



Arab American University - Jenin

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The Reality of Participatory Strategic Planning Process
in the Palestinian Municipalities: Hebron Municipality as
a Case.

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DECLARATION

I declare that this Master's dissertation has been composed by me and is based on my own work unless stated otherwise. I confirm that this Master's thesis is my own work and I have documented all sources and material used; no other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment.

All references and verbatim extracts have been quoted, and all sources of information, including graphs and data sets, have been expressly acknowledged. To my best knowledge, this Master's dissertation has not been accepted in any other previous application for a degree, in whole or in part.

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AKNOWLEDEGMENT

I dedicate this work to the soul of my dear mother, may God have mercy on her soul, who has been my protective angel and biggest supporter.

I would like to wholeheartedly thank my father for all the love, support, inspiration and encouragement he provided throughout my life. Thank you for giving me the strength to reach for the moon, chase my dreams, and being my exceptional proofreader.

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the reality of the participatory strategic planning process in the Palestinian municipalities and poses the Hebron municipality as a case study. This research employed a quantitative approach based on collecting data through questionnaires, previous formal reports, and data in answering questions and testing the hypothesis. The identified targeted population consisted of (300) including council members, municipality employees, and local community representatives. A non-random sample was selected and calculated. The selected sample size was (169) participants. Data were collected using a questionnaire, the primary study instrument, consisting of two main sections. the most important finding was the existence of a moderate level of participation in developing the strategic plan and it all phases for the municipality. The study recommended revising and updating the methodology of planning followed by the municipality to ensure effective participation and make it more interactive and engaging. The study also faced some limitations, including; the need for proper documentation for the planning process, especially the attendance sheets, which limited the reachability to the participants.

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TABLE OF DEFENTIONS

Term	Definition	Reference
Strategic Planning	Deliberative, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why	Bryson (2012)
Strategy Formulation	Developing measurable goals, objectives, and strategies using social situational analysis findings.	Chen (2015)
Vision	It is the statement that specifies where an organization is going and what the future orientation of this organization will be.	Bowen (2018)
Mission	A guide to day-to-day activities of an organization and its decision making. It aids in planning tactically and ‘rallying’ the troops around a common near-to-medium term goal.	Taiwo (2016)
Goals	Intended applications of the results.	Bjørn (2017)
Strategy	A plan, method, or series of actions designed to achieve a specific goal or effect.”	Grant (2022)
Communication	The relationship between two parties, in this case, the government and the people, where they listen to their people's needs and cooperate, making it a two-way communication.	Brent (2020)
Sustaining	Meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.	Fouché (2020)
Participatory Strategic Planning	The participation of individuals and groups in the decision-making process, the selection of goals and policies of the plan, and then participation in its implementation.	Adam (2018)

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1 Background

The local councils in Palestine are the local governing bodies that manage the affairs of Palestinian communities at the municipal level (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022). The first local councils in Palestine were established in the late 19th century under the Ottoman Empire, which ruled Palestine from 1517 to 1917 (Bachi, 1980). These councils were responsible for administering local affairs such as education, health, and public works.

After the fall of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine was placed under the British mandate from 1920 to 1948. During this period, the British established a system of local government in Palestine that included elected municipal councils in cities, towns, district and village councils (Bachi, 1980).

The local councils continued to function in the areas of Palestine that came under the Jordanian control after 1948. However, they were primarily marginalized and had limited powers (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022). Following the Six-Day War in 1967, when Israel occupied the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the Israeli military government established a system of local councils in these territories (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2022). These councils had limited powers and were primarily responsible for local services such as education and public works.

In the early 1990s, the Palestinian Authority was established as part of the Oslo peace process. It assumed responsibility for local governance in the West Bank and Gaza Strip (United Nations Development Programme, 2022). The Palestinian Authority established a system of local councils, and elections for these councils have been held since that time, most recently in 2022 (United Nations Development Programme, 2022).

The modern municipality of Hebron was established during the British Mandate period in the early 20th century. In 1929, the British authorities created the Municipality of Hebron, which was initially responsible for the administration of the city and its environs (El-Eini, 2006). The municipality was later dissolved in 1948, following the Arab-Israeli War, and the city of Hebron was divided between Jordan and Israel (Tamari, 2003).

After the 1967 Six-Day War, Israel occupied the West Bank, including Hebron. In 1976, Israel established a military government in the West Bank, and in 1981, it created a Civil Administration responsible for the administration of the occupied territories, including Hebron (Khalidi, 1992). However, in 1994, following the signing of the Oslo Accords, the Palestinian Authority was granted limited autonomy over the city of Hebron and some surrounding areas (Safi, 2006).

Today, the municipality of Hebron is part of the Palestinian Authority and is responsible for the provision of basic services to the city's residents, including water, sanitation, waste management, and infrastructure development (Hebron Municipality, 2023).

Planning has several strategies and approaches, including participatory planning. Participatory strategic planning (PSP) is a process of involving citizens in the decision-making process of local governments, typically in the development of long-term plans or strategies. Research has identified many potential benefits of PSP, including increased transparency, accountability, and legitimacy in government decision-making Alami & Said (2016) and Ghanem & Abu-Hijleh (2017). By involving citizens in the planning process, PSP can ensure that the needs and priorities of the community are taken into account, leading to more responsive and effective policies and programs.

In addition, Participatory strategic planning (PSP) can also foster a greater sense of ownership and buy-in among citizens for the plans and policies developed through this process (Ghanem & Abu-Hijleh, 2017). Finally, the importance of PSP lies in its potential to improve local governance effectiveness and legitimacy and strengthen the relationship between citizens and their governments (Alami & Said, 2016).

1.2 Study Structure

This study consists of five chapters. The first one is the 'Introduction,' that includes the background, problem statement, study objectives, the importance of the study, questions, hypothesis, and study structure. The second is the 'Literature Review,' that includes the theoretical background of the study's variables, the empirical studies, and the research gap. The third chapter presents the 'Methodology,' that includes; study design, data collection, study instrument, conceptual model, population and sample, and method of data analysis. The fourth chapter is devoted to 'Data Analysis and Discussion, and includes respondents' profiles, study questions, and testing hypotheses. The last and fifth chapter presents the conclusions and recommendations, limitations, and suggestions for future research.

1.3 Problem Statement

Despite adopting participatory strategic planning (PSP) as a means of involving citizens in Palestinian local councils' decision-making process, more research needs to be conducted to examine the level of participation in developing strategic plans in these municipalities. Past research has focused on the potential benefits of PSP, such as increased transparency and accountability (Alami & Said, 2016) and (Ghanem & Abu-Hijleh, 2017), but has not adequately addressed the extent to which citizens are involved in the PSP process in Palestinian municipalities.

According to a study by Alqawasmeh and Bani-Hani (2015), the practice of participatory strategic planning (PSP) in Palestinian local councils has often been inadequate, with many councils relying on top-down, authoritarian decision-making processes rather than truly involving citizens in the planning process (Al-Hindi & Abu-Rumman, 2018). This problem has been exacerbated by a lack of capacity and resources among council staff and a lack of awareness among citizens about their role in PSP (Alkhatib, 2016) and (Alqawasmeh & Bani-Hani, 2015).

To address this gap in the literature, this research aims to examine the level of participation in developing strategic plans in Palestinian local councils through PSP. By analyzing the experiences of Hebron municipality, the researcher aims to showcase the level of engagement for different stakeholders in the phases of developing the strategic plan using the strategic planning model adopted by Chen (2015) and Robbins & Coulter (2012) that consists of seven phases that, to the best of the researcher knowledge, is the first study that is conducted in Palestine using this model. Furthermore, the targeted audience of this study is the Members and employees of the municipality, Civil Society Institutions, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Women's Institutions, Planning committees, and the education sector, Etc.

1.4 Study Objectives

The main objective is to understand the reality and the extent of participatory strategic planning process at Palestinian municipalities: Hebron Municipality as a case.

Furthermore, it aims at:

- Determining the level of participation in developing vision, mission and values phase.
- Determining the level of participation in analyzing the current situation of the municipality phase
- Determining the level of participation in deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality phase

- Determining the level of participation in implementing the developmental activities and projects phase
- Determining the level of participation in monitoring and evaluating developmental activities and projects phase
- Determining the level of participation in sustaining the agreed-upon developmental projects phase
- Determining the level of participation in approving the final version of the strategic plan phase
- Identifying the awareness of participants in understanding the reality of the participatory strategic process at Hebron municipality due to demographic variables

1.5 Importance of Study

While reviewing the related literature, the researcher only found one Palestinian study. This study has focused on exploring the reality of strategic planning at novelty municipalities in the northern West Bank. This research, however, will tackle Hebron Municipality as a case.

Therefore, another research is needed to tackle this topic. However, a different geographical area will be researched. Moreover, the results of this research are expected to have significant importance in the academic literature in Palestine. Moreover, assisting the government in evaluating the efficiency of regulations related to participatory planning. Finally, understanding the local ways of community thinking, stereotyping, and beliefs to be considered in future public policy strategies in Palestine.

1.6 Research Question

This study aims to answer the following central question: **“What is the reality of the participatory strategic planning at the Palestinian municipalities: Hebron Municipality as a case?”**

In order to achieve the main question, the study aims to answer the following sub-questions:

- What is the level of participation in developing the vision, mission, and values?
- What is the level of participation in analyzing the current situation of the municipality?
- What is the level of participation in deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality?
- What is the level of participation in implementing the developmental activities and projects?
- What is the level of participation in monitoring and evaluating developmental activities and projects?
- What is the level of participation in sustaining the agreed-upon developmental projects?
- What is the level of participation in approving the final version of the strategic plan?

1.7 Research Hypothesis

The following Hypotheses will be tested to answer the above questions and objectives:

H1: There is a significant difference in participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to the demographic variables

H1.1: There is a significant difference in participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to gender.

H1.2: There is a significant difference in the participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to (age, qualifications, occupation, and affiliation).

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter consists of two sections: the first section deals with the theoretical framework that includes strategic planning, the importance of strategic planning, barriers to strategic planning, and strategic planning elements. In addition, the reality of strategic planning at the municipal level, the participatory approach, the importance of the participatory approach, and barriers to the participatory approach. In the second section, study will deal with previous Arab and foreign studies, that dealt with the reality of strategic planning.

2.1 Hebron Municipality

Hebron is a Palestinian city located in the southern part of the West Bank, approximately 30 kilometers south of Jerusalem. It is considered the largest city in the West Bank in terms of geographical size and population, with a population of over 200,000 residents (Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics, 2019).

The city of Hebron is governed by the Hebron Municipality, which is responsible for providing basic services and managing the city's affairs. The Municipality is headed by an elected mayor and a city council that includes 15 members who are also elected by the city's residents (Hebron Municipality, 2023)

Hebron Municipality is responsible for a wide range of services, including the provision of clean water, sanitation services, waste collection, and street lighting. It also oversees the maintenance and development of the city's infrastructure, such as roads, bridges, and public parks. In addition, the Municipality provides social and cultural services, including the establishment and operation of community centers, sports facilities, and public libraries (Hebron Municipality, 2023)

Despite its efforts to provide basic services to its residents, Hebron Municipality faces numerous challenges, including limited financial resources and restrictions on its ability to access and develop land. The Municipality's ability to operate freely is also constrained by the Israeli military occupation of the city, which includes restrictions on movement and frequent closures of roads and checkpoints (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2020).

In conclusion, the Hebron Municipality plays a vital role in providing basic services and managing the affairs of the city. Despite facing numerous challenges, the Municipality continues to work towards improving the quality of life for its residents and promoting social and cultural development in the city.

2.2 Strategic Planning

Strategic planning has been discussed widely in the previous literature; scholars defined it using various approaches. Considering that the literature covers a wide range of aspects of this concept, this work focuses on defining the participatory strategic planning process concept. Hence, it starts by defining broader concepts and then dives into narrower and more specific ones. Starting with strategic planning and how the authors define it through different approaches and points of view. However, most of these definitions share the core elements.

