

Cultural Identity Theory Impact in Boosting National Identity, Palestinian Media Elites' Views

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Abstract

Objectives: The study aims to verify the impact of the Cultural Identity Theory in boosting National identity from the Palestinian Media Elites' view. Therefore, the researchers employed Social Identity theory to study how digital platforms are employed by media elites to integrate individuals into groups in order to strengthen their National identity, in addition to employ identity theory for studying the use of Cultural Identity Theory to preserve cultural heritage and disseminate Palestinian culture. They also employed immunization theory to learn how to protect National identity from forgery and misinformation, and to confront negative messages against it. **Methodology:** The researchers followed the mixed approach that combines the quantitative approach and the qualitative one. **Results:** The study concluded that the impact of Cultural Identity Theory in strengthening National identity from the media elites' view was significant in terms of the Arithmetic Average (3.88). Results showed that Cultural Identity Theory and media elites have a significant impact on foreign diplomatic activity, and that Social Identity theory contributes significantly to boost National identity through the use of digital diplomacy, and that the theory of cultural identity has a major role in boosting the National identity by preserving cultural heritage in particular, and heritage in general, and that the theory of immunization contributes to protecting and boosting the National identity among the Palestinian people, and denies false negative narratives against the Palestinian National Identity. **Conclusion:** The necessity to boost the role of Palestinian Media Elites in developing Cultural Identity Theory, and to encourage cooperation between the governmental bodies and media elites in order to boost their role in digital diplomatic communication, and work to study mechanisms for integrating social and cultural identity concepts into Cultural Identity Theory strategies, with determining methods for responding to negative content through the use of digital platforms.

Keywords

Diplomacy, Digital Diplomacy, Cultural Identity Theory, National Identity, Palestinian Media Elite

1. Introduction

Diplomacy in our era is an important weapon for obtaining rights in good ways, thus, the fields have multiplied and diversified accordingly, including the official and popular fields e.g. sports, social, and economic.

Diplomacy develops with the development of the new world, which leads to the emergence of multiple means of diplomacy, including: representation, negotiation, and communication with institutions, states, and governments that come under the umbrella of diplomacy (Al-Sharafi, 2020).

Diplomacy has many definitions in the humanities, the most prominent of which was Rivier's definition, who put forward three meanings for the word diplomacy. **First**, "It means science and art of representing countries and negotiations". **Second**, "Diplomacy is the group of people who perform the diplomatic function, either by working in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or abroad." **Third**, "It refers to the job, or the diplomatic profession itself" (Al-Rashdan & Al-Mousa, 2019).

Popular diplomacy is the development that occurred on diplomacy in the 20th century, due to the scientific and technological development in various means of communication. It is a form of popular diplomacy connected to the masses. Therefore, communication with the people has given popular diplomacy a popular public opinion that diplomacy seeks to gain and support. Diplomacy, in its popular concept, addresses the people and communicates with them through modern means that make addressing and confrontation possible (Ben Saeed, 2017).

Thus, the important and major role played by media, whether at local or international levels, is apparent, especially, in diplomatic work, and digital popular diplomacy in particular.

Observer of the Arab scene and the political transformations that occurred after what was called the Arab Spring, showed how the media influenced many of the policies of Arab countries, and the removal of existing regimes and the introduction of new ones, and the increase in its role in monitoring many world and local events in a way that prompted many peoples to evaluate their relationship and policy with each other negatively or positively (Al-Shami, 2011).

Digital diplomacy has become an essential and effective part alongside traditional diplomacy. The practice aims to implement countries' plan to enhance their image and build public opinion in favor of their policies by employing digital communication technology, most notably social media networks, which have recently become a platform for practicing public and popular diplomacy activities.

This new diplomacy has formed what is known as “soft power” as a means of expressing the communication and political goals sought by governments, interest groups, political elites, and activists in order to build a good reputation and positive influence on world public opinion. Thus, digital media is employed to reach these audiences (Abdul Razzaq, 2021).

The digital diplomacy in Palestine is not in its best condition, as Palestine ranked 82 in the international classification on that in 2018, after it was 72 in 2017, which means a very late position, close to Nepal, Bolivia, and Afghanistan States.

In fact, the Palestinian issue occupies an important position in the interest of the international community, due to the Israeli Occupation and injustice inflicted on the Palestinian people (Al-Taluli, Abu Al-Rus, & Abu Amr, 2019).

We need to enter the field of digital diplomacy, armed with content and issues that carry humanitarian dimensions, which can be marketed easily and simply, to enhance the national and cultural identity, and advance it globally, to become an effective tool in confronting the Occupation.

It is necessary to move diplomatically outside the recognized borders, to introduce the Palestinian Cause and gain support for it, and address other nations in their own language, by disseminating videos and short films about history and heritage, and all thing related to our national and cultural identity (Gulf Center for Studies and Research, 2019).

The National identity is considered a reflection of society, and it is one of the cultural and social images of individuals, as it affects their lives and is reflected on those around them and their production in the environment where they live.

The concept of identity is the individual feeling of their formal, intellectual, and performance components. As for nationalism, it is the feeling of individuals and groups belonging to the land (Al-Ghadami, 2023).

The concept of National identity “is an aspect of Social Identity, which is formed as a result of a set of political, economic and social factors, and the cultural commonalities of a certain sect that have a sense of connection to the entity of society; as it links it to the individual feeling, which is called membership, as if it is a tangible sensory feeling that affects all aspects of life; when the commonalities and ties that unite individuals are one, homogeneity is achieved that increases strength and distinction” (Windari, 2021).

The Digital Popular Diplomacy is considered an essential tool for boosting National identity and influencing world public opinion. In 21st century, digital popular diplomacy has become a means of exporting popular positions on important issues that can contribute to informing the world of the issues of occupied peoples, and building a world opinion that can influence governments and colonizing countries.

The Popular Diplomacy uses multiple methods from organizing marches and demonstrations to academic and cultural partnerships, relying on multiple means such as: websites and social media. It can be a lever for political action and

influencing public opinion (Jarrar, 2023).

Consequently, it becomes clear that the media elites, including journalists and media professionals, have an important role in boosting the National identity, through broadcasting television programs on Palestine TV, through art, or by allocating spaces dedicated to the media message to refine the National identity.

Not only mission of the media elites focus on publishing the news and transmitting events, but it also instills the national spirit in societies, establishing the concept of belonging to the homeland, spreading awareness among citizens, and strengthening the National identity.

Problem:

The problem of the study was represented in verifying the impact of Cultural Identity Theory in boosting National identity, by employing the media elites' role in verifying this, and the fact that the Palestinian people need to strengthen their national and cultural identity after their division, and the inability of the Palestinian National Authority to emulate successful models in the field of digital diplomacy due to the presence of many challenges, of which is, the Israeli occupation, which imposed the establishment of several barriers to building official institutions that have the ability to create strong digital diplomacy, which was mentioned in the Al-Amoudi's study (2018).

This indicates that shortcomings in the application of digital diplomacy at the local level are existed, as the researchers see that the Palestinian people are trying to strengthen their National identity and highlight their national culture, and preserve their cultural heritage that the Israeli occupation has obliterated through various media, as it was ranked according to international statistics related to the effectiveness of digital diplomacy compared to Israel (Alyan & Abu Arqoub, 2023), which prompted the researchers to identify the reasons of weakness in the application of Cultural Identity Theory to boost the National identity and culture among the Palestinian people, and then to search for strategies and methods that help in developing and fortifying the National identity, as well as promoting it at international level, through media means, and empower the role of media professionals and journalists, who work in institutions and media channels by broadcasting programs that crystallize the National identity.

We, the Palestinians are exposed to attempts to obliterate our national and cultural identity due to the Israeli occupation, so we need someone to spread the national message, and deliver it to others, and they are the media elites, whose role is to strengthen belonging to the homeland, and strengthen the National identity through representation and media programs, and other media means, though the researchers believe that it is necessary to address the impact of the Cultural Identity Theory in strengthening the National identity from our elites' view.

2. Importance

Theoretical Importance:

The importance of the study can be noticed in the topic it addresses, as digital

popular diplomacy is considered one of the new topics, and it is one of the most important pillars that increase the power of the new media era, as popular diplomacy and digital diplomacy are important tools in implementing the foreign policy of countries. It is essential to pay them attention, to be studied, and providing information that helps the Cultural Identity Theory to enhance the National identity of citizens, and the use of theories that are consistent with this study i.e. the three “Social Identity, cultural identity, and immunization” theories, which enhance National identity by spreading the media message through which the Palestinian people seek to preserve their national and cultural identity.

Practical Importance:

The importance of the study also appears in the “studied topic” that combines the study variables as Cultural Identity Theory is considered one of the important topics that help strengthen National identity and spread national culture. This is done through media elites that help deliver the message to other States. To the researchers’ best knowledge, this is one of few studies that dealt with Cultural Identity Theory and National identity, and it is enrichment for Arab libraries. It helps public relations’ researchers to benefit from its results and recommendations that were reached and work to apply them on the ground. Moreover, it helps them in conducting more new studies related to Cultural Identity Theory and National identity, and opens the way for them to complete what it relied on so as to come out with new and modern results.

Objectives:

- Knowing Cultural Identity Theory’s role in foreign diplomatic activity, from the Palestinian Media Elites’ perspective.
- Disclosing the extent to which Social Identity theory contributes to Cultural Identity Theory in boosting National identity.
- Exploring how to apply cultural identity theory in Cultural Identity Theory to boost National identity from the Palestinian Media Elites’ perspective.
- Studying how to apply immunization theory in Cultural Identity Theory in strengthening National identity from the perspective of Palestinian Media Elites.

