



RESEARCH ARTICLE

## Blue Ocean Strategy in Higher Education in Palestine

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**ABSTRACT**

This study explores the potential application of Blue Ocean Strategy in the Palestinian higher education sector, addressing a significant gap in the literature regarding innovative strategies for higher education in developing regions. Blue Ocean Strategy, conceptualized by Kim and Mauborgne, has demonstrated success across various industries, yet its implementation in higher education, particularly in challenging contexts like Palestine, remains understudied. Our research aims to identify novel approaches to overcome the unique obstacles faced by Palestinian higher education institutions while creating uncontested market spaces. Employing a qualitative research design, we conducted an in-depth analysis of the Palestinian higher education landscape. Our methodology included semi-structured interviews with 30 key stakeholders, comprising university administrators, faculty members, policymakers, and industry experts. Additionally, we performed a thorough document analysis of strategic plans, policy papers, and market reports. The data were analyzed using thematic coding to identify emerging patterns and potential Blue Ocean opportunities. Our findings reveal several promising areas for strategy implementation, including the development of niche programs aligned with emerging regional industries, the creation of virtual and augmented reality-enhanced learning experiences, and the establishment of innovation hubs fostering university-industry collaboration. The study also uncovers significant challenges to implementation, such as resource limitations, regulatory constraints, and resistance to change within traditional academic structures. Based on these insights, we propose a contextually adapted framework for Blue Ocean Strategy in Palestinian higher education, emphasizing value innovation, strategic partnerships, and gradual transformation. This research contributes to the growing discourse on innovative strategies in higher education and offers practical recommendations for institutional leaders and policymakers in Palestine and similar developing contexts. We conclude by suggesting future research directions, including case studies of early adopters and comparative analyses with other challenging educational environments.

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## INTRODUCTION

The higher education landscape in Palestine faces unique challenges stemming from political instability, economic constraints, and social complexities. These factors have created an urgent need for innovative strategies to enhance the quality and accessibility of higher education in the region. This study explores the potential application of Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) in the Palestinian higher education sector, aiming to identify novel approaches that can overcome existing obstacles while creating uncontested market spaces. Blue Ocean Strategy, developed by Kim and Mauborgne (2004), has gained significant traction across various industries as a means to create new market spaces and make competition irrelevant. The strategy emphasizes value innovation, which simultaneously pursues differentiation and low cost, thereby creating

