the respondents, the academic life after the war is ambiguous and vague. According to Hind, UC:

What kind of life are we anticipating after this war? Previous conflicts, though destructive, had defined periods. Despite ongoing challenges, Palestinians have consistently rebuilt. In 2014, after the war, academics like us participated in cleaning and clearing rubble, despite

extensive damage. This time, 95% of the university campuses have been destroyed. Gaza's infrastructure lies in ruins, with hospitals and schools decimated. If rebuilding Gaza were a negotiation, it would take years to restore it to its pre-October 7th status.

Omar, UB added:

Mentally and psychologically battered, many Gazans who once lived modest lives now endure humiliation, disgrace, and the devastation of relentless wars. Staying in Gaza may not be feasible for them anymore. I anticipate a significant number of academic and intellectual figures will choose to leave Gaza for other countries.

A few per cent of the participants have a positive perspective. For Ali, UF:

This war has brought global attention to Palestinian rights and their enduring struggle under occupation. If a ceasefire is achieved, Gaza's political landscape could shift in favor of Palestinians. With international support, Gaza can be rebuilt anew. There will come a time for Gaza to forge a path towards a prosperous future for its youth, offering new opportunities after this period of sacrifice.

Prevailing Uncertainty and Erosion of Trust

The depicted struggle shaped an atmosphere of uncertainty and lack of trust. For those staff, investing in Gaza again is critical. For Ahmed, UC:

I lost my house during the 2014 war and struggled for over five years until I finally rebuilt it in 2019 and settled in with my family. I never imagined experiencing such misery again in 2023, losing my home once more and tragically losing a beloved son. Now, I am uncertain whether to rebuild my house in Gaza again, knowing it might be destroyed for a third time in another war. Regardless of my decision, my son will never return. Living in a war-torn context is defined by uncertainty and profound challenges.

Trust is another issue. Most staff asserted a lack of trust in the political system, the university system, and the world's failure to impose a ceasefire. For Sanaa, UC:

While we believe in our right to resist and strive for freedom, the current approach is not the solution. Gaza, with its dense population, cannot continue to be a war zone. Political decisions must prioritize the safety of citizens and avoid jeopardizing their future in this manner.

Mohammed, UH emphasized that:

Since October 7th, we have endured over four months without any communication or response from our university's academic or administrative bodies regarding our status during the ongoing war. We have not received our salaries nor any form of assistance to alleviate the burden of fear and escalating crisis. In times of crisis, there should be an emergency plan in place to provide immediate support to those who are suffering.

Omar, UD reported that:

No trust with any parties of the ongoing conflict is obvious through the reported answers.

Ali, UF said:

The IDF instructed us to relocate to the south, only to bomb that area shortly after. Despite resistance and government advice to remain in our homes and not yield to IDF threats, many houses were destroyed. As academics, we collaborate with local, regional, and international entities, yet despite ongoing solidarity, little has changed on the ground. This cycle of death continues to claim many lives day after day.

Necessity for Higher Education Reform

When the education system fails to secure the basic rights of its employees it is the time to ensure and call for a comprehensive management and administration reform. According to Khalid, UA:

In an occupied country like ours, there is an urgent requirement for specialized procedures to address crises, wars, and other disruptions. Regrettably, there has been a widespread failure to provide immediate assistance or support in most of the Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in Gaza. Furthermore, in the West Bank, the education process is transitioning to online modes, raising concerns about the Ministry of Education's responsibilities towards staff and students during these challenging times.

Soaad, UF added:

I reached out to esteemed colleagues from various universities worldwide, who generously offered to collaborate by providing opportunities for our staff to teach online and assisting our students as visiting scholars. However, a significant hurdle we face is the lack of necessary data from many universities, which has resulted in the loss of potential aid projects and initiatives aimed at alleviating the burdens of the conflict.

Education Discontinuity and DE Development

According to Abdullah, UA:

The most pressing concern is the disruption of the education system. Once the conflict subsides, extensive damage and rubble must be cleared. Reconstructing higher education facilities could span several years. While temporary solutions like special caravans may be considered for ongoing education, the destruction of numerous science labs, computer facilities, and medical schools with their equipment poses significant challenges that cannot be easily overcome.

Hisham, UE emphasized that:

Palestinian higher education campuses have endured various wars between 2000 and 2024, but the current level of destruction and devastation is unparalleled. The extensive damage inflicted will severely impede the recovery and development of these universities in the years to come.

Brain Drains and Intellectual Power Loss

Associated with both the unemployment and the financial burden themes, the theme of brain drains and leaving the country exists in the respondents' answers. For some, the departure intention is already there, and they are just searching for a way. According to Omar, Uc:

This devastating war has left few options for those seeking refuge after enduring immense hardship. Our primary challenge now is securing the necessary funds to travel, with no clear future in sight for us as citizens. Any opportunities that arise amidst the ongoing conflict are now deeply valued and sought after.

Respondents believe that there will be a tendency for academics and undergraduate master's and PhD to depart the country and find jobs in other countries. According to Hussam, UA:

The relentless military assaults over seven months have set Gaza back by two decades, leaving it without infrastructure or adequate medical facilities. These are not conditions that can be tolerated, especially for the primary provider of the family. I have several promising opportunities for prestigious positions at top-ranked universities, which would secure dignity and stability for my beloved family.

Brain drains occur for different reasons, and political instability is to be mentioned. The loss of someone's life and career can lead to fatal decisions and uprooting themselves from the land they belong to. According to Bassam, UC:

Living in constant fear raises serious questions. I have experienced four devastating wars, and there is no assurance that this current conflict will be the last. I cannot take the risk of exposing my family to danger, especially after witnessing the events since October 7th.

For the participants who declared their intention to leave the country during the war. These asserted the notion that their departure is just a transition period bridging them to return. According to Omar, UD:

I am striving to build a path to safety that will ensure the security of my family during this dark and chaotic period. I plan to return once conditions stabilize.