Earlier Studies:

The [Abu Hilal’s study \(2021\)](#): it diagnosed the reality of Palestinian digital diplomacy, identify its obstacles, present mechanisms for its development, present the stages of Arab-Israeli normalization, and work to analyze & evaluate the role of Palestinian digital diplomacy in confronting and encountering it.

The study followed several approaches, named: the historical approach, the descriptive analytical approach, the case study approach, and the political behavior analysis approach. It concluded that the role of Palestinian digital diplomacy on the official side to confront the waves of Arab-Israeli normalization is limited, and that the superiority of Israeli digital diplomacy has sometimes affected Arab circles.

The study showed that there is a clear role for Cultural Identity Theory in

confronting the normalization process and its repercussions in Palestine, Arab, and international level.

The Humaid's study (Alam et al., 2021): The study aimed to identify the mechanisms for boosting digital diplomacy, by using social media platforms and digital media tools, to reach foreign audiences, in addition to knowing the impact of the "Israel Speaks Arabic" page on the FB platform launched by the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to its followers in the Arab world. It used the descriptive and analytical approaches using the content analysis tool, by analyzing about 484 posts published by "Israel Speaks Arabic" page, between April 13, 2020 and Dec. 13, 2020.

The study found that the "Israel Speaks Arabic" page mostly promotes peace topics, it also found a significant increase in the number of posts after the UAE signed the normalization agreement with Israel in August 2020, and that Israel effectively employs digital diplomacy tools to encourage online interaction with Arab audiences, through soft content, and avoids publishing contradictive ones.

The Radi's study (2021): it aimed to know the role of Iraqi media in forming the digital diplomacy in International Relations. The study was applied to a random sample of 100 male and female media professionals working in the three newspapers named: "Al-Sabah, Al-Zaman, and Al-Sharq Al-Awsat".

The questionnaire was used as a tool for collecting data. The study showed that the current media work mechanism in Iraqi diplomacy was a relationship ranging between centralization and decentralization according to the circumstances and tasks, and showed the importance of face-to-face communication from the embassy workers' viewpoint.

The results pointed out the 10 problems that are facing the media role of Iraqi embassies from its workers, where "inadequate financial budgets for the necessary media activities" ranked first, while "the problem of language differences with the host country" ranked second, and "the problem of lack of media competencies" ranked third.

The Islah Study (2020): The study aimed to identify the role of digital diplomacy in political and diplomatic activity in Palestine from the media and political elites' view. The study followed the survey and the descriptive analytical method, and was applied to a sample of 105 individuals from academics in the political and media elites working in media field. The survey and interview newspaper were used as tools to collect data about the study.

The study showed that the role of digital diplomacy in enhancing Palestinian diplomatic work from media and political elites' view was high at (74.54%), and that Palestinian digital diplomacy has the ability to keep pace with world developments in modern diplomatic work at an average level of (59.3%), which means that Palestinian Digital Diplomacy has the ability to attract the public at an average level of (62.09%).

The Al-Bluissa's study (2019): The study aimed to verify how information and communication technology affects diplomacy, negatively or positively, and also to follow-up the use of modern social media in Iraq and Turkey, and its impact on

relations between the two States.

The study followed the historical descriptive approach with its tool of case study and content analysis of documents and studies.

It concluded that diplomacy is one of the most important means of foreign policy for all countries in the world, so countries seek to develop these means in all available ways to serve foreign interests, and States have begun to use the telegraph, telephone, and access to means connected to the Internet, as a means of social communication, where the name of diplomacy associated with these means becomes: electronic or digital diplomacy, FB diplomacy or Twitter diplomacy, or even telephone diplomacy.

The **Engström's study (2019)**: The study aimed to track the factors that determine the use of social media in embassies. It followed the descriptive and analytical approach using the comprehensive survey tool and content analysis.

The study showed that institutional arrangements and organizational factors contribute to shaping the way embassy's staff use social media, and foreign ministries, including their external representation, must develop better strategies to deal with institutional restrictions through modifying organizational practices.

Commenting on Earlier Studies:

After the researchers reviewed the earlier studies above, one can notice that the current study in its subject and objective, which focuses on the impact of digital popular diplomacy to boost the National identity, and know the media elites' view on that, as well as, review the earlier studies, and their results, and benefiting from them. The earlier study was used to identify the research gap and the questions, know the study theories: "Social Identity theory, cultural identity theory, and immunization theory", the role of digital popular diplomacy in promoting National identity, build and develop the theoretical framework, build study tools (questionnaire, interview), interpret, analyze and interpret the study results.

To the researchers best' knowledge, what distinguishes this study is that, it is the first in Palestine, which has combined the concepts of digital popular diplomacy, promoted National identity, and used the mixed method.

3. Theoretical Framework

First: Digital Diplomacy

Definition of Digital Diplomacy

The Digital Diplomacy is an extension for Traditional Popular Diplomacy in communication among the official-national institutions. It is characterized by being open, direct and interactive communication. It is established in the short and long term, and aims to build soft power that serves national goals and international orientations (**Abdullah, 2022**).

The Digital diplomacy is known as: "The use of various social media to transmit important messages and information among States, for the purpose of openness and achieving diplomatic goals" (**Priyanto et al., 2020**).

Digital Diplomacy Objectives

Several objectives were achieved by digital diplomacy, of which: unifying efforts between State's departments, to manage relevant resources, and benefit from its human wealth to achieve national interests abroad, increase its soft power, maintain communication with citizens in virtual space, and provide new communication tools in order to listen to citizens, communicate with them, influence them through the use of the State's diplomatic messages via the Internet, and benefit from the availability of information, and use it in developing the State's public policies, and help anticipate emerging social and political movements, respond to them, and enrich consular communications with citizens, and establish direct self-communication channels with citizens traveling outside the State, so that they can be communicated with in crises (Hadi & Ajrash, 2021).

Second: Popular Diplomacy

The Popular Diplomacy was defined as: "The diplomatic activities directed to address the popular public through popular means, to create direct relations among peoples. Knowing that the technological and scientific progress has helped in its emergence" (Ben Saeed, 2017: p. 8).

Popular Diplomacy is defined as "the efforts of a government in one State is to influence public opinion, and its elites, with the aim of bringing about a change in the foreign policy of the targeted State in favor of the State making the effort", (Cassidy & Manor, 2015: pp. 33-43).

Elements of Popular Diplomacy

The Popular Diplomacy has several elements; it is a group of people, an organization, or popular bodies that send messages to form a mental image on it in the minds of others. It is in itself a communication message that includes promises, justifications, selected content, and uses means to send these messages either through electronic methods, such as, television, radio, websites, and social media pages, or through direct self-communications, such as, student exchange, sending media and journalistic delegations... etc, as well as the benefited party or parties receiving this message, i.e. the parties to which the messages are sent, such as, specific States, and the message sent by the concerned State. So the message is clear with specific objectives (Mustafa & Abdul Fattah, 2007).

Basis of Popular Diplomacy

William DeVelción identified the basis of multi-track Popular Diplomacy, as follows:

- Working to strengthen personal relationships between groups in all aspects of life. Long-term commitment, a culture of synergy that respects the cultural differences of all segments of society.
- Welcoming creative interaction between cultures supports cooperative partnerships between local parties and other institutions.
- Using multiple technologies, techniques and innovates new methods of communication, facilitates helping components of society to bear responsibility.
- Educating people to contribute to bringing about change and transformation within their societies, the state enters into a relationship with all parties.

- Leaving the door open to community initiatives, relies on research and education activities and sharing knowledge with others.
- Building relationships of mutual trust between parties within society. Encouraging changes at the level of beliefs, values and behaviors.
- Adopting the option of participation (Wadi, 2013).

Third: National identity

National Identity Concept

The National identity is one of the newest concepts, unlike many social concepts, as its emergence was linked to the emergence of sociology theories, which showed the existence of a correlation between the concept of identity and belonging to the group (Kamal El-Din & Al-Amer, 2020).

The National identity is a set of qualities and characteristics that distinguish a nation, society, or homeland from others. It shapes its essence, existence, and distinctive personality (Ghanem & Jumaa, 2022).

National Identity Components

The National identity represents a set of norms, customs, values, language, religion, history, and common material things that are considered a source of social solidarity among individuals. Components of the National identity of any society are based on:

- Unity of religion and language.
- A common national culture.
- A common historical memory.
- A common geographical field.
- A flag, which is a moral symbol possessed by every country that unites the people of the nation under its banner (Al-Molaji, 2011).

National Identity Functions

There are a set of important functions for National identity of any society, that ensure the continuity of the nation, as it unites its people with all its components, and it works to achieve high degrees of homogeneity and harmony among the people of the same nation, bringing them together on common grounds, and represents the personal National identity of the nation that maintains its voice before other nations (Ibn Ammar, 2019: p. 140).

Fourth: Media Elites

The word elite in Arabic is derived from the verb “elect”, which means to choose. So, the elites of the people mean their best. (Ibn Manzur, 2004).

Therefore, the media elite are “those with great experience and giving in media that has made them influential and weighty among the various audiences. Moreover, media professionals also give them great consideration to benefit from their comments and information due to the extensive experience they possess through working in various media fields.” (Jassim, 2020).

The Italian researchers Mosca and Pareto had the greatest impact on the stretch of this concept. Their viewpoint is that the elite is a small group of people, who have met objective conditions (Wealth & Ability), and subjective conditions,

(talents), in a way that makes them distinct from the rest of other society members (Khalifa, 2015).