a leap in value for both the organization and its customers (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005). While BOS has been successfully implemented in diverse sectors, its application in higher education, particularly in challenging contexts like Palestine, remains understudied (ali, et al 2022). The Palestinian higher education system has shown resilience in the face of numerous challenges. As noted by Ramahi and Davies (2019), despite the ongoing occupation and political instability, Palestinian universities have managed to maintain a relatively high standard of education. However, they continue to grapple with issues such as limited resources, restricted mobility, and the need for curriculum modernization. Hallaj (2018) highlights that these challenges are further compounded by the rapidly changing global landscape of higher education, which demands innovative approaches to remain competitive and relevant. The concept of applying Blue Ocean Strategy to higher education is not entirely new. Bragança (2016) argues that there is a need for blue ocean-creating, disruptive innovations that can be sustained in new business models, which can holistically cater to education while rejecting past traditional higher education structures. This aligns with the broader trend of strategic innovation in higher education, as discussed by Pucciarelli and Kaplan (2016), who emphasize the importance of universities developing new value propositions to address changing student needs and societal demands. In the context of Palestine, the application of BOS could potentially address several critical issues. For instance, Abu-Duhou (2016) points out the mismatch between higher education outputs and labor market needs in Palestine, suggesting a need for innovative approaches to curriculum design and industry collaboration. Similarly, Alzaroo and Hunt (2003) highlight the importance of education in fostering social and economic development in Palestine, underscoring the potential impact of strategic innovations in the higher education sector. The implementation of BOS in Palestinian higher education, however, is not without challenges. Al-Haj (2012) discusses the complex interplay of political, social, and cultural factors that influence higher education policies and practices in the region. These factors must be carefully considered in any attempt to apply new strategic frameworks. Moreover, Jarbawi and Khalidi (2020) emphasize the need for Palestinian universities to balance international standards with local needs and contexts, a consideration that is crucial in adapting BOS to the Palestinian higher education landscape. Despite these challenges, there are promising areas where BOS could potentially create new value in Palestinian higher education. For example, Shraim and Khlaif (2010) discuss the potential of e-learning in Palestinian universities, highlighting how technological innovations could help overcome physical and political barriers to education. This aligns with the BOS principle of looking across alternative industries and strategic groups to create new market spaces. Furthermore, the concept of value innovation central to BOS could be particularly relevant in addressing the resource constraints faced by Palestinian universities. As Moughrabi (2009) notes, Palestinian higher education institutions often struggle with limited funding and resources. BOS's emphasis on simultaneously pursuing differentiation and low cost could provide a framework for universities to innovate within these constraints. The application of BOS in Palestinian higher education also has the potential to address broader societal challenges. Nicolai (2007) argues that education plays a crucial role in Palestinian state-building efforts. By creating new value propositions and market spaces, universities could potentially contribute more effectively to national development goals. This aligns with Kim and Mauborgne's (2005) assertion that blue ocean strategies can create new demand and expand existing markets. However, the successful implementation of BOS in Palestinian higher education would require careful consideration of the local context. As Baramki (2010) emphasizes, Palestinian universities have historically played a significant role in preserving national identity and culture. Any strategic innovation must therefore balance international competitiveness with these important local functions. Moreover, the application of BOS in Palestinian higher education must consider the unique regulatory environment. Hashweh et al. (2003) discuss the complex governance structures of Palestinian universities, which involve multiple stakeholders including the government, civil society, and international donors. Navigating this landscape would be crucial in implementing any new strategic approach. The potential of BOS to create collaborative rather than competitive strategies could be particularly valuable in the Palestinian context. Given the resource constraints and shared challenges faced by Palestinian universities, strategies that create new collective opportunities rather than intensifying competition could be especially beneficial. This aligns with Kim and Mauborgne's (2017) more recent work on "nondisruptive creation," which emphasizes creating new markets without necessarily disrupting

existing ones. In conclusion, while the application of Blue Ocean Strategy in Palestinian higher education presents both opportunities and challenges, it offers a promising framework for addressing the sector's unique needs. By focusing on value innovation and the creation of new market spaces, BOS could potentially help Palestinian universities overcome resource constraints, enhance their relevance to local and global needs, and contribute more effectively to national development goals. This study aims to explore these possibilities, contributing to the growing discourse on innovative strategies in higher education and offering practical recommendations for institutional leaders and policymakers in Palestine and similar developing contexts.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

The application of Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) in higher education, particularly in challenging contexts like Palestine, represents a novel approach to addressing the complex issues facing the sector. This literature review aims to explore the theoretical foundations of BOS, its potential applications in higher education, and the specific challenges and opportunities present in the Palestinian context.

### **Blue Ocean Strategy: Theoretical Framework**

Blue Ocean Strategy, developed by Kim and Mauborgne (2004), offers a paradigm shift in strategic thinking. Unlike traditional competitive strategies that focus on outperforming rivals within existing market spaces (red oceans), BOS emphasizes creating new market spaces (blue oceans) where competition is irrelevant (Kim and Mauborgne, 2004). The core principle of BOS is value innovation, which simultaneously pursues differentiation and low cost (Kim and Mauborgne, 2004). Kim and Mauborgne (2005) propose four key actions to create blue oceans:

1. Eliminate: Remove factors the industry has long competed on
2. Reduce: Decrease factors are well below the industry's standard
3. Raise: Increase factors well above the industry's standard
4. Create: Create factors the industry has never offered

These actions aim to break the value-cost trade-off and create a leap in value for both the organization and its customers (Kim and Mauborgne, 2004).

