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**The Role of Youth Councils in Developing a Voluntary Culture in Hebron Governorate**

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**Abstract**

The study aimed to identify the role of youth councils in developing a voluntary culture in the Hebron governorate. The study used descriptive and analytical methods, whereby the questionnaire was used to collect data. The study was conducted on a sample of (229) young men and women from the Hebron governorate, who were selected randomly, and the study found. However, the extent of the effectiveness of youth councils in promoting volunteer culture from the point of view of youth was to a large extent. And that the reality of the energy of individuals' performance in volunteer work within youth councils and the role of youth councils in educating young people and enhancing their skills towards volunteering was significant, and the study also found that the obstacles to developing volunteer culture in youth councils were to a large extent.

The results also showed no statistically significant differences in the total score of the study sample's estimates of the effectiveness of youth councils in promoting voluntary education and its fields due to the variable of sex, age, and place of residence.

It also showed that there were no statistically significant differences in the total score of the study sample's estimates of the obstacles to developing a voluntary culture in youth councils and the areas (personal handicaps, social and cultural barriers, and economic and political obstacles) due to the variable of gender and place of residence.

**Keywords:** youth councils, voluntary culture

**Introduction**

The culture of volunteer work generally aims to inculcate the positive values of volunteering in order to actively contribute to voluntary work programs within the program of the individual, the institution, and society, and then at the regional and international levels, emphasizing that

volunteer work is not just good intentions, but has become characterized as an outstanding professional performance in which skills are employed. New in management, funding management, service delivery method, and communication with others (Jassim, 2016).

Furthermore, the youth in every nation is the basis of its renaissance, the hope for the future, and the center of hope, as hopes are entrusted to them to change the reality of life, achieve the desired goals, and progress. Hence, thinking about righteously guiding the youth and preparing them to bear the burdens of a virtuous life is not less valuable than thinking about the most significant economic projects that save The nation is free from poverty and misery because the preparation of strong and righteous youth is the project for the future life of the nation in which it finds the guarantee for the maintenance of what it has built (Abu Daf & Al-Agha, 2001).

As the State of Palestine is characterized by being a young youth society, the percentage of young people in it is (22%), i.e., they constitute about a fifth of society out of the total population in Palestine in the middle of the year 2020 (PCBS), 2021).

The importance of youth participation in the development process initially lies in the individual's realization of himself and his importance and value. When young people participate in the development process, they participate in drawing up plans, and this means that there is a body that organizes this participation, so youth councils were created, which means that directly elected body from the public body, which corresponds to local bodies in their composition and functions, as it allows young people to participate in governance and learn about the mechanisms of work of local government bodies (Sansour, 2017). Here, the importance of youth institutions in the Palestinian territories emerges, which played a vital role in raising the level of youth's political, social, cultural, and health awareness, and represented an essential and organizing framework for political action during the direct Israeli occupation. Where youth centers and volunteer work committees became places for the development of the activities of these frameworks, and after the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority, the work of youth institutions expanded and diversified to become multi-goals and names, such as local youth councils and cultural clubs (Al-Maliki & Waldodoh, 2011).

Thus, and in light of this, this study examined the role of youth councils in the development of voluntary culture, as youth are one of the most critical sectors of society, and youth are the indispensable engine of voluntary work.

### **Importance of Study:**

Two different domains can best characterize the importance of such research. The first will be theoretical importance, while the second is an application.

### **The Theoretical Importance:**

1. Through the results of this study, specialists working in governmental and non-governmental institutions and youth councils will be able to develop suitable plans and design counseling programs aimed at developing and promoting youth towards participating in volunteer work.

2. Reaching new cognitive results since the current study will be applied to a social and cultural context different from the social and cultural contexts in which previous studies were used.
3. Contribute to completing studies related to this field of knowledge at the local and Arab levels.
4. The importance of the youth council's variable is evident as a variable that deserves study and research by revealing it and identifying the related variables and its importance in the developmental and social fields and in building future leaders.