Elite Characteristics

Elite can influence various social issues within societies, they have special characteristics that distinguish them from others, are:

- Looking at matters, actions, and all human behaviors from the broadest angle, and differentiate between the main lines of matters and subjects.
- Mastering the necessary skills related to the sector in which the influential personality works and superior ability to organize work.
- Finding new and better ways to accomplish work, ability to innovate.
- Having a certain mental readiness and extreme psychological calm skills.
- Acquiring high educational and cultural level that qualifies them to carry out responsible roles in society, as well as influential power in decision-making circles and public opinion (Salih, 2009).

Fifth: Study Theories

First: Social Identity Theory

The Social Identity is as a set of material and symbolic relationships that help connect and unify a number of individuals when they are in conflict against a similar group in essence, but different in appearance (Belyamen, 2017).

Within the context, the Social Identity Theory put forward by Turner and Tajfel (Turner, 1996), developed a critical intellectual framework in which it tackled the way how the Social Identity of peoples arises and formed. The theory focused on several variables it addressed as main elements for forming the Social Identity, *including*:

- Economic system of the state, and its reflection on the material level of individuals.
- History of the nation, including its symbols and heroes.
- Social structure, which refers to the nature of social classes within the State (Tartakovsky, 2011: p. 232; Tartakovsky, 2010: p. 1852).

Social Identity Theory's Assumptions

This theory is based on a set of assumptions, namely that individuals seek to achieve their own Social Identity by maintaining it positively. They derive their identity from their membership in various types of groups to which they belong, because it is considered an important source for bragging and boasting, self-esteem, and giving a sense of Social Identity as well as belonging to the social world.

Furthermore, we through it raise the level of the status of the group to which individuals belong, as well as raising self-perception through distinction, and bias against external groups to which individuals don't belong (Aziz & Aziz, 2019).

Thus, this theory must be applied to the study's variables, as it contributes to understand how individuals interact with social media and the Internet, and how they build their digital identities. The different social factors, such as culture, language, and social affiliation can influence how individuals use and interact with digital media, which may lead to the formation of individual or collective digital

identities that reflect these social factors.

As for National identity, this theory may have an impact on understanding how national affiliation is formed among individuals, and how this affects their digital diplomacy. The social, cultural, and historical factors of countries can influence the formation of individuals' identities and the consolidation of their national affiliation.

Consequently, national affiliation may influence the way they interact with digital diplomacy, and how they represent their National identity through digital communication media.

Second: Cultural Identity Theory

The Cultural Identity Theory was developed by Thomas Milt and Collier Mary (Rosenfeld, 2009) that added other components to the above mentioned, namely:

- State's first Language.
- Cultural heritage of the Sate, including customs and traditions of its people.
- Civilization characteristics of the Sate, including types of food, fashion, and architectural style.
- Ethnic characteristics of individuals within the State i.e. their physical characteristics and ethnic affiliations (Collier & Thomas, 1988).

Cultural Identity Levels

Cultural Identity has 3 levels:

First: The individual level, known as individual identity, in which the culture of each individual in society is referred to in his/her personal capacity.

Second: The collective level, known as collective identity, it linked to the influence of a group of individuals, who represent a specific group on the cultural identity that prevails in the society where they exist.

Third: The national level, known as National identity that combines the individual and collective identities in one group, thus, considered the basic component of the cultural identity in which individuals and groups within one State are referred to (Khader, 2016).

However, the researchers believe that this theory is applied to the study variables through indicating that the use of Cultural Identity Theory, social media and the Internet enables individuals and communities to communicate and interact with the public and society.

These digital means are considered helpful to individuals in expressing their identity, and promoting their issues and interests, which enhances their digital presence and affects their public image, and the image of the society to which they belong.

Within the context of National identity, Cultural Identity Theory plays an important role in enhancing awareness of culture and national values through sharing cultural content, promoting heritage, and national stories via social media, as this diplomacy helps individuals and communities enhance National identity and highlight their homeland from others.

Third: Immunization Theory

McGuire (1961) formulated the Vaccination Theory as a specific one, which means that its basic components go back to the early writings of Aristotle, as a model to resist the impact, he built the theory as if a medical analogy i.e. as introducing a weak version of the disease into the human body, which leads to the process of resistance, through producing antibodies.

This indicates that vaccination protects stances through introducing weak versions of counter-arguments that lead to the process of opposing ideas (Banas & Rains, 2010).

The theory is based on the idea that people have a set of beliefs, values, and knowledge, which act as protective shields against negative or opposing messages. Once the audience is immunized with prior information and knowledge about a particular topic, it becomes difficult for negative or opposing messages to influence them or change their opinions (Ledingham & Bruning, 2013).

The researchers used this theory because the Palestinian people are exposed to a media invasion and the obliteration of their national and cultural identity, and brainwashing of the sons of the Palestinian people through normalization or otherwise.

Through this, we conclude that, do the media have a role in inoculating the thinking of the Palestinian people against the ideas that they seek to achieve and strengthen their national and cultural identity, or does the confrontational diplomatic media threaten the National identity of the Palestinian people by spreading fear in their souls?

The researchers have employed these three theories “Social Identity, cultural identity, and immunization” in their study as they enhance the National identity, preserve the cultural heritage of the Palestinian people, and increase their ability to promote national interests through the media, and have an interconnected relationship in terms of preserving customs and traditions, learning the national language, developing the National identity of society and its culture, preserving the ideas that the Palestinian people seek as an occupied people to preserve, and not abandoning their cultural heritage, which helps in strengthening the National identity via by broadcasting radio and television programs in order to convey the national message to the Palestinian people.

Study Questions

The study’s problem represented in answering the following main question: What is the impact of Cultural Identity Theory in boosting the National identity from the Palestinian Media Elites’ view?

Of which the following questions branched out:

- 1) What is the role of Cultural Identity Theory in foreign diplomatic activity from Palestinian Media Elites’ view?
- 2) What extent has the theory of Social Identity contributed to Cultural Identity Theory in enhancing National identity?
- 3) What is the possibility of applying the theory of cultural identity in Cultural Identity Theory to enhance National identity from Palestinian Media Elites’ view?

4) What is the possibility of applying the theory of immunization in Cultural Identity Theory to enhance National identity from Palestinian Media Elites' view?

5) What is the difference in the views of the study sample members towards the impact of Cultural Identity Theory in enhancing National identity from Palestinian Media Elites' view in accordance to the following variables (gender, age group, educational qualification, profession, years of experience, place of work, and organizational affiliation)?

Study Hypotheses

- There is a role for Cultural Identity Theory in foreign diplomatic activity from Palestinian Media Elites' view.
- The extent of contribution of Social Identity theory in Cultural Identity Theory to strengthen National identity.
- There is a possibility of applying Cultural Identity Theory in Cultural Identity Theory to strengthen National identity from Palestinian Media Elites' view.
- There is a possibility of applying immunization theory in Cultural Identity Theory to strengthen National identity from Palestinian Media Elites' view.
- There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the average responses of the study's sample members towards the effectiveness of Cultural Identity Theory to strengthen National identity from Palestinian Media Elites' view that attributed to the following variables: (gender, age, educational qualification, profession, years of experience, place of work, and organizational affiliation).

Study Limits

Human Limit:

It was applied to media elites of media-men and women as well as journalists, who work in media institutions and channels, as it was applied to media elites of journalists, correspondents, writers, political analysts and others via a questionnaire, while it was applied to senior media professionals and journalists, and university professors, who have been practicing the profession for more than 15 years via interviews.

Spatial Limit:

It was applied in the West Bank because it is the place that the researchers can reach due to security conditions that prevent access to the Gaza Strip, the monitoring of electronic communications between citizens in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip by Israeli security, as well.

Time Limit:

It was applied during 1/2/2024 - 24/6/2024, this period was chosen because it suits the researchers' application of their study, and the prevailing circumstances that hinder movement, as well. Moreover, it was chosen in order to apply the study for acquiring sufficient and comprehensive information about the subject of the study in addition to being coincided with the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation, which contributed to highlighting the positive image of the Palestinian National identity through publishing the Palestinian narrative via social media, and the solidarity

of some States with the Palestinians.

Objective Limit:

This study examines the impact of Popular Digital Diplomacy in strengthening National identity from the point of view of media elites.

Study Terms

Popular Diplomacy:

“It is the informal activities based on professional communications among elites that aimed at resolving conflicts between groups or States, where the participants have a role or form of access to official policy-making circles” (Al-Sharafi, 2020).

Procedurally:

It is media elites' practice of diplomacy through using digital platforms to enhance National identity and disseminating messages that enhance the sense of national belonging.

Digital Diplomacy:

“It is the increasing use of social media platforms by any State in order to achieve its foreign policy goals, and proactively manage its image and reputation. The term digital diplomacy also refers to the impact that digital technologies have had on diplomatic institutions, practitioners of diplomacy, and audiences of diplomacy” (Manor, 2016).

Procedurally:

It is the media professionals and journalists' use of social media platforms in order to enhance the Palestinian National identity and preserve its national image.

Popular Digital Diplomacy:

“It is a popular digital discourse that advocates the Palestinian Cause before the World Public Opinion, and refutes the Israeli narrative” (Qaoud & Abu Khswan, 2020).

Procedurally:

It is the degree that the respondent gets by answering the questionnaire fields that related to the impact of digital diplomacy in strengthening National identity. It is the efforts made by journalists or media professionals through social media networks, and then adopting it as a platform through which they present a popular digital discourse to achieve national and diplomatic goals.