Bryson (2012) has defined *strategic planning* as a "deliberative, disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization (or other entity) is, what it does, and why." At the same time, Fooladvand (2015) defined *strategic planning* as formulating an organization's goals and making decisions regarding comprehensive operational and administrative strategies to achieve those goals. Furthermore, Al-Barishni (2019) defines *strategic planning* as a "systematic process by the organization which defines the organization's vision,

mission and strategic objectives then chooses the best available strategic options to achieve the desired goals." Moreover, Nickols (2016) stated that strategic planning is a defined set of activities where the substantive issues are essentially the same regardless of the authors' differences. It includes establishing and periodically confirming the organization's mission and strategy and setting all financial and non-financial goals. It also includes monitoring results, measuring progress, and making necessary adjustments to attain and achieve these goals and objectives.

Thus, this research perceives strategic planning as the application of knowledge, skills, and techniques by which an organization develops systematic procedures and decisions using different skills, tools, and techniques to achieve its objectives and vision.

2.3 Importance of Strategic Planning

According to Kerzner (2019), the importance of the strategic planning process stems from the need to ensure the organization's survival, allowing it to achieve its objectives and adapt to the environmental changes that are constantly occurring regardless of the type of the organization. However, the strategic planning process includes defining an organization's values and mission while ensuring they are achievable. Gartenstein (2018) also assures that the same process applies when setting goals and objectives as they enable the management to evaluate the progress. The evaluation process helps the management take the correct assessments and actions before, during, and after reaching the goals. Furthermore, Cote (2020) discussed that strategic planning could help create a forward vision, giving the organization a sense of direction. Also, as strategic planning includes the study of the market and environment, it makes the organization more competitive and minimizes risk.

Furthermore, according to Abdelqader (2019), strategic planning helps organizations achieve long-term goals by translating the goals and objectives into detailed plans and programs. It also makes the organization competitive by studying environmental factors and taking necessary measures. Where this all helps use the available resources more effectively. Moreover, according to Gartenstein (2018), “Strategic planning is important to an organization because it provides a sense of direction and outlines measurable goals. Strategic planning is a tool that is useful for guiding day-to-day decisions and also for evaluating progress and changing approaches when moving forward.”

Therefore, strategic planning helps guide the management of an organization’s effort toward achieving its objectives, mission, and vision. Furthermore, a strategic plan guarantees the efficient application of all necessary skills, tools, and techniques to maintain the best utilization of the resources.

2.4 Barriers to Strategic Planning

Nazemi (2015) addressed strategic planning and its challenges as internal and external barriers. The internal barriers relate to management, employees, communications, organizational structure, leadership, information system, and technology. On the other side, the external barriers relate to environmental changes, policies, and market \ industry changes. These barriers also contribute to the implementation process of the plans, where the lack of transparency, lack of understanding, lack of commitment, poor feedback, Etc., are results of preliminary plans due to the barriers mentioned above.

Furthermore, Javaheri (2018) has also identified the barriers to strategic planning and divided them into two primary levels. The system and management-related barriers and barriers related to employees. The leadership and employees must

be able to set a clear vision and goals for the organization to ensure a good planning process.

For Kimanthi (2015), it is essential to mention the time and cost of sufficient strategic planning that an organization would spend. The need for better management and dedicated employers can also play a critical role in planning. Kimanthi (2015) stated, “Employee motivation also influences making the most suitable strategic plan for the organization as they highlight the current weaknesses in the organization.” Moreover, according to Günther (2016), some businesses lack a defined direction, vision, or goals, which makes it challenging to develop a successful strategy for the corporation; as a result of the lack of clarity in the responsibilities, making incorrect decisions for the strategic plan, and lack of accountability.

Table 2.1 Barriers to strategic planning summary

Barriers to strategic planning	
The pre-strategy formulation barriers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strategic planning is a newly introduced managerial practice in the Palestinian context. ● The absence of a successful model for strategic planning in the Palestinian context. ● Limited financial resources. ● The social norms downgrade the adoption of modern practices at the organizational level.
Barriers during the strategy formulation process).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The need for more expertise in the field of strategic planning. ● Limited financial resources. ● Lack of efficient monitoring. ● Lack of effective engagement of stakeholders.
The post formulation barriers (the strategy implementation stage).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Limited financial resources. ● Lack of effective evaluation and feedback. ● Lack of commitment.

Therefore, based on previous literature, this research sees strategic planning as a newly introduced managerial practice in the Palestinian context, which implies

numerous barriers to strategic planning, such as the absence of a remarkably successful model for strategic planning among Palestinian organizations besides the lack of competences in the field of strategic planning, and the limited financial resources. Furthermore, the absence of an organization's clear vision and mission also significantly weakens the strategy formulation process.

2.5 Strategic Planning Elements

The main elements of the strategic planning process consist of the following. Mccarthy (2020) states, “the basic elements of a strategic plan: vision, mission, SWOT analysis, core values, goals, objectives, and action plans.” As the vision describes the desired way an organization aims to be viewed and the mission is the way to reach its objectives, goals, and vision, the plan needs to be set accordingly, Chen (2015). Nickols (2016) also argues that strategic planning setters in an organization must consider “where it is headed and what it will or should become.” In the same vein, the plan must consider applying the core values that the organization has, such as integrity, passion, collaboration Etc.

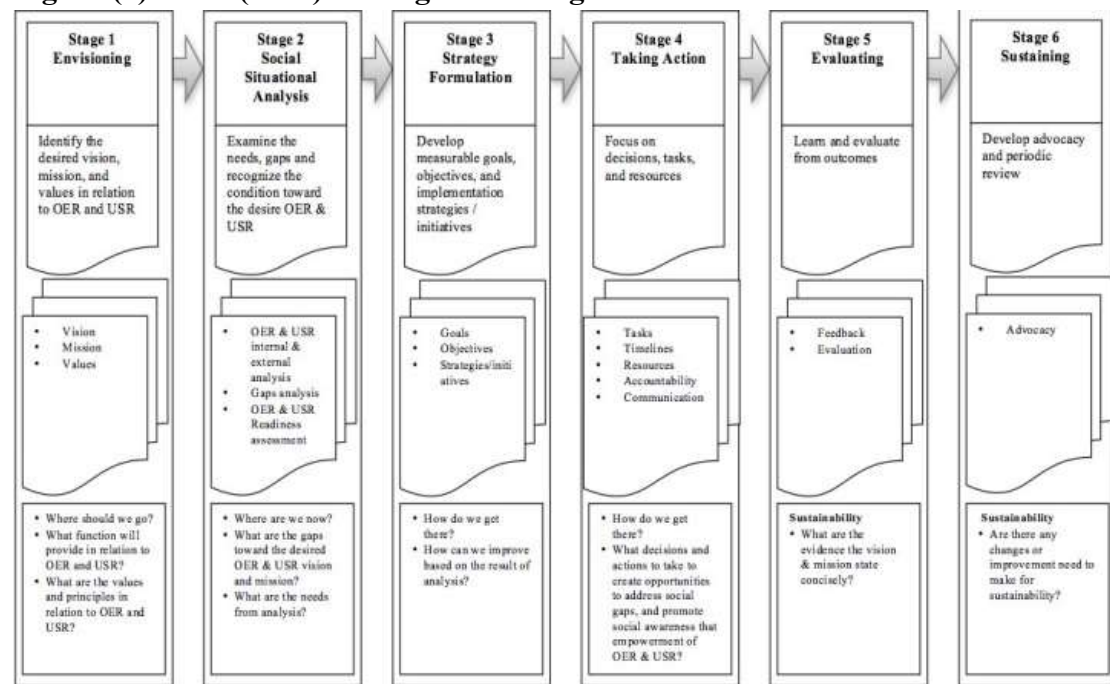
Moreover, a strategic plan must also include a careful analysis of the current organization's position in the market. Mccarthy (2020) suggests using the SWOT analysis approach, which includes considering the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that the organization may face when implementing the plan. Also, having clear goals and objectives helps shape the action plan within the strategic planning process, which all serves to conduct a successful strategic plan for an organization.

Kersulic (2020) addressed eight strategic planning dimensions: “social, cultural, organizational, logistic, communication, economic, tourism, and environmental factors.” Kersulic (2020) argues that setting a strategic plan following these dimensions is an essential characteristic for an organization to achieve sustainability, draw a clear

path for the plan, and assist in better understanding the demands of the market, customers, and stakeholders.

This research adopts the strategic planning process model that Chen (2015) proposed, which consists of six stages, as presented in the chart below.

Figure (1) Chen (2015) Strategic Planning Model



Source: Chen. et al. (2015)

2.5.1 Envisioning

According to Chen (2015), envisioning is the first phase in the proposed strategic planning model. It is the phase where an institution must identify the core vision, mission, and values in alignment with the surrounding environment. It is essential to make sure that they are updated. Bowen (2018) defines *vision* as the statement that specifies where an organization is going and what the future orientation of this organization is. Furthermore, the vision statement is the goal that an organization is pursuing, which acts as the motivation to overcome barriers; Bowen, (2018) states, “vision statements are key drivers of organizational innovation, the commitment, motivation of employees, effectiveness, and success in the competitive arena.”

Similarly, Taiwo (2016) defines *mission* as, “a guide to day-to-day activities of an organization and its decision making. It aids in planning tactically and ‘rallying’ the troops around a common near-to-medium term goal”. Furthermore, Chen (2015), the *mission* statement is the direction of an organization on how to get to the vision. According to Bowen (2018), the importance of the mission statement comes from the need to organize the priorities that an organization may face to pursue its vision and to direct each member to act accordingly. Bowen (2018) states, “A mission statement should help to hone the operations of an organization by minimizing or eliminating extraneous activities, allowing focus and teamwork, and driving organizational priorities and activities.”

Both the vision and mission must be put following the organization's values; as Bowen (2018) states, "The core ethical values of the organization shape not only its vision but also its mission."

2.5.2 Social Situational Analysis

According to Chen (2015), the *social situational analysis* consists of internal and external analysis of the gaps, issues, and challenges that the planners may face during the strategic planning process. Chen (2015) and Thongsookularn (2019) suggested the use of strategic planning tools in order to identify and overcome such obstacles. These tools may include SWOT analysis, PESTEL analysis, SMART.etc. These tools help the planner collect information about the current situation, including the obstacles, opportunities, and strengths which will achieve the vision and mission. Moreover, Thongsookularn (2019) stated that environmental analysis could be applied "to identify opportunities, threats, strengths and weaknesses of the organizations."

Similarly, according to Ahmed (2019), environmental analysis is the main element in strategy formulation, that helps the organization identify the possible

environmental changes it may face and influence the decision-making process towards aligning the strategy with these changes.

2.5.3 Strategy Formulation

Grant (2022) states that a strategy is “a plan, method, or series of actions designed to achieve a specific goal or effect.” A discussion about desirable plans and methods and their importance raised by Fouché (2020), as he stated that “how much risk the decision-makers are willing to take will determine the number of desirable strategies. These desirable strategies will determine how to make the desired strategy a reality.” Moreover, Chen (2015) states that strategy formulation involves developing measurable goals, objectives, and strategies using social situational analysis findings where, these goals and objectives have to follow the SMART approach.

Consequently, Gagn'e (2018) defines *goals* as an "end state not yet attained and focused on attaining. " Furthermore, Bjørn (2017) defines *goals* as "Intended applications of the results." At the same time, Goals are broader aims informed by a vision. Also, Haavisto (2015) states that " goal was the aim of an action that one consciously desired to achieve or obtain." Cummings and Worley (2015) state that the first exercise aims at helping an organization determine the organizational goals it wants to pursue (goal deliberation, or the 'what and why), leading to the development of its overall mission and strategic goals. The group considers what the organization is about, what it wants to accomplish, given its current resources (money, time, material/natural, human, social, informational, technological) and the external environment (assessed by identifying social, technological, economic, ecological, political/regulatory forces as well as industry characteristics, such as supplier and buyer power, resource dependence, information ambiguity, and competition.

Finally, Shulga (2019) states that, initiative is “a community-driven development, including transparency, participation, accountability, and enhanced local capacity.” Furthermore, according to Romberg (2021), initiatives are the formal participation processes made to make a difference.

2.5.4 Taking Action

Fouché and Brent (2020) touched on timelines being a vital aspect of any strategy; as they say, it is the organizing of the tasks in any strategy made to achieve a goal, and without the timeline, there would be no achievements without putting them in chronological order to begin with. Gigante (2017) proposed that timelines are a chronological order of tasks and that timeline planning is not so flexible.

