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THE IMPACT OF HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ON STRATEGIC PLANNING IN THE MUNICIPALITIES OF HEBRON GOVERNORATE

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ABSTRACT

This study assessed participants' views regarding human resource management (HRM) practices and the level of strategic planning practiced by municipalities in the Hebron Governorate, with special emphasis on Hebron City Municipality. A quantitative approach was used, and a structured questionnaire consisting of 20 items – 10 items for HRM and 10 items for strategic planning – was distributed to employees of municipalities in the Hebron Governorate. The results indicated that the implementation of human resource management practices was at a moderate to high level ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.87$, $P = 69.64\%$), while the level of strategic planning was relatively high ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.81$, $P = 70.46\%$). Since a strong positive correlation was found ($r = 0.914$, $p < 0.001$), this study suggests that improving HRM practices can better support strategic planning in municipal institutions. The paper concludes with recommendations and limitations.

KEYWORDS: Human Resources Management, Strategic Planning, Municipalities of Hebron Governorate.

1. INTRODUCTION

Strategic Human Resource Management (HRM) is one of the most important factors that enhance organizations' ability to adapt and achieve long-term strategic objectives, especially in light of the rapid changes organizations are currently experiencing at the local and global levels. When human resources are viewed as an important competitive factor, there is significant potential to enhance organizational performance, particularly when HR is integrated with the organization's strategic planning through the effective alignment of HR functions with the business plan (Sayyad, 2017; Emerald, 2018).

In the public sector, particularly at the municipal level, the organizational capacity to implement SHRM practices is further complicated by the influence of intertwined political, economic, and legal factors (Emerald, 2023; Emerald, 2018). However, research indicates that practices such as competency development and employee empowerment have a positive impact on the successful implementation of strategic plans, while also increasing employee satisfaction (Emerald, 2018; Emerald, 2023).

Although some research has been conducted in several municipalities in the northern West Bank on strategic planning and participatory practices, research in the Palestinian context remains limited (Fawaraa, 2023). Research conducted in Jenin Municipality showed that the extent and quality of strategic planning were directly related to the improvement of municipal services provided (Kharroub & Mansour, 2019). In addition, recent examinations of strategic planning in Palestinian ministries revealed that strategic planning in areas such as human resource management is still in its infancy, as demonstrated by gaps in incentive and reward systems (Odeh, 2020).

Despite the contributions of these studies, it is evident that a clear knowledge gap exists regarding the actual relationship between human resource management practices and strategic planning within Palestinian municipalities, especially those in the Hebron Governorate. Therefore, the current study aims to investigate this relationship among a sample of municipalities in the Hebron Governorate, contribute to knowledge in this field, and provide recommendations that may help enhance institutional performance and improve local governance (Sayyad, 2017; Fawaraa, 2023).

1.1. The problem of study

Human resource management is one of the managerial functions that has a direct impact on

organizational performance and the achievement of organizations' strategic goals (Boxall & Purcell, 2016). Although strategic planning establishes the path for an organization's growth and development, weaknesses may arise in achieving organizational goals if human resource management is not effectively integrated into the strategic planning process (Wright, Dunford, & Snell, 2001). In the local government sector, organizations encounter many challenges, including insufficient strategic planning and inadequate human resource management practices, which negatively affect the quality of services provided to citizens (Boyne, 2002). In Palestine, municipalities, particularly those in the Hebron Governorate, face challenges in employing human resource management practices in a way that supports strategic planning, given the political, economic, and social conditions in the region (Abu Baker & Al-Haj, 2019).

Local studies have shown that the disconnect between human resource management and strategic planning leads to poor administrative practices and limits municipalities' ability to respond to challenges and meet residents' aspirations (Barakat, 2021). The absence of an effective motivation system, continuous training, and impartial evaluation impedes the development of human competencies and consequently affects the quality of strategic planning and its implementation (Al-Shobaki, 2019).

Therefore, it is important to study the impact of human resource management practices on strategic planning in municipalities in the Hebron Governorate. Such a study can highlight the issue in depth and provide effective recommendations that enhance institutional performance and improve municipal service delivery.

1.2. Main Question:

Is there a statistically significant relationship between human resource management practices and the level of strategic planning in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate ?

1.2.1. Sub-questions:

1. What is the level of implementation of human resource management practices in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate?
2. What is the level of implementation of strategic planning in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate?

1.3. Objectives of the Study

1. To identify the reality of human resource management practices in the municipalities of

Hebron Governorate.

2. To identify the level of implementation of strategic planning in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate.
3. To identify the relationship between human resource management and strategic planning in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate.

1.4. Importance of the Study

Theoretical Significance:

This study contributes to enriching the scientific literature related to human resource management and strategic planning by identifying the relationship between them in the municipal sector. Human resources have become a key factor in achieving the strategic goals of all organizations.

