



The Role of Christian Schools in Jerusalem (1967–2025): A Study on Identity, Cultural Resilience, and the Challenges of Systematic Israelization

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Abstract

This study investigates the educational and national role of Christian schools in Jerusalem between 1967 and 2025, analyzing their current standing amidst funding crises and policies of systematic Israelization. Adopting a mixed-methods approach, the researchers gathered quantitative data through two surveys distributed to a sample of teachers ($n = 84$) and alumni ($n = 94$). Qualitative data were collected through in-depth interviews with eight school principals ($n = 8$) and analyzed using *Grounded Theory*.

The findings reveal that Christian schools play a significant role in fostering values of coexistence (mean = 4.23) and constructing a Palestinian national identity among both students and graduates. Furthermore, the study identifies a severe funding gap; while official claims suggest that the occupation authorities provide 65% of operating budgets, the actual support ranges only between 40% and 60%. Qualitative analysis further uncovered «circumventive pedagogical strategies» employed by educational staff to bolster the school's role in resisting the removal of national content from the curricula.

The study recommends the establishment of an independent endowment fund to support education in Jerusalem and ensure educational sovereignty. It also emphasizes the need to activate alumni networks as a means of safeguarding the city's cultural heritage.

Keywords: Christian Schools, Jerusalem, Israelization, Cultural Resilience, Conditioned Funding, Grounded Theory

Introduction

Palestine in general, and Jerusalem in particular, are characterized by a deep-rooted bond between their Christian and Muslim inhabitants. This undeniable historical relationship is built upon a foundation of harmony and mutual affection derived from their respective

religious teachings. From the moment Palestine fell under Israeli occupation, Palestinian Arab Christians stood at the forefront of the resistance, openly and unequivocally rejecting all forms of injustice and oppression practiced against the Palestinian people as a whole.

The strong connection between Eastern and Western Christians has played a vital role in anchoring their presence in Jerusalem through comprehensive support for their institutional survival. A primary expression of this support was the establishment of Christian schools in Jerusalem that embrace an authentic Palestinian education while rejecting the alien curriculum imposed by the occupier.

These Christian schools are an integral part of the city's cultural and educational identity. They are far more than mere educational institutions; they serve as guardians of the Arab Christian heritage, which, alongside the Islamic heritage, forms a unified front against attempts at Judaization. Following the 1967 occupation, the Israeli government enacted Law No. 564 of 1968, which brought all private and parochial schools in Jerusalem under the supervision of the Ministry of Education. This administrative and curricular annexation placed secondary education under the Jerusalem Municipality's Department of Education, while primary education fell under the jurisdiction of the Israeli Ministry of Education (General Secretariat of the Council of Ministers, 2007).

Christian schools in Jerusalem serve as a cornerstone of Palestinian steadfastness (*sumud*). These institutions are more than just schools; they are historical and cultural anchors for the community. By moving beyond traditional education, they have become vital guardians of the city's Arab identity. Since the occupation of the remainder of Jerusalem in 1967, these schools have faced structural and curricular pressures aimed at integrating them into the Israeli educational system. Studying the impact of these schools between 1967 and 2025 is particularly significant, as they have confronted Israelization policies that have escalated sharply in the last decade. In this context, occupation authorities seek to transform education into a tool of «soft colonialism» designed to reshape the consciousness and national loyalty of Jerusalemite students (Qadah, 2024).

These policies strive to strip away Palestinian memory associated with identity, recognizing that the educational process is the primary engine for national activism and the struggle against the occupation. Consequently, since the city's occupation in 1967, Israeli practices have sought to impose a specific curriculum on Jerusalem's students to promote a culture aligned with Zionist goals—namely, altering Arab-Palestinian features and replacing them with a Jewish narrative that supports their alleged historical and religious claims (Abu Ghazaleh, 2021).

Research Problem and Questions

The core of the problem lies in the existential challenge facing Christian schools in Jerusalem. These institutions find themselves in a state of permanent conflict: they must balance the preservation of the Palestinian curriculum and their national



Christian identity against Israeli threats to revoke licenses or cut funding if they do not adopt the Israelized curriculum or its alternative, the *Bagrut* (the Israeli matriculation exam). This crisis has grown more complex as we approach 2025, with Judaization policies reaching an advanced stage that targets the Palestinian historical narrative within textbooks.

The role these schools have played—and continue to play—since 1967 deserves rigorous academic study to help reinforce their mission in serving the city's residents, both Christian and Muslim. Accordingly, this study seeks to answer the following primary research question:

What has been the role of Christian schools in the city of Jerusalem from 1967 to 2025?

Several sub-questions emerge from this central inquiry:

1. What role have Christian schools played in preserving the Palestinian identity of Jerusalem since 1967?
2. How have these schools confronted the Israelization of curricula and their educational mission?
3. What are the most prominent administrative, financial, and existential challenges these schools currently face?

Research Objectives

1. This study aims to achieve the following:
2. Track the impact of the historical development of Christian schools in Jerusalem since 1967.
3. Analyze the impact of Israeli «Israelization» policies on the educational and national outcomes of these schools.
4. Envision the future of Christian schools in Jerusalem through 2025 in light of current challenges.

Research Hypotheses

1. Christian schools in Jerusalem contribute greatly toward strengthening the values of national identity and coexistence among students and graduates, from the perspective of the study sample.
2. There is a statistically significant gap between the funding levels that Israeli education authorities claim to provide to Christian schools (65%) and the reality of the funding these schools receive.
3. Conditioned surveillance policies tied to «soft Israelization» funding negatively

affect the historical and geographical knowledge content in the official curriculum, leading to the emergence of compensatory strategies (the «hidden curriculum») within the schools.

4. There are no statistically significant differences (at the level of ≤ 0.05) in the perceptions of the sample members (teachers and graduates) regarding the role of Christian schools as a shield for cultural steadfastness attributable to variables of age, years of experience, or graduation year.

Significance of the Study

The study derives its theoretical importance from the way it establishes the role of church institutions in national education under occupation, reflecting the role of these schools in Jerusalem across an extended period full of conflict. Its practical significance lies in providing a vision for decision-makers on how to support these schools to confront «Israelization» and preserve their national and historical identity.

Definition of Terms

Christian Schools

Christian schools are long-standing institutions in Jerusalem. They are defined as “educational establishments affiliated with Christian churches and monastic orders that aim to provide an academic education integrated with spiritual and moral values” (Al-Khoury, 2015).

Jerusalem

While any definition of Jerusalem, regardless of its eloquence or force, remains inevitably limited, certain definitions can be adopted for the purposes of this research. It is defined as the capital of Mandatory Palestine and the epicenter of the current geopolitical conflict, which has been subject to a complex legal reality since 1967 (Abu Laban, 2019).

Operationally, Jerusalem is defined as the geographical and political space within which Christian schools conduct their educational activities, encompassing the historical and political boundaries of East Jerusalem.

Israelization

In the context of education, Israelization refers to the systematic erasure of Palestinian education—which reinforces national identity—and its replacement with a Zionist-Israeli alternative. This process has been executed through a policy of enforced ignorance or obscurantism employed since the city’s occupation in 1967. By seizing



control of the educational process and stripping it of its original content, the policy seeks to align education with occupation objectives, thereby marginalizing Palestinian identity. In its place, it seeks to instill Jewish nationalism as enshrined in the «Jewish State Law,» which asserts that the Land of Israel is the historical homeland of the Jewish people where the state was established, that the right to self-determination belongs exclusively to the Jewish people, that a «complete and united» Jerusalem is the capital of Israel, and that Hebrew is the state's official language (Dhouqan, 2023).

Operationally, Israelization refers to the various pressures exerted by Israeli educational authorities and the Jerusalem Municipality on Christian schools to adopt the Israeli curriculum or to redact national content from the Palestinian curriculum.

Cultural Resilience

Terminologically, cultural resilience is defined as the capacity of a society or its institutions to maintain their cultural identity and value systems in the face of attempts at erasure or forced replacement (Mansour, 2020).

Operationally, the researchers define cultural resilience as the set of strategies and «workaround» pedagogical practices implemented by Christian schools in Jerusalem to safeguard the Palestinian national narrative and ensure the continuity of an authentic Christian presence.

Conditional Funding

Terminologically, this refers to financial support provided by donors or occupation authorities on the condition that the recipient institution adheres to specific agendas or policies that serve the funding party (Abdel Hadi, 2021).

Operationally, conditional funding is defined as the financial blackmail practiced by the Israeli Ministry of Education, which ties the disbursement of budgets—a natural right of the people of Jerusalem—to the implementation of the Hebrew curriculum or the acceptance of educational surveillance.

Grounded Theory

In technical terms, this is a qualitative research methodology aimed at constructing theories or concepts through the systematic comparative analysis of data derived directly from field reality (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

Operationally, 'Grounded Theory' is the methodology employed by the researchers in this study to analyze qualitative interviews conducted with school principals, with the objective of deriving concepts of «Steadfastness» (*sumud*) and «Israelization» from their lived experiences.