The Urgent Needs of the Displaced Academicians and Personnel During the Ongoing Conflict

The fourth question aims to grasp the urgent needs of the displaced Palestinian academicians and personnel in the Gaza Strip during the ongoing conflict. Above all, Participants called for a ceasefire hence it is the only way to Return to normal life status. Some participants referred to the financial disruption, declaring that: *The employees have gone without a salary for over six months while the war continues to rage. We must be treated with dignity and provided the means to lead a decent life.* (Soaad, UA). Some participants associated their problems with their off-job status, and they called for supporting them with alternative job opportunities. The replies further asserted the need for rehabilitating students and workers and called for reconstruction.

The majority of the participants called to *It is crucial to safeguard Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) from becoming targets of political and military invasions in order to maintain continuity in the educational process. This protection should ensure the safety of academic staff and adequately meet their essential needs.* (Soaad, UA). In terms of crisis management, participants emphasized the need to develop an emergency plan to continue the minimum level of education in times of emergencies.

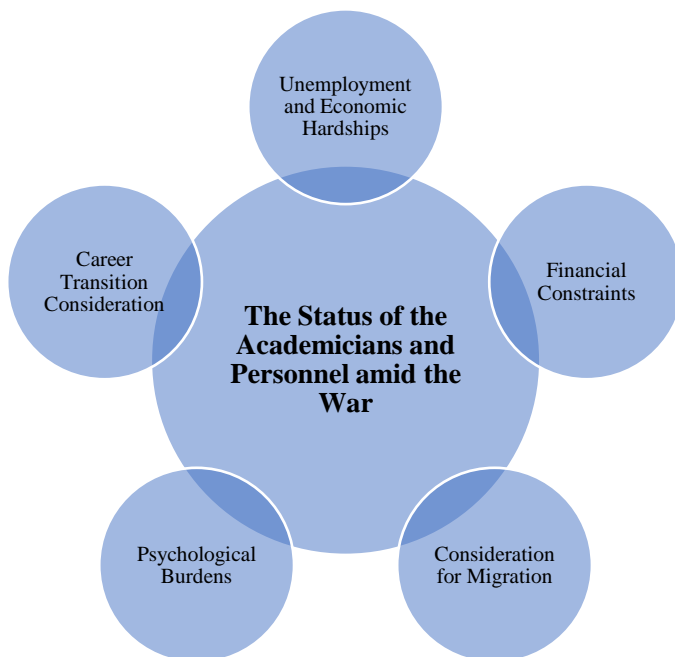
DISCUSSION

This discourse endeavors to articulate a comprehensive understanding of the circumstances faced by academicians during the catastrophic conflict in Gaza. The initial research inquiry sought to elucidate the current state of individuals affiliated with Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) amidst the ongoing war in Gaza since October 7, 2023. The relentless genocide perpetrated in Gaza by Israel has inflicted severe damage, both infrastructurally and in terms of human casualties. In a blatant effort to penalize the Gaza Strip by stripping its inhabitants of educational opportunities and future preparedness, numerous schools, colleges, and technical institutes have been obliterated, resulting in the deaths of several educators and students.

The Status Quo of the Academicians and Personnel During the War

The primary findings of the first question reveal that those associated with HEIs during the conflict are experiencing severe unemployment and financial hardship. They are contemplating emigration and grappling with the ramifications of displacement. Additionally, they are burdened with significant psychological distress and are considering career transitions as a response to their dire circumstances (figure 5).

FIGURE 5
THE STATUS QUO OF THE ACADEMICIANS AND PERSONNEL DURING THE WAR



Unemployment and Economic Hardship

This theme captures the experiences and challenges of individuals who are currently without employment and the severe economic difficulties they face as a result. It reflects the immediate and ongoing struggles with joblessness and the impact on their financial stability. It reflects the direct impact of unemployment on participants' financial stability and overall well-being. In a scenario where survival is a daily battle, the quest for recognition and prestige takes second place, and the disintegration of social institutions further restricts prospects for acquiring respect within society. Residents of Gaza also feel forgotten by the international world, which contributes to a sense of undervaluation and disdain. This long-term predicament, which extends far beyond the present war, has had a dramatic influence on the esteem needs of the people in Gaza, impacting their feeling of value, their capacity to pursue personal objectives, and their role within the social fabric of their society and this aligns up with different studies depicting similar experience such as (Abed Alah, 2024).

Financial Constraints

This theme delves into the various financial limitations and pressures experienced by participants. It includes difficulties in meeting basic needs, managing debt, and the overall strain on their financial resources. It highlights the ongoing financial difficulties, including the inability to meet basic needs and manage debts. In the case of the Palestinian higher education institutions HEIs the financial budgets mostly fund salaries and operating expenses, leaving little for capital expenditure. Insurance is amongst the most effective protection measures for conflict- and disaster-related risk yet Gaza's HEIs are not covered under

any insurance policies, and this is aligned with studies like (Abusamra, 2023; Barakat, Milton, & Elkahlout, 2018; Milton, Elkahlout, & Barakat, 2023).

Consideration of Migration

This theme explores the thoughts and considerations participants have regarding migration. It examines their motivations, aspirations, and the factors influencing their contemplation of relocating to seek better opportunities. There are many reasons behind the participants' thoughts of migrating for better opportunities. The significant economic challenges, low salaries and limited job opportunities has forced these thoughts to seek better employment prospects abroad. Furthermore, the ongoing conflict and political instability in Gaza significantly impact the quality of life, prompting academics to seek safer environments where they can live and work without constant threats. Academics often migrate to establish international networks and collaborations, crucial for advancing their careers and contributing to their fields of study. The desire for a better quality of life, including access to healthcare, education, and professional development opportunities, is a significant driver for migration among Gaza's academics and this was depicted in many literature such as (Hajian, Yazdani, Jadidfard, & Khoshnevisan, 2020).

Experiences of Displacement

This theme addresses the feelings and realities of displacement experienced by participants. It includes the emotional, social, and practical impacts of being uprooted from familiar environments, whether due to economic necessity or other factors. Displacement has multifaceted impact of displacement on individuals' lives. Displacement and dispossession have been made worse by military offensives, especially in the Gaza Strip. Armed wars have resulted in the forced displacement of Palestinians from their homes. Article 49 of the Fourth Geneva Convention prohibits deportations of protected individuals, for whatever reason, from occupied territory to the territory of the Occupying Power or any other nation, occupied or not. It also prohibits individual or mass forceful transfers. "The deportation or transfer [by the Occupying Power] of all or parts of the population of the occupied territory within or outside this territory" is defined as a war crime in international armed conflicts under the Statute of the International Criminal Court. However, according to the researcher, individuals fleeing crisis zones can be crucial in safeguarding higher education. Displacement protects higher education communities by relocating them from insecure situations. However, host governments must also continue to provide education services and preserve the right to education, which goes with some studies (Obe et al., 2024).