1.5. Applied Significance:

This study benefits officials in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate by helping them evaluate and improve the human resource management strategies currently being applied. It also helps identify how these strategies can be used to develop methods that integrate human resource management with strategic planning.

2. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The study by Jabbour and Santos (2008) aimed to identify the relationship between Strategic Human Resource Management, strategic planning, and organizational performance, as well as to identify the main contributions of human resource management to the development of sustainable organizations. The relationship between human resources and organizational sustainability, based on economic, social, and environmental performance, includes several important management-related dimensions, such as innovativeness, cultural diversity, and the environment. The authors incorporated aspects of the triple bottom line in constructing a model based on the strategic and centralized role of Human Resource Management. A questionnaire answered by employees and managers of private and public companies was used to collect data. The data were analyzed using linear regression. The findings indicated that strategic planning acts as an intermediary between human resource management practices and organizational performance because it enhances implementation effectiveness.

This article provides a conceptual model describing the pathways to employee engagement through four HRM practices: selection, socialization, performance management, and training. These practices create and maintain employee engagement

by shaping the organizational climate, job demands and resources, and psychological experiences at work. This effort included synthesizing two previously developed HR and engagement frameworks. It emphasizes the commitment organizations must make to embed engagement in regular HRM practices rather than relying solely on annual engagement surveys (Albrecht, Bakker, Gruman, Macey, & Saks, 2015). It also offers a set of practical recommendations for organizations on how to use their HR approach to foster engagement for competitive advantage. This study offers lessons for both theorists and practitioners.

Prior research has conceptualized pro-environmental behavior in the workplace within the construct of organizational citizenship behavior. Zhao and Zhang (2017) created a scale to measure this behavior. The purpose of this research was to address conceptual and psychometric issues related to this scale by: (a) conceptualizing organizational environmental citizenship behavior through a goal-based dominant approach, (b) creating and refining a new and more comprehensive measure of organizational environmental citizenship behavior, and (c) validating the measure through evidence of content, structural, convergent, discriminant, concurrent, synchronous, internal, and temporal validity and reliability. For this purpose, six studies were conducted ($n = 652$), which resulted in the development of a psychologically sound measure of organizational environmental citizenship behavior. Implications for theory and practice, as well as guidance for future research, were provided.

The study by Al-Siddiqi (2019) sought to examine the effects of strategic planning and human resource planning on organizations, particularly human resource management, which is among the first departments potentially affected by internal organizational changes, external changes, and individual-related changes. The study aimed to raise the level of effectiveness and efficiency of human performance, examine the human resource planning process, and investigate the available options in order to select the most appropriate strategy and accompanying programs that match the types of strategies developed at both the enterprise and business unit levels. The research showed compatibility between strategic planning and human resource planning in joint-stock companies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It also showed that this compatibility has an impact on employee performance and the profitability of joint-stock companies. The research suggests the need for strategic planning in joint-stock companies in Saudi

Arabia and in companies operating in emerging markets, as well as the development of human resource plans and strategies derived from such planning, especially since change in the business environment has become an essential requirement.

The research by Wiyono et al. (2025) aimed to understand the overall effects of environmental, social, and governance practices on employee performance and well-being within private higher education institutions in Bandung, West Java. To achieve this objective, Wiyono et al. used a quantitative approach based on the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling method, through which the relationships between constructs—such as environmental practices, social practices, governance practices, employee performance, and well-being—were analyzed. The study collected data from 270 respondents using stratified random sampling across 138 private higher education institutions and included participants from various management roles. The findings revealed that environmental practices positively affect employee performance and well-being, while social practices also contribute to improved performance and well-being. Governance practices were found to mediate and strengthen these effects. These findings highlight the importance of integrating sustainable practices into organizational strategy and their impact on employee outcomes through social practices. The study also emphasizes the need to improve employee and organizational outcomes by focusing on performance management and the evaluation of overall organizational results. This study differs from previous studies on sustainability engagement and employee engagement by analyzing the role of governance in private higher education institutions, particularly in Bandung.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Research Approach

The researcher chose to employ a quantitative research methodology, as it is appropriate for measuring the relationship between variables and fits the nature of the study instrument.

3.2. Study Population:

The study population consisted of all employees working in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate.

3.3. Study Sample:

The researcher selected a random sample of 1000 employees from municipalities in Hebron Governorate. The sample was selected from various municipalities and departments to ensure greater diversity and objectivity.

3.3. Study Instrument

The researcher used a structured questionnaire as the data collection tool developed for this study.

The structured questionnaire consisted of two main sections (domains):

- The first domain focused on the implementation of Human Resource Management (HRM) practices and consisted of 10 items.
- The second domain focused on strategic planning in the municipality and consisted of 10 items.

