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# ISRAELI INCITEMENT AGAINST PALESTINIAN CURRICULA, AND THE PALESTINIAN POSITION TO CONFRONT THIS INCITEMENT

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## ABSTRACT

*This study aimed to examine the degree of Israeli incitement against Palestinian curricula, and the Palestinian position to confront this incitement. The study was conducted in the first semester of the academic year (2024/2025). The researcher used the qualitative approach using content analysis and focused interviews, where the study community consisted of all original reports on the subject of incitement and the leadership of the Palestinian Ministry of Education that witnessed the incitement attack. The researcher developed a study tool, which is questions specific to the leadership of the Ministry of Education that witnessed the major attack of Israeli incitement against Palestinian curricula, as well as a tool to analyze the content of official reports issued by the Ministry of Education that were issued in this regard. The results of the study showed that there is a high degree of Israeli incitement against Palestinian curricula, that Israeli incitement aims to undermine Palestinian identity and reformulate the historical narrative. There is official Western support represented by linking aid to the Palestinians to changing curricula, and there are foreign research and study centers that provide Israeli incitement with baseless allegations. There are also great efforts by the Ministry of Education and relevant institutions to stand against this incitement and refute it. The study recommended the need to establish study centers specialized in Israeli curricula to study incitement and racial discrimination in them, as well as forming a national team from all relevant ministries and institutions to address the issue of Israeli incitement against curricula, and increasing Palestinian activity at the international level to stop incitement.*

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**KEYWORDS:** Incitement, Curricula, Palestinian Position.

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## INTRODUCTION

Changing or developing educational curricula has become one of the issues that has increasingly attracted the attention of educators due to the importance of education as the foundation upon which nations seeking progress and development rely (Al-Mutawwa, 2009). The concept of curriculum improvement refers to introducing specific modifications to certain parts of the curriculum without changing its basic concepts or overall structure. Curriculum development, however, is more comprehensive, as it includes all aspects of the school curriculum and its elements, in addition to teaching methods, instructional media, learning activities, evaluation methods and tools, school administration, school libraries, and teacher guides. Development aims to bring the object being developed to the best possible form so that it achieves its goals efficiently in terms of time, effort, and cost (Saadah & Ibrahim, 2014).

In every country, particularly in Palestine, curricula are considered a sovereign matter because of their close connection with national identity and narrative. Palestinian curricula therefore play an important role in preserving the national narrative and strengthening it among younger generations.

The discussion of violations committed by the occupation against Palestinian education has become a prominent issue locally and internationally. The concept of curriculum may refer to the narrow meaning (the textbook) or the broader meaning that includes all experiences intended to achieve comprehensive student development, including educational activities inside and outside the school and involving students, teachers, schools, and the educational environment (Al-Hawari & Qasim, 2016).

### *Study Problem and Questions:*

While working in the Palestinian Ministry of Education and due to his proximity to decision-making and educational policy formulation, the researcher observed the level of pressure exerted on the Ministry's leadership to modify Palestinian curricula under the claim that they incite violence. Foreign delegations repeatedly visited Ministry officials and, in many cases, threatened to cut financial support. These pressures were justified by Israeli and foreign reports, including those issued by organizations such as IMPACT-se, claiming that Palestinian educational curricula promote terrorism.

Accordingly, the research problem emerged in order to answer the following questions:

1. What are the Israeli objectives behind incitement against Palestinian curricula?
2. What allegations has Israel used in its campaign against Palestinian curricula?
3. What procedures and tools were used by Israel in incitement against Palestinian curricula?
4. What is the Palestinian position in confronting these accusations?

### *Study Objectives*

This study aims to: 1. Identify Israeli objectives behind incitement against Palestinian curricula. 2. Monitor the allegations used in incitement campaigns. 3. Track the procedures and tools used in these campaigns. 4. Identify the Palestinian position in confronting such incitement.

### *Study Limitations:*

The study results are limited to: 1. Analysis of major documents and reports related to the incitement campaign and interviews with leadership figures in the Ministry of Education. 2. The time period of the study, which was the first semester of the 2024/2025 academic year. 3. The suitability and validity of the study tools in examining Israeli incitement against Palestinian curricula and the Palestinian response.