**Applied importance:**

- The importance of the sample as university youth constitutes a significant segment of society, as an active segment that contributes to building community, and they are the energy of a culture that gives it a strong character. Hence, the researcher saw the need to shed light on this segment.
- Assisting specialists in the developmental, social, and educational fields in identifying the aspects of volunteering among university students and the extent of the role of youth councils in promoting a culture of volunteering among them, which contributes to knowing the factors that help achieve the dissemination and promotion of this culture.
- Helping educational and educational decision-makers in Palestinian universities to make decisions related to curricula and extracurricular activities that would enhance the culture of volunteering among university youth.
- Providing youth councils with the study results and benefiting from them in evaluating the programs they implemented, which aim to spread the culture of volunteering.
- Identify the obstacles to volunteering and try to address them.

**Objectives of the study**

1. Knowing the effectiveness of youth councils in promoting volunteering culture.
2. Knowing the obstacles to developing a voluntary culture in youth councils.
3. To know the estimates of the study sample for the role of youth councils in developing the voluntary culture in Hebron governorate according to the study variables (gender, age, place of residence).

**Study Hypotheses**

1. There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean scores of volunteering culture among university students in Hebron governorate due to the gender variable.
2. There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean scores of volunteering culture among university students in Hebron Governorate due to the variable of age.
3. There are no statistically significant differences at the significance level ( $\alpha \leq 0.05$ ) in the mean scores of volunteering culture among university students in Hebron Governorate due to the variable of a place of residence.

### **Literature Review**

- (Saito & Theresa, 2011), Discussed the development of youth programs as a concept and its effect on society. Saito summarized the level of youth participation into three different categories: the first is participating in the community on a high level, and the second is their engagement in any form of activity that develops their mentality and passion. The final form of participation is where they emphasize the role and the value of youths' voices in matters that might affect society. Accordingly, some communities see the adults and youth as an important opinion in decision making. Moreover, this research focused on demonstrating the benefits of youth participation and how positive people, places, and environments strengthened this participation to the maximum. Saito used Sullivan's research as a base and came across a model divided into four different aspects called "The Rings of Engagement," where these four pillars were (Participation, Passion, Voice, and Collective Actions). Each of these pillars defined and analyzed illustrated the strength of youth engagement and the outcomes when a community prioritizes these programs.
- (Checkoway & Lorraine, 2006), emphasized more on what youth participation can do if empowered. According to this study, when society empowers the role of youth within, their participation becomes essential and accurate. Their lives in society can be affected if their decisions are not on the right path. Checkoway encouraged society to shift its view on youth from being the cause of problems, to be a positive catalyst to social changes. The research explores community agency efforts to involve young people in the community and the process through which youth civic engagement promotes empowerment. However, in order to achieve this empowerment and a positive outcome, Checkoway stated that such a process must include specific initiatives like educational reforms, juvenile justice, and environmental quality to happen, as the well alone does not create the perfect atmosphere for the youth to develop their mentality and level of participation in addition to their responsibility towards the community and the individuals in their surroundings. Furthermore, the power held by youth can perform two different outcomes, since they form groups to take social and political actions according to their interests. Thus, if the community managed to win the interests of these groups and help promote their voice to the public, the outcome would be on the positive side of the scale.
- (Marguerite Casey Foundation), Shed light on different aspects regarding youth participation in society. However, the main difference of this research was the driving forces and the benefits that will show if youth-of-colored development was a priority to the government and the society in particular. The article mentioned several facts regarding the level of inequality youths – of – color experience through their growing stage, where the only solution for this problem is "equity- just and fair inclusion of all" (Marguerite Casey Foundation). Why does youth engagement matter? This is a question previously asked in this article, and the answer was simple: today's youths are tomorrow's workers. If their development was limited, their ability to engage with society in the future would not be strong; as mentioned, "The post-recession economy has not been kind to young people, leaving them with limited and low-quality employment prospects"(Marguerite Casey Foundation). Furthermore, the situation in America should change, and that is due to the high level of diversity the country experiences, which means that all youth, regardless of their ethnicity, religious beliefs, or educational level,

shall have the same concentration from the government and personnel on their developments. They are holding the future of the nation, which makes this case critical, as having a stable level of youth engagement can help boost employment, increase education and literacy, and improve the current policies to give a better outcome in the future. This article concentrated on all aspects of youth development, and that is due to its effect on the country as a whole; it also shared some ideas and strategies that help support this cause to the maximum.

