

RESEARCH TITLE

The role of administrative leadership in managing the electricity crisis in Tarqumia Municipality, Palestine: A case Study

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Abstract

The objective of this study was to explore the role of administrative leadership in managing the electricity crisis in the municipality of Tarqumia, Palestine. The municipality faces significant challenges in providing electricity services to citizens due to financial, political, and technical constraints. The study adopted a qualitative approach using a case study method, in which semi-structured interviews were conducted with a purposive sample of decision-makers and key employees in the municipality, in addition to analyzing relevant documents. The results showed that administrative leadership plays a key role in crisis management by making rapid strategic decisions and coordinating efforts between different departments. The study also revealed external challenges represented by the almost total dependence on the Israeli supplier and the restrictions it imposes, as well as the accumulation of debt. It also highlighted interrelated internal challenges of an administrative, financial, and technical nature, including weak administrative structure, high electricity losses, and total dependence on electricity revenues. The study recommended the need to develop training programs for administrative managers, improve internal communication mechanisms, and establish comprehensive emergency plans for future crisis management.

Key Words: Administrative Leadership, Crisis Management, Electricity Sector, Local Governance, Palestinian Municipalities.

دور القيادة الإدارية في إدارة أزمة الكهرباء في بلدية ترقوميا، فلسطين: دراسة حالة**المستخلص**

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استكشاف دور القيادة الإدارية في إدارة أزمة الكهرباء في بلدية ترقوميا بفلسطين. تواجه البلدية تحديات كبيرة في توفير خدمات الكهرباء للمواطنين نتيجة للقيود المالية والسياسية والتقنية. اعتمدت الدراسة على المنهج النوعي بأسلوب دراسة الحالة، حيث تم إجراء مقابلات شبه منظمة مع عينة قصدية من صناع القرار والموظفين الرئيسيين في البلدية، بالإضافة إلى تحليل الوثائق ذات الصلة. أظهرت النتائج أن القيادة الإدارية تلعب دورًا محوريًا في إدارة الأزمة من خلال اتخاذ قرارات استراتيجية سريعة وتنسيق الجهود بين الأقسام المختلفة. كما كشفت الدراسة عن وجود تحديات خارجية تمثلت في التبعية شبه الكاملة للمزود الإسرائيلي وما يفرضه من قيود، وتراكم الديون. كما كشفت وجود تحديات داخلية إدارية ومالية وفنية متشابكة، أبرزها ضعف الهيكل الإداري، وارتفاع نسبة الفاقد الكهربائي، والاعتماد الكلي على إيرادات الكهرباء. أوصت الدراسة بضرورة تطوير برامج تدريبية للقادة الإداريين وتحسين آليات التواصل الداخلي وإنشاء خطط طوارئ شاملة لإدارة الأزمات المستقبلية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: القيادة الإدارية، إدارة الأزمات، قطاع الكهرباء، الحكم المحلي، البلديات الفلسطينية.

Introduction

Administrative leadership is a fundamental pillar for the success and development of institutions, considered one of the most important components of institutional excellence. The ability of institutions to achieve their objectives is directly related to the effectiveness of their administrative leadership and their ability to plan, organize, and direct efforts toward the achievement of institutional objectives (Al-Amoudi, 2013). In light of the growing challenges facing contemporary institutions, the importance of crisis management has become a vital area of administrative work. An institution's ability to manage crises has become a decisive factor in determining its ability to survive and grow (Al-Miftah and Al-Afri, 2022), requiring distinguished leadership skills and the ability to make decisions under conditions of uncertainty and pressure. This relationship is particularly significant in the local government sector, given the vital nature of the services these institutions provide to citizens. Municipalities face multiple challenges in service delivery, making the role of administrative leadership pivotal in ensuring the continuity and development of these services (Al-Obaidli, 2023). In the Palestinian context, municipalities face exceptional challenges under the difficult political and economic conditions imposed by the policies of the Israeli occupation, operating in complex circumstances characterized by limited resources, poor infrastructure, and restrictions on movement (Abu-Maria, 2022). This makes it necessary to develop administrative leadership capacities to deal with the multiple crises they face and to innovate solutions appropriate for the specificity of the Palestinian situation (Zagharneh, 2023).

