

The Role of Universities in Directing Researchers Towards the Development of the Palestinian Society

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Abstract:- The study aimed to identify "the role of universities in directing researchers towards the development of the Palestinian society." To achieve this, the researcher used the analytical approach. The study population consisted of employees working in the field of public relations and studies in the institutions of Salfit Governorate, their number was (150) employees, the study sample consisted of 50 employees who were randomly selected from the study population after conducting the necessary statistical analysis and applying the study procedures to A questionnaire prepared by the researcher consisting of (20) items, the following results were obtained, The average response for all questionnaire items was (63.9%), which is an average percentage. The results also showed a weak partnership with community institutions and a lack of interest in studies and their orientation towards community service, As for the recommendations that came out of the study, the most important of them is the formation of a committee from the various Palestinian universities to work as a mediator with the institutions of society to determine their needs for projects and studies . within clear job description that follows up studies and conducts surveys and directs researchers toward the real market needs. The Palestinian program and projects encourage student researchers by providing them with financial support while conducting research and studies that serve the community, and by linking field training to a study about the institution in which the student is training.

Keywords: Universities, Palestinian Society, Development, Directing Researchers.

I. INTRODUCTION

Establishing partnership relationships between universities and civil society organizations works to share the vision to meet the basic needs of the community. This is done by seeking solidarity and recognizing the skills, resources and knowledge each partner offers in an atmosphere of independence and promoting equitable partnerships. Indeed, rights and responsibilities are mutually

defined, differences are respected, an obligation to listen to others and learn from one another and transparency are encouraged. Working with civil society helps solve the problems it faces by committing to a long-term process of developing local organization as well as identifying, understanding and strengthening community capabilities. It is the main source of the problems that are sought with the aim of enhancing sustainability and strengthening the partners' ability to identify weaknesses, issue tree and priorities for addressing them. Partnership is an essential part of the way Palestinian universities view themselves in society. Universities deeply believe that change takes place through local partners. Securing sustainability and strengthening local institutions allow enhancing the community's ability to respond to its own problems, to alleviate human suffering, to promote social justice, and to help people who seek to develop themselves.

One of the most important postulates upon which the university's relationship with its society is based is that the university is not separated from society and that the university's relationship with society is the relationship of the part to the whole. The university never exists out of nowhere. Rather, it has its own territory and a specific environment that directly and indirectly affects its nature and the quality of the various activities it undertakes, whether they are educational, research or extension activities. Hence, the real purpose of the university and the justification for its existence is to serve the society in which it is located. This means that the association of the university with its society gives it legitimacy and justifies its existence. It is not more dangerous for the university than being separated from its society and confined within its walls, transferring knowledge without a close connection to society and its issues (Al-Qaws, 2016).

➤ Problem Statement:

Selecting a research problem is one of the most difficult things that a novice researcher faces. It usually takes a long time, the bulk of which is devoted to data collection and analysis. It is recognized that there is no simple way to help the researcher choose his problem and formulate its hypotheses, because it requires practice,

training and contact with distinguished scholars through their published writings and research. The researcher must realize that he deals with complex and intertwined phenomena. In addition, most researchers address marginal problems rather than issues of importance in the field of learning and teaching processes. Besides that, many researchers find themselves in clear contradiction with the concepts, values and prevailing trends of the social milieu in which they live. Therefore, they should adjust their ambitions and refrain from dealing with problems in which they have a great conviction or strong inclination, so as not to affect the quality of the data they collect and the ways they interpret them.

The studies of Masmoudan (2018), Breni (2018) and Falouh (2016) have shown that community service is one of the most important functions of the university at the present time. It provides an atmosphere that allows the practice of democracy and effective participation in opinion and work, It develops the learners' ability to participate and contribute to building society and solving its problems. Also, it develops a serious desire to search for knowledge, challenge reality, and continue the future within the framework of an accurate scientific approach that takes into account the social, economic and political conditions of society. Thus, the university can serve the community by contributing to linking scientific research with the needs of the production and service sectors. The university connects the community to progress, which makes the community permanently prosperous and in line with the developments of the times. The university, with its trained competencies, is considered a factor of economic and social development in society.

