Faculty of Graduate Studies

Diagnosing the Social Inclusion Strategies for the Disabled Students at the Palestinian Higher Education Institutions

By

Ramsey Osama Wade' Ata

Supervisor

Dr. Nedal Jayousi

This thesis was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Intercultural Communication and Literature

April 2023

Thesis Approval

Diagnosing the Social Inclusion Strategies for the Disabled Students at the Palestinian Higher Education Institutions

By

Ramsey Osama Wade' Ata

This thesis was defended successfully on October 5, 2022 and approved by:

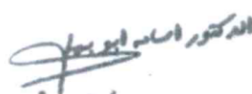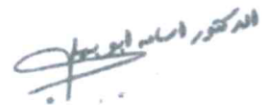Committee member   Signature

1- Supervisor Name : Dr. Nedal R. Jayousi

2- Internal Examiner Name ------------------------

3- External Examiner Name ------------------------

Declaration

This work entitled "**Diagnosing the Social Inclusion Strategies for the Disabled Students at the Palestinian Higher Education Institutions**" submitted in this dissertation for the degree of Master in Intercultural Communication and Literature is the result of the candidate's own investigations except where otherwise stated.

The candidate further declares that the results of this work have not been submitted for the award of any other degree of fellowship.

Signed: *Ramsey Ata*

Ramsey Osama Wade' Ata

Date: Aug 5, 2023

Student ID: 201912839

Acknowledgments

I foremost thank God who has given me strength and encouragement throughout all the challenging moments of completing this dissertation. I am truly grateful for His unconditional and endless love, mercy, and grace.

I would like to acknowledge and extend deepest gratitude and appreciation to my supervisor Dr. Nedal Jayyousi for his guidance and cooperation throughout this journey and also the four universities; Hebron, Bethlehem, Birzeit and Arab American - Jenin universities, for their cooperation in collecting the data, for the sake of this research.

I would also like to extend special thanks to my family, especially my father, for their continued support and encouragement in all walks of life, but especially throughout this challenge.

I would like to dedicate this thesis to each and every one of my beloved family members; especially to my mother's soul, who continue to be my main source of inspiration in this life.

List of Abbreviations

1- SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

2- UN: United Nations

3- UNESCO: The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural

Organization

4- PCBS: Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics

5- PA: The Palestinian Authority

6- NGOS: Non-governmental organizations

7- ICHR: The Independent Commission for Human Rights

8- SPAR: services, programs, advocacy, research

9- GPA: Grade point average

10- MoE: Ministry of Education

11- CRPD: United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

Abstract

This thesis examines different frameworks for understanding disability and their implications for practice. The functional limitations framework focuses on individual disabilities but neglects the environment's role in worsening conditions. The minority group paradigm focuses on marginalization and discrimination but can reinforce stereotypes of people with disabilities as victims. The social construction of disability challenges assumptions about disability as an individual experience and emphasizes the social environment. This approach aims to remove all barriers to create an inclusive environment for everyone.

The research problem pertains to the lack of clear strategies or plans to promote inclusivity for disabled students at Palestinian universities. The study seeks to address the gaps in existing social inclusion strategies employed in Palestinian universities and their feasibility in comparison to European/international models. The significance of this research is that it highlights the fundamental rights of disabled students that are often overlooked by the government.

The researcher constructed a questionnaire, which was distributed to ninety-seven students with disabilities, and SPSS program was used to analyze all results. In addition, twenty students with disabilities and twenty experts in the disability field were directly interviewed and thematic analysis was used to analyze all results. The researcher focused on four main universities covering the main geographical locations including Hebron, Bethlehem, Birzeit and the Arab American – Jenin universities.

The findings from the analysis of the experts reveal the lack of clear policies and strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions, with varying capabilities among institutions to support them. Developing a comprehensive

model that addresses the needs of people with disabilities at Palestinian higher education institutions is essential, including policies for university education, infrastructure preparation, and integration from an early age in basic education. Furthermore, from the interviews with students with disabilities there is a significant difference between Palestinian higher education institutions in providing facilities for students with disabilities. Despite that, there is a general satisfaction expressed by students of disabilities. The findings from the analysis of the students with disabilities also reveal that the majority of them receive financial aid that is beneficial in meeting their financial needs. While flexible teaching methods are generally available and received positively, the evaluation of activities designated for students with disabilities varies between institutions. Most disabled students are not aware of ways in which institutions can assist them in getting jobs after graduation. Efforts to promote social inclusion should address structural and systemic barriers as well as attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate social exclusion.

Finally, the study emphasizes the lack of both clear policies, strategies and evaluation for this segment. Each institution attempts to meet their needs, according to its own capabilities and ability to bring support for them. It is essential to recognize these shortcomings and take active steps to address them, as disabled students' satisfaction can lead to better integration into institutions. Training and raising awareness for university staff can help eliminate barriers and create an inclusive culture within higher education institutions

Table of Contents

List of Figures

List of Tables

Chapter 1

Introduction

Higher education is one of the basic pillars in building the infrastructure for the development of countries and one of the most important reasons for their progress and prosperity (Nieminen, 2022). The right to education is one of the most important human rights that should be practiced without distinction or discrimination, whether this person is incapacitated or not (Cole, 2022). This is decided by international charters and agreements, and local legislations, on the basis that education raises the level of society in all different fields, and contributes to progress and development (Al Jubeh, 2017). In the era of progress and technology, there has become recognition and awareness of the needs of persons with disabilities in higher education institutions, in order to be able to practice a normal life, pursue professions, and be active members of society, thus achieving self-realization (Cinotti & Giulia, 2018).

The increase in the number of students with disabilities in higher education during the past years highlights the need to make the higher education system in Palestine more just, so as to allow the active participation of individuals in their integration (Khayran, 2019). The concept of justice and its requirements reflects a shift from the diagnosis of disability, which focuses on the individual's limited ability to do something, towards the educational perspective, which links disability with the ability of the educational system to integrate all students, regardless of their special status, equally in terms of access, educational outcomes, and general outlook (Snounu, 2019). According to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2005), inclusion in education is a process of building the capacities of the educational system to enable it to reach all learners of various abilities. Decision-makers

must recognize that inclusive education (inclusion in education) is a continuous process that aims to provide quality education for all (Albadawi, 2022). UNESCO (2005) includes inclusion as a dynamic approach to respond to student diversity and to see individual differences not as a problem but as an opportunity to enrich the learning process. In addition, countries, especially the developed ones, have sought and are still striving to encourage, empower, enroll, and communicate with persons with disabilities in society and higher education institutions. This is widely referred to as intercultural communication (Harris et al., 2004).

Intercultural communication is a discipline that studies communication across different cultures and social groups, or how culture affects communication (Aneas & Sandín, 2009). It describes the wide range of communication processes and problems that naturally appear within an organization or social context made up of individuals from different religious, social, ethnic, and educational backgrounds. In this sense, it seeks to understand how people from different countries and cultures act, communicate and perceive the world around them (Lauring, 2011).

The study of intercultural communication does require intercultural understanding, that is the ability to value and understand cultural differences of different cultures. Language is an example of an important cultural component that is linked to intercultural understanding (Saint-Jacques, 2011).

The importance of investigating intercultural communication lies in many things, amongst which are understanding one's identity, enhancing personal and social interactions, and solving any misunderstandings and miscommunications (Issa, 2016).

The world has its own strategies to cope with the different cultures especially the socially excluded/marginalized disabled people, so as to incorporate them into society, which is widely referred to as social inclusion (Camilleri-Cassar, 2014).

According to the World Bank (2013), social inclusion is " the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society – improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged individuals and groups on the basis of their identity. In fact, in every country, some individuals and groups confront barriers that prevent them from fully participating in political, economic, and social life. These groups may be excluded not only through legal systems, land and labor markets, but also through discriminatory or stigmatizing attitudes, beliefs, or perceptions (Bogart et al., 2022).

The disadvantaged individuals and groups are often excluded based on social identity, which may be derived from gender, age, location, occupation, race, ethnicity, religion, citizenship status, disability, and sexual orientation and gender identity (SOGI), among other factors. There are surely strategies that are advocated to be considered for achieving social inclusion (World Bank, 2013).

Social inclusion, as mentioned, explicitly refers to people who are disadvantaged on the basis of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, or economic or other status for two reasons (Ahmad et al., 2022). First, although anyone may be potentially at risk of social exclusion, certain attributes or characteristics increase such risk (Peruzzo, 2022). These are often linked to identity or group ascription. Kabeer (2006) described two types of identity. One relates to "groups of people who acknowledge their common membership, have shared beliefs and values and act in collective ways. Rank, ethnicity and religion are examples of such group identities." The other refers to categories of

people defined on the basis of some shared characteristic rather than shared values and way of life. Members of these categories do not necessarily know each other and share very little in common, aside from the nature of the discrimination they face. Street children, people with AIDS, undocumented migrants and people with disabilities are examples of such socially excluded categories (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016).

In aspiring to empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all members of society, the United Nations' 2030 Agenda draws attention to these attributes. In fact, it is emphasized that all should be included "irrespective of age, sex, **disability,** race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status" (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016).

Social inclusion is "both a process and a goal. Promoting social inclusion requires tackling social exclusion (a state in which individuals are unable to participate fully in economic, social, political and cultural life) by removing barriers to people's participation in society, as well as by taking active inclusionary steps to facilitate such participation. Besides, social inclusion is thus a more deliberate process of encompassing and welcoming all persons and embracing greater equality and tolerance." (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016).

Social inclusion processes require both addressing the drivers of exclusion, including certain policies and institutions as well as discriminatory attitudes and behaviors, and actively bringing people in (Rimmerman, 2013). Moreover, it not only requires encouraging the disabled, but also creating and implementing adequate policies and practices that meet their needs. These strategies shall be an integral part of any culture (UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2016).

"Our world is undergoing rapid social transformations driven by the compounded impact of economic and social crises and other challenges resulting in growing inequalities within and among countries. Goals 10 and 16 of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development directly address social inclusion: the former sets the ambition to reduce inequality within and among countries with an emphasis on inclusion, equal opportunities and enhanced representation; the latter recognizes that inclusion is a key requirement for sustained peace and targets, among others, the protection of fundamental rights. Given its multidimensional nature, inclusion is also a key tenet in several other goals. Notably, goals focusing on education (Goal 4) and urban development (Goal 11) are to be inclusive, as are goals addressing economic growth (Goal 8) and industrialization (Goal 9). Goal 5 focuses on the multidimensional form of social inclusion as it relates to gender equality." (UNESCO, 2005).

Considering that the researcher investigates social inclusion with regards to the disabled, it is quite vital to refer to some background information about it. Disability is part of the human abnormal condition. Most extended families have a disabled member, and in many cases the family members are responsible for supporting and incorporating them, especially in their educational life, throughout their life. It is essential to mention that incorporation in education is a process for building the educational system capabilities so that it reaches all learners of different abilities (Shine & Stefanou, 2022). In fact, inclusion is a dynamic way of responding to student differences, where individual variances are not considered a problem but as a chance for development and enrichment of the learning process (Lyons & Arthur-Kelly, 2014).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The researcher seeks to diagnose social inclusion strategies for the disabled at Palestinian Higher Education institutions and to what extent they meet the disabled peoples' needs, including physical environment, tools provided, and attitudes by students or instructors. There are no clear strategies or plans to incorporate them in almost all universities. In fact, inclusion policies are not clearly adopted, whether at the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research or the higher Education institutions and this is an obstacle! Policies must be crystal clear so as to incorporate them in university life, just like all other students. Although local and international legislations guarantee the right of persons with disabilities to access education, regardless of disability, there are so many persons with disabilities who do not have the opportunity to receive or complete their basic education, which completely eliminates the chances of completing their higher education. Many factors play a major role in limiting the enrollment of students with disabilities in basic and secondary education. This must be addressed so as to encourage student enrollment in higher education.

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2019), there are approximately ninety three thousand people with disabilities in Palestine. The Persons with disabilities in Palestine constitute 2.1% of the total population, 48% in the West Bank and 52% in Gaza Strip. Moreover, about one fifth of persons with disabilities are children under age 18. The percentage of male children was higher compared with females in the same age group, reaching 21% and 18% respectively. The percentage was more prevalent in Gaza strip (22%) compared with West Bank (17%). In addition, about 75% of persons with disabilities live in urban areas in Palestine, of whom 64% of the total number of persons with disabilities in the West Bank and 85% of the total

number in the Gaza Strip. It is vital to mention that more than one third of persons with disabilities (10 years and over) are illiterate. This gap in illiteracy rates between the sexes is large, as the illiteracy rates among males reaches 20% compared to 64% among females. The illiteracy rate in the West Bank reached 35% compared to 29% in the Gaza Strip. Also, about 46% of children with disabilities aged 6 -17 are not enrolled in education. These rates varied between 51% in the West Bank and 43% in the Gaza Strip. Last but not least, the unemployment rate amongst person with disabilities (15 years and over) was about 37% (19% in the West Bank and 54% in Gaza Strip). The increase in the disability numbers in higher education requires making the educational system more just, so as to incorporate them in the educational process.

The social barrier of discrimination, that people with disabilities face, affects their lives more than the actual impairment. Descent attitudes from others in addition to the provision of physical aids (elevators, ramps, vision and hearing assistance) are essential for people with disabilities to have feasible access to opportunities, information and facilities. Palestinians with disabilities confront many obstacles in exercising their rights.

The Palestinian Authority (PA) expressed its commitment to address issues related to the disabled and reduce barriers they face by becoming the 144th State Party to sign the Convention on Rights of Persons with Disability on April 2, 2014, but they still face so many challenges especially in the educational settings (Hendriks, 2007). According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2019), about 300,000 Palestinians are living with some kind of disability. In fact, the disability report (Mitra & Yap, 2021) provided an alarming glimpse of discrimination, highlighting both physical and social barriers: 87.3% of all persons with disability were unemployed;

8.7% aged 18 years and above avoid engaging in any activities because of poor public attitudes;76.4% aged 18 years and above do not use public transportation due to the lack of infrastructure adaptations, and 22.2% of disabled individuals were forced to drop out of their classes because of no means to access their schools.

Moreover, several non-governmental organizations (NGOS) and human rights institutions link the decay of the disabled rights in Palestine to the violations by Israel against Palestinian rights, the economic crisis and weak legal framework. In fact, the Palestinian Independent Commission for Human Rights (ICHR) acknowledges discriminations against persons with disabilities within the Palestinian Society and their lack of access to facilities. Although people get used to frustration caused by inaccessibility, this requires governments and societies to make serious efforts to facilitate lives of persons of disabilities. Individuals and organizations are demanded to take action to integrate persons with disabilities in educational and social activities in addition to the job market and ensure that services are accessed easily for the disabled people (Al-Qasem, 2019). So, persons with disabilities are indeed a vulnerable group, especially in Palestine, and strengthening their roles in the community ensures a healthier equitable environment for everyone.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

The overall aim of the research is to diagnose the social inclusion strategies for the disabled students. More specifically, the research has the following objectives:

- To identify the existing social inclusion strategies for the disabled students at the Palestinian higher education institutions

- To examine the applicability of the social inclusion strategies

- To compare the social inclusion strategies at Palestinian higher education institutions with International / European models.

- To advise and recommend a model of social inclusion for application in Palestinian higher education institutions.

- To shed light on the facilities / services that the higher education institutions provide for the disabled students.

1.3 Questions of the Research

Main question: What are the existing social inclusion strategies for the disabled students?

Sub questions:-

- What are the existing social inclusion strategies at the Palestinian higher education institutions?

- What is the extent of applicability of the social inclusion strategies at Palestinian higher education institutions?

- What are the social inclusion strategies at Palestinian higher education institutions compared with International / European models?

- What is a recommended model of social inclusion to be applied in Palestinian higher education institutions?

- What are the facilities / services that the higher Palestinian education institutions provide for the disabled students?

1.4 Hypotheses

- There is a lack of serious and specific social inclusion strategies and policies in the Palestinian higher education institutions.

- There is a lack of application of social inclusion strategies and policies on the ground.

- There are significant disparities between social inclusion strategies at Palestinian higher education institutions compared with International / European models.

- There is a lack of a suitable model of social inclusion to be applied at Palestinian higher education institutions.

- There is a lack of facilities / services that the Palestinian higher education institutions provide for the disabled students.

1.5 Significance of the Research

In early times, children born with disabilities were kept out of sight and sometimes may were killed. Feelings of disgrace and guilt were connected to giving birth to a child with a disability. In fact, the disability was sometimes blamed on sins of members in the household. Even as people with disabilities became more accepted, society continued to see it as a tragedy that the individual and family must deal with. On the other hand, people with disabilities and their advocates saw that it was not limited to disability, but rather an inaccessible environment and the negative attitudes of others that contributed to the restrictions they faced (MacKenzie et al., 2020). Some people are not comfortable talking to people with disabilities, mainly because they feel sorry for them. However, a lot of these people feel that their lives are enriched by their experiences with disability (MacKenzie et al., 2020). Having mentioned this,

understanding social construction of disability can assist to clarify why these people have been discriminated against, and hence would draw awareness of what needs to be done to omit negative attitudes (Logan & Bogart, 2022).

The disabled students have rights and must not be discriminated against as they are part of society and should play their role in it fully. The researcher investigates the limitations of students enrolled at some Palestinian Universities and the problems they encounter, focusing on the main factors that affect incorporating them in higher education. This includes the facility constructions and its suitability for their needs in addition to measures to integrate and encourage them.

The researcher investigates whether there are clear social inclusion strategies that deal with the disabled, especially in higher education institutions considering that the number of disabled students is relatively high. It is quite important to compare and contrast social inclusion strategies with international standards especially European ones, for the sake of benefiting from successful models and policy instruments used to promote social inclusion and recommending a model of social inclusion at our Palestinian higher education institutions. The population approached includes around 40% of the overall university populations, using both qualitative and quantitative methods (interviews and surveys) to analyze the data.

The topic is unfortunately not addressed and overlooked by our government. Perhaps, the research would be a reference document for policy makers to help in the institutionalization of a national strategy for this segment.

It is quite essential to address this issue considering the current status quo of the marginalized disabled segment at higher education institutions, which are regretfully not prepared in terms of facilities and tools to meet their needs.

This research attempts to provide a review of different policies across some Palestinian universities and investigate models that promote higher education access and participation by students from underrepresented groups, such as the disabled.

It is vital to look into social inclusion policies in higher education internationally and benefit from these models and investigate applicability in Palestine. It can be beneficial to investigate main policy types to promote social inclusion: regulations governing access and social inclusion, financial policies in addition to organizational and information policies and hence suggest a suitable model to enhance and promote social inclusion at our higher education institutions. All the above reasons actually make this research necessary and significant to implement (Hayes et al., 2008).

1.6 Limitations of the Research

- TEMPORAL LIMITATION:-
  - o This research is restricted to a two-month data collection period, from 5/1/2023 till 15/3/2023

- SPATIAL LIMITATION:-
  - o The research is restricted to four higher education institutions in Palestine; Bethlehem, Birzeit, Hebron and Arab American University-Jenin universities.

- TOPIC LIMITATION:-
  - o The research is restricted to socially excluded / marginalized students in higher education institutions.

1.7 Operational Definitions

1- Social Inclusion

According to the World Bank (2013), social inclusion is" the process of improving the terms on which individuals and groups take part in society – improving the ability, opportunity, and dignity of those disadvantaged on the basis of their identity."

2- Inclusive Education

According to UNESCO (2009), inclusive education refers to a teaching approach that accommodates and supports students of all backgrounds, abilities, and identities within the same classroom or learning environment. This approach focuses on providing equal opportunities for learning and participation, regardless of a student's race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, or socioeconomic background. It seeks to create an environment where diversity is celebrated and all students feel valued and included.

3- Strategies of Social Inclusion

The researcher focuses on identifying and addressing policies/ strategies implemented at Palestinian higher education institutions that address the disabled peoples' issues and their participation and incorporation at these institutions and society, and to what extent they are actually applied at these institutions, for the disabled peoples' benefit.

4- The Disabled

In reference to the last National Survey of Disability (2011), which was prepared by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and the Ministry of Social Affairs, people with disabilities have been defined as "people who have long-term impairments that may hinder their effective participation in society on an equal basis with others."

5- Palestinian Higher Education institutions

The researcher focuses on Palestinian higher education institutions, mainly universities and colleges in the West Bank, covering geographical locations from North to South. They are chosen according to availability of information, considering geographical distributions in addition to old and new universities.

Chapter 2

Theoretical Framework, Background and Review of Related Studies

2.1 Theoretical Framework

It is unfortunate that most of the disability definitions have been framed by "eyes of others", especially that much of the research in this field is primarily conducted by those without disabilities whatsoever (Fine & Asch, 1988). "Disability" is meaningful when addressed in opposition to "ability". People with disabilities are counted as different from those without disabilities (Scheer, 1994). Hence, a new framework is required to challenge these stereotypical images of those with disabilities that would assist in changing perspectives of their experiences. Disability is prevalent in societies, but little is known about their experience (Fine & Asch, 1988; Atkinson & Hackett, 1995). Jones (1996) mentions the three most existing and prevalent theoretical frameworks that address students with disabilities – functional limitations framework, minority group paradigm, in addition to the social constructivism approach.

The first framework is the functional limitations framework. This is primarily focusing on the actual individuals and their disabling conditions (Hahn, 1991). Jones (1996) mentions that this framework provides explanations for powerlessness as well as strategies for coping with limitations. She goes to mention that disability in this framework justifies the "status quo" and hence keeps students with disabilities in positions of weakness. All limitations here are central in defining the students with disabilities (Hahn, 1988). In fact, this model assumes that biological factors of disability are central (Hahn, 1991). These factors govern their sense of "self", and which justify all problems experienced by these students, and hence help and support are offered.

However, this framework, despite focusing on the actual individuals, completely ignores the environments that contribute to worsening the disability conditions. In fact, this model that change shall be from the actual individual and not the conditions of a "disability environment" (Hahn, 1998). Interventions in this model focus mostly on rehabilitation and dealing with physical barriers (Jones, 1996). However, this focus on limitations contributes to concealing differences in disabling conditions, differences in degrees of limitations or impairment, and differences in individual responses to limitations (Fine & Asch, 1988).

The second framework that addresses disabilities is the minority group paradigm. Proponents of this model suggest that being a member in any minority group produces "commonalities of experience amongst all members" (Atkinson & Hackett, 1995; Hahn, 1991). Jones (1996) mentions that this model focuses on issues of marginalization, alienation, oppression and discrimination. This model, she mentions, acknowledges "environmental factors in addition to differential power structures, group identification as different and discriminatory treatment." She adds that this model suggests that "students with disabilities are fully understood considering all consequences of minority group status, privilege, as well as the disabling environment." Despite the fact that this model primarily depends on minority group identification and consciousness, Hahn (1988) mentions that this creates obstacles for people with disabilities, especially with regards to access in addition to obstacles related to coming together. Jones (1996) mentions that the variety of disabling conditions acts against developments of any consciousness. She goes on to mention that this model enhances stereotypical images of students with disabilities as victims and that need urgent

support. Unfortunately, she mentions, it sometimes serves as a justification from separating them and setting them apart from other students.

