

Political Alienation Among Palestinian Refugees In The Diaspora

Bashir Ahmad

Abstract

The current thesis aims to investigate the political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora. The study approached on both the literature of theoretical and empirical work. The importance of the study is that it is the first topic, which proposes political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora, to the author's knowledge using a large sample that covered all Palestinian refugees worldwide. The study is considered one of the pioneering studies that examined this subject due to the scarcity of studies that dealt with the issue of political alienation among Palestinian refugees. The study constituted an important reference for researchers who are interested in the issue of political alienation in general, in addition to researchers interested in the issue of Palestinian question in particular.

To achieve the study aims, the study adopted the descriptive method used a triangulation approach of quantitative and qualitative designs, and a questionnaire, which is appropriate to the exploratory nature of the research, which will provide more meaningful in-depth data. The target population consists of Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora during 2021 that includes 15,378,205 Palestinians. The overall sample composed of nine thousands five hundred and ninety-eight Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora (5822 males and 3776 females) 15 years of age or above stratifiedly selected, due to region. The participants were from, Palestine, neighbor countries, Arab countries, South America, Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia.

Political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora was evaluated using an index of a 40-item scale. A 5-point Likert scale (Strongly agree, agree, neither, disagree and strongly disagree) was used to assess the political alienation among the sampled population through an online survey that was launched on May 19, 2021, and the data were collected for a period of twelve months. Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS-23).

In total, nine thousands five hundred and ninety-eight were conducted. Respondents were above 15 and 87 years of age (M 33.38, SD 13.64); and the vast majority (82.9%) were married. Males represented 60.7% of the participants, while the remaining 39.3% were females. Half (49.4%) of

the respondents had a secondary degree, and almost 48.3% had highly religious committed. The majority (57.4%) were working, and had on average of 5.56 family members, with a range of 1 to 15 (SD 2.45). Party affiliation represented 55.8% of the participants, while the remaining 44.2% do not have any party affiliation; and the majority (58.4%) were independent, (22.6%) were from Fateh, (13.6%) from Islamic trends (Hamas, Islamic Jihad), (3.7%) from left Trends (People's, Democracy, FDA, People's Party), and (1.8%) from other political fractions

The findings showed that, the political alienation as experienced by the sample of nine thousands five hundred and eighty-nine Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora was moderate (M 3.20 SD 0.54). Of the Palestinian refugees surveyed in the Diaspora, 64% preserved a moderate level of political alienation.

Furthermore, the study explored the demographic breakdown over the political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora with the aim of identifying any differences. Findings showed that all of the study independent variables were significant predictors for the political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora that are, gender, age, marital status, number of family members, educational level, religion commitment, relation to work force, Political party affiliation, fraction affiliation, and the religion commitment.

In light of the study findings and the discussion, the study recommends, given the concept of political socialization the utmost importance in the teaching curriculum and the different media outlet, it is necessary to activate the political participation of the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora, by taking charge of the refugees themselves or choosing their representative in any future solutions to their just cause, activating all official and popular institutions to support the Palestinian refugee cause, which is the basis of the Palestinian cause, and since there is large proportion of politically independents, the study recommends the emergence of a new party linked to the Palestinian refugee issues, which will have a prominent role in the conflict solution, especially the political participation, the right of return, and the right to self-determination. Holding the Palestinian elections as soon as possible with the participation of all Palestinian factions and all Palestinians in the Diaspora. Empowerment the role of women in the Palestinian political life through awareness programs and amending the mechanisms of the Palestinian political system.

Keywords: Political alienation, political socialization, political participation, Nakba, refugees, Diaspora, Palestine.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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Political Alienation Among Palestinian Refugees In The Diaspora