Building upon the preceding definition of the research problem, its hypotheses, and its objectives—all of which focus on investigating the role of Christian schools in

Jerusalem—it is now essential to review the existing literature and the theoretical framework that explains the historical and political roots of these institutions. This will be addressed in detail in Chapter Two: Theoretical Framework and Literature Review.

Theoretical Framework: The Role of Christian Schools in Jerusalem

The Nature of Christian Schools in Jerusalem

Christian schools in Jerusalem are defined as non-profit educational institutions whose administration and ownership belong to churches (patriarchates) or international and local religious orders. They constitute a vital segment of private education in the city and can be classified according to their administrative affiliation as follows:

1. **Schools affiliated with Patriarchates:** Such as the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate (Mar Metri School), the Armenian Orthodox Patriarchate (Armenian School), and the Anglican Church (St. George's School and Princess Basma School).
2. **Schools affiliated with Religious Orders:** Such as the Frères schools (De La Salle Christian Brothers), Terra Sancta (Franciscans), the Rosary Sisters, the German Schmidt's Girls College, and the Spanish School (Hazboun, 2022).

These schools serve as a cornerstone of the city's educational system, operating as non-profit community institutions overseen by various Christian denominations. Despite their administrative and financial independence and religious affiliations, they are characterized by a «quasi-public» nature in terms of their student recruitment. Hazboun (2022) emphasizes that these institutions embody the living presence of the Palestinian Christian heritage in the city, acting as a catalyst for a collective national identity in the face of all attempts at cultural distortion.

Christian Schools After 1967: The Challenge of Survival and Israelization

The Shock of Occupation and Methodological Transformation

Following the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, Christian schools were confronted with a complex legal reality as occupation authorities sought to extend administrative and educational control over them. However, church institutions relied on the «Status Quo» and international conventions to maintain their independence, insisting on teaching the Jordanian curriculum until 1994. Hazboun (2022) confirms that this steadfastness acted as a «buffer wall» that prevented early attempts at Israelization from penetrating the educational structure of these schools, preserving their national and religious essence against all Israeli pressures.

Occupation authorities sought to gradually impose the Israeli educational program while tightening the noose on private (community) schools by issuing the School



Supervision Law No. 5729 of 1969. This law included full oversight of all schools, including those belonging to religious denominations and private community schools. It mandated that these schools and their educational staff obtain Israeli licenses to continue their activities while also placing educational programs and funding sources under Israeli supervision (Al-Mudallal & Abu Amer, 2013).

The rejection by Arab citizens of Jerusalem of Israeli control over their children's education persisted, expressed year after year as large numbers of parents withdrew their children from government schools to enroll them in private, community, Waqf, or monastic schools. This led to a surge in student numbers at these institutions; for example, in the 1979–1980 academic year, 45% of Arab students in Jerusalem were enrolled in these types of schools, compared to 24% just prior to the occupation. Although various Palestinian religious and non-religious entities opened new private schools to accommodate the increasing number of students who rejected the occupation's curricula, these efforts were not entirely sufficient. Nevertheless, the migration of Arab Jerusalemite students away from Israeli-affiliated government schools continued throughout the 1980s. In the 1989–1990 academic year, for instance, 54.7% of Arab Jerusalemite students were studying in private schools, compared to 38.6% in government schools and 6.7% in UNRWA schools (Al-Shawish, 2011).

The Strike of Christian Schools in Jerusalem: Resilience of Identity Against Israelization and Financial Blackmail

Since the 1967 occupation, education in Jerusalem has been a theater of ongoing political and sovereign conflict. At the heart of this struggle, Christian schools have stood as bastions protecting the national narrative, engaging in battles of «educational strikes» to preserve Arab curricula and reject the occupation's interventions that seek to dissolve the Palestinian character.

The Curriculum Conflict (1967–1994): The Strike of Steadfastness (Sumud)

Following the occupation of Jerusalem in 1967, occupation authorities attempted to forcibly impose the Israeli curriculum on schools. In response, national educational institutions—led by Christian and private schools—initiated a comprehensive strike to reject this mandate. Al-Jabari (2014, p. 22) documents that adhering to the Jordanian curriculum at that stage was a conscious act of cultural resistance; Jerusalemites successfully maintained it as their sole educational reference until the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority in 1994. This strike was not merely a suspension of classes, but rather a political declaration that national consciousness would not accept the occupation in any of its intellectual or pedagogical dimensions.

The 1998 Turning Point: The Trap of Conditional Funding

As financial burdens mounted and the cost of living in Jerusalem became increasingly exorbitant, Christian schools began to face an existential crisis that first took shape in the early 1990s. This crisis was a direct result of closure policies and escalating

economic pressures. Within this context, Alayan (2023) notes that occupation authorities sought to capitalize on these conditions through a strategy of «crisis exploitation.» Consequently, educational institutions were pressured by financial necessity into accepting a degree of Israeli funding to ensure they could pay teacher salaries and cover substantial operational costs.

Qadah (2021) analyzes this shift as a mechanism for creating «financial dependency.» In this framework, allocated budgets serve as leverage to push the educational system toward structural «Israelization.» This places school administrations in a permanent state of tension between the practical requirements for continued operation and the need to preserve their national independence in all respects.

The 65% Discrepancy: Reported Figures vs. Reality

While Israeli educational authorities announce the provision of budgets for Christian and private community schools under specific financial classifications, reality on the ground reveals a significant gap between these public figures and the actual amounts integrated into school budgets. Rather than accepting the official percentages at face value, critical analyses—such as Alayan (2023)—suggest that this funding is contingent upon heavy administrative and supervisory requirements. The core objective of these requirements is to foster financial dependency, thereby facilitating the eventual introduction of an «Israelized» curriculum.

The discrepancy in the reported figures lies not only in the percentages themselves but in the exclusion of «operational costs» from the funding. This leaves schools with a persistent deficit, forcing them to either seek alternative revenue sources or accept compromises that undermine their autonomy. Consequently, funding functions more as a tool for political bargaining than as disinterested educational support. This explains the profound caution with which school administrations approach all such grants.

Sovereignty Conflict: The Palestinian Curriculum vs. Soft Colonialism

In her study of education in Jerusalem, Alayan (2023) explains that the conflict has shifted from the form of direct strikes to a «curriculum war.» Occupation authorities use the financial allocations established in 1998 as a pressure tactic to modify national symbols within textbooks. It is argued that while some schools accepted funding due to economic pressures, this did not constitute an abandonment of core principles. Instead, it represents a survival strategy combined with the continued protection of national content through parallel activities within the classroom.

The history of Christian schools and their commitment to an authentic curriculum thus demonstrates their role as a «safety valve» for identity. Despite attempts at financial blackmail, Jerusalemite consciousness has remained resistant to Israelization processes. This has positioned the Christian school as a model of steadfastness (*sumud*) against what contemporary literature describes as «soft Israelization»—a



term that aligns with Qadah's (2021) analysis regarding the targeting of collective student consciousness and the systematic marginalization of their historical narrative.

Geographic and Political Obstacles

The challenges extend beyond curricula to encompass access to education itself. A 2011 report by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) indicates that the system of permits and checkpoints surrounding Jerusalem has significantly impacted Christian schools, as thousands of students and teachers are prevented from reaching their institutions within the city. This geographic blockade aims to isolate Jerusalem's schools from their Palestinian surroundings in the West Bank, representing a key component of the policy of fragmentation (OCHA, 2011).

Theories Explaining the Role of Christian Schools in Jerusalem

Soft Colonialism Theory

Qadah (2021) suggests that occupation authorities have shifted from direct military control over education to «soft Israelization.» This strategy involves substantial investment in schools that agree to adopt the Israeli curriculum in exchange for funding. Christian schools are central to this struggle; the General Secretariat of Christian Schools (2023) affirms that its institutions remain committed to the Palestinian curriculum and reject any conditional funding that compromises national identity. This principled stance often results in acute financial crises, a reality documented by Al-Shoumali (2016) in her study on the administrative and financial difficulties facing these institutions.

Theory of Curriculum Conflict and Supervision

Samira Allayan (2017) posits that textbooks in Jerusalem serve as a mirror of the broader conflict. In this context, occupation authorities filter Palestinian books, removing any references to Jerusalem as a capital or other national symbols. Christian schools play a compensatory role by providing extracurricular activities and informal national education to address these systematic gaps in curricula subject to rigorous censorship.

Sacred Place and Civilizational Mission Theory

Tracing the trajectory of Christian schools from 1967 through the challenges anticipated in 2025 reveals that they are not merely educational institutions, but foundational cultural pillars. This study addresses a specific research gap: analyzing how these institutions balance the financial and administrative pressures described by Al-Shoumali with the mission of steadfastness (*sumud*) and identity characterized by Khader and Qadah, particularly in the face of escalating Israelization policies.