The study seeks to enhance the benefit of university research for university students. Many researches remain words without actions or mere ink on paper and do not show any positive impact on society. The problem of the study was summarized in answering the following main question: What is the role of universities in directing researchers towards the development of Palestinian society?

The study also seeks to examine the reality of partnerships in Palestinian universities and their relationship to supporting the orientation towards community service. It also seeks to clarify the foundations and criteria under which partnerships in Palestinian universities fall. It also examines the statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) for the role of universities in directing researchers towards the development of the Palestinian society in Salfit Governorate due to the variables (gender, age, educational qualification, and years of experience).

• *This Study also Aims to:*

- ✓ Acknowledging the reality of partnerships in the university and their relationship to orientation towards community service.
- ✓ Acknowledging the importance of building partnerships in directing researchers towards the real needs of studies that serve the community.

- ✓ Identifying the mechanisms followed by the university in networking with civil society organizations in determining the needs of studies.

➤ *Significance of the Study:*

The importance of this study lies in introducing the issue of university partnerships, the foundations and criteria for their activation and measurement, and the extent to which these partnerships are built in universities on a clear, generalized and applied methodology. According to the best of the researcher's knowledge, it is considered one of the new topics that are being researched on this topic. It also provides an important reference for researchers and specialists in the field of building university institutional partnerships. It helps in directing decision-makers towards the follow-up and evaluation processes of the reality of scientific research outputs and their effects on the provision of services, transparency in work, and research on appropriate standards thereof.

➤ *Previous Studies:*

The role of universities in community service is the focus of attention and interest of many researchers. A'raqib study (2022), which corresponds to the Palestinian situation, aimed at studying and analyzing the role of universities in serving society and the surrounding environment in unstable conditions.

It focused on the Libyan situation compared to some models from Western and Arab universities, whether in normal or unstable conditions as a result of the major political changes Libya is going through. It had clear repercussions on all components of Libyan society and universities. It is one of the most important and influential institutions operating in society, using the exploratory approach to explore and analyze reality. It also focused on studying the style and ability of Libyan universities to confront these conditions in the context of local, regional and international changes. It adopted systems analysis approach to reach stability, balance, and assimilation of various events.

The study concluded that despite the importance of the role played by universities in Libya in exceptional circumstances, these circumstances are still stronger than the university's ability to play the role entrusted to it to face such circumstances. This is attributed to the absence of the mechanisms organizing this role, in addition to the absence of the administrative and legislative structure that supports and assists university and community work.

The study of Kamal et al. (2016) aimed to highlight the role of university in achieving sustainable development and serving the local community. The university is considered a cornerstone of building a modern, open state based on advanced thought. In addition, education plays an important role in the development of society locally, through the contribution of its institutions to the graduation of human cadres trained to work in all different fields and specializations.

➤ *The Importance of Science and Knowledge in Society:*

Knowledge in language is the opposite of ignorance. I learned something; that is, I knew it. Knowledge comes with the meaning of jurisprudence; jurisprudence is the knowledge of things. Certainty is knowledge. Every certainty is knowledge, and not every knowledge is certain. Certainty is knowledge that occurs after deduction and consideration, while knowledge may occur without that.

Science is a type of knowledge and knowledge consists of two types; general knowledge and specific knowledge. General knowledge: through observation, coexistence and daily interaction. A specific scientific knowledge based not only on intuition and friction, but also through systematic and comprehensive learning and analysis of the subject under study. Knowledge is more comprehensive than science. Science studies and analyzes phenomena to discover new facts, solve problems, or report issues.

The aim of scientific research is to provide services to humans and develop their life for the better. This comes through conviction and belief in the importance of scientific research away from personalization or exploitation of the conditions and circumstances of the respondents. Accordingly, it was necessary to provide conditions in conducting research operations; the most important of which is not to subject living organisms to laboratory experiments that endanger their lives, and emphasizing the importance of following up on the future effects resulting from the study.