Psychological Burdens

The theme addressing the mental health challenges and emotional burdens faced by individuals in war zones is a critical area of study. This theme encapsulates the wide array of psychological effects such as stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues that arise from living in such volatile and dangerous environments. The constant trauma and emotional strain inherent in war zones as in Gaza profoundly affect decision-making processes and overall mental well-being. The mental health challenges faced by the academicians in war zones can significantly impair their decision-making abilities. Stressful conditions, such as those encountered in conflict areas, have been shown to alter decision-making processes. Typically, under high stress, there is a shift from rational, deliberate decision-making strategies to more emotionally driven or impulsive responses and this aligns with some depicted literature (Starcke & Brand, 2012). This shift can be detrimental, especially in high-pressure situations where optimal decision-making is crucial.

Career Transition Considerations

This theme examines the thoughts and plans of participants regarding a potential career change. It looks at their motivations, the barriers they perceive, and the steps they consider shifting to different professional paths. The study investigates participants' considerations and plans for changing their career paths in search of better prospects. This is mainly associated with unemployment and financial constraints hence they are correlated. As a result, much more psychological pressure will be on the surface, leading the displaced staff

to search for another job or think of travelling and leaving the area where no safety and basic needs can be satisfied.

Challenges Face by the Academic Staff and Personnel Amid Crisis

The qualitative analysis of interviews with academicians and personnel amid the war revealed several significant themes that encapsulate the myriad challenges they face. These themes are derived from a detailed coding process and are presented as follows: personal safety concerns, psychological impact, communication barriers, environmental instability, economic hardships, necessity shortages, employment insecurity, and mobility restrictions (figure 6).

FIGURE 6
CHALLENGES FACE THE ACADEMICIANS AND PERSONNEL AMID THE WAR



Personal Safety Concerns

The foremost theme identified is Personal Safety Concerns. Participants frequently highlighted the pervasive threat to their physical well-being. The constant risk of violence and the necessity to find secure shelters were recurrent issues. This theme underscores the critical need for safe environments for academic and professional activities to continue, reflecting findings from previous studies on conflict zones where safety is a primary concern.

Universities in Gaza confront ongoing problems due to occupation and fighting. From 1967, Israeli occupation resulted in military decisions, closures, and intimidation of students and staff at Palestinian territories' institutions. During the Intifadas (uprising), higher education adjusted to retain some kind of normalcy. During the closure of schools and universities, educators held lessons in private venues such as lecturers' houses and snuck students into laboratories during curfew hours. Alternative higher education locations provided a sense of purpose and camaraderie among students and faculty, contributing to Palestinian narratives of struggle against occupation and this was observed in literature such as (Maxwell, 2012) and (Baramki, 2010a, 2010b; Bruhn, 2006). The possible threats related to war can be interpreted in the context of life or death and from the perspective of economic and financial consequences. Respectively, and as a part of the basic human needs, safety and fear become the main themes of the respondents' answers

hence they are living in a changeable critical atmosphere. These themes are associated with all the other themes hence people have the stress of the imposed financial challenges and the absence of proper food and drinking water for them and their kids as a result of their job termination. This leads to a sense of instability mentally and physically.

Psychological Impact

The second theme, Psychological Impact, encompasses the pervasive fear and anxiety experienced by individuals. Fear of violence, loss, and the unknown future has a significant psychological toll. This aligns with research by (Jones, 2020), which found that war-induced stress severely affects mental health, leading to long-term psychological issues such as PTSD and anxiety disorders. Although it is a common challenge for academics and personnel in Gaza struggling under war, research shows that men and women might experience and respond to stress differently due to both biological and sociocultural factors. For example, women may have a higher prevalence of internalizing disorders such as depression and anxiety, while men might be more prone to externalizing behaviours like aggression. These differences can influence gender-specific approaches to decision-making under stress. Women might exhibit more cautious or risk-averse decision-making while men display more risk-taking behaviours. Under acute stress, individuals often prefer simpler decision-making strategies and focus more on immediate rewards than long-term benefits (Starcke & Brand, 2012). This tendency is particularly problematic in war zones, where short-term survival often takes precedence over long-term planning.

Communication Barriers

Communication Barriers emerged as a substantial challenge, with participants citing disrupted communication channels as a major impediment. The destruction of infrastructure and intermittent access to the internet and other communication tools hindered their ability to stay connected with colleagues and family. This theme echoes the findings of (Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2018) who emphasized the critical role of communication in maintaining academic networks and support systems during crises. For communication, students and staff communicate largely via text messages, phone calls, and WhatsApp groups to warn of impending attacks. Furthermore, universities communicate with students via email during emergencies and publish safety instructions online (Milton et al., 2023).

Nevertheless, communication failure implies future constraints for the continuation of the education process on the second day after the war. Communication under dilapidated and ruined infrastructure will not be restored in days or even months after the ceasefire hence it was not adequate even before the war. Respectively, the online model solutions would be difficult to apply to Gaza, where telecommunications blackouts are common, and students and teachers do not have access to stable electricity and the internet. Moreover, most people have been forced to flee their homes and shelter in refugee camps and till the reconstruction of Gaza in the post-war era there will be no change in their status in due course.

Environmental Instability

The theme of Environmental Instability reflects the unpredictable and often hazardous living conditions caused by the war. Participants described how the instability affects their daily lives and professional responsibilities. The disruption of regular services and the continuous threat of displacement contribute to an unstable environment, corroborating the observations of prior studies on the impacts of war on living conditions (Brown, 2017). The ongoing conflict and political instability in Gaza significantly impact the academic environment. Frequent military operations and blockades disrupt the educational process, damage infrastructure, and create a climate of uncertainty that hampers long-term academic planning and development.

