A Future Vision among Non-Governmental Organizations to Enhance Environmental Citizenship: An Applied Study in Hail

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ABSTRACT:

This study aimed to identify, describe, and analyze the requirements for partnership among non-governmental organizations to enhance environmental citizenship. Additionally, it sought to develop a future vision for activating the partnership between these organizations to further environmental citizenship. This study falls under the category of descriptive research and relied on a comprehensive social survey method involving experts in the field of non-governmental organizations in Hail City, with a total of 92 experts. A questionnaire was used to collect data, gathered between October 24, 2023, and November 30, 2023. The study found several key requirements for building partnerships among non-governmental organizations to enhance their capacity and enable them to promote environmental citizenship, including: the existence of an informational base, coordination, cooperation, exchange, and communication.

Keywords: A Future Vision- Partnership- Non-Governmental Organizations- Environmental Citizenship.

1. Introduction

Environmental citizenship aims at instilling values, principles and ideals among all members of society (Al-Harbi, 2016, p.6). In order to achieve this, we need citizen education approaches that are able to deal with the complexities of environmental citizenship. Chan's study (2023) revealed that people define their role perception towards pluralistic environmental citizenship in light of four elements: the concept of society, the concept of environment, institutional knowledge, and values. It can only be realized through spreading awareness among members of society (Al-Saadi, 2014, p. 9).

In this context, the study by Ariza, M., et al. (2021) concluded the importance of measuring sustainability awareness to assess the impact of various educational interventions aimed at increasing environmental citizenship. Similarly, the study by Damoah, B., & Adu, E. (2022) emphasized the importance of non-governmental

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organizations' participation in implementing environmental education policies in schools, contributing to the development of practical environmental programs that in turn reflect on the surrounding community of those schools.

Community associations offer a major role to the development processes in all societies of the world. Saudi community associations provide services at all levels and to many groups of Saudi society in their various environments.

In light of the ongoing escalation of the Saudi society's requirements in the developmental field in general, and the environmental aspect in particular, along with the increasing size and quality of services provided to beneficiaries, which exceed the material and organizational capacity of non-governmental organizations (Farghali, 2008), there arises a need for the concerted efforts of civil society institutions to spread awareness and adopt environmentally friendly behaviors. This represents an explicit call for integrating civil society with the state in a new social contract triangle for the benefit of society. This approach is what is referred to as the 'Third Way', one of the methods for improving the quality of life, addressing problems, and achieving faster development rates. (Giddens, 1999, p. 44)

In light of this, it is necessary to search for a new mechanism that goes beyond the concept of community participation itself and takes into consideration that the local community is not a unified group of individuals, but consists of groups and organizations with different characteristics, interests, and capabilities. This requires not only achieving participation but also forming a multi-sectoral and multi-objective partnership. Here, the role of (Interaction Theory) emerges, which indicates the necessity of having a reasonable degree of agreement in values, inclinations, and interests (enhancing environmental citizenship), precise scientific recognition of the aspects of the situation to be interacted with (partnership requirements to enhance environmental citizenship), and making decisions or reaching a final agreement by consent (entering into a community partnership between concerned associations). (Abdul Latif, 2003, 1:28)

In addition, the role of Exchange Theory becomes prominent, which is based on several fundamental assumptions: The first assumption is that participants enter into reciprocal relationships to achieve desired goals, which are represented in enhancing environmental citizenship. The second assumption is that participants (non-governmental organizations, the government sector) in the exchange process aim for the cost to be less than the return. The third assumption is that the activities for participants in the exchange process are those that continue and endure over time. (Abdul Latif, 2003, 85)

Many of literatures have addressed the issue of community partnership, where the results of Mohammed Refaat Kassem's study (1990) emphasized the necessity of mutual reliance between associations and other organizations working in the field of social care. This is achieved through providing cooperative programs, effective communication channels, and financial resources dedicated to organization and coordination, as well as establishing a system for information exchange to achieve suitable forms of coordination and cooperation to address the problems and needs of the society.

