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Evaluating gifted education in Palestine: A study of educational and learning capitals

Anies Al-Hroub^{1*}

Abstract: The present theoretical article aims to conduct a critical analysis and elaborate on the influence of educational and learning capitals on the education of gifted students in Palestine. The article commences by providing a comprehensive examination of the educational system in Palestine, offering an overview of the current state of gifted education in the country, along with its challenges and expenditures by both public and private educational institutions. The Education and Learning Capital Model (ELCM), based on the Systems Theory and the Actiotope Model of Giftedness was used as a framework to study and explain the current practices of gifted education in Palestine. Accordingly, the article provides a detailed discourse on the ten educational and learning capitals in the context of gifted education in Palestine. This is done by drawing upon relevant, evidence-based literature as a basis to identify the critical elements that contribute to the academic success of gifted students in Palestine. The article further highlights key insights into the cost of gifted education, including the resources required for implementing effective educational programs for gifted individuals. Additionally, the article emphasizes the significance of recognizing and defining giftedness in Palestine, along with teacher training for providing adequate support to these students. Finally, the article concludes by emphasizing the importance of efficient utilization of educational resources for gifted students to ensure their academic achievement and growth, while also addressing the challenges faced by the gifted education system in Palestine.

Subjects: Educational Psychology; Inclusion and Special Educational Needs; School Psychology; Education - Social Sciences

Keywords: giftedness; learning resources; educational capital; learning capital; refugees; systems theory and the actiotope model of giftedness; Palestine

1. Introduction

This theoretical research article aims to critically analyze and elaborate on the influence of educational and learning capitals on the education of gifted students in Palestine. The article seeks to provide valuable insights into the current state of gifted education in Palestine, addressing its challenges, expenditures, and the overall educational system in the country. By employing the Education and Learning Capital Model (ELCM), which is based on the Systems Theory and the Actiotope Model of Giftedness, this research article aims to examine and explain the existing practices of gifted education in Palestine.



To accomplish this, the article draws upon relevant and evidence-based literature to identify the key elements that contribute to the academic success of gifted students in Palestine. By utilizing the ELCM framework, a comprehensive discourse on the ten educational and learning capitals within the context of gifted education in Palestine is presented. This analysis sheds light on the various dimensions that impact the education of gifted students, including financial, human, social, cultural, organizational, organismic learning, actional learning, telic learning, attentional learning, and episodic learning capitals. Moreover, the research article emphasizes the importance of understanding and defining giftedness within the Palestinian context. It explores the significance of teacher training in providing appropriate support to gifted students, ensuring their educational needs are met effectively. Additionally, the article highlights the cost associated with providing education for gifted individuals, including the necessary resources required to implement effective educational programs. Finally, the article concludes by underscoring the crucial need for efficient utilization of educational resources to promote the academic achievement and growth of gifted students in Palestine. It addresses the challenges faced by the gifted education system in Palestine, emphasizing the importance of overcoming these obstacles to create an inclusive and supportive educational environment that nurtures the potential of gifted learners.

2. The state of Palestine profile

The State of Palestine, located in the Eastern Mediterranean region, is a country with a rich history and culture. According to the Worldometer elaboration of the latest United Nations data (Worldometer, 2023), the estimated population of the state of Palestine was approximately 5,415,439 people in 2023, with around 60% of the total population residing in the West Bank and 40% in the Gaza Strip (PCBS, 2022). The population is predominantly Palestinian Arab, with small minorities of Christians, Jews, and others. However, for the Palestinian people, Palestine is more than just a modern-day country. Historic Palestine refers to the land that encompasses present-day Israel, the West Bank, and the Gaza Strip, and has been the homeland of the Palestinian people for thousands of years, with evidence of their presence dating back to the ancient Canaanites (Masalha, 2018). However, the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 resulted in the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes, leading to what is known as the Palestinian refugee catastrophe (what is known in Arabic as Al Nakba) (Masalha, 2018). Today, there are 5.9 million Palestinian refugees scattered throughout the Middle East, including in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria. The Palestinian refugees consider themselves part of the Palestinian people and are an integral part of the ongoing struggle for their rights and self-determination. However, they continue to face significant challenges, including limited access to basic services such as healthcare and education, and restrictions on their ability to travel and work (UNRWA, 2023).

Education is highly valued in Palestinian society with emphasis on science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) subjects in public and private educational institutions. However, due to the ongoing conflict with Israel, Palestinian students often face obstacles in accessing education, including school closures, restricted movement, and the destruction of school buildings (UNICEF, 2028, 2021). Arabic is the official language, but English is widely spoken and taught as a second language in schools. Additionally, there are small communities that speak Hebrew, Armenian, and other languages. Notably, the youth literacy rate in Palestine was 99.24% (99.25% for females, and 99.22% for males) in 2020, one of the highest in the Arab world, with similarly high adult literacy rates of 97.51%. The latter exceeds the global average of 84.34% for adults in 72 countries (World Bank, 2023).

2.1. School education structure in Palestine

The Palestinian education system is structured into a 12-year cycle consisting of 12 grades, starting from the first to the twelfth grade. Pre-school education is available for children aged four and five, although it is not yet compulsory. The formal education system has two distinct phases. The first phase is basic education, which spans grades one to ten and includes a preparatory phase (grades 1–4) and an empowerment phase (grades 5–10). The second phase

is secondary education, which is not mandatory and encompasses grades eleven to twelve. The latter is further divided into literary, scientific, and vocational education, including industrial, agricultural, commercial, hotel, and home economics programs. Notably, there are fifteen industrial schools in the West Bank and Gaza, of which only three are government-run. Upon completion of secondary education, students may opt for higher education, which is offered in the form of a two-year intermediate-level course through community colleges or a four-year university-level program in either public or private institutions. Admissions to higher education institutes are determined solely based on the results of the General Secondary Education Certificate Examination (Tawjihi) (Broco & Trad, 2011; Mansour, 2006).

2.2. Educational provision and school enrollment in Palestine

The number of students for the 2021–2022 school year in all education sectors in Palestine reached 1,358,410 including 335,138 students from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) schools. According to the “Statistical report for the academic year 2022–2022” issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Education (MOE), there are 3,142 schools in Palestine distributed as follows: public schools (2,307), private schools (631), and UNRWA schools (374). The number of schoolteachers is 60,543. In 2022, there are around 22.4 students per teacher in both public elementary and secondary education (MOE, 2022), which is higher than the ratio of teachers versus students in some surrounding Arab countries, such as Jordan and Lebanon.

Table 1 presents an overview of the distribution of students across various school types. The data indicate that the largest proportion of students, accounting for 65.6% of the total student population, are enrolled in public schools, while 24.7% attend schools administered by the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA). A minority of students, 9.7%, attend private schools. Notably, there are disparities in the enrollment rates of male and female students across different school types, with higher percentages of female students enrolled in public schools (51.9%), while private schools have a higher percentage of male students (57.7%) (MOE, 2021).

2.3. Higher education system in Palestine

Palestine places a very high value on higher education, with over 25% of 18–24-year-olds enrolled in university, 10% higher than the average in the Arab region. Half of all students are women, a ratio that is among the highest in the world (Scientist for Palestine, 2016).

In Palestine, the higher education landscape comprises a total of 51 institutions, with 34 institutions located in the West Bank and 17 institutions in the Gaza Strip. These institutions include 19 traditional universities, 15 college institutions, and 17 community colleges. Combined, these educational institutions cater to a student population of 225,975, with female students accounting for 61.5% of the total. They offer a diverse range of degree programs spanning various disciplines, including arts and humanities, social sciences, journalism, and media studies, business, management, law, natural sciences, mathematics, statistics, information and communication technology, engineering, manufacturing, and construction, agriculture, forestry, fisheries, and veterinary, health and welfare, as well as other specialized fields (Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research MHESR, 2023) (See Table 2).

The data for the year 2021 indicates that among every 100 young men and women aged 18 to 29, 18 individuals have obtained a bachelor’s degree or higher. It appears that young women have a slight advantage, as 23 out of every 100 young women hold a bachelor’s degree or higher, compared to 13 out of every 100 young men (PCBS, 2022). On the other hand, unemployment rates pose the greatest challenge for young people, with these rates reaching 62% among females and 33% among males. The highest rates were observed in the Gaza Strip compared to the West Bank, with 65% and 24% respectively. Interestingly, the highest unemployment rates among young people aged 18 to 29 were found among graduates with at least a high school diploma,

Table 1. Students' and teachers' distribution across schools in palestine for the academic year 2021 –2022

Type of School	# of Schools	# of Teachers	Total # of Enrolment	# of Females	% of Females	# of Males	% of Males
Public	2,307	41,645	891,798	462,642	51.9	429,156	48.1
Private	461	8,245	131,474	55,549	42.3	75,925	57.7
UNRWA	374	10,653	335,138	167,652	50.0	167,486	50.0
Total	3,142	60,543	1,358,410	685,843	50.5	672,567	49.5

(Ministry of Education [MOE], 2022)

Table 2. The distribution of higher education institutions in Palestine for the academic Year 2022/2021

Institution Type	West Bank	Gaza Strip	Total
Traditional Universities*	13	6	19
College Institutions	10	5	15
Community Colleges	11	6	17
Total	34	17	51

*In addition to two open education universities: Al-Quds Open University, with centers distributed between the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with a total of 18 centers, 13 in the West Bank, and 5 in the Gaza Strip, and Arab Open University in Ramallah (MHESR, 2023)

reaching 53%. There was a noticeable disparity between young males and females, with rates of 39% for males and 66% for females (PCBS, 2022).

According to Nasir (2022), the landscape of higher education in Palestine presents distinctive obstacles attributable to the prevailing political and economic circumstances within the region. The West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip have been subject to Israeli occupation since 1967. Consequently, these conditions have led to constraints on mobility, limited availability of resources, and challenges in acquiring visas for international scholars.

One of the most significant challenges for higher education in Palestine is funding. Due to the ongoing conflict, the Palestinian Authority struggles to allocate sufficient resources to universities. This has resulted in a lack of research facilities and equipment, as well as difficulties in recruiting and retaining faculty. Another major challenge is the issue of academic freedom. Palestinian universities have faced significant pressure from the Israeli military, as well as from foreign donors, to limit academic freedom and suppress political dissent. This has resulted in a climate of fear and self-censorship, which can limit the quality and scope of research and education (Broco & Trad, 2011; Nasir, 2022; UNICEF, 2021).