Economic Hardships

Economic Hardships were a common theme, with respondents discussing their financial challenges. The war has led to reduced funding for academic institutions, loss of personal income, and increased costs of living. This economic strain is consistent with research by (Patel, 2020), which highlights the financial

difficulties experienced by individuals in conflict zones, impacting their ability to sustain their livelihoods and pursue academic goals. Additionally, male and female academics in Gaza experience these hardships differently, reflecting broader gender disparities. Women often bear the added burden of balancing household responsibilities with their academic work, which becomes even more challenging under economic duress. Conversely, men frequently face the pressure of being primary breadwinners, exacerbating their financial stress. These gender-specific challenges underline the multifaceted impact of economic hardship on academic professionals in conflict zones, making it crucial to address both economic and gender-based inequities to support their resilience and academic pursuits.

Basic Necessity Shortages

Male and female academics in Gaza experience profound hardship under war conditions, particularly facing severe shortages of basic necessities like water and food. These shortages disrupt daily life and academic responsibilities, as accessing clean water and sufficient food supplies becomes a constant struggle. This scarcity threatens survival and well-being and exacerbates the stress and insecurity the academic community faces. Such conditions align with (Wilson, 2015) findings, which highlight how the lack of necessities in war-torn regions significantly intensifies the humanitarian crisis, creating an environment where the fight for mere survival persistently hampers the pursuit of educational and professional goals.

Employment Insecurity

The theme of Employment Insecurity highlights the pervasive uncertainty regarding job retention and stability that male and female academics in Gaza endure. Many participants reported experiencing job termination or the constant threat of losing their positions, severely undermining their professional and personal stability. This insecurity reflects the precarious nature of employment in conflict settings, as discussed by (Gómez, 2017), who emphasizes how such instability negatively impacts individuals' socioeconomic status. Consequently, the ongoing conflict disrupts their immediate livelihoods and poses long-term challenges to their economic and social well-being.

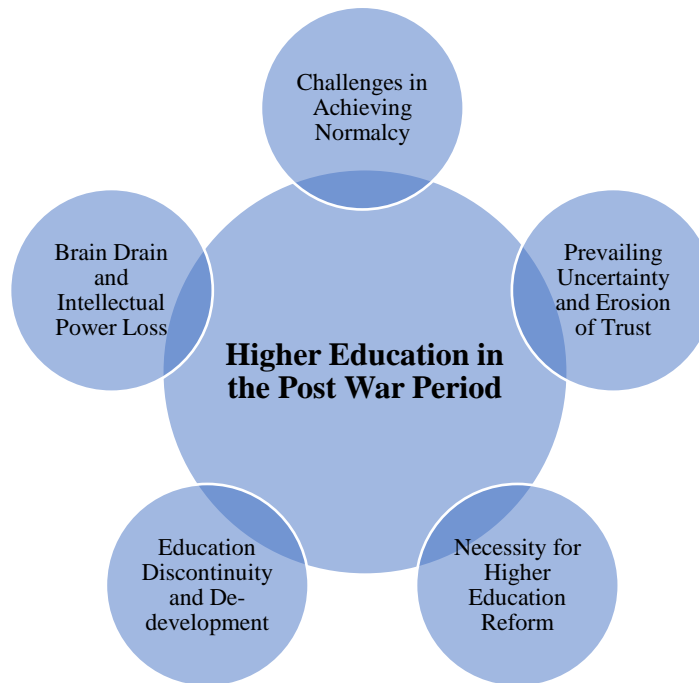
Mobility Restrictions

Lastly, mobility restrictions were highlighted as a significant barrier. The war has led to restricted movement, affecting the ability to travel for work, access resources, and maintain personal and professional relationships. This theme aligns with research by (Ahmed, 2013), which examines the constraints on mobility in conflict zones and their implications for academic and professional activities. The issue of mobility restrictions has long been a pervasive challenge for male and female academics in Gaza, predating the recent conflict. These restrictions have significantly hindered the academic community's ability to engage in essential scholarly activities, such as attending conferences, conducting research collaborations, and accessing educational resources beyond the region. The limitations placed on mobility have not only impeded the professional growth and development of academics but have also constrained their opportunities for academic exchange and knowledge sharing on a global scale. Addressing these enduring mobility barriers is essential to bolstering academic advancement, fostering intellectual exchange, and enhancing the overall vibrancy of the academic landscape in Gaza.

Higher Education in the Post-War

The third research question explored the perspectives of Higher Education Institution (HEI) personnel in the post-war context. The analysis of participant responses, facilitated by Atlas.ti, revealed several critical themes. Replies from the participants highlighted that it will be difficult to reach the new normal status before October 7th. The post-war period will resemble uncertainty and lack of trust. Based on the majority of the respondents, a new higher education reform agenda is needed. They are mainly disappointed regarding education discontinuity and de-development, referring to the problem of brain drain and the loss of intellectual power (figure 7).

FIGURE 7
HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE POST-WAR PERIOD



Challenges in Achieving Normalcy

Respondents expressed a consensus that attaining a state of new normalcy before October 7th will be arduous. This sentiment underscores the pervasive disruptions and the substantial adjustments required in the post-conflict recovery phase. Defending higher education, Gazan students and academics demonstrate both fatalism and resilience, as (Milton et al., 2023) points out. However, according to the respondents, it would be challenging to return to academics post-war in the wake of the sheer scale of the destruction of life and properties. In the aftermath of the recent ceasefire in Gaza, higher education institutions are anticipated to navigate a new normal marked by prolonged challenges. While Palestinians have historically demonstrated resilience in the face of adversity, the substantial distractions resulting from the conflict may impede post-war reconstruction efforts during the initial period following the cessation of hostilities. The compounding psychological and financial burdens engendered by the conflict are likely to influence the decision-making processes of academicians as they endeavor to chart a path forward in the post-war landscape. As such, it is imperative for stakeholders within the higher education sector to critically assess and address the multifaceted impacts of the conflict on academic pursuits, institutional functioning, and the broader educational ecosystem in Gaza.