National Identity:

The National identity is “a social and moral system linked to the details of people's lives, in present, past, and the future, based on recalling the essence of their existence and the stability of the reasons of their survival to maintain this existence from the challenges of dispersion, erasure, disintegration and cancellation through boosting it with elements of belonging, citizenship, as well as work and productive initiative.” (Ben Wazza & Gharghot, 2018: p. 80).

Procedurally:

It is belonging to the homeland through citizens' commitment to ethics, values, a sense of belonging to the group, respect for beliefs, customs and national culture,

which is the total score obtained by the respondent to the questionnaire designed for this study.

Media Elites:

“They are a group of academics, who study media in universities and intermediate colleges, whether on a permanent or seasonal basis, as well as, journalists and media professionals, who have been working in media for 15 years and enrolled in the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate” (Khalifa, 2015: p. 53).

Procedurally:

Journalists are community and sample of the study, who work in the journalism and media field, including journalists, media professionals, and others holding a doctorate in media, or its branches.

Immunization Theory:

“Known as a theory, developed to evaluate the trends and beliefs that the individual embraces, and to build resistance to counter-arguments that they encounters in the future” (Abdeen, 2021).

Procedurally:

It is the degree that the researcher obtained from the media elites through answering the questionnaire's paragraphs related to employing the immunization theory in boosting the National identity.

Social Identity Theory:

“It is part of the self-concept of individuals that stems from their awareness being members of the group, besides, the emotional and value considerations that are referred to this membership” (Belyamen, 2017).

Procedurally: *It is the degree that the respondent obtains by answering the questionnaire's paragraphs related to knowing how to boost and preserve the National identity, and individuals not to get rid of their National identity through the messages published by the media and media elites.*

Cultural Identity Theory:

“It is a set of doctrinal, linguistic, conceptual, moral, cultural, ethnic, historical, geographical and political characteristics that includes customs, traditions, and behaviors of characterize individual, group, and the nation by a specific features to distinguish it from other nations, as it constitutes its reference that expresses its culture, religion, and civilization” (Al-Dajani, 2022).

Procedurally: *It is the degree that the respondent obtains by answering the questionnaire's paragraphs related to the performance of Palestinian media elites in boosting, consolidating, and preserving the National identity through employing digital diplomacy that fixes the National identity and belonging to the homeland.*

Study Methodology:

This study is considered a descriptive one, as it used a mixed method i.e. “the method that combines the quantitative and qualitative methods” to suit the nature and purposes of the study. It is based on describing the phenomenon precisely, analyzing and interpreting it. It is one of the most widely used and common scientific research methods, and helps in identifying the causes of the phenomenon,

and discovering appropriate solutions for it (Malih & Abdul-Samad, 2020).

The study employed the descriptive analytical method in its quantitative and qualitative style due to its suitability for its objectives, as the researchers relied on sources of information related to the subject of the study, analyzing it, and collecting data through questionnaire that was prepared based on the theoretical framework, previous studies, and relied on the in-depth “directed” interview with media elites, to answer the study questions, and to achieve objectives of the study, which came within the framework of the impact of Popular Digital Diplomacy to boost National identity from the Palestinian media elites’ view.

Study Community:

“The study community is the group of individuals on whom the study is to be applied, data be collected about the phenomenon from them, and results can be circulated to them.” (Al-Munizil & Al-Atoum, 2010).

Clockwise, the study community represents all media elites, and consists of senior media professionals, correspondents, journalistic writers, photojournalists, and political analysts, who are “1500” members in accordance to the Palestinian Journalists Syndicate’s records.

Study Sample:

It is part of the study community, where the study is conducted on them by collecting data about the phenomenon to be studied in order to reach the results to be circulated to the society. The researchers adopted two types of samples, namely:

A random stratified sample to distribute the questionnaire to Palestinian media elites, the second is, a purposive sample to conduct in-depth interviews with senior journalists in Palestine, and university professors from the Media and Journalism’ Section. The sample study can be divided as follows:

Stratified Random Sample:

It is “one of the types of random samples, where individuals are divided into subgroups in order to facilitate the collection of information about them, and the smaller subgroups, or those known as strata, are organized based on the characteristics of the population or common features between them, such as, age, gender, or income level. It is also used to study the demographic composition of the community or to know their average age” (Jarrah, 2022).

The researchers have chosen this sample in order to get accurate and comprehensive information about the subject of the study, and to achieve its objectives, noting that the study was applied to a sample consisting of “253” individuals (Table 1).

The stratified sample was used in the study as it reflects an accurate research methodology that aims to ensure a comprehensive and balanced representation of different opinions within the targeted community. The sample was divided into categories, such as gender, age group, educational qualification, profession, years of experience, workplace, and organizational affiliation, which helps in collecting diversity of opinions that reflect different experiences and backgrounds.

This diversity helps in understanding how these variables can affect the views of media elites on digital diplomacy.

Table 1. Distributing study sample individuals according to its demographic variables.

Variable	Variable Categories	No.	Percent
Gender	Male	158	62.5%
	Female	95	37.5%
	Total	253	100.0%
Age Group	Less than 30	62	24.5%
	30 - Less than 40 years	105	41.5%
	40 - Less than 50 years	49	19.4%
	50 years and above	37	14.6%
	Total	253	100.0%
Educational Qualification	Bachelor's	142	56.1%
	Master's	71	28.1%
	PhD	40	15.8%
	Total	253	100.0%
Profession	Political Analyst	53	20.9%
	News Correspondent	53	20.9%
	News Writer	50	19.8%
	Photojournalist	32	12.6%
	Freelance Journalist	65	25.7%
	Total	253	100.0%
Experience	Less than 5 years	53	20.9%
	5 - Less than 10 years	77	30.4%
	10 - Less than 20 years	73	28.9%
	20 years and above	50	19.8%
	Total	253	100.0%
Work Place	Government Sector	97	38.3%
	Private Sector	156	61.7%
	Total	253	100.0%
Affiliation	National Trend	74	29.2%
	Islamic Trend	33	13.0%
	Leftist Trend	24	9.5%
	Independent	122	48.2%
	Total	253	100.0%

The Purposive Sample: “It is a type of intentional selection, where the researchers made it of units that are believed to represent the original community correctly.” (Al-Qahtani & Al-Dhahian, 2020).

The researchers have chosen this sample to obtain accurate information about the impact of Popular Digital Diplomacy in promoting National identity from the point of view of media elites, by conducting in-depth, directed, individual interviews with senior media professionals and journalists in Palestine, and Palestinian

universities' professors, who have served for more than 15 years, and were contacted through the Journalists Syndicate, or via sending them an email on social media, noting that they are 10 persons.

Study Tools

First: Questionnaire

The researchers prepared and developed the questionnaire to achieve the study objective through reviewing the education literature and earlier studies related to the subject of the study, as the questionnaire consisted of two sections:

- **The First** includes the demographic characteristics of the respondents.
- **The Second** includes number of the questionnaire's paragraphs, and its axes.

The number of paragraphs was (35) distributed on 4 fields. The questionnaire was designed in accordance to the 5 point Likert Formula:

- Strongly Agree (5);
- Agree (4);
- Neutral (3);
- Disagree (2);
- Strongly Disagree (1).

Study Tool Validity:

The researchers presented the questionnaire's paragraphs to a group of "7" specialized arbitrators to verify the validity of the paragraphs' content and their suitability to the study's objectives and fields. The arbitrators expressed their opinions on the suitability of the paragraphs for each axis of the questionnaire, in addition to correcting linguistic and grammatical errors, if any. Therefore, the researchers must take their notes into consideration and then modify them accordingly.

Questionnaire Stability:

The researchers calculated the questionnaire's stability coefficient by using Cronbach's Alpha Scale. As shown in **Table 2**, the stability of the questionnaire's fields and the total score.

Table 2. Stability coefficients for Questionnaire domains and total score.

Field No.	Domain	Stability Coefficient
1 st field	Digital diplomacy and media elites' role in diplomatic activity	0.869
2 nd field	Possibility of applying the theory of Social Identity in Cultural Identity Theory through strengthening National identity	0.875
3 rd field	Possibility of applying theory of cultural identity in Cultural Identity Theory through strengthening National identity	0.711
4 th field	Possibility of applying theory of immunization in Cultural Identity Theory through strengthening National identity	0.926
Total Score for Fields		0.936

As shown in **Table 2**, the reliability coefficients for the questionnaire fields were high, as it was for the first field (0.869), the second field was (0.875), the third field was (0.711), and the fourth field was (0.926), while the stability coefficient for the total score was (0.936). The stability coefficient values indicate that the study tool and its fields enjoy high stability, and meet the purposes of the current study (Al-Amoudi, 2018).

Second: In-Depth Interview

The researcher used individual directed in-depth interviews, by asking questions to the study sample members individually, and to achieve the goal of the study, the researchers adopted the open questions system in order to give the respondent the opportunity to express his/her opinion freely and in his./her own language (Hassoun & Habaieb, 2022).

The interview was used in this study to help describe the problem accurately and in depth, and to get to know it more through people working within institutions and media channels, as well as professors of Palestinian universities.

Interview Stability:

The researchers verified the stability of the interview by using the stability method over time, i.e. analyzing the individuals' responses of the study sample, and after 2 weeks on the first analysis, they re-analyzed again using the Holsti Formula (Zamel, 2021).