### *Definitions*

**Incitement** refers to the campaign launched by the Israeli occupation against Palestinian curricula since the publication of the first Palestinian curriculum in 2000. This campaign continues through Israeli institutions claiming to be independent research centers but which are politically oriented. These institutions use falsified examples or quotes taken out of context from textbooks to mislead international public opinion and influence donor institutions supporting Palestinian education (Ministry of Education, 2020).

### *Operational definition*

the set of allegations, activities, policies, and decisions taken by Israel to undermine Palestinian curricula and distort their image regionally and internationally.

### *Curriculum*

The educational curriculum is defined as an educational plan consisting of objectives, content, methods, instructional tools, activities, and evaluation methods derived from the philosophy of education and connected to the learner and society. It is implemented through educational situations

inside and outside the classroom to contribute to the comprehensive development of the learner's personality (Al-Mutairi, 2020).

### ***Operational definition***

the set of school textbooks developed by the Palestinian Curriculum Center by educational experts across scientific and humanities fields from grade 1 to grade 12.

**Palestinian Position :** This refers to diplomatic and political efforts carried out in coordination with the Palestinian diplomatic corps to confront the incitement campaign against Palestinian curricula in international arenas in Europe and the United States. These efforts included discussions with high-level political and diplomatic actors (Ministry of Education, 2022).

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The educational curriculum consists of four main elements: objectives, content, teaching methods, and evaluation (Bouhanna et al., 2020). Continuous curriculum evaluation plays an important role in improving and developing curricula. In Palestine, curriculum development is an ongoing process based on feedback from the educational field and evaluation results (Al-Kilani, 2024).

However, curriculum changes linked to foreign conditions and Israeli allegations of incitement have been rejected in Palestine because they undermine Palestinian sovereignty (Jamous, 2024; Khudour, 2024).

### ***Incitement Against Palestinian Curricula***

Curricula in every country, particularly in Palestine, are considered a sovereign national matter because of their close connection with identity and the national narrative. For this reason, decisions related to curricula must remain independent national decisions rooted in Palestinian identity. Given the systematic targeting of the Palestinian narrative—its people, land, culture, and history—the Palestinian curriculum plays a crucial role in preserving the national narrative and embedding its values among younger generations.

The Palestinian Ministry of Education continuously develops school curricula based on feedback from the educational field and on the results of ongoing evaluations. As part of these efforts, the Ministry decided to develop new school curricula beginning in the academic year 2015/2016. The framework of the new curriculum and its knowledge structure were completed in early 2016, after which the process of writing and producing textbooks began.

More than four hundred textbooks were produced within less than three years. However, after their publication it became evident that some textbooks required revisions and improvements at different levels. These differences were partly attributed to weaknesses in quality assurance systems used in writing and reviewing textbooks.

The campaign of incitement against Palestinian curricula began during the preparation of the first Palestinian national curriculum in the late 1990s and has continued in various forms until today. This campaign primarily targeted core elements of the Palestinian narrative including history, geography, Jerusalem, refugees, and the reality of occupation and resistance.

The campaign intensified after the launch of the second national curriculum in 2016. Organized pressure groups led this campaign through reports and media publications accompanied by unprecedented incitement activities directed particularly at policymakers and legislators in Europe and the United States. The goal of these campaigns has consistently been to distort the Palestinian narrative and portray the curricula as promoting violence and hatred.

Israeli reports and studies used in the incitement campaign include several documents prepared by foreign and Israeli institutions, such as reports issued by the IMPACT-se organization, which claims to monitor curricula in the Middle East. These reports accused Palestinian textbooks of encouraging extremism, promoting violence, and denying Israel's existence.

In addition, several reports claimed that Palestinian textbooks encourage radicalization among students and glorify martyrdom and resistance while rejecting negotiations. Other reports claimed that the curriculum incorporates extremist ideological perspectives and contains antisemitic themes.

In contrast, Palestinian officials and scholars argue that these accusations rely on selective quotations or fabricated examples taken out of context. Palestinian educational authorities emphasize that the curriculum promotes values such as justice, human rights, freedom, and national identity while reflecting the social and historical reality experienced by Palestinian society.