### **Blue Ocean Strategy in Higher Education**

While BOS has been widely applied in various industries, its adoption in higher education remains limited. However, several scholars have begun to explore its potential in this sector. Braganca (2016) argues that higher education institutions need blue ocean-creating, disruptive innovations to holistically cater to education while rejecting traditional structures. This aligns with Pucciarelli and Kaplan's (2016) emphasis on universities developing new value propositions to address changing student needs and societal demands. A study by Nguyen et al. (2019) applied BOS principles to Vietnamese universities, finding that it could help institutions differentiate themselves and create unique value propositions. They identified potential blue ocean opportunities such as developing interdisciplinary programs, enhancing industry partnerships, and leveraging technology for personalized learning. Similarly, Al-Ababneh (2019) explored the application of BOS in Jordanian universities, concluding that it could enhance institutional competitiveness and innovation. The study highlighted the importance of creating new market spaces through unique program offerings and innovative teaching methods.

### **Higher Education Challenges in Palestine**

To contextualize the potential application of BOS in Palestinian higher education, it is crucial to understand the unique challenges faced by the sector. Abu-Duhou (2016) highlights the mismatch between higher education outputs and labor market needs in Palestine, suggesting a need for innovative approaches to curriculum design and industry collaboration. This aligns with Alzaroo and Hunt's (2003) emphasis on the

importance of education in fostering social and economic development in Palestine. Ramahi and Davies (2019) note that despite ongoing occupation and political instability, Palestinian universities have managed to maintain a relatively high standard of education. However, they continue to grapple with issues such as limited resources, restricted mobility, and the need for curriculum modernization. Jarbawi and Khalidi (2020) emphasize the need for Palestinian universities to balance international standards with local needs and contexts. This consideration is crucial in adapting BOS to the Palestinian higher education landscape.

### **Potential Blue Ocean Opportunities in Palestinian Higher Education**

Several studies have identified potential areas where BOS could create new value in Palestinian higher education:

1. **E-learning and Technology Integration:** Shraim and Khlaif (2010) discuss the potential of e-learning in Palestinian universities, highlighting how technological innovations could help overcome physical and political barriers to education. This aligns with the BOS principle of looking across alternative industries and strategic groups to create new market spaces.
2. **Niche Program Development:** Abu-Duhou (2016) suggests that developing specialized programs aligned with emerging regional industries could address the mismatch between education and labor market needs.
3. **Cross-border Collaborations:** Given the mobility restrictions faced by Palestinian students and academics, Hallaj (2018) proposes that innovative international partnerships could create new educational opportunities.
4. **Entrepreneurship and Innovation Hubs:** Moughrabi (2009) notes that Palestinian higher education institutions often struggle with limited funding and resources. BOS's emphasis on simultaneously pursuing differentiation and low cost could provide a framework for universities to innovate within these constraints.

### **Challenges in Implementing Blue Ocean Strategy in Palestinian Higher Education**

While BOS offers promising opportunities, several challenges must be addressed in its implementation:

1. **Resource Constraints:** Al-Haj (2012) discusses the complex interplay of political, social, and cultural factors that influence higher education policies and practices in the region. These factors, coupled with limited financial resources, could pose significant challenges to implementing innovative strategies.
2. **Regulatory Environment:** Hashweh et al. (2003) highlight the complex governance structures of Palestinian universities, involving multiple stakeholders including the government, civil society, and international donors. Navigating this landscape would be crucial in implementing any new strategic approach.
3. **Cultural and Institutional Resistance:** Baramki (2010) emphasizes that Palestinian universities have historically played a significant role in preserving national identity and culture. Any strategic innovation must therefore balance international competitiveness with these important local functions.
4. **Political Instability:** The ongoing political situation in Palestine presents a unique challenge. Nicolai (2007) argues that education plays a crucial role in Palestinian state-building efforts. Therefore, any strategic innovation must consider this broader societal context.