Prevailing Uncertainty and Erosion of Trust

The post-war period is characterized by significant uncertainty. This theme encapsulates the pervasive ambiguity surrounding future developments and the stability of the higher education sector. Uncertainty during and post a war is a common phenomenon with wide-ranging impacts on society, economy, politics, and individual lives. This uncertainty can stem from multiple sources and persist long after the formal cessation of hostilities. During the Gaza war, the academic staff suffer from security and safety concerns and immediate threats to life and property. Furthermore, large-scale displacement of people leads to refugee crises and internal displacement.

A marked lack of trust among HEI personnel reflects concerns about governance, institutional integrity, and future prospects. This distrust is a barrier to collaborative efforts and the effective implementation of

policies. This all will accumulate with economic instability and the resources scarcity including access to food, water, and medical supplies becomes unpredictable. Uncertainty further lies within the social disruption, family separation, and social services breakdown. However, in the post-war period, uncertainty will be bound to the speed and success of rebuilding efforts. In addition, the atmosphere of economic policies and the influx of foreign aid or investment can create uncertain economic conditions. uncertainty about the longevity and effectiveness of the new policies and the reform agendas. Educational reforms can be slow and challenging (Abusamra, 2023).

Necessity for Higher Education Reform

A predominant view among the respondents is the urgent need for a new higher education reform agenda. This reflects a collective recognition that existing frameworks are inadequate to address the sector's current and future challenges. A reform agenda in Gaza post-war is essential to address the multifaceted challenges that arise from prolonged conflict and to lay the foundation for sustainable peace and development. Post-war Gaza requires extensive rebuilding of essential services such as healthcare, education and water. A higher education reform agenda in Gaza post-war is crucial for several reasons. Higher education is pivotal in rebuilding societies, fostering economic development, and promoting social stability. The reform should incorporate rebuilding the human capital. Post-war reconstruction requires a skilled workforce. Reforming higher education can ensure that students acquire relevant skills needed for rebuilding infrastructure, healthcare, education, and other critical sectors. Higher education institutions can cultivate future leaders who are equipped to handle the complexities of governance and public administration in a post-war context. Universities can play a role in strengthening public institutions by providing research and expertise that inform policymaking and governance. Many educational institutions have been damaged or destroyed during the conflict. Supported with literature and according to (Abusamra, 2023), reforms are needed to rebuild and modernize these facilities. Higher education reform is a cornerstone of Gaza's post-war recovery and long-term development. By investing in education, Gaza can develop the human capital necessary for rebuilding and ensuring sustainable development. Reforms can promote economic revitalization, social cohesion, political stability, and international collaboration, all essential for a resilient and prosperous future.

Educational Discontinuity and De-Development

Participants expressed profound disappointment regarding the disruption of educational activities. This theme highlights the interruption in academic processes and the adverse effects on students and faculty. The concept of de-development emerged prominently, referring to the regression in educational progress and institutional capabilities. This regression is a direct consequence of the prolonged conflict and its aftermath. In terms of destruction and de-development, the insecure backdrop has had a significant impact on higher education, resulting in the deaths of many students and staff and the destruction of university structures. Using a modified typological framework, (Novelli & Selenica, 2014) identified protective strategies for higher education. Yet in both reporting and advocacy measures a major blind spot stems from the fact that, contrary to basic education, no single international organization has a clear mandate as a higher education protection actor.

Brain Drain and Intellectual Power Loss

The issue of brain drains, and the subsequent loss of intellectual capital is a significant concern. This theme underscores the migration of skilled professionals and academics, exacerbating the challenges of rebuilding and advancing the higher education sector. Restrictive organizational methods, declining living circumstances, and continuous violence all contribute to Gaza's academic brain drain, which is a serious and complex issue. The region's intellectual and professional resources are being further depleted by the increasing exodus of intellectuals and professors due to the current uptick in violence in Gaza. Palestinians would face the long-term brain drain issue due to aggression, significant destruction, and forced migration. At that time, the problem of fleeing from Gaza really looked threatening as more and more Gazans crossed the Palestinian border to find shelter. The problem of brain drain in Gaza after the war is a significant issue

that exacerbates the challenges of post-war recovery and development. Brain drain refers to the emigration of highly skilled and educated individuals to other countries in search of better opportunities. This phenomenon can negatively impact Gaza, including its economy, society, and overall ability to rebuild and develop. The loss of intellectual capital from these regions undermines local educational and professional infrastructures and places additional pressure on already strained international academic markets.

The harsh living conditions in Gaza, marked by frequent bombings, economic hardships, and limited access to basic services, severely affect the quality of life for residents, including academics. Organizational practices within local institutions often lack fairness, equity, and opportunities for career advancement, prompting many professionals to seek better opportunities abroad. This is particularly evident in the education sector, where adverse working conditions and organizational inefficiencies drive skilled professionals to leave Gaza for more stable environments mentioned in (Ali Abou-AL-Ross & N. AlWaheidi, 2021). The ongoing conflict has also had a profound impact on academic institutions. The war environment creates an unsafe and unpredictable context for educational activities, leading to frequent disruptions and an inability to maintain consistent academic standards. Many academics find it challenging to continue their work under such conditions and are compelled to emigrate to pursue their careers in safer, more supportive environments.

The Future of Education Amidst Crises

The fourth question examined the pressing needs of displaced Palestinian academicians in the Gaza Strip amidst the ongoing conflict. The responses underscored profound concerns that disruptions in education due to military invasions would severely undermine future generations' access to the manifold benefits of education, including health, income equality, and psychological well-being. This interruption perpetuates a cycle of poverty with far-reaching and devastating consequences.

Respondents highlighted the critical need to address issues related to conflict preparedness and the development of alternative sites and modes for higher education delivery. There was a strong consensus on the imperative for protective measures and the prevention of any military use of higher education facilities in Palestine.

From my perspective, the ongoing conflict necessitates an urgent reform agenda, emphasizing the reinforcement of university autonomy. The efforts to support displaced students, academics, and institutions have been notably vigorous since the conflict's inception. Collaboration with universities in the West Bank is currently underway, aiming to provide displaced students from Gaza with access to seats as visiting students and the opportunity to participate in online courses. Furthermore, the global community must reaffirm the principles of accountability and state responsibility to safeguard higher education internationally and in Palestine. The enforcement of international and human rights laws, coupled with robust reporting and advocacy measures, is imperative to protect educational institutions and uphold the right to education in conflict zones.