### ***Judaization of Palestinian Education in Jerusalem***

Despite the extensive media campaign against Palestinian education in the West Bank, Gaza, and Jerusalem, the education sector in Jerusalem has been

the most affected. Israeli authorities allocated more than 2.1 billion shekels within a five-year plan to impose Israeli educational policies in Jerusalem. These policies include attempts to replace Palestinian curricula with Israeli curricula and to modify or distort Palestinian textbooks, particularly in schools administered by the municipality.

Private and community schools in Jerusalem have been required to obtain licenses from Israeli authorities in order to receive financial support. At the same time, these schools have been threatened with license withdrawal if they continue teaching the Palestinian curriculum. Schools are pressured to use modified or distorted textbooks instead of the original Palestinian textbooks.

Municipal authorities in Jerusalem have also introduced changes to Palestinian textbooks by altering historical and national content related to Palestinian identity. These altered books are then printed and distributed to Palestinian schools in Jerusalem. Palestinian officials consider these actions a direct violation of educational rights and a deliberate attempt to alter the Palestinian national narrative.

### *Sovereignty of Palestinian Curricula*

Palestinian curricula occupy a central place within the Palestinian educational system. The Ministry of Education therefore seeks continuously to update curricula, teaching methods, and educational tools in order to keep pace with developments in knowledge, educational technology, and learning methodologies.

At the same time, Palestinian authorities stress that curricula are a sovereign national matter closely linked to Palestinian identity and national narrative. The campaign against Palestinian curricula is therefore viewed as a political campaign aimed at distorting Palestinian historical, cultural, and social identity.

Several studies conducted by Israeli and international researchers have also examined educational content used in Israeli schools. Some of these studies argue that Israeli textbooks themselves contain narratives that marginalize Palestinians, distort Palestinian history, and deny the existence of Palestinian national identity.

For this reason, strengthening the sovereignty of Palestinian curricula requires rejecting conditional foreign funding that demands changes to educational content. Palestinian policymakers emphasize the importance of national funding for education in order to ensure the independence of educational decision-making.

### *Previous Studies*

Several previous studies addressed the topic of incitement against Palestinian education and the challenges facing the Palestinian educational system under Israeli occupation.

Al-Kilani (2024) aimed to document violations committed by the occupying authority against education in Palestine and attempts to erase the Palestinian national narrative through accusations that Palestinian textbooks incite violence and terrorism. The study adopted a qualitative approach and relied on content analysis of official documents issued by the Palestinian Ministry of Education. The study concluded that the development of Palestinian curricula must remain a sovereign national decision consistent with the Palestinian narrative and national constants.

Dweikat and Rabaya (2023) examined the impact of Israeli military checkpoints on the educational process in Palestinian schools from the perspective of teachers in the Jordan Valley. The study followed a descriptive field approach and included a sample of 40 teachers from Tubas Governorate. The results showed that Israeli checkpoints have a significant negative effect on the educational process and on students' psychological well-being.

Abu Asab (2022) investigated the procedures used by the Israeli Ministry of Education to monitor Palestinian history textbooks in East Jerusalem schools and the effect of these procedures on national identity. The study analyzed Palestinian textbooks from grade five to grade ten and compared them with modified versions produced under Israeli supervision. The results indicated that Israeli interventions represent a serious challenge to Palestinian educational identity.

Abu Ghazaleh (2021) studied the impact of the "Israelization" of curricula on national culture among residents of Jerusalem. The research adopted a descriptive analytical method and included a sample of 230 teachers in Jerusalem schools. The results indicated that curriculum distortion significantly affects national awareness and cultural identity among students.

Quwaider (2019) examined the challenges facing the modernization of Palestinian curricula in light of Israeli incitement from the perspective of educational supervisors. The study used a descriptive analytical method and relied on questionnaire data collected from educational supervisors in Gaza. The results revealed that the challenges facing curriculum development are significant and require coordinated political, diplomatic, and educational responses.

Other studies, such as Zahd (2016) and Abu Jaber (2017), focused on the influence of Israeli educational

policies on Palestinian students in Jerusalem. These studies highlighted the negative consequences of multiple education systems in Jerusalem and the political pressures placed on Palestinian schools.