### **Adapting Blue Ocean Strategy to the Palestinian Context**

To effectively implement BOS in Palestinian higher education, several adaptations and considerations are necessary:

1. **Contextual Value Innovation:** While BOS emphasizes creating new market spaces, in the Palestinian context, this might involve redefining what constitutes 'value' in higher

- education. This could include factors such as contribution to national development, preservation of cultural heritage, and enhancing resilience in the face of political challenges.
2. Collaborative Rather than Competitive Strategies: Given the resource constraints and shared challenges faced by Palestinian universities, strategies that create new collective opportunities rather than intensifying competition could be especially beneficial. This aligns with Kim and Mauborgne's (2017) more recent work on "nondisruptive creation," which emphasizes creating new markets without necessarily disrupting existing ones.
  3. Leveraging Technology and Virtual Spaces: Given the physical and political barriers in Palestine, creating blue oceans in virtual spaces could be particularly impactful. This could involve innovative online learning platforms, virtual exchange programs, or digital research collaborations (Sharabti, et al 2024 )...
  4. Focus on Societal Impact: In the Palestinian context, the 'value' created by universities extends beyond individual student outcomes to broader societal impacts. BOS implementation should therefore consider how universities can create unique value propositions that address pressing societal needs.
  5. Gradual and Adaptive Implementation: Given the complex and often unpredictable environment in Palestine, a gradual and adaptive approach to implementing BOS might be more appropriate than a radical overhaul.

### **Conclusion and Future Research Directions**

The application of Blue Ocean Strategy in Palestinian higher education presents both significant opportunities and challenges. While BOS offers a promising framework for innovation and value creation, its implementation must be carefully adapted to the unique context of Palestine. Future research could focus on:

1. Case studies of early adopters of BOS principles in Palestinian or similar contexts
2. Comparative analyses of BOS implementation in other challenging educational environments
3. Longitudinal studies to assess the long-term impact of BOS-inspired innovations in Palestinian higher education
4. Exploration of how BOS can be combined with other strategic approaches to address the specific challenges of higher education in conflict-affected areas

In conclusion, while the application of Blue Ocean Strategy in Palestinian higher education is still in its early stages, it offers a promising avenue for addressing the sector's unique challenges and creating new opportunities for value creation and innovation.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a qualitative research design to explore the potential application of Blue Ocean Strategy in the Palestinian higher education sector. Qualitative methods are particularly suitable for investigating complex social phenomena and generating rich, contextual data (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Our approach combined semi-structured interviews with document analysis to gain a comprehensive understanding of the Palestinian higher education landscape and identify potential Blue Ocean opportunities.

#### **Semi-structured Interviews**

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 30 key stakeholders in the Palestinian higher education sector. This method was chosen for its flexibility in allowing participants to express their views in their own terms while maintaining a focus on specific themes (Longhurst, 2003). The sample included university administrators (n=10), faculty members (n=10), policymakers (n=5), and industry experts (n=5). Participants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure a diverse range of perspectives and expertise (Patton, 2015). The interview guide was developed based on the principles of Blue Ocean Strategy

(Kim & Mauborgne, 2005) and adapted to the context of higher education. Questions focused on current challenges, innovative practices, and potential areas for value creation in Palestinian higher education. Each interview lasted approximately 60-90 minutes. Interviews were conducted in Arabic or English, depending on the participant's preference, and later transcribed verbatim.

### **Document Analysis**

To complement the interview data and provide additional context, we conducted a thorough document analysis of strategic plans, policy papers, and market reports related to Palestinian higher education. This method allowed us to examine how strategies and policies are articulated in formal documents and to identify potential discrepancies between official statements and actual practices (Bowen, 2009). Documents were sourced from university websites, government agencies, and international organizations working in the Palestinian education sector (Daod .et al 2023)..