Amid hardship, it is imperative to implement strategies that foster both immediate survival and long-term personal and societal advancement. Robust community support networks, providing essential relief such as food, shelter, and healthcare, are foundational. Additionally, the integration of accessible online education and capacity-building programs, specifically tailored to Gaza's unique context, is crucial given the extensive destruction of educational institutions observed during the war which aligns with different literature such as (Tlili et al., 2024). These programs encompass vocational training, digital literacy, and leadership development, facilitated through agreements with international educational institutions for virtual learning. Such initiatives enable the continuation of higher education and professional growth despite the constraints imposed by the siege.

Moreover, livelihood projects aimed at achieving economic stability, in conjunction with local capacity-building efforts focused on resilience, trauma-informed teaching, and community-led development, are essential. These initiatives equip Gazans with the skills necessary to rebuild their community, foster economic self-sufficiency, and enhance social cohesion amidst ongoing adversity. These measures collectively address immediate needs while laying the groundwork for sustainable long-term

growth and resilience. Further research is recommended to explore how cultural and circumstantial factors influence individual and community needs during complex conflicts (Abed Alah, 2024).

To mitigate the brain drain in Gaza, improving living conditions, enhancing organizational practices, and providing increased support and stability for academics is essential. Investing in human resources, ensuring equitable treatment, and developing advanced organizational systems are key strategies to retain skilled professionals within the region. Gaza has experienced a steady decline in educational standards and career opportunities, affecting its predominantly young population. The interviews revealed a significant lack of awareness regarding conflict or crisis readiness training among respondents. Universities demonstrated minimal understanding of the regulations and processes required to safeguard the education sector, with faculty members and administrators displaying limited awareness of these policies and procedures.

Interview findings challenge the notion that reconstructing Gaza's universities during wartime serves as a protective measure. In conflict-affected areas, while rebuilding HEIs may offer some protection against assaults that damage or destroy them, some Gazan scholars argue that donor-funded university reconstruction reduces international pressure on Israel, potentially resulting in more severe reactions in future conflicts (Milton et al., 2023). Additionally, the conflict's long-term impact, including widespread destruction and disruption to daily life, hampers personal development by restricting access to educational and professional opportunities. The psychological effects of stress, trauma, and loss further impair individuals' capacity to focus on self-improvement and pursue their interests (Abed Alah, 2024).

Although the collected responses from both male and female participants did not indicate any significant gender-based differences, the struggles faced by women can be contextualized by examining their specific backgrounds. Several women reported losing familial support, compelling them to shoulder the responsibility of meeting basic needs such as food and water. Female educators are particularly vulnerable due to the intersection of gender and conflict. Women and girls in conflict zones face unique challenges, including gender-based violence, cultural restrictions, and limited access to resources, as illustrated in ("Global Education Monitoring Report 2019," 2018). These challenges are further amplified in conservative societies where educational opportunities for females are already challenging. The literature highlights a complex interplay between conflict, gender, and education, illustrating that female academics in Gaza confront substantial challenges while also playing crucial roles in fostering resilience and advocating for change (Shalhoub-Kevorkian, 2009). Their commitment to maintaining educational standards and promoting gender equality amidst ongoing conflict underscores their critical role in challenging societal norms and advancing the status quo. Despite facing distinctive challenges, women in conflict-affected areas demonstrate remarkable resilience, shedding light on the nuanced impacts of war, fragility, and instability on vulnerable populations.

Addressing these issues requires a multifaceted approach. Immediate improvements in living conditions and organizational practices must be accompanied by long-term strategies to enhance academic support and stability. Moreover, a coordinated effort among HEIs to prepare for and respond to crises, alongside increased international advocacy and support, is crucial for fostering a resilient educational environment in Gaza. Further research is recommended to understand how cultural and circumstantial factors influence individual and community needs during complex conflicts, informing more effective interventions. Further research is recommended to understand how cultural and circumstantial factors influence individual and community needs during complex conflicts, informing more effective interventions (Abed Alah, 2024).

LIMITATIONS

The present study's findings are preliminary and are limited to data collected at a single point during the conflict, specifically in settings experiencing varying levels of death, injury, and destruction. This temporal and geographical constraint impacts the generalizability of the results. Nonetheless, this study aligns with other recent research, which similarly evidences the psycho-emotional impacts of disasters, particularly as they relate to gender, context, and university roles.

CONCLUSION

Understanding how to safeguard higher education from threats is crucial for saving lives, preserving intellectual potential, and defending the right to education during conflict. However, there remains limited understanding of how to effectively secure higher education institutions (HEIs) against attacks.

In this paper, the first question focused on the respondents' current situation concerning HEIs amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza that began on October 7, 2023. The primary findings revealed that HEIs are grappling with severe financial hardships, joblessness, and psychological burdens. Additionally, displacement and travel restrictions are significant concerns, with many considering shifting career due to the instability and uncertainty.

The second question addressed the difficulties academic staff and lecturers faced during the conflict. Interview data identified several critical themes: safety concerns, psychological impact, communication breakdowns, instability and relocation, financial struggles, scarcity of the basic life necessities, job termination, and travel restrictions. Each of these issues is directly related to the current situation of HEIs under conflict conditions.

The third question examined the post-war perceptions of HEI staff. Participants indicated that achieving a new normal by October 7th would be challenging, as the post-war period is expected to be marked by mistrust and uncertainty. Many respondents emphasized the need for a new higher education reform agenda, expressing dissatisfaction with educational discontinuity and de-development. The issues of brain drain, and the decline of intellectual capacity were particularly highlighted.