The last framework that addresses disabilities is the social construction of disability. Jones (1996) mentions that to explore disability as a social construction requires the analyses to be expanded to cover both the disabled and non – disabled people. She adds that this model depends upon comprehension that most of what is believed about disability is a result of meanings and perceptions of the non – disabled and challenges assumptions upon which those meanings rest. This model, according to Jones, is mainly about celebrating the uniqueness and authenticity of individual differences, but with giving attention toward "social change and transformation of oppressive structures" (Asch & Fine, 1988; Trickett et al., 1994). This framework is mainly about differentiating between biological factors of disability and the social environments in which the people with disabilities exist. Hence, according to Gergen (1985), a social constructivist approach promises for new understandings and perceptions because it does not only define disability as an individual experience or medical condition, but as a social construction that mainly "incorporates the experience of those living with disabilities in interaction with their environments." Moreover, this approach emphasizes that one's understanding of the world only exists considering the context within which the individual interacts with the world (Gergen, 1985). In addition, Asch and Fine (1988) write "it is the attitudes and institutions of the non - disabled, even more than the biological characteristics of the disabled that turn characteristics into handicaps." Lombana (1989) mentions that "this perspective does not discount the existence of either the biological fact of disability or the functional limitation, but the limitation is just that – a limitation." Biological factors cannot be comprehended outside

contexts, institutions and relationships that shape definitions of disability (Asch & Fine, 1988; Scheer, 1994). According to Rollins (1991), viewing disability as a social construction requires analyses of social structures that contributed to pushing disabilities to margins of institutions and that have created handicaps from certain characteristics. Hence, it maintains oppressive social structures that create apparent oppositions and distinctions between inferiority / superiority in addition to disability / ability. Viewing disability from this perspective is mainly about challenging definitions of disability that have guided theories ever along. According to Jones (1996), this approach has powerful implications for practice.

These implications for practice center around designing successful programs and services for students with disabilities and this is directly about meeting the particular needs of students with disabilities and expanding the disability boundaries (Jones, 1996). The "SPAR model (services, programs, advocacy, research)" developed by Jacoby and Girrell (1981) provides a framework for examining implications for practice in that "the model assumes that Student Affairs professionals – no matter what position they hold in the organizational structure – will work for, with, and on behalf of all groups of students" (Jacoby, 1993). She adds that the "SPAR Model" basically examines the basic functions of a student affairs unit from perspectives of certain groups of students. They are at the center of the analysis. To start with, Jacoby (1993) suggests that student affairs units must evaluate their success in providing suitable services for all students as well as being specific to identifiable student groups. Providing services for disabilities are the responsibility of all units and not restricted to the unit that provides certain services for particular groups. Moreover, successful programming creates opportunities for interactions amongst student participants

(Jacoby, 1993). Programs must address the students with disabilities' needs and also provides opportunities for them to be together. Advocacy is all about learning, meaning that student affairs administrators must learn about the common needs and issues of people with disabilities. They shall also contribute to raise knowledge and consciousness of them and their issues to other members on campus in addition to creating conditions for institutional change (Jacoby, 1993). Last but not least, it shall be acknowledged that disability is understood best and studied over the course of time, both in a cultural and historical contest, and most importantly as a continually transforming process and not a static and individual characteristic (Becker & Arnold, 1986). So, as Jones (1996) puts it "to view disability as a social construction is to think inclusively by considering the experiences of persons with disabilities and examining the quality of their interaction with the campus environment. Such a perspective acknowledges the power of environmental, structural, and cultural definitions of disability, which exert a strong force on those living with disabilities." After all, removing all barriers, whether emotional, social or physical of the disabling environment suggests that "once people with disabilities are admitted inside the moral and human community, the task becomes one of creating an environment where all humans – including those with impairments – can truly flourish" (Fine & Asch, 1988). Moreover, thinking about disability from a social constructivist perspective will result in inclusive – theory building and broaden services, programs, advocacy, and research (Jones, 1996).

Within social theory, questions related to disability identity link key modern debates (Shakespeare, 1996). However, identity is indeed a complex field and the word is used in many different contexts. Shakespeare (1996) puts forth two uses of identity

which are a real tension in disability debates. The first one is related to "identifying" as a verb, which is mainly about uncovering disabled people or discovering them. The second use is related to "self – identification", which is about this sense of belonging or membership of a collective. He adds that there were limited narrative devices and themes available to people with disabilities. However, new stories are being told today and no reliance is restricted only on the traditional narratives of biomedical intervention or rehabilitation.

Shakespeare (1996) mentions two main approaches to identifying disabled people as a group, one based in medical or physical understanding and the other based in a socio – cultural understanding. The first approach he mentions, conceives disability as a result of impairment. He goes on to mention that this approach defines disabled people as a group who bodies do not work; or look or act differently; or who cannot do any productive work. This approach mainly raises the question of normality. Shakespeare mentions that this approach does not identify "the disabled" but however focuses on certain groups of people with impairment like "the blind". There is a clear denial of common social experiences which actually unite the disabled people and the primary focus is on medical dimensions of difference. The second approach, he mentions, conceives disability as a result of social processes or as a constructed category. The social model, which arose from the social movement of disabled people, and developed by Disability Studies sociologists is an apparent example.

The author highlights five options for identifying disability as a social process. The first one is the social model, which focus on disability as a relationship between people with disabilities and a discriminatory society. Disability is defined as the result of disabling barriers imposed by policy or environmental interventions. It suggests

strategies to remove obstacles or education to remove any prejudice and the ultimate goal is inclusion. All the disabled people want here is to be treated equally as the non-disabled people. The second model is the minority group approach, in which disabled people are mainly oppressed. This mainly focuses on power politics and identity politics but not necessarily problematizing disability itself. There is also the Weberian or Focauldian approach in which disability is a category of social policy. The fourth model recognizes disability as the outcome of definitions from social research methods. Works of Abberly (1991) and others show how survey instruments create and construct a category arbitrarily. The last category conceives disability as a cultural category. This approach draws on the notion of 'cultural representation' is included in works of Sontag (1991) and related to Foucault's concept of discursive formations. Shakespeare (1996) acknowledges that disability is socially constructed and highlights that disability as a process of subjection.

Shakespeare (1996) mentions medical and social approaches to negative self – identity. He points that medical approaches consider negative self – identity to be an outcome of physical impairment. Social approaches, on the other hand, conceive negative self – identity as a result of the experience of oppressive social relations and mainly focus on chances and possibilities for changing society, empowering the disabled people, and enhancing a different self – understanding.

Giddens (1991) summarizes the term self – identity "Self – identity is not a distinctive trait, or even a collection of traits, possessed by the individual. It is the self as understood by the person in terms of her or his biography." Shakespeare (1996) mentions that identity connects and links both the personal and the social and involves "the individual putting themselves in a collective context." Giddens (1991) goes on to

mention that "a person's identity is not be found in behavior nor – important though it is – in the reaction of others, but in the capacity to keep a particular narrative going."

Alternatively, it is vital to mention that many forms of denial are present amongst people with disabilities (Shakespeare, 1996). This is where a person claims to be 'really normal' and minimizes impairment in their lives, mainly through concealment. Other ways may include religious identification with sufferings. This quietist acceptance involves enduring the difficulties of impairment. Finally, another way involves refusal to submit to reality and there are attempts to acquire a "normal identity" through extraordinary activities and endurance. All these alternatives use narratives of self, Shakespeare (1996) mentions that none are psychologically or socially progressive or healthy. All of them, he adds, involve an element of external definition and have costs for personal psychological security and happiness. He mentions that "through focusing on the body and the individual, the disabled person is trapped in a prison." He adds that the shift, that people with disabilities take in resisting the negative implications of the medical model and develop responses which focus on the exclusion and injustice which characterizes disability, leads to a more positive identity, described as "coming out". This "coming out", he mentions, is the process of positive self – identification, and one which rejects the categorization of subjection and one which affirms collective power. Shakespeare points out that this is all about "developing new definitions and new political forms."

Hunt (1966) suggests that self – organization of a disabled people's movement prompts the process of identification. He adds that even segregated institutions can have disabled activists foster responses to exclusion. Weeks (1990) mentions that "Identity is about belonging, about what you have in common with some other people and what

differentiates you from others. At its most basic, it gives you a sense of personal location, the stable core to your individuality." Melucci (1989) mentions that "both self – organization and direct action are processes with implications for identity, as well as instrumental goals." He adds that "the actors mobilize to regain control of their own action. They try to reclaim the right to define themselves against the criteria of identification determined by an anonymous power and systems of regulation that penetrate the area of internal nature."

Shakespeare (1996) mentions that a disability movement would provide the "collective context for political identification." He adds that it involves processes which change perceptions of disabled people as passive, powerless, and incapable. Moreover, he adds that a disability movement establishes disabled people as the actual experts on disability and regard their definitions as the most suitable approaches to disability. Bynoe et al. (1991) mention that "a move towards the self – organization of a disabled people's movement has prompted increasing numbers of disabled people to adopt a shared political identity which in turn has helped to build a new mood of confidence. Disabled people no longer ask for change, but demand it. They are prepared to use a whole range of tactics in pursuit of their demands, including direct action and civil disobedience."

Shakespeare (1996) adds that there is what is known as "disability art" in which the people with disabilities develop a sense of shared cultural identity. Sian Vasey, quoted in Lees, ed. (1992) mention that "disability arts also provides a context in which people with disabilities can get together, enjoy themselves and think in some way about issues of common concern. But it does deeper than that, as disability culture really does offer people a key to the basic process of identifying as a person with disabilities,

because culture and identity are closed linked concepts. Simply naming the idea has encouraged a lot of people with disabilities to happily call themselves so and to be more up front and confident about themselves and that is also giving more confidence to the movement as a whole." Shakespeare (1996) also says that challenging stereotypical images, building solidarity, telling new stories are all about enhancing and developing a disability culture. As Morrison and Finkelstein (1992) puts it, encouraging the enhancement of a disability culture is about "beginning radical tasks of transformation from passive and dependent into active and creative agents for social change."

However, there are unfortunately major obstacles to developing a positive and strong disabled identity. According to Shakespeare (1996), people with disabilities are socialized to think of themselves as inferior. In fact, Morris (1991) mentions that "people with disabilities" self – image is dominated by the non – disabled world's reaction to them. Moreover, people are socialized to think of disabilities in a medical model way. According to Paolo Freire (1972), this can be viewed as internalized oppression. He mentions "self – depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from the internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them. So often do they hear that they are good for nothing, know nothing, and are incapable of learning anything – that they are sick, lazy and unproductive – that in the end they become convinced of their own unfitness." Shakespeare (1996) believes that in the case of people with disabilities, this is enhanced by segregated education, negative stereotypical images, cultural representation, and absence of any positive role models in addition to the negative social treatment of disabled people.

The second main obstacle to developing a positive and strong disabled identity is that people with disabilities are isolated and separated from each other and from source

of collective strength and support (Shakespeare, 1996). Morris (1991) mentions that many people with disabilities spend most of their lives accompanying non – disabled people. Moreover, he adds that the people the disabled deal with are not like them. This makes it difficult for them to recognize and challenge values and judgements applied to them and their lives. He concludes that ideas about disability are generally formed by those who are not disabled.

Social approaches take part in demonstrating how it is exclusionary policies, environmental barriers in addition to a process of social oppression which create the category of disability. This is what social constructivism, mentioned earlier, is all about. Shakespeare (1996) mentions that celebrating disability pride equals celebrating difference and accepting it at the same time. Nietzsche (1990) suggests that "A species come to be, at type becomes fixed, in the long fight against essentially constant adverse conditions." Hence, it is about accepting categories created by others!

To conclude, Ken Plummer (1995) suggests that there are only five basic narratives to modern stories: the journey (progressing through stages), enduring suffering, engaging in contests, pursuing consummation (achieving goals) and establishing a home (find a community or identity). These five patterns are included in narratives of people with disabilities. He also suggests that "Stories need communities to be heard, but communities themselves are also built through story telling. Stories gather people around them: they have to attract audiences, and these audiences may then start to build a common perception, a common language, a commonality." This sheds light on the importance of the individual and collective relationship.

It is indeed all about having spaces to tell stories and audiences that actually listen. It is about recognizing differences and isolating certain classifications and

attributes that constitute disability (Shakespeare, 1996). It all starts with them having a voice to speak and be heard.

2.2. Background

According to the Mitra & Yap (2021), disability is considered a part of social diversity in all societies, and the way in which societies deal with it reflects their development and acceptance of diversity. The rights of the disabled vary according to prevailing approaches and intellectual frameworks. Globally, approximately 15% of the population has a disability, with most living in developing countries. However, their participation in the labor force is low, with just under half of working-age persons with disabilities economically inactive. The situation of persons with disabilities in Palestine is unique, as it is the only country living under occupation, which has resulted in repeated aggression against Palestinians, leaving many with disabilities. The separation between the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and East Jerusalem presents different economic, social, and political situations, with different authorities in each region. Rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities are distributed among various providers, with civil society institutions and the civil sector providing the largest share of rehabilitation services. Palestine has laws and regulations for the rights of persons with disabilities based on the Palestinian Constitution. In 2013, Palestine obtained observer member status in the United Nations and signed and ratified the International Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in 2014. However, no work has been done to amend the issued laws and executive regulations to align with the convention due to the absence of the Palestinian legislative body.

The Disabled Rights Law No. 4/99 adopted the definition of a disabled person as 'a person with total or partial disability, congenital or not congenital and stable in any of his senses or physical, psychological or mental capabilities, to the extent that limits the possibility of meeting the requirements of his normal life in the conditions of his non-disabled peers (Snounu, 2019).

According to the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics (2021), the prevalence of disability in the Palestinian territories ranges from 2.7% to 7%, depending on the definition used. The percentage of disability is higher among the elderly, with 32% of those aged 75 years and over being disabled. Physical disabilities are the most common type, affecting 48.4% of people with disabilities, followed by slow learning disabilities at 24.7%. Illness is the most common cause of disability, and nearly 87.3% of people with disabilities do not work. Moreover, 37.6% of individuals with disabilities in Palestine have never enrolled in education. Recent data indicates that people with disabilities face challenges in their daily lives, with many avoiding inclusion due to how others perceive them, not using public transportation, and having difficulty performing daily activities at home. Additionally, around 22.2% of individuals with disabilities left education due to their disability. The statistics show significant disparities in the prevalence of disability and access to education and employment opportunities in different governorates in Palestine.

Palestinian legislation addressing accessibility for persons with disabilities is found within the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. 4 of 1999 (Snounu, 2019). The law includes provisions for the adaptation of public places for persons with disabilities, covering all types of disabilities. However, the law lacks enforcement mechanisms, such as penalties for noncompliance. In 2014, the Palestinian Engineers

Syndicate developed a training manual for engineers on designing buildings to meet the needs of people with disabilities and held workshops with organizations of persons with disabilities and consulting engineering offices to promote adherence to necessary standards. Exceptions to mandatory adaptation are allowed for historical or archaeological importance, security and safety, and cost exceeding 15% of the public place's value, but alternatives must be provided for disabled individuals. Despite laws and regulations, monitoring and enforcement are weak due to a lack of legislative process and accountability. Public transportation lacks facilities for persons with disabilities, and drivers are not trained to deal with them. Emergency plans often do not address the needs of persons with disabilities. While the law requires the introduction of sign language in all government facilities, practical steps have not been taken. However, some police personnel are being trained in sign language translation, and sign language has been introduced in some television programs and in the banking system.

The Palestinian government has implemented laws and regulations to support the rights of individuals with disabilities. Snounu (2019) refers to that the Law on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities No. 4/99 outlines the educational rights of individuals with disabilities, including equal opportunities to join educational facilities and universities, necessary educational diagnosis, appropriate facilities, and education of all sorts and levels based on individual needs. Approximately 7,552 students with disabilities are integrated into public schools, with the majority suffering from speech disorder disabilities, followed by partial visual impairments and physical disabilities. While modern government school buildings consider the needs of students with disabilities, more schools need to provide accommodations, including toilets for students with disabilities. The marginalization of persons with disabilities in education

leads to low academic achievement, enrollment issues, dropouts, and the development of psychological and social problems. The Ministry of Education is working to adapt the educational environment and provide special programs in cooperation with civil society and governmental institutions. Universities provide alternative examination methods and accommodations such as computer labs for the blind and sign language interpreters, but further improvements are necessary. Snounu (2019) also mentions that the Disabled Rights Law No. 4/99 outlines provisions for rehabilitation and employment, including the obligation to allocate no less than 5% of employees for people with disabilities. Specific and updated data on the employment of people with disabilities is not available, and estimates are based on non-regular publications. The Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. 4/99 also outlines provisions for health rights, including free health services and early detection services for disabilities (Snounu, 2019).

The Ministry of Health provides various services for persons with disabilities, including diagnosis and classification of disabilities, health insurance, curative health services, early detection services, and maternity and child services. However, the law contradicts the services provided, as it stipulates the generality of disability, while the Ministry has set 60% for the level of disability to obtain health insurance (Albadawi, 2022). PCBS statistics (2021) indicate a lack of health services, including occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy, and psychological services. The Ministry does not directly supervise or periodically monitor health institutions that provide rehabilitation services to persons with disabilities, despite being the official party that gives licenses to these institutions. Organizations of persons with disabilities still do not have enough power to make drastic changes in the lives of persons with disabilities, and budgets of successive governments have not allocated a provision regarding the

implementation of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Law No. 4/99 (Snounu, 2019). The government established the Supreme Council for Persons with Disabilities to follow up on the implementation and application of the law, prepare strategies and policies related to care and rehabilitation, monitor plans and achievements of ministries and institutions, evaluate achievements of all agencies, suggest amendments to laws, set necessary standards for quality of programs and services, and form committees to assist the Council in carrying out its tasks (Al-Rimawi, 2021).

Despite many years passing since the last amendment of the council, it still does not work efficiently and struggles to implement its entrusted tasks due to its lack of independent capacity and working under the Ministry of Social Development. The Basic Law guarantees the right to independent will and participation for all Palestinians, including persons with disabilities. However, the General Union of Persons with Disabilities has witnessed a decline in its role, affecting any action to change their conditions for the better (Al-Rimawi, 2021)

According to Albadawi (2022), the Ministry of Social Development has taken steps to positively affect the lives of persons with disabilities and their rights, including the activation of the Supreme Council for Persons with Disabilities and the National Committee for Persons with Disabilities. However, investment in the outputs and documents produced by the Ministry, such as the strategic framework for the disability sector and the 2013 National Conference on Disability, has not reached the required level to maximize benefits and move towards a human rights developmental approach in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

2.3 Review of Related Studies

2.3.1 Local and Arab Studies

A few studies have been conducted by researchers in regard to disabled students perusing their studies at Palestinian universities. These studies did not address public policies or the extent of their application to the disabled sector at higher education institutes. Instead the authors discussed the level of satisfaction of the disabled students from services offered by the individual universities. (Abu'Ida, 2017) reported on the satisfaction of disabled students at Birzeit University, Al-Quds University, Bethlehem University, Hebron University, and Al-Quds Open University in Ramallah. The sample consisted of 129 students with hearing, visual, and physical disabilities. Social services, academic services, university facilities, information resources, and library services were rated as high whereas counseling, registration and administrative facilities were rated as medium. There were no significant changes in overall severity due to disability type; however there were substantial disparities in specific aspects in favor of hearing and physical disabilities. At the overall level, substantial differences ascribed to the University variable favored Bethlehem University in all categories except university facilities, where those were favored at the Al -Quds Open Ramallah branch.

Abu Shkheidem & Ishtia (2020) conducted a study which aimed to reveal the reality of the availability of facilitations at An-Najah National University. The sample consisted of 30 disabled students during the academic year 2019-2020, and was selected in a simple random manner. A questionnaire consisting of 13 paragraphs and two open questions were designed for this purpose. The results indicated a high level of overall availability of environmental assistance. However, substantial differences related to the

gender variable, which favored males, the type of disability, which favored the hearing disabled students, and the academic level, which favored the undergraduate students.

More recently, Al-Rimawi (2021) reported on the necessary adaptations for students with disabilities at Palestinian universities, from a sample of 50 students with visual, hearing, and physical disabilities from Al-Quds and Bethlehem universities. The disabled students were purposefully chosen from the second semester of the year 2020/2021. The descriptive analytical approach was used, and data was collected using a questionnaire with 36 paragraphs which addressed academic adaptations, environmental adaptations, and social adaptations. Significant differences in the type of disability variable favored visual impairment. The study recommended that Palestinian institutions give close attention to the necessary adaptations for students with disabilities in all categories, particularly those involving hearing and physical difficulties. Interestingly, Al-Rimawi (2021) showed there were no differences in the necessary adaptations for students with disabilities at Palestinian universities due to the University variable, which contradicted with the study of Abu 'Ida (2017). The former concluded that almost all buildings at universities were relatively old which meant that students with disabilities needed similar adaptations in the two universities. Moreover, Al-Rimawi revealed there were differences in the adaptations, required by students with disabilities at Palestinian universities, depending on the type of disability, with visual disabilities being more prevalent. This again contradicted with the findings of Abu 'ida (2017), who denied the required differences in adaptations. Al-Rimawi (2021) explained that the number of students with visual disabilities in universities was higher than the number of students with other disabilities, resulting in them receiving the necessary adaptations. The author consequently recommended that further work was required to

adapt the university education to the needs of students with disabilities in all categories, particularly those with hearing and physical disabilities.

Simadi & Alqaryouti (2017) reported on the satisfaction aspects among disabled students in a sample of universities in the Middle East where they examined the impact of socio-demographic factors on such satisfaction with regard to the services provided by their universities. The sample consisted of 251 subjects from Oman, Qatar, Jordan and Yemen and analysis was conducted on satisfaction aspects and socio-demographic factors. Satisfaction aspects included: social, psychological, educational, environmental and health, while the socio-demographic variables included: country, specialization, kind of disability, gender GPA and degree of disability. The findings revealed that social satisfaction was top rated, followed by psychological, educational, environmental and health satisfaction in order. The results also revealed that all socio-demographic factors impacted significantly on the satisfaction of disabled students, except gender and the degree of disability. Furthermore, Jordanian and Qatari students had higher educational and psychological satisfaction than Omani and Yemeni students. The authors added that despite the limitations of the study and difficulty to generalize, their work offered the first comparative study in the Middle East region.

