

The Role of Local Youth Councils in Promoting Community Participation in Bethlehem Governorate: A Comparison Study

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Abstract

The current study aimed to investigate the role of local youth councils in promoting community participation in Bethlehem governorate. The study approached the literature as a multi-dimensional phenomenon which addressed both theoretical and applied research. The significance of this recent study is the first which dealt with this theme, to the author knowledge which in turn encourages other researchers to work on further research on this important issue.

A 40-item questionnaire was formulated which was divided into two sub-scales as follows: the general information of the participants; and the second section dealt with the community participation (40 items). The random stratified method was utilized which comprised of a sample size of 383 male and female respondents among the Palestinian citizens in Bethlehem District. The collected data was statistically analyzed using the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS).

The results revealed that the participants experienced a high level of community participation. The mean scores and standard deviation were (M 3.84 SD 0.36). The findings revealed a positive effect of local youth councils on community participation among the sampled population. It was found that community participation increased among the Palestinian citizens controlled by local youth councils.

The results of the study revealed significant statistical differences in community participation among the participants due to gender, educational level. However, no statistical significant differences were found in the rest of the study variables, that is, religion, marital status, and place of residency. In addition, the findings revealed a positive correlation between age and community participation.

In light of the current study and its discussions, the following is recommended: circulate and expand the idea of local youth councils and to all the Palestinian cities and towns; the need to promote and instill the concepts of volunteerism concepts and community participation for a

better participation in the process of community building and development; and finally, further research is essential to develop an understanding of more variables that affect citizens' community participation.

Keywords: Community participation, youth councils, comparison, Palestine.

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Number of Pages: 130. Number of References: 45. Defense Date: July 10, 2017.

HOW TO CITE THIS PAPER

Sansour, R. (2017). The Role of Local Youth Councils in Promoting Community Participation in Bethlehem Governorate: A Comparison Study. *International Humanities Studies*, 4(3), 67-68.

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