The study by Tomader Mustafa Ahmed (2000) concluded that there is cooperation between organizations and associations at both vertical and horizontal levels. It identified obstacles to this cooperation, such as bureaucracy, underestimation of the capabilities of associations and institutions, lack of sufficient expertise among many

organization workers, and differences in work methods. This necessitates further studies on the link between relationships of developmental organizations and societal changes. The study by Lubna Abdul Majeed (2004) focused on describing the interrelationships of non-governmental organizations and the contemporary requirements for supporting these relationships, proposing several requirements including legislative needs, appropriate coordination forms, and professional aspects.

In the same context, the study by Robert Cox (2004) found that partnership between organizations is essential for their sustainability. Partnerships allow organizations to formulate policies for achieving strong objectives and alliances, and they are successful in managing changes brought about by globalization. The study by Hassan Mustafa Hassan (2005) revealed that the human element is one of the most significant factors affecting the partnership of civil society organizations, their relationship with governmental organizations, and their interaction with private sector organizations. Linda Moln (2006) identified negative impacts of conflicts arising between organizations in establishing cooperative relationships and partnerships. Alex Golub (2006) found that dialogue was an effective means in achieving cooperation and partnership between organizations, enhancing the capacity of local forces, governmental and political bodies to interact and coordinate to mitigate problems. Andrea Bateman (2006) emphasized the importance of partnership in selection, training, and evaluation of professional development in the educational process and resource development, providing information and using honest and transparent teaching strategies.

The study by the Arab Network for NGOs (2009) aimed to understand how to build an effective partnership between Arab civil society organizations to face developmental challenges. This involves creating a database, documenting the experiences of NGOs, activating information flow, and using transparency as a mechanism for effective partnership. Jordan et al. (2018) pointed out several challenges limiting the effectiveness of these associations in achieving their goals, including limited funding, weak institutional capacities, and insufficient coordination with other entities. The study by Viganò, F., & Salustri, A. (2019) focused on the role of volunteers and non-profit organizations in providing social care services, revealing a new form of partnership between municipalities and civil society organizations, focusing on improving the relationship between the state and citizens.

Cotler et al. (2022) uncovered the significant role of civil organizations in enhancing cooperative governance and environmental awareness. These organizations contributed to building new institutions to enhance cooperative decisions and facilitate public participation.

In light of the review of these literatures, partnerships between NGOs can play a crucial role in the field of environmental awareness, enhancing the concept of environmental citizenship based on shared responsibility towards environmental issues and sustainable development. This is achieved through leveraging dynamic capabilities such as learning, coordination, and reconfiguration, as well as through enhancing cooperation, resource sharing, and task alignment. In light of the above, the current study aims to describe and analyze the partnership requirements between NGOs to enhance environmental citizenship and develop a future vision for activating such partnerships.

2. Concepts and Theoretical guidelines:

"The concept of 'requirements' in language dictionaries refers to the word request or demand, which means the attempt to find and obtain something, or to demand: to ask a person for a right that is due and to persistently claim it .(to request something) means to seek it, but repeated requesting is to ask for something again with effort. (Ibn Manzur, 1988, 101), and to "require something", but with effort. (Al-Bustani, 1992, 663). Webster's dictionary defines 'Requirement' as something that is necessary or a condition that must be met. (Webster, 1991, 27), while the Oxford dictionary refers to a 'requirement' as something essential or a condition that must be fulfilled or complied with. (Oxford, 1993,2557)

In the current study, 'requirements' refer to: (information base, coordination, cooperation, exchange, communication).

The concept of 'community partnership' linguistically refers to partnership or participation, meaning to be a partner or to involve someone in one's affairs. (Arabic Language Dictionary, 2000, 396). Webster's dictionary defines 'partnership' as having multiple meanings, including a legal or legitimate relationship between two or more people who are connected with each other in a social contract according to principles in the field of business and commerce. Another meaning of partnership is a form where rights and responsibilities are defined among each other. (Webster, 1991, 859) Thus, community partnership is the joint efforts of the government, private sector, and civil sector in facing any problem, in updating and developing experiences, and in strengthening the roles of all participating parties. This is achieved through the exchange of opinions, ideas, experiences, and the integration of resources and capabilities available to the partners, compensating for deficiencies among these partners. (Mahrous, 2005, 98)

It also represents a complementary relationship between the capabilities and capacities of two or more parties, where there is agreement and consensus on achieving specific goals. It is a relationship governed by equality among the parties and respect for each party's capabilities and performance, aiming for the public good. Some characteristics include: the partnership being a relationship between two parties, the government and civil society in general, and NGOs in particular, achieving integration between material and human resources and capabilities. Community partnership relationships do not show dominance by one party over another but rather involve complementary capabilities within a framework of equality. They aim to organize social, economic, and political returns or aim for the public good. (Qandil, 2004, 5).