Despite the multiplicity of studies on the electricity sector in Palestine, there is a clear gap in research examining the relationship between administrative leadership and the ability of small municipalities to manage the electricity crisis, especially under the exceptional challenges imposed by the Israeli occupation through the control of the Israel Electric Corporation over energy sources and its command of prices and supplied quantities. Most previous studies have focused on the technical and financial aspects of the electricity crisis, or have addressed major cities and the national level, overlooking the role of administrative leadership and the specificity of small municipalities like Tarqumia in dealing with these complex challenges. The importance of bridging this research gap is heightened by the governmental trend towards reforming the electricity sector, which requires a deeper understanding of the role of administrative leadership in the success of these reforms under the constraints imposed by the occupation on the development of this vital sector. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the main question: **What is the role of administrative leadership in managing the electricity crisis in Tarqumia Municipality?**

To achieve this, the study aims to identify the challenges and obstacles facing the administrative leadership in Tarqumia Municipality in managing the electricity crisis, evaluate the effectiveness of the procedures and strategies adopted to deal with it, and develop practical proposals and solutions to enhance this role. The study's importance stems from its contribution to bridging the knowledge gap in the field of administrative leadership and crisis management in Palestinian local government bodies, and from providing a practical analysis that helps decision-makers in Palestinian municipalities to develop their leadership styles and improve their ability to manage crises, especially in the electricity sector. The study is spatially limited to Tarqumia Municipality in the Hebron Governorate, Palestine, and temporally to the period during which the research was conducted in 2024, focusing objectively on the role of administrative leadership in managing the electricity crisis from the perspective of the municipality's leadership and employees.

Theoretical Framework

This section reviews the theoretical foundations and previous studies related to the research topic. It is divided into three main parts: the first deals with administrative leadership, the second with crisis management, and the third with the reality of the electricity sector in Palestine, followed by a commentary on previous studies to highlight the contribution of the current research.

First: Administrative Leadership

Administrative leadership is a social process that reflects the actions of individuals and aims to achieve the organizational vision through key procedures such as adaptation, change, and setting direction (Riggio & Newstead, 2023). It is defined as the activity a person exercises to influence others and make them cooperate to achieve a desired goal (Qahwaji, 2015). It differs from general leadership by focusing on administrative activity within an organizational framework, where it tends to influence the behaviors of individuals to achieve the goals set by the leader (Al-Ameri, 2025). Thus, administrative leadership represents a blend of formal authority and the ability to positively influence employee behavior. Its effectiveness is based on a set of integrated elements: the leader, the subordinates (the group), the common goals, the prevailing situation, and the process of positive influence (Belkhamssa & Bourbouna, 2022). The success of leadership depends on the ability to harmonize these elements to achieve institutional goals while maintaining a spirit of cooperation and organizational loyalty.

Second: Crisis Management

Crisis management is an integrated administrative system aimed at dealing with emergency and critical situations facing institutions. This concept has evolved to become a science in its own right, including a set of methodologies and studied strategies for dealing with various crises (Kamel & Hussein, 2024). It is an organized administrative process that includes planning, coordination, and control over available resources to deal with critical events and recover from them as quickly as possible (Fahmy, 2023). Canyon (2020) defined it as a methodological approach to dealing with emergency situations by using administrative and scientific methods to predict, prepare for, and efficiently handle crises. The crisis management process goes through successive stages, starting with signal detection and prevention, moving to immediate response and containment of damage upon the crisis's occurrence, and ending with activity recovery and learning from the experience to improve future strategies (Youssef et al., 2023; Melh, 2023).

Third: The Electricity Sector in Palestine

The regulation of the electricity sector in Palestine is based on Law No. (13) of 2009, which constitutes the basic legal framework for organizing and managing the sector (Palestinian Energy and Natural Resources Authority, 2023). However, the sector faces significant challenges due to the political and geographical circumstances. One of the most prominent structural challenges is the fragmentation in the sector's management, where about 25% of local government bodies still manage electricity distribution services directly (Palestine Studies, 2023). The Israel Electric Corporation (IEC) dominates the sector, as Palestine obtains about 87% of its electricity needs from Israel (Palestine Studies, 2023). This dependency has led to the accumulation of huge debts, which amounted to about 1.7 billion shekels by 2019 (MAS, 2019), and which Israel deducts from clearance revenues, putting enormous pressure on the Palestinian budget. Municipalities also face challenges such as high electricity loss, which reaches about 22% (Palestinian Electricity Regulatory Council,

2024), poor collection, and restrictions on infrastructure development imposed by the occupation .