All items used a five-point Likert-type response format, ranging from (1) strongly disagree to (5) strongly agree.

3.4. Validity of the Instrument

A group of academics in human resource management and strategic planning reviewed the questionnaire to check its content validity. The reviewers agreed that the items were appropriate, understandable, and aligned with the intended purposes of the research.

3.5. Reliability of the Instrument

The reliability of the instrument was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, which achieved a value of 0.80. This demonstrates adequate internal consistency and reliability of the questionnaire.

3.6. Data Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Descriptive statistics were used to examine the levels of HRM practices and strategic planning, while inferential statistics were used to test the relationships between variables.

4. RESULTS

What is the level of implementation of human resource management practices in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate?

To answer this question, the mean, standard deviation, and percentage were calculated.

Table 1: shows the arithmetic mean (M), standard deviation (SD), and percentage (P) for the items related to Human Resource Management.

#	M	SD	P
The municipality applies clear and equitable criteria for recruiting new employees.	3.31	0.884	66.2%
The recruitment process is conducted in a professional and transparent manner.	3.51	0.893	70.2%
The municipality provides employees with supervised opportunities for continuous professional training.	3.55	0.968	71.0%
The results of performance evaluations are used to enhance employees' efficiency.	3.57	0.700	71.4%
The municipality encourages employees to develop their personal skills.	3.36	0.859	67.2%
The municipality offers financial incentives to employees based on performance standards.	3.44	0.925	68.8%
The municipality relies on moral appreciation to enhance motivation.	3.38	0.962	67.6%
Employees are involved in decision-making related to their tasks.	3.59	0.753	71.8%
The municipality has a regular and clear performance evaluation system.	3.45	0.833	69.0%
Management promotes a culture of teamwork and communication.	3.66	0.890	73.2%
Total	3.48	0.870	69.64%

The current results indicated that the overall level of HRM practice implementation in the sampled municipalities of Hebron Governorate was moderate to high ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.87$, $P = 69.64\%$). This indicates a generally positive application of HRM practices, particularly in the areas of teamwork and

communication.

What is the level of implementation of strategic planning in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate?

To answer this question, the mean, standard deviation, and percentage were calculated.

Table 2: shows the arithmetic mean, standard deviation, and percentage for the items related to strategic planning.

#	M	SD	P
The municipality has a clear and publicly announced vision for the future.	3.43	0.879	68.6%
The municipality has a clear mission that identifies its purpose.	3.49	0.835	69.8%
The municipality identifies measurable strategic objectives.	3.47	0.958	69.4%
The municipality involves different departments in developing strategic plans.	3.58	0.806	71.6%
The municipality considers internal and external circumstances when developing plans.	3.62	0.763	72.4%
Top management regularly follows up on the implementation of strategic plans.	3.52	0.847	70.4%
The municipality evaluates the extent to which goals are achieved within a defined time period.	3.58	0.741	71.6%
The municipality updates its strategic plan using field data.	3.59	0.780	71.8%
Strategic plans are linked to human resource planning.	3.40	0.804	68.0%
Performance evaluation results are used to improve the development of future plans.	3.55	0.657	71.0%
Total	3.52	0.810	70.46%

Regarding the level of strategic planning implementation, participants indicated a relatively high level of implementation ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.81$, $P = 70.46\%$). This reflects a degree of consistency in strategic planning within the municipalities, as well as the updating of the planning process based on field data.

Is there a statistically significant relationship between human resource management practices and the level of strategic planning in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate?

To answer this question, Pearson's correlation test was conducted.

Table 3: Pearson's Correlation Test between Human Resource Management Practices and the Level of Strategic Planning.

			human resources management practices	strategic planning
		Pearson Correlations	1	0.914

<i>Pearson Correlations</i>	<i>human resources management practices</i>	<i>Sig.</i>		<i>000.</i>
		<i>N</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>1000</i>
	<i>strategic planning</i>	<i>Pearson Correlations</i>	<i>0.914</i>	<i>1</i>
		<i>Sig.</i>	<i>000.</i>	
		<i>N</i>	<i>1000</i>	<i>1000</i>

To assess this relationship, the current study conducted Pearson's correlation test. As illustrated in Table 3, the Pearson correlation coefficient between human resource management practices and strategic planning was 0.914, indicating a very strong positive relationship. The significance value (Sig.) was 0.000, which is less than the standard alpha level of 0.05. Thus, the result was statistically significant, indicating that better implementation of human resource management practices is associated with higher levels of strategic planning in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate.