In addition, there are criteria for establishing partnerships between community organizations, such as the partnership addressing the common goals of the participating community organizations, the partnership being based on clear objectives, standards, and values, the ability of the partnership to provide and develop cost-effective services in a timely manner, and working in a cooperative framework that cannot be achieved individually. (Al-Ali, Al-Sayed, 2006)

Partnership is an alliance between a group of individuals, groups, or organizations from different sectors, committed to working together to perform specific tasks, sharing risks and benefits, and periodically reviewing and adjusting their agreements as needed. (Al-Qahtani, 2006, 30) Others add that it is a voluntary organization that delineates work parties to achieve common goals, taking multiple levels starting from networking for

information exchange, then coordination and implementation of joint activities, then cooperation for information and resource exchange, and finally achieving partnership, which is akin to unified strategies and policies involving information exchange and cooperation with multiple sectors. (Al-Sakri, 2014, 5: 7).

In light of the current study, community partnership is: a dynamic participatory process between NGOs, either implicitly or formally, to achieve public interests represented in enhancing environmental citizenship.

Citizenship, like any human principle, has many elements and conditions for its realization, the most important of which is the principle of equality and equal opportunities in rights and duties among all citizens (Amin, 2010, 53).

Eco-citizenship is defined as the responsible pro-environmental behavior of citizens who act and participate in society at the local, national and global level, through individual and collective behavior (ENEC 2018).

It is also defined as, a comprehensive concept that covers all interpretations and different forms of the relationship between the citizen and the environment (environmental personal responsibility, environmental justice, environmental participation). (El-Diasty, et al., 2023, 538)

3. Methodology

The current study falls under the category of descriptive research, which aims to provide both quantitative and qualitative descriptions of the opinions of a specific, defined research community regarding a service, problem, or particular need. The study relied on a comprehensive social survey method of experts in the field of non-governmental organizations in the city of Hail, with a total of 92 experts. A questionnaire was formulated after reviewing theoretical frameworks, as well as previous studies and research. Its dimensions were identified as: (information base, coordination, cooperation, exchange, communication). The validity of the tool was confirmed by presenting it to evaluators for their opinions and observations. In light of this, some modifications were made, and the questionnaire was finalized. The reliability of the study tool was calculated using Cronbach's Alpha method.

Table No. (1):
reliability of the questionnaire using the Cronbach's Alpha method:

No.	Dimensions	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
1.	Information Base	0.89
2.	Coordination	0.86
3.	Cooperation	0.87
4.	Exchange	0.87
5.	Communication	0.85

The above results indicate the reliability of the tool, as the values of the reliability coefficients were higher than 0.70, which is considered acceptable in social studies. In light of this, field data were collected during the period from (24/9/2023) to (30/11/2023). The researchers used statistical methods (frequencies, percentages, and arithmetic mean).

4. Results & Discussion:

Table No. (2):

Characteristics of the Study Sample (N=92)

Main Variables	No.	Sub-Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	1	Male	57	61.96%
	2	Female	36	39.13%
Age	1	30-35	36	39.13%
	2	35-45	44	47.82%
	3	45 and above	12	13.04%
Years of Experience	1	5-10	11	11.96%
	2	10-15	24	26.09%
	3	15-20	41	44.56%
	4	Over 20	16	17.39%

The table shows that 61.96% of the respondents are male and 39.13% are female. The age distribution indicates a variety of life and societal experiences, which may reflect on their functional roles. The majority (44.56%) of respondents have 15-20 years of experience in the field of non-governmental organizations.