Fouché and Brent (2020), where the author talked about who can provide resources, where the word's literal meaning is an asset one can use for their aid. In this case, it can be material resources, such as money or raw material. The author says they can be provided by "all relevant private, local, regional and national institutions." Another definition was provided by Romberg and Conrad (2021) Where; they said that resources could be "human or monetary"

Accountability was touched upon by Bolay (2018) when he said that transparent procedures that have incorporated the citizen’s feedback make the government more easily held accountable or responsible for anything they choose to take action in, and how that makes a country truly democratic. Similarly, Haavisto (2015) says that accountability is the responsibility held by organizations/ governments and can be done by making sure to “improve the transparency of operations and preferably lead to a better level of accountability.”

Fouché and Brent (2020) defined communication as the relationship between two parties, in this case, the government and the people, where they listen to their

people's needs and cooperate, making it a two-way communication. Next, Romberg and Conrad (2021) talk about discourse, a form of communication where the authors say, "We define each sentence as a discourse unit," which is an aid to the communication process, where everything said is essential.

2.5.5 Evaluating

Bolay (2018) discussed Feedback and described it as a response of great importance to measure progress and see problems and possible solutions, as "provision of feedback enables greater inclusion of all groups of stakeholders." Regarding how important feedback is to evaluation, Yazdania (2020) defines evaluation by explaining the process it takes to get feedback and draw conclusions from it. The deliberation and evaluation are based on the associated perceived risks of each strategy within the identified future. The strategies with the least perceived risks are the most desirable. Haavisto (2015) says "performance measurement is seen as a collection of measures for quantifying performance as well as the reporting process for providing feedback on how well activities have worked out." Thus, proving how feedback and evaluation can only go hand in hand.

2.5.6 Sustaining

Fouché (2020) defined Sustaining as: "meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs." According to Pezzey (2017), "A definition of sustainability is maintaining 'utility' (average human wellbeing) over the very long-term future."

Advocacy is a term used in various fields; for instance, according to Farrer (2015), In health care: "Advocacy is a means of promoting policies that improve health equity" meanwhile, in human rights, it is a "message and a means of holding

governments to account." However, according to Walker (2017) is the fight to stand up for what is right or take the initiative.

2.5.7 Approving

The strategic plan approval phase is the final stage in the strategic planning process, during which the plan is reviewed and approved by the appropriate individuals or groups within an organization (Robbins & Coulter, 2012). This may involve presenting the plan to a board of directors or other governing body for review, seeking input from stakeholders, or obtaining sign-off from key leaders or decision-makers (Naylor, 2017). The purpose of the strategic plan approval phase is to ensure that the plan has been thoroughly reviewed and is aligned with the organization's mission, values, and resources before it is implemented (Mintzberg, Ahlstrand, & Lampel, 2009).

It is important to note that the strategic plan approval phase is not the end of the strategic planning process. The plan should be regularly reviewed and updated to ensure that it remains relevant and effective in achieving the organization's goals and objectives (Robbins & Coulter, 2012).

2.6 Reality of Strategic Planning at the Municipal Level

The reality of strategic planning in the Palestinian municipalities is an essential element in the development process. According to Abdelqader (2019), Strategic planning at the municipal level is an essential element that thoroughly contributes to identifying social needs. Abdelqader (2019) also shows that municipalities try to ensure the public's participation in drawing strategic plans. Ghanem (2017) stated that the reality of planning in Palestinian ministries is still insufficient due to the weakness of the planning teams and the unwillingness of the influentials in these ministries to accept and implement the strategic plan. Moreover, Al-Barishni (2021) has further addressed

the main obstacles that Arab communities would face when adopting a strategic planning approach: the financial resources and the relatively high cost of strategic planning. Furthermore, according to Al-Qeeq (2014), there needs to be an adequate follow-up to the efforts to activate community participation by the Palestinian municipalities.

Therefore, the reality of strategic planning at the municipal level needs to include core elements, such as the lack of active community participation, which is an impediment that would stand against having an effective strategic planning process. Although the municipalities have set community participation as a primary goal in their work, they still need to develop adequate policies for implementation.

2.7 Participatory Approach

Adam (2018) defines *participatory strategic planning* as the participation of individuals and groups in the decision-making process, the selection of goals and policies of the plan, and then participation in its implementation. Moreover, Nurudin (2015) defined *public participation* as "Citizen engagement towards the administration of local authority affairs involving district matters." Nurudin (2015) also argues, "Public participation results in a more transparent administration, and it is crucial for the successful implementation of national development plans."

According to Al-Shantaf (2015), Participatory strategic planning is a process that allows an entity and the locals to work together to plan their future, identify their priorities and goals, and develop programs and projects capable of achieving these goals. Moreover, Mohammad (2019) defines the participatory approach as a method that ensures the participation, assistance, and cooperation of all implementers and beneficiaries of a particular project in the planning process. So that all parties are fully aware of the phases of the plan and objectives.

Therefore, the participatory approach is the active engagement of stakeholders, including the public, in developing the municipality strategy. This process usually consists of seven main phases: setting objectives, mission, and vision; conducting internal and external analysis; strategy development and strategy implementation; evaluating and ensuring sustainability, and approving the final strategic plan document. This ensures better achievement of the social needs and adequate implementation of the strategy.

2.8 Importance of Participatory Approach

According to Al-Khayat (2020), the importance of the participatory approach stems from the fact that it provides an opportunity for various groups of society to contribute to the preparation, management, and implementation of development plans, as this ensures the achievement of comprehensive national development goals. In this regard, Al-Shantaf (2015) has clarified the importance of the participatory approach as it provides a more excellent representation of remote and marginalized areas. It provides more effective identification of local needs and improves services provided to the local community.

Furthermore, Nurudin (2015) argues that a successful participation practice will result in making better decisions that are socially accepted, and people will know that their voices count and their community integration will be enhanced, "people will feel more responsible for the project, the environmental quality, and will be engaged and active in environmental monitoring." In the same vein, Mohammad (2019) discusses that the participatory approach helps prepare more realistic plans that stem from the community's actual needs. It also involves the local community in the various phases of planning. Finally, it ensures the support and commitment of all community members to achieving development goals.

Therefore, the participatory approach actualizes the belief that is engaging the stakeholders, including the public, in the decision-making process results in more accurate outcomes. Where the active engagement of locals in developing the strategies means shared responsibilities that ensure they meet the actual community needs. This process also ensures better monitoring, evaluation, accountability, and commitment, as well as transience between the public and municipalities, which builds mutual trust between all sides.

2.9 Barriers to the Participatory Approach

Alsharafa (2014) argues that in most societies, people are recipients of development and not active participants. This could result from needing to believe in the necessity of community participation in the planning and development process. Furthermore, the lack of freedom of expression and opinion for all members of society and the absence of encouragement policies are also barriers to public participation. Nonetheless, Qiatti (2017) also argues that the barriers include the weak trust between community members and the authorities and the need for municipalities to make more effort to reach the community members.

However, Alaya (2020) argued that the lack of communication between local councils and citizens and the weakness of the participatory culture are essential barriers that must be overcome. Similarly, according to Adam (2018), barriers can go beyond these elements; for example, lack of proper planning for development projects, wars, educational issues, awareness, culture, etc., are all impediments that would stand against implementing effective participatory planning.

Thus, the barriers to the participatory strategic planning process lie in the relationship between the community and the authorities. These barriers can be identified as a lack of trust, monitoring, commitment, accountability, and transparency.

They also include the need for proper planning and decision-making. Nonetheless, the concept of participatory strategic planning still needs to be embodied in the cultural awareness of the public. In other words, development requires freedom. People do not participate but rather receive, and they are recipients of the development and not active participants.

Table 2.2 International Empirical Literature

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
1	Anna Zachrisson et al. / 2021	Sweden	To explore the use of comprehensive participatory planning to handle competing land-use priorities in the sparsely populated rural context.	The research used public data sources	Qualitative transdisciplinary case study.	Strategic planning should have been prioritized in the municipalities.	Call upon all sectors to pay more attention to the theory and practice of "rural planning."	Researchers could only monitor/supervise some of the needed participatory planning processes in the municipalities.	Future research should work towards increasing the local acknowledgment of power aspects.
2	Mona Roman et al. / 2021	Finland	To explore how authorities can facilitate the participation of the civil society in planning processes	Regional authorities' members	Qualitative approach	The research identified the fundamental mechanisms to facilitate public participation in regional planning.	-Provide motivation. - Provide further information. -Avoid professional language.	Lack of information and motivation to participate. This research only focuses on one country.	Future research should conduct the same research in other European countries.
3	Julia Romberg et al. / 2021	Germany	To explore how authorities can facilitate the participation of the civil society in	Local community and municipalities' members.	Qualitative approach.	Results show that practical support for municipalities in evaluating participation processes is within reach.	The use of pre-trained models will make argument mining applicable in municipalities.		Future research should improve the detection of argumentative discourse units.

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
			planning processes						
4	Astrid Bjørgen et al. / 2021	Norway	How to build stakeholder participation in collaborative urban freight planning	Local community	Field visits and observation.	Stakeholders' involvement, including the local community, helps improve urban planning.	Power imbalances between the government sectors and citizens must be reduced.	Local authorities are unwilling to share power with local communities.	Future research could investigate the methodologies used by local authorities to initiate and organize collaborations.
5	Nanang Indra et al. / 2021	Canada	To understand the role of local participation in the governance of natural resource extraction.		Previous literature comparison and analysis.	Citizen engagement in natural resource governance does not reduce power imbalances in extractive sector decision-making.	There should be more understanding of local participation in natural resource extraction.	Lack of meaningful participation initiated by authorities	“Future research should examine what role affected populations play in shaping transnational extractive policies and practices.”
6	Roberta Sisto et al. / 2021	Georgia	To test the suitability of an innovative methodological framework that integrates back casting and decision-making tools.	Community representatives and locals	Quantitative approach.	The proposed methods prove to be valid.	Devoting more time to this type of reflection.	The applied techniques require time and dedication.	Future research should apply the proposed approach in different types of studies.

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
7	Murebwayire Jeanne / 2021	Rwanda	To showcase the role of citizen participation in the planning process for local economic development.	Local community.	Descriptive approach.	<p>Citizens' participation in strategic planning helps the government to ensure that development programs align with citizens' needs.</p> <p>This study's findings confirmed that citizens' effective participation in planning is pertinent to Rwanda 's development.</p> <p>It contributes positively to implementation as well as evaluation and monitoring.</p>	Call upon the government to further facilitate consultations with citizens.	There needs to be more communication between citizens and administrative entities.	Future research should conduct an impact assessment to measure the effects of citizens' participation.
8	Jolanda Zurfluh / 2021.	Germany	To analyze and compare the views of three spatial disciplines: spatial development, transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Spatial planners. - Landscape planners. - Traffic planners. 	Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used.	There are uncertainties in future planning in all three fields	The adaption of the research proposal can develop common visions to resolve these uncertainties.	There needed to be more knowledge between professional groups. Professional groups/planners needed help to	

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
			planning, and landscape planning.					agree on a particular strategy.	
9	Elaine Fouché/2020	South Africa	Develop a participatory planning approach for local governments in South Africa to Explore, Design, and Act for Sustainability.	The municipal management team; the municipal council; Stellenbosch University; the Western Cape government ; Eskom Research.	Qualitative. Data collection was a voice-recorded open discussion, group discussions, and group feedback.	Developing a participatory planning approach (EDAS approach) for local governments in South Africa concerning long-term sustainability issues.	Future research directions should focus on applying the EDAS approach to more local governments.	The EDAS approach was only applied in the local government context in South Africa.	Future research directions should focus on applying the EDAS approach to more local government contexts and public enterprises.
10	Ivan Shulga et al. / 2019	Russia	To review the Russia Local Initiatives, Support Program (LISP) and how it addresses the needs of the population.	Local Community	Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used.	The initiative implementation builds and strengthens the local capacity for project implementation.		The research does not cover larger settlements or urban areas.	

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
11	Rob Weymouth et al. / 2019	Australia	To determine if a gap existed between citizens' expectations and satisfaction with participation in government in Western Australia.	Local community and local council members.	Both quantitative and qualitative approaches were used.	The gap between citizen expectations and satisfaction with participation in government is starting to close.	Building an ongoing partnership between citizens and government.	Lack of trust between the citizens and the government.	Future research should work towards creating initiatives that would ensure trust between citizens and the government.
12	Lisa Schmidhuber / 2019	Austria	To shed light on citizen participation in a local open government initiative.	Local community	Quantitative.	The study finds that motivations for citizen participation in public administration greatly vary across forms of participation.	The study suggests that future research should study how different types of motivation influence the kind and quality of users' contributions.		Future research should study how different types of motivation influence the kind and quality of users' contributions.