In a study on talent management in four Palestinian universities, the Islamic University, Al-Azhar University, University of Palestine, and Gaza University, in the Gaza Strip (Al-Jiddi, 2018), it was found that these universities prioritize attracting and hiring talented individuals, albeit with a moderate budget due to challenging economic conditions. However, the programs for talent retention and development are not meeting expectations, leading some university staff to seek opportunities in foreign institutions. The training programs and incentives provided to university staff are insufficient, and the available resources and training facilities are comparatively poor.

In the Palestinian context, education and scientific research are held in high esteem as attested by the prevalence of universities in the country and a substantial volume of research publications. The SCImago Journal and Country Rank (SRJ, 2023) has reported that, despite the prevailing

occupation, Palestinian institutions of higher education have generated a noteworthy output of 10,971 research publications with 10,322 citations from 1996 to 2021. This has positioned Palestine in the 13th place among 22 Arab countries and 107th place among 242 countries globally in terms of scientific research impact classification, as measured by the H Index of 131 (SRJ, 2023). Additionally, Palestine produces a significant number of qualified professionals across various fields. In recent decades, there has been a growth in research focused on giftedness, particularly by university scholars and postgraduate students.

3. Overview of the gifted education mandate in Palestine

The Palestine mandate for gifted education, as outlined in the 2017 Education Law, underscores, as stated in Article (3), the significance of nurturing students' personalities, talents, and mental and physical abilities while promoting positive interaction with cognitive, technical, and informational changes. This Article emphasizes that Palestine mandate that gifted students, who possess exceptional abilities and talents, should receive appropriate attention and support. To achieve this goal, Article (6) of the law highlights the importance of providing appropriate pedagogical methods and educational facilities to all students, irrespective of their academic abilities, including high-achieving and gifted students (Ministry of Education and Higher Education MoEHE, 2017). This demonstrates a commitment to offering specialized educational approaches and resources that cater to the unique needs and potential of gifted students.

To ensure that gifted students are not left behind, the 2017 Education Law (Article 13) mandates that the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) collaborate with other specialized entities to develop mechanisms for identifying and nurturing gifted and talented students (MoEHE, 2017). This includes the implementation of an academic acceleration program, which allows students with advanced mental abilities beyond their chronological age to potentially skip a grade or transition to a higher educational stage. However, it is important to note that the policy does not provide clear definitions and guidelines for the acceleration program and its various types.

Furthermore, Article (35) of the law requires the Ministry to create flexible and responsive educational curricula that cater to the individual needs of gifted students across all education stages (MoEHE, 2017). This aligns with the national inclusive education policy of 2015, which emphasizes the commitment to inclusive education for all students, including gifted students. However, the policy does not explicitly state and define the enrichment program for gifted students. Therefore, it is necessary to establish clear guidelines and specifications to ensure the effective implementation of enrichment programs and to provide appropriate educational opportunities for gifted students. This includes developing a cadre of teachers and support staff who are equipped with the necessary skills and knowledge to implement child-friendly and inclusive education practices for gifted students (Ministry of Education and Higher Education MoEHE, 2015).

Despite the provisions outlined in the 2017 Education Law and the 2015 national inclusive education policy, gifted education in Palestine faces significant challenges. These challenges stem from the absence of a national and unified definition of giftedness (Ding et al., 2016), limited access to information about gifted education among educators and teachers (Allen, 2020), a lack of funding, resources, and trained teachers (Allen, 2020; Broco & Trad, 2011; Mansour, 2006). Moreover, the occupation and political situation in Palestine has a detrimental impact on the education system, including gifted education (Mansour, 2006). According to Mansour (2006) and Broco and Trad (2011), the social and economic conditions of Palestinians, combined with the lack of resources, hinder the ability of teachers and support staff to identify and nurture the talents of gifted students.

4. Research on the challenges in identifying gifted and talented students in Palestine

Challenges in identifying gifted and talented students in Palestine arise from the lack of a clear definition and specific criteria within the Education and Higher Education Law in Palestine (2017). This absence of clarity hinders the establishment of effective mechanisms for identifying these

students. As a result, there is a need to explore existing educational practices in the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza Strip.

One recent study conducted by Al-Halawani (2022) investigated educational practices among Palestinian teachers and principals in Jerusalem regarding the identification and support of gifted students in the primary stage. The study involved a randomly selected sample of 300 teachers and 40 principals. The findings revealed a ranking of preferred identification methods: observing students' activities in clubs, seeking parental feedback, relying on teacher observations and reports, utilizing aptitude and interest tests, identifying through intelligence and mental ability tests, and identifying through tests of creative thinking ability. Furthermore, Abuhannoud (2021) conducted a study involving 401 parents and teachers, as well as 7 experts specialized in special education and gifted education. The research focused on perceptions of the identification process for gifted students in the primary stage (grades 1–9). The findings revealed the importance of adopting multiple mechanisms for identifying gifted students, with teacher nomination receiving particular attention from the experts. The experts, the ranking of identification mechanisms based on priority as follows: parental nomination, intelligence and creativity tests, teacher nomination, academic achievement, and peer nominations, student files, student interviews, and behavioral observation checklists. Both the experts and parents shared the view that parental nomination is the primary foundation for identifying gifted students. The experts also agreed with the teachers in giving intelligence and creativity tests the second highest priority. All the perceptions, including those of the experts, teachers, and parents, considered academic achievement and peer nominations as relatively less significant compared to other mechanisms presented in the study. There were variations in perceptions regarding the mechanism of teacher nomination, where teachers themselves ranked this mechanism in the first place, while parents ranked it in second place, and experts ranked it in third place.

In the Gaza Strip, the education system is confronted with several challenges that hinder the identification and nurturing of gifted students. Al Ajez (2012) conducted a comparative study aimed to identify systems of educating and identifying gifted students in the Gaza Strip based on the German experience. The study resulted in several findings, including a clear deficiency in the identification and nurturing system of gifted students in the Gaza Strip due to limited resources and Israeli occupation. The study also found similarities between Palestine and Germany in the recognition of the importance of nurturing gifted children in educational systems. However, Palestine does not implement identification policies due to resource limitations, and Gaza schools rely solely on academic achievements in identifying gifted students.

In a study conducted by Al-Asmar (2021), aimed at examining the obstacles to identifying gifted students in Palestinian government schools from the perspectives of teachers and educational supervisors, the results indicated several obstacles related to policies, systems, and legislation, textbooks, teacher qualifications, and teaching methods. In terms of policies, systems, and legislation, the identified obstacles included the limited financial support from relevant authorities to design specialized programs for gifted students, the absence of a ministry plan to train a specialized cadre in the field of gifted education, and the current educational policies lacking plans that prioritize gifted students. Additionally, the study highlighted the insufficient availability of scientific and practical resources aligned with the interests of gifted students, the difficulty in attracting educational experts and specialists in gifted education, the absence of a specific and clear definition of giftedness, and the lack of standardized and validated assessment tests to identify giftedness.

The main obstacles related to textbooks include the insufficient content in textbooks to stimulate challenges among gifted students, the inadequate suitability of textbooks for the interests and preferences of gifted students, and the lack of focus on developing self-learning and independent learning skills. Regarding teacher qualifications, the study found obstacles such as the lack of specialized teachers in the fields of nurturing and developing gifted students in government schools,

the emphasis on the theoretical aspects of the curriculum at the expense of practical aspects, and the overemphasis on lower-order thinking skills such as knowledge and recall. Furthermore, the study identified obstacles related to teaching methods, such as the limited use of modern strategies by teachers to foster the love for knowledge among gifted students, the inadequate activation of learning resource rooms in public schools, the reliance on traditional teaching methods in delivering scientific content to gifted students, and the lack of individualized instruction to deeply study specific subjects under the supervision of a teacher or educational supervisor.

5. Effects of educational and learning capitals on gifted education

To comprehensively assess the obstacles involved in providing gifted education in Palestine, the Systems Theory and Actiotope Model of Giftedness are used, which distinguished five types of *exogenous learning resources* and five types of *endogenous learning resources* that they term *educational capital* and *learning capital*, respectively (see Tables 3 and 4) (Ziegler & Baker, 2013; Ziegler et al., 2017, 2019). This analysis highlights the complex and interconnected factors that impact gifted education in Palestine and underscores the need for comprehensive and sustained efforts to address these challenges.

5.1. Educational capitals

Educational capitals, commonly referred to as exogenous learning resources, are comprised of a diverse range of factors within the scope of gifted students. These factors include but are not limited to, social resources, material resources, and cultural resources. Social resources encompass the presence of peers and coaches, providing valuable interactions and support. Material resources encompass a wide array of mediums, such as texts, videos, and software, which serve as valuable tools for learning. Lastly, cultural resources pertain to values and work ethics that play a pivotal role in shaping the holistic development of gifted students (Chandler & Ziegler, 2017). Table 3 lists the specific definitions of the five educational capitals.

5.1.1. Economic educational capital

In the context of Palestine, and according to the World Bank, in 2020, the Palestinian National Authority's expenditure on education was approximately 18.5% of total government expenditures (World Bank, 2021). Another study by UNESCO (2020) found that Palestine allocated 19.7% of its total government expenditure to education in 2018, which was higher than the regional average of 14.2%. However, the ongoing economic crisis and political conflict have had a significant impact on the provision of gifted education. A study by Mansour (2006) found that gifted education programs in Palestine are limited and lack the resources needed to support the development of gifted students. The study highlighted the inadequate funding and resources available to educational institutions, which has created a barrier for gifted students to access appropriate educational opportunities. Moreover, a report by Save the Children (2018) revealed that the education system in Palestine is largely influenced by the political situation, which affects the funding allocated for education. The report stated that the educational infrastructure in Palestine is subpar, and the majority of the population has limited access to educational resources, creating significant challenges for the provision of gifted education.

It is worth noting that some universities in Palestine offer general scholarship programs for academically talented students, which may include gifted students. For example, Birzeit University provides financial assistance to students who demonstrate academic excellence through its Excellence Scholarship Program (Birzeit University, n.d.b.). An-Najah National University also offers a scholarship program to high-achieving students with financial needs, which is based on academic performance, extracurricular activities, and community service (An-Najah National University, n.d.a.).