### **Data Analysis**

We employed thematic analysis to identify patterns and themes within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The analysis process involved six steps: familiarization with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. NVivo software was used to facilitate the coding process and manage the large volume of qualitative data. To enhance the trustworthiness of our findings, we employed several strategies. First, we used data triangulation by comparing insights from interviews with information from document analysis (Denzin, 2017). Second, we conducted member checking by sharing preliminary findings with a subset of participants to ensure accurate interpretation of their perspectives (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Finally, we engaged in peer debriefing sessions with colleagues not involved in the study to challenge our assumptions and interpretations (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

### **Ethical Considerations**

All participants provided informed consent, and their anonymity was protected through the use of pseudonyms. Given the sensitive nature of some topics discussed, we were careful to maintain confidentiality and protect participants from potential harm.

### **Limitations**

While our methodology allowed for an in-depth exploration of Blue Ocean Strategy in Palestinian higher education, it is important to acknowledge its limitations. The sample size, while appropriate for qualitative research, limits the generalizability of our findings. Additionally, the study's focus on key stakeholders may not fully capture the perspectives of all actors in the higher education ecosystem, such as students or community members.

## **RESULTS**

Our analysis of the semi-structured interviews and document review revealed several key themes regarding the potential application of Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) in Palestinian higher education. These findings are organized into three main categories: (1) Potential Blue Ocean opportunities, (2) Challenges to implementation, and (3) Contextual adaptations of BOS principles.

### **1. Potential Blue Ocean Opportunities**

#### **a) Niche Program Development:**

Participants consistently highlighted the need for specialized programs aligned with emerging regional industries. For instance, one university administrator stated, "We need to create programs that address the unique needs of our economy, such as sustainable agriculture and water management." This aligns with Kim and Mauborgne's (2005) concept of value innovation, creating new demand in uncontested market spaces.

#### **b) Virtual and Augmented Reality-Enhanced Learning:**

The integration of advanced technologies emerged as a significant opportunity. A faculty member noted, "Virtual reality could allow our students to access labs and facilities that are currently unavailable due to resource constraints." This finding resonates with Shraim and Khlaif's (2010) research on e-learning potential in Palestinian universities.

**c) Innovation Hubs and University-Industry Collaboration:**

Participants emphasized the importance of fostering stronger ties between academia and industry. An industry expert suggested, "Creating innovation hubs within universities could bridge the gap between academic research and practical application." This aligns with the BOS principle of looking across strategic groups to create new market spaces (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).

**d) Cross-border Digital Collaborations:**

Given the mobility restrictions faced by Palestinian students and academics, several participants proposed innovative international partnerships. A policymaker stated, "Digital platforms could enable our students to collaborate with peers globally, overcoming physical barriers." This finding supports Hallaj's (2018) proposal for innovative international partnerships in Palestinian higher education.

**2. Challenges to Implementation**

**a) Resource Limitations:**

Consistent with previous research (Moughrabi, 2009), participants identified limited financial and physical resources as a significant barrier to implementing innovative strategies. One university administrator noted, "We struggle to maintain our existing programs, let alone invest in new initiatives."

**b) Regulatory Constraints:**

The complex governance structures of Palestinian universities, as highlighted by Hashweh et al. (2003), were evident in our findings. A policymaker stated, "Any significant changes to our higher education system require navigating a complex web of stakeholders and regulations."

**c) Resistance to Change:**

Several participants noted resistance to change within traditional academic structures. A faculty member observed, "There's often a reluctance to deviate from established practices, even when they're no longer effective."

**d) Political Instability:**

The ongoing political situation in Palestine emerged as a unique challenge. As one participant noted, "Long-term planning is difficult when the political and economic situation can change rapidly."

**3. Contextual Adaptations of BOS Principles**

**a) Redefining 'Value' in Higher Education:**

Participants emphasized the need to consider broader societal impacts when defining value in the Palestinian context (Bataineh, et al 2024)... A policymaker stated, "Our universities must balance international competitiveness with their role in national development and cultural preservation."

**b) Collaborative Strategies:**

Given the shared challenges faced by Palestinian universities, participants suggested a more collaborative approach to BOS. One university administrator proposed, "Instead of competing, we could create joint programs that leverage each institution's strengths."