- (Yusuf & Mechanic, 2014), This paper assessed youth participation in community development in Damaturu's local government, Yobe State, Nigeria. Nigeria is endowed with enormous human and natural resources that should positively impact the country's performance in both economic and political aspects. However, strategies and policies by various governments have not effectively strengthened these resources to benefit the country and the citizens. The finding of this research demonstrated that most of the higher levels of youth contribution towards community development are through communal labor, provision of security, maintenance of footpaths, and "re-orientation of moral support by the elites is one of the ways to address the problem faced by the youth in the community ."The study also concluded that youth involvement and engagement in the community's development are considered cardinal principles of designing programs and should be central to the development effort of the community.
- (Khin, 2017), took a different angle on youth participation in a different country than the one mentioned above. According to Khin, the ratio of young to elders or young to pensioners is higher, meaning Cambodia is a young population. Therefore, the study focused on implementing new definitions of youth empowerment, strategies to develop youth engagement, and problems that the youth face in Cambodian society. Khin thought that, since the ability to communicate and socialize was higher in the young society than this of elders, the impact of young individuals once given a chance would also be higher. Nevertheless, regardless of the high level of youth in Cambodia, the traditions cause a barrier to development; "Cambodian youth are living in a traditional social hierarchy in which younger generations have to pay significant respect to their elders by keeping silent during discussions and meetings. As such, social norms and practices remain a real challenge for youth wishing to be included in development processes, and young people find it hard to access networks for making changes or expressing their ideas" (Khin, 2017). This ignorance towards the youth and minimizing their role within society under the name of traditional norms are the two biggest enemies of Cambodian youth development. Therefore, the first and more crucial solution is to spread awareness to society on the ability of youth to engage, make decisions, and even spread their voices as much as any other adult; only then, according to Khin, will society experience the difference.
- (Gage, 2012), examined the different motivational factors of college students to volunteer in various activities using the "Volunteer Function Inventory". Accordingly, this research focused on the "volunteering characteristics, the scope of volunteerism, volunteer segments, and the type of contributions that were investigated". Data were collected at a major university in the southeast United States, where the results identified that the majority were involved in volunteerism in various capacities. It also emphasized on organizations that focused on human services were the most important type of organizations to volunteers. In

addition to what was mentioned before, it also considered the role of Families and teachers, and how they are responsible for introducing almost the majority to volunteerism.

- (Hill, Russell, & Brewis, 2009), This summary provides an overview of a rapid review of recent evidence on the relationship between young people, volunteering, and youth projects. The review examines the impact of volunteering and youth projects on young individuals, highlighting the benefits and challenges associated with their involvement. It also demonstrated the benefits of volunteering for young people, where according to the findings, youth volunteering helps personal development as, volunteering offers opportunities for skill-building, leadership development, and personal growth. It also has its impact on social connections: young volunteers often experience increased social connections, networking opportunities, and a sense of belonging. Moreover, the engagement of youth in society will also develop overall civic engagement as it enhances young people's awareness of social issues, fostering their engagement in community and societal matters.

**Findings and Results:**

Table 1 The characteristics of members of the demographic sample

Variable	Variable's level	Amount	Percentage
Gender	Male	134	58.5
	Female	95	41.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Age	Less than 20	45	19.7
	(20-30)	143	62.4
	30 and older	41	17.9
	<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Place of Residence	City	128	55.9
	Village	74	32.3
	Immigration Camp	27	11.8
	<b>Total</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>100.0</b>

Table 2: Mathematical averages, standard deviations and relative weights of the effectiveness of youth councils in promoting volunteer culture from the viewpoint of youth

Domain	Arithmetic Dev	Standard Dev	Relative Weight %	Degree of Approval
The role of youth councils in educating young people and enhancing their skills towards volunteer work	4.15	0.51	83	High
The reality of the effectiveness of the performance of individuals in volunteer work within youth councils	3.93	0.76	78.6	High
	<b>4.04</b>	<b>0.63</b>	<b>80.8</b>	<b>High</b>

The data contained in table (2) indicate that the effectiveness of youth councils in promoting volunteer culture from the viewpoint of youth was significant, as the average arithmetic for the overall degree of the effectiveness of youth councils in promoting volunteer culture (4.04) reached a percentage of.(80.8%)

The "the role of youth councils in educating young people towards volunteer work" came first, with an average calculation of (4.15). A percentage of (83.0%), and the field of "the reality of the effectiveness of the performance of individuals in volunteer work within youth councils" came in the second place, With an average of my account (3.93), and a percentage of.(78.6%)

Table 3: The averages, standard deviations, and the relative weights of the field of youth councils in educating young people and enhancing their skills towards volunteer work are descending.

