

# **Cultural Identity and Its Relationship with Some Psychological Variables As Perceived by Palestinian University Students**

This study aimed at identifying the degree and depth of cultural identity and its relationship with both citizenry and psychological firmness as well as the meaning of life and psychological anxiety. To this end, the study identified the most important factors shaping the Palestinian cultural identity. Furthermore, the study sought to find out if there were differences among the variables in question which may be attributed to variables of specialization, university level, sex and place of living.

This study was conducted in the context of frequent attacks on Palestinian sacred sites, state terrorism, killing, torturing, arrests, destruction, colonial policy, building of the separation wall, economic blockade and starving out. All these practices, by the Israeli military authorities, aim at obliteration of the cultural identity along with all its historical, geographical, religious and ideological elements. This is in addition to the depopulation of the Palestinians' presence on their land, let alone the weakening of their will and firmness, thus leading to a state of psychological separation, existential vacuum and facilitating the process of their subjugation and control.

To realize the objectives of the study, the researcher formulated the following hypotheses:

1. Cultural identity is a multi-factor phenomenon and its features can be classified in the light of these factors.
2. There is a statistically significant correlation between the average of the degrees of cultural identity and the average of the degrees of citizenry among the students at Palestinian universities.
3. There is no statistically significant correlation between the average of the degrees of cultural identity and the average of the degrees of psychological anxiety among students at Palestinian universities.

4. There is a statistically significant correlation between the average of the degrees of cultural identity and the average of the degrees of psychological firmness among students at Palestinian universities.
5. There is a statistically significant correlation between the average of the degrees of cultural identity and the mean of the degrees of the meaning of life among the students of Palestinian universities.
6. There are statistically significant differences between the mean of the degrees of cultural identity, citizenry, anxiety, psychological firmness and meaning of life among students which may be attributed to variables of specialization, university level, sex and place of living.

Against the backdrop of a rich theoretical background, the study, in chapter two, dwelt on identity, culture, cultural identity, fundamentals of the Palestinian cultural identity and its formation factors, globalization and cultural identity. It also dwelt on variables of citizenry, anxiety, psychological firmness and meaning of life. Chapter three was devoted to the review of related literature. The researcher made use of methodologies employed by other researchers. He also drew on the findings of previous studies. In chapter four, the researcher presented the procedures of the field study focusing on methodology (analytical descriptive survey) and instruments used, namely cultural identity scale and citizenry scale both designed and developed by the researcher. This was in addition to meaning of life scale developed by Rashidi (1998), psychological firmness scale developed by Mukheimer (2002) and psychological anxiety scale by Taylor(1953). The chapter also described the population of the study (students at Palestinian universities) and the sample (randomly chosen) of 367 male and female students.

Chapter five presented the findings of the study, their discussion and analysis. The major findings were as follows.

The Palestinian cultural identity among students in all its eight dimensions demonstrated depth and a high degree of strength (solidity). The score was 84.4%. The national unity factor came first as one of the explanatory

factors of cultural identity. However, the study did not reveal differences in the factors of cultural identity which might be attributed to the specialization variable but it revealed differences in the factors of peace, tolerance, belonging, values and social habits which might be attributed to variables of university level in favor of first year students. In contrast, there were no differences which might be attributed to factors of language, religion, spiritual beliefs, democracy, and national unity. The female students had a higher score in the factors of religion, spiritual beliefs, democracy, national unity, tolerance and belonging. In contrast, the male students obtained a higher score in the fields of democracy. The study also did not reveal any differences in the factors of language, peace, values and social habits between the two sexes. There were also no differences between the scores of cultural identity factors which might be attributed to variable of place of living save the democracy variable. In this last factor, the students in the city scored higher than their counterparts in the village.

The study also revealed that the belonging factor had the highest score among the eight factors of cultural identity as opposed to the lowest score for the democracy factor.

Furthermore, the study revealed the presence of a statistically significant positive correlation between the average scores of cultural identity and the average scores of the citizenry. The students achieved a very high score in citizenry (88.8%). The study also found statistically significant differences between the average scores of citizenry which might be attributed to variable of specialization in favor of humanities and social sciences majors. However, the study didn't find any difference between the average scores of citizenry which might be attributed to variable of university level, sex, place of living. Pertaining to citizenry-related rights and civil duties, there was an edge in the domains of right & political, economic and social duties.

However, the study didn't find any statistically significant correlation between the average scores of cultural identity and average score of psychological anxiety. There were also no statistically significant differences in

the scores of psychological anxiety, among Palestinian university, which might be attributed to variables of specialization, university level, sex and place of living.

The study also revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the average scores of cultural identity and average scores of psychological firmness. The latter, however, achieved a higher score (74.3%) among Palestinian students. No statistically significant differences were found in the average scores of the factors of psychological firmness which might be attributed to specialization variable. There were also no statistically differences in the commitment and control factors. However, there were differences in factor of challenge and total score of psychological firmness which might be attributed to the variable of university level in favor of the lower university level students. The commitment factor excelled control and challenge as factors of psychological firmness.

The study also revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between the average scores of cultural identity and average scores of the meaning of life. However, the meaning of life variable achieved an average score (66.1%) among Palestinian university students. However, the study didn't reveal statistically significant differences in the factor of the meaning of life which might be attributed to specialization and university level variable. Exception to this was the existential wealth and in favor of freshman students. In the same context, the study showed no statistically significant differences in the factors of the meaning of life which might be attributed to the variables of sex. Exception to this were the goals of life and positive clinging to life in favor of females.

Also, there were no statistically significant differences in the factor of the meaning of life which might be attributed to place of living save the existential wealth factor in favor of city and village students. The quality of life factor, in contrast, obtained a low score in comparison with the other factors of the meaning of life.