Previous Studies and What Distinguishes the Current Study

Numerous studies have addressed the topics of administrative leadership, crisis management, and the electricity sector, each from a different perspective. The following is a review of the most prominent of these studies:

The study by Al-Zubaidi (2025) aimed to analyze the role of leadership in managing human resources within organizations, with a focus on participative leadership as an effective leadership style. The study concluded that participative leadership contributes to enhancing crisis response by improving the quality of decision-making and utilizing collective capabilities and expertise. The study also reviewed successful experiences of companies like Apple and Toyota, and failed ones like Kodak, to demonstrate the impact of leadership in overcoming crises.

The study by Al-Amri (2024) aimed to identify the role of administrative leadership in crisis management in public hospitals in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the Corona pandemic. The study found a positive relationship between autocratic leadership and crisis management in the dimensions of "crisis fragmentation" and "crisis containment," and recommended the need to focus on training employees, providing knowledge resources, and creating opportunities for creativity and innovation.

The study by Jaaffar & others (2023) aimed to evaluate the mediating role of crisis management and its relationship with leadership styles (transformational and transactional) and their impact on the performance of Jordanian hotels. The study concluded that the transformational leadership style and crisis management experience are the most important qualities a leader must possess to maintain hotel performance during crises, and emphasized the importance of integrating leadership qualities and experience with crisis management skills to ensure performance sustainability.

The study by Belkhamssa and Bourbouna (2022) sought to identify the impact of administrative leadership on the decision-making process within the institution. The study concluded that administrative leadership has a significant impact on the decision-making process, and that the prevailing leadership style depends on the situation and circumstances that arise in the workplace.

The study by Marburger (2022) aimed to understand the experiences of the president of Taylor University and the surrounding community after they experienced a crisis on campus. The study concluded that there were specific leadership qualities in the university leaders that contributed to their effective response to the crisis, and emphasized the pivotal role that the campus culture and Christian faith played in how the crisis was experienced and its impact on decision-making.

Finally, the study by Bayad & Govand (2021) explored the relationship between leadership styles and crisis management in the Ministry of Planning in Erbil. The study concluded that charismatic leadership had the highest value among the different leadership styles, and explained that the growth strategies of institutions often need to be adjusted during crisis periods.

From the review of previous studies, it is clear that there is a growing research interest in the relationship between leadership and crisis management in various contexts (health, tourism, education). These studies have focused on different leadership styles such as transformational, participative, and autocratic, and their impact on variables like decision-

making and institutional performance. There are also studies that have addressed crisis management in Palestinian municipalities in general, such as the study by Zagharneh (2023), which focused on situational leadership in the municipalities of Hebron Governorate.

However, the current study is distinguished from previous studies in several fundamental aspects that fill an important knowledge gap:

Focus on a Specific and Ongoing Crisis: Unlike many studies that deal with sudden crises (like a pandemic or an accident), this study focuses on the electricity crisis, which is a chronic and complex crisis with political, economic, social, and technical dimensions, requiring a different kind of leadership and management.

Specificity of the Context (A Small Municipality Under Occupation): The study addresses the case of Tarqumia Municipality, a small municipality with limited resources, operating in a unique context imposed by the Israeli occupation's control over the energy source. This context adds a layer of complexity not addressed by most traditional crisis management theories.

Direct Link Between Administrative Leadership and the Electricity Crisis: The study directly seeks to understand the "role" of administrative leadership in managing this specific crisis, rather than measuring the "impact" of a particular leadership style on a general variable. This allows for a deeper understanding of the actual practices, challenges, and opportunities facing local leaders.

In-depth Qualitative Methodology: By adopting a case study approach and in-depth interviews with key actors, the study provides rich and detailed insights from the ground, revealing internal dynamics and interactions that may not be captured by quantitative or survey-based studies.

