

zoom_out_map search menu Journals Sustainability Volume 15 Issue 6 10.3390/su15064983 Download PDFsettingsOrder Article Reprints Open AccessArticle Educational Loss at Times of Crisis: The Role of Games in Students' Learning in Palestine and Iraq by Kareema Ali 1,Daniel Burgos 1,2,* andSaida Affouneh 1 1 Faculty of Educational Sciences and Teachers Training, An-Najah National University (ANNU), Nablus P.O. Box 7, Palestine 2 Research Institute for Innovation & Technology in Education (UNIR iTED), Universidad Internacional de La Rioja (UNIR), 26006 Logrono, Spain * Author to whom correspondence should be addressed.

Work to spread the culture of educational games, introduce the characteristics of educational games that help achieve effective learning in an atmosphere of fun and motivation, and open a constructive dialogue between the family and the school in this field. As for the use of digital educational games, Reham from Iraq argued that they benefit students in numerous ways, stating, "In my view, digital educational games stimulate focus, increase attention, help meditation and thinking, increase academic achievement and the desire to obtain information, ... keep boredom away from the student, and [help] him to compete with his colleagues, which motivates him to improve his performance". The issue of educational loss is one of the important issues that threatens the efficiency of educational systems [5], which the teacher must work to solve using various educational strategies, digital means, and effective digital participation [20]. Therefore, the participants unanimously agreed that whenever the students' motivation and enthusiasm for learning increased, they would be ready to search for information and acquire it through playing that simultaneously combines fun and learning. Nour from Palestine defined educational loss as "a cognitive, skill, social, and behavioural loss that negatively affects the subsequent learning of students". Naya from Palestine also agreed: "Educational games enable the student to work and practice learning by himself or in partnership with his peers, which increases his motivation to learn, deepens and enhances his knowledge, and thus contributes to bridging the knowledge gap and reducing educational loss". To reinforce this idea, Raed from Palestine stated, "I believe that educational games reduce the time required for learning, increase students' involvement, enhance positive values and behaviours, and achieve the intended educational goals and outcomes, provided that there is good planning and good use of the educational games". Amer from Iraq added, "I recommend improving teachers' salaries, enrolling teachers in courses on modern educational strategies, including educational games, and spreading the culture of educational games among school principals and parents and that they are not a waste of time, and I recommend the Ministry [of Education] to keep pace with modernity and develop teachers' technological capabilities". Finally, Reham from Iraq mentioned, "I recommend researching the employment of educational games and providing free digital educational games sites for teachers that can be used and adapted for different academic subjects". Naya from Palestine emphasized this view, stating, "When the student plays, he experiences the ideas that revolve in his mind, and transfers him from a recipient of knowledge to a discoverer and producer of it, whether by himself or in partnership with his colleagues through cooperative learning". Maysa from Iraq reinforced this idea, expressing, "Educational games are an active learning strategy because they are teamwork in which there is a cooperation and rules of play, and the student is the one who plays and learns by himself, as it makes the student the focus and centre of the learning process". The participants believed that it is possible to try to overcome these challenges by providing the

funding necessary to employ educational games, preparing plans to effectively employ them in the teaching process, strengthening the infrastructure in schools, developing electronic educational platforms, activating digital educational games sites for teachers, and developing curricula in line with the use of educational games, therein raising the capabilities of educational staff, and developing their capabilities in designing and employing educational games. The participants also offered additional suggestions for overcoming these issues, with Nour from Palestine stating, "I suggest developing the technological infrastructure necessary for education, developing the skills of teachers necessary to use educational games, and improving the teacher's economic situation. I also recommend the Ministry of Education hold training workshops for teachers on the use of educational games, how to design them under the topic of the lesson, and the age group of students, and designing educational games that develop motivation and help gain knowledge and rid students of stress and anxiety, especially in emergencies, and I recommend good planning to systematically employ educational games in the educational process". Sustainability 2023, 15(6), 4983; <https://doi.org/10.3390/su15064983> Submission received: 16 February 2023 / Revised: 6 March 2023 / Accepted: 8 March 2023 / Published: 10 March 2023 (This article belongs to the Special Issue Approaches and Strategies of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education) Downloadkeyboard_arrow_down Versions Notes Abstract This study examines the role of educational games in compensating for educational loss and their impact on students' motivation towards learning during crises in Palestine and Iraq. In conclusion, it is well known that the strategy of educational games helps in the occurrence of effective learning among students, but in countries that suffer from occupation and wars, such as Palestine and Iraq, it is difficult to implement this strategy because of the challenges it faces that stand in the way of its implementation and the achievement of its goals in helping learning in environments that lack the requirements for safe living and the lack of necessary infrastructure for learning and the use of educational games in it. Decision makers and concerned parties are recommended to: Believe in the need to adopt educational games, whether traditional or digital educational games, in the educational process. Yildiz [13] noted that well-designed educational games have many benefits, such as increasing active participation in the classroom; increasing motivation and attention span; reducing behavioural problems; facilitating learning and memory; developing cognitive, emotional, and motor skills; and increasing self-confidence, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, and creativity. The Challenges of Employing Educational Games and Ways to Develop Their Employment Employing educational games in developing countries such as Palestine and Iraq, which suffer from many crises that place them in difficult economic, social, and political situations, encounters many challenges that the participants in the study outlined, including economic and financial challenges, technological challenges, challenges related to the school environment, and others related to the extent of readiness and efficiency of teachers. Nour from Palestine confirmed this observation: "The weakness of the internet, the lack of smart devices and knowledge in dealing with digital educational games, the financial problems in the country, and the bad psychological situation of students as a result of the occupation practices against students and teachers". Reham from Iraq summarized these problems as follows: "the lack of infrastructure necessary to use digital educational games, the weakness of the internet, its lack of it for some students and teachers, the lack of smart

devices, the increasing number of students in the classroom, and the difficult economic situation of the Iraqi teacher". Educational games are generally defined as targeted competitive educational activities conducted by the learner individually or collectively with specific procedures and laws regulating them that stimulate the learner's motivation and make him or her more positive and interactive in acquiring experiences and skills [28]. Educators and researchers have classified digital educational games into several categories. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 1. 2. 1. 1. 3. 2. 2. 1. Table 1. Sample description. 2. 2. 2. 3. 3. 3. 1. 3. 2. 3. 3. 4. 5. 6.