Numerous organizations, including the Palestinian Welfare Association, supported by the European Commission, EU member-states, the Palestinian Authority, and Palestinian businesses, acknowledge and reward creative and innovative Palestinian institutions. With contributions of

Table 3. Educational capitals from the lens of systems theory and the actiotope model of giftedness

Educational Capitals, commonly referred to as Exogenous Learning Resources

- Economic educational capital. Several scholars have highlighted the importance of economic educational capital in gifted education (Al-Hroub, 2022; Ziegler & Baker, 2013). Bourdieu (1986) introduced the concept of economic capital and its role in influencing individuals' educational opportunities and outcomes. Similarly, Ziegler and Baker (2013) emphasized the need to consider various forms of material resources, including financial assets, real estate, and property ownership, when evaluating access to educational opportunities in gifted education.
- Infrastructural educational capital refers to the physical structures, both public and private, that are essential in facilitating the provision of education and learning opportunities for gifted students. These structures may include special schools, learning centers, online resources, libraries, and universities (Al-Hroub, 2023; Ziegler & Baker, 2013). The availability and quality of these facilities can significantly impact the educational experiences and outcomes of gifted students.
- Cultural educational capital refers to the different factors that influence a person's education and learning outcomes, including knowledge, behaviors, attitudes, experiences, and skills (Bourdieu, 1986). It can have a significant impact on a learner's academic progress and achievement (Ziegler & Baker, 2013).
- Social educational capital refers to individuals and social entities that can positively influence the educational and learning outcomes of individuals. These entities include teachers, practitioners, parents, mentors, and advocacy organizations (Ziegler & Baker, 2013). Didactic educational capital refers to describe the collective knowledge and expertise utilized in developing and improving educational and instructional methods (Ziegler & Baker, 2013).
- This includes specialized educational curricula, teacher training programs, and placement of students in different types of educational settings such as mainstream schools or special classes (Al-Hroub, 2010).

Table 4. Learning capitals from the lens of systems theory and the actiotope model of giftedness

Learning Capitals, commonly referred to as Endogenous Learning Resources

- Organismic learning capital comprises an individual's physiological and inherent resources, which include physical fitness and appearance as essential components (Ziegler & Baker, 2013).
- Actional learning capital is defined as the individual's cumulative capacity to engage in diverse actions, including but not limited to proficiencies in swimming, dancing, musical instrument playing, reading, and mathematics (Ziegler & Baker, 2013).
- Telic learning capital can be defined as the anticipated short-term and long-term objectives that individuals set for themselves, which represent the desired outcomes that they seek to achieve through their actions and practices (Al-Hroub, 2022; Ziegler & Baker, 2013).
- Attentional learning capital refers to the cognitive resources and techniques utilized by an individual to direct their attention toward learning. These may include deliberate focus strategies and the allocation of adequate time for learning (Al-Hroub, 2015; Ziegler & Baker, 2013).
- Episodic learning capital refers to a set of learned actions that are based on a learner's goals and the context in which they operate. It is different from actional learning capital because it includes both available actions and developmental and learning goals, as well as contextual elements (Ericsson et al., 2006). Episodic learning capital is particularly important in advancing gifted students, as noted by Ziegler et al. (2014).

approximately \$200 million to the education sector, representing 30% of its total contributions, the association provides prestigious prizes in sectors such as culture, community development, youth entrepreneurship, education, and community institutions in Gaza. These annual awards, with a prize fund of around \$250,000, inspire excellence and promote positive change (Welfare Association, 2015). In collaboration with the Hani Al-Qaddumi Scholarship Foundation, the

association also presents the “Excellence in Teaching Award,” celebrating exceptional teachers who demonstrate creativity, innovation, and outstanding performance in the Palestinian education system. This award aims to inspire and encourage teachers to adopt effective teaching methods, personalize the learning experience for their students, and contribute to the progress and development of education in Palestine (Welfare Association, 2022).

5.1.2. *Infrastructural educational capital*

In Palestine, the lack of infrastructural educational capital is a significant challenge that hinders the provision of gifted education. Palestinian schools lack specialized schools, learning centers, and other resources, which can limit the identification and support of gifted students (Allen, 2020; Broco & Trad, 2011; Mansour, 2006). However, the establishment of universities in Palestine has contributed to the development of infrastructure and educational capital. An-Najah National University, for instance, provides graduate programs in gifted education and professional development opportunities for teachers to enhance their knowledge and skills in identifying and supporting gifted students. Moreover, An-Najah National University offers a scholarship program that provides financial support to gifted students to pursue their studies in various fields, including science, engineering, and technology (Kanafani, 2021).

Similarly, the Yasser Arafat secondary school for the gifted, established in the Gaza Strip, offers advanced curricula focusing on science, mathematics, technology, and the English language, in addition to other core subjects for students in grades 10–12. The school provides programs for developing leadership skills, creativity, and scientific research for students, and its facilities include computer labs, science labs, language labs, a lecture hall, a library, and a sports field. The school represents an effort to promote higher education and training in the Gaza Strip and aims to develop academic competencies for gifted students in the region (Muktafi-Birzeit, 1998). In 1998, the school implemented an acceleration system that enables students to complete a stage of education at a faster pace than usual, according to models and methods that allow students to enter the stage early, skip grade levels, adjust class placement within the same stage, and gain early admission to universities and colleges (Awad, 2021). However, although this school was originally established based on selective criteria for identifying and nurturing talented individuals, due to the deterioration of the political and economic conditions in the Palestinian society in the Gaza Strip, this school was integrated into the public education system, and the selection of its students is currently based solely on academic achievement tests, such that a student with a percentage score above 90% is considered “gifted”, placing them within the top 3% of students in academic achievement. The school has faced academic problems related to the absence of specialized programs for gifted students beyond traditional academics, inadequate teacher understanding of the unique needs of talented students, and insufficient methods for identifying such students. Additionally, the institution has faced material challenges regarding the provision of support for the development of specialized programs and mechanisms for identifying and nurturing gifted students (Al Ajez, 2012).

In 2016, a plan was announced by the Palestinian Authority to create a specialized school designed to cultivate and sustain the talents of gifted and talented students from all regions of the Palestinian territories. The forthcoming school is envisaged to cater to students across a broad spectrum of academic disciplines. Notably, the Palestinian Authority recently donated a tract of land measuring 35 dunams in the northern region of Ramallah in the West Bank, to facilitate the construction of the aforementioned school. The school will enroll students starting from the tenth grade, in addition to the eleventh and twelfth grades of secondary education. It is intended to cater to approximately 500 gifted students from various parts of the Palestinian-occupied territories. Fundraising efforts are currently underway to finance the establishment of the school, its commencement of academic activities within the stipulated time frame, and the construction of some of the school buildings, with funding provided by PEC DAR and Palestinian businessmen (Al Saadi, 2016).

Additionally, the Palestine Academy for Gifted Students, established in 2018, seeks to foster independent, creative, and responsible thinking in its students, preparing them for higher education of a superior standard. This initiative represents the first step towards a national program for educational excellence in Palestine, and the academy serves as a model secondary school offering innovative and challenging curricula to a select student body chosen for their outstanding academic performance, creative abilities, and leadership potential. The project targets students in the upper secondary education level and envisions a maximum capacity of 250 gifted Palestinian students at the academy (PECDAR Palestinian Economic Council for Development and Reconstruction, 2023).

Moreover, the Al Nayzak Organization for supportive education and scientific innovation founded in 2003 in Jerusalem, Palestine, provides a range of activities and programs for gifted students, including training courses, workshops, competitions, and educational tours. Its primary objective is to support and develop the skills and talents of gifted and talented students, particularly in the fields of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Al Nayzak Organization serves a wide range of age groups, from primary school to university level students, and provides support for teachers and parents of gifted students. The organization targets gifted and talented students from all socioeconomic backgrounds, with a particular emphasis on students from marginalized communities who may not have access to educational opportunities that foster their intellectual and creative potential (Al Nayzak Organization, 2023). Al Nayzak Organization provides a range of annual school programs aimed at fostering educational excellence and nurturing the talents of students. Among these programs are the renowned Horizons Academy and the Talented Students Incubator. Horizons Academy, for example, aims to cultivate the potential of exceptionally talented high school students, equipping them with the skills and knowledge necessary to become accomplished leaders in the future. Through a comprehensive four-year co-curricular program spanning grades 8 to 12, Horizons Academy offers a unique opportunity for students to enhance both their personal and academic capabilities. By providing comprehensive courses, holistic mentorship, college counseling, career development, and guidance, the academy invests in nurturing gifted minds, enabling them to excel in the best universities both locally and internationally. While not a scholarship program itself, Horizons Academy prepares students to become independent critical thinkers and innovative problem solvers. Moreover, the academy conducts annual research on higher education trends, ensuring that its co-curricular program remains up-to-date and aligned with the highest academic standards. This approach ensures that students receive rigorous and competitive programming, positioning them favorably among applicants worldwide. The selection process for admission involves registration and a placement exam, followed by a group interview to assess candidates' ability to stand out, collaborate in a new environment, and demonstrate teamwork skills. Lastly, a personal interview serves as an opportunity for the academy to evaluate individual students' motivation, intellect, empathic skills, personality, and drive. Upon acceptance, students undergo an orientation to familiarize themselves with the academy's principles, expectations, and resources. (Horizons Academy, 2023).

The Talented Students Incubator is an interactive and engaging environment that nurtures exceptional students with advanced mental abilities. It operates within an ongoing annual framework, with students joining upon the discovery of their abilities through assessments. The incubator offers various educational programs, including logical and critical thinking, science, technology, physics, rights and duties, music, contemporary Palestinian literature, and programs focused on Jerusalem and creativity. Weekly activities are held at the institution's headquarters in Jerusalem and the House of Science in Birzeit for students from Ramallah. While the Horizons Academy program and the Talented Students Incubator are highlighted, it is important to note that Al Nayzak Organization offers additional programs that contribute to the holistic development of students, providing them with various opportunities to explore their potential and excel academically.

Al Qaissi's (2016) study on Palestinian gifted students in East Jerusalem, under both the Israeli and Palestinian Ministry of Education, revealed that there are only two schools available for gifted Palestinian students that are under the Israeli occupation Ministry of Knowledge. These schools cater to students from the fourth grade until matriculation, which is equivalent to a high school diploma. The schools prioritize the development of gifted students in the areas of engineering, technology, and high-tech, while also providing opportunities for students to choose their preferred scientific subject among chemistry, biology, or physics. Along with these specialized subjects, compulsory topics such as Arabic, Hebrew, English, and religion are also part of the curriculum.