Thus, this study does not replicate what has been done before, but builds upon it and delves into a specific research gap: understanding how administrative leadership exercises its role in managing a basic and continuous service crisis under coercive political and economic conditions, which provides an important scientific and practical addition to the literature on local governance and crisis management in Palestine.

Methodology

To achieve the study's objectives and answer its questions, a qualitative approach was adopted, specifically a case study design, as it is the most suitable method for deeply and comprehensively understanding complex phenomena in their real-world contexts. The case study allows the researcher to intensively explore the dynamics and interactions within a single unit of analysis (Tarqumia Municipality in this study), providing rich and detailed insights into the role of administrative leadership in confronting the electricity crisis.

Study Population and Sample

The study population consisted of all individuals directly involved in the management of the electricity sector and decision-making in Tarqumia Municipality. Given the qualitative nature of the study, a purposive sample was selected from individuals who possess deep knowledge and experience of the study's subject and are considered rich sources of information. The sample consisted of the following categories:

- **Senior Municipal Leadership:** An interview was conducted with the Deputy Mayor, Mr. Mohammed Abdul-Radi Al-Marqatan, who was assigned by the municipal council to follow up on this file.

- **Financial and Executive Management:** An interview was conducted with the Head of the Collection Department, Mr. Sameh Zakaria Fataftah, to understand the financial challenges and collection mechanisms.
- **Technical Staff:** An interview was conducted with engineers and technicians from the Electricity Department (Engineer Khalil Mohammed Al-Taraman and Engineer Abdul Rahman Saud Qabajah) to obtain a technical perspective on the state of the network and operational challenges.

These categories were chosen to cover the different dimensions of the crisis: the strategic leadership dimension, the financial and administrative dimension, and the technical and operational dimension, ensuring a comprehensive and integrated picture of the subject.

Data Collection Tools

The study relied on two main tools for data collection:

1. **Semi-Structured Interviews:** This was the primary tool in this study. An interview guide was designed for each category of the sample (municipal leadership, collection department, technical staff) containing a set of open-ended questions covering the main themes of the study (challenges, strategies, proposals). This tool allowed the researcher the flexibility to ask follow-up questions and delve deeper into the participants' answers to obtain detailed data.
2. **Document and Secondary Source Analysis:** A range of secondary sources was analyzed to support and triangulate the data collected from the interviews. These sources included: the initial scientific paper that formed the basis of this study, reports from Palestinian institutions such as the Energy Authority and the MAS Institute, previous academic studies, and articles and reports published on news sites related to the electricity sector in Palestine.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the interviews were analyzed using qualitative content analysis. The analysis process involved the following steps:

1. **Transcription of Interviews:** The recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and accurately.
2. **In-depth Reading and Identification of Initial Units:** The texts were read several times to form a comprehensive understanding of the data.
3. **Coding:** The basic ideas and concepts in the texts were identified and assigned codes.
4. **Development of Categories and Themes:** Similar codes were grouped into broader categories, and then the categories were grouped into main themes that reflect the answers to the study's questions. The research questions guided the construction of these themes, which centered on: challenges (external and internal), current strategies, and development proposals.
5. **Interpretation and Linking of Results:** In the final stage, the themes that were reached were interpreted and linked to the theoretical framework and previous studies to draw final conclusions and recommendations.

Results

Based on the analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted with the deputy mayor of Tarqumia, the head of the collection department, and the engineers and technicians, the results were extracted and classified into three main themes corresponding to the study questions: (1) Challenges and obstacles facing the administrative leadership, (2) Strategies and procedures followed to manage the crisis, and (3) Evaluation of effectiveness and development proposals.

Theme One: The Nature of Challenges and Obstacles in Managing the Electricity Crisis

The interviews revealed that the administrative leadership in Tarqumia Municipality faces a complex and interconnected network of challenges that can be classified into coercive external challenges, and internal ones related to the administrative, financial, and technical structure of the municipality.