Literature Review

Previous studies are presented and classified according to the variables and fields of the current research as follows:

Arabic Studies

Field 1: Studies Related to Curriculum Israelization and Educational Policies

Anwar Qadah's (2024) study, titled «Israelization of Curricula in Jerusalem: An Existential Challenge,» examines the state of education in Jerusalem under the weight of Israeli policies aimed at imposing the Hebrew curriculum. Using a descriptive-analytical approach, the study analyzes curriculum documents and the political decisions made by the Israeli Ministry of Education regarding East Jerusalem schools. The findings indicate that the occupation authorities employ a long-term strategy of distorting curricula and leveraging financial crises to exert pressure on private schools. The study also reveals systematic deletions of Palestinian national terms, replacing them with narratives that promote normalization and Israelization.

Similarly, Allyan (2023) presented a study titled «The Conflict over Teaching Curricula in East Jerusalem: Palestinian vs. Israeli.» The researcher utilized a comparative content analysis method, examining social science and Arabic language textbooks prescribed for post-primary schools in Jerusalem. The results highlight the existence of stringent Israeli censorship that reflects the ongoing political conflict; national symbols are redacted from textbooks, placing schools in a difficult position between preserving identity and complying with imposed censorship.

Field 2: Studies Related to the Institutional Role and Administrative Reality of Christian Schools

Awatif Al-Shoumali (2016) investigated «Administrative Problems in Private Christian Schools in Palestine» from the perspective of their principals and supervisors. This descriptive-exploratory study utilized a survey as a data collection tool, targeting a sample of principals and supervisors from Christian schools in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Ramallah. The findings of Al-Shoumali's study revealed high levels of administrative and financial problems—most notably external interference in school affairs and a lack of independent financial resources. These factors significantly hinder the ability of these institutions to maintain their pedagogical autonomy in the face of political pressures (Al-Shoumali, 2016).

In a related context, Hazboun (2022) focused on the historical roots of these institutions in a study titled «Christian Schools in Jerusalem at the End of the Ottoman Era: Their Role and Mission.» Utilizing a historical-analytical approach, the researcher reviewed the emergence and development of missionary schools. The study concluded that these schools played a pioneering role in modernizing Jerusalemite society and fostering



cultural pluralism, making them a cornerstone of the national educational structure that later resisted attempts at cultural dilution following the 1967 occupation.

Field 3: Studies Related to National Identity and Cultural Heritage

Khader (2009) examined the Arab Christian heritage in Jerusalem through a philosophical-analytical lens, highlighting the stances of various churches regarding the issue of Jerusalem. The study concluded that ecclesiastical institutions reflect the city's sanctity and inclusive nature. In a more specialized and recent context, Khader (2022) emphasizes that Christian schools in Jerusalem play a pivotal role in strengthening national identity. Palestinian Christians view these institutions as religious and educational incubators, positioning the school as a safeguard for identity and a pillar of steadfastness (*sumud*) against ongoing policies of Judaization.

Non-Arabic Studies

These studies are categorized according to the research variables as follows:

Field 1: Studies Related to Curriculum Israelization and Educational Policies

Reiter & Eiran (2021) analyzed the conflict over educational sovereignty in a study titled «Education and Sovereignty in East Jerusalem.» The researchers investigated how occupation authorities utilize funding as a tool of political pressure to impose Israelization agendas. Employing a policy-analysis approach, the study revealed a strategy of systematic financial constriction practiced against educational institutions that refuse to adopt censored or modified curricula. It concluded that financial pressure represents the single greatest challenge to the independence of educational decision-making in Jerusalem.

Field 2: Studies Related to the Institutional Role and Administrative Reality of Christian Schools

Dajani & Wildfeuer (2023) focused on «Educational Resilience in Jerusalem's Schools,» examining the «workaround» pedagogical practices adopted by teachers and principals to circumvent the reach of the censor. This qualitative study, based on in-depth interviews, demonstrated that administrative and educational staff go beyond a purely instructional role; they engage in an act of activism that links academic knowledge to the city's historical roots. This positions school administrations as a vital mechanism for protecting the national narrative from distortion.

Field 3: Studies Related to National Identity and Cultural Heritage

Bush & Saltarelli (2019) explored the «dual face» of education in conflict zones, looking specifically at the role of religious educational institutions in preserving the cultural and national components of people under occupation. Utilizing a global comparative approach, the study concluded that these schools fulfill their responsibility as «identity safeguards» and cultural refuges, providing youth with an intellectual immunity that prevents their assimilation into the dominant culture.

The results affirm that the Christian educational presence in holy cities is an essential pillar of cultural pluralism and national steadfastness (*sumud*).

Synthesis of Previous Literature and the Research Gap

The review of previous literature reveals a diverse range of perspectives, from the political dimensions of curricula (as seen in Qadah and Allayan) to the administrative and financial aspects (Al-Shoumali) and the historical and legal contexts (Hazboun and Khader).

The current study distinguishes itself from previous research by integrating these variables over an extended and critical timeframe (1967–2025), with a particular focus on the present situation. While previous studies have tended to focus on specific, isolated elements—be they administrative, historical, or methodological—this research seeks to analyze the integrated impact of Christian schools. Specifically, it examines how these schools have managed to balance the preservation of identity with the challenge of Israelization amidst the administrative and financial crises of a period considered one of the most critical in the city’s history. Furthermore, it is among the few studies to offer an outlook on the reality of these schools through 2025, providing an updated reference for the academic community and researchers specializing in Jerusalem affairs.

The researchers conclude from this comprehensive review that the issue of education in Jerusalem is at the core of the struggle for cultural and existential survival. Arabic studies (Qadah, 2024; Allyan, 2017) have detailed the systematic processes of redacting national terminology and distorting Palestinian history. Meanwhile, foreign studies (Reiter & Eiran, 2021) have provided this research with a deeper understanding of the political and financial mechanisms used as leverage to impose educational sovereignty, confirming the synergy between curriculum censorship and financial blackmail.

Regarding the administrative and institutional reality, previous research (Al-Shoumali, 2016; Dajani & Wildfeuer, 2023) has shown that educational management in Jerusalem schools transcends traditional organizational tasks to assume the responsibility of protecting the national narrative. Educational staff employ sophisticated pedagogical practices to bypass attempts at erasing awareness. This reinforces the arguments of Hazboun (2022) and Khader (2022) that Christian schools are a cornerstone of the national structure and a safeguard for identity that blends religious heritage with authentic national ties.

The added value of the current study lies in its ability to fill a practical gap that previous research has failed to address comprehensively. By combining quantitative and qualitative methodologies, this study investigates the perspectives of three distinct research populations (principals, teachers, and graduates). This allows for a field-based tracking of the «impact» of Christian schools across a continuous era



(1967–2025). Consequently, this research is unique in providing an explanatory model for how an educational institution can be transformed into a tool of cultural resilience in the face of systematic Israelization, moving beyond general theoretical discourse to focus on field-based confrontation strategies.

Having reviewed the historical background of Christian schools and their steadfastness (*sumud*) against Israelization and financial pressure, alongside the insights provided by existing literature, ‘Chapter Three: Methodology and Procedures’ will follow to provide a precise description of the field methodology, statistical tools, and sample characteristics used to examine these theoretical aspirations in practice.

Chapter Three: Methodology and Procedures

This chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology employed in this study. It defines the research population and sample, presents the instruments used for data collection, and outlines the procedures used to verify their validity and reliability. Finally, it discusses the statistical methods applied to analyze the findings.

Research Methodology

The study utilizes a descriptive-qualitative and quantitative approach. This methodology is designed to describe the phenomenon as it exists in reality while interpreting and linking it to the broader general context. This approach was chosen to track the evolution of the role of Christian schools in Jerusalem from 1967 through the current reality of 2025.

Study Population and Sample

The study population encompasses all human components associated with the educational process in Christian schools within the city of Jerusalem. The researchers sought to include diverse groups to ensure the depth and integration of the results. The details are as follows:

First: The Principals’ Population and Sample

The population of principals consists of 12 men and women who represent the educational leadership of all targeted Christian schools in Jerusalem. The study relied on an «Available Sample» (Convenience Sample), from which 8 principals responded to participate in in-depth qualitative interviews. This resulted in a response rate of 66.6%, which is considered sufficient in qualitative research to achieve the «principle of saturation» in data and to thoroughly investigate leadership strategies.

Second: The Teachers’ Population and Sample

The total number of teachers in Christian schools in Jerusalem is 634, according to the latest available statistics. The researchers extracted a sample of 84 teachers

selected via «Simple Random Sampling,» representing approximately 13.2% of the total population. This percentage is statistically representative and acceptable in educational and humanistic studies, particularly given the unique geopolitical sensitivity of Jerusalem.

Third: The Graduates' Population and Sample

Given the extensive timeframe of the study (1967–2025) and the logistical impossibility of statistically identifying the entire graduate population over several decades, the researchers utilized a «Purposive Available Sample» consisting of 94 male and female graduates. Care was taken to ensure diversity and inclusivity in their selection to represent the various eras and historical stages through which the Christian schools have passed, thereby ensuring the tracking of emotional and national impact across generations.