	Arithmetic Dev	Standard Dev	Relative Weight %	Approval
The role of youth councils should be developed in educating young people , regardless of the programs of political parties.	4.51	0.67	90.2	High
Young people need to develop volunteer work skills.	4.43	0.7	88.6	High
Youth councils work to refine youth experiences in terms of communication and communication skills.	4.31	0.81	86.2	High
Youth councils are working on civil education.	4.3	0.73	86	High
Youth councils work to develop the skills of effective dealing with youth problems.	4.29	0.73	85.8	High
Youth councils work to enhance empowerment and advocacy skills.	4.28	0.84	85.6	High
Youth councils develop planning skills.	4.27	0.81	85.4	High
Youth councils prepare young people to wicked the practical life.	4.26	0.81	85.2	High
I believe that youth councils are partially responsible for the weak culture of volunteering among young people.	3.66	1.08	73.2	High
Youth organizations have a partial role in a decrease in women's participation in volunteer work.	3.17	1.28	63.4	High
<b>The Total Degree of the Role of Youth Councils in Educating Young People and Enhancing their Skills towards Volunteer Work</b>	<b>4.15</b>	<b>0.85</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>High</b>

The data mentioned in Table (3) indicate that the role of youth councils in educating young people and enhancing their skills towards volunteer work was prominent, as the average

arithmetic for the total degree of the role of youth councils in educating young people and enhancing their skills towards volunteer work (4.15) and a percentage.(83.0%)

It is clear from Table (3) that the paragraphs: "The role of youth councils in educating young people should be developed regardless of the programs of political parties" and "Young people need to develop volunteer work skills" have obtained the highest degree of approval concerning the field of the role of youth councils in educating young people and enhance their skills towards volunteer work.

While the paragraphs: "Youth organizations have a partial role in a decrease in the participation of women in volunteer work" and "I believe that youth councils are partially responsible for the weak culture of volunteering among young people." They have obtained the lowest degrees of approval concerning the field the role of youth councils in educating young people and enhancing their skills towards volunteer work.

Table (4): Mathematical averages, standard deviations and relative weights of the field of economic and political obstacles, is a descending rank.

	Arithmetic Dev	Standard Dev	Relative Weight %	Approval
The lack of a national plan for the state to raise children to volunteer at an early age.	4.23	0.74	84.6	High
Decreased financial support by capital for volunteerism, programs and activities.	4.22	0.79	84.4	High
The busyness in the labor market prevents individuals from volunteer participation.	4.17	0.74	83.4	High
The state's palaces in spreading the culture of volunteer work at the country level.	4.17	0.75	83.4	High
The absence of development plans that draw the policy of volunteer work in Palestine.	4.13	0.79	82.6	High
Prefer to work with financial wages over volunteer work without pay.	4.13	0.89	82.6	High
Weak capabilities and resources available in society prevents individuals from volunteer participation.	4.12	0.77	82.4	High
Weak legislation and legal regulations for the work of civil society institutions.	4.07	0.87	81.4	High
High costs of living negatively affects the participation of individuals in volunteer work.	4.07	0.92	81.4	High
The low level of income for the family prevents children from participating in volunteer work.	4.04	0.93	80.8	High
<b>The Total Degree of the Role of Youth councils in educating Young People and Enhancing their Skills towards Volunteer Work</b>	<b>4.14</b>	<b>0.82</b>	<b>82.8</b>	<b>High</b>

The data contained in Table (4) indicate that the role of economic and political obstacles in developing volunteer culture in youth councils was significant, as the computational average of the total degree of economic and political obstacles (4.14) and a percentage (82.8%) reached.

It is clear from Table (4) that the paragraphs: "The lack of a national plan for the state to raise children to volunteer at an early age" and "decrease in material support by the capital of volunteerism, its programs and activities" and "preoccupation with the labor market prevents individuals from participating in Voluntary works, "have obtained the highest degree of approval concerning the field of economic and political obstacles.