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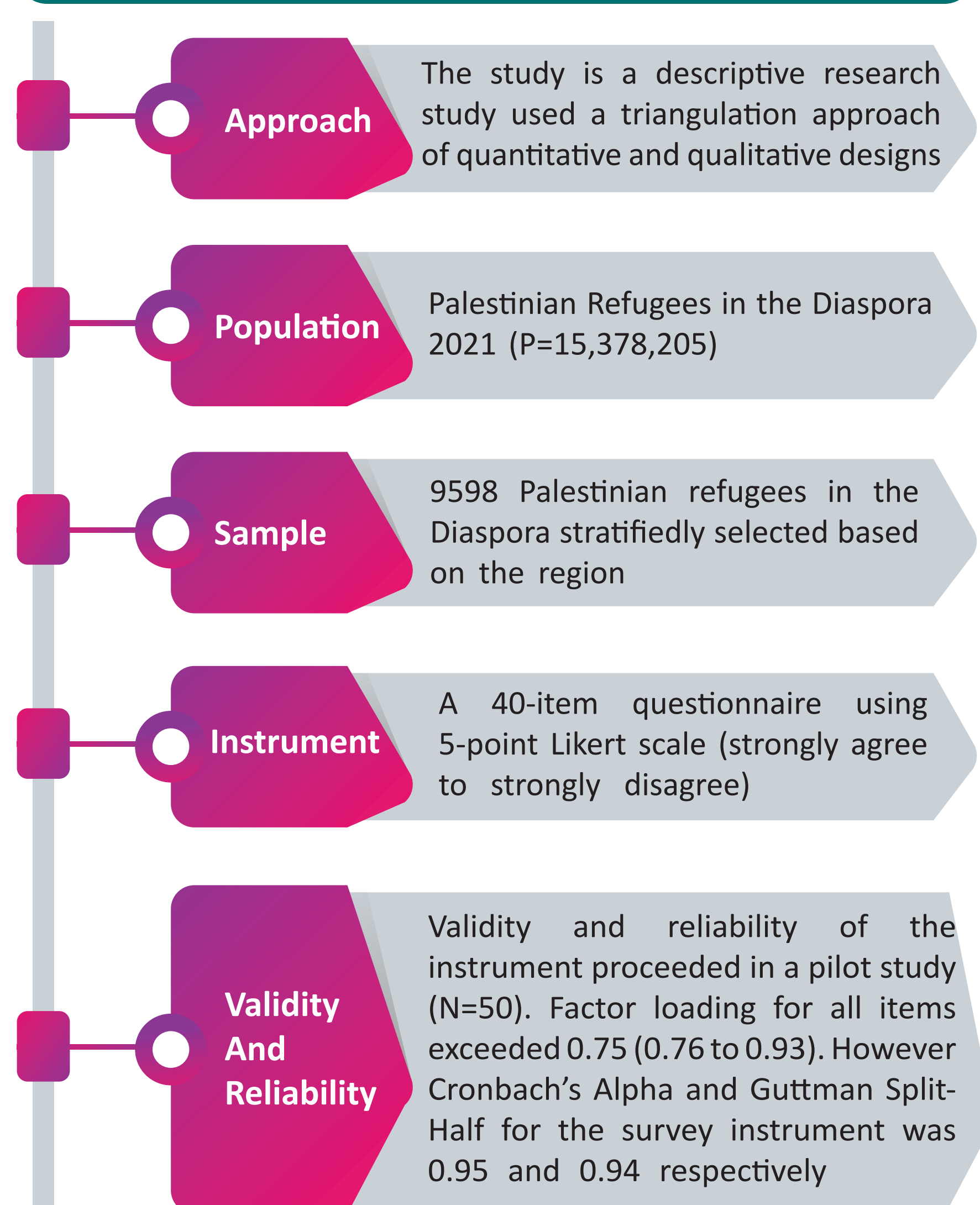
INTRODUCTION

- Political Alienation is a psychological phenomenon that spread among individuals, making them feel relatively separate from themselves and their societies (Seeman, 1959).
- Historically, the term alienation has had various uses in the religious, philosophical, psychological and political heritage. Weakliem and Borch (2006: 415) defined alienation as “a feeling of poor attachment to the central institutions of society”.
- Marx addressed the alienation that accompanies productive processes from four angles: Alienation of the worker from the product of his work, his work, from himself and from others (Marx & Friedrich, 1976).
- The isolation of man from his traditional bonds and his distance from social solidarity is the source of his alienation in modern society (Durkheim, 1893).
- Azzam (1997) states that most of the studies that addressed the political alienation revolved mostly around behavior of voters.
- Palestinian refugees are living under miserable humanitarian conditions. There is no crime in modern history equivalent to the crime of expelling Palestinians from their homes in 1948, which was later called the “Nakba of Palestine” (Abu Sitteh, 2001).
- The statement of the problem lies in identifying the prevalence of the political alienation among the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora.
- The importance of the current study stems from the fact that it discusses a new and important topic in the Palestinian question.

OBJECTIVES

- Exploring the level of political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora.
- Addressing the indicators of political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora.
- Exploring the demography breakdown over political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora, with the aim of identifying any statistically significant differences.