Additionally, the AL-MUNTADA Young Scientists Forum, established in 1996 and affiliated with the Arab and World Councils for the Gifted and Talented, is an educational institution dedicated to fostering critical, logical, and creative thinking skills among Palestinian children aged 6 to 17 in the Gaza Strip and West Bank (Donia Al-Watan, 2015). Its primary goal is to cultivate future scientists who will contribute to the development of their society. The forum specifically targets university students, educators, and interested individuals in utilizing a thinking encouragement approach with children. To further this objective, outreach summer camps and think-shops are organized in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, accompanied by training sessions for school teachers to create a conducive environment for promoting critical thinking (Donia Al-Watan, 2015). Student selection methods involve considering students aged between 10 and 12, who undergo a written examination and an interview process consisting of a scientific assessment with games and puzzles of varying difficulty levels. An open dialogue is also conducted to assess the student's problem-solving approach and ability to face challenges. Additionally, their creative abilities are measured (Sheikhah, 2007). Working with students encompasses four stages. In the first stage, children are exposed to 11 different topics to enhance their questioning, discussing, and discovery skills while identifying their interests. The second stage comprises specialized workshops in electronics, device control, literature and language, archaeology and history, and plants and the environment. During the third stage, students collaborate and closely observe their progress and idea implementation. Lastly, a workshop on genetic engineering is organized for all participants, followed by related experiments and discussions (Sheikhah, 2007). The Young Scholars Forum implemented several projects over the past years. For example, in 2015, the Forum provided electronic kits to Noor Al-Quds School and trained a number of its teachers on how to use them. The project was funded by Siraj Software Company. The project aims to target 20 students, aged between 12 and 14 years, and 5 teachers specializing in mathematics, science, and technology (Donia Al-Watan, 2015).

Overall, infrastructure educational capital plays a crucial role in supporting the provision of education and learning opportunities for gifted students in Palestine. Universities and educational centers in Palestine, such as An-Najah National University, PAL-Academy, Al Nayzak Organization, and Young Scientists Forum are providing specialized programs, teacher training, and scholarship opportunities to support gifted students. The lack of specialized schools and resource rooms for gifted students negatively affects their development. Therefore, further investment in infrastructure and resources for gifted education is necessary to enable Palestinian schools to identify and nurture giftedness effectively.

5.1.3. Cultural educational capital

Education holds significant value among Palestinians as a genuine investment, as it plays a crucial role in personal and societal development. Embedded in the cultural fabric of Palestinians, education is regarded as a fundamental principle, with the Palestinians embracing this perception and recognizing education as a tool for resilience and empowerment (Jawabreh, 2022; Jawabreh et al., 2022). This appreciation for education is deeply rooted in the historical legacy of Palestinians, who have been recognized as the esteemed educators of the Arab Middle East.

To understand the cultural values and beliefs around gifted individuals in Palestine, it is important to analyze the association between cultural values to education, and academic and high-

status careers. Reports suggest that during the British Mandate in Palestine (1917–1948), Palestinians experienced a strong and persistent upward trend in education, despite significant disruptions such as the Palestinian revolution between 1936 and 1939. By the early 1930s, the literacy rate among Palestinians surpassed that of the Arabs and Muslims in other British Empire territories and protectorates. During World War II, Palestinian elementary school enrollment rates were among the highest in the Arab world, second only to Lebanon (Ayal & Chiswick, 1983). The absence of an Arab university in Mandatory Palestine can be attributed to the colonial policy pursued by British authorities. Their concern about the potential strengthening of the Palestinian national movement, as well as the British project to support Hebrew universities and culture, Zionists movement pressure, and the scarcity of resources, collectively hindered the establishment of a comprehensive higher education system for Palestinians. Despite these formidable challenges, Palestinian educators and intellectuals made use of teachers' colleges, with the Arab College (al-Kulliyah al-'Arabiyyah) being particularly noteworthy. Graduates from these institutions, predominantly intellectuals, and elites, made significant contributions to universities both regionally and internationally (Pappé, 2022). The Arab College distinguished itself in this endeavor by forging closer ties with regional universities, particularly the American University of Beirut (AUB), enabling its graduates to pursue further education or embark on academic careers there (Pappé, 2022).

Throughout the initial two decades of the British mandate of Palestine, the American University of Beirut (AUB) witnessed a notable presence and increase in the percentage of Palestinian students. Notably, in the academic year of 1921–22, Palestinian students constituted 11% of the total enrollment (106 out of 966), a figure that rose to 17.1% in 1926–27 (206 out of 1,198) and further climbed to 18.7% in 1930–31 (284 out of 1,515) (American University of Beirut, 1922, 1927, 1933, 1934). The British government in Palestine facilitated this trend by supporting Palestinian students in pursuing higher education degrees at AUB, primarily in the field of education (American University of Beirut, 1925; Pappé, 2022). This support was spurred by the implementation of a new matriculation examination system in Palestine, which was recognized by AUB in 1924 as a valid qualification for admission. However, it is important to note that the absence of an Arab university or even a British university in Palestine during this period stemmed from concerns that such institutions would pose a threat to Hebrew culture and present competition to the envisioned Hebrew University. Consequently, this circumstance prevented elite and intellectual Palestinians from establishing an indigenous university (Pappé, 2022).

The desire among Palestinians to pursue high-status and academic careers can be understood within the context of their historical experiences, including the forced displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians from their homes and lands in 1948 and 1967. Despite high literacy rates and the presence of numerous universities that attract Palestinian students, there is a prevailing cultural preference for academic programs over vocational programs. This preference is evident not only among Palestinians in the Palestinian territories but also among the Palestinian population in Jordan, where a significant portion of the population has Palestinian origins (Al-Sa'ad, 2007; Khallad, 2000). Research by Khallad (2000) demonstrates that Palestinian youths in Jordan aspire to pursue prestigious occupations such as physicians, engineers, airline pilots, and teachers. This cultural inclination is partly influenced by the existing dual academic-vocational educational system, wherein academic tracks are associated with high intellectual and theoretical capabilities, while vocational tracks are often stigmatized and associated with poor performance on the Tawjihi examination, creating a negative perception of manual and skilled labor. Consequently, many Palestinians have pursued higher education and excelled in professions such as medicine, commerce, engineering, teaching, and management (El Abed, 2004). This cultural predisposition toward academic education reflects the aspirations of Palestinians to attain social mobility, success, and professional recognition despite the challenges and hardships they have faced.

In the Palestinian context, as in other contexts like Lebanon and Jordan, cultural perspectives and perceptions of giftedness shape the identification of gifted individuals (Al-Hroub, 2021; Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018b; Al-Hroub & Whitebread, 2008, 2019; Subhi-Yamin, 2009). The absence of

official or legal definitions of giftedness in Palestinian education laws presents a challenge for educators and specialists in recognizing and supporting students with exceptional abilities and talents (Broco & Trad, 2011). Mansour (2006) conducted a study with Palestinian teachers in the West Bank, where the concept of giftedness was defined based on their perceptions. The study found that Palestinian teachers described gifted students as individuals who demonstrated four specific attributes: (1) the ability to achieve excellence, particularly in academics, (2) ease in adapting to new environments, (3) asynchronous development, wherein students may have social or physical developmental gaps but excel academically, and (4) the presence of extrinsic motivation (Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018; El Khoury & Al-Hroub, 2018). A recent study by Jawabreh et al. (2020) examined the characteristics of gifted preschool children according to 450 Palestinian teachers. Gifted children exhibited mental traits such as excellent memory, deep concentration, keen observation skills, academic superiority, proficiency in complex games, and the ability to connect ideas. These traits also influenced cognitive abilities, including rapid learning, curiosity, and a propensity for questioning. Additionally, these characteristics shaped the child's personality, fostering traits like calmness, self-reliance, self-confidence, leadership, and flexibility. Palestinian teachers emphasized the impact of these characteristics on creativity and innovation, with gifted children displaying attributes like an unusual imagination, problem-solving skills, and creative energy. Linguistic proficiency, including complex sentence structures, extensive vocabulary, fluency, and social traits, such as forming relationships, sharing friendships, and an interest in social issues, were also observed. Despite the multifaceted nature of giftedness as defined by the Palestinian teachers in Mansour's (2006), and Jawabreh et al.'s studies, many educational institutions tend to prioritize academic achievement over other domains of giftedness, such as social or emotional intelligence. These cultural views on giftedness contribute to the broader understanding of how giftedness is perceived and identified among Palestinian students, which aligns with their aspirations for academic success and high-status careers. This may lead to inadequate recognition and support of the diverse range of abilities and talents among gifted students.

5.1.4. *Social educational capital*

Social Educational Capital refers to individuals and social entities that can positively influence the educational and learning outcomes of individuals. These entities include teachers, practitioners, parents, mentors, and advocacy organizations (Ziegler & Baker, 2013).

In the Palestinian context, local and expatriate advocacy bodies provide most of the support for creative and gifted Palestinian individuals. One such organization is the Higher Innovation and Excellence Council, established in 2013 by a decree from the President of the State of Palestine. The council serves as the highest authority representing the Palestinian people within and outside the country. It coordinates relationships within the national creativity system, ensures inclusivity and integration among its components, and serves as the primary link between institutions that support regional and international creativity. The council is responsible for all areas of scientific and artistic creativity and those directly related to science and technology (HCIEa, 2020). The Palestine Academy for Science and Technology, established by presidential decrees no. 114 in 1994 and no. 13 in 2004, operates as a self-governing institution with a national mandate to facilitate the advancement of science, technology, and innovation in Palestine. The Academy aims to harness these domains as instruments of economic, social, and human development. In furtherance of this objective, the Academy accords priority to supporting the initiatives of young Palestinians, providing them with opportunities to participate in the decision-making process and fostering a hospitable milieu for their academic and research pursuits. The Academy endeavors to foster connections between these youthful scientists and their counterparts in Palestine and abroad (Palestine Academy for Science and Technology PALAST, 2023).

Another organization that supports creative and gifted Palestinians both inside and outside Palestine is the Palestinian Creativity Foundation. Established in Austria in 2019, the foundation aims to promote and embed a culture of excellence and innovation across all fields and areas

where Palestinian people reside. The foundation strives to develop policies, regulations, and programs that incentivize and support creativity and excellence, particularly in primary and higher education across various disciplines. Additionally, it seeks to represent Palestine effectively and actively within regional and international systems of innovation and creativity and to establish effective communication channels with Palestinian competencies in the diaspora. Finally, the foundation aims to enhance Palestinian identity by disseminating and promoting all components of the national culture. The foundation hosted the inaugural Palestinian Educational Creativity Conference in Istanbul in 2022, adopting the theme “Palestinian Creativity in the Educational Process: Challenges and Prospects”. Its goals include the dissemination of Palestinian creativity culture in diverse fields and locations where Palestinians are present and the advancement of the original Palestinian national identity (International Palestinian Creativity Association, 2022).