Al-Mekdad & Al-Qatawneh (2018) reported on 57 disabled students at Mu'tah University in Jordan. They designed a questionnaire with 34 paragraphs that were classified into academic services, administrative services, infrastructure facilities and their transportation, in an attempt to reveal the reality of the services provided by the administration to the disabled students. The results showed the total average in general, for both administrative services as well as the infrastructure facilities and transportation

was very high, while the average for the academic services field was moderate. On a second front, there were no significant differences due to the type of disability.

In a more recent study, Elhadi (2021) aimed to examine challenges to the inclusion of Students with Disabilities in mainstream education in Egypt. The author used a mixed approach to collect data from various sources. "Firstly, statistical information was retrieved from the Ministry of Education (MoE). Secondly, Ministerial Decrees were examined. Thirdly, semi-structured interviews with specialists in the field of special education in Egypt (N=12) were conducted to explore the major issues that emerged from this study". Results revealed challenges facing the inclusion of disabled students in Egypt, such as the lack of "service training of teachers, limitations of construction and preparation, lack of coordination among ministries, limited programs for students with certain disabilities, and lack of awareness in the community and the family". The study concluded that the successful inclusion of disabled students in mainstream schools in Egypt requires the following:

- Universities should consider inclusive education when training special education teachers.

- Professional development of teachers on inclusive education requirements should be conducted, new policies should be adopted, and school facilities should be constructed with the needs of the disabled students in mind.

- The inclusion of disabled students should not be limited to individuals with certain disabilities but must include students regardless of their type of disability.

2.3.2 Foreign Studies

In their paper, Salmi & D'Addio (2021) discussed policies for achieving inclusion in higher education. The authors reviewed current knowledge about equity promotion policies in higher education and the effectiveness of those policies, from drawn experience in various parts of the world. They started by reviewing definitions of under-represented groups in higher education, which could be considered as "equity target groups". They observed disparities across regions and countries, and analyzed studies that focused on the effectiveness of equity promotion policies and measures. For this purpose, the authors distinguished between financial aid programs; such as grants and loans, and non-monetary interventions; such as outreach, affirmative action, retention, and specialized institutions, that seek to remove the barriers facing students from under-represented groups. "The wide degree of variation in the depth and scope of disparities across regions, countries and equity groups which share similar circumstances indicates that policies matter and can make a significant difference. There is, therefore, a strong need to understand better where the disparities characterizing higher education come from and which policies are more effective in reducing inequality at that level in the education ladder". The authors concluded that "National commitment, translating into comprehensive, well-resourced policies, is indispensable to design and implement effective equity promotion policies to overcome both financial and non-monetary barriers". They recommended that equity in access and success at the higher education level should not be regarded as a luxury or an afterthought and a "long-term view should be key to guaranteeing continuity and consistency in equity promotion".

Moriña (2017) reported on the challenges and opportunities facing inclusive education in higher education. The author provided a description of the situation then, of inclusive education in relation to students with disabilities in higher education; reviewed the literature on disabled students and faculty members within higher education; and discussed how a university moving towards an inclusive setting requires "designing policies, strategies, processes and actions that contribute to ensuring the success of all the students".

The author proposed a series of transformations, both at the institutional level and in the classroom practices that could be considered in higher education to move towards a more inclusive university:

- University spaces should be fully accessible, with no physical barriers of any type.

- Universities should consider the especially sensitive transition of students with disabilities during their first year and even the first weeks of attendance. Strategies might include special orientation sessions, tutorials such as assigning a student in a higher year or an instructor as a counselor or having reference persons or groups related to the disability among the faculty.

- Higher education should support training the faculty, not only in the discipline they teach and investigate, but also in how to teach instructional and methodological strategies to address the needs of students with disabilities (should be mandatory for all personnel). Faculty members should be informed and trained in how to carry out inclusive pedagogy and universal designs for learning.

The author concluded that the university should guarantee access to students with disabilities. Its policies and practices should be revised to ensure that education is

inclusive so as to guarantee all students could fully participate and benefit from a process of quality teaching and learning.

In a more recently published paper, Márquez & Melero-Aguilar (2022) attempted to explore the level of knowledge and beliefs declared by faculty members about inclusive education. For this, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 119 faculty members of all areas of knowledge from ten Spanish public universities. The results of their study revealed that a large proportion of faculty members, who delved into its knowledge, acquired different meanings. The conclusions included "recommendations for adapting continuous training to the fields of knowledge and delving into a shared debate about the meaning and implication of inclusive education in higher education". These recommendations could be extended beyond the Spanish university system to the rest of the European Higher Education Area, whose universities shared common academic frameworks.

2.3.3 Conclusion

From the review of related studies, it is shown that the realization of policies for the disabled students and their real implementation in higher education institutes can simply be described as an unfinished process in various countries and regions of the world. The disparities are widely compared between a country and another and specifically between a higher institute and another. The implementation of policies and strategies for the disabled students in higher education cannot be a luxury, an afterthought or an unaffordable privilege. Grants and scholarships are essentially helpful but are not alone a remedy towards their inclusion in higher education. Non-monetary interventions; such as outreach, affirmative action, retention, and specialized

institutions, that seek to remove the barriers facing students from under-represented groups are equally important if the process of disabled inclusion in higher education is to be fulfilled. This should be a consequence of applying social justice and equity towards their integration in higher education institutes.

The pre-training and in-training of faculty members to professionally handle disabled students becomes an essential necessity, despite the type and degree of disability. Incorporation of disabled students, in the early months of the first year in well prepared and specialized university programs is equally important, that universities should consider a commitment as opposed to a luxury. The literature, whether local, regional or foreign, shows the variability of satisfaction and dissatisfaction by disabled students from various aspects, facilities, services…etc. that are provided by higher education institutes in various countries and regions.

A lot can be done in Palestine, if the will is there and stakeholders of the overall higher education process take realistic action and implement policies, on the real ground, in a genuine, human and just process towards the integration of the disabled students. Available policies, legislation and decrees serve no one if they are neither well-defined and clarified nor compelling to translate into policies that are applied on the ground. If the financial component is a burden, there are many other non-monetary components towards the inclusion policies that need action, commitment and the will of all sectors in the higher education community. It takes a conviction, to start with, that the disabled are to be humanly respected and not marginalized. They have an equal right in education to prepare them for future jobs, without discrimination by any practice of social injustice.

The conclusive review of the literature brings about a main question as a gap worth investigating: what policies are there for the disabled inclusion and to what extent are they applied in Palestine? On the other hand, a comparison of policies and service satisfaction of the disabled students from higher education institutes in regard to their needs would help in identifying possible gaps towards their inclusion. That could in turn; help in proposing a working model that would help universities and the disabled students alike in raising awareness and helping towards satisfying all required needs. Finally, the design of questionnaires with paragraphs that respond to the dimensions necessary for addressing all issues of disability in higher education institutes, provide a realistic means for identifying what gaps and what level of satisfaction the disabled students have in their own institutes. This way, applied policies and identification of gaps would be continuously investigated and followed up.

Chapter 3

Methodology

The researcher's methodology relied on a comprehensive review of recent literature written in the field of disability, as well as on the results of conferences, seminars, symposiums and workshops held in recent years. This is in addition to a questionnaire and interview questions, designed by the researcher and reviewed by five experts in the field for both the disabled students and experts in the field. A quantitative analysis was conducted using SPSS software for the questionnaire of students with disabilities. Furthermore, a thematic qualitative analysis was conducted, where the analysis was performed, based on the following five themes:

- Existing social inclusion strategies and policies in higher education institutions.
- Applicability of the social inclusion strategies.
- Social inclusion strategies at Palestinian higher education institutions in comparison with International / European models.
- A social inclusion model for application at Palestinian higher education institutions.
- Facilities / services that the higher education institutions provide for the disabled students.

3.1 Sample Size Equation

The population of registered students with disability in the four universities is 152 students. By using Cochran's (1977) equation (1), the sample size was initially targeted as 80 students, leading for 95% confidence level, a 7.6% of margin of error

$$n = \frac{NZ^2 p(1-p)}{d^2(N-1) + Z^2\, p(1-p)} \tag{1}$$

Where:

n: Sample size.

N: Population size (N= 152).

Z: Confidence level at 95% (Z= 1.96).

d: Margin of error (d= 5%).

p: Probability of an event p (= 50%).

3.2 Population and Sample Size

The population of the research was the disabled students at Palestinian Universities and experts in the disability and inclusion field. The researcher distributed questionnaires to ninety seven students with disabilities in addition to conducting interviews with twenty students with disabilities from four Palestinian Universities: Arab American University, Hebron University, Birzeit University, and Bethlehem University. Moreover, the researcher conducted twenty interviews with various experts from academic institutions, the government, and NGOs.

3.3 Tools of the Research

The researcher used three main tools: observation whether throughout interviews or through observing the various facilities on the university campuses. This is in addition to interview questions and questionnaires for both the disabled students and the various experts. The questionnaire and interview questions are reported in Appendices, at the end of this thesis. The questionnaire and interview question were all in Arabic, so

that English would not stand as a language barrier for the sample, especially for students with disabilities who may not clearly understand the various questions.

3.4 Validity of the Research

The questionnaire and interview questions were shown to a jury to validate their content and confirm their match to the research goals. The jury consisted of five specialists in the disability field as follows:

1- Mr. Khalil Alawne – Head of the Special Education Institutions Department / Ministry of Education.

2- Mr. Nizar Basalat – Head of the Planning and Policy Making Unit - Supreme Council for Youth and Sports.

3- Dr. Amjad Shehadeh – Head of Educational Programs – Ministry of Education

4- Dr. Ahmad Fasfoos, lecturer in Psychology and expert in disability affairs – Bethlehem University

5- Dr. Nabileh Al- Dakkak, lecturer in sociology and social work – Bethlehem University

The researcher took the following remarks from the referees for both the questionnaires and interviews questions for amendment:-

- Suggestions to add more questions for students with disabilities, so as to get a more credible answer.

- Suggestions to minimize the number of questions for experts so as to make it more to the point and to directly answer the research questions without complications.

- Suggestions to ask some of the questions in the interviews and not in the questionnaire so as to get a clear and direct answers from the experts.

- Suggestions to merge some questions whether for disabled or experts so as to receive clear feedback and make it more direct.

- Suggestions to amend wording of some questions so as to get more direct answers.

3.5 Procedures of the Research

3.5.1 Data Collection

The data of the research is collected as per the aims of the research. Moreover, the data for the research is gathered through a structured questionnaire and interview questions for both the disabled students and experts. All questions and corresponding scholars' responses are transcribed for further record and examination. The questionnaire was distributed and filled electronically using Google Forms and sent by email. It was distributed between 5/1/2023 and 15/3/2023 and 97 respondents were received, where all of them were valid, leading to a reduced margin of error = 6.0%. Furthermore, interviews were conducted with twenty students with disabilities from the various universities within the same dates and its ultimate aim was to emphasize findings from the questionnaire and answer research question number 5. On the other hand, interviews were conducted with twenty experts in the disability field within the above – mentioned dates as well, whether main academic institutions, government officials, and NGOs. The aim of these interviews was to answer the first four research questions in this study. The questionnaires and interview questions were developed, considering the five main research questions of the study and the theoretical framework/literature review.

3.5.2 Data Examination

The selected sample of students and experts have been assessed on the basis of the questionnaire and interview questions. The length of the questionnaire and interview questions vary for students and experts. Through the questionnaire and interview questions, the disabled students were asked about the services provided by their universities. On the other hand, experts through interview questions were asked about existing social inclusion strategies for the disabled students at the Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and their applicability. This is in addition to questions both about comparisons between Palestinians and International / European models and suggesting recommended models for social inclusion at to be applied at Palestinian higher education institutions. Following both quantitative and qualitative research practices, transcriptions of all interviews and questionnaires were carefully read and annotations and definite descriptive phrases were added.

3.6 Information about Students with Disabilities – The Four Universities

The first examined university was **Hebron University**. There are 22 students with disabilities of the 10600 students currently enrolled. In fact, there are 16 students with visual disabilities, 2 with physical disabilities and the type of disability is not known for the other four. This does not reflect the real number of students with disabilities as some do not refer to any disabilities in their enrollment applications. Regarding the specializations that these students choose, it is noted that the majority of them study Jurisprudence and Legislation. The rest are distributed between Languages, History, Agriculture and Journalism and Media. Besides, they suffer from several problems that affect their education. First, there is a lack of permanent supportive services. Students with disabilities get help either through their friends or the Deanship

of Student Affairs. Some of them ask for their parents' help in reading their required materials and registering for courses. These students claim that some of the appliances aren't available; it restricts them from achieving educational results as their peers. So, these students need twice the time and effort to keep up with their peers. Another reason is the high cost of education in comparison to the other students. This includes buying the proper equipment to read and register for their courses in addition to tuition fees. One of the students claimed that the some of the programs could cost as much as US $27,000. This shows the high cost of education for students with disabilities compared to others. The unsuitability of the physical environment is another issue. In fact, the physical environment doesn't facilitate their movement inside campus. Most of the buildings and faculties do not meet their needs. Some of them don't have elevators or corridors to facilitate their movement. This clearly would affect their decision to be enrolled in the university. Also, the unsuitability of teaching methods and curriculum for their needs is another major problem. Students are not allowed to use their personal computers and speaking programs inside class or in exams. Knowing that there is a university resolution that clearly states to specialize a proper place to do their exams, but some professors do not abide by it. Some of disabled students would have to do their exams in noisy and unsuitable halls or inside the classroom, which would definitely affect their academic performance. Another crucial issue is the negative attitudes of some employees and students and the prevention of participation in some cultural and social activities. This makes them feel unequal to others.

There are many factors that affect incorporating students with disabilities in higher education. First, there are many limitations connected to the suitability of the educational facilities to the needs of students with disabilities. Most of the facilities

were built in the 80s and beginning of 90s, and they did not take into consideration international standards for the access of these students. This makes it very hard for them. Regarding the new buildings, only one of them was equipped with an elevator and it was cancelled due to high operating costs. There are no policies or procedures by the university to guarantee that the construction of the facilities is taken into consideration when constructing new buildings or even rehabilitating the old ones to meet their needs. In addition, the university offers scholarships to students with disabilities and it is connected to the rate of disability, which is determined by Ministry of Health. It can be said that the university specializes some financial resources that help incorporate these students in higher education, but the measures and regulations don't clarify the methods used. On the other hand, there are barely supportive services for these students which are provided by the Deanship of Student Affairs. For example, there is social and psychological counseling, Braille printer and computers.

The second examined university was **Bethlehem University**. There are 36 students with disabilities of the approximate 3400 students currently enrolled. In fact, there are 15 with visual disabilities, 1 with physical disability (wheelchair user), 7 with hearing disabilities, and 13 with physical disabilities. This does not reflect the actual number of students with disabilities as some don't indicate in their enrollment applications that there is a disability. Regarding the specializations that these students choose, it is noted that the majority of them study languages. The rest are distributed between social science, accounting, education and computer information systems. Among the problems they face is some negative attitudes and disrespect from some students and also difficulties in transportation. Regarding the students with physical disabilities, they face problems using elevators as rarely anyone helps them use it and

they are neglected, this causes them to be late for their lectures. Another issue is that some students hang out on the ramps, and this causes embarrassment for students with disabilities as they would have to ask them to move. Moreover, some of them complain of the elevator buttons as they are high for them to reach and so would have to ask for help.

There are many factors that affect incorporating students with disabilities in higher education. First, there are many limitations connected to the suitability of the educational facilities to the needs of students with disabilities. All of the faculties have elevators except for Hotel Management. However, the new buildings take into account their needs. In fact, they contain ramps, elevators and equipment. This is because the Hotel Management is an old building and it is not equipped to meet their needs on the contrary of the new ones. On the other hand, the university has adopted a clear policy through which it offers equal opportunities for all students, including students with disabilities. It also seeks to provide a fair and supportive educational environment that would ensure their participation fully in the social and academic life at the university. There is a special section for students with disabilities to fill out the enrollment application, so as to identify their special needs. This includes equipping them with the necessary equipment for entrance exams. Accepted students are transferred to the counseling office and occupational therapy specialists in order to make the necessary arrangements to facilitate the integration process in the university. In addition, there is a Recourse Center for students with disabilities. It has all the educational means that these students could benefit from such as magnifying and recording devices. There is also extra time for these students after the exam time is done. In terms of the services provided, there is a Braille printer, magnifying book font size, computers and necessary

programs, voice recorders, assistants to help them use the library, physical modifications to the university facilities to facilitate their movement and individual training sessions in case there is a problem in their studies or social life.

The third examined university was **Birzeit University**. There are 91 students with disabilities of the approximate 15000 students currently enrolled. In fact, there are 32 with physical disabilities, 50 with visual disabilities, 2 with hearing disabilities, 3 with Autism in addition to 4 with multi - disabilities. This does not reflect the actual number of students with disabilities as some don't indicate in their enrollment applications that there is a disability. Regarding the specializations that these students choose, it is noted that the majority of them study languages, Arts, Law and Commerce. Students mainly complained about their non- integration in any activities and they feel left out. This was a common comment.

There are many factors that affect incorporating students with disabilities in Higher Education. First, there are many limitations connected to the suitability of the educational facilities to the needs of students with disabilities. Not all of the faculties have elevators or ramps. However, most of the new buildings consider their needs. On the other hand, the university has no policy for the disabled, but only adopts interventions in which it offers opportunities for students with disabilities. It also seeks to provide a fair and supportive educational environment that would ensure their participation fully in the social and academic life at the university (Ramahi et al., 2021). In addition, there is an office for students with disabilities. In terms of the services provided, there are Braille printers, magnifying book font size, in addition to computers and necessary programs.

The last examined university was **the Arab American University – Jenin.** There are only 5 students with disabilities of the 11000 students currently enrolled! In fact, there are 3 visual disabilities, 1 physical disability in addition to speech disability. This does not reflect the real number of students with disabilities as some don't refer to any disabilities in their enrollment applications. Regarding the specializations that these students choose, it is noted that the majority of them study Arts, Law, languages, and relevant subjects. Besides, students suffer from several problems that affect their education. First, the computers are old and hence do not support the programs that assist the disabled students. Moreover, there are no Braille language books for the courses due to lack of Braille printers at the university, according to the students.

There are many factors that affect incorporating students with disabilities in higher education. There are many limitations connected to the suitability of the educational facilities to the needs of students with disabilities. There are no policies or procedures by the university to guarantee that the construction of the facilities is taken into consideration when constructing new buildings or even rehabilitating the old ones to meet their needs. Moreover, there are barely sufficient supportive services and students depended on themselves. There is only a social and psychological counseling office.

Chapter 4

Research Findings

4.1 Questionnaire Results and Analysis of Students with Disabilities

How to read the means:

Mean	Degree
1.00-2.33	Low
2.34-3.67	Average
3.68-5.00	High

Reliability of the Questionnaire

The reliability of the questionnaire is calculated using (Cronbach Alpha) formula, and it is measured to be as follows:

Table 1: Cronbach's Alpha

Dimension	N	# of items	Cronbach's Alpha
Total degree of the questionnaire	97	30	0.90

The questionnaire is reliable with (0.90) Cronbach's Alpha coefficient

Table 2: Sample Member of the Disabled Students According to University

University	Frequency	Percent
Bethlehem University	25	25.8%
Hebron University	15	15.5%
Arab American University	12	12.4%
Birzeit University	45	46.4%
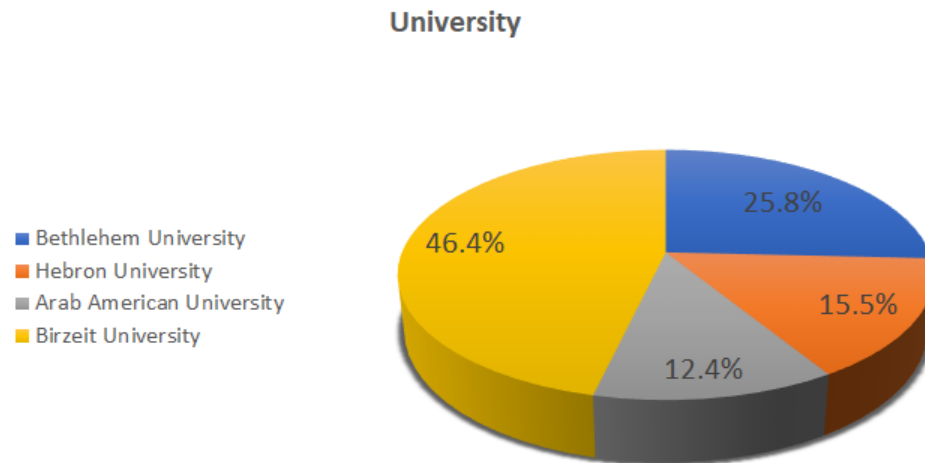
Figure 1: Percentage of Students with Disabilities in The Four Universities

Table 3: Means, Std. Deviations for The Social Integration Strategies Within Bethlehem University from The Perspective of Students with Disabilities.

Item	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent
Services provided to people with disabilities	3.23	0.65	64.6%
Facilities provided to people with disabilities	3.53	0.55	70.6%
Functional limitations framework for people with disabilities	2.42	0.71	48.4%
The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities	2.72	0.54	54.4%
The social construction framework for people with disabilities	3.44	0.64	68.8%
Total degree	3.16	0.41	63.2%

Figure 2: Mean of items shown in Table 3 for Bethlehem University

The services provided to people with disabilities at Bethlehem university is average degree with mean equal to (3.23).

The facilities provided is also average degree with mean equal to (3.53).

The functional limitations framework is also average degree with mean equal to (2.42).

The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities is average degree with mean equal to (2.72).

The social construction framework is average degree with mean equal to (3.44).

Table 4: Means, Std. Deviations for The Social Integration Strategies Within Hebron University from The Prospective of Disabled Students.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent
Services provided to people with disabilities	1.64	0.84	32.8%
Facilities provided to people with disabilities	2.40	0.78	48.0%
Functional limitations framework for people with disabilities	2.53	0.81	50.6%
The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities	3.08	0.78	61.6%
The social construction framework for people with disabilities	3.58	0.61	71.6%
Total degree	2.40	0.59	48.0%

Figure 3: Mean of Items Shown in Table 4 for Hebron University

The services provided to people with disabilities at Hebron university is low degree with mean equal to (1.64).

The facilities provided is also average degree with mean equal to (2.40).

The functional limitations framework is also average degree with mean equal to (2.53).

The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities is average degree with mean equal to (3.08).

The social construction framework is average degree with mean equal to (3.58).

Table 5: Means, Std. Deviations for The Social Integration Strategies Within Arab American University from The Perspective of Disabled Students.