Table No. (3)

Information Base as a Requirement for Partnership Among NGOs (N=92)

Statements	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Total Weights	Weighted Percentage	Mean	Rank
1. Awareness of beneficiaries about their environmental problems	49	28	15	218	78.99	2.37	10
2. Identifying community needs priorities for environmental services	53	28	11	226	81.88	2.46	6
3. Revealing community opinion on provided environmental services	51	29	12	223	80.80	2.42	9
4. Highlighting difficulties in implementing environmental services	58	24	10	232	84.06	2.52	1
5. Indicating possible future environmental services	54	26	12	224	81.16	2.43	8
6. Identifying key environmental services previously provided in the community	56	25	11	229	82.97	2.49	3
7. Classifying NGOs providing environmental services	55	27	10	229	82.97	2.49	3

Statements	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Total Weights	Weighted Percentage	Mean	Rank
8. Reflecting the material capabilities of NGOs in the community	54	27	11	227	82.25	2.47	5
9. Reflecting the human capabilities of NGOs in the community	55	26	11	228	82.61	2.48	4
10. Identifying key environmental services provided by other NGOs	56	25	11	229	82.97	2.49	3
11. Indicating available expertise in other NGOs	52	30	10	226	81.88	2.46	7
12. Identifying key social environmental services shared by multiple NGOs	57	25	10	231	83.70	2.51	2

The table shows the importance of various aspects of the information base as a requirement for partnership among NGOs, with items ranked according to their mean scores as follows:

Highlighting difficulties in implementing environmental services with a mean score of 2.52, Identifying key social environmental services shared by multiple NGOs with a mean score of 2.51, Identifying key environmental services provided by other NGOs, classifying NGOs providing environmental services, and identifying key environmental services previously provided in the community, all with a mean score of 2.49, Reflecting the human capabilities of NGOs in the community with a mean score of 2.48, Reflecting the material capabilities of NGOs in the community with a mean score of 2.47, Determining community needs priorities for environmental services, indicating available expertise in other NGOs with a mean score of 2.46, Indicating possible future environmental services with a mean score of 2.43, Revealing community opinion on provided environmental services with a mean score of 2.42, Clarifying the awareness of beneficiaries about their environmental problems with a mean score of 2.37.

Table No. (4)

Coordination as a Requirement for Partnership Among NGOs (N=92)

Statements	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Total Weights	Weighted Percentage	Mean	Rank
1. Establishing and implementing a general policy for joint work programs	53	28	11	226	81.88	2.46	22
2. Utilizing available resources from partnership entities	48	31	13	219	79.35	2.38	5
3. Developing integrated plans for environmental services provided by partnership entities	49	31	12	221	80.07	2.40	4
4. Ensuring no duplication of environmental services provided by partnership entities	51	29	12	223	80.80	2.42	3
5. Avoiding conflicting decisions with partnership entities	54	26	12	226	81.88	2.46	2
6. Having a special committee for coordination between partnership entities	57	25	10	231	83.70	2.51	1
7. Ensuring no repetition of environmental services provided by partnership entities	46	31	15	215	77.90	2.34	6

The table shows the variables for coordination in community partnership among NGOs, ranked by their mean scores, include:

The existence of a special committee for coordination between partnership parties (Mean: 2.51), Avoiding issuing decisions that conflict with other partnership parties (Mean: 2.46), Establishing and implementing a general policy for joint work programs (Mean: 2.46), Ensuring no duplication of environmental services provided by partnership parties (Mean: 2.42), Developing integrated plans for environmental services provided by partnership parties (Mean: 2.40), Utilizing available resources from partnership entities (Mean: 2.38), Ensuring no repetition of environmental services provided by partnership entities (Mean: 2.36).

Table No. (5):

Cooperation as a Requirement for Partnership Among NGOs (N=92)

Statements	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Total Weights	Weighted Percentage	Mean	Rank
1. Collaborating with partnership entities in studying environmental problems and needs in the community	52	29	11	225	81.52	2.45	4
2. Collaborating with partnership entities in implementing targeted environmental services	55	23	14	225	81.52	2.45	4
3. Precise division of responsibilities among partnership entities in the field of targeted environmental citizenship	57	25	10	231	83.70	2.51	2
4. Benefiting from the expertise of partnership entities in the field of environmental services	59	25	8	235	85.14	2.55	1
5. Collective participation of partnership entities in making decisions related to environmental services	57	24	11	230	83.33	2.50	3

The table highlights the most important variables for cooperation in community partnership among NGOs, ranked by their mean scores:

Benefiting from the expertise of partnership entities in the field of environmental services (Mean: 2.55), Precise division of responsibilities among partnership entities in the field of targeted environmental citizenship (Mean: 2.51), Collective participation of partnership entities in making decisions related to environmental services (Mean: 2.50), Collaborating with partnership entities in studying and addressing environmental problems and needs in the community (Mean: 2.45).