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
13	Tamara Maričić et al. / 2018	Serbia	Provide a brief historical overview of participatory planning in Serbia.		Literature analysis	The application of participatory governance in Serbia is still limited.	All affected parties should be involved in the planning process.	There needs to be more support for knowledge exchange between local citizens and planning professionals.	Future research should address the ongoing urban conflicts.
14	Ahmad Mustanir/2017	Indonesia	This research explores the use of Participatory Rural Appraisal (PRA) as a participatory planning method.	The Local community of Tonrong Rijang Village, Indonesia.	Descriptive explanatory research. This research also used a qualitative approach.	The results show that PRA as an approach is a term that needs to be better known among the local community.		Lack of understanding among the local community regarding the notion of community participation.	
15	Suzie Nurudin / 2015	Malaysia	To showcase the level of public participation in local government programs.	Seremban Municipal Council, The Ministry of Housing, and Local Government	The study used survey sessions as a primary data collection tool including 400 questionnaires	There needs to be more public participation in local government programs.	The study recommends facilitating public participation in development plans.		

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
16	Kayom Wilson, et al. / 2015	Uganda	This paper examines the level of participation of the urban community in the physical planning process.	Stakeholders involved in urban development at the National, District, Town Council and Local Community .	Both quantitative and qualitative methodological approaches were used in this research.	<p>Community participation is still a challenge that affects physical planning in the emerging urban center of Paidha-Uganda.</p> <p>Very few urban community members are involved in physical planning in Paidha. Community participation is limited to a few mass meetings in Paidha.</p> <p>Community participation only takes place at the initial stage of plan formulation in Paidha.</p>	The principles of participatory planning need to be extended to all levels of planning processes, including urban communities.	Lack of awareness and community participation.	

Table 2.3 Arabic Empirical Literature

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
1	Faisal Sabah et al. / 2021	Palestine	To present a proposal for the ideal form of public relations departments in local government entities.	Members of local government entities.	Inductive approach	The public relations departments in local government help raise the level of performance and enhance their relationship with the local community.	Implementation of the study proposal in all local government institutions	Most of the research sample is not convinced of the ability of local authorities to adapt the media to serve their goals.	
2	Jihad Al-Khayat / 2020	Egypt	To demonstrate the importance of community participation in the strategic planning process.	Local community	The research uses both inductive and deductive approaches .	Active engagement of the locals in developing the strategic plans facilitates determining the relevant projects and prioritizing them in relevance to the community needs. Furthermore, it ensures locals' active participation in implementing these projects.	To benefit from the experiences of developed countries in participatory strategic planning. - Educate the local community on how to participate in the planning process		
3	Charmatt Ben Alaya Amir Khalil / 2020	Algeria	Answer the following question: - To what extent does participatory democracy exist in the locally	local Community	The research used the analytical and descriptive approaches	The local councils and people have an authoritarian relationship, which is not based on cooperation and flexibility.	- Elected councils should promote a culture of listening. - Create and support policies that encourage citizens'	Lack of communication between local councils and citizens and a lack of trust between them.	

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
			elected councils in Algeria?		of previous studies.		participation in the planning process.		
4	Husain Abdulqader \ 2019	Palestine	To showcase the reality of strategic planning and the quality service provided by Palestinian municipalities.	Administration members in East Jerusalem municipalities.	Descriptive -analytical approach	<p>Participatory Strategic planning contributes to accurately identifying the needs of municipalities.</p> <p>There is a significant difference between the reality of strategic planning and the service's level of quality due to gender.</p> <p>There is no significant difference between the reality of strategic planning and the service's level of quality due to age and qualifications.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Municipal employees should participate in the planning process - Strengthen the role of monitoring during the implementation of plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The ambiguity of the concept of strategic planning among employees - Centralization of Municipal Decisions - Lack of budget allocated for planning 	
5	Ihab Mohammad / 2019	Egypt	To explore the role of participatory planning in developing social capital through	Citizens who participated in the development projects	The study used the case study method, using a questionnai	The effectiveness of participatory planning as a mechanism for development in terms of its ability to mobilize	The study ends with a conclusion that includes recommendations regarding activating participatory	The study showed a weak mutual trust between citizens and authorities.	

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
			the Egyptian decentralization initiative between 2006 and 2013.		re to collect data.	citizens towards development processes. There are no significant differences in the effectiveness of participatory strategic planning due to gender, age, or occupation. There are significant differences in the effectiveness of participatory strategic planning due to qualifications.	planning as a tool for social capital development.		
6	Amani Adam / 2018	Kassala Stare, Sudan	To shed light on participatory development planning and its impact on the local community in Kassala State.	The local community in Kassala state, Sudan.	Descriptive -analytical method, and the case study method.	The local community has complete knowledge of the participatory development approach and has sufficient capacity to participate.	Spreading awareness of the need for participatory planning and motivating local communities towards change for the better.	Lack of proper planning for development projects. Weak public participation in the development process.	
7	Duha Maari/2018	Ramallah Palestine	To identify the reality of the community partnership between the	Members of the Palestinian Telecommunications Group Foundation for	Both qualitative and quantitative	The Paltel Group Foundation is based on the principle of social responsibility. However,	The PalTel Group Foundation should adopt the principles of community partnership to		

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
			PalTel Group Foundation for Community Development and NGOs.	Community Development.	approaches .	no further steps have been taken in this regard.	strengthen its partnerships on a larger scale with NGOs		
8	Nabil al-Ghoul / 2018	Gaza	What methodology is followed when preparing strategic plans by the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics?	Gaza local community and PCBS planning team	The researcher used the comprehensive survey method.	Developing a tool that enables the institution to achieve its future vision and provide a better life for its citizens.	The necessity of adopting the strategic development planning approach and continuing to engage the local community in the later stages of the strategic plan, specifically in the implementation and follow-up stages.		
9	Ashour Qiatti / 2017	Palestine	The study aims to identify the concept of public participation in local development and its importance, objectives, conditions, characteristics, and principles.	Local community	The study used an analytical method for previous studies.	It has been shown that the proper employment of public participation is one of the most important basic rules on which local development must be based.	Involving the local councils in supervising the implementation of development projects. Ensure community participation in the decision-making process.		

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
10	Zubarah Kanza / 2016	Algeria	To shed light on the concept of participatory democracy in Algeria and the extent of its application on the ground.	Local community.	Descriptive -analytical approach	There is a failure by the local municipal councils to embody and devote participatory democracy as a result of the social and political structure.	Defining mechanisms to strengthen participatory democracy and facilitate local work.		
11	Lina Almohtaseb / 2016	Hebron, Palestine.	Diagnose the reality of public participation from the point of view of the administration level of municipalities in the Hebron Governorate.	The study community consists of 79 mayors and municipal members.	Two tools were used for the study: a questionnaire and interviews	The study concluded that political instability is one of the factors that limit the effectiveness of public participation. there are no significant differences in the degree of influence of the public participation at the local level on the municipality or the citizen due to gender age and qualification	To increase public participation in municipalities and avoid all obstacles that may limit public participation.		
12	Youssef Al Shantaf \ 2015	Gaza, Palestine	The research aims to identify the reality of applying participatory strategic planning in Palestinian municipalities.	Members of municipal councils, municipal employees, local community.	Descriptive -analytical approach.	The study found that the research sample, municipality employees, municipality members, and clients agree that the application of participatory strategic	The study recommended further enhancing community participation in development plans and projects.		

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
						<p>planning is highly taking place in development programs.</p> <p>There are significant differences between municipality employees, municipality members, and clients regarding the level of the application of participatory strategic planning toward the municipality members.</p> <p>There is moderate agreement among the clients in their level of participation in the annual evaluation of the strategic plan.</p>			
13	Youssef Al Shantaf \ 2015	Gaza, Palestine	To identify the relationship between participatory strategic planning and the quality of Palestinian municipal services.	Members of municipal councils, municipal employees, and local community.	Descriptive -analytical approach.	The study found a positive relationship between participatory strategic planning and the quality of the services.	The need to further enhance community participation in development plans and projects.		

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
14	Farid Sobeh Al-Qeeq 2014	Palestine	To clarify the role of community participation in preparing Strategic Development and Investment Planning (SDIP) for Palestinian Cities and Towns.	Palestinian Municipalities and local community representatives.		The study underlined the necessity to institutionalize community participation in planning.	Taking care of selecting representatives of the local community. Establishing strategic planning departments within the municipalities' structure.	Lack of clarity in the concept of community participation. Weak awareness of the public and local bodies about the importance of community participation	
15	Yaser Alsharafa, Wasim Ismail. / 2014	Gaza	To explore the reality of community participation in the development of plans and policies of local authorities in the Gaza Strip (Gaza municipality as a case study).	Members of the local committees.	Quantitative approach.	The study reached several significant results, including no indication of the impact of citizens' participation in urban planning and decision-making process.	Strengthening community participation in the development of work plans and policies. Marketing the concept of community participation in different media channels.	Authorities' belief in the necessity of community participation is weak. The lack of freedom of expression and opinion for all members of society. Absence of encouragement policies from the state.	
16	Amjad Skeik \ 2012	Gaza	Helping decision-makers to set up development	Local community.	Descriptive field method.	People believe that community participation	The need to spread the culture of community	Weak trust between community	

#	The Author /year*	Origin	Purpose	Target population	Study Design	Main Result	Recommendation	Limitations	Further Research
			projects and ensure the role of community participation in sustainable urban development in Gaza City			<p>is a fundamental right for them. There needs to be more promoting community participation.</p> <p>There are no significant differences at alpha 0.05 regarding the role of community participation in urban development due to gender, age, and occupation.</p>	participation and adopt it as a policy in all projects.	members and neighborhood committee members. The novelty of the experience of community participation among all sectors.	

2.10 Summary and Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher has reviewed critical literature on participatory strategic planning in Arab and foreign countries. The researcher has benefited from the previous studies in designing the study, building the study tool and the questionnaire, and developing a theoretical framework regarding the field of study.

The questionnaire of this study was built and developed depending on dimensions, scales, and items from previous studies, mainly Chen (2015), Alsharafa, et al. (2014), Al Shantaf (2015), and Al Mohtas (2016).

Many researchers have explored the reality of participatory strategic planning at the municipal level. These studies proved the importance and effectiveness of adopting the participatory approach in developing the strategic plan for municipalities like Al Shantaf (2015), Adam (2018), Abdulqader (2019), and Murebwayire (2021)

On the other hand, Kanza (2016), Alsharafa & Wasim (2014), Maričić et al. (2018), Skeik (2012), Wilson et al. (2015), Nurudin (2015) and Mustanir (2017) agreed that there is a lack of engagement for the local community in developing the strategic plan which affects, the development process and its outcomes

This study used the quantitative approach since many studies used it, like al-Ghoul (2018), Alsharafa, & Wasim (2014), Schmidhuber (2019), Nurudin (2015), and Roberta Sisto et al. (2021).

Bjørgen et al. (2021) suggested investigating the methodologies used by local authorities to initiate and organize collaborations. Therefore, this study will investigate the reality of participatory strategic planning in the Palestinian municipality following the proposed strategic participatory planning model by Chen (2015) combined with Robbins & Coulter, (2012) model. However, the PPS model consists of six phases for planning that are envisioning, social situational analysis, strategy formulation, taking

action, mentoring, and evaluation and sustaining, and finally the seventh phase, which is approving (adopted from Robbins & Coulter, (2012).

Therefore, the difference between this study and the other studies is, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, that it is the first study in Palestine that examines the reality of the participatory strategic planning process concerning the seven phases adopted by Chen (2015) which consists of six stages combined with Robbins & Coulter (2012) model. Furthermore, it is the only study to combine the council members, municipality employees, and citizens in its targeted population.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter outlines and presents the methodology used in this research by explaining the research design, data sources, study instrument (Questionnaire) steps, and design, questionnaire validity and reliability, conceptual study model, the study population, sample size, and analytical method.