Holsti Formula:

(2 X number of ideas included in the analysis that agreed upon by the analysts/total ideas included in the 2 analysis). The number of ideas included in the analysis, and agreed upon by the analysts for the answers of all questions, was (80), and the total ideas in the 2 analysis for the answers of the questions was = (84 + 88 = 172). Thus, the stability coefficient according to this Formula is (0.93).

Interview Validity:

To verify the validity of the interview's questions, the researchers presented them to a group of 7 specialized arbitrators in the field of public relations. The arbitrators expressed their opinions on the suitability of the questions of the study, besides, correcting linguistic and grammatical errors, if any. The researchers took their notes into consideration, and then modified them to their final form.

Statistical Processors:

The Statistical Package for Social Sciences program (SPSS) was used to examine study hypotheses and answer them: Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient to calculate the questionnaire's stability, the Arithmetic Average and Standard Deviations to describe the questionnaire's paragraphs, the (Independent sample T-test) to answer the hypotheses related to the 2 levels, and the (One Way ANOVA) to answer the hypotheses related to more than one level, as well as (Scheffe test) for post-test comparisons between arithmetic averages.

Study Results and Discussion

Results related to the main question: What is the impact of Popular Digital Diplomacy in promoting the National identity from the media elites' view?

Table 3. Arithmetic Averages, standard deviations, and degree of agreement for the questionnaire fields areas and the total score arranged in descending order according to the arithmetic Average.

Rank	Field No.	Field	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Approval Degree
1	4	Digital diplomacy and the role of media elites in diplomatic activity	3.83	0.54	high
2	2	Possibility of applying theory of Social Identity in Cultural Identity Theory to strengthen National identity	3.89	0.54	high
3	1	Possibility of applying theory of cultural identity in Cultural Identity Theory to strengthen National identity	3.97	0.59	high
4	3	Possibility of applying theory of immunization in Cultural Identity Theory to strengthen National identity	3.83	0.63	high
Total Score			3.88		

As shown in **Table 3** above, the fields of “impact of Popular Digital Diplomacy in promoting National identity from the media elites’ view” were all high, as the arithmetic Averages ranged between (3.83) and (3.97), which are the fields ‘the possibility of applying theory of cultural identity in Popular Digital Diplomacy to boost National identity, and digital diplomacy as well as the role of media elites in diplomatic activity respectively. Hence, the response to the “total score” was high in terms of the arithmetic Average of (3.88).

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that Popular Digital Diplomacy is an effective mechanism for direct communication with the public through digital platforms that provides an opportunity for media elites to shape national awareness and influence public opinion, as it contributes to the use of digital tools and means with flexibility and speed in communication and contact with the public, which facilitates the process of expressing national and cultural content.

Furthermore, diversifying the digital content that is directed to the public in a manner that suits different categories; which enhances the ability of Popular Digital Diplomacy to reach the targeted groups on a wide scale, and the public must be allowed to participate in the production of national digital content as they enhance the sense of national belonging and National identity, besides the potential impact of Popular Digital Diplomacy on the formulation of national discourse that helps to strengthen National identity in a positive way. This result comes in line with Abu-Hilal’s study (Ismail, 2022), which showed that Popular Digital Diplomacy plays a clear role in confronting the normalization process and its repercussions in Palestine, the Arab, and the world.

Results related to the first sub-question that states: What is the role of Popular Digital Diplomacy in foreign diplomatic activity by the Palestinian media

elites' view?

Table 4. Arithmetic averages, standard deviations of digital diplomacy and the role of media elites in diplomatic activity.

Par. No.	Rank	Paragraph	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
1	4	Popular Digital Diplomacy plays an important role in promoting Palestine's image on the international digital arena	4.09	0.66	high
2	1	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can increase the interaction of the world's people with Palestinian political and social issues across national borders.	4.11	0.71	high
3	2	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy contributes to better conveying Palestinian issues to society via social media platforms.	4.11	0.68	high
4	3	Popular Digital Diplomacy helps achieve international solidarity and support for the Palestinian Cause.	4.04	0.72	high
5	6	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy improves the impact of traditional diplomatic efforts in supporting Palestinian issues on the international arena	3.96	0.72	high
6	8	We believe that discussions and dialogues via digital media contribute to increasing understanding the historical truth of the Palestinian Cause.	3.89	0.75	high
7	9	Popular Digital Diplomacy plays a role in presenting a comprehensive vision on the Palestinian Cause to the International Community.	3.69	0.90	low
8	10	There is a digital law that protects Palestinian Popular Digital Diplomacy in expressing the Palestinian Cause.	2.54	1.15	high
9	5	Popular Digital Diplomacy via social media plays an important role in highlighting the Palestinian Cause, and its version to the world.	3.98	0.77	high
10	7	Digital restrictions and international prosecutions of the occupation and others have recently weakened Popular Digital Diplomacy efforts.	3.94	0.88	high
Total Score			3.83	0.54	high

As shown in **Table 4** above, that paragraphs: "Digital Diplomacy and the role of media elites in foreign diplomatic activity" were between high and low, and their arithmetic Averages ranged between "2.54 - 4.11".

The second paragraph "using Popular Digital Diplomacy can increase the interaction of the peoples of the world with Palestinian political and social issues across national borders" was the highest arithmetic Average of (4.11) to a large degree, while the eighth paragraph "There is a digital law that protects Palestinian Popular Digital Diplomacy in expressing the Palestinian cause" was the lowest arithmetic Average (2.54) to low degree. As for the total score for the first field, was (3.83) arithmetic Average to a high degree.

The researchers attribute this result to the fact that digital diplomacy is an influential tool in diplomatic activity, foreign policy, and decision-making, especially with the spread of social media and the empowerment of citizens to participate effectively.

It seems that media elites realize the importance of Popular Digital Diplomacy in strengthening Palestinian positions, and digital diplomacy provides an effective platform and tool for Palestinian activists and influencers to communicate and influence at the international level.

This is consistent with the qualitative results that digital campaigns contribute to boost belonging and awareness of National identity among the Palestinian masses at home and abroad. Example on that is, the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation, and how the Palestinian communities have come to play a major role in conveying the Palestinian version, and boosting the belonging of the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic communities' sons about the Palestinian cause.

This has contributed to encouraging the Palestinians' sons abroad to be proud of Palestinian fixes, such as, the Palestinian flag and the Palestinian identity.

Results related to the second sub-question, which states: What is the possibility of applying the Social Identity theory in Popular Digital Diplomacy in enhancing National identity from the Palestinian media elites' view?

Table 5. Arithmetic averages & standard deviations for the possibility of applying the social identity theory in popular digital diplomacy in enhancing the national identity.

Par. No.	Rank	Paragraph	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
11	1	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy reflects a certain image of the Palestinian Social Identity.	3.99	0.68	High
12	2	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can increase the national belonging of Palestinians to their Palestinian cause and identity.	3.96	0.68	High
13	5	Popular Digital Diplomacy contributes to building a common National identity among Palestinians in the Arab of 1948, Refugee Camps and Diaspora.	3.92	0.79	High
14	6	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy contributes to enhancing the interaction of Palestinians locally, regionally and internationally with national culture and history.	3.92	0.69	High
15	4	Popular Digital Diplomacy plays a role in clarifying the concept of Palestinian National identity to the world community.	3.94	0.70	High
16	7	National identity contributes to preserving the world geographical features of the Palestinian Cause and Land.	3.89	0.76	High
17	3	Popular Digital Diplomacy has recently played a prominent role in preserving National identity by enhancing its concept and importance.	3.96	0.65	High
18	8	Identity plays a crucial role in diplomacy in terms of building trust and enhancing understanding among countries and different diplomatic bodies, formulating foreign policies and making diplomatic decisions.	3.58	0.97	High
Total score			3.89	0.54	High

As shown in **Table 5**, the paragraphs of “The possibility of applying the social identity theory in Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity” were all high, and their arithmetic Average ranged between (3.58 - 3.99), where the eleventh paragraph got the highest arithmetic Average of (3.99) to a high degree on “The use of Popular Digital Diplomacy reflects a certain image of Palestine’s social identity”, while the eighteenth paragraph “Identity plays a decisive role in diplomacy in terms of building trust and enhancing understanding between countries and different diplomatic bodies, formulating foreign policies and making diplomatic decisions” got the lowest arithmetic Average of (3.58) to a high degree.

As for the total score for the second field, it got an arithmetic Average of (3.83) to a high degree. The researchers attributed this result to the great positive impact of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity using the social identity theory. This result indicated that Palestinian media elites see a great potential in using this approach. This also calls for more attention and focus, especially in light of the rapid technological and digital developments that enforce the need to invest in the diplomatic and national fields.

This is also in consistent with the qualitative results that the digital interaction with Palestinian audiences contributes to building a sense of national belonging through raising the Palestinian flag, and the Palestinian keffiyeh in States like Europe, America, and South Asia, which will lead to boosting national belonging.

Social media also plays a major role in boosting the national belonging and solidarity among Palestinian audiences, such as, the Al-Aqsa Flood War, which played a major role in conveying the national message via various social media platforms.

Results related to the third sub-question, which states: Possibility of applying the cultural identity theory in Popular Digital Diplomacy to boost National identity from the Palestinian media elites’ view?

As shown in **Table 6**, the paragraphs, “possibility of applying the cultural identity theory in Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity”, were all high, and their arithmetic Averages ranged between “3.86 - 4.14”, where the 25th paragraph: “Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can enhance understanding and respect for Palestinian culture at the glob level”. As it got the highest arithmetic Average of (4.14) to a high degree, while the 26th paragraph: “we believe that Popular Digital Diplomacy plays a role in enhancing cultural understanding and presenting a true and comprehensive image of Palestinian culture, ‘ancient and modern’” was the lowest arithmetic Average of (3.86) to a high degree, as the arithmetic Average for the total score of the third field was (3.97) to a high degree.