The following tables provide a detailed distribution of the study sample for teachers and graduates:

Table (1): Teachers' Sample (N = 84)

Distribution of the teachers' sample according to demographic variables:

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	Under 30 years	6	%7.10
	Under 40 years	42	%50.00
	Under 50 years	18	%21.40
	Over 50 years	18	%21.40
Specialization	Humanities (Literary)	48	%57.10
	Sciences	36	%42.90
Experience	Less than 5 years	12	%14.30
	10 – 5 years	30	%35.70
	More than 10 years	42	%50.00

Table (2): Graduates' Sample (N = 94)

Distribution of the graduates' sample according to demographic variables:

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	years 30 – 19	18	%19.20
	years 50 – 31	62	%65.40
	years 50 Over	14	%15.40
Graduation Year	and earlier 1980	7	%7.70



	and earlier 2000	44	%46.20
	and earlier 2010	25	%26.90
	and earlier 2024	18	%19.20

Table (3): Principals' Sample (For Qualitative Interviews)^{1*}

Distribution of principals participating in interviews (N = 6)

Code	Job Title	Years of Administrative Experience	Geographical Location of the School	School Type
P1	School Principal (Male)	Years 25	Old City	Historic Church School
P2	School Principal (Female)	Years 18	Beit Hanina / Shuafat	Religious Order School
P3	School Principal (Male)	Years 12	Mount of Olives	General Secretariat School
P4	School Principal (Female)	Years 22	City Center	Major Secondary School
P5	School Principal (Male)	Years 15	Jerusalem Suburbs	Educational Complex School
P6	School Principal (Female)	Years 20	Old City	Primary/Basic School

Research Instruments

Three instruments were developed to collect data—two for quantitative data (questionnaires) and one for qualitative data (interview):

- 1. Teachers' Questionnaire:** Consists of 10 items measuring the impact of regulatory pressures and the national educational mission.
- 2. Graduates' Questionnaire:** Consists of 10 items measuring the school's role in strengthening identity, coexistence, and resilience.
- 3. Interview Tool (for Principals):** A qualitative tool designed to understand leadership strategies in the face of Israelization and financial blackmail.

Validity and Reliability of the Research Instruments

Validity: The instruments were presented to a panel of expert jurors specializing

¹ *The researchers used coding (P1, P2, etc.) in this table to maintain research ethics, participant confidentiality, the privacy of the location, and to protect the sample from the regulatory pressures they face.

in the Arabic language, education, and law to ensure the linguistic integrity of the phrasing and the appropriateness of the items for their respective dimensions.

Reliability: The reliability of the instruments was calculated using the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, yielding the following results:

1. The reliability coefficient for the teachers' questionnaire reached (0.893), which is considered a very high coefficient.
2. The reliability coefficient for the graduates' questionnaire reached (0.94), indicating excellent internal consistency.

Statistical Treatment

Data was processed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), applying the following statistical methods:

1. Frequencies and percentages to describe the study sample.
2. Arithmetic means and standard deviations to determine the levels of response.
3. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient to measure instrument reliability.

Based on the scientific methodology and the procedures established to ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, and in accordance with the characteristics of the sample as described, the research results will be presented and the quantitative and qualitative data obtained discusses and analyzed statistically and sociologically to answer the research questions and test its hypotheses.

Study Procedures

The researchers followed a systematic sequence of steps to ensure the accuracy and objectivity of the findings, as follows:

- **Designing the Research Instruments:** The questionnaire and the interview were prepared following a comprehensive review of educational literature and previous studies related to Jerusalem and «Israelization,» ensuring that all research dimensions were thoroughly covered.
- **Instrument Review:** The instruments were presented to a group of expert jurors specializing in education and the Arabic language to verify the clarity of the phrasing and the suitability of the questions for the subject matter.
- **Reliability Calculation:** The researchers extracted the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient through a pilot study to ensure the instrument's consistency and its capacity to provide reliable data.
- **Obtaining Approvals:** The researchers contacted the administrations of



the Christian schools in Jerusalem to facilitate the process, emphasizing the confidentiality of information and the privacy of the participants.

- **Instrument Implementation:** The questionnaires were distributed to teachers and graduates both digitally and in hard copy, while in-depth interviews were conducted simultaneously with school principals at their respective workplaces.
- **Statistical and Qualitative Processing:** Quantitative data was analyzed using the SPSS program, while the interviews were subjected to thematic analysis according to «Grounded Theory» to extract core concepts.
- **Drawing Conclusions and Writing Recommendations:** The findings were interpreted and linked to the theoretical framework, leading to the formulation of practical proposals to strengthen educational resilience.

Research Results and Discussion

Teacher Results

The results of the questionnaire indicated that the number of valid responses for analysis reached (84), allowing for an initial descriptive overview of teachers' attitudes toward the research dimensions. Looking at the characteristics of the sample, it appears that nearly half of the participants (50%) were under the age of 40, while the remainder of the sample was distributed between the under-50 age group (21.4%) and the over-50 age group (21.4%). A limited percentage (7.1%) represented the under-30 age group. In terms of specialization, the largest proportion of participants came from the humanities (57.1%), compared to (42.9%) from the scientific fields. Regarding years of experience, the results indicated that half of the sample members had more than 10 years of experience (50%), while those with 5–10 years of experience accounted for (35.7%), and the lowest percentage (14.3%) was for those with less than 5 years of experience.

Regarding the descriptive results for the questionnaire items (measured on a five-point Likert scale from 1 to 5), the overall mean for all ten items reached (3.65). This indicates a moderately high upward trend in the attitudes of sample members toward the subject of the questionnaire. This overall mean reflects a general consensus among teachers regarding the national and pedagogical role of the school and the teacher within the Jerusalemite context, while also revealing other aspects that received moderate agreement linked to challenges and constraints.

When ranking the items based on their means, Item 10 ranked first with a mean of (4.00). This item pertains to the participants' vision regarding the success of Christian schools in producing a generation capable of holding onto its land despite attempts at «silent transfer.» Item 9 ranked second with a mean of (3.93), reflecting a clear emphasis among teachers on regarding the Christian presence in Jerusalem

as a national and historical bond, rather than merely a religious presence. A group of other items also showed relatively high means, such as (3.79) for items related to strengthening national identity and belonging, and the administration's provision of space for discussing national issues and fostering intellectual immunity among students.

In contrast, the lowest means were recorded for items related to censorship, redaction, and professional pressure. Item 3 recorded a mean of (3.21) regarding the difficulty of teaching the Palestinian curriculum due to censorship and redaction. Item 4 recorded a mean of (3.36) regarding the recourse to supplementary activities to compensate for redacted national content, and Item 6 recorded a mean of (3.36) regarding the feeling of professional/regulatory pressure when discussing the Arab history of Jerusalem under threats affecting school licensing. These results indicate that while regulatory pressure is a reality in the experience of teachers, its impact varies among individuals—a variation reflected in means that fall within the moderate level.

As for the reliability and internal consistency of the instrument, the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the ten items of the questionnaire reached (0.893). This is a high coefficient indicating strong internal consistency and suggests that the items measure a cohesive general concept within the boundaries of this sample. Furthermore, the results of the item-total correlations showed that some items were characterized by high correlations with the total score, such as Item 7 (0.834) and Item 8 (0.806), which may indicate that these two items capture a more specific aspect or that the responses to them are more varied.

Table (4): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Teacher Responses (In Descending Order)

No.	Item	Rank	Arithmetic Mean	Standard Deviation	Rating
10	I believe the Christian school succeeds in producing a generation capable of holding onto its land despite all attempts at «silent transfer.»	1	4.00	0.82	High
9	I focus in my educational discourse on the idea that the Christian presence in Jerusalem is a «national bond» rather than just a religious presence.	2	3.93	0.85	High



5	The administration of the Christian school grants me a degree of academic freedom to discuss Palestinian national issues clearly with the students.	3	3.79	0.91	High
7	I am keen to link scientific or literary lessons to the geographical and historical reality of Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.	4	3.79	0.89	High
8	I seek to strengthen the intellectual immunity of students to confront attempts at distorting national consciousness that they are exposed to outside the school.	5	3.79	0.90	High
6	I feel professional or regulatory pressure when discussing the Arab history of Jerusalem in light of threats to revoke school licenses.	6	3.36	1.05	Moderate
4	I am forced to resort to additional activities to compensate for national content redacted from textbooks.	7	3.36	1.12	Moderate
3	I face difficulty in teaching the Palestinian curriculum as a result of the censorship and redaction practiced by the Jerusalem Municipality.	8	3.21	1.08	Moderate
-	Overall Mean for the Questionnaire as a Whole	-	3.65	0.95	High

It is observed that the standard deviations for items with high means, such as Item 10, were lower, indicating a high degree of consensus and homogeneity among teachers regarding the school's role in strengthening resilience. Conversely, the deviation increased for items related to regulatory pressure (Item 6), indicating a variation in teachers' experiences based on the nature of their specializations or their specific schools.