In addition to these organizations, several key avenues for the advancement of gifted education in Palestine exist. There has been an increasing amount of research among scholars and university students. Furthermore, In addition, there has been a significant rise in cooperation between Palestinian institutions and both local and international organizations focused on gifted education, such as the International Center for Excellence and Innovation (ICIE) and An-Najah University. ICIE, which was established by researchers from Palestine, Jordan, and Germany and is headquartered in Germany, has organized a range of conferences on gifted education in Arabic and English for scholars, students, and professionals in Palestine.

Palestinian families prioritize and financially support their children’s higher education, including gifted and talented students. Most Palestinian university students are self-funded by their families, who make significant sacrifices to provide financial assistance for tuition, living expenses, and educational needs. This strong culture of support reflects the belief in the transformative power of education and the commitment to investing in their children’s future success. The role of families, teachers, schools, and mentors is also emphasized by several studies in Palestine. In a recent study by Alawneh et al. (2023), findings emphasized the collective influence of the family, teachers, schools, the environment, and specialized institutions, such as the Edward Said Institute, in promoting and nurturing musical talents in Palestine. Firstly, the family was recognized as having a crucial role in supporting and fostering musical talent. Continuous encouragement, attention, and financial support were identified as important elements in talent development. A supportive family environment positively influenced the level of talent and the overall growth process. Secondly, teachers were found to be influential figures in shaping the musical trajectory of gifted individuals. Their role was considered equally important to that of parents. Teachers who demonstrated open-mindedness, cultural sensitivity, and support were instrumental in nurturing and promoting musical talents. Thirdly, the role of schools in promoting musical talents varied among participants. Some participants praised their schools for providing support and encouragement, while others reported experiencing frustration and a perceived lack of support. Schools that actively supported and nurtured musical talents created an environment conducive to talent development. Lastly, the Edward Said Institute was recognized for its significant role in supporting and fostering musical talents. Through music education, the institute contributed to the enhancement and refinement of talents. Their support and guidance were valuable in assisting gifted individuals in their musical journeys.

5.1.5. *Didactic educational capital*

In the context of Palestine, education for gifted and talented students is primarily provided through specialized schools and programs, such as acceleration and enrichment. However, due to political and economic reasons, little has been done to serve a significant number of gifted students, particularly with the trend of inclusion in mainstream programs. The Yasser Arafat secondary school for the gifted in the Gaza Strip is an exemplar of specialized schools catering to gifted students, offering advanced curricula focusing on science, mathematics, technology, and the English language, as well as leadership skills, creativity, and scientific research programs (Al Ajez, 2012). The Palestinian Authority also announced plans to establish a specialized school to

serve gifted students from all regions of Palestine, which is expected to cater to a broad range of academic disciplines (Al Saadi, 2016).

In August 2022, MoEHE, in partnership with the Tamer Foundation for Community Education through the General Administration of Student Activities, launched the Cultural Gifted Clubs in the areas of creative writing, debate, public speaking, divination and eloquence, reading activities, and poetry, from the heart of Sarta Secondary School for Girls in Nablus Education and in all directorates. The Ministry explained in a statement that these clubs aim to prepare students to become pioneers of knowledge and science in literary fields, creating young leaders capable of bearing responsibilities, efficiently managing their lives, and being active and influential in their surroundings, based on the foundation of culture in a way that preserves the pillars of Palestinian storytelling and dedicates the habit of reading according to the Ministry's vision to integrate it into the educational learning process, as well as applying the life skills they have learned in their schools. The number of clubs for the academic year 2021–2022 year reached 26 from grades 7–11, distributed across all directorates of education, targeting 20 students in each club (Al-Najah Al-Ikhbari, 2022).

However, the lack of specialized schools and resource rooms for gifted students negatively impacts their development. Therefore, further investment in infrastructure and resources, including didactic educational capital, for gifted education is necessary to enable Palestinian schools to identify and nurture giftedness effectively.

There are a few universities in Palestine that offer academic programs, teacher training programs, and services related to gifted education. For instance, An-Najah National University in Nablus provides a graduate program in gifted education, as well as workshops and training programs for teachers and parents (An-Najah National University, n.d.b.). Moreover, it is noteworthy that several Palestinian universities, including Al-Quds University, Al-Quds Open University, and Birzeit University, have incorporated specialized courses on gifted and talented education as part of their special education programs (Al Quds Open University, n.d.; Birzeit University, n.d.b.). These courses offer students the opportunity to acquire knowledge and skills in effectively supporting and educating gifted and talented learners.

In a recent study by Abu Dyab (2021), the professional competencies of 313 teachers in Palestinian private schools in East Jerusalem for identifying gifted students were examined from the perspectives of teachers and educational supervisors. The findings indicated highly positive attitudes towards the overall self-professional and teaching competencies of teachers in identifying gifted students. Educational supervisors highlighted the importance of Palestinian teachers having a deep understanding of gifted students, including their characteristics, needs, and effective nurturing approaches. They also emphasized the significance of teachers' intelligence, flexibility, subject matter expertise, and consideration of individual differences in developing, implementing, and evaluating instructional plans. Another recent study by Abu Qulbain (2021) examined the impact of in-service training programs on the teaching competencies of elementary school teachers for gifted students in Jerusalem. The findings revealed moderate positive attitudes among teachers towards program components and teaching competencies. Significant correlations were found between program components and teaching competencies. Gender and academic qualifications had significant effects on the importance of training program components, favoring females and those with graduate and postgraduate degrees.

5.2. Learning capitals

Learning capitals, commonly referred to as endogenous resources, are inclusive of various components associated with gifted students, namely organismic resources, motivational resources, and personal learning resources. Organismic resources encompass factors such as health and endurance, which significantly contribute to the overall well-being of the students. Motivational resources involve elements such as learning goal orientation and self-confidence, playing a pivotal

role in fostering their motivation to learn. Furthermore, personal learning resources encompass learning strategies and self-regulation skills that enhance their capacity to engage in effective learning practices (Chandler & Ziegler, 2017).

5.2.1. *Organismic learning capital*

Although research on the sports, physical fitness, and attributes of gifted learners in Palestine is scarce, the history of sports in the region provides a glimpse into the athletic culture and achievements of the Palestinian people.

Palestinian sports have a long and rich history, and their development has been influenced by the country's complex political and social landscape. In 1908, the first football club in Palestine was established at Jerusalem's St. George School. During the Ottoman Empire, in 1911, the first Palestinian daily newspaper called "Filastin" reported that there were 65 Arab social athletic clubs in Palestine, 55 of which belonged to the Arab Palestine Sports Federation (APSF). In 1928, the Palestinian Football Association was established, and they participated in international competitions, including the 1934 FIFA World Cup in Italy (Khalidi, 2019).

In 1953, the Palestine Basketball Federation was founded, and in the following decade, Palestinian teams began competing in international tournaments. In 1966, the Palestine Volleyball Federation was founded, and Palestinian teams began competing in international tournaments in the 1970s. However, the establishment of Israel in 1948 and the displacement of hundreds of thousands of Palestinians hindered the development of sports in Palestine due to occupation, displacement, and economic hardship (Khalidi, 2019).

In the early 20th century, wrestling, boxing, and weightlifting were popular, while martial arts such as karate, taekwondo, and judo gained popularity in recent decades. During the first Intifada from 1987 to 1993, sports became a means of resistance against the Israeli occupation, with young Palestinians organizing local soccer tournaments and other athletic events to promote community solidarity and demonstrate resilience in the face of adversity (Khalidi, 2019). Palestinian athletes have gained international recognition, competing in various sports at the Olympics and other international competitions. However, they continue to encounter obstacles, including movement restrictions imposed by the Israeli occupation and limited resources for training and development. Despite residing in a conflict zone, sports have continued to play a vital role in Palestinian society, promoting physical fitness, healthy living, and national pride and unity for Palestinians both in Palestine and in the diaspora (Baroud, 2022; Khalidi, 2019).

Today, many Palestinian youths participate in sports programs in schools and community organizations, and Palestinian athletes continue to compete at the highest levels of international competition. Despite the challenges posed by occupation and displacement, sports remain an important part of Palestinian culture, and they continue to provide a means of resilience and resistance for Palestinian youth. Arrest, torture, and killings of Palestinian sportsmen became a regular headline in occupied Palestine (Baroud, 2022).

In 2018, the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MoEHE) launched sports clubs for gifted students across various directorates of education. These clubs continue for a period of nine consecutive weeks. The Director-General of Activities explained that these clubs are part of a deliberate and well-planned effort to enhance sporting creativity and develop talents among students in various sports, according to their abilities and preferences. The clubs, which were held every Saturday over a period of nine consecutive weeks, included a specialized training program conducted by experienced teachers, under the supervision of sports activity supervisors in the directorates. The significance of the clubs coinciding with the organization of the Sports Olympiad in increasing the readiness of participating male and female athletes. In 2018, the sports project consisted of 30 clubs for boys and girls distributed across all directorates of education and higher education. These clubs involve 1,350 students, who were trained by 120 specialized and

experienced teachers (Ministry of Education and Higher Education MoEHE, 2017). Through sports, Palestinians have been able to overcome adversity and display their talents to the world, inspiring hope and pride in their communities.

In regards to physical fitness, several studies have highlighted the low prevalence of physical activity among Palestinian adolescents and suggested the need for immediate action to increase physical activity levels through a school-based health education intervention. For example, Ghrayeb et al. (2013) evaluated the prevalence of physical activity in 720 Palestinian adolescents from public schools in Palestine and found that only 9.86% of the participants met the recommended physical activity guidelines. Similarly, Nubani-Husseini et al. (2023) found that only 36.6% of elementary students reported eating breakfast daily and 28% reported eating the recommended daily quantity of fruits and vegetables.