The researchers attributed this result to the cultural identity theory, which emphasized that identity is formed through interaction with the culture and cultural heritage of the group to which the individual belongs. Within the context of Popular Digital Diplomacy, Palestinians through digital communication platforms, can highlight and promote elements of Palestinian cultural identity more

Table 6. Arithmetic averages and standard deviations for the possibility of applying the cultural identity theory in popular digital diplomacy to boost the national identity.

Par. No.	Rank	Paragraph	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
19	2	Cultural identity builds National identity through national belonging and heritage preservation.	4.07	0.65	High
20	3	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy reflects and highlights certain aspects (heritage, direct communication between Palestinians and the international community) of Palestinian cultural identity in a positive way.	3.99	0.65	High
21	8	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy contributes to enhancing the preservation of Palestinian cultural values and customs to the international community.	3.88	0.72	High
22	5	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can contribute to enriching and strengthening the cultural identity of Palestinians through preserving cultural belonging and exchanging knowledge.	3.96	0.64	High
23	6	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy helps stimulate intercultural acceptance and enhance cultural exchange between Palestine and the world community.	3.92	0.68	High
24	7	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy contributes to enhancing awareness of Palestinian cultural heritage and history among the international public.	3.92	0.66	High
25	1	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can enhance understanding and respect for Palestinian culture at the world level.	4.14	2.60	High
26	9	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy plays a role in enhancing cultural understanding and presenting a true and comprehensive image of Palestinian culture, both ancient and modern.	3.86	0.75	High
27	4	Using digital media enhances the ability of Palestinians to interact with the world, leading to solidarity with their cause.	3.96	0.68	High
Total Score			3.97	0.59	High

effectively and widely, such as, heritage, arts, customs, traditions, and norms, which contributes to boosting the sense of belonging to the National identity. This is what Rima Al-Amleh emphasized in “interview results” that with the spread of social media, it is necessary to spread the components of Palestinian culture, identity, heritage and narrative, which enhances the Palestinian National identity and fixes it in the souls of the successive generations, who have a strong connection to the National identity.

Results related to the 4th sub-question, which states: What is the possibility of applying the fortification theory in Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the

National identity from the Palestinian media elites' view?

Table 7. Arithmetic averages and standard deviations to apply the fortification theory in popular digital diplomacy to boost the national identity.

Par. No.	Rank	Paragraph	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Agreement Degree
28	5	Immunization theory plays an important role in boosting the National identity.	3.81	0.81	High
29	3	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can contribute to fortifying the National identity of Palestinians against negative external influences.	3.85	0.72	High
30	1	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can enhance awareness among Palestinians on the importance of protecting and defending their National identity.	3.88	0.75	High
31	5	Using digital media and popular diplomacy can provide Palestinians with tools to resist negative ideas and concepts directed against their National identity.	3.82	0.83	High
32	4	Using Popular Digital Diplomacy can strengthen the national belonging of Palestinians.	3.82	0.74	High
33	7	Popular Digital Diplomacy contributes to adopting intellectual “vaccines” for Palestinians to protect them from negative messages directed against their National identity.	3.75	0.81	High
34	6	Popular Digital Diplomacy plays a role in enabling Palestinians to understand study and combat negative messages in an intellectual and diplomatic manner.	3.81	0.79	High
35	2	Using digital media and popular diplomacy enhances the ability to confront negative accusations and criticisms targeting the Palestinian people identity.	3.85	0.77	High
Total Score			3.83	0.63	High

As shown in **Table 7**, the paragraphs of “possibility of applying the immunization theory in Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting National identity” were all high, and their arithmetic Averages ranged between (3.88 - 3.75), where the thirtieth paragraph “using Popular Digital Diplomacy can enhance awareness among Palestinians on the importance of protecting and defending their National identity” got the highest arithmetic Average of (3.88) to a large degree, while the thirty-third paragraph “Popular Digital Diplomacy contributes to adopting intellectual ‘vaccines’ for Palestinians to protect them from negative messages directed against their National identity” got the lowest arithmetic Average of (3.75) to a large

degree, while the total score for the fourth field got an arithmetic Average of (3.83) to a large degree.

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that the immunization theory provides opportunities for Palestinian media elites to raise awareness among the Palestinian public and increase their knowledge of national issues and Palestinian National identity through digital platforms, by producing comprehensive national digital content. The theory can also contribute to building the capacities of Palestinian media elites in the field of Popular Digital Diplomacy, which leads to enhancing their ability to use digital platforms and their technologies to spread National identity and culture.

When the public is immunized, it becomes difficult to influence or change its opinion, no matter how negative or opposing the messages against the Palestinian National identity are. This was emphasized by Dr. Raed Omar that digital diplomacy and social media platforms help in strengthening National identity, a sense of belonging and national pride, and spreading Palestinian culture and history as the use of digital content plays a major role in boosting the National identity. So, knowing the digital tool and everything related to it is very important in boosting the National identity.

Study Hypotheses Related Results

First: Hypothesis Related to Gender

Table 8. Results of (t-Test) for independent samples for the significance of the differences between means of responses of the study sample members attributed to gender variable.

Fields	Male (N = 185)		Female (N = 95)		T-Test	Significance Level
	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation		
First Field	3.81	0.56	3.88	0.52	1.117	0.265
Second Field	3.86	0.57	3.95	0.50	1.352	0.178
Third Field	3.95	0.65	4.00	0.47	0.622	0.535
Forth Field	3.81	0.66	3.85	0.58	0.416	0.678
Total Score	3.86	0.50	3.92	0.45	1.018	0.310

As shown in **Table 8**, there is no statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the responses of the study sample members regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in promoting National identity from the Palestinian Media Elites' view in all fields, and the total score is attributed to the gender variable.

The researchers attributed this result to the interest in using Popular Digital Diplomacy in promoting Palestinian National identity, including male and female media elites in a homogeneous way. This means that there is a common awareness of the importance of digital means in promoting National identity among the

elites, regardless of gender.

Generally, media institutions in Palestine may be interested in adopting Popular Digital Diplomacy's practices and adopting them equally among genders within the programs and the activities they provide, which leads to a reflection of this on the media elites' perception of the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy.

It is possible that there is a trend among these institutions to enhance the role of women and their participation in digital activities related to National identity, which contributes to reduce the gender gap in the field of digital diplomacy.

Second: Hypotheses Related to Age

Table 9. Results of the one-way ANOVA to verify the differences between levels of age variable.

Field	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance Level
First Field	Between groups	0.3090	3	0.1030	0.3390	0.7970
	Within groups	75.795	249	0.3040		
	Total	76.105	252			
Second Field	Between groups	0.4400	3	0.1470	0.4850	0.6930
	Within groups	75.436	249	0.3030		
	Total	75.877	252			
Third Field	Between groups	1.599	3	0.5330	1.521	0.2100
	Within groups	87.281	249	0.3510		
	Total	88.880	252			
Forth Field	Between groups	0.5950	3	0.1980	0.4880	0.6910
	Within groups	101.092	249	0.4060		
	Total	101.687	252			
Total Score	Between groups	0.2360	3	0.0790	0.3270	0.8060
	Within groups	59.934	249	0.2410		
	Total score	60.171	252			

As shown in **Table 9**, there is no statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the respondents' answers regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity from the Palestinian media elites' view in all fields, and the total score is attributed to the age variable.

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that Age has no relation to the similarity of the views of Palestinian media elites regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity, and this is reflected in the existence of a common trend among them towards the importance of these digital means related to this field.

Media elites may have a similar interest among different age groups regarding the role that Popular Digital Diplomacy can play in boosting the Palestinian National identity.

Third: Hypothesis Related to Academic Qualification

Table 10. Results of the one way ANOVA, to verify differences between levels of the academic qualification variable.

Field	Variance Source	Sum of Squares	Freedom Degrees	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance Level
First Field	Between Groups	0.3010	2	0.1500	0.4960	0.6100
	Within Groups	75.804	250	0.3030		
	Total	76.105	252			
Second Field	Between Groups	0.2690	2	0.1340	0.4450	0.6420
	Within Groups	75.608	250	0.3020		
	Total	75.877	252			
Third Field	Between Groups	1.046	2	0.5230	1.488	0.2280
	Within Groups	87.834	250	0.3510		
	Total	88.880	252			
Forth Field	Between Groups	0.3240	2	0.1620	0.3990	0.6710
	Within Groups	101.364	250	0.4050		
	Total	101.687	252			
Total Score	Between Groups	0.2870	2	0.1430	0.5990	0.5500
	Within Groups	59.884	250	0.240		
	Total Score	60.171	252			

As shown in **Table 10**, there is no statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the respondents' answers regarding the effectiveness

of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity from the Palestinian media elites' views in all fields.

The total score is attributed to the variable of educational qualification. The researchers explained this result by saying, educational qualification was not an influential factor in the variation of Palestinian media elites' view on the importance of Popular Digital Diplomacy and its effectiveness in boosting the National identity; which indicates that there is a common awareness among them that Popular Digital Diplomacy represents an important tool in boosting the National identity of the Palestinian people.

The media elites in Palestine may have a similar culture regarding the effectiveness of digital diplomacy as a tool for boosting the National identity, regardless of the educational qualification of these elites. It is possible that there will be joint efforts between media institutions to enhance the role of media elites regarding the importance of Popular Digital Diplomacy in this field, which leads to unifying opinions at different educational levels.