The results in Table (4) show that teachers are deeply aware of their role as a struggle for identity, not merely an academic one. Item 10, regarding the production of a

generation holding onto its land, received the highest mean (4.00). This is entirely consistent with the theory of «Education for Resilience,» where the school is transformed from a place of knowledge transfer into a cultural shield that protects students from silent transfer.

Furthermore, the high result for Item 9 (3.93), which asserts that the Christian presence is a national bond, reinforces what was discussed in the theoretical framework regarding the unity of Islamic-Christian destiny in Jerusalem. This connection shatters colonial attempts to define Christians as an isolated religious «minority» and instead reintegrates them as an organic part of the Palestinian national fabric.

These results align with the study of Abdel Hadi (2021), which emphasized that church institutions in Jerusalem fulfill an indirect national role by safeguarding the city's Arab space and confronting policies of marginalization. Nevertheless, the low mean for the two items related to «censorship challenges» proves the validity of the argument made by Abu Asba (2014) regarding the structural pressures exerted on the educational system. Occupation authorities succeed, through the threat of license revocation, in creating a state of forced compliance or professional pressure that hinders the teaching of the full historical narrative.

This reality embodies what the researcher in this study describes as the «exploitation of crises,» where the financial and administrative needs of schools are used as a tool to impose policies of soft Israelization and to manipulate cognitive awareness. Thus, the school finds itself in the dilemma of balancing institutional survival with loyalty to the national narrative—a predicament that explains the observed gap in graduates' responses regarding all aspects of alternative historical content.

In general, the results demonstrate a positive trend among male and female teachers toward the educational and national role of the school and the teacher in Jerusalem. This is confirmed by the overall mean (3.65) and the high means of items associated with strengthening national identity. The researchers interpret this by noting that the school in the Jerusalemite context is not limited to a neutral educational function; rather, it represents a vital social and cultural framework that contributes to anchoring identity and protecting collective consciousness against attempts at distortion or the systematic erasure of the national narrative.

This analysis is consistent with the arguments of Edward Said (1993) regarding culture and resistance. He posits that educational institutions in societies facing cultural alienation are forcibly transformed into sites of unarmed resistance, where the transfer of knowledge itself becomes a political act aimed at preserving the group's existence. Consequently, the message of the Jerusalemite teacher shifts from «mere skill instruction» to the «production of emotional resilience»—a result embodied in the perspectives of the study sample across all its aspects. Furthermore, the high means for Items 9 and 10 reflect a clear awareness among teachers of the role of the Christian school specifically as a national incubator contributing to the production of



a generation committed to its land and identity, and of the importance of framing the Christian presence in Jerusalem as a unifying national dimension.

At the same time, the results reveal a noticeable presence of pressure factors and constraints associated with censorship and redaction. Items linked to these aspects received the lowest means, particularly Item 3 regarding the difficulty of teaching the Palestinian curriculum and Item 6 regarding the feeling of professional pressure when discussing Arab history. From this, it can be understood that the teacher operates within an educational environment affected by constraints that extend beyond content to the general professional climate, which may limit the freedom to address some national issues directly. Item 4 also emerges as a significant indicator of the adaptive response among teachers; their moderate agreement with this item suggests that a number of them resort to supplementary activities to compensate for the deficiencies caused by redaction. This can be considered a form of alternative pedagogical strategy intended to maintain the continuity of the educational and national mission despite constraints.

From another angle, the high mean for Item 5 regarding the school administration's provision of space for discussing national issues indicates that management—according to the sample's perspective—plays a supportive role in empowering the teacher. This is a highly significant factor in the Jerusalemite context, as the existence of institutional cover and clear directions may mitigate the impact of pressures and provide the teacher with better tools to balance the requirements of reality with their educational responsibility to anchor identity and awareness. It can be said that the relationship between the teacher and the administration here is part of the system of educational resilience, where the roles of the institution and the teacher integrate to preserve a national essence within possible and safe spaces.

Graduates' Results

The study relied on a questionnaire consisting of ten items in the form of a five-point Likert scale, applied to a sample of male and female graduates of Christian schools in Jerusalem. After cleaning the response file of rows not belonging to participants (the mean/total rows), the sample size reached ($N = 94$). The sample was distributed by age into three categories: participants from the 31–50 year age group constituted the largest proportion (65.4%), followed by the 19–30 age group (19.2%), followed by the over-50 age group (15.4%). According to graduation year, responses were distributed across multiple eras; the largest representation was the class of 2000 and earlier (46.2%), followed by the class of 2010 and earlier (26.9%), then 2024 and earlier (19.2%), while the class of 1980 and earlier represented a limited proportion (7.7%). This distribution indicates a significant presence of experience from middle and relatively older generations of graduates, which is reflected in how they perceive educational and cultural impact over time.

The results of the internal reliability analysis for the instrument showed a high level

of consistency between items, with a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of (0.94). This indicates that the items measure a cohesive and integrated construct related to the school's impact on identity, belonging, and elements of cultural and social resilience. This reinforces the ability to treat the instrument's outputs as a quantitative indicator with high reliability, though it is noted that such a very high reliability may also suggest a semantic overlap between certain items.

Regarding the general trend of responses, a general index for the role of Christian schools was calculated through the mean of participants' responses across the ten items. The overall mean for the sample reached (3.58) with a standard deviation of (1.02), reflecting a positive-to-moderate evaluation that leans toward the positive, despite a noticeable variance among participants. This variance indicates that the school's impact is not perceived identically by all graduates, leaving room for interpretation based on factors such as differing school contexts, time periods, and individual experiences.

Table (5): Arithmetic Means and Standard Deviations for Graduate Responses (In Descending Order)

.No	Item	Mean	SD	Rank	Rating
3	The school contributes to strengthening the values of coexistence between Muslim and Christian students as a shield against social fragmentation.	4.23	0.75	1	Very High
4	Graduates feel a strong sense of belonging to the Arab identity of Jerusalem thanks to the school environment.	3.85	0.88	2	High
5	Teachers in Christian schools in Jerusalem played a fundamental role in strengthening our understanding of our role and the value of our presence in Jerusalem.	3.81	0.91	3	High
7	The school environment in the Christian school in Jerusalem strengthened my belonging to my city, Jerusalem.	3.73	0.94	4	High
1	The school is keen to commemorate Palestinian national occasions as part of its educational mission.	3.69	0.98	5	High



6	The educational environment in the Christian school in Jerusalem contributed to shaping my national character.	3.57	1.02	6	High
8	Christian schools in Jerusalem strengthened my religious belief.	3.50	1.10	7	Moderate
9	The school helped me build an accurate knowledge base about the history of Palestine and Jerusalem.	3.26	1.15	8	Moderate
10	The Christian school contributed to strengthening my determination to remain and live in Jerusalem despite .difficult living and political challenges	3.23	1.18	9	Moderate
2	The school provides additional educational content to compensate for the deficiency in the Palestinian historical narrative resulting from .censorship	2.96	1.21	10	Moderate
-	Overall Mean for the Questionnaire as a Whole	3.58	1.00	-	High

An analytical reading of the data in Table (5) shows that the statement «The school contributes to strengthening the values of coexistence between Muslim and Christian students as a shield against social fragmentation» received the highest arithmetic mean and the lowest standard deviation (0.75). This statistically proves that the values of coexistence represent the most entrenched and consistent component across all generations of graduates. Conversely, the results revealed a noticeable variance and a high standard deviation in items related to the «historical and geographical knowledge of Jerusalem,» clearly reflecting a knowledge gap resulting from policies that systematically redact national terminology from textbooks.

When comparing these results with the perspectives of teachers, a superficial contradiction emerges that requires deconstruction. While teachers perceive a strict censorship that hinders the transmission of the historical narrative, we find that the stability of identity values among graduates has not been affected to the same degree. This discrepancy is attributed to the effectiveness of the parallel and professional activities adopted by Christian schools; these activities succeed in compensating for knowledge deficiencies and bridging the gap left by the censored official curriculum, transforming belonging from mere «historical information» in a book into a «deep-seated practice» within the graduate's consciousness.

Item 3, regarding the strengthening of coexistence values, is the most prominent in the study, receiving a mean of (4.23) with the lowest standard deviation. Educationally, this indicates the success of Christian schools in applying the theory of Social

Cohesion, which has made graduates better able to confront «divide and rule» policies of fragmentation.

The moderate results for the items regarding the «provision of alternative historical and geographical content» sound an alarm. They suggest that policies of systematic Israelization and the redaction of national themes from books have begun to yield negative results regarding the knowledge base of graduates. When deepening the analysis by comparing graduates from the pre-2000 era with those from the post-2000 era, a critical statistical indicator becomes clear: generations that graduated after 2000 recorded a noticeable decline in their grasp of the city's precise historical details compared to previous generations.