1. External Challenges (Political and Economic)

The participants unanimously agreed that the largest and most influential source of the crisis is external, represented by the Israeli occupation's control over the energy sector. This was manifested in several points:

- **Dependence on the Israeli Supplier:** The engineers indicated that the "Israeli side" is the almost sole provider of the service, which gives it the ability to control the supplied quantities, leading to frequent interruptions. One engineer stated there are "problems from the service provider [the Israeli side] in not providing the necessary amount of electricity," which leads to frequent cuts, especially during peak times.
- **The Debt and Clearance Revenue Crisis:** This crisis is a vicious cycle. The municipality's debt to the Israel Electric Corporation accumulates, and Israel deducts it from Palestinian clearance revenues, which weakens the financial position of the Palestinian Authority, which in turn pressures the municipalities to pay the debts, as indicated in the literature .

2. Internal Administrative and Organizational Challenges

The interviews revealed a significant structural and administrative weakness within the municipality that exacerbates the crisis. The deputy mayor bluntly summarized these problems as the presence of "inefficient people, failure to complete tasks, [and] lack of proper administrative follow-up on employees." The details are as follows:

- **Shortage of Specialized Staff and Weak Structure:** The deputy mayor and engineers pointed to a "shortage in the number of specialized individuals" and a "shortage in human resources." More seriously, the deputy mayor revealed that "task assignments within the municipality were not based on job descriptions." He added that the investigation showed "this shortage was intentional in a previous stage for several purposes, one of which was to confine work to a specific person based on his tribal affiliations to a family," which created administrative chaos.
- **Monopoly of Knowledge and Service:** As a direct result of the previous point, a phenomenon of "monopoly of the service by specialized employees" arose, where an employee becomes the only one capable of providing a certain service. The deputy mayor stressed the need to "not give employees... the opportunity to monopolize the services provided by the municipality, so that no one else can provide this service."
- **Weak Follow-up and Commitment Mechanisms:** The deputy mayor mentioned that "there is no formal commitment from employees to follow the administrative hierarchy in

dealing with procedures and tasks they perform," which indicates weak administrative authority and a lack of a culture of accountability.

3. Financial Challenges

The financial crisis is both a result and a driver of many other challenges. It is represented by:

- **Total Reliance on Electricity Revenues:** The participants confirmed that the municipality "relied on what it collects from electricity as a main source of income" due to the "lack of other sources of income in the municipality." This reliance makes the municipality very fragile, as any disruption in electricity collection affects its ability to provide all other services.
- **High Rate of Electricity Loss:** The deputy mayor pointed to a "large loss in electricity compliance of no less than 700,000 shekels." The engineers explained that this loss is due to "electricity theft," as the "inability to pay the costs led to a tendency towards theft," in addition to technical problems in the network.
- **Difficulty in Collection and Accumulation of Debts on Citizens:** The head of the collection department stated that one of the main challenges is the "non-response of citizens" to payment, which forces the municipality to resort to "legal authorities if the response through [billing] fails." This creates a tense relationship between the municipality and the community.

4. Technical and Cultural Challenges

- **Aging Network and Need for Maintenance:** The engineers pointed to "previous loads" that need to be addressed, which indicates that the network is old or unable to keep up with urban expansion and increasing demand.
- **Absence of a Culture of Consumption Rationalization:** The engineers emphasized the "lack of a culture of electricity rationalization" among citizens who "do not adhere to rationalizing electricity consumption," which increases the pressure on the already strained network.

Theme Two: Strategies and Procedures Followed to Manage the Crisis

In the face of these challenges, the interviews showed that the new administrative leadership (the elected municipal council) has begun to implement a set of procedures and strategies that can be described as a mixture of internal restructuring and direct fieldwork.

1. On the Administrative and Leadership Level

- **Redistribution of Tasks and Activation of the Municipal Council's Role:** The deputy mayor explained that "the elected municipal council distributed tasks among its members, so that each member was assigned to follow up on the implementation of the tasks of each department of the municipality." He added that this step improved the relationship with citizens because the members are "elected" and have "community acceptance," which "facilitated the process of implementing tasks."
- **Attempt to Enforce Adherence to the Administrative Hierarchy:** One of the priorities is to "restructure the administrative work within the municipality" and "assign employees to tasks based on their job descriptions," with the aim of moving out of the previous state of chaos.
- **Direct Leadership and Decision-Making:** The head of the collection department explained that the sources of decision-making are the "municipal council" and the "general administration," but "the highest in authority and decision-making is the mayor," while the

municipal director, an employee, handles "follow-up and coordination." This indicates a clear decision-making structure under the new leadership.