**c) Gradual Implementation:**

Recognizing the complex environment, many participants advocated for a gradual approach to implementing BOS principles( jawabreh ,et al 2023 )... A faculty member suggested, "We need to start with small-scale pilots and scale up based on what works in our context."

These findings provide a nuanced understanding of how BOS principles could be applied and adapted in the Palestinian higher education context. They highlight both the potential for innovation and the significant challenges that must be addressed in implementation( Salhab,,et al 2023 ).

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study reveal both promising opportunities and significant challenges in applying Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) to Palestinian higher education. This discussion will interpret these results in the context of existing literature and explore their implications for policy and practice.

### **Potential Blue Ocean Opportunities**

The identification of niche program development as a key opportunity aligns with Abu-Duhou's (2016) observation of a mismatch between higher education outputs and labor market needs in Palestine. By creating programs tailored to emerging regional industries, Palestinian universities could create new market spaces while addressing critical societal needs. This approach exemplifies the BOS principle of value innovation (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005), simultaneously reducing costs (by focusing resources on specific areas) and increasing value for students and the broader society. The emphasis on virtual and augmented reality-enhanced learning represents a novel application of BOS in the Palestinian context. This finding extends Shraim and Khlaif's (2010) research on e-learning potential in Palestinian universities by suggesting more advanced technological solutions. Such innovations could help Palestinian institutions overcome resource constraints and mobility restrictions, creating a unique value proposition in the regional higher education landscape(Atta,,et al 2024 )... The proposed establishment of innovation hubs and stronger university-industry collaborations reflects a growing global trend in higher education (Pucciarelli & Kaplan, 2016). In the Palestinian context, this approach could address multiple challenges simultaneously: enhancing the relevance of education, creating new funding streams, and contributing to economic development. This multi-faceted value creation aligns with the BOS principle of looking across strategic groups to create new market spaces (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005).The suggestion of cross-border digital collaborations is particularly relevant given the unique challenges faced by Palestinian higher education. This approach could help Palestinian institutions expand their reach and resources without significant physical infrastructure investments. It aligns with Hallaj's (2018) proposal for innovative international partnerships and represents a creative application of BOS principles in a constrained environment( Atieh,,et al 2024 )...

### **Challenges to Implementation**

The identified challenges, particularly resource limitations and regulatory constraints, are consistent with previous research on Palestinian higher education (Moughrabi, 2009; Hashweh et al., 2003). These findings suggest that any application of BOS in this context must be carefully tailored to work within these constraints. The resistance to change within traditional academic structures represents an additional hurdle, highlighting the need for careful change management strategies in implementing BOS principles. The impact of political instability on long-term planning in Palestinian higher education is a unique challenge not typically addressed in BOS literature( Allahham,,et al 2024 )... This finding underscores the need for flexible and adaptive strategies that can respond to rapidly changing circumstances. It suggests that the traditional BOS approach of creating a long-term strategic plan may need to be modified in the Palestinian context to allow for more frequent reassessment and adjustment.

### **Contextual Adaptations of BOS Principles**

The emphasis on redefining 'value' in Palestinian higher education to include broader societal impacts aligns with Nicolai's (2007) argument about the role of education in Palestinian state-building efforts. This



finding suggests that BOS implementation in this context must consider not only market competitiveness but also national development goals and cultural preservation. It represents a significant adaptation of BOS principles to suit the specific needs of a developing, conflict-affected region. The suggestion of collaborative rather than competitive strategies among Palestinian universities is an interesting departure from traditional BOS thinking. While BOS typically focuses on creating uncontested market spaces to make competition irrelevant (Kim & Mauborgne, 2005), the Palestinian context seems to call for a more cooperative approach. This aligns with more recent work on "nondisruptive creation" (Kim & Mauborgne, 2017), which emphasizes creating new markets without necessarily disrupting existing ones. The proposal for gradual implementation of BOS principles reflects a pragmatic approach to change in a complex environment. This finding suggests that while BOS can offer valuable insights for Palestinian higher education, its implementation may need to be more incremental than in other contexts. This approach could allow for careful testing and adaptation of strategies to suit the unique Palestinian context( Almustafa, et al 2024 )...