While the paragraphs: "The low level of income for the family prevents children from participating in volunteer work," "high costs of living negatively affects the participation of individuals in volunteer work," and "weak legislation and legal regulations for the work of civil society institutions," have obtained less the degrees of approval for the field of economic and political obstacles.

### **Conclusions:**

According to what was mentioned above, the role of youth engagement in society is undeniably crucial for fostering positive social change, sustainable development, and a thriving future. This engagement encompasses various aspects, including active participation, volunteerism, and youth-led initiatives. Through their unique perspectives, energy, and innovative thinking, young people have the power to reshape communities, challenge existing norms, and drive progress. Moreover, the results of this research can be summarized as below:

- The belief of the Palestinian leadership in the role of youth councils, in addition to adopting Palestinian universities to develop a culture of volunteer work, led to the effectiveness of youth councils in promoting volunteer culture.
- Development in the performance of the councils led to an increase in the effectiveness of individuals, and the attempts of some volunteers to prove themselves, highlight their personality and enhance their capabilities, contributed to the effectiveness of volunteers within the youth councils.
- Involving young people in setting plans and drawing up policies, in addition to courses, workshops, and initiatives, which led to highlighting the role of youth councils in educating young people and enhancing their skills towards volunteer work.
- The Palestinian societies as a whole should realize that unemployment and underemployment are one of the most important factors that minimizes the role of youth within the society, and edges their participation in a productive way.
- The current situation in which the Palestinian society is living, from the deterioration of the economic and political situation and the presence of the Israeli occupation and others, which hindered the development of the volunteering culture.
- The lack of a clear understanding of the culture of volunteering, and the preoccupation of young people with study or work, in addition to the lack of confidence of some young people in their abilities, stands as a personal obstacle to the development of a culture of volunteering among young people.

- Preferring paid work over voluntary work, in addition to the lack of transportation for some places to volunteer, not to mention the obstruction and prevention of access by the occupation to some Palestinian areas, in addition to the Palestinian division, all of this stands as an economic and political obstacle to the development of a culture of volunteering among youth.
- The lack of harmony between employees and volunteers within the institutions, in addition to the weakness of cooperation and networking between the youth councils and the volunteer institutions, which led to the presence of administrative and organizational obstacles in developing the volunteering culture among the youth.
- The opportunity to volunteer is available to males and females to the same degree, but some customs and excessive care for females make males distinguished over females in administrative and organizational matters in the voluntary fields.
- Young people have great energy and a high drive towards volunteering because they have more free time and less life commitments.
- There is equal opportunity in the house of youth councils in cities, villages and camps, in addition to the convergence of the goals of these youth councils.
- The youth organization suffers from several; negative aspects when it comes to promoting the social role among the youth.
- The more the society manages to understand the preferences of its youth, and allow them to demonstrate that passion on live action, it is more likely to develop a sense of bond between its three generations.

**Recommendations:**

Based on the findings of the current study, the researcher recommends the following:

- The Palestinian leadership and decision-makers in the Palestinian state to continue supporting youth centers, and to increase the pace of financial and administrative support for them.
- The boards of trustees in Palestinian universities recommend the inclusion of teaching courses related to volunteering and social responsibility in their study plans for all majors.
- Work to find unified Palestinian methodological controls for volunteer work. Expanding the business base to meet the needs of the Palestinian society.
- Creating programs and activities that help in developing and activating the community capacities of young people in all aspects of life.
- Coordination and networking between active institutions in the field of social service and youth councils to provide development services to the public.
- Media platforms focusing on voluntary culture within radio programs in all its forms.
- Involving youth in drawing up their own national plans and policies.
- Educational decision makers in education by focusing on extracurricular activities that would enhance the voluntary tendency of students in all stages of study.

- Investing the energy and impulse of young people towards voluntary work, by developing their capabilities and developing their talents, to achieve the greatest benefit to society.
- Combined governmental and private efforts to achieve the goals of development plans in the event of governments' financial or human incapacity.
- Supporting researchers' efforts to conduct more studies and scientific research on voluntary social work.
- Investing in modern technology to coordinate volunteer work between governmental and private agencies to provide social services and give accurate data on the volume, trends and needs of volunteer work most important to society.

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