	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent
Services provided to people with disabilities	2.48	0.58	49.6%
Facilities provided to people with disabilities	2.90	0.86	58.0%
Functional limitations framework for people with disabilities	1.63	0.31	32.6%
The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities	2.69	0.91	53.8%
The social construction framework for people with disabilities	2.81	0.58	56.2%
Total degree	2.55	0.53	51.0%
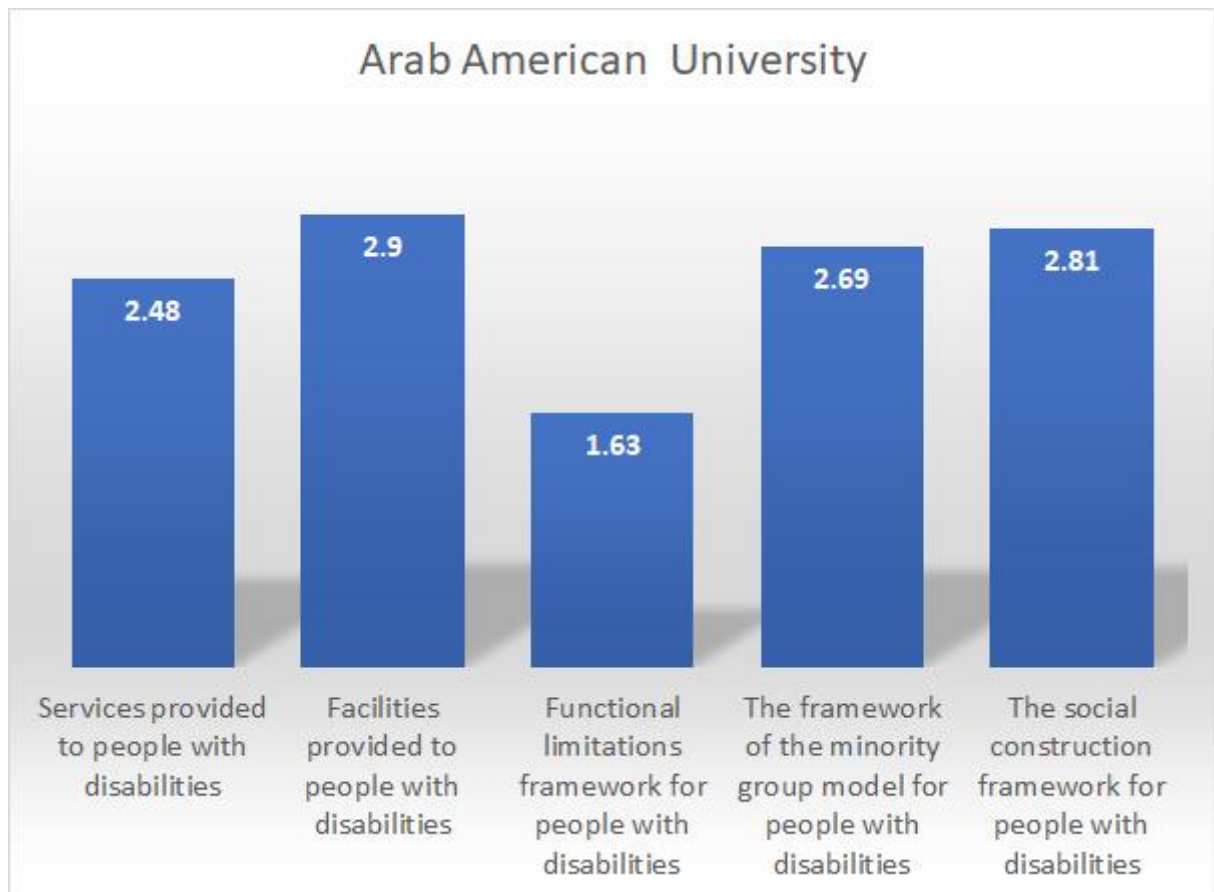
Figure 4: Mean of Items Shown in Table 5 for the Arab American University

The services provided to people with disabilities at Arab American university is average

degree with mean equal to (2.48).

The facilities provided is also average degree with mean equal to (2.90).

The functional limitations framework is also low degree with mean equal to (1.63).

The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities is low degree with mean equal to (1.63).

And the social construction framework is average degree with mean equal to (2.81).

Table 6: Means, Std. Deviations for The Social Integration Strategies Within Birzeit University from The Prospective of Disabled Students.

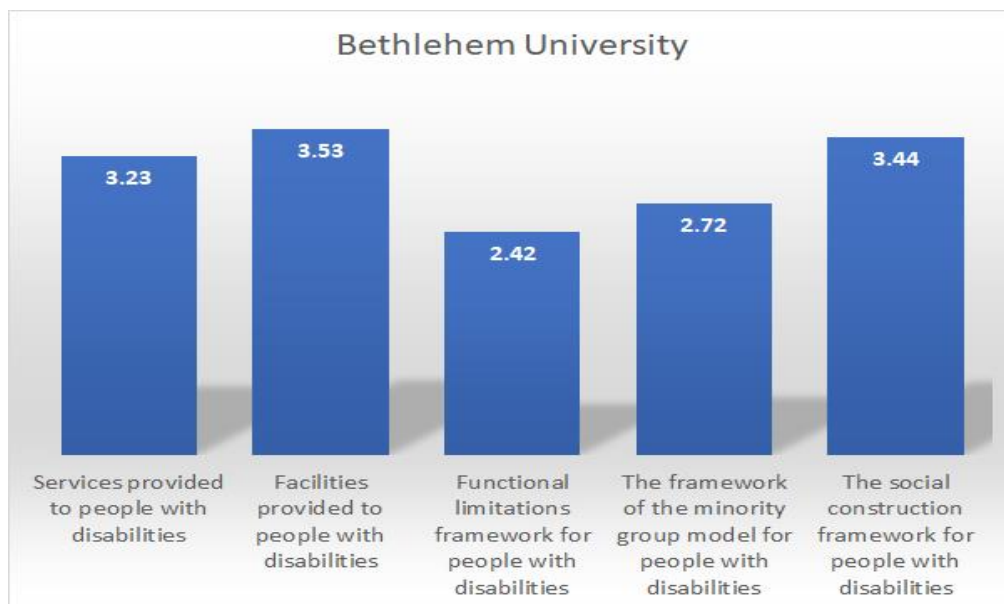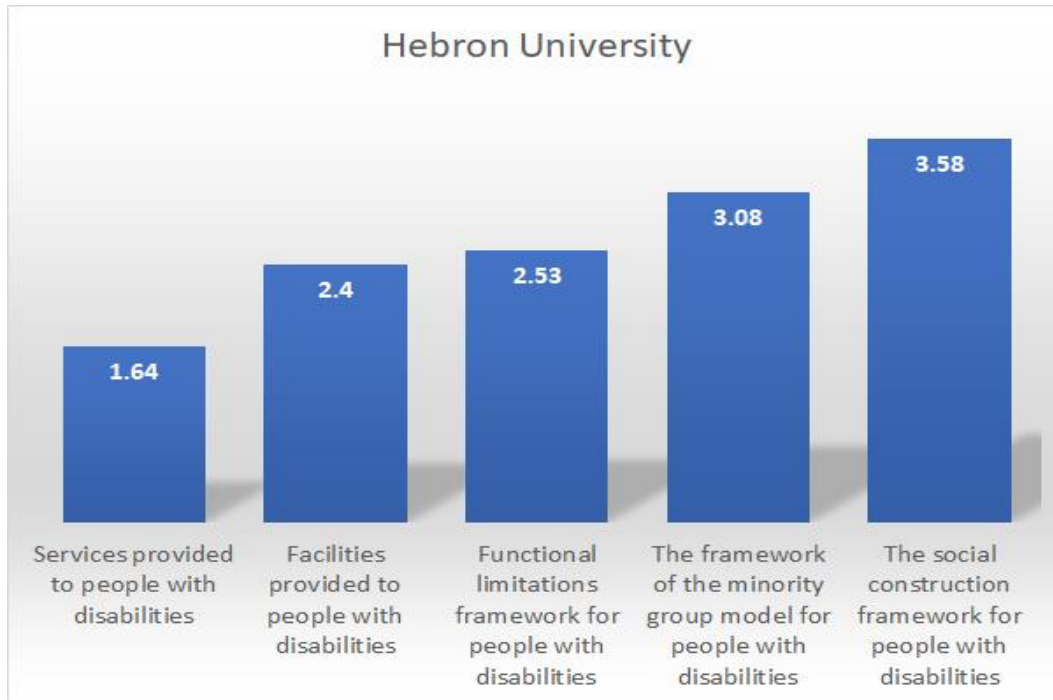|	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent
Services provided to people with disabilities	3.41	0.63	68.2%
Facilities provided to people with disabilities	3.54	0.65	70.8%
Functional limitations framework for people with disabilities	2.61	0.72	52.2%
The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities	2.81	0.63	56.2%
The social construction framework for people with disabilities	3.42	0.57	68.4%
Total degree	3.26	0.46	65.2%
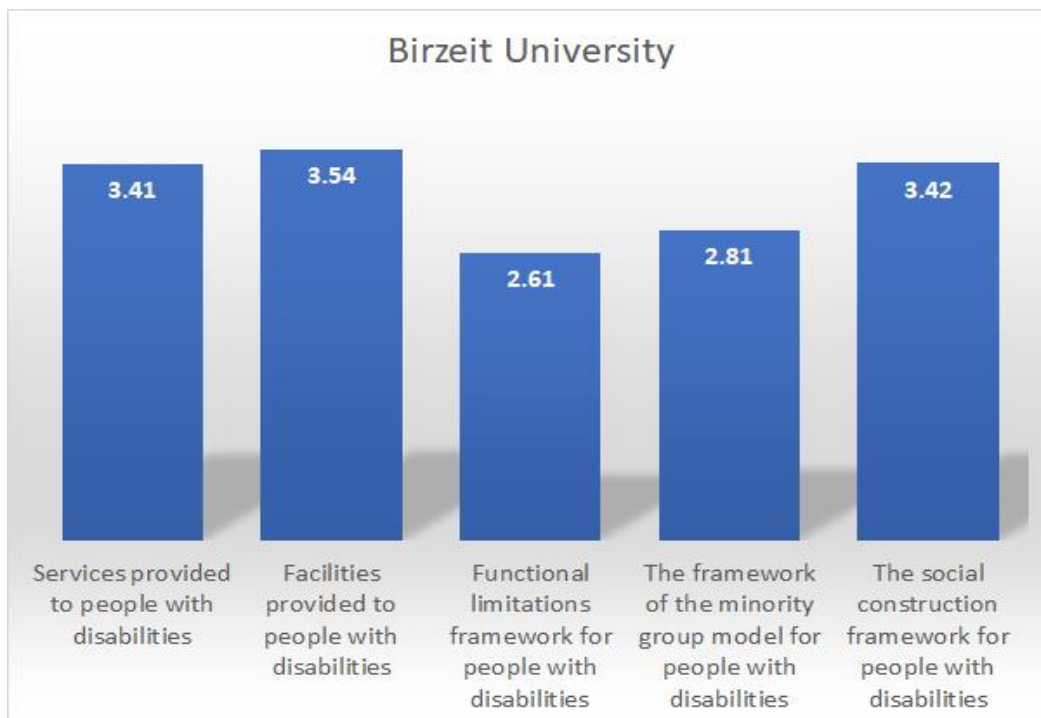
Figure 5: Mean of items shown in Table 6 for Birzeit University

The services provided to people with disabilities at Birzeit university is average degree with mean equal to (3.41).

The facilities provided is also average degree with mean equal to (3.54).

The functional limitations framework is also average degree with mean equal to (2.61).

The framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities is average degree with mean equal to (2.81).

The social construction framework is average degree with mean equal to (3.42).

* There are no significant differences at ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions according to university variable.

Table 7: One-Way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) Test for The Differences in The Social Integration Strategies for People with Disabilities In Palestinian Higher Education Institution According To University Variable.

Items		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	P-value.
Services	Between Groups	39.725	3	13.242	29.935	0.000*
	Within Groups	41.138	93	0.442		
	Total	80.863	96			
Facilities	Between Groups	18.086	3	6.029	13.252	0.000*
	Within Groups	42.308	93	0.455		
	Total	60.394	96			
Functional limitations framework	Between Groups	9.324	3	3.108	6.413	0.001*
	Within Groups	45.072	93	0.485		
	Total	54.396	96			
The framework of the minority group model	Between Groups	1.504	3	0.501	1.110	0.349
	Within Groups	42.000	93	0.452		
	Total	43.504	96			
The social construction framework	Between Groups	4.714	3	1.571	4.412	0.006*
	Within Groups	33.121	93	0.356		
	Total	37.835	96			
Total degree	Between Groups	11.452	3	3.817	16.554	0.000*
	Within Groups	21.446	93	0.231		
	Total	32.899	96			

There are significant differences at (p≤0.05) in the social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institution according to university variable. The differences are in Services, Facilities, Functional limitations framework, social construction framework, and the total degree.

Table 8: Tukey test for the differences at (p≤0.05) in the social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institution according to university variable.

Item	Comparisons	Bethlehem		Arab American	Birzeit
Services	Bethlehem		1.587*	0.750*	-0.181
	Hebron			-0.837*	-1.768*
	Arab American				-0.931*
	Birzeit				
Facilities	Bethlehem		1.133 *	0.635*	-0.01
	Hebron			-0.498	-1.143*
	Arab American				-0.645*
	Birzeit				
Functional limitations framework	Bethlehem		-0.113	0.795*	-0.186
	Hebron			0.908*	-0.072
	Arab American				-0.981*
	Birzeit				
The social construction framework	Bethlehem		-0.138	0.634*	0.018
	Hebron			0.772*	0.156
	Arab American				-0.617*
	Birzeit				
total degree	Bethlehem		0.764*	0.610*	-0.095
	Hebron			-0.155	-0.859*
	Arab American				-0.704*
	Brzeit				

The study identifies significant differences in the services among Bethlehem University, Hebron University, Arab American University, and Birzeit University. Bethlehem University outperforms Hebron University in this framework. Additionally, Bethlehem

University has superior services compared to Arab American University in this framework. In contrast, Arab American University is superior to Hebron University and Birzeit University in the services related to the Functional Limitations Framework. With regard to Facilities, Bethlehem University is far better than the Arab American University. Furthermore, Hebron University had superior services compared to Arab American University in this category. Similarly, Birzeit University outperforms Arab American University in terms of Facilities. In the Social Construction Framework, Bethlehem University has better services compared to Hebron University, and Bethlehem University also outperforms Arab American University in this category. Birzeit University has superior services compared to both Hebron University and Arab American University in the Social Construction Framework. Finally, the Total Degree Framework reveals that Bethlehem University is superior to Hebron University in terms of services provided. Additionally, Bethlehem University has better services compared to Arab American University in this framework. In contrast, Birzeit University outperforms both Hebron University and Arab American University in the Total Degree Framework.

Table 9: Numbers, means, and std. deviations for the differences in the social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institution according to university variable.

Items	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Services	Bethlehem	25	3.23	0.65
	Hebron	15	1.64	0.84
	Arab American	12	2.48	0.58
	Birzeit	45	3.41	0.63
Facilities	Bethlehem	25	3.53	0.55
	Hebron	15	2.40	0.78
	Arab American	12	2.90	0.86
	Birzeit	45	3.54	0.65

Items	University	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Functional limitations framework	Bethlehem	25	2.42	0.71
	Hebron	15	2.53	0.81
	Arab American	12	1.63	0.31
	Birzeit	45	2.61	0.72
The social construction framework	Bethlehem	25	3.44	0.64
	Hebron	15	3.58	0.61
	Arab American	12	2.81	0.58
	Birzeit	45	3.42	0.57
total degree	Bethlehem	25	3.16	0.41
	Hebron	15	2.40	0.59
	Arab American	12	2.55	0.53
	Birzeit	45	3.26	0.46

4.2 Results and Analyses of Experts' and Students with Disabilities' interviews

This section addresses nine relevant themes, extracted from the five main research questions in the study. Each theme consists of a brief introduction, quotes/paraphrases by experts and students with disabilities from the four researched universities. The researcher links results in each theme to theoretical framework and literature review studies wherever relevant.

Availability of Inclusion Policies/Strategies and their Implementation

This part addresses the availability of social inclusion policies/strategies and their implementation. This is mainly from the perspective of the experts in the disability and inclusion field towards the existence of policies/strategies for social inclusion and their implementation.

There is a strong emphasis from the interviewed experts that there are no policies at all, and if they exist, they are improvised and far from planning. Khalil Alawne, Head of the Special Education Institutions Department at the Ministry of

Education, mentions that "there are no policies or strategy adopted by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and applied to the Higher Education Institutions" (interview, 2023). This is also emphasized by Mr. Nizar Basalat, Head of the Planning and Policy Making Unit - Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, who refers to the lack of a unified policy or strategy to work with the disabled students (interview, 2023). Basalat adds that everything is done with improvisation and through individual employee efforts or based on demands from students with disabilities and that strategies and clear written policies are not present in most universities (interview, 2023). Other experts point out that that each institution establishes its own policies regarding inclusion. For example, Rima Canawati, Freelance Disability and Inclusive Development Consultant, indicates that "each educational institution sets its own policies according to its capabilities and the degree of its interest in integrating students with disabilities in higher education" (interview,2023).

On the other hand, some experts are not knowledgeable and have no comments about the existence of policies including Hind Zahde, Head of Disabled Resource Center / Bethlehem University, who does not know about government policies and hence have no comments in this regard (interview, 2023). Mahmoud Amarneh - assigned Head of Counseling and Orientation Department at Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research, disagrees with the previous opinions, as he stated that "there is indeed a clear policy at the Ministry to deal with the disabled" (interview, 2023). Regardless of the reality regarding the existence of actual policies/strategies, the adoption of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) Article 32 promotes the rights of people with disabilities to be included in all development policies and programs" (Disability Evidence Portal, 2022).

Despite the conflicting opinions of experts in this regard, the researcher emphasizes the importance of the existence of clear policies to achieve inclusion. This is confirmed by Salmi & D'Addio (2021) who discusses the importance of having effective policies for achieving inclusion in higher education. The authors reviewed current knowledge about equity promotion policies in higher education and the effectiveness of those policies, from drawn experience in various parts of the world.

From the investigated literature review, it is shown that the realization of policies for the disabled students and their real implementation in higher education institutes can simply be described as an unfinished process in various countries and regions of the world.

Moreover, there are variations in expert responses with regards to how policies/strategies are evaluated to be implementable within renewed plans. Some indicate that evaluation is rarely carried out. Rasha Saleh, project coordinator at EduAid, states that "evaluation rarely happens; and if it does happen, it is done in a very random way" (interview, 2023). She confirms that evaluation is through the extent of implementation of activities and the impact of their application on enrolled students by knowing the indicators that can be built upon and the extent to which they are achieved (interview,2023). This resonates with Khalil Alawne's intervention about the relation between evaluation and implementation of activities. They both agree that this should be followed up on at the Deanship of Student Affairs.

Unfortunately, there is no real evaluation of these strategies and policies on the ground. For example, Khalil Alawne, Head of the Special Education Institutions Department at the Ministry of Education, and Mahmoud Atshan, Disabled Arabic

Language Instructor at Birzeit University, both agree that there is no evaluation whatsoever (interviews, 2023). In fact, they both agree that there is exclusivity and dictatorship in decision-making in most of these institutions, and they do not think that the issues and rights of students with disabilities are at the top of their priorities at all (interviews, 2023). Moreover, Ziad Amro, Disability Consultant, emphasizes that evaluation processes are limited (if any) to only feedback when implementing activities and events (interview, 2023).

It is vital to mention that the government established the Supreme Council for Persons with Disabilities to follow up on the implementation and application of the law, prepare strategies and policies related to care and rehabilitation, monitor plans and achievements of ministries and institutions, evaluate achievements of all agencies, suggest amendments to laws, set necessary standards for quality of programs and services, and form committees to assist the Council in carrying out its tasks (Al-Rimawi, 2021). However, monitoring and evaluation rarely takes place.

Hence, it was found that that there are clear shortcomings on the part of higher education institutions regarding policies and strategies for integrating people with special needs.

Accommodation of with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions vs. European/international educational institutions and a social inclusion model proposal.

This part is mainly about the accommodation of with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions and the European/international educational institutions and the proposal of a social inclusion model.. This is mainly from the perspective of the

experts in the disability and inclusion field towards the existence of policies/strategies for social inclusion and their implementation.

There is a strong indication from experts that accommodating people with disabilities in higher education institutions internationally and mainly in Europe is based on the right of individuals with disabilities to education. For example, Bihan Qaimari, special education professor and expert in disabilities, indicates "the policies applied in European educational institutions are based on the right of persons with disabilities to education, in contrast to the concept of disability in Palestinian institutions, which is based on the medical and charitable concept" (interview, 2023). Many experts such as Osaid Alem, Bethlehem disability Union member, and Asmahan Asfour, disability consultant and translator, both indicate that there are clear policies in these countries that have a positive impact on the institutions' performance towards this group, in terms of providing suitable infrastructure to serve them and facilitate their movement (interviews, 2023). Moreover, they emphasize what Awad Abayat, Bethlehem Disability Union President, and Khalil Alawne, portray about European institutions having policies and strategies supported by binding laws imposed by the state, as well as specialized units or departments in each university that provide individual assistance, assistive tools, training, and development of systems and procedures within the university (interviews, 2023).

Regarding Local Institutions

There is strong confirmation from experts that the comprehension of the concept of disability within Palestinian institutions adopts the medical and charitable approach. Rasha, project coordinator at Edu-Aid, and Shatha Abu Srour, Disability and Inclusion

activist, both confirm that the policies applied in European educational institutions are based on the developmental rights approach, that is, the right of persons with disabilities to inclusive education, while the concept of disability in Palestinian institutions is based on the medical and charitable approach. This is a fundamental disagreement that has repercussions on students with disabilities (interviews, 2023). Others refer to the absence of policies in Palestine. For example, Nizar Basalat, Head of the Planning and Policy Making Unit - Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and Mahmoud Atshan, Disabled Arabic Language Instructor at Birzeit University, both agree that there are no clear policies to deal with this category locally, and if there was, they are based on personal efforts that do not meet their minimum requirements (interviews, 2023).

Moreover, there is clear confirmation that the laws and regulations which ensure the right of people with disabilities to education are clear and applied in all European institutions, while these laws are not applied in Palestinian educational institutions. For example, Ziad Amro, Disability Consultant, and Bihan Qaimari, special education professor and expert in disabilities, both agree regarding the existence of clear applied laws internationally and especially in European countries. There are also penalties for not applying them, on the contrary of Palestine. They also add that there are representative bodies internationally and especially in European institutions, which in not the case in Palestine (interviews, 2023).

Rasha Saleh, project coordinator at EduAid and Shatha Abu Srour, Disability and Inclusion activist, emphasize that there is no great interest at the state level to provide the necessary needs for different groups of students with disabilities, and there is no free support for education for these groups, unlike the case in European universities that provide so much for this category. Moreover, there is respect for

diversity and differences in addition to humanitarian treatment unlike Palestinian institutions. Also, they think that things are organized more clearly internationally and Europe in particular and based on the clear and applicable government support, which is on the contrary of the case here in Palestine (interviews, 2023).