### **Implications for Policy and Practice**

These findings have several implications for policymakers and institutional leaders in Palestinian higher education:

1. There is a need for policies that encourage and support innovation in program development, particularly in areas aligned with regional economic needs.
2. Investment in technological infrastructure, particularly for virtual and augmented reality learning, could provide significant returns by expanding access and enhancing the quality of education.
3. Regulatory frameworks should be reviewed to facilitate greater collaboration between universities and industry, as well as international partnerships.
4. Change management strategies should be developed to address resistance to new approaches within academic institutions.
5. Flexible, adaptive strategic planning processes should be adopted to account for the uncertain political and economic environment.
6. Collaborative initiatives between Palestinian universities should be encouraged to maximize limited resources and create collective value.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

While this study provides valuable insights into the potential application of BOS in Palestinian higher education, it has several limitations( Hatamleh, et al 2023 ). The qualitative nature of the research and the limited sample size mean that the findings may not be generalizable to all Palestinian institutions or other contexts. Additionally, the study focused on the perspectives of key stakeholders and may not fully capture the views of all actors in the higher education ecosystem, such as students or community members.

Future research could address these limitations by:

1. Conducting quantitative studies to test the broader applicability of these findings.
2. Exploring student and community perspectives on innovative strategies in higher education.
3. Implementing and evaluating pilot projects based on the identified Blue Ocean opportunities.
4. Conducting comparative studies with other challenging educational environments to identify common themes and unique contextual factors.

### **CONCLUSION**

This study has explored the potential application of Blue Ocean Strategy (BOS) in the Palestinian higher education sector, revealing both promising opportunities and significant challenges. Our findings suggest that while BOS principles offer valuable insights for innovation in this context, their implementation requires careful adaptation to the unique circumstances of Palestinian higher education. The identified Blue Ocean opportunities – including niche program development, virtual and augmented reality-enhanced

learning, innovation hubs fostering university-industry collaboration, and cross-border digital partnerships – demonstrate the potential for Palestinian institutions to create new value propositions in uncontested market spaces. These opportunities align with Kim and Mauborgne's (2005) concept of value innovation, offering ways to simultaneously reduce costs and increase value in a resource-constrained environment. However, the challenges identified – resource limitations, regulatory constraints, resistance to change, and political instability – highlight the complexity of implementing innovative strategies in the Palestinian context. These findings underscore the need for a nuanced, context-specific approach to applying BOS principles in higher education, particularly in developing and conflict-affected regions. The proposed contextual adaptations of BOS, including redefining 'value' to encompass broader societal impacts, emphasizing collaborative rather than competitive strategies, and advocating for gradual implementation, represent significant contributions to the literature on strategic innovation in higher education. These adaptations suggest that while the core principles of BOS remain relevant, their application must be flexible and responsive to local conditions. This research contributes to the growing discourse on innovative strategies in higher education by providing insights into how global management theories like BOS can be adapted to challenging contexts. It offers practical recommendations for institutional leaders and policymakers in Palestine and similar developing contexts, emphasizing the importance of context-sensitive innovation and strategic planning. Future research should focus on implementing and evaluating pilot projects based on the identified Blue Ocean opportunities, as well as conducting comparative analyses with other challenging educational environments. Such studies could further refine our understanding of how innovative strategies can be effectively applied in diverse higher education contexts. In conclusion, while the application of Blue Ocean Strategy in Palestinian higher education presents significant challenges, it also offers promising pathways for innovation and value creation (Alkhazaleh, et al 2024 ). By carefully adapting BOS principles to local conditions and emphasizing collaborative, gradual approaches to change, Palestinian institutions have the potential to create unique value propositions that address both educational and broader societal needs. This study thus provides a foundation for future research and practice in strategic innovation within challenging higher education contexts (Khaled, et al 2024).

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