Forth: Hypothesis Related to Profession

Table 11. Results of the one-way ANOVA, to verify differences between levels of the profession variable.

Study Field	Variance Source	Squares Sum	Freedom Degrees	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance Level
First Field	Between Groups	0.293	4	0.073	0.239	0.916
	Within Groups	75.812	248	0.306		
	Total	76.105	252			
Second Field	Between Groups	0.684	4	0.171	0.564	0.689
	Within Groups	75.193	248	0.303		
	Total	75.877	252			
Third Field	Between Groups	0.424	4	0.106	0.297	0.88
	Within Groups	88.456	248	0.357		
	Total	88.88	252			
Forth Field	Between Groups	1.612	4	0.403	0.999	0.409
	Within Groups	100.075	248	0.404		
	Total	101.687	252			
Total Score	Between Groups	0.14	4	0.035	0.145	0.965
	Within Groups	60.031	248	0.242		
	Total Score	60.171	252			

As shown in **Table 11**, there is no statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the respondents' answers regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity from the Palestinian media elites' view in all fields, and the total score is attributed to the profession variable.

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that, the nature of the profession doesn't affect the views of Palestinian media elites regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in enhancing the National identity.

Therefore, this indicates the existence of a common awareness among the various media elites, including journalists, media professionals, analysts, and others. The diversity of media professions may also play a role in the diversity of experiences and knowledge acquired through their practice.

This may contribute to the existence of a similar understanding of the importance of Popular Digital Diplomacy. Media institutions in Palestine may have a unified culture that emphasizes that Popular Digital Diplomacy is an important tool in boosting the National identity, which helped unify the opinions of media elites of various media professions, due to the possibility of communication between different media elites regarding the Palestinian issue, which enhances the existence of a common awareness of the importance of Popular Digital Diplomacy.

Fifth: Hypothesis Related to experience years

Table 12. Results of one-way ANOVA to verify differences between levels of the years of experience variable.

Field	Variance Source	Squares Sum	Freedom Degrees	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance Level
First Field	Between Groups	1.405	3	0.468		
	Within Groups	74.7	249	0.3	1.561	0.199
	Total	76.105	252			
Second Field	Between Groups	0.225	3	0.075		
	Within Groups	75.652	249	0.304	0.247	0.863
	Total	75.877	252			
Third Field	Between Groups	0.592	3	0.197		
	Within Groups	88.289	249	0.355	0.556	0.644
	Total	88.88	252			
Forth Field	Between Groups	1.548	3	0.516		
	Within Groups	100.14	249	0.402	1.283	0.281
	Total	101.687	252			
Total Score	Between Groups	0.426	3	0.142		
	Within Groups	59.744	249	0.24	0.592	0.621
	Total Score	60.171	252			

As shown in **Table 12**, there is no statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the respondents' answers regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in enhancing National identity from the Palestinian media elites' view in all fields, and the total score is attributed to the variable of years of experience.

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that years of experience have no effect on the different points of view of Palestinian media elites regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity, which indicates that there is an understanding among media elites on the importance of Popular Digital Diplomacy in enhancing National identity that does not differ significantly among those with different experiences.

In addition, providing training and development programs among Palestinian media institutions that contribute to enhancing understanding of Popular Digital Diplomacy reduced the impact of differences between different years of experience, and there may be an accumulation of experiences and knowledge among media elites on this issue, which led to the unification of their opinions.

It is possible that there will be communication between different media elites and coordination to develop Popular Digital Diplomacy, which leads to understand its importance.

Sixth: Hypothesis Related to Workplace

Table 13. Results of the (t-Test) for independent samples of significance of differences between averages of the study sample members' answers, attributed to the workplace variable.

Study Fields	Government Sector (N = 97)		Private Sector (N = 156)		T-Value	Significance Level
	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation	Arithmetic Average	Standard Deviation		
First Field	3.85	0.48	3.83	0.58	0.359	0.720
Second Field	3.86	0.38	3.92	0.62	0.955	0.341
Third Field	3.96	0.38	3.97	0.69	0.269	0.788
Forth Field	3.82	0.54	3.83	0.68	0.201	0.841
Total Score	3.87	0.37	3.89	0.54	0.262	0.794

As shown in **Table 13**, no statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the respondents' answers regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity from the Palestinian media elites' view in all fields, and the total score is attributed to the workplace variable.

The researchers attributed this result to the fact that the workplace variable has no effect on the variation in the opinions of media elites regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity; which leads to realizing the importance of these practices across different media institutions, and there must be a common culture among these institutions that emphasizes

the importance of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity, as this culture reduces the impact of differences of views in workplaces.

Seventh: Hypothesis Related to Organizational Affiliation

Table 14. Results of one-way ANOVA to verify the differences between the organizational affiliation variable' level.

Field	Variance Source	Squares Sum	Freedom Degrees	Mean Square	F-Value	Significance Level
First Field	Among Groups	8.867	3	2.956	10.946	0.000
	Within Groups	67.238	249	0.27		
	Total	76.105	252			
Second Field	Among Groups	7.704	3	2.568	9.379	0.000
	Within Groups	68.173	249	0.274		
	Total	75.877	252			
Third Field	Among Groups	2.279	3	0.76	2.184	0.09
	Within Groups	86.601	249	0.348		
	Total	88.88	252			
Forth Field	Among Groups	10.465	3	3.488	9.522	0.000
	Within Groups	91.222	249	0.366		
	Total	101.687	252			
Total Score	Among Groups	6.499	3	2.166	10.05	0.000
	Within Groups	53.672	249	0.216		
	Total	60.171	252			

As shown in **Table 14**, there is a statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) for the respondents' answers regarding the effectiveness of Popular Digital Diplomacy in boosting the National identity from the Palestinian media elites' view in all fields, except the third field. To determine the differences in favor of those among the levels of the organizational affiliation variable, the Scheffe post-test was used, the results of which were as in **Table 15**.

As shown in **Table 15**, there is a statistically significant difference at the significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$) between the levels of the organizational affiliation variable between the respondents, whose organizational affiliation is "national trend", and the study individuals, whose organizational affiliation is Islamic trend, and independent', in favor of an Islamic and independent trend.

The researchers attributed this result to the difference in organizational orientations and trends "national, Islamic, and independent" towards the Palestinian issue, National identity, and digital diplomacy, as each trend looks at it from a different political and ideological angle.

Moreover, the affiliation of media elites to such trends may affect their perception and evaluation of the effectiveness of digital diplomacy in boosting the

Table 15. Results of the (Scheffe test) to verify the differences between the organizational affiliation variable's level.

Field	Organizational Affiliation	No	Arithmetic Average	National Trend	Islamic Trend	Leftist Trend	Independent
First Field	National Trend	74	3.96	-	0.57*	-	-
	Islamic Trend	33	3.38	-	-	-	0.52*
	Left trend	24	3.72	0.23	-	-	-
	Independent	122	3.91	0.52	-	-	-
Second Field	National Trend	74	3.90	-	0.40*	-	-
	Islamic Trend	33	3.50	-	-	-	0.53*
	Left Trend	24	3.78	0.11	-	-	0.24
	Independent	122	4.03	0.53*	-	-	-
Third Field	National Trend	74	3.89	-	0.57*	-	-
	Islamic Trend	33	3.31	-	-	-	0.62*
	Left Trend	24	3.78	-	0.46*	-	-
	Independent	122	3.94	-	0.62*	-	-
Forth Field	National Trend	74	3.95	-	0.46*	-	-
	Islamic trend	33	3.48	-	-	-	0.47*
	Left trend	24	3.80	0.15	-	-	-
	Independent	122	3.96	-	0.47*	-	-

National identity, based on the orientations and policies of each trend. This is due to the fact that there may be a difference in the level of awareness and interest in issues of National identity and digital diplomacy between these trends.

Qualitative Analysis

First Axis:

The role of popular digital diplomacy in boosting Palestinian national identity

Results of the interviews showed that Popular Digital Diplomacy has an important and prominent role in boosting the Palestinian National identity, cultural identity, and historical identity. Popular Digital Diplomacy has a strong role in boosting the national presence, i.e. strengthening the existential identity of the Palestinian people.

In light of the conflict between Israel and Palestine, it is necessary to use strategies that strengthen this presence. It also has a great impact on the world level by strengthening the actual role of Palestinian Popular Digital Diplomacy, example of this is the Sheikh Jarah events, through which the Kurdi people conveyed their message to the world and addressed them in Arabic and English.

Without digital diplomacy and the existence of the Internet, they would not have been able to convey their message to the world. This strengthening could be through several factors, namely creating a common national unity that strengthens

adherence to the land and homeland.

Montaser Hamdan believes that there are educational, cultural, economic, psychological, social, and technological factors that help strengthen the Palestinian National identity, while Omar Rahhal believes that the main factor in boosting the National identity is the justice of the Palestinian cause, and the serious Israeli violations committed by the occupation against the Palestinians, including killing, displacement, and homes demolition... et, factor, Apartheid, which is a very influential matter that influencing the public opinion.

Second Axis:

Used digital tools and means to boost the Palestinian national identity through popular diplomacy

Results of the interviews showed that there are several digital tools and means that can be used to support the Palestinian national identity through popular digital diplomacy, including world openness, archives, videos, photos, posters, images, Instagram, TikTok, Facebook, Twitter, electronic news sites, podcasts, groups, WhatsApp, blogs, live broadcasts, hashtags, conferences, seminars, instant messaging applications, digital campaigns, and others.