3.1 Study Design

This research used the quantitative approach to reach the findings and explore the reality of participatory planning in Palestinian municipalities. A structured questionnaire was used as a primary data collection tool to gather information from the targeted population. The sample of this study was chosen non-randomly (convenience) from those who participated in developing the strategic plan of Hebron Municipality.

3.2 Data Collection

In this study, two data collection sources were used. The primary sources were collected by distributing a structured questionnaire to the participants in developing the strategic plan of Hebron Municipality. The secondary sources, consisted of the data gathered through reviewing the literature that exists in previous studies, research papers, articles, journals, books, dissertations, etc.

The variables are rated by using the 5 Likert Scale. The questionnaire was used in print form and online form questions were given to those who participated in developing the strategic plan for Hebron Municipality. The questionnaire was designed to achieve the research objectives.

3.3 Study Instrument

As mentioned earlier, a structured questionnaire went through these steps to achieve its goals.

3.3.1 Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire is designed in two sections. The first one studies demographic and general information about the respondents. It is divided into six variables; gender, academic level, age, occupation, whether they are members of the municipality council, and affiliation.

The second section, "participation of the local community in the strategic planning development phases " based on the previous studies mainly Alsharafa, Et al. (2014), Al Shantaf (2015), and Al Mohtaseb (2016), which consists of seven sub sections: 1) the local community participation in developing and drafting the vision, mission and values of the municipality, and it consists of three items, such as "local community representatives participates in developing a clear vision for the municipality" 2) the local community participation in analyzing the current situation, and it consists of nine items, like "local community representatives participates in determining the actual issues for the local citizens" 3) the local community participation in setting the strategic activities and goals for the municipality, and it consists of five items such as "local community representatives participates in ranking the priorities regarding the actual needs of the citizens", 4) the local community participation in implementing the development activities and projects, and it consists of three items, these items includes "local community representatives participates in implementing the developmental strategy plan". 5) the local community participation in mentoring and evaluating the development activities and projects; and it consists of four items, like "local community representatives participate in the regular evaluation of the strategic plan implementation concerning the key performance indicators for each phase of the strategic plan implementation." 6) the local community participation in ensuring the sustainability of the implemented and the agreed upon projects of the strategic plan. It

consists of four items these items include "local community representatives participates in planning the mitigation strategy for the new changes and emergencies." 7) the local community participation in approving the final strategic plan documents. It consists of four items, such as "local community representatives participate in revising the strategic plan before its final approval.

3.3.2 Validity of the Questionnaire

Before distributing the final version to the targeted respondents, the questionnaire was developed, edited, approved, and passed all needed procedures. It was sent to the supervisor and six more evaluators to evaluate each dimension and its consistency validation with the main objectives to achieve the study's primary aim.

Participatory strategic planning phases have been identified from previous literature and tested by the supervisor and the evaluators before publishing to the final respondents. So, the validity of this instrument content for the present study was ensured. The evaluators agreed it would achieve the main objectives and answer the questions.

Additionally, the questionnaire initially consisted of 41 items divided into two sections with seven subsections. Then, the questionnaire was modified based on the supervisor's and the evaluators' comments and suggestions, and it became 32 items in its final version.

3.3.3 Reliability of the Questionnaire

The Cronbach Alpha test was used to evaluate the reliability of questionnaires, and the test was used to validate the questionnaire items and ensure that it achieves the study objectives. The test was conducted on each of the seven dimensions and the questions as a whole which were assessed by the questionnaires and scaled for the level of participation as shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Cronbach's alpha value of each variable

Phases	No. of Items	Reliability	Result
P1	3	0.928	Pass
P2	9	0.922	Pass
P3	5	0.930	Pass
P4	3	0.908	Pass
P5	4	0.899	Pass
P6	4	0.869	Pass
P7	4	0.882	Pass
SP	32	0.971	Pass

The results shown in table (3.2) show that the score of the Alpha Coefficient is more than the minimum level of reliability which is 0.70 for all the phases used by the questionnaires (Adams & Lawrence, 2014).

3.4 Conceptual Model

This research aims to understand the reality and the extent of participatory planning at large Palestinian municipalities: Hebron Municipality as a case. The conceptual framework is adapted from the literature review. The researcher added the seventh stage (dimension) to this model, which is "approving the strategic plan," which is adapted from Robbins & Coulter, (2012) to assess the involvement of the local community in taking a formal role in approving the final version of the strategic plan, whereas the six phases adopted from Chen, (2015) as shown in the questionnaire scale, and the figure below which consists of seven main phases (dimensions). These dimensions are envisioning, social situational analysis, strategy formulation, taking action, evaluating, sustaining, and approving.

Figure (2) Conceptual Model Summary

Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4	Phase 5	Phase 6	Phase 7
Envisioning	Social Situational Analysis	Strategy Formulation	Taking Action	Evaluating	Sustaining	Approving

3.5 Population of Study

The population of this study is all people who have participated in developing the strategic plan for Hebron Municipality. Therefore, the targeted population is all participants in developing the plan, and the target population is 300. (Hebron Municipality, 2021)

3.6 Sample of Study

The sample of this study was chosen based on scientific rules and methods, and it was a non-random (Convenience) sampling method.

According to Sekaran (2003), the Minimum Sample Size of this study was 169. Thus, a total of (170) questionnaires were distributed to respondents. A total of (122) respondents out of (170) received, (13) questionnaires were discarded due to corruption in data, and (109) questionnaires were adopted for analysis. The response rate was (71.7 %) which is 36.3% of the population.

3.7 Method of Data Analysis

The primary data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

In this study, the researcher used frequency to describe the demographic variables and used mean and standard deviation to answer the study question, T-test, and one-way ANOVA to test the hypothesis.

CHAPTER FOUR

Data Analysis & Discussion

The cross-sectional design was used to achieve the primary study objective. A survey was distributed to people who participated in developing the Hebron municipality strategic plan. This chapter includes the current study's findings, participant profile, study questions, and testing hypotheses.

4.1 Respondents Profiles

Table 4.1: Demographic Variables of Study

Demographic Variables	Sample size (n=109)	Percent
	Frequency	
Gender		
Male	75	68.8
Female	34	31.2
Qualification		
Secondary school or less	5	4.6
Diploma or less	20	18.3
Bachelor	64	58.7
Higher education	20	18.3
Age		
Less than 30 years	29	26.6
30-39	42	38.5
40-49	21	19.3
50 or more	17	15.6
Occupation		
Public sector employee	11	10.1
Private sector employee	10	9.2
NGOs	1	.9
Municipality employee	80	73.4
Freelance	7	6.4
Are you a council member		

Demographic Variables	Sample size (n=109)	Percent
	Frequency	
Yes	10	9.2
No	99	90.8
Affiliation		
Public sector employee	9	8.3
Private sector employee	9	8.3
NGOs	7	6.4
Municipality employee	66	60.6
Council member	13	11.9
Citizens	5	4.6

Table (4.1) shows that, out of the total respondents: the weight of males and females is (68.8:31.2) that shows that male respondents are quite double the female respondents. Considering that the majority of the respondents are municipality employees, i.e., 73.4%, this could indicate that most of the municipality employees are males. Furthermore, most of the other organizations' representatives in developing the strategic plan are males. Thus, the researcher believes this result is a typical reflection of the percentage of male employees in other sectors than the education and health sectors.

As for the qualifications of the respondents, the result shows that 4.6% of them got a secondary education or less, and 18.3% had a diploma degree. The most significant percentage of the respondents have a Bachelor, and they form 58.7% of the total participants. At the same time, the remaining respondents, who are 18.3% of the sample, are postgraduates.

Regarding the respondents' age, the age segment (30 – 39) covers the highest weight, which forms 38.5% of the respondents, while the category of (more than 50)

was the lowest, with only 15.6% of the respondents. The second largest group (Less than 30) forms 26.6% of the participants. Then, the segment of (40-49) years old comes in third place, forming 19.3% of the respondents. Given the above information, the average age of the participants in Hebron municipality strategic plan development is 30 – 39 years. This indicates that people of this age stage are more aware of modern managerial practices; thus, their involvement would be more effective and reliable.

As for the respondents' jobs and occupations, the results show that 73.4% of the sample are municipality employees, while public sector employees made up 10.1% of the sample. 9.2% of the respondents are private sector employees, 6.4% are freelancers, and the remaining respondents, who form 0.9% of the sample, are NGO employees.

The percentage of municipality employees, 73.4%, and 0.9% NGO employees indicates a need for more engagement for the non-governmental organization in developing the strategic plan for the municipality.

The percentage of the council members who participated in developing the strategic plan among the total respondents is 9.2. This result indicates a high percentage of the council members' participation in developing the strategic plan concerning the total number of the council members is 13.

Finally, the questionnaire classified the participants according to the respondents' affiliation. The result showed that the largest segment is the municipality employees, 60.6% of the total sample. The second largest group was the council members; their percentage is 11.9%, including some members from other councils. The public and private sectors were equal in their participation percentages of 8.3. NGO representation is 6.4% considering that some NGO representatives stated that their primary work is in other sectors. Finally, citizens had a minor proportion, that is 4.6%.

4.2 Study Questions

Based on the research questions this section aims to answer the research questions, and indicates the level of the local community representatives' participation in developing the strategic plan of Hebron municipality.

To judge the level of items on the Likert scale, the researcher considered that if the mean of the item is (1-2.33), then the level is low, (2.34-3.66) moderate, but for high-level items, the mean will be (3.67-5.00).

Table 4.2

Degree	Range
High	3.67-5
Moderate	2.34-3.66
Low	1-2.33

To answer the study question: What is the reality of the participatory strategic planning process in Palestinian Municipalities? The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.3).

Table 4.3

Phase	Mean	S.D	Degree	Rank
Phase 1	3.29	.871	Moderate	3
Phase 2	3.31	.718	Moderate	1
Phase 3	3.29	.825	Moderate	2
Phase 4	3.17	.827	Moderate	5
Phase 5	3.09	.872	Moderate	7
Phase 6	3.12	.817	Moderate	6
Phase 7	3.21	.809	Moderate	4
Participatory Strategic Planning (PSP)	3.23	.677	Moderate	

As shown in table (4.3) the reality of the participatory strategic planning process in Palestinian municipalities has a moderate degree (3.23) with a low deviation (0.677). The respondents' highest rank phase is the second phase, which is "participation in

analyzing the current situation of the municipality," with a participation degree of (3.31) and low deviation (0.718). In contrast, the respondent's most minor rank is phase 5, which is "participation in monitoring and evaluating the developmental activities and projects," with a participation degree of (3.094) and a low deviation of (0.872).

This result indicates that the level of involvement of the local community in developing the strategic plan is moderate. Maričić et al. (2018) found in their study that the application of participatory governance in Serbia is still limited. In addition, in their study, Kayom Wilson et al. (2015) concluded that community participation is still a challenge that affects physical planning in the emerging urban center of Paidha-Uganda. Further, Skeik (2012) found in his study that there is a lack of promoting community participation. Also, Nurudin (2015) found a lack of public participation in local government programs. On the other hand, Al Shantaf (2015) found in his study that the municipality's members agree that the level of the application of participatory strategic planning is highly taking place in development programs.

The researcher believes that the participants' experience and knowledge in developing the strategic plan are pretty low as this managerial practice is newly introduced in the Palestinian context, mainly in the local government sector, which aligns with Adam (2018), who concluded that the local community must have full knowledge of the participatory development approach and have sufficient capacity to participate.

Furthermore, this result reveals the following: in the first place, as the municipalities outsource the development of the plan to a consultancy firm; these firms are usually concerned with saving their resources by limiting the role of the participants whose experience and knowledge in the field is limited; therefore the firm's planning team usually takes the instructor's role rather than the facilitator's role, while taking into

consideration that the facilitator's role usually requires providing more time and efforts to guarantee better engagement for participants considering that the participants number is approximately 300. In the second place, most participants needed to be adequately prepared to participate actively in the planning session as they most likely did not get any training or instructions before participating in the planning sessions. Third, planning sessions usually last for several hours, eventually affecting the participants' ability to concentrate effectively during the planning sessions. Finally, the planning team members are of variant engagement techniques and abilities, which also impacts the participation rate of the attendance

On the other hand, the researcher believes that there is no balance between the mass meetings and the committee meetings in a way that does not reveal the degree of contribution of these committees in building the strategic plan. Furthermore, the participant's commitment to attending the planning sessions is low. However, by revising the attendance sheets of these sessions, the researcher found that some participants skipped some sessions, which affected their understanding and, eventually, their participation. Furthermore, some participants usually only attend part of the session.