Participants unanimously called for a ceasefire as the primary means to resume normal living conditions. Financial disturbances were also noted, with some participants highlighting that the conflict has decreased wages for over six months. There were calls for dignified living conditions and respectful treatment, with suggestions for part-time employment opportunities to mitigate unemployment. The necessity of reconstruction and the rehabilitation of staff and students was emphasized. There was a strong demand for continuing the educational process and for HEIs to be protected from military and political incursions. Participants stressed that academic staff should be entitled to protection that ensures their safety and meets their primary needs. Participants underscored the importance of creating an emergency plan to maintain at least the minimum level of education during disasters. They highlighted the historical role of Palestinian universities in preserving the Palestinian struggle and the right to resistance to achieve freedom. Despite the challenges, there is a resilient belief that universities will rise again, rebuilt through the efforts of their dedicated staff, including professors, lecturers, and researchers.

REFERENCES

- Abed Alah, M. (2024). Shattered hierarchy: How the Gaza conflict demolished Maslow's pyramid of needs. *Current Psychology*, 43(21), 19562–19568. doi: 10.1007/s12144-024-05784-1
- Abusamra, A. (2023). Why do we need to reform higher education management in Palestine? *Journal of Higher Education Theory and Practice*, 23(5), 62–90. Retrieved from https://search.proquest.com/openview/17afba2c60f1acc654f12b4039541541/1?pq-origsite=gscholar&cbl=766331&casa_token=O1wd0grQqCUAAAAA:f4hLevDI9vARZ8aiiN6-sKV6yy7uWbSg7RC-FM3f4nf8sh7jxIrO3ziDh-JimvTvFRou8v2vFg
- Abusmara, A., & Triwiyanto, T. (n.d.). *Leadership studies*. Retrieved from https://johepal.com/browse.php?a_id=351&sid=1&slc_lang=en&ftxt=1
- Ahmed, A.S. (2013). *The thistle and the drone: How America's war on terror became a global war on tribal Islam*. Brookings Institution Press. Retrieved from [https://books.google.com/books?hl=ar&lr=&id=F6mp5AVNbtAC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Ahmed+\(2013\)+war&ots=9rhWC49Fdw&sig=btJOEpUfVaNbOvdSW85n3QTrnI](https://books.google.com/books?hl=ar&lr=&id=F6mp5AVNbtAC&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Ahmed+(2013)+war&ots=9rhWC49Fdw&sig=btJOEpUfVaNbOvdSW85n3QTrnI)

- Ali Abou-AL-Ross, S., & AlWaheidi, T.N. (2021). The impact of living conditions and organizational practices as brain drain cause factors on the human resource assets of the health sector in the Gaza Strip – Palestine. *Global Journal of Economics and Business*, 11(2), 297–314. doi:10.31559/GJEB2021.11.2.10
- Alzaroo, S., & Hunt, G.L. (2003). Education in the context of conflict and instability: The Palestinian case. *Social Policy & Administration*, 37(2), 165–180. doi: 10.1111/1467-9515.00332
- Barakat, S., Milton, S., & Elkahlout, G. (2018). The Gaza reconstruction mechanism: Old wine in new bottlenecks. *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, 12(2), 208–227. doi:10.1080/17502977.2018.1450336
- Baramki, G. (2010a). Education against all odds. *Mediterranean Journal of Educational Studies*, 15(2). Retrieved from <https://www.um.edu.mt/library/oar/bitstream/123456789/56136/1/MJES15%282%29full.pdf#page=11>
- Baramki, G. (2010b). *Peaceful resistance: Building a Palestinian university under occupation*. London: Pluto Press. Retrieved from <https://fada.birzeit.edu/bitstream/20.500.11889/8179/1/Peaceful%20resistance%20%20building%20a%20Palestinian%20university%20under%20occupation.pdf>
- Brown, A.D. (2017). Identity work and organizational identification. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 19(3), 296–317. doi: 10.1111/ijmr.12152
- Bruhn, A. (2006). The inspector’s dilemma under regulated self-regulation. *Policy and Practice in Health and Safety*, 4(2), 3–23. doi: 10.1080/14774003.2006.11667679
- Chabin, M. (2023). Israel-Hamas war shakes scientific community. *Science*, 382(6669), 362. doi:10.1126/science.adl5526
- Friese, S. (2019). *Qualitative data analysis with ATLAS.ti* (pp. 1–344). Retrieved from <https://www.torrossa.com/en/resources/an/5018383>
- GCPEA News. (n.d.). *A Gaza Vocational College Devastated by the War*. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://protectingeducation.org/news/a-gaza-vocational-college-devastated-by-the-war/>
- Gómez, D.R. (2017). When war enters the classroom. In *(Re)constructing memory: Education, identity, and conflict* (pp. 269–289). Brill. Retrieved from <https://brill.com/downloadpdf/book/edcoll/9789463008600/BP000013.pdf>
- Hajian, S., Yazdani, S., Jadidfard, M.P., & Khoshnevisan, M.H. (2020). Factors influencing the migration intention of health professionals in low-and-middle-income countries: Critical review with a theoretical model. *Journal of Contemporary Medical Sciences*, 6(6). Retrieved from <https://www.iasj.net/iasj/download/e0495744e31f73aa>
- Hass, A. (2012, September 27). High Court rejects Gaza students’ petition to study in West Bank. *Haaretz*.
- Jebri, M. (2023). Between construction and destruction: The experience of educationalists at Gaza’s universities. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 53(6), 986–1004. doi: 10.1080/03057925.2021.1987190
- Jebri, M.A. (2018). *Academic life under occupation: The impact on educationalists at Gaza’s universities* [PhD thesis]. Retrieved from <https://www.repository.cam.ac.uk/items/5c9833a9-33fe-4baf-8b0e-24fd0d691d4b>
- Jones, E. (2020). *A mixed-method exploration of the impact of PTSD in UK military veterans and their families* [PhD thesis, UCL (University College London)]. UCL (University College London). Retrieved from <https://discovery.ucl.ac.uk/id/eprint/10111548/>
- Kapeliouk, O. (1985). The Palestinian universities under occupation. *Arab Studies Quarterly*, pp. 88–91. Retrieved from https://www.jstor.org/stable/41857771?casa_token=d5Z4FvqrTEYAAAAA:kvELMSxKAJ8zvasj8YqQ99XIU4XAo3-g3nMaWpKLTBdbc4ssoUyz5GrYnZ3eCITAwJAI7UM13MFIMfnppCUeuDxtkbGrwy0lfmf-zD1TUIZp4Siq7Vo
- Kapeliouk, O. (2024). *The Palestinian universities under occupation*.