It was found, through the experts' questions, that there are significant differences in the policies of integrating people with disabilities in Palestinian institutions of higher education compared to their European/ international counterparts, and this difference was clearly in favor of the international institutions that are based on the idea of the right to education for people with disabilities, and promoting a culture of diversity among members of their societies.

There is a strong indication for the necessity of adopting a policy for inclusive education and integration in practical life. For example, Rasha Saleh, project coordinator at EduAid and - Dr. Azim Assaf - English Language and Literature Instructor / Birzeit University both emphasize the importance of adopting an inclusive education policy based on equity and equal opportunities, and this requires radical modifications and changes in the existing educational system in Palestine. Additionally, they refer to the need to prepare the infrastructure to accommodate all types of disabilities (interviews, 2023).

Overall, the functional limitations framework provides a useful lens for understanding these results. The framework highlights the importance of identifying and addressing functional limitations in order to improve the participation of people with disabilities in higher education and practical life. The expert interviews suggest a range

of strategies for addressing these functional limitations, including adopting policies and providing support and accommodations for people with disabilities.

These results can also be explained through the lens of the Minority Group Paradigm in highlighting the challenges facing people with disabilities and the need for accommodations, support, and social change to ensure their full participation and inclusion in society. The framework is a useful tool for understanding the experiences of people with disabilities and guiding policy and practice to promote their rights and well-being.

The social construction of disability framework provides a useful lens for understanding the experiences of people with disabilities in society. Expert interview results align with the framework's emphasis on the importance of examining social and cultural factors that contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities, and the need to address societal and structural barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society.

Physical Infrastructure and Transportation

This part is mainly about the physical infrastructure and transportation at Palestinian Higher Education Institutions. This is from the perspective of both students with disabilities at the four Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and experts in the disability and inclusion field.

It was found that there is an evident significant difference between Palestinian higher education institutions with regards to how the physical infrastructure (such as elevators, buildings, and ramps) meets the student with disabilities' needs to move from

one place to another. It is obvious that Bethlehem and Birzeit universities excelled in this regard, on the contrary of Hebron and the Arab American Universities.

Bayan from Birzeit University states that the physical environment meets her needs especially that there are elevators with Braille language numbers as well as ramps. (interview, 2023). Rajeh from Bethlehem university confirms what Bayan says in that the physical environment meets his needs excellently. However, this is not the case in Hebron and the Arab American Universities, as they did not meet the minimum requirements for providing facilities for students with disabilities, from their point of view. This is emphasized in the questionnaire analysis as well. Dina from Hebron University emphasizes that the physical environment does not meet her needs because nothing is there to help her out except for a couple of building that have ramps (interview, 2023). Moreover, Anas from the Arab American University mentions that the physical environment does not meet his needs and there are many buildings that do not have elevators or ramps and there are lots of stairs inside buildings and between them (interview, 2023).

The physical environment is indeed a barrier for the disabled students' social inclusion on campus. In fact, Shatha Abu Srour, Disability and Inclusion activist, refers to the importance of having a suitable physical environment that meets their needs at all universities and that this requires a unified university policy (interview, 2023). Moreover, Rasha Saleh, project coordinator at EduAid, refers to that their satisfaction is mainly about the suitability of the physical environment and it meeting their needs (interview, 2023).

This can be explained through the lens of the social construction of disability framework with aims to remove all barriers, emotional, social, or physical, to create an environment where all humans, including those with impairments, can truly flourish.

This is emphasized by Moriña (2017) who refers to that the university spaces and physical environment should be fully accessible, with no physical barriers of any type. Moreover, people with disabilities and their advocates see that it is not limited to disability, but rather an inaccessible physical environment that contributes to the restrictions they face. (MacKenzie et al., 2020).

Providing an accessible physical environment is indeed an essential part of their basic rights that must be fulfilled and considered by all higher education institutions.

Students with disabilities also comment on the availability of secure transportation services inside and outside the university campus. For example, Rasha from Birzeit University and Rama from Bethlehem University indicate that they both fully depend on themselves and sometimes get help from security men and students on campus and both refer to the excellent services within the campus and that they can reach the required locations easily (interviews, 2023). This is emphasized by Moath from Hebron University and Thaer from the Arab American University who also get help from security men and students (interviews, 2023).

This can be explained through the lens of the minority group paradigm framework which emphasizes on the importance of providing all accommodations and support including transportation to ensure full participation in society and in this case Higher Education institutions.

(Abu'Ida, 2017) elaborates on this point and emphasizes the importance of the satisfaction of disabled students at various universities including social services,

academic services, university facilities, information resources, library services and transportation, among others.

It was found that universities should put in more efforts to secure transportation services on campus. There should be a comprehensive plan to secure these services and hence foster students' satisfaction in this regard.

University Environment and Educational Experience

This part is mainly about the university environment and whether it contributed to enriching their educational experiences. This is from the perspective of both students with disabilities at the four Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and experts in the disability and inclusion field.

It was found that there are no bad educational experiences for the of the students within Palestinian higher education institutions, with some experiences for a few students that had a negative impact on their psyche

Zainab from Birzeit University, Rawan from Bethlehem University and Dunya from Hebron University all emphasize that the university environment really enriched their educational experiences, as they were all motivating environments (interviews, 2023). This is not the case regarding Anas from the Arab American University who mentions that the environment is relatively just ok and did not contribute much in enhancing his educational experience (interview, 2023).

Suheir Najjar – Head of Disabilities Office at Birzeit University confirms the importance of providing a healthy university environment that would contribute positively towards their educational experience (interview, 2023). She also indicates that the measures implemented to serve this segment on campus have clear goals

and guarantee equal opportunities. This mainly contributes positively towards a healthy educational experience. This is also confirmed by Nizar Basalat, Head of the Planning and Policy Making Unit - Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, confirms that rights for the disabled must be considered, as they would provide all needs for the disabled to make them feel included in a healthy university environment and hence would contribute to positively enriching their educational experiences (interview, 2023).

The results resonate with the social construction of disability framework which refer to that the attitudes and beliefs, university environment, policies and practices of institutions contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities.

Elhadi (2021) examines challenges to the inclusion of Students with Disabilities, among which is the university environment. He adds that successful inclusion of disabled students requires that all facilities/services meet their needs. Hence, the environment is suitable for them to achieve best results academically.

It was found that meeting the students with disabilities' needs through providing the required services and facilities contributes greatly to a positive university environment that ultimately leads to a positive university experience.

Financial Resources & Social Inclusion Programs/Activities

This part is mainly about the financial resources and social inclusion programs/activities. This is from the perspective of both students with disabilities at the four Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and experts in the disability and inclusion field.

There is a strong indication that Palestinian higher education students with disabilities benefit from the financial aid provided by all the institutions, as most of

these aids were beneficial in meeting the financial needs of students with disabilities during their studies. For example, Malek from Birzeit University, Nareen from Bethlehem University, Dina from Hebron University and Anas from the Arab American University all emphasize that they fully benefit from financial assistance and that without this assistance, they would not be able to meet many of their needs. They all agree that this is the minimum thing any university must provide for them (interviews, 2023).

The results can be explained through the lens of the minority group paradigm framework that emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diversity within disability community and the need for all accommodations and support to ensure full participation in society.

Financial assistance of the disabled is essential in any university. This is indeed the least any university can do to support them and ensure their full and active participation in university life.

Experts are asked about how universities provide financial resources to implement activities and policies/strategies that respond to the needs of people with disabilities and there is an evident indication that it is done through the financial support of certain projects. Rasha Saleh, project coordinator at Edu-Aid, and Shatha Abu Srour, Disability and Inclusion activist, both confirm that this is done by financing projects from foreign supporting bodies or from national civil institutions, or by relying on voluntary human resources within higher education institutions. Additionally, they indicate that no part of the institutions' budget is allocated to meet the requirements of

students with disabilities. If support is not available, the needs of these students are not being met (interviews, 2023).

This resonates with Simadi & Alqaryouti's (2017) article on the satisfaction aspects among disabled students in a sample of universities in the Middle East where they emphasize on the importance of resources especially financial one to implement various activities and its relation to their satisfaction on campus.

It was found that, since experts indicated that financial resources are provided through external support and funding from supporting entities or volunteer activities, there is a need for more sustainable funding sources that are integrated into the general plan of the Ministry of Higher Education and hence universities. Hence, this would require examining more sources to meet their needs. This resonates with the social construction of disability framework which calls upon the importance of examining all factors that contribute to the experiences of the disabled including financial sources so as to create a more equitable society for the disabled.

Their evaluation of specific activities aimed at social inclusion is another investigated aspect. It was found that there is a variation between Palestinian higher education institutions regarding their evaluation of activities designated for people with disabilities. While Ramez from Bethlehem University and Dina from Hebron University confirm that their universities hold many activities for them and hence raises awareness and knowledge for the other students (interviews, 2023). On the contrary, Anas from the Arab American University and Zainab from Birzeit University both indicate that there are barely any activities that take place, just some breakfasts and some tracks from time to time (interviews, 2023).

Nizar Basalat, Head of the Planning and Policy Making Unit - Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and Rima Canawati, Freelance Disability and Inclusive Development Consultant, both emphasize that the lack of financial resources is the main obstacle to developing a comprehensive specialized program for the disabled that covers all aspects and guarantees their rights at the Higher Education Institutions including implementing activities (interviews, 2023).

Students with disabilities are not aware of ways in which these institutions can assist them in getting jobs after graduation, except for the students of the Arab American University and some students in Birzeit University who confirm that this service is not available in their institutions. For example, Rama from Birzeit University and Thaer from the Arab Amercian University indicate that this service is unfortunately not available in their universities but wish it does (interviews, 2023). Jiries from Bethlehem University and Dunya from Hebron University show that they are both not aware of this whatsoever (interviews, 2023). Mahmoud Atshan, Disabled Arabic Language Instructor at Birzeit University, refers to that governments internationally provide assistive education for all students and secure jobs for them after graduation (interview, 2023). This is also emphasized by Bihan Qaimari, special education professor and expert in disabilities, who emphasizes that is a vital aspect that is not considered by universities (interview, 2023).

Last but not least, there is a strong confirmation that that there are generally good and equal opportunities to join a certain specialization/program. However, most of these opportunities are for human sciences' majors that suit their disability nature. For example, Amani from Birzeit University, Fayez from Bethlehem University, Anas from the Arab American University in addition to Dunya from Hebron University feel all the

same as everybody else but they cannot join specializations sometimes as a result of their disabilities (interviews, 2023).

This is emphasized by most experts including Nizar Basalat, Head of the Planning and Policy Making Unit - Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, and Mahmoud Atshan, Disabled Arabic Language Instructor at Birzeit University, who refer to the importance of providing equal opportunities to join specializations and programs as this would foster social inclusion for the disabled students (interviews, 2023).

It is vital to note that the majority of experts confirmed, with 50%, that there are no well-thought-out programs for integrating and interacting with people with disabilities in the community. Meanwhile, 25% of experts agreed, and the other 25% remained neutral.

Providing equal opportunities to join a certain specialization/program and assisting them in finding opportunities after graduation are major aspects towards enhancing social inclusion. In fact, Goals of the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development directly address social inclusion and set the ambition to reduce inequality within and among countries with an emphasis on inclusion, equal opportunities and enhanced representation.

Last but not least, there is a strong confirmation that the group constitutes a strong force in conveying their voices to obtain all their rights. This is actually confirmed by all students. For example, Zainab from Birzeit University mentions that their voices would be a lot stronger within a group to obtain their rights (interview, 2023). This is confirmed by Jiries from Bethlehem University who claims that "the bigger of a group they are, the stronger they are and hence we would obtain anything they seek for"

(interview, 2023). These ideas, for example, are confirmed by Thaer from the Arab American University and Dunya from Hebron University (interviews, 2023).

Providing equal opportunities to join specializations and assisting in finding jobs after graduation should be considered seriously by all higher education institutions. However, this would require major steps by the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in this regard to start with.

All these aspects go in line with the minority group paradigm framework that emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diversity within the disability community and the need for accommodations and support to ensure full participation in society. This all lies with social inclusion, which is discussed and confirmed by Salmi & D'Addio (2021) who discuss the necessity of the existence of policies for achieving inclusion in higher education.

Teaching Methods, Specialized Tools and Disabilities

This part is mainly about the teaching methods and specialized tools used at higher education institutions. This is from the perspective of both students with disabilities at the four Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and experts in the disability and inclusion field.

It was found that flexible teaching methods are available in Palestinian higher education institutions, and their satisfaction with their availability was generally good. For example, Bayan from Birzeit University and Rajeh from Bethlehem University confirm that there is complete flexibility and cooperation by instructors and they don't face difficulties in this regard (interviews, 2023). Others students from other universities were somewhat less satisfied regarding the teaching Methods. For example, Dina from

Hebron University states that there is 70% satisfaction as most of the instructors and students are very cooperative (interview, 2023). Mohammad from the Arab American University mentions that there is a general satisfaction with several limitations (interview, 2023).

Rima Canawati, Freelance Disability and Inclusive Development Consultant claims that the teaching methods do not meet students' needs in most universities, as a lot needs to be provided to facilitate their learning (interview, 2023). This was emphasized by Kareemeh Shweiki – Head of Blind Charitable School (part of Blind Charitable Society) who states that surrounding universities in Hebron, especially Hebron University, are not flexible and there is barely cooperation in providing anything related to the course by instructors (interview, 2023).

This is emphasized by the minority paradigm framework that highlights the importance of addressing barriers that prevent people with disabilities from achieving full equality and inclusion in society.

Abu'Ida (2017) emphasizes the importance of providing Social services, academic services including flexible teaching methods on campus to achieve inclusion.

It was found that Palestinian higher education institutions included in the study generally provide specialized tools that help students with disabilities (such as machines, Braille, tablets, etc.), except for the students at Hebron University who confirmed that they do not have any specialized tools available for them. For example, Amani from Birzeit University confirms that there are many technological devices and tools such as laptops, recorders, braille devices, and others and they all meet their needs at the university (interview, 2023). This is agreed upon by Sahar from Bethlehem

University who refers to that the university provides all tools and devices that facilitate the learning process (interview, 2023). However, this is not the case at Hebron University. Dina states that there are no basic tools or devices. The computers are very old and do not support any programs and there is no employee to help with Braille typing or printing (interview, 2023). Thaer from the Arab American University mentions that there are only some devices but some need renewing especially computers, printers and the recording devices (interview, 2023).

Khalil Alawne, Head of the Special Education Institutions Department at the Ministry of Education, and Mahmoud Atshan, Disabled Arabic Language Instructor at Birzeit University, confirm that providing tools and devices on campus in one of the basic rights of students with disabilities so they are able to integrate in the courses and various activities on campus. Providing the necessary tools contributes to their university experience in general and especially their education. They add that this is still a barrier in most universities and meeting all their needs is essential to ensure their integration and participation in society (interviews, 2023).

This can be explained through the minority group paradigm which emphasizes the importance of recognizing the diversity within the disability community and the need for accommodations and all kinds of support including specialized tools that meet their needs to ensure their full participation in society.

Al-Mekdad & Al-Qatawneh (2018) refer to the necessity and importance of providing all services to meet their needs, especially the specialized tools to facilitate their life.

The availability of flexible teaching methods and cooperation by the instructors in addition to specialized tools is a vital part of inclusion. These barriers must be addressed on campus as they are major obstacles that prevent them from achieving fully equality and inclusion in society.

Emotional Support and Disabilities

This part is mainly about the emotional support and changing negative attitudes towards the disabled at higher education institutions. This is from the perspective of both students with disabilities at the four Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and experts in the disability and inclusion field.

There are variations regarding the students with disabilities' opinions regarding whose responsibility it is to change negative attitudes towards them. All students at Hebron University and the American University confirm that the responsibility for changing negative attitudes is primarily a collective responsibility, while students at Bethlehem University and Birzeit University see that the responsibility primarily falls on people with disabilities to change the negative attitudes towards them. For example, Bayan from Birzeit University and Mahmoud from Bethlehem University indicate that the main responsibility to change any negative attitudes falls upon the people with disabilities especially students with disabilities on campus (interviews, 2023). On the contrary, Dina from Hebron University and Thaer from the Arab American University confirm that it is a collective responsibility starting with the person himself/herself, the family and the community and the media plays an important role as well (interviews, 2023).

All experts confirm that there must be someone responsible for contributing to changing negative behaviors and attitudes towards people with disabilities, with 50%

strongly agreeing and 50% also agreeing. For example, Rasha, project coordinator at EduAid, and Shatha Abu Srour, Disability and Inclusion activist confirm that, regardless who is responsible to change the negative attitudes, there must be someone out there to change any attitudes and negative behaviors towards them as this is another major aspect towards their inclusion on campus and in society (interviews, 2023).

The majority of experts confirm, with 30%, that there is a role for the university in changing stereotypical negative images of people with disabilities among students and professors. Meanwhile, 25% of experts strongly agreed, 25% opposed, and 20% remained neutral.

The majority of experts also confirm that there is a role for students in changing the stereotypical negative images about people with disabilities among themselves and with professors, with 50% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing. Meanwhile, 25% of them preferred to remain neutral.

These results can be explained through the lens of the minority group paradigm framework which refer to that negative attitudes and stigmatization as major factors that contribute to the social exclusion of people with disabilities. This is also emphasized in the social construction of disability framework that emphasizes that the attitudes and beliefs, physical and built environment, and policies and practices of people and institutions contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities.

Moriña (2017) reports on the challenges and opportunities facing inclusive education in higher education, among which is changing any negative attitudes towards them in addition to the physical environment. This requires, as she mentioned,

designing policies, strategies, processes and actions that contribute to ensuring the success of all the students, without any obstacles.

All segments of society should take part in changing any negative attitudes towards this segment of society. They must be able to experience university life equally and justly, like all other students without any obstacles.

Students with Disabilities' and Experts' Perceptions towards the University Educational Environment

This part is mainly about the students with disabilities' and experts' perceptions towards the university educational environment. This is from the perspective of both students with disabilities at the four Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and experts in the disability and inclusion field.

It was found that their disabilities do not hinder them from benefiting from services and facilities, and they can overcome any barriers if they exist. However, Hebron University students who were included in the study confirmed the lack of services and facilities specifically for them**.** For example, Malek from Birzeit University and Aws from Bethlehem University both agree that their disabilities are not an obstacle and they smoothly benefit from services and facilities (interviews, 2023). Anas from the Arab American University agrees with both of them, regardless of how basic and limited the services are (interview, 2023). However, Dina from Hebron University disagrees with them, as there are no services to start with. If they are provided, there would not be any obstacles (interview, 2023).

It was also found that all students with disabilities included in the study indicate their complete satisfaction if the Palestinian higher education institutions meet all their

needs, which would decrease their feeling of alienation and make it easy for them to integrate into these institutions.

All of the expert sample members confirm their agreement that there would be satisfaction on the part of people with disabilities if all their needs were met in the university education institution, with 75% strongly agreeing and 25% agreeing

Moreover, it was found that the majority of students do not experience marginalization within Palestinian higher education institutions. Zainab from Birzeit University and Rawan from Bethlehem University both agree that they have never felt marginalized on campus (interviews, 2023). Dina from Hebron University confirmed not feeling marginalized as well, and added that even she does experience it, she would never let it affect her as she wants to finish and graduate (interview, 2023). This point was confirmed by Thaer from the Arab American University who confirmed that the ultimate aim is to finish his studies and find a decent job (interview, 2023).

In addition, it was found that there is a strong confirmation that students do not face any discrimination in treatment by students or professors. Bayan from Birzeit University and Jiries from Bethlehem University emphasize that they did not feel any discrimination. In fact, they put in so much effort to prove that they are just like the other students (interviews, 2023). Students from the other universities agree. Dunya from Hebron university and Anas from the Arab American University indicate that a strong personality imposes itself and that they both did not allow ant discrimination to happen (interviews, 2023).

In addition, there is a unanimous confirmation that students would interact to a great extent in university life if they are involved in it. All students from all universities

that they would interact actively if they are more involved in university life and would interact without any hesitation.

Last but not least, it was found that all students with disabilities at the American University and Birzeit University confirm their dissatisfaction with the term "people with disabilities," while there is variation among students at Bethlehem University and Hebron University, as some confirm their good level of satisfaction with this term, while some have a low level of satisfaction with it. For example, Bayan from Birzeit University indicates that she does not like this term at all and that there is no need to refer to them using any term (interview, 2023). Rama from Bethlehem University agrees with Bayan and adds that the term "disability" makes her feel weak and annoyed (interview, 2023). Thaer from the Arab American university also expresses his dissatisfaction with the term (interview, 2023). On the contrary of all these opinions, Dina from Hebron University states that the term is relatively suitable for her, but it should be persons with disabilities and not the disabled alone (interview, 2023).

The majority of experts oppose the idea that the term "people with disabilities" has an impact on reducing their value and self-confidence, with 25% strongly opposing it and 25% opposing it, while 15% strongly agreed and 10% agreed, and 25% preferred to remain neutral.

All these results can be explained through the lens of the minority group paradigm framework that refer to discrimination, prejudice, and stigmatization as major factors that contribute to the social exclusion of people with disabilities. Moreover, the framework also highlights the importance of advocacy and social change to address the tangible and non – tangible barriers that prevent people with disabilities from achieving

full equality and inclusion in society. It can also be explained through the social construction of disability framework which refers to that disability is created by the societal and structural barriers that prevent people with disabilities from fully participating in society. The framework also emphasizes that society's attitudes, beliefs and practices contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities.

Al-Rimawi (2021) recommends that further work was required to adapt the university education to the needs of students with disabilities in all categories, especially categories related to the inner feelings of students with disabilities on campus, so as to enhance their participation and integration in university life.

All university policies related to their inclusion should take into account omitting all forms discrimination, prejudice, and stigmatization against them, so as to facilitate their university experience and hence guarantees their basic rights to equal education.

Institutional Structure and Disabilities

This part is mainly about the institutional structure and disabilities. This is from the perspective of both students with disabilities at the four Palestinian Higher Education Institutions and experts in the disability and inclusion field.

Bayan from Birzeit University and Jiries from Bethlehem University confirm that the specialized unit/center at their universities facilitates their university life, as they do activities, provide financial aid for them and meets all their needs (interviews, 2023). On the contrary, Thaer from the Arab American University expresses his dissatisfaction that that there is no specialized unit / office at the university to meet his needs (interview, 2023). Dunya from Hebron University expresses a similar

dissatisfaction regarding the existence of only a very small room for their use and no unit/center and it does not include any of her basic needs (interview, 2023).