Furthermore, monitoring and evaluation is an ongoing process that requires excellent human and financial resources to cover the implementation phase that would last for years. Therefore, this complicated process requires a high level of knowledge and experience to be accomplished properly. Consequently, this phase among all phases was the lowest ranked phase.

To conclude, considering that the participation rate of all phases is moderate, it reflects the participant's understanding and capacity to conduct such a role. However, this managerial practice occurs only once every four years, starting from 2012

following the introduction of the ministry of local government, a manual guide for the planning process at the municipalities in Palestine.

To answer the study question: “What is the level of participation in developing the vision, mission, and values?” The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.4).

Table 4.4

Items	Mean	S. D	Degree	Rank
Developing a clear vision for the municipality	3.34	.955	Moderate	1
Deciding on a clear mission for the municipality	3.28	.914	Moderate	2
Selecting the municipality values	3.26	.927	Moderate	3
Phase 1	3.29	.871	Moderate	

Table (4.4) Shows that the "level of participation in developing the vision, mission, and values" phase has a moderate participation degree (3.29) and low deviation (0.871). That means that local community representatives participate to some extent in developing the strategic plan. Furthermore, the respondent's highest rank item is "participation in developing a clear vision," with a participation degree of (3.34) and a low deviation (0.955). At the same time, the respondent's lowest rank item is "participation in selecting the values," with a participation degree of (3.26) and a low deviation (0.927). Taewoo (2014) concluded in his study that Albany 2030 has led to overall successful engagement in visioning.

The researcher believes that participants are more likely to be exposed during their work and education experience to developing visions and missions. In contrast, their exposure to developing organizational values is less frequent. However, in our communities, the organizational values are usually a reflection of the community values; therefore, their adoption will require less effort and participation rate than it

requires to decide on the vision that represents the future state that the participants are keen to achieve.

To answer the study question: "What is the level of participation in analyzing the current situation of the municipality?" The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.5).

Table 4.5

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree	Rank
Determining the actual issues for the local citizens.	3.50	.878	Moderate	1
Determining the local community needs.	3.33	.882	Moderate	3
Determining the sources of the internal strengths of the municipality.	3.23	.949	Moderate	7
Determining the sources of the internal weaknesses of the municipality.	3.29	.956	Moderate	5
Determining the available resources when developing the municipality strategy.	3.37	.930	Moderate	2
Determining the available capabilities while developing the strategic plan for the council.	3.28	.942	Moderate	6
Determining the opportunities in the external environment that can be utilized while implementing its strategy.	3.32	.838	Moderate	4
Determining the threats in the external environment that encounter the implementation of the strategic plan.	3.19	.887	Moderate	8
Analyzing the political, economic, technological, legal, environmental, and social circumstances.	3.28	.963	Moderate	6
Phase 2	3.31	.718	Moderate	

Table (4.5), shows that the "level of participation in analyzing the current situation of the municipality" has a moderate participation degree (3.31) and low deviation (0.718). The respondents' highest rank item is "participation in determining the actual issues for the local citizens," with a participation degree of (3.5) and a low deviation of (0.878). Whereas the lowest rank item is "determining the threats in the external environment that may encounter the implementation of the strategic plan," with a participation degree of (3.19) and low deviation (0.949). This result copes with the

finding of Abdulqader (2019) in his study that strategic planning contributes to accurately identifying the needs of municipalities.

The researcher believes this reflects that the participants are part of the community; therefore, their ability to determine the community needs is greater than their ability to analyze the surrounding risks, which requires advanced procedures and techniques besides high analytical skills.

To answer the study question: "What is the level of participation in deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality?" The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.6).

Table 4.6

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree	Rank
Ranking the priorities regarding the actual needs of the citizens.	3.34	1.043	Moderate	1
Setting up the developmental objectives of the municipality.	3.31	.910	Moderate	2
Developing the developmental objectives of the municipality.	3.25	.954	Moderate	4
Building the activities related to the strategic plan.	3.26	.937	Moderate	3
Selecting the projects of the strategic plan.	3.21	.903	Moderate	5
Phase 3	3.29	.825	Moderate	

Table (4.6), shows that the "level of participation in deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality" is moderate (3.29) with a low deviation of (0.825). It is clear that participants' engagement in "ranking the priorities of the actual needs of the citizens" is higher than their engagement in "selecting the projects of the strategic plan." However, the respondents' highest item rank is "ranking the priorities regarding the actual needs of the citizens," with a participation degree of (3.34) and moderate deviation (1.043). Whereas the respondents' lowest item rank is "Selecting the projects of the strategic plan," with a participation degree of (3.21) and a low

deviation of (0.903). This result corresponded with Al-Khayat (2020), who concluded in his study that active engagement of the locals in developing the strategic plans facilitates determining the relevant projects and prioritizing them in relevance to the community needs.

The researcher believes this result reflects that the participants are initially part of the community; therefore, their ability to determine and prioritize the community needs will definitely be greater than their ability to select the relevant projects for the strategy. However, selecting the relevant projects requires technical experience and knowledge shared by some participants' qualifications and experiences. Consequently, their level of participation will vary accordingly.

To answer the study question: "What is the level of participation in implementing the developmental activities and projects?" The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.7).

Table 4.7

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree	Rank
Implementing the developmental strategy plan.	3.26	.886	Moderate	1
Implementing the agreed upon activities of the strategic plan.	3.14	.918	Moderate	3
Implementing the agreed upon projects of the strategic plan	3.14	.897	Moderate	2
Phase 4	3.17	.827	Moderate	

Table (4.7), shows that the "level of participation in implementing the developmental activities and projects" is moderate (3.17) with a low deviation (0.82722). The respondents' highest item rank is "implementing the developmental strategy plan," with a participation degree of (3.26) with a low deviation (0.866). Whereas the respondents' lowest item is "implementing the agreed upon activities of the strategic plan," with a participation degree of (3.14) and low deviation (0.918). This

result comes with Al-Khayat (2020), who concluded in his study that the active engagement of the locals in developing the strategic plans ensures locals' active participation in implementing these projects.

The researcher believes this result suggests that participants' commitment and engagement in implementing the plan are higher than their commitment and engagement in certain activities or projects. Further, this also indicates that participants' role in the implementation is either task-based or supervisory since they all have their jobs elsewhere.

To answer the study question: "What is the level of participation in monitoring and evaluating the developmental activities and projects?" The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.8).

Table 4.8

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree	Rank
The regular monitoring of the strategic plan implementation.	3.14	0.995	Moderate	2
The regular evaluation of the strategic plan implementation in regard to the key performance indicators for each phase of the strategic plan implementation.	3.15	0.951	Moderate	1
Monitoring the implementations of the strategic plan outputs.	3.06	.984	Moderate	3
The regular meeting with the council member in order to follow the satisfaction of implementing the strategic plan.	3.03	1.049	Moderate	4
Phase 5	3.09	.872	Moderate	

Table (4.8) shows that the "level of participation in monitoring and evaluating the developmental activities and projects" is moderate (3.094) with a low deviation (0.872). The respondents' highest item rank is "the regular evaluation of the strategic plan implementation regarding the key performance indicators for each phase of the strategic plan implementation," with a participation degree of (3.15) and low deviation (0.951). At the same time, the respondents' lowest rank item is "the regular meeting

with the council member in order to follow the satisfaction of implementing the strategic plan," with a participation degree of (3.03) and moderate deviation (1.049). This result comes with Al Shantaf (2015), who concluded in his study; that there is moderate agreement among the clients in their level of participation in the annual evaluation of the strategic plan.

The researcher believes people's willingness to participate in evaluation sessions with known and approved key performance indicators is more than their willingness to participate in sessions with unknown outcomes. However, people's satisfaction evaluation is not an easy task and requires significant efforts beyond most participants' abilities; therefore, the participation rate will eventually be less.

To answer the study question: "What is the level of participation in sustaining the agreed upon developmental projects?" The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.9).

Table 4.9

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree	Rank
Planning the mitigation strategy for the new changes and emergencies.	3.30	.938	Moderate	1
Mobilizing and advocating the locals to sustain the developmental plans.	3.03	.947	Moderate	4
Dismantling the impediments that would stand against implementing the strategic plan activities and projects.	3.05	1.066	Moderate	3
Updating the short-term objectives to ensure the suitability of the plan to the emergence of the new circumstances	3.11	.896	Moderate	2
Phase 6	3.12	.817	Moderate	

Table (4.9) shows that the "level of participation in sustaining the agreed upon developmental projects" is moderate (3.12) with a low deviation (0.817). The respondent's highest item rank is "planning the mitigation strategy for new changes and emergencies," with a participation degree of (3.30) and a low deviation (0.938). Whereas the respondent's lowest item rank is "mobilizing and advocating the locals to

sustain the development plans," with a participation rate of (3.03) and a low deviation (0.947).

The researcher believes the variance in the level of participation between “planning the mitigation strategy” and “mobilizing and advocating locals” is because the planning team is more concerned with the planning side of the strategy. The mobilizing effort is a part of the implementation phase that falls under the duties of the implementation team.

To answer the study question: “What is the level of participation in approving the final version of the strategic plan?” The mean and the standard deviation have been calculated as shown in table (4.3).

Table 4.10

Items	Mean	S.D	Degree	Rank
Revising the strategic plan before its final approval.	3.32	.912	Moderate	1
Editing the strategic plan before its final approval.	3.18	.894	Moderate	3
Approving the strategic plan.	3.28	.973	Moderate	2
Mobilizing the resources to implement the strategic plan.	3.07	.988	Moderate	4
Phase 7	3.21	.809	Moderate	

Table (4.10), shows that the "level of participation in approving the final version of the strategic plan" is moderate (3.21) with a low standard deviation (0.8097). The respondents' highest item rank is "revising the strategic plan for final approval," with a participation degree of (3.32) and a low deviation (0.912). Whereas the respondent's lowest item rank is "mobilizing the resources for implementing the strategic plan," with a participation degree of (3.07) and a low deviation (0.988).

The researcher believes participants actively participated in revising the plan's final version to ensure the adoption of their inputs in the final version, as this part falls

under their duties as a planning team. Mobilizing the resources for implementing the strategic plan is separate from their duties while developing the strategy. It also depends on the availability of funds to actualize the desired outcomes. However, most of the planning team members are municipality employees who may participate in implementing the strategy and consequently in mobilizing the resources in later stages.

4.3 Testing Hypothesis

H1.1: There is a significant difference in participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to gender.

Table (4.11) The independent t-test results show a significant difference in participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to gender.

Table 4.11

Phases	Gender	N	Mean	Std. deviation	T-value	Sig.
Phase 1	Male	75	3.3511	.85405	1.024	.308
	Female	34	3.1667	.90732		
Phase 2	Male	75	3.3304	.71169	.441	.660
	Female	34	3.2647	.73957		
Phase 3	Male	75	3.3360	.83255	.858	.393
	Female	33	3.1879	.81231		
Phase 4	Male	75	3.1689	.86364	-.158	.875
	Female	34	3.1961	.75263		
Phase 5	Male	75	3.0800	.86716	-.249	.804
	Female	34	3.1250	.89453		
Phase 6	Male	75	3.1000	.82302	-.408	.684
	Female	34	3.1691	.81352		
Phase 7	Male	75	3.1733	.81474	-.808	.421
	Female	34	3.3088	.80260		
PSP	Male	75	3.2383	.67365	.171	.865
	Female	33	3.2140	.69646		

The first alternative hypothesis is to explore the significant difference at a 95% level of confidence in the participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives in Palestine.