METHODS



FINDINGS

The Distribution Of Sample

Fig 1: Sample Distribution By Gender

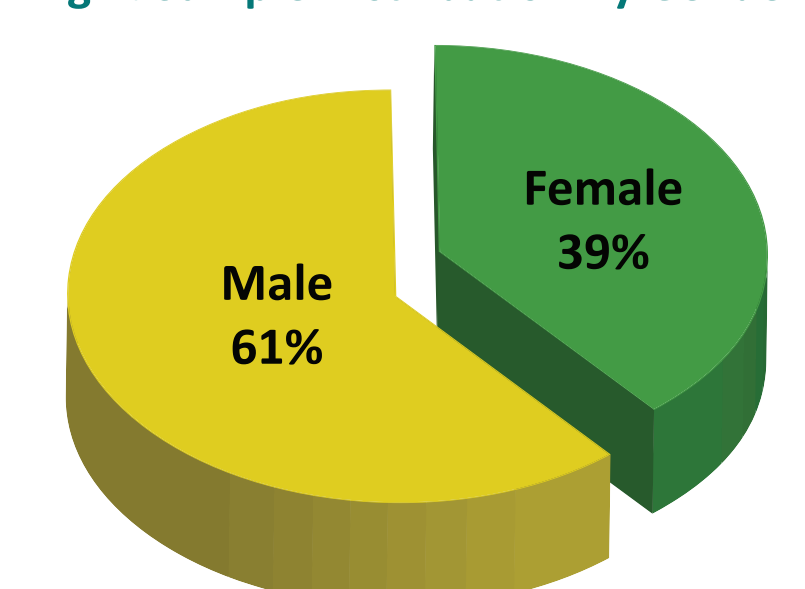


Fig 2: Sample Distribution By Parity Affiliation

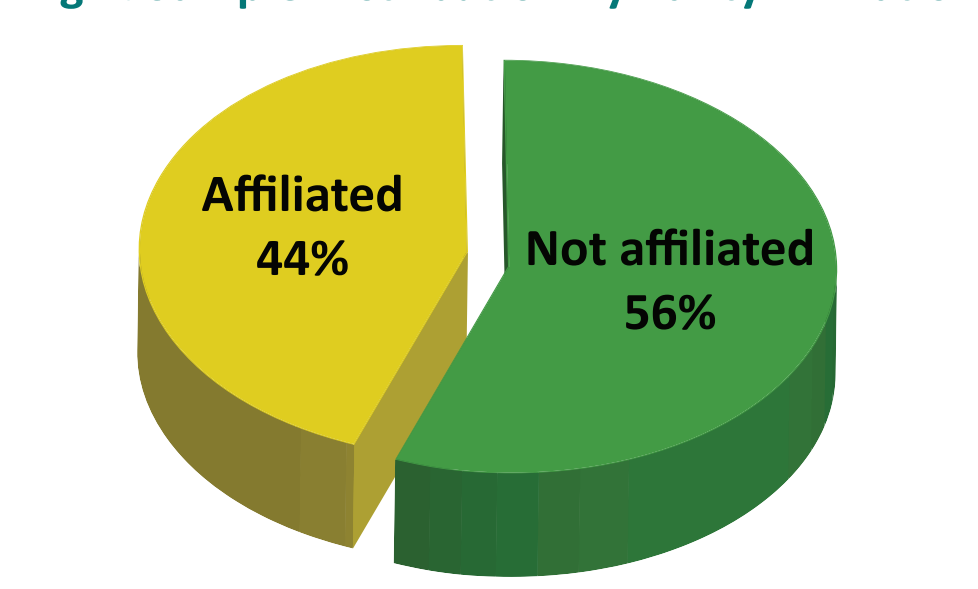


Fig 3: Sample Distribution By Region

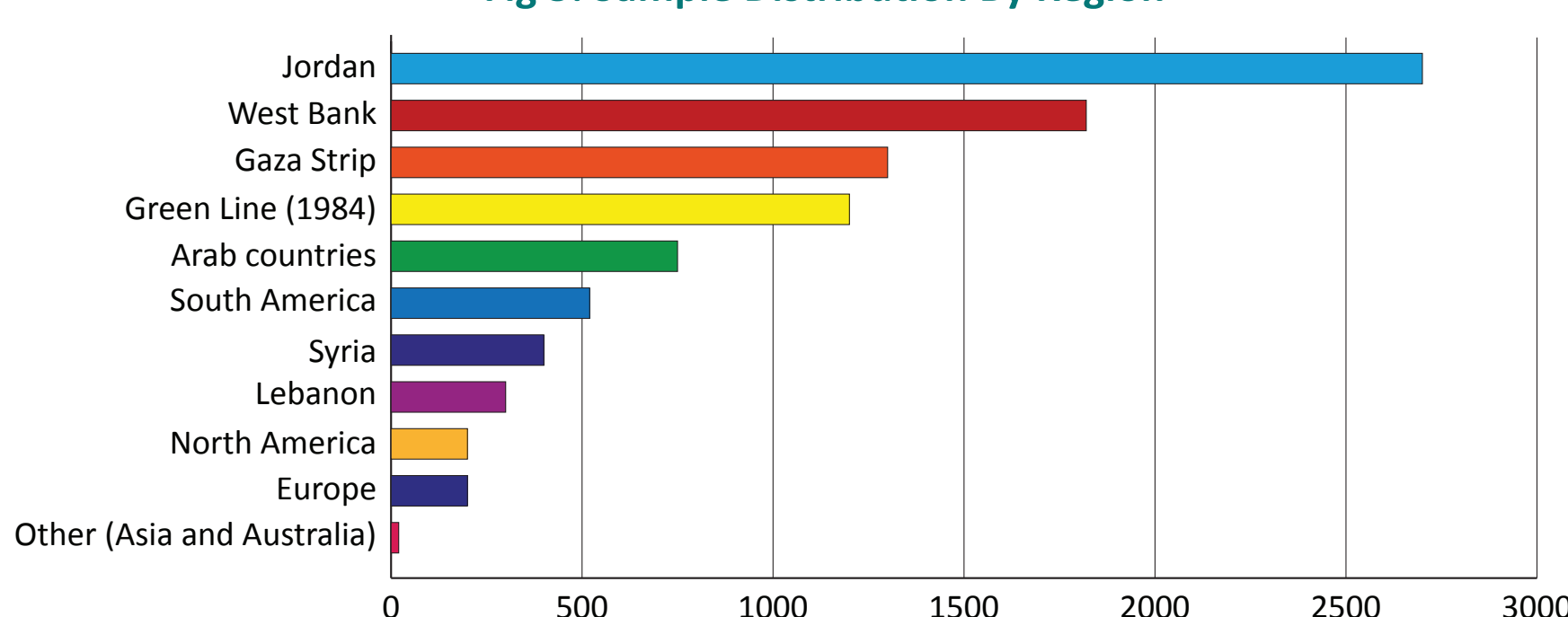


Table1: Number, mean, standard deviation, and percentage of political alienation among Palestinian refugees in Diaspora

Variable	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent %
Political alienation total score	9598	3.20	0.54	64.0

*Mean out of 5 points.

Table2: Mean scores, standard deviation, and percentage for the indicators of political alienation among Palestinian refugees in Diaspora ranked in a descending order

Political Alienation Indicators	Mean	Std. Deviation	Percent %
A good politician is good whether his name is Muhammad or Hanna	3.70	1.27	74.0
Every person has the right to express his political ideas even if most people have different views	3.68	1.23	73.6
I do not feel comfortable with the margin of political freedom in our Palestinian society	3.64	1.23	72.8
What matters for political entities is the number of votes and not the ideas of the electorate	3.56	1.25	71.2
No matter the outcome, political violence cannot be justified	3.55	1.29	71.0
The fear from political action in our Palestinian society is realistic and not exaggerated	3.51	1.15	70.2

- Political alienation among Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora was moderate (M 3.20, SD 0.54).
- Independent Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora scored a higher level of political alienation.
- Palestinian refugees in Syria Diaspora scored a higher level of political alienation.
- Aged Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora reported more political alienation than youth.
- Political alienation decrease substantially among religious Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora.
- Palestinian refugee females in the Diaspora scored a higher level of political alienation than males.
- Non-working Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora experienced a higher level of political alienation.
- Non-affiliated Palestinian refugees experienced a higher level of political alienation.