This decline demonstrates the effectiveness of the «distortion of consciousness» theory practiced by the occupation through tight control over official curricula, where censorship tools have managed over time to shrink the space previously occupied by traditional national content. Nevertheless, the stability of deep-seated identity values (despite the lack of factual knowledge) serves as evidence that the role of Christian schools has shifted from «knowledge instruction» to «value reinforcement» through extracurricular activities. This is an attempt to fill the gaps created by the absence of an authentic curriculum, explaining why belonging remains strong despite systematic attempts to enforce ignorance.

These findings intersect with the conclusions of Nuseir (2018) regarding the decline of the national narrative in «recognized but unofficial» schools due to intensive regulatory interventions. The noticeable gap in historical knowledge among graduates proves that while the Christian school has been exceptionally successful in instilling the city's Arab identity as a firmly rooted emotional sentiment—at a mean of (3.85)—it faces grave challenges in building a «solid Palestinian national knowledge» that encompasses historical details, due to the strict constraints imposed by the Israeli-edited curriculum.

Here, the true gap uncovered by the study emerges: identity for the Jerusalemite student in Christian schools appears as an existential and emotional belonging to the city's Arab character and history, yet in recent generations, it lacks the cognitive and informational momentum. This is a result of the absence of a Palestinian national curriculum capable of providing an integrated historical narrative. This confirms that Israelization policies have succeeded in besieging information but have failed to uproot the emotional identity preserved by the school environment and all forms of parallel activities.

By weighing the responses of teachers against the perspectives of graduates, the researchers conclude that the reality of Christian schools in Jerusalem embodies a deep-rooted emotional resilience facing a fierce cognitive siege. The status of these educational institutions can be characterized as follows:



1. **Success in Social and Value-Based Metrics:** The results demonstrate the school's high capacity to instill the values of coexistence and to safeguard the city's emotional identity, positioning these institutions as exemplary national incubators.
2. **Political Targeting:** These schools are confronted with a strategy of «funding in exchange for silence» or «soft Israelization.» This places school administrations in an ongoing struggle between ensuring institutional survival and maintaining national loyalty.
3. **Forced Academic Deficit (The Knowledge Gap):** Participant responses acknowledge a clear gap in the ability to compensate for redacted historical and geographical content. The regulatory siege imposed on official curricula has reached a level where it is difficult to fully bridge the knowledge gap through parallel activities alone. This admission proves that Israelization policies have succeeded in surrounding and isolating solid historical knowledge, even while failing to uproot national belonging.

When examining the items individually, it is clear that the item pertaining to «strengthening the values of coexistence between Muslims and Christians» achieved the highest arithmetic mean (4.23). The percentage of those who «Agreed» or «Strongly Agreed» reached approximately 80.8%, while the percentage of those who «Disagreed» shrank to just 7.7%. This result proves that participants perceive Christian schools as influential social actors that protect the internal cohesion of Jerusalemite society and serve as an educational lever to deepen ties of cooperation and positive interaction. This grants these institutions a pioneering role in safeguarding the social fabric and strengthening its immunity against surrounding challenges. Ranking next were items associated with identity and belonging, which scored relatively high. The item on strengthening the Arab identity of Jerusalem through the school environment recorded a mean of (3.85) with a 69.2% agreement rate, while the item on the role of teachers in strengthening the understanding of the Palestinian presence in Jerusalem recorded a mean of (3.81) with a 61.5% agreement rate. These results indicate that the school contributes to building identity awareness through the educational context, human relationships, and value-based interactions it provides, with the teacher emerging as a cultural mediator who crystallizes meaning and directs student perception toward the city's significance and memory.

In contrast, the results showed that the dimension of «historical knowledge and compensating for the deficiency in the Palestinian narrative» recorded relatively lower values. The item regarding the provision of additional educational content to compensate for narrative gaps caused by censorship fell to the bottom of the ranking with a mean of (2.96). The percentage of those who «Disagreed» or «Strongly Disagreed» reached 38.5%, while the agreement rate was 42.3%, reflecting a clear divide in the perception of this role. Similarly, the item on building an accurate knowledge base regarding the history of Palestine and Jerusalem recorded a mean

of (3.27) with a high disagreement rate of 30.8%. These results suggest that, in the view of a significant portion of graduates, schools may not always provide sufficient cognitive compensation for the gaps created by methodological constraints or censorship of the historical narrative; alternatively, it suggests that such compensation occurs inconsistently or is not generalized across all schools and teachers.

Regarding living resilience—specifically the determination to remain in Jerusalem despite challenges—the relevant item recorded a mean of (3.23). While 42.3% «Strongly Agreed,» a nearly identical percentage (30.8%) «Disagreed,» alongside a 26.9% «Neutral» response. This indicates that the school's impact in this area is less distinct and more varied, suggesting that the decision to remain in Jerusalem is not determined by education alone, but is intertwined with broader economic, social, and political factors that fall outside the scope of the school institution. In the same context, the item on strengthening religious belief received a mean of (3.50), reflecting a moderately strong religious role compared to the school's role in promoting coexistence, identity, and belonging.

Moving to the descriptive differences, it appears that the overall index mean was higher for the 31–50 age group compared to other categories. A relatively higher mean also emerged among the class of 2010 and earlier. When linked to the study variables, this variation is attributed to the fact that generations graduating before 2010 lived through a stage where the national narrative was more present in the school environment, or they benefited from the momentum of extracurricular activities before the current tightening of the regulatory noose.

This correlation between «graduation year» and the «strength of the national narrative» provides a clear picture of the stages during which a gradual erosion of certain pillars of cognitive identity began. The results show that younger generations are the most vulnerable to the effects of systematic Israelization. Nevertheless, these differences are read as descriptive trends in light of the current sample size, which necessitates expanding the scope of inquiry in the future to conduct inferential tests. Such tests would prove the extent to which professional activities are capable of compensating for this knowledge decline among the rising generations.

Accordingly, the results indicate that Christian schools in Jerusalem—per the perceptions of participating graduates—play a central role in strengthening social cohesion. This was clearly manifested in the «coexistence» item receiving the highest means. This result can be interpreted through the perspective that the school here is not reduced to its educational function; rather, it represents a social space for the reproduction of the city's values and the management of religious and cultural diversity within daily interactions that prevent isolation or division. In the Jerusalemite context, where religious and national identities are intertwined with political and economic pressures, it appears that the school contributes to building social capital based on mutual trust and recognition of the other. This is a fundamental dimension of cultural resilience, understood as a collective capacity to protect the social fabric, memory,



and symbols from fragmentation.

The findings are also consistent with the idea that identity and belonging are formed through the lived experience within the school and through educational actors, rather than through cognitive content alone. This is reflected in the high means for items related to the Arab identity of Jerusalem and the role of teachers. The firmly rooted belonging to the city suggests that the school produces an impact on identity at two complementary levels: first, the level of the «school environment,» including its symbols, traditions, activities, and social relationships; and second, the level of the «teacher» as a bearer of values and meaning. The teacher in Jerusalem does not settle for an instructional role; they assume the task of reframing the «Jerusalemite experience» as a localized identity in the students' consciousness. This makes the place (Jerusalem) more than just a geographical space, but a core component of the self and the national consciousness.

Consequently, the role of the school can be viewed as a cultural and educational impact embodied in the formation of attitudes, loyalties, and emotional bonds with the city—an impact that exceeds pure cognitive influence in its strength and permanence. Thus, the school succeeds in transforming «steadfastness» (*sumud*) from a political slogan into a «localized identity» that the student lives in the details of their daily life, fortifying them against all attempts at alienation or cultural distortion.

In contrast, the results reveal a striking paradox: the narrative-cognitive dimension (compensating for narrative deficiencies and building accurate historical knowledge) ranked the lowest and was accompanied by a clear split in responses. This paradox is read as an indicator that the school may succeed in building a sentimental or value-based identity even under constraints, but it may face difficulties in transforming this into a systematic and institutionalized cognitive payload regarding Palestinian history and narrative. It is likely that cognitive compensation, when it occurs, is linked to individual initiatives by a teacher or teachers or to extracurricular activities, which explains the varying perceptions among graduates. Furthermore, the nature of censorship or methodological constraints may push some institutions to adopt indirect inclusion strategies rather than providing explicit historical content, which raises awareness of identity without necessarily reflecting a feeling among graduates that they have acquired precise and detailed historical knowledge.

Regarding the item on the determination to remain in Jerusalem, its mean—which was close to the neutral point—and the variance in participant responses highlight the limits of educational influence when it comes to major life decisions. Living in Jerusalem is affected by extremely powerful structural factors that exceed the school's capacity: economic pressures, cost of living, employment opportunities, administrative restrictions, and the fear of instability. Therefore, it can be said that the school may strengthen the value-based readiness to remain or the emotional bond with the city, but it does not alone possess the resources necessary to transform this readiness into an actual residency decision when structural determinants are

overwhelming. This underscores the necessity for the study to distinguish between cultural resilience (as the protection of identity, memory, and social bonds) and living resilience (which requires economic and community interventions and broader support policies).