4.1. Discussion

Discussion of Question 1: Level of Human Resource Management Practices

The findings showed a moderate to high level of human resource management (HRM) practices ($M = 3.48$, $SD = 0.87$, $P = 69.64\%$) in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate. This demonstrates good awareness among local municipalities of the importance of human resources in improving employee performance and institutional development. Specifically, the highest-rated item was related to teamwork and internal communication ($M = 3.66$), which supports the existence of a strong organizational culture that values collaboration. However, the lowest mean was related to recruitment criteria ($M = 3.31$), which highlights the need to standardize recruitment criteria to make them fairer, more transparent, and more equitable.

The findings support earlier studies that noted the positive effects of HRM practices on organizational effectiveness and employee engagement (Albrecht et al., 2015). They also support Armstrong's (2020) conclusion that fair recruitment, regular performance assessment, and developmental opportunities are the foundation of an effective human capital strategy. In summary, HRM practices are applied relatively well, but there is still room for improvement in areas such as fairness in recruitment and reward systems.

Discussion of Question 2: Level of Strategic Planning Implementation

The analysis revealed a relatively high level of strategic planning implementation in the selected

municipalities ($M = 3.52$, $SD = 0.81$, $P = 70.46\%$). The municipalities appear to have made an important organizational commitment to determining long-term objectives, involving departments in decision-making, and modifying plans according to internal and external circumstances. The items related to updating plans based on field data and involving departments scored notably higher ($M = 3.59$ and $M = 3.58$, respectively), suggesting that these municipalities have a relatively dynamic and participatory planning culture.

The data align with strategic planning literature, which asserts that effective strategic planning requires a clear vision, mission, measurable goals, and adaptable action plans (Bryson, 2018). Therefore, the ability of the sampled municipalities to translate strategic vision into operational actions suggests a degree of maturity in their planning process. However, the relatively lower average score for linking strategic plans to human resource planning ($M = 3.40$) indicates a potential gap that should be further explored to strengthen organizational integration.

Thus, while municipalities reported a considerable level of strategic planning, greater coordination with HRM practices could help promote a more cohesive approach to municipal development and governance.

Discussion of Question 3: The Relationship Between HRM Practices and Strategic Planning

The Pearson correlation showed a very strong positive relationship between HRM practices and the level of strategic planning ($r = 0.914$, $p < 0.001$). This statistically significant result confirms that improvements in human resource practices are directly associated with improvements in strategic planning. This means that when municipalities implement effective HRM systems, such as transparent recruitment, continuous training, and motivational systems, they are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of planning, coordinated implementation, and alignment with strategic goals.

This aligns with the theoretical model proposed by Wright and McMahan (2011), which emphasized the strategic potential of HRM in supporting long-term organizational goals. It also supports the conclusions of several empirical studies (e.g., Wiyono

et al., 2025; Alsaeed, 2019), which identified HR practices as a main enabler of strategic planning and organizational resilience.

The strength of this relationship in local government institutions highlights the need for municipalities to consider HR not only as an administrative function but also as a strategic partner in organizational development. Aligning these practices is critical for public sector reform and sustainable service delivery in Palestinian municipalities.

4.2. Recommendations

Based on the study's findings, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Municipalities should improve the transparency and fairness of recruitment by using specific selection criteria and a standardized merit-based process.
2. Human resource management (HRM) practices should be more closely aligned with strategic planning by ensuring that HRM actions reflect long-term organizational goals.
3. Continuous training and professional development should be embedded to enable employees to develop their capacities in line with organizational strategic objectives.

4.3. Limitations

This study was restricted to municipalities within Hebron Governorate. The decision to focus on this specific municipality was due to logistical reasons, time constraints, and the researcher's desire to conduct an in-depth and focused case study in one of the most active and prominent municipalities in the West Bank. Furthermore, data were more accessible and available in Hebron compared to more remote or smaller municipalities. Because of these constraints,

the findings may provide useful insights; however, they may not be generalizable to all local government bodies in Palestine. Future studies are encouraged to use wider samples in order to provide more generalizable findings.

4.4. Suggestions for Future Research

Future researchers should consider:

1. Including a larger sample across several municipalities in various governorates to increase generalizability.
2. Investigating the impact of HRM practices on variables such as employee satisfaction, innovation, and public service quality.
3. Using qualitative approaches, such as interviews or focus groups, to explore managerial perspectives on strategic alignment.
4. Exploring the long-term impact of integrated HRM and strategic planning on institutional performance.

5. CONCLUSION

This study is expected to improve understanding of how HRM practices contribute to strategic planning in the context of local government. The strong statistical relationship supports the idea that investing in human resources remains central to achieving long-term organizational goals. By enhancing HR systems, municipalities can strengthen strategic planning and management, improve institutional performance, and respond more effectively to community expectations. Although the study was limited in scope, it provides a useful framework that can help improve the administrative functions of Palestinian municipalities and similar local government institutions.

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