- Single Palestinian refugees scored a higher level of political alienation.
- Less-educated Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora scored a higher level of political alienation.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Given the concept of political socialization the utmost importance in the Palestinian curriculum and the different media outlet.
- It is necessary to activate the political participation of the Palestinian refugees in the Diaspora, by taking charge of the refugees themselves or choosing their representative in any future solutions to their just cause.
- Activating all official and popular institutions to support the Palestinian refugee cause, which is the basis of the Palestinian cause.
- Since there is large proportion of politically independents, the study recommends the emergence of a new party linked to the Palestinian refugee issues, which will have a prominent role in the conflict solution, especially the political participation, the right of return, and the right to self-determination.
- Holding the Palestinian elections as soon as possible with the participation of all Palestinian factions and all Palestinians in the Diaspora.
- Empowerment the role of women in the Palestinian political life through awareness programs and amending the mechanisms of the Palestinian political system.
- Further studies are essential to expand understanding of the political alienation in the Palestinian occupied society.

CONCLUSION

- Political participation and the freedom of opinion expression is a measure of subjective sense of community that brings a considerable positive impact towards individuals and the society.
- On 15 May 1948, the Zionist Movement declared the formation of “Israel: on 78% of the Palestinian lands.
- 74 years of the Nakba, Palestinians refugees in the Diaspora are still up till this present moment waiting for a political decision to put an end to their daily pain and suffering.
- The study confirmed the value of political participation in the Palestinian occupied society. More than half of the participants scored a moderate level on political alienation scale.
- Since 2007, Palestinians were unable to hold elections on a regular basis under the on-going Israeli occupation.

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