The most important social considerations are that research in part serve the society away from narrow class and factionalism, with the need to adhere to intellectual honesty in research and not to steal works of scientific, industrial or literary value (Al-Quds Open University, 2014, p. 17).

To ensure the existence of a methodology in institutional work that paves the way for building effective partnerships, there must be a documented and institutionalized system to carry out the work and the system guarantees continuity. It does not depend on people and supports political and strategic systems so that it is a logical, flexible and interconnected system. It should focus on the needs of customers and contain specific procedures and responsibilities, within a timetable that ensures effective and efficient implementation. It must be measurable, and must follow-up and subject to review and continuous updating (Ghanem, 2009).

- *The Criteria for Building Partnerships are also based on a Number of Stages, Including the Following:*
- ✓ *The First Phase:* The partners and strategic partnership opportunities must first be identified in line with the university's strategy by drawing the framework and boundaries of the partnership relations in a way that achieves mutual benefit for all.
- ✓ *The Second Phase:* Ensuring mutual benefit and cultural compatibility between the university and its partners to support the institutional development efforts of the

university and its partners.

- ✓ *The Third Phase:* Dissemination of the concepts and applications of creativity and innovative thinking through constructive partnership and joint work to improve the performance of operations, simplify procedures and develop customer services.
- ✓ *The Fourth Phase:* Transparency in publishing, evaluating and selecting partners, publishing and evaluating the methodology for dealing with them (Ibid, 6).

In order for partnerships to be effective, there must be a successful and effective leadership that has essential elements of partnerships. These elements are:

- *First, Strength:* It means informing and participating with subordinates in decision-making processes related to building companies and others. In addition to showing the danger of non-compliance with the university's vision in the field of partnerships and the penalties related to its violation.
- *Second, Influence:* It is about the methods and means that the university administration uses to influence the policies of others.
- *Third, Authority:* It is represented in the official tools within which the university administration operates in accordance with the controls stipulated in the protocols and partnership agreements.

➤ *There must also be other Requirements that Fall within Two Groups of Factors:*

First: The characteristics and capabilities of the university.

- *Institutional Capabilities can be Divided into Three Types:*
- ✓ Special abilities of the university entity (the ability to exist). It is represented in the university's identity, mission, vision, leadership style and internal governance, in addition to the executive and financial management systems and mechanisms.
- ✓ Abilities specific to the services provided by the university (the ability to act). It reflects the university's ability to carry out programs, projects and services with high quality and efficiency.
- ✓ Special abilities for university relations (the ability to link and build partnerships). It is related to the university's ability to form relationships with society of all spectrum, as well as the ability to adopt development issues and advocate for them and carry out networking activities with others.

The one responsible for the partnership management process must possess a set of personal qualities and characteristics in order to be able to take any action, whether presenting an inspiring vision or influencing others.

- *These Characteristics Include the Following (Al-Atrash, 2013):*

- ✓ *Vision:* The one responsible for managing partnerships will be able to determine what the university will be like in the future.
- ✓ *Charisma:* It is represented in a strong, attractive personality who is convinced of the possibility of achieving this vision and building partnerships.
- ✓ *Ingenuity:* The one's ability, professionalism and skill to act as a leader in facing situations and to provide evidence repeatedly on the importance of building partnerships.
- ✓ *Emotional Intelligence:* What is distinguished by the person responsible for managing partnerships is that the emotional coefficient is high, which qualifies them to influence those they work with. Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, respect, influence, and respond intelligently to the emotions of others.
- ✓ *Values:* They are represented in the performance values that the university needs to progress towards achieving the vision.

➤ *Second, The Surrounding Conditions:*

In addition to the characteristics of the university administration, there are circumstances that largely represent the objective dimensions that it deals with in one way or another to ensure the achievement of its vision.