### *Commentary on Previous Studies*

The current study is consistent with several previous studies that addressed Israeli interference in Palestinian education and the difficulties faced by Palestinian educational institutions under occupation. However, this study differs from earlier research in its focus on incitement against Palestinian curricula specifically, particularly school textbooks.

In addition, this study relies entirely on a qualitative research approach and uses multiple tools including interviews with senior policymakers and content analysis of official documents and reports.

## **METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES**

### *Research Methodology*

To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher adopted a qualitative research approach. This approach involved analyzing the theoretical framework and previous studies related to the research topic, conducting personal interviews with policymakers, and analyzing official documents and reports. The purpose was to describe the phenomenon, analyze it, and extract meaningful conclusions relevant to the research problem.

### *Sources of Data*

The researcher relied on several sources for collecting data:

1. Literature review: analyzing previous studies and documents related to the topic.
2. Personal interviews: interviews were conducted with senior leaders and policymakers in the Palestinian Ministry of Education who were directly involved during the peak of the incitement campaign against Palestinian curricula.
3. Official documents and reports issued by the Ministry of Education.

The interviews were conducted with high-level officials who participated directly in responding to the incitement campaign and who had extensive experience in educational policy. Each interview

lasted more than one hour, and in some cases follow-up interviews were conducted in order to obtain detailed and accurate information.

### *Validity and Reliability of the Interviews*

#### **Validity**

The interview questions were prepared by the researcher based on previous literature and professional experience. Four main questions were formulated and reviewed by specialists and experts in the field. Based on their feedback, some modifications were made to improve the clarity and relevance of the questions.

#### **Reliability**

To ensure reliability, the researcher conducted repeated interviews separated by a period of seven days. The responses were then analyzed and compared to ensure consistency in the findings.

#### *Data Analysis*

The researcher analyzed qualitative data collected from interviews and official documents using grounded theory techniques. The analysis involved carefully reviewing interview transcripts, identifying key concepts, coding responses, grouping similar ideas into subcategories, and then organizing them into broader thematic categories. Percentages were calculated to summarize the frequency of responses.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of the study were derived from two primary sources: interviews conducted with senior leaders in the Palestinian Ministry of Education and the analysis of official reports and documents issued by the Ministry. The findings were organized according to the main research questions.

### *Israeli Objectives Behind Incitement Against Palestinian Curricula*

Interview responses indicated that Israeli objectives focus primarily on weakening the Palestinian Authority internationally, undermining Palestinian national identity, and reducing international financial support for Palestinian education.

Objective	Percentage
Weakening the Palestinian Authority in international forums	60%
Undermining Palestinian national identity	40%
Reducing financial support for the Palestinian Authority	40%

### *Israeli Allegations Used in the Incitement Campaign*

Allegation	Percentage
Curricula promote resistance against the Israeli occupation	60%
Distorting facts related to Jerusalem and the Right of Return	60%
Erasing Palestinian heritage	40%

### *Tools Used in the Incitement Campaign*

Tool	Percentage
Use of Israeli diplomatic leaders through conferences and research centers	100%
International incitement through media	60%
Filing international cases against Palestinian curricula	60%

### *Palestinian Response to the Incitement Campaign*

Response	Percentage
Diplomatic meetings with international officials and parliaments	80%
Awareness campaigns through media and workshops	80%
Analyzing curriculum content to refute allegations	60%
Documenting Israeli violations in international forums	40%

## CONCLUSION

The findings demonstrate that the Israeli incitement campaign against Palestinian curricula is primarily political in nature and aims to weaken Palestinian national identity and influence international perceptions of Palestinian education. Both interviews and official documents confirm that the allegations often rely on selective or misleading interpretations of educational content.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Conduct follow-up studies examining incitement against Palestinian curricula.
2. Establish research centers specializing in analyzing Israeli curricula and discriminatory narratives.

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3. Form a national team from relevant ministries to confront Israeli incitement campaigns.
4. Strengthen cooperation with international educational and human rights organizations.
5. Increase national funding for education to protect the independence of Palestinian curricula.

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