The results related to the religious dimension indicate a moderate role, which may reflect the specificity of Christian schools in Jerusalem as institutions that blend religious education with general human values; alternatively, it may suggest that religiosity among graduates is shaped by the family, religious institutions, and the local community to a degree no less than that of the school. Accordingly, based on the sample data, the school appears to play a more distinct role in civic-social values, such as coexistence, compared to its role in deepening religiosity as a broader individual and social experience.

In conclusion, methodological constraints impose limits on the generalization of the results; the sample size (N=94) remains limited and is not necessarily representative of the entire population of Christian school graduates in Jerusalem. Furthermore, the measurement relies on self-recall, which may be affected by factors of time, personal experience, or emotional nostalgia. Nevertheless, these results provide a meaningful and significant indicator: Christian schools demonstrate a strong role in maintaining social cohesion and strengthening identity, yet they appear less capable—according to the perceptions of a significant portion of graduates—of bridging the historical knowledge gap resulting from strict methodological constraints.

Therefore, the researchers emphasize that this data does not provide a final statistical generalization but rather offers preliminary indicators that map the educational reality in Jerusalem. Building upon this, the study recommends strengthening extracurricular programs concerned with history, narrative, and Jerusalemite memory, and linking identity education to social and professional support initiatives for graduates to bolster their living resilience. The researchers also suggest expanding the scope of the study in the future through a larger sample and a qualitative component (in-depth interviews) to interpret the observed variances in the data and deconstruct their causes with higher precision.

Results of the Qualitative Analysis of Interviews (In-Depth Study)

Based on semi-in-depth and semi-structured interviews with Christian school principals, «Grounded Theory» was used to extract codes and concepts. The analysis resulted in three «Core Categories» reflecting strategies of resilience and the circumvention of Israelization.

Analysis of the results of principals' responses following four questions addressed to them:

Exploiting Crises and Financial Pressure to Impose Methodological Paths
The responses of the principals (N=6) indicate that the exploitation of crises is viewed



as a structural pressure mechanism used to link financial continuity to the acceptance of educational systems or conditions that affect educational decision-making. In this sense, the crisis is not read merely as an emergency financial circumstance, but as a tool for redirecting the school at the level of curricula and identity, placing the administration before a delicate equation: protecting the educational mission on one hand, and securing the minimum conditions for operational survival on the other.

The strategies for dealing with this pressure are distributed across three paths, each of which appeared multiple times, reflecting a diversity of adaptation options. The first path is building funding alternatives through donations, tuition fees, and internal and external funding to compensate for the financial deficit. This can be described academically as a quest to build institutional financial resilience, reducing the school's vulnerability to blackmail through conditional funding. This path reveals a transition from reliance on a single source of support toward the engineering of a multi-channel resource network that protects educational decision-making.

The second path consists of value-based resistance through adherence to educational and national principles and the rejection of any conditions that compromise identity or the approved curricula. This response indicates that the curriculum is treated as a sovereign and normative boundary within the school, rather than a negotiable field, and that its preservation is considered a fundamental part of the school's institutional legitimacy and cultural mission—especially in a context where education is subject to attempts at restructuring.

In contrast, the third path presents a model of academic repositioning through the adoption of an international system in place of the *Tawjihi* (the Palestinian General Secondary Education Certificate). This option can be understood as a response seeking a wider margin of movement that ensures continuity and mitigates points of pressure. However, it raises a central research question regarding the conditions for its success: how is the relationship managed between an alternative academic framework and the components of national identity within the school, such that the methodological shift does not become a loophole that weakens the school's cultural function?

Participants unanimously agreed that the relationship with the Israeli educational authorities represents a case of financial and legal coercion. The interviews revealed that the Israeli announcement regarding the provision of 65% funding is more of a tool for political propaganda than an absolute financial reality. Principals (P1, P3) emphasized that the actual percentage that reaches the school's operational budget shrinks to approximately 40% in some institutions, particularly when the exorbitant costs of maintaining historic buildings are excluded.

Nevertheless, the researchers recognize that this percentage does not represent a general rule applicable to all Christian schools; variations exist that lead some institutions to receive percentages ranging between 50% and 60%, depending on specific administrative and legal factors. Therefore, the research avoids generalizing

these figures as a fixed statistical hypothesis and instead places them within the context of the volume and variance of financial pressures, and the use of conditional funding is used as a tool for political pressure to shape the features of the city's educational system.

This intersects with the concept of «soft colonialism» mentioned in the theoretical framework, where money is used as a tool for political control. It is a case of bartering educational sovereignty for institutional survival. While all principals shared the feeling of being subjected to financial blackmail, they differed in their methods of addressing it: some resorted to extreme austerity to reduce reliance on grants, while others expanded graduate support funds as a national alternative.

Administrative Obstacles and Their Impact on Planning and the Daily School Schedule

Regarding the question of administrative obstacles, the image of an unstable operating environment emerges, in which organizational determinants are intertwined with external constraints. Some responses framed the obstacles in a general way, linking them directly to mandates imposed by the occupation authorities. This suggests that the administration views external constraints as a comprehensive framework that pressures both planning and operations, affecting the school's ability to build stable, medium-term plans.

Other responses reveal clearly defined internal-organizational administrative obstacles: financial instability, a high volume of changing instructions, and a shortage of human resources. These elements can be interpreted within the concept of institutional uncertainty, where changing instructions and fluctuating resources increase the cost of administrative compliance and weaken the capacity for long-term planning. Furthermore, the human resource shortage reflects negatively on the quality of implementation and the ability to follow up on supportive programs (including those related to strengthening identity and extracurricular activities).

Some responses add a direct field dimension involving delays at checkpoints in the morning and the denial of summer permits for teachers and staff from the West Bank. This pattern of obstacles does not only pressure the administration but also impacts the regularity of learning itself, making the school day vulnerable to interruption or delay. This forces the school into a state of near-permanent emergency management: redistributing classes, creating compensation plans, and implementing alternative measures to ensure a minimum level of educational stability.

Roadmap for Survival Amidst Judaization: From Response to Strategy

The strategic vision for the future indicates a clear shift from reactive measures toward a deliberate, well-planned project for survival. Several responses explicitly noted the



implementation of systematic plans designed to safeguard identity, suggesting that school administrations view their challenges not as temporary hurdles, but as an enduring reality that requires conscious, long-term policy-making rather than situational fixes.

The essence of this roadmap is the cultivation of a generation that is deeply aware of its cause and identity through structured educational and awareness-building initiatives (31/). Semantically, this approach places the student at the very center of the resilience strategy. Identity is built pedagogically through a combination of knowledge, awareness, and practice, effectively transforming the school into an institution that produces and fortifies collective consciousness, rather than serving as a mere site for rote academic instruction.

In a complementary effort, other strategies emphasize the preservation of approved curricula that strengthen language, history, and identity, while simultaneously building supportive community partnerships. This framework reveals that the roadmap for resilience is not confined to the four walls of the classroom; it extends into a protective community network. These partnerships are viewed as vital levers for protection, resources, and meaning, utilized to increase the school's capacity for continuity and to break the isolation often imposed by a high-pressure environment.

Strategies for Cultivating Palestinian National Identity and Arab Belonging

The efforts to develop student identity are distributed across three integrated pedagogical pathways. While distinct, these pathways overlap and serve a single, unified objective.

The first pathway focuses on history and narrative, with an emphasis on educating students about the true history of the city and the ongoing attempts at forgery and «Judaization» practiced by the occupation. This approach suggests that identity is constructed by deconstructing competing narratives and re-establishing local memory as a form of counter-pedagogical knowledge intended to resist symbolic erasure.

The second pathway centers on curricula, values, and language. Here, identity development is linked to Arabic curricula, societal values, and the consolidation of a sense of Arab belonging. This reflects a vision of identity as a cognitive and value-based structure that is reshaped within the school through language as a cultural carrier, values as a behavioral system, and belonging as a collective consciousness formed through daily upbringing rather than mere slogans.

The third pathway emphasizes experience and practice through extracurricular activities designed to safeguard national identity. The importance of this path lies in its ability to move identity from the realm of abstract knowledge to the level of lived experience. Activities become a space for embodying and reinforcing belonging within both sentiment and behavior—a concept supported by educational literature, which posits that identity is strengthened as much by collective experience as it is by cognitive content.

Furthermore, the interviews revealed the existence of what can be termed «Circumventive Pedagogy.» Principals explained that while Israeli censorship redacts fundamental sections of the Palestinian curriculum, teachers engage in «resistant education» through

extracurricular channels. In this context, one principal remarked: “We teach what is in the book in front of the inspector, but we teach the truth of our history through drama classes and field trips.” These findings align with Nuseir’s (2018) observations regarding the duality of educational performance in Jerusalem, where educators are forced to balance the administrative requirements of the state with the values of the «Original Curriculum.»