Despite these challenges, local partners such as UNICEF (2021) are implementing the Nutrition Friendly Schools Initiative (NFSI) in Palestine to improve the nutritional status of school-age children and adolescents. The program has successfully reinforced healthy dietary habits and physical activity to improve the nutritional status of adolescent girls through updated curricula and extra-curricular activities. Furthermore, the “Palestine Marathon for Freedom of Movement” is an annual event held in Bethlehem that aims to establish a running culture in Palestine and promote physical fitness and cultural exchange and understanding between Palestinians and people from around the world. The marathon also raises awareness about the restrictions on movement that Palestinians face due to the Israeli occupation and shows another side of Palestinians to the international community.

Overall, sports and physical fitness have played a vital role in Palestinian society, promoting physical fitness, healthy living, and national pride and unity for Palestinians both in Palestine and in the diaspora (Baroud, 2022; Khalidi, 2019). Despite residing in a conflict zone, sports have continued to be a means of resilience and resistance for Palestinian youth, allowing them to showcase their talents to the world and inspiring hope and pride in their communities.

5.2.2. *Actional learning capital*

Within the framework of Action Learning Capital in Palestine, we emphasize key dimensions, namely academic excellence, cultural achievements, the diaspora’s contributions, and the promotion of scientific research. By scrutinizing these aspects, we delve into the significant accomplishments and contributions that have had a formative impact on the educational landscape of Palestine.

5.2.2.1. *Academic excellence and international recognition.* Palestinian universities, schools, and individuals have consistently demonstrated exceptional academic performance and accomplishments in various fields. Despite facing political and economic challenges, Palestinian educational institutions have achieved success locally, regionally, and internationally. Over the past five years, Palestinian individuals have excelled in diverse areas, including medicine, engineering, literature, and art. Notable achievements include Palestinian doctor Walid Al-Banna winning the title of “Arab Inventor” for his invention of “Retinal Eye Analysis Glasses for Brain Health” and a team of Palestinian engineers earning a gold medal at the Global Exhibition of Creativity and Technology in China for their invention of an “Artificial Hand.” Palestinian students have also garnered global recognition, such as Joue Nazal winning first place globally at the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair for her project “Life Saving Socks.” Additionally, Palestinian writers, teachers, and students have received prestigious regional and international awards and prizes. Palestinian writer Ibrahim Nasrallah won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction for his novel “The Second War of the Dog” (Ali, 2018). Palestinian teacher Hanan Al-Hroub won the Global Teacher Prize in 2016 (Euronews, 2016). Palestinian students won the International Space Settlement Design Competition organized by NASA in 2021 (Royanews, 2021). The Palestinian team “First Robotics

Palestine” won the gold medal at the global competition on robot design held in Dubai in 2019 (International Federation of Inventors’ Association IFIA, 2019). Palestine secures first place in the Quantum Computing Hackathon, held in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates. Yafa Jarradat, a student from Palestine Polytechnic University, won the top prize for her project “Smart Current.” The competition involved 263 participants from over 54 countries, and Jarradat’s achievement was recognized as the highest award in the hackathon (International Palestine Creativity Association, 2023; Palestine Polytechnic University PPU, 2023).

5.2.2.2. Cultural and artistic excellence. Palestine is renowned for its contributions to the international community through its exceptional Palestinian individuals in various fields, such as fashion design (e.g., Natalie Tahhan, Nadya Hazboun), literature, and poetry (e.g., Mahmoud Darwish, Tamim Barghouthi, Ghassan Kanafani), historical and theoretical discourse (e.g., Anis Sayigh, Edward Said), vocal and instrumental music (e.g., Mahammad Assaf, Noel Kharman, Ziad Rahbani, Elias Rabani, Rahbani brothers), film directing (e.g., Michel Khleifi, Rashid Masharawi, Ali Nassar, Elia Suleiman), visual arts (e.g., Ismail Shammout, Naji Al-Ali), and many others (Marefa, 2019).

5.2.2.3. Contribution of the palestinian diaspora. The Palestinian diaspora has made significant contributions to various fields globally, particularly in North and Latin America, where their impact on politics and the economy is widely recognized. Several individuals of Palestinian origin have ascended to positions of power, such as Salvadoran President Nayeb Bukele, former Salvadoran President Antonio Saca, and former Honduran President Carlos Facussé (MEMO, 2019). The diaspora has also produced international celebrities like supermodels and actresses Gigi and Bella Hadid, comedian Dean Obeidallah, record producer DJ Khaled, singer-songwriter Nasri Tony Atweh, visual artist and inventor Vladimir Faik Tamari, physicists Hanna Nasser and Munir Nayfeh, mathematician Al Nayfeh, and many others. These achievements highlight the positive influence and global impact of the Palestinian diaspora (Marefa, n.d).

5.2.2.4. Promoting scientific research and projects. Several organizations, such as Scientists for Palestine (S4P), have been established to promote scientific research and projects in the Occupied Palestinian territories. S4P, founded in 2015, works to integrate Palestine into the international scientific community and supports science research, education, and entrepreneurship. Palestinian scientists collaborate with international Palestine solidarity networks to pursue projects and initiatives that contribute to scientific advancements. S4P has organized the Palestinian Advanced Physics School since 2016, providing a platform for outstanding Palestinian researchers and students to further their scientific knowledge and skills (Scientist for Palestine, 2016). Despite these achievements, there are no records for the country’s top-performing students in international educational evaluations such as TIMSS, and PISA. The enduring conflict and political instability with Israel have made it challenging for Palestinian officials to prioritize the allocation of resources and attention towards education assessments like PISA and TIMSS.

In 2022, The Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research (MHESR), in collaboration with the Palestinian National Committee for Education, Culture, and Science, announced the first edition of the International Award for Applied Research in Gifted Education. The award aims to create a better educational environment and foster excellence, creativity, and innovation in gifted education in Palestine (State of Palestine, 2022).

The remarkable achievements of Palestinians worldwide underscore the importance of recognizing and nurturing gifted and talented individuals in Palestine. The unique context of Palestine, coupled with the influence of the diaspora, has played a significant role in shaping and inspiring these gifted Palestinians across various disciplines. By investing in education, providing resources and opportunities for talented learners, and receiving support from the Palestinian diaspora, Palestine can continue to make significant contributions to the international community and inspire future generations to strive for greatness.

5.2.3. *Telic learning capital*

Various services and educational opportunities are available to support gifted students in Palestine. Some universities in the country offer academic programs, teacher training programs, and services specifically designed for gifted education. An-Najah National University in Nablus, for example, provides a graduate program in gifted education, along with workshops and training programs catered to teachers and parents (An-Najah National University, *n.d.b.*). Additionally, other Palestinian universities like Al-Quds University, Al-Quds Open University, and Birzeit University integrate courses on gifted and talented education within their special education programs (Al Quds Open University, *n.d.*; Birzeit University, *n.d.a.*).

However, despite the presence of these services, and the strong emphasis on education among Palestinians (Al-Hroub, 2011, Al-Hroub, 2014, Al-Hroub, 2014), there is a shortage of relevant capital that hinders the full realization of the potential of gifted students. Palestinian students' career aspirations are influenced by various factors, including gender, socioeconomic status, and the prevailing occupational structure of their local labor market. This leads to gender-based disparities, with Palestinian boys aspiring more towards male-dominated high-status professions like engineering and medicine, while Palestinian girls tend to lean towards traditionally female-dominated fields such as teaching and nursing (Al-Sa'd, 2007; Khallad, 2000; Khattab, Al-Hroub, 2015; Al-Hroub, 2014).

Cultural and gender biases significantly impact the motivational levels of students, as highlighted by a study conducted by Khattab (2003). The study revealed that Palestinian boys displayed higher interest in pursuing careers as engineers (13.7%), medical doctors (12.2%), and teachers (9.2%), whereas Palestinian girls showed a greater inclination towards becoming teachers (25.4%), medical doctors (11.4%), or nurses (8.1%). Other popular career choices among boys included lawyer (7.8%), computer programmer (6.7%), and pharmacist (5.1%), while girls expressed interest in careers like engineer (7.5%), lawyer (5.5%), and pharmacist (5.1%).

To overcome these obstacles, it is crucial to promote awareness and challenge societal biases regarding gender roles and occupational expectations. Implementing comprehensive career counseling and guidance programs in Palestinian schools can help students explore a wider range of career possibilities and break free from gender stereotypes. Additionally, ensuring equal gender-based access to resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities can empower female Palestinian-gifted students to pursue their passions and excel in their chosen fields, regardless of societal expectations. By addressing these challenges and fostering an inclusive educational environment, Palestine can effectively nurture the talents and potential of its gifted students, contributing to their personal development and the advancement of the nation.

5.2.4. *Attentional learning capital*

Despite the importance of attentional learning capital, there is a dearth of research and information on this topic in Palestine. Specifically, it is unclear to what extent gifted students in Palestine devote their time and attention to developing their talents and skills. Moreover, due to the challenges of education under military occupation, leisure time is a scarce commodity for students in Palestinian schools, which may further limit the opportunities available for gifted students to cultivate their potential. However, as stated in previously described exogenous earning resources, the Palestinian government undertook the establishment of sports clubs targeting gifted students across various educational directorates (MoEHE, 2018). Furthermore, it is noteworthy that hundreds of Palestinians have been honored with awards in the fields of literature, sciences, medicine, and other disciplines (refer to Appendix 1). These commendable initiatives have yielded numerous accolades spanning various domains. Consequently, through their remarkable academic accomplishments, artistic pursuits, and successful sporting endeavors, Palestinians have unequivocally demonstrated their resolute determination and steadfast dedication to achieving excellence and distinction.

5.2.5. *Episodical learning capital*

Palestinian gifted learning experiences are influenced by the historical context and cultural aspirations of Palestinians. The cultural inclination towards academic education and high-status professions reflects the aspirations of Palestinians to attain success and professional recognition (El Abed, 2004). This preference is reinforced by a dual academic-vocational educational system that associates academic tracks with intellectual capabilities and theoretical knowledge while stigmatizing vocational tracks. Consequently, many Palestinians have pursued higher education and excelled in various fields such as medicine, engineering, teaching, and management.

Palestinian teachers have described gifted students as individuals who demonstrate excellence in academics, ease in adapting to new environments, asynchronous development, and extrinsic motivation Mansour (2006); Al-Hroub & El Khoury, 2018b). Gifted learners in Palestine

Are perceived as those with advanced cognitive traits, such as excellent memory, deep concentration, keen observation skills, and academic superiority. Cognitive abilities such as rapid learning, curiosity, and a propensity for questioning are also observed. Gifted children exhibit traits that shape their personality, such as calmness, self-reliance, self-confidence, leadership, flexibility, high linguistic proficiency, communication skills, and a keen interest in social issues (Jawabreh et al., 2020). However, teachers, parents, and peers tend to prioritize academic achievement over other domains of giftedness, such as social or emotional intelligence (Mansour, 2006; Jawabreh et al., 2020).