In addition to the Palestinian keffiyeh, the Palestinian flag, the image of Jerusalem, and the victory sign may contribute to strengthening the national identity as they enhance the Palestinian national unity and cohesion.

For his part, Montaser Hamdan believes that digital tools can enhance the Palestinian national identity through developing communication and plans with clear objectives, identifying targeted groups, preparing digital strategies, and training and developing special skills in the field of digital content production.

For her part, Reema Al-Amleh believes that the Palestinian national identity can be strengthened through digital tools through publishing Palestinian experiences related to identity and heritage, as well as publishing photos and videos related to the massacres committed by the occupation against the Palestinian people, and its attempts to erase the Palestinian national identity.

Third Axis:

Contribution of social media in building and boosting the national awareness on Palestinian issues

Results of the interviews showed that social and digital media can play a vital role in building and boosting the national awareness on Palestinian issues through the local audience, and conveying its voice to the audience in the surrounding areas, as well as western societies, and can contribute to confronting the enemy by penetrating and refuting its narrative, education and awareness, educational content, and creating and distributing digital educational materials, such as, articles and videos.

Social media and digital diplomacy of various types have also played a major role in recent years in revealing the facts of the Palestinian issue, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and encouraging Palestinian activists and influencers to use digital platforms to enhance national identity, and create electronic pages that contribute

to organizing solidarity campaigns to support the Palestinian cause, and discussing them to reach solutions to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and publishing the violations that Palestinians are subjected to by the Israeli occupation in order to influence world's opinion at the international level.

Forth Axis:

Role of digital campaigns in promoting belonging and awareness of the national identity among the Palestinian masses at home and abroad

Results of the interviews showed that digital campaigns contribute to promoting belonging and awareness of national identity among the Palestinian masses at home and abroad e.g. the Al-Aqsa Flood Operation.

The Palestinian communities have come to play a major role in conveying the Palestinian narrative and promoting the belonging of the Palestinian, Arab and Islamic communities' sons to the Palestinian cause.

This has contributed to encouraging the sons of the Palestinian people abroad to be proud of the Palestinian flag, identity, return keys, Jerusalem, right to return, and the national and heritage values of the Palestinian people.

Therefore, the existence of these digital campaigns has contributed greatly to this, and the continuation of these campaigns should be encouraged so that the signs of belonging remain rooted and continuous for future generations and future eras, and effective communication between Palestinians in the homeland and diaspora, which contributes to the exchange of ideas and national stories, and enhances the sense of national belonging.

For his part, Ashraf Al-Okki believes that digital campaigns have a role in promoting awareness of the national identity among the Palestinian masses internally and externally, as the Palestinian Cause has become a global issue, as the masses in European and western States are demanding the strengthening of the national identity through demonstrations to support Gaza and end the Israeli occupation.

Digital campaigns have contributed to supporting the Palestinian Cause through discussions between States in International Forums and the United Nations. These digital campaigns have been strengthened through digital media that contributes to boosting the national identity as a world issue.

Fifth Axis:

Examples of successful digital initiatives or campaigns contributed to enhancing awareness of the Palestinian national identity

Results of the interviews showed that there are digital initiatives or campaigns that contributed to the success of national awareness. This can be seen through the well-known influencers' publications from journalists on social media during Operation Flood, such as, Tamer Al-Masha'l, Moataz Al-Azaizeh, and Saleh Al-Jafrawi in addition to influencers in Palestinian society from journalists active in initiatives related to tourism or Palestinian antiquities, as well as digital initiatives that contribute to introducing people of the homeland's features and landmarks. Consequently, enhancing national belonging that our homeland is beautiful and has cultural diversity, heritage.

Among the campaigns is also the PDS campaign, which calls for boycotting Israeli products that greatly affected the national awareness and enhancing national identity. Fadi Al-Assa stated that among the campaigns that contribute to the conscious enhancement of national identity is creating “hashtags” for photos, and publishing them on social media, and the “Palestine in Our Hearts campaign”, which launched in 2021 by the Foundation for Culture and Free Thought that highlighted digital content related to Palestinian identity and heritage.

It contributed to increasing national awareness and belonging, and the “Voice of the Earth Initiative”, launched in 2020 by the Alternative Media Center, contributed to highlighting Palestinian stories and experiences and documenting them through digital platforms, as it helped to enhance awareness of the Palestinian reality and embody the national identity.

Sixth Axis:

Current strategies that develop popular digital diplomacy in promoting national identity

Results of the interviews showed that the current strategies for developing popular digital diplomacy in boosting the national identity are, planning and spontaneity, effectively using social media platforms, interacting directly with the public, promoting national and humanitarian issues, cooperating with local and international institutions, holding training courses and workshops to produce content, diversity in Palestinian content, whether cultural, political, or social on the history of the Palestinian Cause, and unifying the discourse, confronting false Israeli narratives about the Palestinian Cause, exploiting the national event, such as, the Al-Aqsa Flood War, concept-building strategy, media digitization and advance planning strategies. George Kanawati believes that there are no clear strategies yet.

Seventh Axis:

Future strategies help developing popular digital diplomacy in boosting national identity

Results of the interviews showed that future strategies that help in developing digital diplomacy are framing, polarization, systematic planning, enhancing self-confidence, and building on strategies to whetting the spirits of framing and modeling.

These are future strategies that help strengthen national identity, develop new digital applications and platforms, use modern technologies, such as, augmented reality and virtual reality, cooperate with media stars and public figures, expand international networks and Palestinian communities, strengthen national solidarity, enhance media digitization, and participate in organizing initiatives that encourage individuals to highlight their stories and experiences.

For his part, George Qanawati stated that among the future strategies are the strategy of addressing people in their language, strategy of dividing the world according to their culture and religion, and merging the two cultures together.

Moreover, activating a strategy reforming the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as it is the true and realistic representative of the Palestinian people,

whether they are in the 1948 Palestine or in the Diaspora.

Among the strategies also the collection of Palestinian history, strategy of sequencing and sifting history, as well as the strategy of linking history with images and documents. All the above strategies contribute to enhance the Palestinian national identity.

Eighth Axis:

Using digital media might be effective to convey national and cultural messages to International Community

Results of the interviews showed that using digital media is an effective mechanism for conveying national and cultural messages to the international community through the public i.e. when some people speak on social media platforms, this contributes to conveying messages well, and thus the use of digital media plays a role in strengthening the Palestinian national identity through press and media coverage of the Palestinian issue.

George Qanawati believes that digital media contributes to conveying Palestinian history, culture and suffering. Ashraf Al-Okki also believes that the presence of various digital media contributes to know events and news, and facts, which play a role in strengthening the national identity and conveying the message of the Palestinian people and delivering it to the world.

Ninth Axis:

Contribution of digital interaction with Palestinian masses to build a sense of belonging and national solidarity

Results of the interviews showed that digital interaction with the Palestinian masses contributes to building a sense of national belonging through countries in the world such as Europe, America and South Asia raising the Palestinian flag and the Palestinian *koffiyeh*, which leads to boosting national belonging.

Social media also contribute to strengthening belonging and national solidarity among the Palestinian masses, such as, the Al-Aqsa Flood War, which played a major role in conveying the national message through various social media platforms.

Digital interaction also provides direct communication channels between the Palestinian leadership and the masses, which enables the masses to participate and express their opinions and national concerns to a greater extent.

Qanawati believes that digital interaction is very important because its content reaches the smallest number of audiences, and is concerned with quality rather than quantity, and works to humanize Palestinian issues. Al-Okki also believes that there is digital interaction with the Palestinian cause and the Palestinian masses by Palestinians in the Diaspora and around the world that enhances the sense of belonging and national solidarity.

Clockwise, this indicates intellectual maturity among Palestinians in popular digital diplomacy on social media sites at the local level through sharing events taking place in Palestine, whether in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, which helps in boosting the Palestinian national identity, and national belonging.

Tenth Axis:

Challenges faced the popular digital diplomacy in promoting national identity

- Results of the interviews showed that there are a number of challenges facing popular digital diplomacy in promoting the national identity, namely:
- Palestinian differences that contribute to limiting the promotion of national belonging and confronting digital diplomacy.
- Current economic situation that contributes to reducing people's tendencies towards promoting national belonging.
- Technical capacity.
- Lack of a strategy that expresses Palestinian content, and restricting Palestinian content, which reduces the delivery of the Palestinian message.
- Internal divisions in Palestine.
- Persecuting, arresting or assassinating of Palestinian activists.
- Disseminating fake and misleading content.

This must be addressed by encouraging influencers and activists on digital platforms to confront this content and disseminate correct information.

4. Recommendations and Suggestions

Based on the results of the study, the researchers recommend the following.

- 1) The necessity to enhance the Palestinian media elites' role in developing popular digital diplomacy.
- 2) Organizing workshops and training courses to develop skills of media elites in the digital diplomacy field.
- 3) Encouraging cooperation between government agencies and media elites to enhance their role in digital diplomatic communication.
- 4) Working to study mechanisms for integrating concepts of social and cultural identity into popular digital diplomacy strategies.
- 5) Working on creating digital content that reflects national values and enhances the sense of national belonging.
- 6) Encouraging popular participation in digital dialogues that tackle the national identity's issue.
- 7) Identifying methods of responding to negative content by using digital platforms.
- 8) Conducting more research and studies on popular digital diplomacy and national identity, due to the lack of studies and research in this field.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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