Based on these findings, the theory of the «Reflexive Action of the Oppressed» (Paulo Freire, 1970) clearly emerges; the classroom and its parallel activities are transformed into a space for reclaiming a stolen consciousness. The researchers emphasize that invoking this theoretical framework is a scientific explanation for the actual practices revealed in the interviews—practices adopted by Christian schools as guardians of heritage through informal channels. This transforms the educational act in Jerusalem into a tool of conscious cultural resistance against all attempts at erasure.

Finally, the principals expressed a firm rejection of the term «Christian minority schools.» Participants stressed that the Christian school in Jerusalem is first and foremost a national institution with an ecclesiastical foundation. They asserted that the integration of Muslim and Christian students is a conscious strategy to strengthen social immunity against colonial policies of fragmentation.

Integrating the Findings: Quantitative and Qualitative Triangulation

By utilizing the process of ‘Research Triangulation’, several striking intersections have emerged that enhance the overall credibility of this study:

1. **Intersections:** Both the quantitative data (the questionnaire) and the qualitative accounts (the interviews) consistently identified coexistence as the highest value, proving that these schools have successfully fulfilled their role as a social incubator.
2. **Variances:** The questionnaire data indicated that teachers perceive a moderate level of regulatory pressure. In contrast, the interviews with principals revealed that this pressure is intense and direct at the administrative level. This suggests that school leadership serves as a buffer or shield, protecting the teaching staff so they can focus entirely on the educational process.

The application of “Grounded Theory” to this data leads us to the conclusion that Christian schools in Jerusalem practice what can be termed «Negotiated Resilience.» They do not engage in a direct confrontation with the occupation that would lead to their closure, nor do they succumb to its agenda in a way that dissolves their identity. Instead, they navigate the «gray areas» with a strategic leadership intelligence that preserves both their physical presence—the buildings and the students—and their symbolic presence—identity and awareness.

Drawing from these intersections between quantitative data and qualitative analysis,



which reveal the school's impact on identity and steadfastness, the study moves into its final stage—Chapter Five: Conclusions and Recommendations—to provide a forward-looking vision and practical proposals to support the continuity of these educational institutions in Jerusalem.

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

This chapter presents a summary of the study's findings in light of its research questions and hypotheses, followed by in-depth educational and sociological conclusions. It culminates in practical recommendations designed to strengthen the role of Christian schools in Jerusalem as bastions of identity and steadfastness (*sumud*).

Summary of Findings

Through the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data, the study reached the following conclusions:

1. **The Centrality of Coexistence:** The value of coexistence emerged as the highest-rated outcome for graduates, with a mean of 4.23. This proves the schools' success as a «safety valve» protecting the Jerusalemite social fabric from policies of fragmentation.
2. **The Crisis of Funding vs. Identity:** The study revealed a severe financial gap; actual funding ranges between 40% and 60%—depending on the school's institutional strength—contrary to Israeli claims of 65%. This subjects schools to a state of continuous financial colonialism.
3. **Educational Resistance (The Hidden Curriculum):** Despite the intense censorship of textbooks, teachers and principals demonstrated a high capacity for practicing «circumventive pedagogy» to compensate for the knowledge deficiency in national history and geography.
4. **Demographic Resilience:** The study demonstrated that the presence of Christian schools is one of the reasons why families remain in Jerusalem, thereby hindering the «silent transfer» targeted by the occupation.

Recommendations

Based on the results and discussions derived from the three study samples (graduates, principals, and teachers), a set of strategic and pedagogical recommendations can be formulated to strengthen the role of Christian schools in Jerusalem and their cultural and national resilience:

First: Recommendations for the General Secretariat of Christian Schools and Ecclesiastical Institutions

- 1. Financial Independence:** Work toward establishing a global sovereign endowment fund to support Jerusalem's schools, thereby reducing reliance on Israeli educational budgets that are conditioned upon «Israelization.»
- 2. Strengthening the Alternative Curriculum:** Develop supplementary educational guides focused on the history and national identity of Jerusalem to be taught as enrichment classes or extracurricular activities that are not subject to direct censorship.

Second: Recommendations at the National and International Levels

- 3. Official Support:** Demand that the Palestinian National Authority and the Arab League establish a special emergency budget for Jerusalem's schools to bridge the financial gap that the occupation uses to blackmail these institutions.
- 4. Human Rights Documentation:** Raise the issue of the «Israelization» of education in international forums (such as UNESCO) as a threat to cultural diversity and the right to education for people living under occupation.

Third: Recommendations for School Principals and Teachers

- 5. Developing Intellectual Immunity:** Intensify national awareness programs for students to counter the distorted narratives they are exposed to in the broader public space in Jerusalem.
- 6. Activating Graduate Networks:** Transform alumni associations into a powerful advocacy and support force that contributes both financially and morally to the schools' continuity.

In conclusion, the role of the school in Jerusalem can be likened to a dam: it does not only serve to prevent the erosion of identity but must also be structurally strengthened from within through independent funding and from without through partnerships. It is essential to ensure that those living behind this dam are equipped with all the knowledge necessary to stand firm against external storms.



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Appendices: Research Instruments

Research Instrument: Graduates' Questionnaire

Part One: Preliminary Data

- 1. Graduation Year:** () 1980 and earlier; () 2000 and earlier; () 2010 and earlier; () 2024 and earlier.
- 2. Age of Respondent:** () 18–30 years: Represents recent graduates and current «Israelization» challenges. () 31–50 years: Lived through the transition from the Jordanian to the Palestinian curriculum. () Over 50 years: Lived through the post-1967 era and the initial stages of occupation pressure.

Note: A score of 1 indicates a «Very Low Degree,» increasing to 5, which indicates a «Very High Degree.»

Dimension 1: The School's Role in Strengthening National Identity (Applying Cultural Identity Theories)						
No.	Paragraph	1	2	3	4	5
1	The school is keen to commemorate Palestinian national occasions as part of its educational mission.					
2	The school provides additional educational content to compensate for the deficiency in the Palestinian historical narrative resulting from censorship.					
3	The school contributes to strengthening the values of coexistence between Muslim and Christian students as a shield against social fragmentation.					
4	Graduates feel a strong sense of belonging to the Arab identity of Jerusalem thanks to the school environment.					
5	Teachers in Christian schools in Jerusalem played a fundamental role in strengthening our understanding of our role and the value of our presence in Jerusalem.					
6	The educational environment in the Christian school in Jerusalem contributed to shaping my national character.					
7	The school environment in the Christian school in Jerusalem strengthened my belonging to my city, Jerusalem.					
8	Christian schools in Jerusalem strengthened my religious belief.					
9	The school helped me build an accurate knowledge base about the history of Palestine and Jerusalem.					
10	The Christian school contributed to strengthening my determination to remain and live in Jerusalem despite difficult living and political challenges.					

Research Instrument: Teachers' Questionnaire

Preliminary Data: (Age, Specialization, Years of experience in Christian schools in Jerusalem).

Dimension 2: Strengthening National Identity and Confronting Curriculum Israelization (Applying Soft Colonialism Theory)

1	Through my work, I have contributed to strengthening students' knowledge of their national identity and their sense of Arab belonging.					
2	Through my work, I have helped clarify misconceptions prevalent among students that are disseminated by the Zionist occupation.					
3	I face difficulty in teaching the Palestinian curriculum as a result of the censorship and redaction practiced by the Jerusalem Municipality.					
4	I am forced to resort to additional activities to compensate for national content redacted from textbooks.					
5	The administration of the Christian school grants me a degree of academic freedom to discuss Palestinian national issues clearly with the students.					
6	I feel professional or regulatory pressure when discussing the Arab history of Jerusalem in light of threats to revoke school licenses.					
7	I am keen to link scientific or literary lessons to the geographical and historical reality of Jerusalem as the capital of Palestine.					
8	I seek to strengthen the intellectual immunity of students to confront attempts at distorting national consciousness that they are exposed to outside the school.					
9	I focus in my educational discourse on the idea that the Christian presence in Jerusalem is a «national bond» rather than just a religious presence.					
10	I believe the Christian school succeeds in producing a generation capable of holding onto its land despite all attempts at «silent transfer.»					

Interview Protocol for Christian School Principals in Jerusalem

Principal Interviews: Measuring Leadership Strategies and Crisis Management

Objective: To understand how leadership manages financial and political crises and navigates «soft colonialism.»

Interview Themes:

- Funding vs. «Israelization»:** How does the administration handle the «crisis exploitation» strategy used by occupation authorities to impose curricula in exchange for financial support? (Qadah, 2024).
- Structural Administrative Problems:** What are the most prominent administrative obstacles documented in the Al-Shoumali (2016) study that continue to impact your planning through 2025?
- Future Vision:** How is the Christian school mapping its roadmap for survival and the preservation of national identity amidst accelerating «Judaization» plans?
- Consolidating National Belonging and Identity:** How do you work to solidify the Palestinian national identity and Arab belonging of students in Christian schools in Jerusalem?