2. On the Financial Level (Collection and Debt Reduction)

- **Dealing with Arrears:** Accumulated debts are handled through flexible mechanisms, where a citizen can submit a request to the municipal council to schedule his debts, and the "municipal council decided to charge a monthly amount of 100 shekels" as a minimum. Also, "accumulated debts are reduced by a certain percentage" based on an assessment of the citizens' needs.
- **Activation of the Prepayment System:** The head of the collection department indicated that "the prepayment system has facilitated the work and eliminated all the problems that existed in the past," describing it as "good in the collection process, and more beneficial and effective than just the billing issue."

3. On the Technical and Field Level (Loss Reduction)

- **Intensive Field Follow-up:** The deputy mayor emphasized the "importance of follow-up and field visits to the electricity network and meters to reduce the loss rate." This measure has been very fruitful, as he stated that "through this procedure and field follow-up, about 3 million shekels of electricity loss have been recovered."
- **Identifying and Treating Loss Hotspots:** Work is being done to "identify the areas that are found to constitute the largest percentage of loss, and then work on treating this loss" through technical procedures such as hiring specialized companies and installing "modern electronic meters."

4. On the Level of Relationship with the Community

- **Direct Communication:** The new leadership seeks to "conduct direct interviews with the community, and remove barriers and restrictions between citizens and the municipality," and to meet their needs "according to the capabilities and resources available to the municipality."
- **Handling Complaints:** There is a public services department through which complaints are submitted, which are then followed up by "the competent authorities for each complaint, who in turn provide the appropriate solution, and carry out the task of following up on the procedure and implementation."

Theme Three: Evaluation of Effectiveness and Development Proposals

The interview participants provided an implicit evaluation of the effectiveness of the current measures and put forward a set of proposals that reflect their vision of what is required to achieve better crisis management.

Evaluation of the Effectiveness of Current Measures

It can be concluded that the new measures have achieved remarkable success in some aspects, but it is still partial. The fieldwork to control losses has yielded direct and positive financial results. The prepayment system has also proven to be highly effective in improving collection. However, the structural challenges remain. The problem of staff shortages, poor infrastructure, and dependence on the Israeli supplier are deep-seated problems that cannot be solved solely through internal administrative measures.

Development Proposals

The proposals put forward by the participants focused on the need to strengthen leadership, develop human resources, adopt technical solutions, and enhance the relationship with the community.

1. **The Need for Strong and Decisive Leadership:** The most prominent demand from the deputy mayor was the need for "a leadership capable of enforcing decisions on employees and following up on their commitment to these decisions." This reflects a feeling that administrative procedures alone are not enough without a strong authority capable of implementing them and confronting any internal resistance.
2. **Human Resources Development:** The engineers stressed the need for "training specialized individuals" and "continuous training and development" of skills to keep pace with the rapid technological development in the electricity sector. This complements the deputy mayor's vision of the need to break monopolies and appoint competent people.
3. **Technical Solutions and Alternative Energy:** It was proposed to hire technical companies to install modern electronic meters as a solution to the problem of losses. Although not explicitly mentioned in the interviews as a direct proposal, the trend towards solar energy, which Tarqumia Municipality supports in other projects, represents a long-term strategic solution that can reduce dependency and pressure on the network.
4. **Increasing Citizen Awareness:** The engineers proposed "increasing citizen awareness in rationalizing electricity consumption and urging them to adhere to the principles of good governance and public ethics," recognizing that the citizen is a key partner in solving the crisis.

Discussion

The results of this study present a realistic and complex picture of the role of administrative leadership in managing the electricity crisis in Tarqumia Municipality. By linking these findings to the theoretical framework and previous studies, a set of deep analytical conclusions can be drawn that explain the existing dynamics and answer the study's questions.