All of the experts confirm, that it is a very important task, to have a specialized unit/center to deal with people with disabilities at higher education institutions based on the principle of the right of people with disabilities, to education in order to meet their needs and requirements, so that these units provide activities that suit the needs of this group. Bihan Qaimari, special education professor and expert in disabilities and Hind Zahde, Head of Disabled Resource Center / Bethlehem University both agree that the existence of a specialized unit is very necessary to facilitate the needs of people with disabilities (interviews, 2023). They added that the presence of this specialized unit is very important in order to implement the policies and strategies set by the institution, and also in order to provide supportive services to provide equal opportunities for students regardless of their disabilities, and to ensure the compatibility of buildings and facilities for everyone's use (interviews, 2022).

The results can be explained through the lens of the social construction of disability framework which refers to that the policies and practices of institutions contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities. Hence, having a specialized center/unit would assist in this regard and facilitate their university experience. The unit would take part in examining any social and cultural factors that contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities in order to create a more inclusive and equitable society.

It is vital for each higher education institution to have a specialized unit / center that fulfills their needs, in terms of financial aid, services, activities and so on. This goes

in line with the minority group paradigm that highlights the need for all accommodations and support to ensure full participation in society including a specialized unit, which must be a top priority.

4.3 Correlation between all Frameworks and Results of Expert Interviews

The three frameworks correlate with the results of expert interviews on integrating people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions.

The first framework, the functional limitations framework, suggests that disability is caused by functional limitations that hinder an individual's ability to perform certain activities or participate in certain areas of society. The expert interviews confirmed major challenges facing people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions, such as physical, sensory, cognitive, and emotional limitations that hinder their participation. The severity of disability experienced depends on the level of support and accommodation available to them. The framework highlights the importance of identifying and addressing functional limitations in order to improve the participation of people with disabilities in higher education and practical life.

The second framework, the Minority Group Paradigm, emphasizes that disability is viewed as a minority status and people with disabilities face social, economic, and political barriers that limit their participation in society, including higher education institutions. The interviews confirmed the lack of policies and strategies for integrating people with special needs in Palestinian universities, and the importance of accommodations and support to ensure full participation in society. The framework also highlights the need to recognize the diversity within the disability community and the

importance of advocacy and social change to address systemic barriers preventing people with disabilities from achieving full equality and inclusion in society.

The third framework, the social construction of disability framework, asserts that disability is not an inherent characteristic of an individual but is constructed through social interactions, cultural beliefs, and institutional practices. The results of the expert interviews align with this framework, as they revealed shortcomings in the policies and strategies of higher education institutions for integrating people with disabilities. This suggests that institutional practices and policies can create barriers for people with disabilities, which prevents them from fully participating in society.

In conclusion, the frameworks discussed provide useful lenses for understanding the experiences of people with disabilities and guiding policy and practice to promote their rights and well-being. The expert interviews support the importance of identifying and addressing functional limitations, the need for accommodations, support, and social change to ensure full participation and inclusion in society, and the need to examine institutional practices and policies to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

4.3.1   Summary of Correlation

The study discusses three frameworks and their correlation with expert interviews on integrating people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions. The functional limitations framework highlights the importance of identifying and addressing functional limitations to improve participation. The Minority Group Paradigm emphasizes the need for policies, strategies, and accommodations to ensure full participation and recognize diversity within the disability community. The social construction of disability framework asserts that institutional practices and

policies can create barriers, preventing full participation in society. The expert interviews align with all three frameworks and suggest the need for accommodations, support, social change, and examination of institutional practices to remove barriers for people with disabilities.

4.4 Correlation between Literature Review and Results of Expert Interviews

The literature review provided an overview of the status of policies and strategies for disabled students' inclusion in higher education institutes globally, emphasizing that it is still an unfinished process. It highlighted that grants and scholarships alone cannot remedy the issue of disabled inclusion in higher education, and non-monetary interventions such as outreach, affirmative action, and retention policies must be implemented to remove barriers facing under-represented groups. Pre-training and in-training of faculty members to handle disabled students professionally are also essential. The review identified a gap in policies for disabled inclusion in Palestine and recommended further investigation through questionnaires and comparison with international counterparts.

The results of expert interviews revealed that higher education institutions in Palestine have shortcomings in policies and strategies for integrating people with special needs. However, these institutions strive to provide support for disabled students within their capabilities. The comparison of policies of integrating people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutes with their European counterparts showed a clear difference, with the latter being more supportive of disabled students' right to education and promoting a culture of diversity among their societies. The experts recommended adopting a policy for university education and integration in

practical life, preparing infrastructure to accommodate all types of disabilities, and integrating them into education from an early age in basic education stages.

The various questions asked to the experts revealed that all of them pointed out the existence of significant challenges facing disabled students, and there must be someone responsible for contributing to changing negative behaviors and attitudes towards them. Moreover, the majority of experts confirmed that there are no well-thought-out programs for integrating and interacting with disabled students in the community. There is a role for universities and students in changing stereotypical images of disabled students among themselves and with professors.

In conclusion, the literature review provided a theoretical background, while the expert interviews and the various questions provided practical insights into the status of disabled students' inclusion in higher education in Palestine. The results showed that there are gaps in policies and strategies for disabled inclusion in Palestine, and more effort is needed to improve the situation. It is essential to implement non-monetary interventions and pre-training and in-training of faculty members to handle disabled students professionally. Further research is needed to identify the gaps and level of satisfaction of disabled students with their institutes and policies. This research can help in proposing a working model that raises awareness and helps in satisfying all required needs.

4.4.1 Summary of Correlation

The study discusses the correlation between a literature review and expert interviews on the status of disabled students' inclusion in higher education institutions in Palestine. The literature review highlighted that policies and strategies for disabled

inclusion in higher education globally are incomplete, and non-monetary interventions must be implemented to remove barriers. The expert interviews revealed gaps in policies and strategies in Palestine, and the need for more effort to improve the situation, including non-monetary interventions, pre-training and in-training of faculty members, and infrastructure preparation. The results also showed the lack of well-thought-out programs for integrating and interacting with disabled students. Further research is needed to identify gaps and propose a working model for disabled students' inclusion in higher education.

4.5 Correlation between all Frameworks and Results of Students with Disabilities Interviews

The interviews conducted with students with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions were analyzed using three frameworks: functional limitations, minority group paradigm, and social construction of disability. The functional limitations framework focuses on identifying and addressing functional limitations to enable individuals with disabilities to participate fully in society. The interviews align with this framework, highlighting the importance of evaluating the availability of facilities and activities designated for people with disabilities, providing specialized tools and accommodations to overcome functional limitations, and addressing discrimination and negative attitudes towards individuals with disabilities.

The minority group paradigm framework recognizes disability as a form of minority status and emphasizes the social, economic, and political barriers that people with disabilities face. The interviews demonstrate the relevance and applicability of this framework, showing that Palestinian universities vary significantly in their provision of

facilities for students with disabilities and the importance of recognizing diversity within the disability community. Financial aid and flexible teaching methods are essential for ensuring full participation for students with disabilities. The interviews also reveal the need for advocacy and social change to address systemic barriers that prevent people with disabilities from achieving full inclusion in society.

The social construction of disability framework emphasizes that disability is not solely a medical issue, but a social and cultural phenomenon constructed through various social interactions, cultural beliefs, and institutional practices. The interviews align with this framework, showing that disability is not an inherent characteristic of an individual, but a result of the interaction between the individual and the social and physical environment. The provision of facilities for students with disabilities and the availability of flexible teaching methods are influenced by societal and structural barriers, and the importance of examining the social and cultural factors that contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities is highlighted.

Overall, the interviews reveal the importance of addressing functional limitations, recognizing diversity within the disability community, and examining the social and cultural factors that contribute to the experiences of people with disabilities in order to create a more inclusive and equitable society. The results also demonstrate the need for ongoing evaluation and improvement in this area and the significance of advocacy and social change to address the systemic barriers that prevent people with disabilities from achieving full inclusion in society.

4.5.1 Summary of Correlation

Interviews with Palestinian students with disabilities in higher education institutions were analyzed using three frameworks: functional limitations, minority group paradigm, and social construction of disability. The functional limitations framework focuses on addressing limitations and discrimination towards individuals with disabilities. The minority group paradigm recognizes disability as a form of minority status and emphasizes social, economic, and political barriers. The social construction of disability framework highlights that disability is a social and cultural phenomenon constructed through social interactions and institutional practices. The interviews emphasize the importance of addressing functional limitations, recognizing diversity, and examining social and cultural factors to create a more inclusive society. Ongoing evaluation, improvement, advocacy, and social change are necessary to remove systemic barriers to full inclusion.

4.6 Correlation between Literature Review and Results of Students with Disabilities Interviews

The literature review highlights that the implementation of policies for disabled students in higher education is an unfinished process in various countries and regions worldwide. The study further emphasizes the need for non-monetary interventions, such as outreach, affirmative action, retention, and specialized institutions, to remove the barriers faced by students with disabilities.

The interview results with disabled students are then presented in three parts. The first part discusses the facilities provided by Palestinian higher education institutions for disabled students. The interviews reveal that Bethlehem and Birzeit

universities provide better facilities than Hebron University and the American University. Financial aid is beneficial in meeting the financial needs of disabled students during their studies. Flexible teaching methods are available in Palestinian higher education institutions, and their satisfaction with their availability is generally good. Disabled students confirm a good level of satisfaction with the performance of the registration department.

The second part highlights the variation between Palestinian higher education institutions in their evaluation of activities designated for people with disabilities. Bethlehem and Hebron universities excel in this regard. The majority of disabled students confirm that specialized tools are available in most Palestinian institutions of higher education, except for Hebron University. Most disabled students are not aware of ways in which these institutions can assist them in getting jobs after graduation.

The third part focuses on the evaluation of equal opportunities for disabled students to obtain a certain specialization. Most opportunities are for human sciences' majors that suit their disability nature. Generally, the interviews reveal that disabled students do not face discrimination from other students or professors. However, Hebron University students confirmed the lack of services and facilities specifically for them.

The interview results with disabled students show that there is a significant difference in the facilities provided by Palestinian higher education institutions. There is also a variation between institutions in their evaluation of activities designated for disabled students and in the availability of specialized tools. Most disabled students are not aware of ways in which these institutions can assist them in getting jobs after graduation.

The results of this study are consistent with the literature review, which highlighted the importance of policies and strategies for the inclusion of disabled students in higher education institutions. The study found that the majority of disabled students did not experience marginalization or discrimination in treatment from students or professors in Palestinian higher education institutions. This suggests that policies and strategies for disabled inclusion are being implemented to some extent in these institutions.

The study also found that disabled students interacted to a great extent in university life if they were involved in it, indicating that they are an integral part of the university community. Furthermore, the study revealed that disabled students constitute a strong force in conveying their voices to obtain their rights, as they expressed their satisfaction with the behavior of the university community towards them. This emphasizes the importance of including disabled students in decision-making processes that affect their lives.

The variation among students at different universities in their satisfaction with the term "people with disabilities" and their perceptions of responsibility for changing negative attitudes highlights the need for a comprehensive approach towards disabled inclusion that takes into account individual differences and preferences. This reinforces the importance of non-monetary interventions such as outreach, affirmative action, retention, and specialized institutions, as suggested by the literature review.

Overall, this study provides valuable insights into the experiences of disabled students in Palestinian higher education institutions and emphasizes the importance of policies and strategies for disabled inclusion to ensure equity and social justice in higher

education. The study also highlights the need for ongoing evaluation and follow-up to identify gaps and ensure continuous improvement in policies and practices towards disabled inclusion, which is directly consistent with the literature review.

4.6.1 Summary of Correlation

The study presents a literature review on the implementation of policies and strategies for the inclusion of disabled students in higher education institutions. It emphasizes the need for non-monetary interventions to remove barriers faced by students with disabilities. Interviews with disabled students at Palestinian higher education institutions show variations in facilities and evaluation of activities for disabled students. However, disabled students did not face discrimination from students or professors, and policies and strategies for disabled inclusion are being implemented to some extent. The study emphasizes the importance of including disabled students in decision-making processes and highlights the need for a comprehensive approach towards disabled inclusion.

Chapter 5

Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Discussion

5.1.1. Interview of Experts

The findings of the study highlight a clear shortfall by higher education institutions in dealing with people with disabilities. The lack of clear policies and strategies for this group, coupled with little evaluation of the policies/strategies, if they exist, indicate that institutions are not doing enough to meet the needs and requirements of people with disabilities. This is a concerning issue, given that education is a fundamental right for all individuals, including those with disabilities. The fact that only one expert indicated that planning is carried out through a committee of people with disabilities in cooperation with the university administration and students with disabilities shows that there is a need for more inclusive planning processes in higher education institutions.

Furthermore, all experts recognized the importance of having a specialized unit to deal with people with disabilities in higher education institutions. This is crucial as it ensures that the needs and requirements of people with disabilities are met, and activities that are suitable for this group are provided. However, the lack of financial resources provided to implement activities and policies for people with disabilities is a concerning issue, as it limits the ability of institutions to provide adequate support for this group. The fact that some experts indicated that financial resources are provided through recruiting external support, funding from supporting entities or volunteer activities, and providing a special budget for people with disabilities highlights the need

for more sustainable funding sources that are integrated into the general plan of the Ministry of Higher Education.

The findings also highlight the importance of providing human and infrastructural resources to implement activities and policies/strategies that respond to the needs of people with disabilities. It is reassuring to note that the experts confirmed that higher education institutions provide a qualified and specialized staff to deal with people with disabilities. However, it is unclear whether there are enough human and infrastructural resources to meet the needs of this group, given that there are no clear policies for dealing with them.

In terms of comparing the concept of considering people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions to the policies applied in European/international educational institutions, the findings indicate that there are clear differences between the two. While European institutions have clear policies that positively reflect on the performance of institutions towards people with disabilities, including providing suitable infrastructure to serve them and facilitate their mobility, the concept of considering people with disabilities in Palestinian institutions is still based on the medical and charitable concept. This means that there is still a long way to go in terms of implementing inclusive policies and strategies that meet the needs and requirements of people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions.

One of the main similarities between the two is the laws and regulations that ensure the right of people with disabilities to education. This highlights the need for Palestinian higher education institutions to focus on implementing these laws and regulations and integrating them into their policies and strategies. It is also important to note that the principles of justice and equality among all members of society, as mentioned by one

expert in the European context, should also be integrated into the policies and strategies of Palestinian higher education institutions. This will ensure that people with disabilities are not only given equal opportunities to access education but also have equal opportunities to succeed in higher education.

On integrating people with disabilities into Palestinian higher education institutions, experts were surveyed to identify the challenges faced by this community, the need for awareness programs to change negative attitudes towards them, the availability of programs catering to their specific needs, the role of universities and students in changing stereotypes, the impact of the term "people with disabilities" on self-worth and self-confidence, and the importance of meeting their needs to ensure satisfaction. All experts agreed on the existence of significant challenges for people with disabilities in higher education institutions, emphasizing the need to address these challenges for successful integration. They also agreed on the need for an individual responsible for changing negative attitudes and behaviors towards this community, as well as the development of programs catering to their specific needs.

Experts believed that universities have a role in changing stereotypical images of people with disabilities and that students have a role in promoting inclusivity and diversity. They opposed the idea that the term "people with disabilities" has an impact on reducing their self-worth and self-confidence, highlighting the need for empowerment and promoting a positive self-image. All experts agreed that people with disabilities would be satisfied if all their needs were met; highlighting the importance of identifying and meeting, their specific needs in higher education institutions. The experts also emphasized the need for a policy for university education and integration, preparing infrastructure to accommodate all types of disabilities, integration from an

early age, representation, job opportunities, and supporting devices to facilitate their work.

In conclusion, the findings of the study highlight the need for Palestinian higher education institutions to develop clear policies and strategies for people with disabilities, evaluate them regularly, and provide sustainable financial, human, and infrastructural resources to meet their needs and requirements. Additionally, the findings emphasize the importance of having a specialized unit to deal with people with disabilities in higher education institutions. Furthermore, the findings call for the integration of laws and regulations that ensure the right of people with disabilities to education and the principles of justice and equality among all members of society into the policies and strategies of Palestinian higher education institutions.

The study emphasizes the need to address the challenges faced by people with disabilities, change negative attitudes and behaviors, develop well-thought-out programs, promote positive attitudes towards them, empower them, involve students in promoting inclusivity, and meet their specific needs to ensure their successful integration into the academic community. This is considering that higher education institutions strive to provide the special needs of people with disabilities, each institution according to its capabilities and ability to bring support for this category.

5.1.2 Interview of Students

The study examines the facilities and services provided for students with disabilities in four Palestinian higher education institutions, including Bethlehem University, Hebron University, the American University, and Birzeit University. The

results of the study show that there are significant differences between these institutions in terms of providing facilities and services for disabled students.

In terms of facilities, Bethlehem and Birzeit universities scored better than Hebron University and the American University. For example, Bethlehem and Birzeit universities have elevators, ramps, and other physical facilities that make it easier for students with disabilities to move around. However, some students at Hebron University and the American University reported that such facilities are not available.

Regarding financial aid, the majority of disabled students from all institutions confirmed that it helped to meet their financial needs during their studies. However, some students at Birzeit University said they did not benefit from such aid.

Flexible teaching methods were generally available in all institutions and were rated positively by most students with disabilities who were interviewed. Students from all institutions also reported good treatment by the registration department, with only a few isolated negative comments.

In terms of activities designated for students with disabilities, there were differences between the institutions. Bethlehem and Hebron universities were rated highly in this regard, while students from the other institutions noted a lack of activities, or insufficient and limited activities.

The availability of specialized tools for students with disabilities also varied between institutions. Bethlehem and Birzeit universities provided various tools such as tablets, Braille machines, and audio recording devices. However, Hebron University reported the absence of any specialized tools or employees to serve disabled students. The American University provided outdated computers, and some students reported a lack of specialized tools.

In conclusion, the study highlights the significant differences between Palestinian higher education institutions in providing facilities and services for students with disabilities. These differences may affect the accessibility of education for students with disabilities, and there is a need for more attention and support to be given to this important issue.

In part three of the findings, the researchers evaluated the availability of equal opportunities for students with disabilities to join specific programs. The majority of students confirmed that there are equal opportunities, but some still face challenges. The availability of services and facilities was also evaluated, and the majority of students stated that they did not face any barriers. The researchers asked students how they would feel about being equal with others and not different from them if the university met all their needs in terms of services, facilities, and infrastructure. All students confirmed that they would feel satisfied with that.

In part four, the study examined how students with disabilities feel about marginalization within the university campus. The majority of students did not experience marginalization. The study also investigated how the university environment may have contributed to bad educational experiences for students with disabilities. The majority of students did not have any bad educational experiences, but a few students had negative experiences that affected their psyche. Discrimination towards students with disabilities in treatment by students or professors was also evaluated. The majority of students did not face any discrimination in treatment towards them. Finally, the study asked students how much they interact in university life and environment. The majority of students loved to participate and contribute to university life to a great extent.

In conclusion, the study revealed that the majority of students with disabilities did not face significant challenges in accessing equal opportunities or services and facilities in Palestinian higher education institutions. However, a few students had negative experiences that affected their psyche. Overall, students with disabilities are satisfied with the university environment if all their needs are met, and they feel they can integrate and participate in university life largely. The study emphasizes the importance of continuing to improve accessibility and services for students with disabilities to ensure they can fully benefit from their university experience.

The data findings reveal interesting variations in the perceptions and experiences of students with disabilities regarding the social framework within which they operate. One of the most striking variations is in the level of satisfaction with the term "people with disabilities." While all students at the American University and Birzeit University expressed dissatisfaction with the term, there was a mixed response from students at Bethlehem University and Hebron University. This highlights the importance of considering the diverse and often complex ways in which people with disabilities perceive and respond to language and terminology.

Another important finding is the varied opinions on who is responsible for changing negative attitudes and behaviors towards people with disabilities. While students at Hebron University and the American University saw this as a collective responsibility, those at Bethlehem University and Birzeit University believed that people with disabilities themselves are primarily responsible for changing negative attitudes towards them. This raises questions about the role of broader society in promoting inclusion and diversity, and the need for greater awareness and education on disability issues.

The data findings also shed light on the strength of the collective voice of students with disabilities in advocating for their rights within the university community. While the majority of students saw the group as a strong force, there were some who preferred to pursue their needs individually. This highlights the need for flexible and diverse approaches to advocacy and representation, which recognize the unique needs and perspectives of individuals with disabilities.

Finally, the data findings reveal a generally positive evaluation of the university community's behavior towards students with disabilities for being different from others. However, it is important to note that this may be influenced by the limited sample size and the specific context of the study. Further research is needed to explore the experiences of a more diverse group of students with disabilities and to identify areas where improvements can be made in promoting greater inclusion and equity in higher education institutions.

5.1.3 Questionnaire of Students

The quantitative analysis results, presented in this study, provide valuable insights into the level of social integration strategies provided to disabled students in different universities. The analysis is based on mean scores and standard deviations for various social integration strategies, as well as the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, which measures the reliability of the questionnaire used in the study.

The reliability of the questionnaire, as measured by Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, was found to be high (0.90). This indicates that the questionnaire is a reliable tool for measuring the level of social integration strategies provided to disabled students. The

high reliability of the questionnaire also suggests that the results of the study are valid and accurate.

The analysis of means for the social integration strategies within each university shows that there are variations in the level of social integration strategies provided to disabled students. For instance, at Bethlehem University, the services provided to disabled students were found to be of an average degree (mean score of 3.23), while the facilities provided were of an average degree (mean score of 3.53). In contrast, at Hebron University, the services provided were of a low degree (mean score of 1.64), while the facilities provided were of an average degree (mean score of 2.40).

These findings suggest that there are significant differences in the level of support and resources available to disabled students across universities. Such disparities could be attributed to a lack of adequate funding, resources, and accessibility measures at certain universities. The low degree of services provided at Hebron University highlights the need for universities to invest in accessibility measures and resources to support disabled students. In contrast, the high degree of facilities provided at Birzeit University and Bethlehem University indicates that these universities have made significant efforts to create an inclusive and accessible environment for disabled students.

It is worth noting that the mean scores for the functional limitations framework for people with disabilities and the framework of the minority group model for people with disabilities were found to be of an average degree or low degree across all universities. This suggests that there is a need for universities to adopt a more comprehensive approach to support disabled students, one that takes into account their unique needs and experiences.

The social construction framework for people with disabilities was found to be of an average degree or high degree across all universities. This framework recognizes that disability is a social construct that is influenced by cultural, social, and economic factors. It emphasizes the need to promote social inclusion and equality for disabled individuals. The high degree of the social construction framework at Bethlehem University and Arab American University indicates that these universities have made significant efforts to promote social inclusion and create an inclusive environment for disabled students.