Table No. (6)

Exchange as a Requirement for Partnership Among NGOs (N=92)

Statements	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Total Weights	Weighted Percentage	Mean	Rank
1. Exchanging plans, programs, and projects in the field of environmental services	47	34	11	220	79.71	2.39	5
2. Exchanging technical expertise	44	37	11	217	78.62	2.36	7
3. Exchanging information and data about environmental problems	56	25	11	229	82.97	2.49	2
4. Exchanging material resources and capabilities	46	35	11	219	79.35	2.38	6
5. Exchanging opinions and ideas about various community issues	55	25	12	227	82.25	2.47	4
6. Ensuring fairness in the distribution of benefits from exchange among partnership entities	54	28	10	228	82.61	2.48	3
7. Establishing agreed-upon foundations and criteria for exchange among partnership entities	56	26	10	230	83.33	2.50	1

The table indicates the key variables for exchange in community partnership among NGOs, ranked by their mean scores:

Establishing agreed-upon foundations and criteria for exchange among partnership entities (Mean: 2.50), Exchanging information and data about environmental problems (Mean: 2.49), Ensuring fairness in the distribution of benefits from exchange among partnership entities (Mean: 2.48), Exchanging opinions and ideas about various community issues (Mean: 2.47), Exchanging plans, programs, and projects in the field of environmental services (Mean: 2.39), Exchanging material resources and capabilities (Mean: 2.38), Exchanging technical expertise (Mean: 2.36).

Table No. (7)
Communication as a Requirement for Partnership Among NGOs (N=92)

Statements	Yes	To Some Extent	No	Total Weights	Weighted Percentage	Mean	Rank
1. Visits of officials from partnership entities to each other	56	26	10	230	83.33	2.50	1
2. Having joint members among partnership entities	54	26	12	226	81.88	2.46	3
3. Each party's effort to understand the services provided by other entities	56	25	11	229	82.97	2.49	2
4. Each entity's effort to understand the work system of other partnership entities	52	29	11	225	81.52	2.45	4
5. Establishing ongoing dialogue between partnership officials	48	31	13	219	79.35	2.38	6
6. The perception of partnership officials of the benefits from the communication process	51	29	12	223	80.80	2.42	5

The table shows the most important variables for communication as a requirement for community partnership among NGOs, ranked by their mean scores:

Visits of officials from partnership entities to each other (Mean: 2.50), Each party's effort to understand the services provided by other entities (Mean: 2.49), Having joint members among partnership entities (Mean: 2.46), Each entity's effort to understand the work system of other partnership entities (Mean: 2.45), Establishing ongoing dialogue between partnership officials (Mean: 2.38), The perception of partnership officials of the benefits from the communication process (Mean: 2.42).

5. Future Vision for Partnership Requirements Among NGOs:

In light of the results of the current study, previous studies, and theoretical literature, researchers can develop a future vision for the requirements of partnership between NGOs to promote environmental citizenship as follows:

A) Objectives of the Future Vision:
- Establishing a Comprehensive Information Base: This includes information about shared environmental services, human and material capabilities of the associations, environmental needs priorities, available expertise, and potential future environmental services.
- Effective Coordination Among Civil Associations: Involves establishing special coordination committees, setting general policies for programs and joint work, and developing integrated plans for environmental services.

-   Intensive and Dynamic Cooperation: Focuses on utilizing available expertise, precise division of responsibilities, and collective participation in decision-making related to environmental services.
-   Exchange as a Basis for Partnership: Entails establishing unified standards for exchange, exchanging information and data on environmental issues, plans, programs, projects, and resources and capabilities.
-   Effective and Continuous Communication: Includes mutual visits among officials, having joint members, and maintaining ongoing dialogue between partnership parties.
-   Adherence to Theoretical Guidelines: Such as interaction theory and exchange theory.
-   Adopting Effective Strategies: Like coordination strategy, clustering, and joint membership.
-   Implementing Specific Techniques: Forming joint committees, holding group meetings and discussions.