- *The Surrounding External Conditions are Represented in two Dimensions (Al-Atrash, 2013):*

- ✓ *General External Environment:* It is the overall political, legal, economic, technological, social and cultural conditions prevailing in the country and affecting the university. If these conditions are encouraging, they will be additional motives and drives in order to work on creativity and innovation and vice versa
- ✓ *Specific External Environment:* It is represented in the stakeholders who directly influence and are affected by the work and activities of the university.

➤ *The Relationship of Institutional Partnerships with Scientific Research:*

Partnerships can be formalized through the current legal arrangements and procedures used by the university in the field of scientific research through partnership agreements. They are conducted to allow obtaining research contributions between the university and institutions within the following bases.

- *Memoranda of Understanding (MoU):* They provide a framework for cooperation and do not usually entail any financial obligations.
- *Exchange of Letters:* This method is used when cooperation is limited (within a short period or a limited scope). It is used if joint assessments or coordination of work is desired during the implementation of field activities.

- *Letters of Agreement (LoA):* Its scope is generally limited to contracting for services from other non-commercial parties (<http://www.fao.org/partnerships/how-to-partne>).

✓ *Scientific Research at the University will Focus on the Local Community to Ensure the Positive Reflection of Research on Partners and the Community by Fulfilling the Following Conditions:*

- To achieve the standards and requirements of good research.
- The objective of the scientific research should be clearly defined and the accepted concepts used in this issue.
- Describe the research procedures (the research method) in sufficient detail to allow another researcher to repeat the research for development, maintaining continuity through what has been previously achieved.
- The procedural design of the research should be carefully and accurately planned in order to give objectivity and to speak frankly about defects.
- The data analysis must be adequate enough to reveal its significance. Besides, the methods of analysis used should be appropriate, in addition to examining the validity, reliability and accuracy of the data so that the results and conclusions are limited to what is justified by the research data.

It should also be limited to those for which the data provide a sufficient basis to build significant confidence in the research. One should be assured of the researcher's experience and good reputation in scientific research and his enjoyment of integrity, credibility and scientific honesty.

➤ *Study Methodology and Procedures:*

The researcher used the descriptive approach using the sample survey method due to its suitability for the purposes of the study. It also showed the study population and its sample, in addition to describing the steps for developing the study tool, the procedures for its application, and the statistical analyzes that were carried out.

➤ *Study Population:*

The study population consisted of the working staff in governmental and semi-governmental institutions in Salfit Governorate. In this chapter, there is a description of each of the study method, the study population and its sample, in addition to describing the steps for developing the study tool, the procedures for its application, and the statistical analyzes that were carried out.

➤ *Study Sample:*

A purposive sample consisting of 50 public relations employees in the governmental and semi-governmental sectors of Salfit Governorate.

Table No. 1 shows the distribution of the sample, according to the demographic variables of the study.

Table 1 Demographics of Respondents

	Demographic	Frequency		
	1	Gender		
Male		45	90.0	90.0
Female		5	10.0	10.0
Total		50	100.0	100.0
2	Years of Experience			
	Less than 5 years	7	14.0	14.0
	5-10 years	28	56.0	56.0
	More than 11	15	30.0	30.0
Valid		50	100.0	100.0
	Diploma	5	10.0	10.0
	Bachelor's degree	26	52.0	52.0
	Master's degree	19	38.0	38.0
	Total	50	100.0	100.0

➤ *Study Tool:*

In conducting the study, the researcher relied on a questionnaire that was designed based on the literature review and previous studies, and reviewed samples of some relevant questionnaires. The number of its items reached (20) items. The researcher relied on this questionnaire to reach the results of the current study. In developing the questionnaire, it was taken into consideration questionnaire the extent of its suitability to the sample in terms of linguistic formulation and the clarity of what the items are about.

A Likert scale was used. Positive items were given (5) points for each answer (strongly agree), (4) points for each answer (agree), (3) points for each answer (neutral), (2) points for each answer (disagree), and (1) points for each answer (strongly disagree).