1. Administrative Leadership in the Context of a Dual Crisis: A Crisis of Service and a Crisis of Sovereignty

The study's findings confirm that the electricity crisis in Tarqumia is not merely an administrative or technical crisis, but a "dual crisis." The first dimension is a crisis of managing a basic public service, manifested in the internal challenges revealed by the interviews: weak structure, lack of competencies, financial and technical losses, and collection difficulties. These challenges are consistent with what many local government bodies in the developing world face, as noted in the literature.

The second, and more impactful, dimension is a "crisis of sovereignty" resulting from the Israeli occupation. The near-total dependence on the Israeli supplier, and the use of electricity as a political and financial pressure tool through the clearance revenue mechanism, places the municipality's administrative leadership in an extremely critical position. It is accountable to its citizens for providing a service over whose source and cost it has no control. This context makes the application of traditional crisis management models, which assume an organization's control over its environment, very difficult. The leadership here is not just managing an internal crisis, but is constantly reacting to a crisis imposed from the outside, which is consistent with the analysis of the Palestine Studies Institute (2023) on the occupation's obstruction of development plans in the electricity sector.

2. The Required Leadership Style: Between Firmness and Participative Flexibility

The results reveal a clear tension in the required leadership style. On one hand, there is an explicit call from the deputy mayor for a "leadership capable of enforcing decisions," which leans towards an autocratic or firm style. This demand is understandable in light of the state of administrative laxity, information monopoly, and non-adherence to the hierarchy that prevailed previously. This finding aligns with Al-Amri's study (2024), which found a positive relationship between autocratic leadership and the crisis containment dimension in hospitals during the COVID-19 pandemic, suggesting that a degree of firmness is necessary to restore order in chaotic situations.

On the other hand, the successful measures that the new leadership has begun to implement have a participative and democratic character. The "distribution of tasks among municipal council members" to follow up on departments, "conducting direct interviews with the community,"; and "removing barriers with citizens" are all practices consistent with the participative leadership that Al-Zubaidi's study (2025) emphasized for its importance in utilizing collective capabilities and enhancing response to crises. This indicates that successful leadership in this context is not a single rigid style, but rather a Situational Leadership, a conclusion that strongly aligns with Zagharneh's study (2023) conducted in the same context of Hebron Governorate municipalities. The current study provides empirical evidence from the electricity crisis that effective leadership must be capable of using firmness to impose internal order and reform, while simultaneously using flexibility and participation to build trust with employees and the local community and mobilize them to face the crisis.

3. Effectiveness of Strategies: Tactical Successes in the Face of Strategic Challenges

The results show that the strategies adopted by the administrative leadership, such as intensifying field follow-up to reduce losses and implementing the prepayment system, are important "tactical successes." They have led to tangible and immediate improvements in the municipality's financial situation, which proves that effective internal management can make a difference even in the most difficult circumstances. Recovering 3 million shekels from losses is no small feat, and it is evidence that leadership can achieve results when it focuses its efforts. This aligns with the general principles of crisis management which emphasize damage containment and activity recovery (Youssef et al., 2023).

However, these successes remain tactical because they do not address the root and "strategic" causes of the crisis. The problem of dependence on the Israeli source, restrictions on building an independent infrastructure, and the crisis of accumulated debt are strategic challenges that are beyond the ability of a single municipality to solve. The administrative leadership in Tarqumia, no matter how competent, is effectively managing the symptoms, but lacks the tools to treat the disease itself. This finding differs from the context of the studies by Jaaffar & others (2023) or Marburger (2022), where the crises were internal or temporary, and the leadership had greater control over the strategic environment. This study, therefore, contributes by highlighting the limitations of local administrative leadership in a context of political occupation, where tactical successes do not necessarily translate into strategic solutions.

4. The Dual Role of the Municipality: Service Provider and Development Institution

The results revealed a deep problem related to the role of the municipality. The participants indicated that the municipality relies on electricity revenues to finance all its other services. This turns the electricity department from just a department for providing a basic service into a "cash cow" for the entire budget. This situation puts enormous pressure on this department

and makes any decision related to it (such as service pricing or network investment) primarily a financial decision rather than a service or technical one.