Overall, Palestinian gifted learning experiences are shaped and motivated by cultural aspirations for academic success, the historical context of displacement, and the perceptions of giftedness. The enjoyment of learning for gifted individuals in Palestine is fostered through academic excellence, intellectual stimulation, and the pursuit of high-status careers aligned with their aspirations and cultural values.

The remarkable achievements of Palestinian individuals in various fields around the world demonstrate the importance of recognizing and nurturing gifted and talented individuals in Palestine. The impact of Palestine's unique context and diaspora has played a significant role in shaping and influencing these gifted Palestinians in various disciplines, Palestine can continue to contribute to the international community and inspire future generations to achieve greatness. Therefore, investing in education, providing resources and opportunities for talented learners in Palestine, and being supported by the Palestinian diaspora can lead to greater success and significant contributions to the global community.

6. Conclusion and implications

In the context of Palestine and the Palestinian people, the conclusions and implications drawn from this critical review article hold significant relevance. Palestine, with its unique historical, cultural, and political background, faces distinct challenges and opportunities in the field of education. Recognizing and addressing these factors is crucial for creating a thriving educational system that empowers Palestinian students and contributes to the overall development of Palestinian society.

The examination of the ten educational and learning capitals in the Palestinian context highlights their interconnectedness and significance in shaping educational outcomes and opportunities. The examination reveals the impact of the economic crisis and political conflict on gifted education in Palestine, where limited funding and inadequate infrastructure hinder the provision of appropriate opportunities for gifted students. Efforts are being made to establish specialized schools and offer scholarships, but further local and international investment is needed to effectively support gifted education (Economic Educational Capital). Developing infrastructure and resources, such as specialized schools, learning centers, and resource rooms, can enhance the identification, support, and overall development of gifted students. Comprehensive teacher

training and continuing professional development programs are crucial to equip educators with the necessary knowledge and skills to cater to the unique needs of gifted learners (Infrastructure Educational Capital). Education is highly valued in Palestine, reflecting a deep appreciation for education and a cultural inclination toward academic careers. However, there is a need to broaden the understanding of giftedness beyond academics (Cultural Educational Capital). Gifted education in Palestine is supported by organizations such as the Higher Innovation and Excellence Council, the Palestine Academy for Science and Technology, and the Palestinian Creativity Foundation. Families, teachers, schools, mentors, and specialized institutions play vital roles in nurturing gifted talents, with increasing cooperation between Palestinian and international organizations (Social Educational Capital). Specialized schools and programs exist for gifted students, but additional investment in infrastructure and resources is necessary. Some universities offer academic programs and teacher training in gifted education, emphasizing the importance of teacher competencies. The establishment of culturally gifted clubs and the inclusion of specialized courses in university programs are positive steps toward supporting gifted education (Didactic Educational Capital).

The examination also highlights the resilience of Palestinian athletes (Organismic Learning Capital) and the importance of recognizing academic excellence, cultural achievements, diaspora contributions, and scientific research (Actional Learning Capital) in Palestine. Providing comprehensive support and guidance to gifted students (Telic Learning Capital), addressing gender biases, and promoting inclusive educational environments is crucial. Additionally, attention needs to be given to research on time allocation and attentional focus among gifted students (Attentional Learning Capital). Finally, the cultural aspirations and historical context shape the experiences of Palestinian gifted learners (Episodic Learning Capital).

The analysis of the ten capitals in the Palestinian context yields several implications for the enhancement of education and the support of gifted students. One significant implication is the need to strengthen financial capital. To achieve this, it is essential to allocate sufficient financial resources to education and prioritize investment in infrastructure development, teacher training programs, and the procurement of educational materials and technology. Implementing transparent and accountable financial management systems is crucial for ensuring the effective utilization of funds, promoting efficiency, and maximizing the impact of financial resources.

Enhancing human capital is another crucial implication. Continuous professional development programs should be prioritized for educators to enhance their teaching skills and pedagogical approaches. Collaboration and knowledge-sharing platforms among educators can foster innovative teaching practices and create a supportive professional learning community, ultimately benefiting gifted students.

Promoting social capital is vital for fostering a sense of community and engagement in education. Partnerships and collaborations between educational institutions, communities, and stakeholders are necessary to encourage community involvement and support. Establishing mentoring programs and peer support networks can contribute to positive relationships and social support among students, teachers, and parents, creating a conducive environment for gifted students to thrive.

Cultural capital should be valued and integrated into the educational system. Incorporating culturally relevant curricula and teaching materials that reflect the diversity of students' backgrounds and experiences is crucial. Fostering an inclusive and respectful learning environment that appreciates and values the cultural identities of all students is essential for the holistic development of gifted learners.

Enhancing organizational capital is key to effective educational systems. Improving school leadership and governance structures ensures efficient decision-making, resource allocation, and accountability. Participatory approaches that involve students, parents, and teachers in the decision-making processes foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility, leading to a more cohesive and supportive educational environment.

Organismic learning capital pertains to the support and development of talented athletes. Investing in sports infrastructure, training programs, and coaching resources can provide a supportive environment for talented athletes. Establishing partnerships with international sports organizations and universities can expand exposure and opportunities for Palestinian athletes. Developing talent identification programs is also crucial to identify and nurture gifted athletes across Palestine.

Actional learning capital focuses on academic excellence and cultural achievements. Expanding academic programs and specialized training in gifted education can provide tailored support for gifted students. Collaboration between educational institutions, cultural organizations, and the diaspora can promote cultural exchange, artistic development, and recognition of Palestinian talent. Mentorship programs connecting gifted students with accomplished individuals in their fields can offer valuable guidance and support.

Promoting telic learning capital emphasizes inclusivity and addressing gender biases. Implementing comprehensive career counseling and guidance programs in schools challenges gender stereotypes and expands career options for gifted students. Ensuring equal access to resources, mentorship, and networking opportunities for female gifted students empowers them to pursue their passions and excel in their chosen fields. Raising awareness and advocating for gender equality in education and society creates an inclusive environment that values and supports the aspirations of all gifted students.

Addressing the shortage in attentional learning capital is crucial. Conducting research studies to explore the time allocation patterns and attentional focus of gifted students in Palestine provides insights for designing effective educational strategies. Collaboration with international researchers and organizations can facilitate the sharing of best practices and methodologies for studying attentional learning capital.

Finally, enhancing episodic learning capital involves fostering collaborations between Palestinian universities and international scientific communities. This collaboration enhances research opportunities for gifted students. Establishing funding initiatives and research grants specifically targeted at supporting scientific research projects by gifted individuals is essential. Developing mentorship programs that connect gifted students with experienced researchers can provide guidance and support for their scientific endeavors.

By addressing these implications and taking a comprehensive approach to education, Palestine can create an inclusive, supportive, and high-quality learning environment for gifted students. Policymakers, educators, and stakeholders must work together to implement these recommendations, recognizing the interconnectedness and significance of the ten capitals in shaping educational outcomes and opportunities. Through these efforts, Palestinian students will be better prepared to succeed in the 21st century, and gifted individuals can excel, contribute to their communities, and make valuable contributions on the global stage.

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Appendix 1

Recent Notable Achievements: Examples of International, Arab, and Local Awards Received by Palestinians (2021-2022)

In Media and Arts

- Palestinian director Mohammed Khamees received the World Distribution Award for Best Director for his film “Exit Visa” in London.
- Palestinian journalist Hadeel Aleyan was awarded the Best Media Character in the Middle East for 2021 in Amman, Jordan.
- Palestinian director Ahmed Hassouna from Gaza won the Best Screenplay award for feature films at the International Cinema and Migration Festival in Oujda, Morocco, for his film “Astorobia.”
- Palestinian student Lailas Kilani won first place in the competition for Best Radio Performance at the Arab universities level.
- The documentary film “Palestine 1920” by Palestinian director Ashraf Mashharawi, which was broadcasted on Al Jazeera, won the Silver Dolphin Award at the Cannes Film Festival. The film depicts Palestine, its infrastructure, facilities, and social life in 1920, countering the claim that it was a land without a people.
- The graduation film “Touch Line” by young director Mohammed Safouri won the award for Best Short Drama Film at the Arab French Film Festival in Amman. The film explores the events of the Nakba and displacement through the story of his refugee grandfather. It was screened at several festivals in France and the United States. His documentary film “The First” also won an award at the Zayed University Short Documentary Film Festival.
- The novel by Palestinian activist Maryam Zaqout, featured in the program “Her Story,” won first place at the Arab Radio and Television Festival in Tunisia in the main radio programs competition.
- Palestinian journalist Majdoline Hassouna won the World Press Freedom Award for 2021 in the Free Journalist category, presented by Reporters Without Borders.
- Photographer Mohammed Asaad Mohsen from the Palestinian Press Agency (SAFA) won the Arab Journalism Award in Dubai for Best Press Photo in its twentieth edition.
- Photographer Hisham Abu Shakra from the Anadolu Agency Palestinian won the Zoom International Award for the third time. He received the award from the Communications Committee under the presidency of the Republic at the annual ceremony held in Ankara on December 22, 2021, for a video he captured during an attempt by occupation soldiers to seize a wounded Palestinian from inside an ambulance.
- The director Mohammed Qablawi, founder and president of the Malmö Arab Film Festival in Sweden, has been awarded the Arab Cinema Personality of the Year at the events of the 72nd edition of the Berlin International Film Festival.
- The Palestinian photographer from Gaza, Majdi Fathi Qariqa, won first place in the “Karima Aboud (2022)” Photography Award. He also received the Arab Photographers Union and Sharjah Calligraphy Meeting Award for Press Photography, organized under the auspices of the Department of Culture in the United Arab Emirates.
- The Palestinian journalist Fatima Shubeir from Gaza won the 85th edition of the World Press Photo Contest, organized by the World Press Photo organization.