➤ *Validity of the Study Tool:*

The study tool was presented to 5 arbitrators and took their feedback and amended what was necessary for the questionnaire items, whether in terms of language, deleting or modifying some paragraphs.

➤ *Reliability of the Study Tool:*

The reliability coefficient of the tool was calculated by using the (Cronbach's alpha) internal consistency equation. The reliability coefficient was (82.8%), which is an acceptable value for the internal consistency coefficient within the limits of the purposes and nature of this study.

➤ *Study Variables:*

- *A - Independent variables, which include the following:*

✓ Gender: it's two levels: 1- male 2- female

- *B - Qualification: Three Levels:*

✓ A- Diploma or less B- Bachelor's degree C- Master's degree and above

- *C- Years of Experience: It has three Levels:*

✓ A- Less than 5 years B- 5-10 years C- More than 11 years

- *B - Dependent variables, which include the response to the total score of the questionnaire.*

➤ *Statistical Analysis:*

The researcher used the statistical program for the social sciences (SPSS) for data analysis using the following statistical processes:

- (Cronbach's alpha) equation to calculate reliability.
- Arithmetic averages, standard deviations, and percentages of the responses of the study sample members to the questionnaire as a whole and to each of its paragraphs.
- T-test for the two independent samples.
- One-way ANOVA.

II. RESULTS OF THE STUDY

After conducting the necessary statistical analysis and applying the study procedures to a questionnaire prepared by the researcher consisting of (20) paragraphs, the following results were obtained:

➤ *Results Related to the Main Question of the Study:*

It States the Following: How effective are university partnerships in directing researchers toward the real needs of studies for the development of Palestinian society?

To answer the question, the researcher used the arithmetic means for each paragraph and the total score of the tool, and Table (2) shows that.

In order to interpret the results, the following approved arithmetic means for the response depended on the items as follows:

- More than 80 % is very high
- Between 70-79.99 % is high
- Between 60-69.99 % is medium
- Between 50-59.99 % is low
- Less than 50% is very low.

Arithmetic means, the impact degree of the items, and the total degree of the role of universities in directing researchers towards the development of Palestinian society.

Table 2 The Response Level of the Study Sample

Items	Arithmetic mean	Impact Degree
1-The university is working to spread the culture of joint work in the field of scientific research in our institution.	3.70	Medium
2-There are documents regulating the work of partnerships with the university.	3.45	Medium
3-There are clear standards for the university to organize partnership with civil society organizations.	3.27	Medium
4-The university provides research to deal with work problems in institutions	3.23	Medium
5-The university cooperates with (other universities / research centers) in the field of scientific research to serve your work	3.36	Medium
6-The institution implements an assessment of the need for studies based on the approved criteria for building partnerships with the university.	3.80	Low
7-The university gets to know the problems facing your institution and needs research studies.	2.86	Low
8-The institution provides the necessary human resources to answer the questions and inquiries of researchers.	2.79	Low
9-The institution provides the students with the data necessary for the success of the study within our policies.	2.94	Low
10-The institution uses information and communication technology to achieve contact with the local community.	3.11	Medium
11-The problems in your organization are ranked among the priorities.	2.85	Low
12-Our institution has experience in the field of scientific research.	3.44	Medium
13-I feel the importance of strengthening partnerships between the university and civil society organizations in the field of scientific research.	3.66	High
14-Building partnerships with universities makes it easier for students to choose real research titles that address work problems.	3.46	Medium
15-We feel the importance of having a specialized department at the university concerned with networking with civil society organizations in preparing studies	3.40	Medium
16-Scientific research contributes to addressing work problems in our organization	3.03	Medium
17-The scientific research of university students is translated into our practical application.	3.55	Low
18-Our institution takes the means to preserve the environment.	3.40	Medium
19-We contribute to providing job opportunities for distinguished researchers in our institution.	2.97	Low
20-We reward scientific research that enhances the work of the institution.	3.01	Medium
Total and impact degree for all items	3.30	Medium

*Maximum Degree for the Items is (5).