- Kostelny, K., & Wessells, M. (2010). *Psychosocial assessment of education in Gaza and recommendations for response*. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/8329249/psychosocial-assessment-of-education-in-gaza-and-recommendations-for-response/9259620/>
- Leach, F., & Dunne, M. (2007). *Education, conflict and reconciliation: International perspectives*. Peter Lang.
- Lopez, S.J., Pedrotti, J.T., & Snyder, C.R. (2018). *Positive psychology: The scientific and practical explorations of human strengths*. Sage Publications. Retrieved from [https://books.google.com/books?hl=ar&lr=&id=arRoDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Lopez+\(2018\)&ots=5I9RN9Qarm&sig=n3qGrifgAXU4s83IaPCRhnUKOaw](https://books.google.com/books?hl=ar&lr=&id=arRoDwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=Lopez+(2018)&ots=5I9RN9Qarm&sig=n3qGrifgAXU4s83IaPCRhnUKOaw)
- Maira, S. (2018). *Boycott!: The academy and justice for Palestine* (Vol. 4). University of California Press. Retrieved from <https://books.google.com/books?hl=ar&lr=&id=N8U3DwAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=scholasticide&ots=4KpIuhQ0Rl&sig=fdauSy2wnyZboEoq6RSCgBM5jeQ>
- Marchenko, T. (2023). Higher education during the war time in Ukraine. *Scientific Journal of Polonia University*, 59(4), 49–57. doi: 10.23856/5907
- Marshall, D.J. (2016). ‘All the beautiful things’: Trauma, aesthetics and the politics of Palestinian childhood. In *The beginning of politics* (pp. 53–73). Routledge. Retrieved from <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/chapters/edit/10.4324/9781315751726-4/beautiful-things-trauma-aesthetics-politics-palestinian-childhood-david-jones-marshall>
- Maxwell, J.A. (2012). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. SAGE Publications.
- Milton, S., Elkahout, G., & Barakat, S. (2023). Protecting higher education from attack in the Gaza Strip. *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 53(6), 1024–1042. doi:10.1080/03057925.2021.1987192
- Minoia, P., & Taher, T. (2024). Resistance-existence within and against education in colonized lands. In *Justice-oriented, postcolonial and postcapitalist transformations*. Routledge. Retrieved from <https://researchportal.helsinki.fi/en/publications/resistance-existence-within-and-against-education-in-colonized-la>
- Novelli, M., & Selenica, E. (2014). Protecting higher education from attack. In *Education under attack 2014* (pp. 99–108). Retrieved from https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ervjola-Selenica/publication/356187892_Protecting_higher_education_from_attack/links/618fc7ae61f09877209070e8/Protecting-higher-education-from-attack.pdf
- Obe, G.F., Khan, A., Jewell, D., & Jameel, S. (2024). Responding to the war in Israel and Palestine. *British Journal of General Practice*, 74(739), 76–76. doi: 10.3399/bjgp24X736257
- Omar, A. (2024). Bleeding forms: Beyond the Intifada. *Critical Times*, 11216928. Retrieved from <https://read.dukeupress.edu/critical-times/article-abstract/doi/10.1215/26410478-11216928/386299>
- One year after—Gaza early recovery and reconstruction needs assessment—Occupied Palestinian Territory. (2010, May 20). *ReliefWeb*. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/occupied-palestinian-territory/one-year-after-gaza-early-recovery-and-reconstruction-needs>
- Patel, C. (2020). People out of place: Developing a human rights research agenda on internally displaced persons. In *A research agenda for human rights* (pp. 37–49). Retrieved from <https://www.elgaronline.com/edcollchap/edcoll/9781788973076/9781788973076.00008.xml>
- Paulson, J., Barakat, B., & Karpinska, Z. (2008). *Desk study: Education and fragility*. Retrieved from <http://researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk/id/eprint/2556>
- Paz, R. (2000). Higher education and the development of Palestinian Islamic groups. *Middle East Review of International Affairs*, 4(2), 81–94. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/download/36040685/HIGHER_EDUCATION_AND_THE_DEVELOPMENT_OF_PALESTINIAN_ISLAMIC_GROUPS.pdf

- Paz, R. (2009). *The development of Palestinian Islamic groups*. Retrieved from <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/14511968.pdf>
- Ramallah, U.O. in, Kostelny, K., & Wessells, M. (n.d.). Psychosocial assessment of education in Gaza and recommendations for response. *Policy Commons*. Retrieved from <https://policycommons.net/artifacts/8329249/psychosocial-assessment-of-education-in-gaza-and-recommendations-for-response/9259620/>
- ReliefWeb. (2018, November 20). *Global Education Monitoring Report 2019: Migration, displacement and education: Building bridges, not walls* [EN/AR/RU/ZH]. Retrieved July 5, 2024, from <https://reliefweb.int/report/world/global-education-monitoring-report-2019-migration-displacement-and-education-building>
- Report on UNCTAD assistance to the Palestinian people: Developments in the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory*. (n.d.).
- Shalhoub-Kevorkian, N. (2009). *Militarization and violence against women in conflict zones in the Middle East: A Palestinian case-study*. Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9780511626852
- Starcke, K., & Brand, M. (2012). Decision making under stress: A selective review. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 36(4), 1228–1248. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0149763412000218>
- The New Humanitarian. (2009, March 26). *Tough times for university students in Gaza*. Retrieved July 4, 2024, from <https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2009/03/26/tough-times-university-students-gaza>
- United Nations. (n.d.). *Rapid assessment of higher education institutions in Gaza: Data Analysis Report - UNESCO report - Question of Palestine*. Question of Palestine. Retrieved from <https://www.un.org/unispal/document/auto-insert-205867/>
- Webster, P., & Neal, K. (2022). War and public health. *Journal of Public Health*, 44(2), 215–216. doi:10.1093/pubmed/fdac060
- Wilson, R.J. (2015). Still fighting in the trenches: ‘War discourse’ and the memory of the First World War in Britain. *Memory Studies*, 8(4), 454–469. doi: 10.1177/1750698015575174