In conclusion, the results of the quantitative analysis highlight the need for universities to invest in accessibility measures and resources to support disabled students. The study provides valuable insights into the level of social integration strategies provided to disabled students in different universities. It also highlights the need for universities to adopt a more comprehensive approach to support disabled students, one that takes into account their unique needs and experiences. The findings of the study can serve as a basis for future research and policy development aimed at improving the social integration and inclusion of disabled students in higher education.

The null hypothesis (H0) of the study is that there are no significant differences at $(\alpha \leq 0.05)$ in the social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institution according to university variable. The data has been analyzed using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) and Tukey test for comparisons between universities.

The ANOVA test results show that there are significant differences at $(p \leq 0.05)$ in the social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institution according to the university variable. These differences were found

in Services, Facilities, Functional limitations framework, social construction framework, and the total degree. The Tukey test was conducted to determine which universities have significant differences in social integration strategies.

The Tukey test results show that there are significant differences between universities in services, facilities, functional limitations framework, social construction framework, and the total degree. In the services and functional limitations framework, the differences were between Bethlehem and Hebron universities, and in favor of Bethlehem university. In the services, there were differences between Bethlehem university and Arab American university, and in favor of Bethlehem university. There were also differences in the services between Hebron University and Arab American University, and in favor of Arab American university, and between Hebron university and Birzeit university, and in favor of Birzeit university. There were differences in the services between Arab American University and Birzeit University, and in favor of Birzeit University.

In the Facilities, there were differences between Bethlehem University and Arab American University, and in favor of Bethlehem University. There were also differences in the services between Hebron University and Arab American University, and in favor of Hebron University. There were differences in the services between Arab American University and Birzeit University, and in favor of Birzeit University.

In the social construction framework, there were differences between Bethlehem University and Hebron University, and in favor of Bethlehem University. There were also differences in the services between Bethlehem University and Arab American University, and in favor of Bethlehem University. There were differences in the services between Hebron University and Birzeit University, and in favor of Birzeit University.

There were differences in the services between Arab American University and Birzeit University, and in favor of Birzeit University.

In conclusion, the study results show that there are significant differences in the social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions based on the university variable. The results suggest that Bethlehem University has better social integration strategies for people with disabilities compared to other universities. These results can be useful for policymakers and university administrations to improve social integration strategies for people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions. Further research is required to explore the reasons behind the observed differences and identify best practices for social integration strategies for people with disabilities in higher education institutions.

5.2 Conclusion

Different theoretical frameworks for understanding disability and their implications for practice were discussed in this thesis. The first framework, the functional limitations framework, focuses on individual disabling conditions but ignores the environment's role in worsening disability conditions. The second framework, the minority group paradigm, focuses on issues of marginalization and discrimination, but it can create obstacles for people with disabilities to come together and reinforce stereotypical images of them as victims. The third framework, the social construction of disability, emphasizes the social environment and challenges assumptions about disability as an individual experience or medical condition.

The social construction of disability framework challenges definitions of disability that have guided theories and maintained oppressive social structures. This framework

emphasizes the social context in which disability occurs and requires analyses of social structures that push disabilities to the margins of institutions and create handicaps from certain characteristics. This approach challenges apparent oppositions and distinctions between inferiority/superiority and disability/ability and aims to remove all barriers, emotional, social, or physical, to create an environment where all humans, including those with impairments, can truly flourish.

The SPAR model (services, programs, advocacy, research), developed by (Jacoby and Girrell, 1981), offers a framework for examining the basic functions of a student affairs unit from the perspective of students with disabilities. The model emphasizes the need for evaluating services for all students and the importance of advocacy to raise awareness and contribute to institutional change. Two main approaches are further highlighted (Jones, 1996) towards identifying disabled people as a group: a medical or physical understanding and a socio-cultural understanding. The medical approach focuses on impairment and defines disabled people as a group whose bodies do not work, look or act differently, or who cannot do any productive work. The socio-cultural approach views disability as a result of social processes and defines it as a constructed category. The social model emphasizes disability as a relationship between people with disabilities and a discriminatory society, with the ultimate goal of inclusion. The development of a positive and strong disabled identity faces significant obstacles, including societal attitudes and internalized oppression. Socialization makes people with disabilities think of themselves as inferior and internalize the non-disabled world's reaction to them, leading to self-depreciation, a characteristic of the oppressed. However, self-organization of a disabled people's movement prompts the process of identification and establishes disabled people as the actual experts on disability.

Disability arts offer people with disabilities a shared cultural identity, a context to think about issues of common concern, and an opportunity to enhance and develop a disability culture.

The research problem, addressed, emphasizes the lack of clear strategies or plans to incorporate disabled students in Palestinian universities. Inclusion policies are not adopted, and many disabled individuals do not receive basic education, which eliminates their chances of higher education. The research aims to answer questions about existing social inclusion strategies in Palestinian universities, their applicability, and how they compare to international models. The study also seeks to recommend a social inclusion model for Palestinian universities and examine the facilities and services available for disabled students. The research is significant because disabled students have rights, and the government often overlooks the topic. The study can serve as a reference for policymakers to institutionalize a national strategy for social inclusion of disabled students.

In this work, the researcher highlights the challenges faced by people with disabilities in accessing higher education in Palestinian institutions. The findings indicate that there is a clear shortfall in the way higher education institutions deal with people with disabilities, with a lack of clear policies and strategies for this group. Furthermore, there is little evaluation of the policies/strategies. Each institution attempts to meet the needs of people with disabilities according to its own capabilities and ability to bring support, whether in terms of financial, human, or infrastructural resources.

The interviewed experts had different ideas and opinions about the concept of considering people with disabilities in Palestinian and European/international educational institutions. While some experts pointed out that European/international

institutions have clear policies that positively reflect on their performance towards people with disabilities, others pointed out that local institutions are based on personal efforts and do not meet the minimum needs of individuals with disabilities. The experts also pointed out that European/international institution have laws and regulations that ensure the right of people with disabilities to education, which are not applied in Palestinian institutions. Finally, some experts pointed out that there is respect for diversity and differences in European institutions, which is not the case in Palestinian institutions.

In terms of developing a model for integrating people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions, there were several opinions in this regard. Some experts indicated the necessity of adopting a policy for university education and integration in practical life. Others pointed out the need to prepare the infrastructure to accommodate all types of disabilities, and others highlighted the importance of integrating them into education from an early age in the basic education stages, among other opinions. It is essential to consider all these opinions and develop a comprehensive model that addresses the needs of people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions.

The research also sheds light on the experiences of surveyed students with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions. It is clear from their responses that there is a significant difference between institutions in providing facilities for students with disabilities. Bethlehem and Birzeit universities excelled in this regard, while the American and Hebron universities did not meet the minimum requirements for providing facilities for disabled students from their point of view.

There was a variation, between Palestinian higher education institutions, regarding students with disabilities' evaluation of activities designated for them. Bethlehem University and Hebron University excelled in that regard, while the majority of students in the remaining universities included in the study confirmed the non-existence of activities, and if there were any, they were not sufficient. It was found that the majority of Palestinian higher education institutions included in the study provide specialized tools that help students with disabilities (such as machines, Braille, tablets, etc.), except for the students at Hebron University who confirmed that they do not have any specialized tools available for them.

The majority of disabled students in most Palestinian institutions of higher education confirmed that they are not aware of ways in which these institutions can assist them in getting jobs after graduation, except for the students of the American University and some students in Birzeit University who confirmed that this service is not available in their institutions. The majority of disabled students in Palestinian institutions of higher education confirmed that their evaluation of the availability of equal opportunities to join a specific specialization is good. However, there are still some who face challenges in accessing these opportunities.

The research found that disabilities did not hinder students from benefiting from services and facilities, and they can overcome any barriers if they exist. However, Hebron University students who were included in the study confirmed the lack of services and facilities specifically for them. All the disabled students included in the study indicated their complete satisfaction if Palestinian higher education institutions met all their needs, which would decrease their feeling of alienation and make it easy for them to integrate into these institutions.

In light of the findings from the experts and the students with disabilities, it is clear that there is a significant shortfall in higher education institutions in dealing with people with disabilities. It is evident that there is a lack of clear policies and strategies for this group, and little evaluation of the existing policies/strategies. It is also found that there is a lack of infrastructure and resources in Palestinian institutions to accommodate people with disabilities. Each institution attempts to meet their needs, according to its own capabilities and ability to bring support for them, whether in terms of financial, human, or infrastructural resources. This approach may not be sufficient to meet the diverse needs of people with disabilities, and therefore, a more coordinated effort is needed to ensure that all institutions are meeting the minimum requirements for providing facilities for students with disabilities.

From the students with disabilities' perspective, it is evident that there is a significant difference between Palestinian higher education institutions in providing facilities for students with disabilities. While Bethlehem and Birzeit universities excelled in this regard, Hebron University and the American University did not meet the minimum requirements for providing facilities for students with disabilities, from their point of view. It is essential to recognize these shortcomings and take active steps to address them.

It is also noteworthy that the majority of Palestinian higher education students with disabilities benefit from the financial aid provided by all institutions, as most of these aids were beneficial in meeting the financial needs of students with disabilities during their studies. It is essential to continue providing such financial aid to support students with disabilities in their education.

Flexible teaching methods are available in Palestinian higher education institutions, and their satisfaction with their availability was generally good. This is a positive finding, as it indicates that institutions are taking active steps to provide a more inclusive learning environment for students with disabilities.

However, there is still a variation, between Palestinian higher education institutions, regarding students with disabilities' evaluation of activities designated for them. This finding highlights the need for institutions to provide more inclusive and diverse extracurricular activities that cater to the needs of all students, including those with disabilities.

It is also important to note that the majority of disabled students in most Palestinian institutions of higher education confirmed that they are not aware of ways in which these institutions can assist them in getting jobs after graduation, except for the students of the American University and some students at Birzeit University, who confirmed that this service is not available in their institutions.

Additionally, it is crucial to raise awareness and provide training for university staff, including professors, administrators, and other personnel, to ensure they have the knowledge and skills necessary to provide appropriate support to students with disabilities. This support can include providing academic accommodations, ensuring accessibility of physical spaces and digital materials, and promoting an inclusive environment. Such efforts can help to eliminate barriers and create a more inclusive culture within higher education institutions.

In conclusion, this study has shed light on the experiences of students with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions and highlighted the challenges they face in accessing education and participating fully in university life. The findings

of this study suggest that there is a clear shortfall in dealing with people with disabilities in higher education institutions, including a lack of clear policies and strategies, little evaluation of existing policies, and insufficient resources to support students with disabilities.

However, there are also promising practices that could be replicated across higher education institutions in Palestine, such as providing financial aid, flexible teaching methods, and specialized tools to help students with disabilities. It is essential to build on these positive examples and work towards developing a comprehensive and inclusive model for integrating people with disabilities in Palestinian higher education institutions.

Finally, social inclusion is not only a goal but also a process that requires the active participation of all members of society, including people with disabilities. Efforts to promote social inclusion should be ongoing and address not only the structural and systemic barriers but also the attitudes and beliefs that perpetuate social exclusion. By taking a holistic approach to social inclusion, we can create a more equitable and just society for all.

5.3 Recommendations

The research study yields the following recommendations, if the sector of disabled students at higher education is to be socially integrated and given the utmost priority it deserves.

5.3.1 Recommendations Related to the First Main Result

There are clear shortcomings on the part of higher education institutions regarding policies and strategies for integrating people with special needs and each institutions puts its own efforts in this regard. Hence, it is recommended that there is one higher education policy for all Palestinian universities that meets their needs without any discrimination and above all, implementable and this would require serious cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the universities.

5.3.2 Recommendations Related to the Second Main Result

There are significant differences in the policies of integrating people with disabilities in Palestinian institutions of higher education compared to their European/ international counterparts. Hence, it is recommended that Palestinian institutions benefit and learn from international models but there are also local models to benefit from and build upon such as the Bethlehem University model.

5.3.3 Recommendations Related to the Third Main Result

Universities should put in more efforts in providing a more accessible physical environment and services on campus. Hence, it is recommended that there are serious steps by the universities to develop the current physical environment with all equipment and materials necessary to implement the inclusion. Moreover, it is recommended to work closely towards meeting the students with disabilities' needs through providing the required services and facilities contributes greatly to a positive university environment that ultimately leads to a positive university experience.

5.3.4 Recommendations Related to the Fourth Main Result

Financial assistance of the disabled is essential in any university. This is indeed the least any university can do to support them and ensure their full and active participation in university life. Hence, it is recommended that universities submit proposals related to disability and social inclusion to donors and parties that are potentially willing to assist them. Moreover, the government must provide funds for students with disabilities as well.

5.3.5 Recommendation Relate to the Fifth Main Result

The availability of flexible teaching methods and cooperation by the instructors in addition to specialized tools and programs is a vital part of inclusion. In fact, it is recommended that there are special programs for these students under direct supervision of the deanships of student affairs. For the sake of implanting these programs, it is also recommended that there is establishment of specialized units / inclusion centers that fulfill their needs, in terms of financial aid, services, activities and hiring qualified staff to run these units / centers. In fact, capacity building for university staff must be a priority. Moreover, these units/centers must take into consideration the academic needs, requirements and specialized tools to meet their basic needs, such as course syllabuses, special labs, special libraries, etc. In addition, amongst the flexible teaching methods and specialized tools would be the allocation of virtual mobility for students with disabilities, to facilitate their experiences. The inclusion centers' roles should extend beyond the university and assist them in finding jobs after graduation. It is recommended to do so through linking the Graduate Tracking System with the existing Labor Market Information System (LMIS) implemented by the Ministry of Labor.

5.3.6 Recommendations Related to the Sixth Main Result

All segments of society should take part in changing any negative attitudes and discrimination towards this segment of society. They must be able to experience university life equally and justly, like all other students without any obstacles. Hence, awareness must be raised and spread about disability issues and how to respond appropriately to the needs of those challenged students at Palestinian higher education institutions, especially among university staff and the local community. This also includes issuing periodic annual reports offered to public and educational institutions in this regard. They shall inform about the main findings and statistics related to disability and inclusion. Moreover, for the sake of omitting discrimination and negative attitudes, university policies must address omitting all forms discrimination, prejudice, and stigmatization against them, so as to facilitate their university experience and hence guarantees their basic rights to equal education.

5.4 Suggested Studies

Regarding future work, this research should be extended to cover a wider sample of experts and students and other Palestinian Universities, to see where they stand in integrating the disabled and make comparisons. Future research could study social inclusion in the job market in the different sectors after graduation, and accordingly make recommendations to change their conditions in this matter as well.

References

Abberly, P. (1991). Handicapped by numbers: a critique of the OPCS disability surveys Occasional Papers in Sociology No. 9. *Department of Economics and Social Science, Bristol Polytechnic*.

Abu 'Ida, Yasmin A. H. (2017). The degree of satisfaction of university students with disabilities about the adaptations and services provided to them in Palestinian universities. Al-Quds University, Abu Dies, Palestine.

Abu Shkheidem, Sahar and Ishtia, Heba Abdel Raouf (2020). The reality of Environmental Facilities at An –Najah National University from the point of view of students with disabilities. *Arab Journal for scientific publishing issue* 21-July 2020.

Ahmad, S., Islam, M., Zada, M., Khattak, A., Ullah, R., Han, H. & Araya-Castillo, L. (2022). The Influence of Decision Making on Social Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities: A Case Study of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, *19*(2), 858.

Albadawi, B. (2022). Emphasize inclusive education and vocational training for disability in Palestine. *Journal of Positive Psychology and Wellbeing*, *6*(1), 1138-1156.

Al-Qasem, H. H. (2019). The Reality of the Services Provided by the Administrations of Palestine Technical University Kadoori and Al-Quds Open University for Students with Disabilities from Their Perspectives. *World Journal of Education*, *9*(5), 70-82.

Al Jubeh, C. K. (2017). Disability Inclusive Development Toolkit DID-CRPD influencing everything we do.

Al-Mekdad, Mustafa Abdullah and Al-Qatawneh, Sana Abdullah (2018). The reality of the services provided by the administration of Muta University to students with disabilities from their point of view. Jn. of Al-Quds Open University for Educational and Psychological Research and Studies, 7(21), 1-15.

Al-Rimawi, A. (2021). Necessary Adaptations for Students with Disabilities in Palestinian Universities. *Journal of Positive School Psychology*, 5(2), 148-165.

Aneas, M. A., & Sandín, M. P. (2009). Intercultural and cross-cultural communication research: Some reflections about culture and qualitative methods. In *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research* (Vol. 10, No. 1).

Atkinson, D. R., & Hackett, G. (1995). *Counseling diverse populations*. Brown & Benchmark.

Becker, G., & Arnold, R. (1986). Stigma as a social and cultural construct. *The dilemma of difference: A multidisciplinary view of stigma*, 39-57.

Bogart, K. R., Bonnett, A. K., Logan, S. W., & Kallem, C. (2022). Intervening on disability attitudes through disability models and contact in psychology education. *Scholarship of Teaching and Learning in Psychology*, *8*(1), 15.

Bynoe, I., Oliver, M., & Barnes, C. (1991). *Equal rights for disabled people*. The Institute.

Camilleri-Cassar, F. (2014). Education strategies for social inclusion or marginalising the marginalised?. *Journal of Youth Studies*, *17*(2), 252-268.

Chan, F., Gelman, J. S., Ditchman, N., Kim, J. H., & Chiu, C. Y. (2009). The World Health Organization ICF model as a conceptual framework of disability.

Cinotti, A., & Giulia, R. (2018). Raising-awareness and empowerment within the Particip-Action project. The issue of disability in Palestine.

Cochran, W. G. (1977). *Sampling Techniques: 3d Ed*. Wiley.

Cole, M. (Ed.). (2022). Education, equality and human rights: issues of gender,'race', sexuality, disability and social class. Taylor & Francis.

Elhadi, A. (2021). Inclusion of Students with Disabilities in Egypt: Challenges and Recommendations. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 8(2), 173-178.

Fine, M., & Asch, A. (1988). Disability beyond stigma: Social interaction, discrimination, and activism. *Journal of social issues*, *44*(1), 3-21.

Gergen, K. J. (1985). Social constructionist inquiry: Context and implications. *The social construction of the person*, 3-18.

Giddens, A. (1991). *Modernity and self-identity: Self and society in the late modern age*. Stanford university press.

Hahn, H. (1988). The politics of physical differences: Disability and discrimination. *Journal of social issues*, *44*(1), 39-47.

Hahn, H. (1991). Theories and values: Ethics and contrasting perspectives on disability. *The psychological and social impact of disability*, 18-22.

Harris, R., Miske, S., & Attig, G. (2004). Embracing Diversity: Toolkit for Creating Inclusive Learning-Friendly Environments. *UNESCO Bangkok*.

Hayes, A., Gray, M., & Edwards, B. (2008). *Social inclusion: Origins, concepts and key themes*. Canberra: Social Inclusion Unit, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Hendriks, A. (2007). UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with

Disabilities. *European Journal of Health Law*, *14*(3), 273-298.

Hunt, P. (Ed.). (1966). *Stigma: The experience of disability*. G. Chapman.

Issa, A. A., Yunusa, M., & Ali-Garga, F. Z. (2016). The Meaning and Theories of

Intercultural Communication.

Jacoby, B. (1993). Service delivery for a changing student constituency. *The handbook

of student affairs administration*, 468-480.

Jacoby, B., & Girrell, K. W. (1981). A model for improving services and programs for

commuter students. *NASPA Journal*, *18*(3), 36-41.

Jdaitawi, M. T., & Kan'an, A. F. (2022). A Decade of Research on the Effectiveness of

Augmented Reality on Students with Special Disability in Higher

Education. *Contemporary Educational Technology*, *14*(1).

Jones, S. R. (1996). Toward inclusive theory: Disability as social construction. *NASPA

journal*, *33*(4), 347-354.

Kabeer, N. (2006). Poverty, social exclusion and the MDGs: The challenge of 'durable

inequalities' in the Asian context.

Khayran, A. (2019). Teachers Who Face the Challenges of Educational Integration in

Palestine.

Lauring, Jakob (2011). "Intercultural Organizational Communication: The Social

Organizing of Interaction in International Encounters". Journal of Business

Communication. **48** (3): 231–55.

Lees, S. (Ed.). (1992). *Disability Arts and Culture Papers: Seminar: Transcripts*. Shape

Publications.

Logan, S. W., & Bogart, K. R. (2022). The effect of an intervention on college students' attitudes towards people with disabilities and self-directed mobility. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *69*(3), 853-867.

Lombana, J. H. (1989). Counseling persons with disabilities: Summary and projections. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, *68*(2), 177-179.

Lyons, G., & Arthur-Kelly, M. (2014). UNESCO inclusion policy and the education of school students with profound intellectual and multiple disabilities: Where to now?. *Creative Education*, *2014*.

MacKenzie, A., Bower, C., & Owaineh, M. (2020). Barriers to Effective, Equitable and Quality Education: A Rights-based, Participatory Research Assessment of Inclusion of Children with Disabilities in Palestine. *The International Journal of Children's Rights*, *28*(4), 805-832.

Márquez, C., and Melero-Aguilar, N. (2022). What are their thoughts about inclusion? Beliefs of faculty members about inclusive education. Higher Education, 83(4), 829-844.

Melucci, A. (1989). Nomads of the Present (London: Hutchinson Radius). *Melucci Nomads of the Present 1989*.

Mitra, S., & Yap, J. (2021). The Disability Data Report. *Mitra, S. and Yap, J.(2021). The Disability Data Report. Disability Data Initiative. Fordham Research Consortium on Disability: New York*.

Moriña, A. (2017). Inclusive education in higher education: Challenges and opportunities. European Journal of Special Needs Education, 32(1), 3-17.

Morris, J. (1991). *Pride against prejudice: Transforming attitudes to disability*. New Society.

Morrison, E., & Finkelstein, V. (1992). Culture as struggle: access to power. *Disability Arts and Culture Papers, London: Shape.(available at http://www. leeds. ac. uk/disability- studies/archiveuk/index.)*.

Nieminen, J. H. (2022). Assessment for Inclusion: rethinking inclusive assessment in higher education. *Teaching in Higher Education*, 1-19.

Nietzsche, F. (1990) Beyond Good and Evil (trans. RJ Hollingdale).

Opdal, L. R., Wormnæs, S., & Habayeb, A. (2001). Teachers' opinions about inclusion: A pilot study in a Palestinian context. *International Journal of Disability, Development and Education*, *48*(2), 143-162.

PCBS.2021. *Press release on the occasion of the International Day of Persons with Disabilities, 03/12/2021* [press release]. https://www.pcbs.gov.ps/portals/_pcbs/PressRelease/Press_En_2-12-2021-dis-en.pdf

Peruzzo, F. (2022). The Model Of Becoming Aware: disabled subjectivities, policy enactment and new exclusions in higher education. *Journal of Education Policy*, *37*(3), 482-504.

Plummer, K. (1995). *Telling sexual stories: Power, change, and social worlds*. Psychology Press.