This dual role puts the administrative leadership in a dilemma. On the one hand, it is required to provide a stable and reasonably priced electricity service to citizens (its service role). On the other hand, it is forced to maximize revenues from this service to finance the rest of its activities (its financial role). This contradiction may partially explain the reason for the high debts on citizens and the difficulty of investing in modernizing the network. Overcoming this dilemma requires the administrative leadership to think of creative solutions to diversify sources of income, which is a major challenge in light of the difficult economic conditions, but it is necessary to free the electricity sector from this double burden.

Conclusion

This study explored the crucial role of administrative leadership in managing the multifaceted electricity crisis facing the municipality of Turaqia, revealing that it is fundamentally a political crisis rooted in forced dependence on Israeli infrastructure. The crisis manifests itself in multiple dimensions—external political constraints, internal administrative weaknesses, financial constraints, and societal tensions—requiring municipal leadership to deal with complex and often contradictory pressures simultaneously. Through qualitative analysis of the responses of the study sample, the study shows that small Palestinian municipalities operate in a unique governance context, where traditional crisis management theories prove inadequate, as leaders must balance immediate tactical responses with long-term strategic planning, while operating under severe political and resource constraints.

The findings reveal that effective administrative leadership in this context requires a hybrid approach combining authoritative decision-making to address internal administrative laxity with participatory strategies to build community trust and engagement. The newly elected municipal council in Tarqumia has achieved notable tactical successes through direct field interventions, systematic loss reduction efforts, and improved collection mechanisms, resulting in measurable short-term improvements. However, these achievements remain largely reactive responses to daily crises rather than proactive strategic solutions addressing root causes. The study identifies a critical gap between current tactical effectiveness and the need for transformative leadership capable of transitioning from crisis management to sustainable development within existing political realities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and the preceding discussion, this study offers a set of practical and targeted recommendations aimed at enhancing the role of administrative leadership in managing the electricity crisis and improving service delivery in Tarqumia Municipality and similar Palestinian municipalities.

1. Implement integrated strategic leadership with measurable key performance indicators: Develop a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan for the electricity sector with specific targets, including achieving a 5% annual reduction in technical and non-technical losses, increasing revenue from non-electricity municipal services by 15% within three years, and establishing monthly performance dashboards to track progress on debt reduction and service quality metrics.
2. Implement a concrete income diversification strategy: generate additional municipal revenue through specific mechanisms, including leasing unused municipal land to small businesses (estimated at NIS 80,000 per year), and establishing a fee system for municipal waste management (estimated at NIS 120,000 per year) to reduce dependence on electricity revenues from 85% to 60% within four years.

3. Launching the Municipal Solar Energy Initiative with a concrete framework: establishing uniform feed-in tariffs of 0.45 NIS per kWh for municipal solar energy projects, creating a simplified 60-day approval process for installing solar panels on public buildings, and providing 70% financing through the Palestine Investment Fund for solar energy projects generating between 100 and 500 kilowatts, with the goal of achieving 30% energy independence for participating municipalities within five years.
4. Implementation of a structured debt relief and administrative capacity program: Negotiation of a national debt restructuring agreement that allows municipalities to convert 50% of accumulated debt into low-interest loans for 10 years (2% per annum).
5. Establish mandatory quarterly training programs for electricity department staff covering smart grid technologies and financial management, with certificates of completion linked to opportunities for performance improvement and rewards or promotions at work.
6. Develop a community crisis management system: Implementation of bi-monthly "electricity transparency forums" where municipal leadership presents detailed financial reports showing accurate debt figures and loss rates, along with community monitoring where neighborhood representatives track electricity theft, with the goal of achieving a 20% reduction in non-technical losses through community participation.
7. Establish a framework for transitioning from crisis to strategy: Implementation of a structured monthly leadership review process, with 60% of meeting time focused on immediate crisis response and 40% on long-term strategic planning, including quarterly consultations with local business stakeholders and community leaders to identify collaborative solutions for energy security and economic development under current political constraints.
8. Future Research Directions: Conduct comprehensive comparative studies examining electricity crisis management across Palestinian municipalities of varying sizes and governance structures, incorporating quantitative analysis of leadership effectiveness on key performance indicators (loss rates, collection efficiency, citizen satisfaction), while simultaneously assessing the socio-economic impact of electricity crises on local communities and evaluating the technical and financial feasibility of renewable energy solutions and public-private partnership models for small municipal contexts.

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