The significant T values for all phases are 1) developing the vision, mission, and values is (T=1.024, sig.= .308). 2) analyzing the current situation of the municipality is (T=0.441, sig.= 0.660). 3) deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality is (T=0.858, sig.= 0.393). 4) implementing the developmental activities and projects is (T= -0.158, sig.= 0.875). 5) monitoring and evaluating developmental activities and projects is (T= -0.249, sig.= 0.804). 6) sustaining the agreed upon developmental projects is (T= -0.408, sig.= 0.684).and 7) approving the final version of the strategic plan is (T=-0.808, sig.= 0.421) and for the total value of participatory strategic planning is (T=-0.171, sig.=0 .865). Since the T Value is more than 0.05, these results do not support the alternative hypothesis of all the phases and the participatory strategic planning included above due to gender. This result means there is no significant difference in the Participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to gender. This result indicates that both male and female share the same qualification, experience, motivation and knowledge regarding the strategic planning. Like Mohammad (2019), his study found no significant differences in the effectiveness of participatory strategic planning due to gender. Also, Almohtaseb (2016) found that there are no significant differences in the degree of influence of public participation at the local level on the municipality or the citizen due to gender. Further, Skeik (2012) shows no significant differences regarding the role of community participation in urban development due to gender. On the other hand, Abdulqader (2019), in his study, stated that there is a significant

difference between the reality of strategic planning and the service's level of quality due to gender.

H1.2: There is a significant difference in the participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to (age, educational level, years of experience, job title, and employer).

Table (4.12) Group Statistics and One-way ANOVA test for the Demographic Variables (*Qualification, age, Occupation, and affiliation*).

Dimension Phases	Qualification		Age		Occupation		Affiliation	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
Phase 1	.138	.937	.424	.736	.883	.477	.132	.985
Phase 2	.281	.839	.335	.800	1.335	.262	.681	.639
Phase 3	.076	.973	.051	.985	1.131	.346	.405	.844
Phase 4	.403	.751	.113	.953	1.473	.216	.887	.493
Phase 5	.688	.561	.903	.442	2.386	.056	.468	.799
Phase 6	.502	.682	1.492	.221	1.376	.247	.120	.988
Phase 7	1.197	.315	.552	.648	1.697	.156	.302	.911
PSP	.121	.948	.486	.693	1.575	.187	.307	.908

Table (4.12) displays that One-Way Anova conducted the second alternative hypothesis to explore the significant difference at a 95% level of confidence in the participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives in Palestine.

The significant F values for all phases which are 1) developing the vision, mission, and values, 2) analyzing the current situation of the municipality, 3) deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality, 4) implementing the developmental activities and projects, 5) monitoring and evaluating developmental activities and projects, 6) sustaining the agreed upon developmental projects and 7)

approving the final version of the strategic plan and the total value of participatory strategic planning is more than 0.05, this does not support the alternative hypothesis of all the phases and the participatory strategic planning included above due to qualification, age, occupation, and affiliation.

This result means there is no significant difference in the participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to qualification, age, occupation, and affiliation. Mohammad (2019) found that there are no significant differences in the effectiveness of participatory strategic planning due to age and occupation. Also, Almohtaseb (2016) found no significant differences in the degree of influence of public participation at the local level on the municipality or the citizen due to age and qualification. Further, Skeik (2012) found no significant differences regarding the role of community participation in urban development due to age and occupation. Mohammad (2019) found no significant differences in the effectiveness of participatory strategic planning due to age and occupation in his study. Furthermore, Abdulqader (2019) found that there is no significant difference between the reality of strategic planning and the service's level of quality due to age and qualifications.

On the other hand, Mohammad (2019) found significant differences in the effectiveness of participatory strategic planning due to the qualification. Also, Al Shantaf (2015) concluded in his study that there are significant differences between municipality employees and municipality members and clients regarding the level of the application of participatory strategic planning toward the municipality members.

The researcher believes that this result reveals that all the strategic planning development team participants, regardless of their gender, occupation, age, occupation, and affiliation, share almost the same level of knowledge and experience in strategic planning. Furthermore, the development of the strategic plan is led by a consultancy

firm assigned by the municipality, which adds some implications to the participation process. However, the participation procedures imposed by the firm limit participants' interventions and inputs as they are subject to prior permission. In addition, the large number of participants and time limits impact the quality of participation. However, some interventions based on the participant's experience and background may need more time to be presented and discussed.

CHAPTER FIVE

Conclusions and Recommendations

This chapter shows the findings of this study. It provides recommendations to enhance the reality of participatory strategic planning in Palestinian municipalities. Also, it adds recommendations for future studies where they can cover a new or a narrower area of this topic.

5.1 Conclusion

This study aimed to understand the reality of strategic planning in Palestinian municipalities by realizing the level of participation in all phases of strategic planning development.

The results showed a moderate level of participation in all phases of the strategic plan development following the adopted model in this study which is 1) developing the vision, mission, and values, 2) analyzing the current situation of the municipality, 3) deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality, 4) implementing the developmental activities and projects, 5) monitoring and evaluating developmental activities and projects, 6) sustaining the agreed upon developmental projects and 7) approving the final version of the strategic plan.

Table 5.1: Summary of the Results of Hypothesis

Number of Hypothesis	Hypothesis	Test	Result
H1.1	There is a significant difference in participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to gender.	T-test	Rejected
H1.2	There is a significant difference in the participatory strategic planning and its phases of the local community representatives due to (age, educational level, years of experience, job title, and employer).	One-Way Anova	Rejected

5.2 Recommendations

In this section, the researcher provides some recommendations for the municipalities in Palestine to help them improve the reality of participatory strategic planning. These suggestions are developed from data analysis results in chapter four and are mainly based on the level of participation impact on the reality of participatory strategic planning. Accordingly, below are the recommendations:

5.2.1 Recommendations for the Municipality Members

1. **Revising and updating the methodology of planning:** To be followed by the municipality so as to ensure effective participation by all employee and council member.
2. **Using multiple channels for communication:** Use various communication channels, such as social media, email, newsletters, and town hall meetings, to reach out to the community and encourage their participation in strategic planning. This will help to ensure that as many people as possible are aware of the planning process and can provide their input.
3. **Making the process accessible:** Make sure that the process of providing input is accessible to everyone, regardless of their age, background, or physical abilities. This could include providing translation services, making documents available in different formats, and holding meetings in accessible locations.
4. **Fostering a welcoming environment:** Create an atmosphere that is welcoming and inclusive, and encourage all members of the community to share their ideas and perspectives. Make it clear that all input is valued and that everyone's voice will be heard.
5. **Providing opportunities for collaboration:** Offer opportunities for people to work together on strategic planning, such as through community workshops or

focus groups. This can help to build relationships between community members and foster a sense of ownership over the planning process.

6. **Showing the impact of community input:** Communicate to the community how their input has been used in the strategic planning process and how it has influenced decisions. This can help to build trust and engagement in future planning processes.
7. **Being transparent and accountable:** Ensure that the planning process is transparent and that progress is communicated regularly to the community. This can help to build trust and encourage ongoing participation in the planning process.
8. **Making it fun:** Council members can make the strategic planning process more engaging by incorporating fun activities, such as games or brainstorming sessions. This can help to generate enthusiasm and increase participation.
9. **Being responsive:** Finally, council members need to be responsive to stakeholders' feedback and demonstrate that their input is valued. This can help to build trust and encourage continued participation in the strategic planning process.
10. **Developing an electronic participation tool:** To guarantee effective participation, documentation, and evaluation

5.2.2 Recommendations for the Municipality Employees

1. **Engaging employees early:** Involve employees in the strategic planning process as early as possible to get their input and buy-in. This can help to ensure that the plan is practical and achievable, and that employees feel invested in its success.

2. **Providing training and resources:** Provide employees with the necessary training and resources to understand the strategic planning process and their role in it. This can help to build their confidence and enable them to contribute effectively.
3. **Encouraging cross-functional collaboration:** Encourage employees from different departments to work together on strategic planning. This can help to break down silos, foster a culture of collaboration, and ensure that the plan reflects the needs of the whole organization.
4. **Communicating clearly:** Communicate the purpose and goals of the strategic plan clearly to employees. This can help them to understand how their work contributes to the overall objectives and motivate them to participate in the planning process.
5. **Fostering a culture of innovation:** Encourage employees to think creatively and challenge assumptions during the strategic planning process. This can help to generate new ideas and approaches that may not have been considered otherwise.
6. **Recognizing and rewarding participation:** Recognize and reward employees who participate actively in the strategic planning process. This can help to build morale, create a sense of ownership, and encourage ongoing engagement in the planning process.
7. **Evaluating and adjusting:** Evaluate the success of the strategic planning process and adjust as necessary. Solicit feedback from employees and use it to improve the planning process in the future. This can help to build trust and engagement among employees and ensure the ongoing success of the organization.

5.2.3 Recommendations for the Local Community Representatives

1. **Encouraging public engagement** by making sure that the municipality reaches out to the community and invites them to participate in the process of:
 - ▶ Developing the vision, mission and values.
 - ▶ Analyzing the current situation.
 - ▶ Deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality.
 - ▶ Implementing the developmental activities and projects.
 - ▶ Monitoring and evaluating developmental activities and projects.
 - ▶ Sustaining the agreed upon developmental projects.
 - ▶ Approving the final version of the strategic plan.
2. **Providing educational materials:** Create educational materials that explain the strategic planning process and the goals of the plan. This can help community stakeholders better understand the process and feel more comfortable participating.
3. **Involving participants:** in preparing and designing of the planning process in order to ensure effective engagement for all the stakeholders.
4. **Using plain language:** Use plain language when communicating about the planning process to ensure that community stakeholders of all education levels can understand and participate.
5. **Making meetings accessible:** Hold public meetings at convenient times and locations, and provide accommodations such as translation services or sign language interpreters to make them accessible to everyone.
6. **Using diverse methods of engagement:** Use a range of methods to engage community stakeholders in the planning process, such as focus groups,

workshops, and online surveys. This can help to ensure that a wide range of perspectives are considered.

7. **Providing incentives:** Consider providing incentives for community stakeholders to participate in the planning process, such as raffles or prizes. This can encourage more people to participate and make the process more fun.
8. **Being open to feedback:** Be open to feedback and suggestions from the community, even if they challenge existing assumptions or plans. This can help to ensure that the plan is comprehensive and reflects the needs of the community.
9. **Providing opportunities for feedback:** Provide multiple opportunities for community members to provide feedback, such as surveys, public meetings, and online forums. This can help to ensure that a wide range of perspectives are considered during the planning process.
10. **Following up and following through:** Follow up with community stakeholders after the planning process is complete and provide updates on the progress made. This can help to ensure that the community remains engaged and invested in the success of the plan.
11. **Engaging with community stakeholders:** Reach out to community stakeholders, such as business owners, community leaders, and non-profit organizations, and invite them to participate in the strategic planning process. This can help to ensure that the plan reflects the needs and priorities of the community.
12. **Celebrating successes:** Celebrate successes along the way, such as successful community meetings or achieving milestones in the planning process. This can help to build momentum and keep community stakeholders engaged.

5.3 Limitations

A few limitations faced this study during the whole process. At first, the lack of and inappropriate documentation of the strategic planning sessions by the municipality and the consultancy firm, including the attendance sheets hindered the participants' reachability and missed some vital information. Secondly, the sample was nonrandom. At last, there needed to be more secondary data sources as many essential articles were costly.

5.4 Future Studies

In the future, researchers could study the process of developing the strategies by municipalities. For example, to what extent does the local participant engagement impact the strategic planning process outcomes at the municipalities regarding the adopted strategic planning model of this study? Also, they could identify issues hindering the effective development of strategic planning process. Furthermore, researchers could conduct an evaluative study for Palestinian municipalities adopted strategic planning model.

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Appendix (A): Questionnaire English Version



الجامعة العربية الأمريكية
ARAB AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

The reality of the participatory strategic planning in the Palestinian municipalities;

Hebron municipality as a case.

This study aims to explore the reality of the participatory strategic planning in the Palestinian municipalities; Hebron municipality as a case. In order to complete the requirements for obtaining a master degree in Strategic Planning and Fundraising at Arab American University. The data extracted from the survey will be used for scientific research purposes only.