- The Palestinian director Ashraf Mashhrawi won three awards at the “Telly” festival in the United States in its forty-third edition for his films “Palestine 1920” and “The Story Continues—Russia and Ukraine: The Roots of the Crisis”.
- The Palestinian director Maha Haj, born in the city of Nazareth in Palestine, won the Best Screenplay Award in the “Un Certain Regard” competition at the Cannes Film Festival.
- The film “Touchline” by the young Palestinian director Mohammed Saffouri won the Judges’ Award at the Franco-Arab Film Festival in Paris, as well as the Holidays 365 Festival in Los Angeles. It was also selected to participate in the Tribeca and Hollyshorts festivals, both of which nominate films for the prestigious Oscars.
- Palestine won seven awards at the 22nd edition of the Arab Radio and Television Festival in the Saudi capital, Riyadh.
- The Palestinian film “Palestine 87” by director Bilal Al-Khatib won the Golden Tanit Award for Best Short Fiction Film at the 33rd edition of the Carthage Film Festival.
- The Palestinian journalist Farah Abadi won the Best Presenter Award in “Skona” in Sweden through public voting for the year 2022.
- The director Abdullah Al-Khatib won the “Black Iris” award at the third edition of the Amman International Film Festival for his film “Little Palestine,” which portrays documented accounts of the Yarmouk Camp.
- The Palestinian director and actor Youssef Alari received the Best Actor Award for his film “Evening Prayer” at the Moroccan International Film Festival for the year 2022.
- The Palestinian documentary film “Inside the Battle for Jerusalem” by Palestinian photographer Ayman Abu Ramuz and South African photographer Dan Beatman won two awards for Best Cinematography and Best News Coverage at the Emmy Awards Festival in the United States after competing with 30 international films.
- The film “Flag” by the Palestinian director Feras Khouri won the Golden Pyramid Award for Best Film at the Cairo International Film Festival in its forty-fourth edition.
- Palestinian journalist Mohammed Al-Thalathini from Gaza, a photographer at the German news agency DPA, won the international POY Award in the Breaking News category (Al Awda News Network, 2022; Safa, 2021).

In Sports

- Palestinian refugee Mohammad Majd Abdullah was crowned first in the youth category (16 years old) in the First Youth Karate League Championship, which took place in several Syrian provinces.
- Palestinian boxer Ahmed Harara won the Arab championship belt for professional boxing, becoming the Arab champion.
- Palestinian swimmer Bassem Mahmoud Taha achieved first place in the Rahab Swimming Championship organized by the Rahab Sports Club in the Arab Republic of Egypt.
- Palestinian child Abdulrahman Ramez Al-Khouli achieved first place in the kickboxing championship and won the title of the Syrian Arab Republic Championship in the youth category.
- Palestinian child Noor Al-Souiti won the gold medal in the World Taekwondo Championship held in Britain. This championship is considered one of the strongest tournaments held in Europe.

- The Palestinian national beach volleyball team achieved the bronze medal in the 2022 West Asia Championship by defeating the Syrian team 2-0 in Doha.
- Palestinian athlete Sami Asaad Ibrahim Natil won first place in the Egypt International Marathon held in Luxor, Egypt, with the participation of runners from 32 countries.
- Mahmoud Mufid Diab, the Palestinian athlete, won the gold medal and the Syrian championship in the art of self-defense (karate).
- Omar Hantouli, the Palestinian athlete, won the gold medal in the 9th Sofia International Taekwondo Championship in Bulgaria, where he competed against 1,350 players from 65 countries worldwide. He also won the gold medal in the Asia Club Championship held in the Pakistani capital, Islamabad.
- Palestinian player Alaa Fadil won first place in the Central Syrian Universities Table Tennis Championship.
- Iman Suwan won the gold medal in the Under-14 category for females, while Mohammed Sader won the gold medal in the Under-14 category for males, at the Arab Youth and Junior Championships for both genders.
- Palestinian child Imran Salim Ahmed Ghanem, from Nahr al-Bared Camp, claimed first place in the Kickboxing Championship for juniors in the United States, which concluded in the state of Missouri.
- Palestinian coach Mahmoud Abdel Fattah won the Best Coach Award in the NBA G-League basketball championship.
- Fadi Al-Deeb, the Palestinian champion, achieved an unprecedented historical achievement by leading the Greek team Ike Athens as a player and coach to win the Wheelchair Basketball League.
- Palestinian champion Mohammed Hamada won two gold and one bronze medals during his participation in the World Weightlifting Championship in the 102 kg category.
- The Palestinian Muay Thai team won three medals, including a gold and two bronzes, at the World Championship held in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates.
- Mustafa Abu Nasser, from Nahr al-Bared Camp, won the gold medal in the Asia Powerlifting Championship held in the United Arab Emirates.
- Mohammed Ouda Allah won the gold medal in the “Grand Prix” International Jiu-Jitsu Championship for juniors in Bangkok, Thailand.
- Palestinian athlete Khader Khader won first place in the South and fifth place in Lebanon at the Tyre Marathon held in the city of Tyre.
- Palestinian international referee Ahmed Abu Hatab received the Best Referee Award in the 2022 Asian Combat Games (Al Awda News Network, 2022; Safa, 2021).

In Literature

- Palestinian novelist Fajr Ya'qub, who is displaced from the Yarmouk camp in Syria, won the Katara Prize for the Arabic Novel for his novel “Hours of Laziness.”
- Similarly, Palestinian novelist Nader Manhal Haji Omar, also displaced from the Yarmouk camp in Syria, won the Katara Prize for the Arabic Novel for his novel “Cities of Boredom.”

- Palestinian writer Noha Afouna was crowned with the “Pioneers of Literature and Creativity” award, one of the most important global literary awards for women, held in the Indian capital, New Delhi.
- Palestinian poet Dr. Abdullah Issa was granted active membership in the Russian Academy of Natural Sciences, becoming the first Palestinian academic to receive this scientific status. He was honored with the “Golden Quill” in recognition of his contribution to the global poetry movement and his exceptional translations of poetry from Russian to Arabic and vice versa.
- Palestinian poet Alaa Al-Qattarawi won the Best Poetry Collection Award for Youth in the Abdulaziz Al-Babtain Poetry and Criticism Competition.
- Mohammed Abu Rajila, the Palestinian, won the Sharjah Ayyam Award for the Preservation and Protection of Cultural Heritage in the Arab region, for the existing collections in cultural institutions, as part of the initiative to revive and preserve cultural heritage in the town of Al-Qarara in Khan Yunis Governorate.
- Dr. Ashjan Ajour from Gaza City won the Palestinian International Book Award for 2022 in the Academic Books category, organized by the Middle East Monitor Foundation, for her book “Restoring Humanity in the Experience of Hunger Strike in Palestine.”
- The website of Sabastiya in the Palestinian city of Nablus achieved first place among Arab participants in the Excellence Competitions for Museum and Cultural Guidance in museums and archaeological sites under the theme “Crossing from the Past to the Future.”
- Palestinian writer Susan Assaabi won first place in the Hana Mina Arab Novel Competition for her novel “Dance as if You’re the Nun,” organized by the Syrian Ministry of Culture (Al Awda News Network, 2022; Safa, 2021).

In Teaching Excellence

- Asmaa Ma’mar, a teacher at Al-Fuqhari Girls’ School in Gaza, won the Global Creative Woman Award 2021, earning a gold medal after passing four exams with distinction.
- Dr. Ibtisam Mahmoud Khalafallah, a teacher at UNRWA’s Eastern Khan Yunis School, won the International Women Icon Award 2022 in the field of education and scientific research, presented by the International Women Award.
- Palestinian teacher Safaa Mahmoud Obeid won the Teacher of the Year title in the Global Earth Prize Competition, which focuses on environmental sustainability and is dedicated to students.
- Palestinian teachers Rana Ziyada and Najwa Abu Salameh won the Khalifa Education Award for Creative Teachers. They received the award during a ceremony held in the United Arab Emirates (Al Awda News Network, 2022; Safa, 2021).

In Administration and Management

- The U.S. National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) announced the appointment of Palestinian engineer Najoud Al-Fahoum as the Head of Mission Planning for the Artemis 1 project, aimed at landing the first woman and first person of color on the moon.
- The Permanent International Arbitration Court in the Netherlands appointed Palestinian judges Shawan Jabarin and Raji Sourani to its new panel, making Palestine part of the International Judges Club.
- Palestinian student Adham Yaghi won the International Town Hall Award specialized in fighting corruption, surpassing participants from 11 countries in the competition.

- Engineer Abdel Nasser Duwaikat, founder and president of the Energy Society in Palestine, received the award for Best Energy Development Specialist in the Middle East for the year 2022 (Al Awda News Network, 2022; Safa, 2021).

Further recognition, excellence, and awards

- Fourteen-year-old Palestinian child Muhammad Issa Awis from Jerusalem solved 200 mathematical problems in a record time of 8 minutes and achieved first place globally in the UCMAS online competition at the Higher A level, competing against participants from 30 countries around the world.
- Eleven-year-old student Sadeen Mahand Al-Bazra from Nablus won first place globally in the “Genius of Mental Intelligence” GMA competition held in Istanbul. She received the Icon of Global Competitions shield and was crowned the world’s youngest little trainer.
- Child Muhammad Alaa Mustafa achieved first place in the Mental Calculation competition in Syria.
- “Green Olive Mountain” company in Ramallah won the Silver Award in the DOMINA International Olive Oil Competition. The company’s olive oil samples received the Silver Award, ranking after Italy and before Spain.
- Twenty-year-old Palestinian youth Sara Al-Khatib won the title of Volunteer of the Year in the Kingdom of Denmark, surpassing 211 other volunteers with a total of 7,203 votes.
- The New York Police Association named Issa Abbasi, Chief of the Strategic Initiative Department in the Palestinian American Police, as the Person of the Year.
- Professor Bassam Dalah, a Palestinian Australian, was selected among the top 2% of prominent scientists in all fields according to the 2021 ranking by Stanford University.
- Scientist Bashar Saad, a lecturer at the Arab American University, was selected among the top 2% of the world’s best scientists for the year 2021 according to Stanford University’s ranking (Al Awda News Network, 2022; Safa, 2021).

Safa (2021). *Safa publishes the Palestinian creativity harvest of 2021*. Retrieved from: <https://safa.ps/post/318721/%D8%B5%D9%81%D8%A7-%D8%AA%D9%86%D8%B4%D8%B1-%D8%AD%D8%B5%D8%A7%D8%AF-%D8%A7%D9%84%D8%A5%D8%A8%D8%AF%D8%A7%D8%B9-%D8%A7%D9%84%D9%81%D9%84%D8%B3%D8%B7%D9%8A%D9%86%D9%8A-%D9%84%D8%B9%D8%A7%D9%85-2021>

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