Ramahi, J., Fteiha, A., & Khalili, O. (2021). Disabled students at the Palestinian Universities: Birzeit University as a model. *Education in the knowledge society: EKS*.

Rimmerman, A. (2013). Social inclusion of people with disabilities: National and
      international perspectives.

Rollins, J. (1991). Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of
      empowerment.

Saint-Jacques, Bernard. (2011). "Intercultural Communication in a Globalized World."
      In Intercultural Communication: A Reader, edited by Larry A. Samovar,
      Richard E. Porter, and Edwin R. McDaniel, 13 edition, 45-53. Boston, Mass:
      Cengage Learning.

Salmi, J., & D'Addio, A. (2021). Policies for achieving inclusion in higher
      education. Policy Reviews in Higher Education, 5(1), 47-72.

Scheer, J. (1994). Culture and disability: An anthropological point of view.

Shakespeare, T. (1996). Disability, identity and difference. *Exploring the divide*,
      .94 -113

Shine, D., & Stefanou, C. (2022). Creating the Inclusive Higher Education Classroom for
      Students with Disabilities: The Role of Attitude and Confidence Among
      University Faculty. *International Journal of Teaching and Learning in Higher*
      Education, *33*(2), 216-224.

Simadi, F.A., and Alqaryouti, I.A. (2017). Students with disabilities' satisfaction with
      their universities' services. International Journal of Human Rights in
      Healthcare. Doc: 10.1108/IJHRH-11-2016-0021.

Sontag, S. (1991). Illness as metaphor: AIDS and its metaphors London. *UK: Penguin*
      Books.

Snounu, Y. (2019). Disability and Higher Education in Palestine. *Journal of Culture and*
      Values in Education, *2*(3), 61-78.

Srivastava, A., Agarwal, S., & Ganapathy, M. (2022). Inclusive higher education in cross-   cultural settings. *International Journal of Educational Management*, *36*(4), 357-363.

Trickett, E. J., Watts, R. J., & Birman, D. (1994). Toward an overarching framework for diversity.

United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2016). World Population Prospects 2016: Data Sources.

United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), Paris (France). (2005). *Guidelines for inclusion: Ensuring access to education for all*. ERIC Clearinghouse.

UNESCO, P. (2009). Policy guidelines on inclusion in education. Paris (Fr).

Weeks, J. (1990). The value of difference, identity (community, culture, difference). Rutherford, J.(Edt).

World Bank. (2013). *Inclusion matters: The foundation for shared prosperity*. The World Bank.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Interview Questions for Experts

الجامعة العربية الأمريكية
ARAB AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

<u>أسئلة مقابلات الخبراء في الإعاقة</u>

<u>استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي</u>

تحية طيبة وبعد،

يقوم الباحث رمزي عطا باجراء دراسة لتشخيص استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي لذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية.

ولغرض انجاز رسالة الماجستير ـ تحت اشراف د. نضال الجيوسي- أرجو من حضرتكم التكرم بتخصيص جزء من وقتكم في الاجابة على الأسئلة أدناه بشكل موضوعي، مع العلم أن المعلومات التي ستقومون بتعبئتها ستبقى سرية وتستخدم فقط لأغراض البحث العلمي. يُذكر أن ذكر الاسم هو اختياري.

مع الاحترام،

الجزء الأول والثاني

استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي الحالية للطلبة ذوي الإعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية

مدى قابلية تطبيق سياسات / استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي.

السؤال	الجواب
1- كيف يتم وضع سياسات / استراتيجيات واضحة للتعامل مع الطلبة ذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي؟	
2- كيف يتم تقييم السياسات/الاستراتيجيات ان وجدت لتكون قابلة للتنفيذ ضمن خطط مجدَدة؟	
3- ما أهمية وجود وحدة متخصصة للتعامل مع ذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي؟	
4- كيف يتم تقييم سياسات/استراتيجيات ذوي الاعاقة لتعطي نتائج ملموسة على أرض الواقع؟	
5- كيف توفر مؤسسات التعليم العالي موارد مالية لتنفيذ الأنشطة والسياسات/الاستراتيجيات بما يستجيب لاحتياجات ذوي الاعاقة؟	
6- ماذا توفر مؤسسات التعليم العالي من موارد بشرية وبنية تحتية لتنفيذ الأنشطة والسياسات/ الاستراتيجيات بما يستجيب لاحتياجات ذوي الاعاقة؟	

الجزء الثالث
استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية مقارنة بالمؤسسات الأوروبية.

1- هل لديك فكره عن المؤسسات التعليمية الأوروبية؟ **ملاحظة:** اذا كان الجواب "نعم" يمكن الإنتقال إلى السؤالين الثاني والثالث.	
2- كيف ترى الاختلاف بين مفهوم مراعاة ذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية بالمقارنة مع السياسات المعمول بها في المؤسسات التعليمية الأوروبية؟	
3- ما هي أوجه الاختلاف والتشابه؟	

الجزء الرابع
نموذج موصى به للدمج الاجتماعي ليتم تطبيقه في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية.

	1- ما هو اقتراحك لوضع نموذج لدمج ذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية؟

الجزء الخامس ـ متفرقات

1- يوجد تحديات رئيسية تواجه ذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي.

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة

2- يجب أن يكون هناك مسؤول عن المساهمة في تغيير سلوك ووجهات النظر السلبية تجاه ذوي الاعاقة.

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة

3- يوجد برامج مدروسة لدمجهم وتفاعلهم في المجتمع الجامعي.

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة

4- هنالك دور للجامعات في تغيير الصور النمطية حول ذوي الاعافة بين الطلبة والاساتذة.

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة

5- هنالك دور للطلبة في تغيير الصور النمطية حول ذوي الاعاقة بين الطلبة أنفسهم والاساتذة.

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة

6- لمصطلح "ذوي الاعاقة" أثر في تقليل ذوي الاعاقة من قيمتهم الذاتية وثقتهم بنفسهم.

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة

7- سيكون هناك رضى من طرف ذوي الاعافة في حال تم تلبية جميع احتياجاتهم في مؤسسة التعليم الحامعي.

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Students with Disabilities

<div dir="rtl">

أسئلة مقابلات ذوي الإعاقة

استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي

تحية طيبة وبعد،

يقوم الباحث رمزي عطا باجراء دراسة لتشخيص استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي لذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية.

ولغرض انجاز رسالة الماجستير ـ تحت اشراف د. نضال الجيوسي- أرجو من حضرتكم التكرم بتخصيص جزء من وقتكم في الاجابة على هذه الأسئلة بشكل موضوعي، مع العلم أن المعلومات التي ستقومون بتعبئتها ستبقى سرية وتستخدم فقط لأغراض البحث العلمي. يُذكر أن ذكر الاسم هو اختياري.

مع الاحترام،

</div>

الجواب	السؤال
	تجارب الطلبة ذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسة التعليم العالي / الجامعة
	الجزء الأول **التسهيلات المقدمة لذوي الإعاقة**
	1- **كيف تلبي البيئة المادية (كالمصاعد والمباني والمنحدرات) إحتياجاتك بالتنقل من مكان لآخر؟**
	2- **ماذا تستفيد من المساعدات المالية التي توفرها مؤسسة التعليم العالي؟**
	3- **ما مدى توفر طرق تدريس مرنة في مؤسستك؟**
	4- **كيف تقيم أداء قسم التسجيل في آلية التعامل مع ذوي الإعاقة أسوة بالطلبة العاديين؟**
	الجزء الثاني **الخدمات المقدمة لذوي الإعاقة**
	5- **ما تقييمك حول توفر خدمات نقل مؤمنة داخل وخارج الحرم الجامعي؟**
	6- **كيف تقيم أنشطة محددة ومخصصة لذوي الإعاقة؟**

	7- ماذا توفر مؤسسة التعليم العالي من أدوات متخصصة تلبي احتياجات ذوي الإعاقة (لغة اشارة، بريل، الات)؟
	8- كيف تساعد المؤسسة في الحصول على وظيفة بعد التخرج؟
الجزء الثالث إطار القيودالوظيفية لذوي الإعاقة	
	9- كيف تقيم توفر فرصة متكافئة مثل الطلبة الاخرين للالتحاق ببرنامج / تخصص معين؟
	10- كيف تشعر بأنك مختلف كأحد ذوي الآعاقة عن الأخرين في الجامعة؟
	11- كيف تعتقد ان اعاقتك تشكل عائقا أمام الاستفادة من الخدمات والتسهيلات؟
	12- أذا لبّت الجامعة جميع احتياجاتك من حيث الخدمات والتسهيلات والبنية التحتية، فكيف سيكون شعورك بأنك متساو مع الاخرين ولا تختلف عنهم؟
الجزء الرابع إطار نموذج مجموعة الآقليات لذوي الإعاقة	
	13- كيف تقيم أنك قد تشعر بتهميشك داخل الحرم الجامعي؟
	14- كيف ساهمت البيئة الجامعية في تجربة تعليمية ربما كانت سيئة بالنسبة لك ؟

	15- ما شعورك بالنسبة للتمييز نحوك في المعاملة من قبل الطلبة او الاساتذة؟
	16- ما مدى تفاعلك إذا ما تم اشراكك في الحياة والبيئة الجامعية؟
الجزء الخامس إطار البناء الإجتماعي لذوي الإعاقة	
	17- ما مستوى الرضى لديك بالنسبة لمصطلح "ذوي الاعاقة"؟
	18- من المسؤول عن تغيير وجهات نظر الناس السلبية وسلوكهم السلبي تجاه ذوى الاعاقة ؟
	19- كيف تقيم قوة ايصال صوتك للجامعة ضمن مجموعة للحصول على كافة حقوقك ؟
	20- ما تقييمك لسلوك المجتمع الجامعي تجاهك لكونك مختلفا عن الاخرين ؟

Appendix C

Questionnaire for Students with Disabilities

إستبيان

استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي

تحية طيبة وبعد،

يقوم الباحث رمزي عطا باجراء دراسة لتشخيص استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي لذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية .

ولغرض انجاز رسالة الماجستير ـ تحت اشراف د. نضال الجيوسي- أرجو من حضرتكم التكرم بتخصيص جزء من وقتكم في تعبئة هذه الاستبانة بشكل موضوعي، مع العلم أن المعلومات التي ستقومون بتعبئتها ستبقى سرية وتستخدم فقط لأغراض البحث العلمي. يُذكر أن ذكر الاسم هو اختياري.

مع الاحترام،

ملاحظة: ضع علامة ✓ مرة واحدة في الاجابة على كل سؤال

أعارض بشدة	لا أوافق	حيادي	أوافق	اوافق بشدة	السؤال
					الجزء الآول **الخدمات المقدمة لذوي الإعاقة**
					1- توفر المؤسسة مركز / مكتب موارد مخصص لاحتياجات طلبة ذوي الإعاقة ومتابعتهم.
					2- تستجيب المؤسسة لاحتياجات الطلبة ذوي الاعاقة من خلال توفير تقنيات تكنولوجية .
					3- تقوم المؤسسة بمتابعة الخريجين ذوي الاعاقة من خلال توفير دعم وظيفي بعد التخرج.
					4- تقدم المؤسسة الخدمات اللوجستية أثناء الامتحانات.
					5- مكتبة المؤسسة تضم كتب موائمة لاستخدام ذوي الاعاقة خاصة ذوي الاعاقة البصرية (البريل).
					6- توفر المؤسسة خدمات النقل في كافة مرافق وخارج الحرم الجامعي
					7- تقوم المؤسسة باستيعاب واشراك فئات ذوي الاعاقة بالمجال الرياضي وتوفر الادوات اللازمة بحسب الاعاقة.
					8- توفر الجامعة مترجم لغة اشارة لذوي الاعاقة السمعية.
					9- توفر المؤسسة الخدمات الصحية المناسبة للطلبة ذوي الاعاقة.
					الجزء الثاني **التسهيلات المقدمة لذوي الإعاقة**
					10- تشجع المؤسسة طرق التدريس المرنة بما يستجيب لاحتياجات ذوي الاعاقة.
					11- تتيح المؤسسة وقتًا إضافيًا لإكمال الاختبارات.
					12- العاملون في قسم التسجيل لديهم معرفة حول آلية التعامل مع ذوي الاعاقة وتقديم الخدمات لهم أسوة بالطلبة العاديين.
					13- المحاضرون بالمؤسسة لديهم خبرة في التعامل مع كافة فئات ذوي الاعاقة.
					14- تلبي المؤسسة احتياجات ذوي الاعاقة من حيث البيئة المادية (المصاعد ، المنحدرات ، المباني ، خدمات الطعام ، إلخ) ويمكن الوصول إليها.
					15- . توجد مساعدات مالية / منح مالية للطلبة ذوي الاعاقة من قبل المؤسسة.
					16- كافة الغرف الصفية موائمة لاحتياجات ذوي الاعاقة؟
					17- كافة الممرات والمرافق الصحية موائمة لاحتياجات لذوي الاعاقة.
					18- توفر المؤسسة مواقف سيارات خاصة للطلبة ذوي الاعاقة داخل الحرم الجامعي.

تجارب الطلبة ذوي الاعاقة في مؤسسة التعليم العالي / الجامعة

الجزء الثالث **إطار القيود الوظيفية لذوي الإعاقة**				
				19- تشعر بأنك مختلف عن الطلبة الاخرين من حيث الاستفادة من الخدمات / التسهيلات أسوة بباقي الطلبة
				20- تشكل اعاقتك عائقا أمام الاستفادة من الخدمات والتسهيلات التي تعدها المؤسسة.
				21- تشعر بأنك مختلف عن باقي الطلبة وحتى إذا لبّت الجامعة جميع احتياجاتك من حيث الخدمات والتسهيلات والبنية التحتية.
				22- تتشعر بأن إعاقتك تجعلك غير متفاعل بالإشتراك في الفعاليات الرياضية والموسيقية التي توفرها المؤسسة.
الجزء الرابع **إطار نموذج مجموعة الأقليات لذوي الإعاقة**				
				23- تشعر بأنك مهمش داخل الحرم الجامعي.
				24- قد تسييء البيئة الجامعية إلى تجربتك التعلمية.
				25- تشعر بتمييز في المعاملة من قبل الطلبة او الاساتذة؟
				26- يتم اشراكك في الحياة والبيئة الجامعية وتشعر بأنك متفاعل.
الجزء الخامس **إطار البناء الإجتماعي لذوي الإعاقة**				
				27- تعتقد بأن ايصال صوتك للجامعة للحصول على كافة حقوقك سيكون أقوى اذا كنت ضمن مجموعة.
				28- تشعر برضى عن مصطلح"ذوي الاعاقة"؟
				29- تغيير وجهات نظر الناس السلبية وسلوكهم السلبي تجاه ذوى الاعاقة هي من مسؤولية الجامعة.
				30- سلوك المجتمع الجامعي(طلبة أو أساتذة) تجاهك يُشعرك بأنك مختلف عن الآخرين في الجامعة.

Appendix D

Characteristics of Interviewed Disabled Students

1- Characteristics of Disabled Students at Birzeit University

Name	Specialization	Year	Disability Type	Date of Interview
1- Amani Bader	English Literature / Translation	Two	Visual	5/1/2023
2- Zainab Shrayde	Computer Engineering	Four	Physical	7/3/2023
3-Malek Rasem	Public Management	Two	Physical	4/3/2023
4- Rama Bayatne	Law	Three	Visual	15/1/2023
5- Bayan Asfour	Computer Science	Four	Hearing	10/3/2023

2- Characteristics of Disabled Students at Hebron University

Name	Specialization	Year	Disability Type	Date of Interview
1- Dunya Taha	Arabic Language and Literature	Masters	Visual	1/3/2023
2- Dina Abdalla	English Language and Literature	Graduated in 2020	Visual	12/3/2023

3- Characteristics of Disabled Students at Arab American University – Jenin

Name	Specialization	Year	Disability	Date of Interview
1- Mohammad Hamudeh	English Language and Literature / Translation	One	Visual	25/2/2023
2- Thaer Warasneh	Law	Graduated in 2019	Visual	21/1/2023
3- Anas Takruri	Accounting	Four	Physical	9/2/2023

4- Characteristics of Disabled Students at Bethlehem University

Name	Specialization	Year	Disability	Date of Interview
1- Rajeh Rabayaa	Chemistry	One	Hearing	14/3/2023
2- Rawan Qasis	Business Administration	One	Hearing	17/2/2023
3- Jeries Handal	Sociology	Two	Visual	12/2/2023
4- Sahar Jarayseh	English Language and Literature	Two	Visual	15/3/2023
5- Mahmoud Hamad	English Language and Literature	One	Visual	29/1/2023
6- Aws Afaneh	Laboratories	One	Physical	3/3/2023
7- Ramez Jaradat	Sociology	Three	Visual	18/1/2023
8- Nareen Salah	Chemistry	Four	Physical	19/2/2023
9- Fayez Farran	Business Administration	Two	Physical	9/3/2023
10- Rama Malek	Laboratories	Two	Hearing	27/2/2023

Appendix E

Characteristics of Interviewed Experts

Name	Occupation	Date of Interview
1- Khalil Alawne	Head of the Special Education Institutions Department / Ministry of Education.	8/1/2023
2- Nizar Basalat	Head of the Planning and Policy Making Unit - Supreme Council for Youth and Sports.	10/1/2023
3- Mahmud Atshan	Arabic Language and Literature Instructor / Birzeit University	13/1/2023
4- Mahmoud Amarneh	Assigned Head of Counseling and Orientation Department / Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research.	6/2/2023
5- Azim Assaf	English Language and Literature Instructor / Birzeit University	10/2/2023
6- Hind Zahde	Head of Disabled Resource Center / Bethlehem University.	12/2/2023
7- Suheir Najjar	– Head of Disabilities Office / Birzeit University	17/2/2023
8- Kareemeh Shweiki	Head of Blind Charitable School – Hebron	30/1/2023
9- Rima Canawati	Freelance Disability and Inclusive Development Consultant	27/1/2023
10- Rasha Saleh	Project coordinator at EduAid	25/1/2023
11- Shatha Abu Srour	Disability and Inclusion activist	22/1/2023
12- Bihan Qaimari	Special education professor and expert in disabilities	19/2/2023
13- Awad Abayat	Bethlehem Disability Union President	22/2/2023
14- Osaid Alem	Disability activist and expert	23/2/2023
15- Ziad Amro	Disability Consultant	16/2/2023
16- Hamza Naser	Disability Union President - Ramallah	20/2/2023
17- Mohammad Qaisi	Qader for Community Development	4/2/2023

18- Asmahan Asfour	Deaf Language Translator and Disability expert	6/2/2023
19- Salam Salem	Disability Expert	9/2/2023
20- Taim Amer	Disability Expert	18/2/2023

ملخص

تبحث هذه الأطروحة في الأطر المختلفة لفهم الإعاقة وآثارها على الممارسة. يركز إطار القيود الوظيفية على الإعاقات الفردية ولكنه يتجاهل دور البيئة في تدهور الظروف. كما يركز نموذج مجموعة الأقليات على التهميش والتمييز ولكنه يمكن أن يعزز الصور النمطية للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة كضحايا. يتحدى البناء الاجتماعي للإعاقة الافتراضات حول الإعاقة كتجربة فردية ويؤكد على البيئة الاجتماعية. يهدف هذا النهج إلى إزالة جميع الحواجز لخلق بيئة شاملة للجميع.

تكمن مشكلة البحث في عدم وجود استراتيجيات أو خطط واضحة لتعزيز الشمولية للطلبة ذوي الإعاقة في الجامعات الفلسطينية. تسعى الدراسة إلى معالجة الثغرات الموجودة في استراتيجيات الدمج الاجتماعي الحالية المستخدمة في الجامعات الفلسطينية وجدواها مقارنة بالنماذج الأوروبية / الدولية. وتتبين أهمية هذا البحث في أنه يسلط الضوء على الحقوق الأساسية للطالب من ذوي الإعاقة التي غالبًا ما تتجاهلها الحكومة.

قام الباحث ببناء استبانة وزعت على سبعة وتسعين طالبًا من ذوي الإعاقة، واستخدم برنامج SPSS لتحليل جميع النتائج. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، تم إجراء مقابلات مباشرة مع عشرين طالبًا من ذوي الإعاقة وعشرين خبيرًا في مجال الإعاقة وتم استخدام التحليل الموضوعي لتحليل جميع النتائج. ركز الباحث على أربع جامعات رئيسية تغطي المواقع الجغرافية الرئيسية وهي الخليل وبيت لحم وبيرزيت والجامعة العربية الأمريكية ــ جنين.

كشفت نتائج تحليل الخبراء عن عدم وجود سياسات واستراتيجيات واضحة للأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية، مع تفاوت القدرات بين المؤسسات لدعمهم. إن تطوير نموذج شامل يلبي احتياجات الأشخاص ذوي الإعاقة في مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية يعد أمرًا ضروريًا، بما في ذلك سياسات التعليم الجامعي، وإعداد البنية التحتية، والدمج منذ سن مبكرة في التعليم الأساسي. علاوة على ذلك، ومن خلال المقابلات مع الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة، تبين أن هناك فرق كبير بين مؤسسات التعليم العالي الفلسطينية في توفير التسهيلات للطلبة ذوي الإعاقة. بالرغم من ذلك، هناك متوسط عام للرضا من قبل الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة. تكشف نتائج تحليل الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة أيضًا أن الغالبية منهم يتلقون مساعدات مالية تفيدهم في تلبية احتياجاتهم المالية. في حين أن طرق التدريس المرنة متاحة بشكل عام ويتم تلقيها بشكل إيجابي، فإن تقييم الأنشطة المخصصة للطلبة ذوي الإعاقة يختلف بين المؤسسات. لا يعرف معظم الطلبة ذوي

الإعاقة الطرق التي يمكن للمؤسسات من خلالها مساعدتهم في الحصول على وظائف بعد التخرج. يجب أن تعالج الجهود المبذولة لتعزيز الدمج الاجتماعي والحواجز الهيكلية والنظامية وكذلك المواقف والمعتقدات التي تديم الاستبعاد الاجتماعي.

وأخيرًا، تؤكد الدراسة على عدم وجود سياسات واستراتيجيات وتقييمات واضحة لهذه الفئة. تحاول كل مؤسسة تلبية احتياجاتها حسب إمكانياتها وقدرتها على تقديم الدعم لها. من الضروري التعرف على أوجه القصور هذه واتخاذ خطوات فعالة لمعالجتها، حيث يمكن أن يؤدي رضا الطلبة ذوي الإعاقة إلى دمج أفضل في المؤسسات. يمكن أن يساعد التدريب ورفع مستوى الوعي لموظفي الجامعة في إزالة الحواجز وخلق ثقافة شاملة داخل مؤسسات التعليم العالي.