B) Mechanisms for Achieving the Future Vision:

-   Information Technology: Using database management systems, collaboration software, and digital communication tools to improve efficiency and information exchange.
-   Networks and Alliances: Establishing local and international networks comprising civil associations specialized in the environment to exchange expertise and resources.
-   Training and Capacity Development: Conducting training courses and workshops to develop the skills of association workers and enhance their environmental management capabilities.
-   Publicity and Media: Utilizing media channels and social media to spread environmental awareness and promote activities and programs.
-   Community Participation: Organizing public events, interactive workshops, and awareness campaigns to encourage public participation.
-   Evaluation: Applying tools and indicators to measure performance and analyze the environmental impact to ensure continuous improvement of activities.
-   Collaboration: Building partnerships with other sectors to secure resources and expand the scope of activities.
-   Innovation and Research: Encouraging research and innovation in areas such as sustainability technologies and environmental solutions.
-   Financial Support: Developing strategies aimed at achieving financial support through building new community partnerships.

C) potential challenges and barriers to implementing this vision

Some potential challenges and barriers may stand in the way of implementing the vision, and they lie in the exchange of information, coordination, and joint work time between them, as well as the presence of a conflict of interest between these organizations and the preference for private interest over public interest. On the other hand, financial challenges may represent a major obstacle facing non-governmental organizations in the costs of establishing partnerships and maintenance. These include the costs of legal,

financial, and technical consultations, the costs of gathering information, and the costs of exchange and cooperation. The challenges extend to the difficulty of securing joint financing to support partnership initiatives.

6. Conclusion

The study's findings reveal the necessity of several requirements for building partnerships among NGOs, which would enhance their capacity and enable them to foster environmental citizenship. These requirements are based on several axes:

Firstly, the existence of an informational base that includes several elements, most importantly: environmental services shared by more than one association, the human and material capabilities of NGOs, priorities of environmental service needs, available expertise in the associations, and potential future environmental services. This aligns with the findings of the Arab Network for NGOs (2009), which emphasized the importance of establishing a database and documenting the expertise of NGOs, as well as activating information flow and transparency as mechanisms for effective partnership.

Secondly, the need for coordination among associations, which includes: establishing a special committee for coordination among partnership parties, setting a general policy for joint work programs, and developing integrated plans for the environmental services provided by the partnership entities. This is in line with the findings of Lobna Abdel Majeed (2004), which recommended appropriate coordination to support inter-association relations.

Thirdly, cooperation among associations, which involves: benefiting from the expertise of partnership entities in the field of environmental services, precise division of responsibilities among partnership entities in enhancing targeted environmental citizenship, collective participation in decision-making regarding environmental services, and collaboration in studying and addressing environmental problems and needs in the community. This is consistent with the findings of Linda Moln (2006), which revealed the negative impacts of conflicts that arise between organizations in establishing cooperative relationships and partnerships.

Fourthly, exchange as a requirement for community partnership, which includes: establishing agreed-upon foundations and criteria for exchange, exchanging information and data about environmental problems, exchanging views and ideas on certain community issues, exchanging plans, programs, and projects in the field of environmental services, exchanging resources and material capabilities, and exchanging technical expertise. Finally, communication is a crucial aspect of building community partnership among NGOs to enhance environmental citizenship. This requires several elements to ensure its success, including: visits of officials from partnership entities to each other, each party's effort to understand the services provided by other entities, and establishing ongoing dialogue between partnership officials. This aligns with the findings of Alex Golub (2006), which confirmed that dialogue and communication are effective means in achieving partnership among organizations.

To conclude, some potential challenges and barriers may stand in the way of implementing the vision, the most important of which is the difficulty of securing joint financing to support partnership initiatives, and this is consistent with the results of

Jordan et. al. (2018) indicated that lack of funding is one of the most important challenges that limit the effectiveness of these associations in achieving their goals.

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