Researcher: Samir Hilmi Nassar Fawar'a

Supervisor: Dr. Ra'ed Ali Iriqat

Section One

Personal information:

1.1 Gender: Male Female

1.2 Qualifications:

Secondary or less Diploma Bachelor Higher Studies

1.3 Age: 30 or less 30-39 40-49 50 or more

1.4 Occupation:

Public Sector Employee Private Sector Employee Civil Sector Employee

Municipality Employee Freelancer

1.5 Are you a council Member? Yes No

1.6 Affiliation:

Public Sector Employee Private Sector Employee Civil Sector Employee
Municipality Employee Citizen Council Member

Section two:

**Community participation in the strategic planning development for the
municipality**

Please answer all the following items carefully, honestly, and objectively

Participatory strategic planning: is the engagement of stakeholders in developing the desired plans, which ensures a comprehensive strategic planning and its reachability to its goals						
Phase one: Participation in developing the vision, mission and values						
Local Community representatives participate in:						
No.	Item	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
2.1	Developing a clear vision for the municipality					
2.2	Deciding on a clear mission for the municipality					
2.3	Selecting the municipality values					
Phase two: Participation in analyzing the current situation of the municipality						
Local Community representatives participate in:						
3.1	Determining the actual issues for the local citizens.					
3.2	Determining the local community needs					
3.3	Determining the sources of the internal strengths of the municipality.					

3.4	Determining the sources of the internal weaknesses of the municipality.					
3.5	Determining the available resources when developing the municipality strategy.					
3.6	Determining the available capabilities while developing the strategic plan for the council.					
3.7	Determining the opportunities in the external environment that can be utilized while implementing its strategy					
3.8	Determining the threats in the external environment that encounter the implementation of the strategic plan.					
3.9	Analyzing the political, economic, technological, legal, environmental, and social circumstances.					
Phase three: Participation in deciding on the activities and the strategic objective for the municipality						
Local Community representatives participate in:						
4.1	Ranking the priorities regarding the actual needs of the citizens.					
4.2	Setting up the developmental objectives of the municipality.					
4.3	Developing the developmental objectives of the municipality					
4.4	Building the activities related to the strategic plan					
4.5	Selecting the projects of the strategic plan.					

Phase four: Participation in implementing the developmental activities and projects

Local Community representatives participate in:

5.1	Implementing the developmental strategy plan.					
5.2	Implementing the agreed upon activities of the strategic plan					
5.3	Implementing the agreed upon projects of the strategic plan					

Phase Five: Participation in monitoring and evaluating the developmental activities and projects

Local Community representatives participate in:

6.1	The regular monitoring of the strategic plan implementation.					
6.2	The regular evaluation of the strategic plan implementation in regard to the key performance indicators for each phase of the strategic plan implementation					
6.3	Monitoring the implementations of the strategic plan outputs.					
6.4	The regular meeting with the council member in order to follow the satisfaction of implementing the strategic plan					

Phase six: Participation in sustaining the agreed upon developmental projects

Local Community representatives participate in:

7.1	Planning the mitigation strategy for the new changes and emergencies.					
7.2	Mobilizing and advocating the locals to sustain the developmental plans.					
7.3	Dismantling the impediments that would stand against implementing the strategic plan activities and projects.					
7.4	Updating the short-term objectives to ensure the suitability of the plan to the emergence of the new circumstances					
Phase seven: participation in approving the final version of the strategic plan						
Local Community representatives participate in:						
8.1	Revising the strategic plan before its final approval.					
8.2	Editing the strategic plan before its final approval.					
8.3	Approving the strategic plan.					
8.4	Mobilizing the resources to implement the strategic plan.					

Thank you for your Cooperation

Appendix (B): Questionnaire Arabic Version



الجامعة العربية الأمريكية
ARAB AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

أخي الكريم/ أختي الكريمة،

تحية طيبة وبعد،

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى التعرف على واقع التخطيط الاستراتيجي التشاركي في البلديات الفلسطينية، بلدية الخليل كحالة وذلك استكمالاً لمتطلبات برنامج الماجستير في التخطيط الاستراتيجي وتجديد الأموال - الجامعة العربية الأمريكية. علماً بأن جميع البيانات المستخلصة من استمارة الدراسة سوف تستخدم لأغراض البحث العلمي فقط، وعليه، يرجى من حضرتكم التكرم بتقديم الإجابات وفقاً لأرائكم وتجربتكم الشخصية بكل صدق وموضوعية.

وتفضلوا بقبول فائق الاحترام والتقدير

الباحث: سمير حلمي نصار فوارعة

اشراف: د. راند علي عريقات

(القسم الأول: معلومات عامة (يرجى التكرم بالإجابة عن جميع الاسئلة التالية بتأني وصدق وموضوعية)

A1	الجنس	<input type="checkbox"/> ذكر	<input type="checkbox"/> انثى
A2	المؤهل العلمي	<input type="checkbox"/> ثانوية فأقل	<input type="checkbox"/> دبلوم
		<input type="checkbox"/> كالوريوس	<input type="checkbox"/> دراسات عليا
A3	الفئة العمرية	<input type="checkbox"/> أقل من 30 عام	<input type="checkbox"/> 30-39 عام
		<input type="checkbox"/> 40 - 49 عام	<input type="checkbox"/> 50 عام فأكثر
A4	المهنة	<input type="checkbox"/> موظف قطاع عام	<input type="checkbox"/> موظف قطاع اهلي
		<input type="checkbox"/> موظف قطاع خاص	<input type="checkbox"/> موظف بلدية
		<input type="checkbox"/> عمال حرة	
A5	هل انت عضو في المجلس البلدي؟	<input type="checkbox"/> نعم	<input type="checkbox"/> لا

شاركت في عملية التخطيط <input type="checkbox"/> مؤسسة قطاع عام <input type="checkbox"/> مؤسسة قطاع اهلي <input type="checkbox"/> الاستراتيجي بصفتي ممثل لـ: <input type="checkbox"/> مؤسسة او شركة قطاع خاص <input type="checkbox"/> عضو مجلس بلدي <input type="checkbox"/> موظف في البلدية <input type="checkbox"/> شاركت بصفتي مواطن يسكن في المدينة	A6
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(يرجى التكرم بالإجابة عن جميع الاسئلة التالية بتأني وصدق وموضوعية)

<p>القسم الثاني: مشاركة المجتمع المحلي في مراحل بناء الخطط الاستراتيجية للبلدية. التخطيط الاستراتيجي التشاركي هو مشاركة الأطراف ذات العلاقة في وضع الخطط المنشودة الامر الذي يساعد على ضمان شمولية التخطيط ووصله الى أهدافه بسهولة أكبر. المرحلة الأولى: المشاركة في صياغة الرؤية والرسالة والقيم</p>						
يشارك ممثلو المجتمع المحلي في: -						
الرقم	العبارة	أوافق بشدة	أوافق	محايد	لا أوافق بشدة	لا أوافق بشدة
2.1	صياغة واضحة لرؤية البلدية					
2.2	تحديد رسالة واضحة للبلدية					
2.3	تحديد القيم الخاصة بالبلدية					
<p>المرحلة الثانية: المشاركة في تحليل الوضع الراهن للبلدية</p>						
يشارك ممثلو المجتمع المحلي في: -						
3.1	تحديد المشكلات الفعلية للسكان المحليين					
3.2	تحديد وصياغة احتياجات المجتمع البلدي					
3.3	تحديد مصادر القوة الداخلية في البلدية					
3.4	تحديد نقاط الضعف الداخلية في البلدية					
3.5	تحديد الموارد المتاحة عند القيام بعملية التخطيط الاستراتيجي للبلدية					
3.6	تحديد الإمكانيات المتاحة عند القيام بعملية التخطيط الاستراتيجي للبلدية					

				3.7 تحديد الفرص في البيئة الخارجية الممكن استغلالها اثناء تنفيذ الخطة الاستراتيجية
				3.8 تحديد التهديدات في البيئة الخارجية الممكن مواجهتها خلال تنفيذ الخطة الاستراتيجية
				3.9 تحليل الظروف السياسية والاقتصادية والتكنولوجية والقانونية والبيئية والاجتماعية
المرحلة الثالثة: المشاركة في وضع الأنشطة والاهداف الاستراتيجية للبلدية				
يشارك ممثلو المجتمع المحلي في:-				
				4.1 ترتيب الأولويات وفقا لحاجة السكان
				4.2 تحديد الأهداف التنموية الخاصة بالبلدية
				4.3 صياغة الأهداف التنموية الخاصة بالبلدية
				4.4 تحديد الأنشطة الخاصة بالخطة الاستراتيجية
				4.5 تحديد المشاريع الخاصة بالخطة الاستراتيجية
المرحلة الرابعة: المشاركة في تنفيذ الأنشطة والمشاريع التنموية				
يشارك ممثلو المجتمع المحلي في:-				
				5.1 تنفيذ الخطة التنموية الاستراتيجية
				5.2 تنفيذ الأنشطة المقررة في الخطة الاستراتيجية
				5.3 تنفيذ المشاريع المقررة في الخطة الاستراتيجية
المرحلة الخامسة: المشاركة في متابعة وتقييم الأنشطة والمشاريع التنموية				
يشارك ممثلو المجتمع المحلي في:-				
				6.1 عملية متابعة دورية لتنفيذ الخطة
				6.2 عملية تقييم دورية لتنفيذ الخطة وفقا لمؤشرات القياس لكل مرحلة من مراحل تنفيذ الخطة الاستراتيجية
				6.3 متابعة تنفيذ مخرجات الخطة الاستراتيجية
				6.4 اللقاءات الدورية مع أعضاء المجلس البلدي لمتابعة الرضا عن تنفيذ الخطة الاستراتيجية

المرحلة السادسة: المشاركة في ضمان استدامة المشاريع التنموية المنفذة والمقررة في الخطة التنفيذية				
يشارك ممثلو المجتمع المحلي في: -				
				7.1 تخطيط الاستجابة للظروف والمتغيرات الجديدة او الطارئة
				7.2 حشد التأييد والمناصرة لتسهيل عملية استدامة الخطة التنموية
				7.3 تدليل العقبات امام تنفيذ أنشطة ومشاريع الخطة الاستراتيجية
				7.4 تحديث الأهداف قصيرة المدى لضمان ملائمة الخطة للظروف الطارئة
المشاركة في اعتماد ومصادقة الخطة بصورتها النهائية				
يشارك ممثلو المجتمع المحلي في: -				
				8.1 مراجعة الخطة الإستراتيجية النهائية قبل اعتمادها
				8.2 تعديل الخطة الاستراتيجية بصورتها النهائية قبل اعتمادها
				8.3 المصادقة على الخطة الاستراتيجية
				8.4 حشد الموارد لتنفيذ الخطة الاستراتيجية

شكرا لحسن تعاونكم

Appendix (C): Evaluators List

Name	Academic Rank	Affiliation
Dr. Ahmad Hirzallah	Assistant Professor	Al-Quds University
Dr. Atieh Musleh	Associate Professor	Al-Quds Open University
Dr. Emad Wald-Ali	Assistant Professor	AAUP
Dr. Khalid Atieh	Assistant Professor	AAUP
Dr. Majeed Mansour	Associate Professor	AAUP
Dr. Shaher Obaid	Assistant Professor	Al-Quds Open University

الملخص

هدفت الدراسة الى بيان واقع التخطيط الاستراتيجي التشاركي في البلديات الفلسطينية، بلدية الخليل كحالة دراسية. من حيث المنهجية، اتبع هذا البحث نهجًا كميًا يعتمد على جمع البيانات من خلال الاستبيانات والتقارير الرسمية السابقة والبيانات في الإجابة على الأسئلة واختبار الفرضية. تم تعريف مجتمع الدراسة على أنه جميع المشاركين في عملية التخطيط الاستراتيجي لبلدية الخليل من أعضاء مجلس بلدي وموظفي البلدية وممثلي المجتمع المحلي والبالغ عددهم ما يقارب 300 مشارك، وتم اختيار عينة غير عشوائية من نوع العينة الملائمة حيث بلغت 169 مشارك وتم استخدام الاستبانة كأداة رئيسية لجمع البيانات. توصلت الدراسة الى عدد من النتائج اهمها وجود درجة مشاركة متوسطة في عملية التخطيط الاستراتيجي بكافة مراحلها. وقدمت الدراسة توصيات أبرزها ضرورة مراجعة وتحديث المنهجية المتبعة من قبل البلديات الفلسطينية من اجل ضمان مشاركة أكثر فاعلية، كذلك جعلها أكثر تفاعلية وجذابة للمشاركين. واجهت الدراسة عددا من المعوقات كان أبرزها عدم كفاية الية التوثيق لعملية التخطيط الاستراتيجي التي أدت الى عدم المقدرة للوصول الى كافة المشاركين في عملية التخطيط الاستراتيجي للبلدية بالإضافة الى عدم الوصول الى بعض المعلومات ذات القيمة.