➤ *The Results of the Sample Responses Analysis to the Items:*

The average response on all items in the questionnaire was (63.9%), which is medium. The response of the sample was medium and low on all other items, which gave the researcher a general idea about the subject with weak or even lack of benefit from university studies in practice. Some of those who distributed the questionnaire indicated that there is no real and effective dimension in organizing partnerships on the topic under discussion.

➤ *Results Related to the First Hypothesis:*

The first hypothesis states the following: "There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the effectiveness of university partnerships in directing researchers towards the real needs of studies for the development of Palestinian society due to the gender variable.

To test the first hypothesis, the researcher used a T-test for two independent samples to indicate the differences on the total score of the tool according to the gender variable.

➤ *Results Related to the Third Hypothesis:*

The third hypothesis states the following: "There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the effectiveness of university partnerships in directing researchers towards the real needs of studies for the development of Palestinian society due to the years of experience variable. To test the third hypothesis, the researcher used the arithmetic means of the total score of the tool according to the years of experience variable. Table (2) shows the arithmetic means of the total score of the tool according to the variable years of experience.

The third hypothesis was also tested using one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) to extract the significance of the differences on the total degree of the tool according to the years of experience variable in the sample.

➤ *Discussion of the Study Hypotheses:*• *The First Hypothesis States the Following:*

"There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). It was found that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the total score of the tool according to the gender variable." Therefore, the first hypothesis was accepted for the sample in this study.

The researcher attributes this to the fact that the research on the partnership between universities and civil society organizations is not affected by the fact that the respondent is male or female due to the nature of the administrative task. Therefore, the first hypothesis was accepted for the sample in this study.

• *The Second Hypothesis States the Following:*

"There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the effectiveness of university partnerships in directing researchers towards the real needs of studies for the development of Palestinian society according to the educational qualification variable." It was found that there were no statistically significant differences at the significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) on the total score of the tool. The researcher attributed this to the fact that a large percentage of the workers hold a scientific degree.

• *The Third Hypothesis States the Following:*

"There are no statistically significant differences at the level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) of the effectiveness of university partnerships in directing researchers towards the real needs of studies for the development of Palestinian society according to the years of experience variable." Thus, the hypothesis was accepted, and the researcher attributes this to the fact that the workers have close experiences.

The study aimed to identify the extent to which university partnerships are effective in directing researchers towards the real needs of studies for the development of Palestinian society. After conducting the necessary statistical analysis and applying the study procedures to a questionnaire prepared by the researcher consisting of (20) paragraphs, the following results were obtained:

The average response on all items in the questionnaire was (63.9%), which is medium. The sample response was high on item (13); I feel the importance of strengthening partnerships between the university and civil society organizations in the field of scientific research. It was medium and low on all other items.

The results showed that there is a weakness or even an absence of partnerships and a lack of interest in studies and their orientation toward community service. There are also no clear mechanisms and channels for communication with universities in determining the society's needs for studies.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- *Forming a committee from the various Palestinian universities to act as a mediator with civil society organizations to determine its needs for projects and studies.*
- *Adding a body within the public relations departments in universities within a clear job description that follows up on studies.*
- *Conducting survey studies and directing researchers towards the real needs of the Palestinian market in terms of programs and projects.*
- *Encouraging student researchers by providing them with financial support during conducting research and studies that serve the community.*
- *Linking the field training to conducting a study on the institution in which the student is trained.*

III. CONCLUSION

The study came with the aim of examining the role of Palestinian universities, directing researchers to present their research towards community development service in light of the lack of benefit from many students' research, and the study showed the importance of the role of Palestinian universities in achieving this so that society and students benefit alike from these studies. It is important in strengthening the partnership between universities and society, and this requires directing researchers toward conducting studies that enhance the level of scientific research and examine the role of the private sector in supporting students and universities and other related topics.

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