


2015

Strategies to Sustain Public Private Partnership: A Lebanese Agency Case Study

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Walden University

College of Management and Technology

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Nada Dimachkieh Sweidan

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Walden University
2015

Abstract

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by

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MBA, Lebanese American University, 2009

BS, Lebanese American University, 2001

Doctoral Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

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December 2015

Abstract

Four public private partnerships have been created in Lebanon to fulfill the promises of better public value and accelerated economic development for sustainable business development. The problem is some business owners embark on public private partnership projects without following known documented strategies that ensure business sustainability. The purpose of the single case study was to explore the strategies business owners used to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon. The conceptual framework included the theory of X-efficiency and the new public management model. The Northern Lebanon public private partnership was chosen for the study. All 7 business owners participated through interviews for data collection. The emergent themes from the interviews were compared and contrasted across participants' responses and were cross referenced with the academic literature and printed agency reports. Data interpretations were triangulated through member checking. The business owners identified 7 specific strategies to monitor the agency's work. The top 3 strategies were proper selection of partners, the need for a strong technical director, and hiring of professional staff. Three additional strategies noted were the articulation of a clear mission and vision, followed by the development of bylaws and the identification of international best practices. Holding monthly partners' meetings to discuss emerging needs was the last strategy identified for consistent follow up and forward movement of the businesses. The findings over time could promote social change in Lebanon by revealing how municipalities can partner with the private sector and nongovernment organizations to reduce poverty, create jobs, and ensure local economic development.

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate the following: To my father and mother, Marwan and Hiam, who have always urged me to study and work hard as these are the strongest tools at hand for survival today. To my husband, Samer, who supported me throughout the process. To my kids, Lana, Lea, and Karim, who will one day earn their Doctorates and look with pride to their parents and grandparents.

Acknowledgments

I would first like to thank Dr. Sandy Kolberg for her indispensable support, help, feedback, and time. Dr. Kolberg displayed much patience and encouragement throughout the preparation of the paper. Her knowledge and comments provided excellent insight into conducting the research and drafting a thorough dissertation. Dr. Kolberg was generous in sparing her time to go over the body of work despite her busy schedule, providing constructive criticism that ultimately resulted in the following Doctoral study. I would like also to thank Dr. Yvonne Doll, my second committee member, for her responsiveness, professionalism, and the support for completing the study. I would like to thank my URR, Dr. Carol-Anne Faint. Her review and feedback were extremely helpful. Many thanks to DBA Program Director, Dr. Freda Turner, for her guidance, wisdom, and commitment to an outstanding Walden University DBA program.

My parents will always be my source of pride and inspiration. Without them, I would never have reached such heights academically or professionally. Words are never enough to thank them. May God protect and blesses them, and always make them proud of us. Finally, I would like to thank my husband Samer for offering me the support and encouragement to complete the Doctorate.

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Section 1: Foundation of the Study

Introduction

Since 1990, the United Nations Development Program has implemented human development programs at the local level in more than 15 countries (United Nations Development Program, 2012). The program managers fostered the creation of more than 30 Local Economic Development Agencies (LEDA) in developing countries that joined the network, including more than 500 LEDA in the developed world (United Nations Development Program, 2012). Bringing together public and private partners enabled the agencies to maximize the possible endogenous economic and competitive advantage of a region in a global context, by making use of the local natural, human, and institutional resources (Feser, 2014). Heideman (2011) illustrated that the LEDA facilitate the implementation of complex initiatives and partnerships, and provide solutions that lead to poverty reduction, gender equality, job creation, and micro and small enterprise development.

The focus of the study was to explore the strategies business owners can follow to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon. Section 1 contained a brief and succinct introduction to the study. The background of the problem preceded the problem and purpose statements. A description of the nature of the study and a statement of the precise research question guided the study followed the conceptual framework, along with the assumptions, limitations, delimitations that constrain the study, and the significance of the study. The remainder of Section 1 included the review of available professional and academic literature forming the foundation of the study.

Background of the Problem

Government leaders advocate public private partnerships as an organizational solution to societal problems involving the government, business, and the civil society (Brinkerhoff & Brinkerhoff, 2011). The reason behind the promotion of public private partnership practices is the partnerships are often an essential factor in economic development (Mauldin, 2012). Public and private partners could achieve optimal results when the partners align with the mission, business, and quality goals of the participating organizations and recognize that organizations function within competitive environments (O'Brien & Kaluzny, 2014). Heideman (2011) indicated public private partnerships in the context of local economic development help in addressing the government's and the industry's shortcomings through the incorporation of the strengths of both the private and public sectors.

As a means of improving the neglected and institutionally weak regions of Lebanon and at the same time conducting development initiatives, in late 2010 the United Nations Development Program in Lebanon established four LEDAs in the North, South, Bekaa, and Beirut Southern Suburbs. The LEDAs were the first to bring together social responsibility and private sector management techniques to Lebanon (United Nations Development Program, 2012). The survival of the LEDAs was crucial. Lebanese business owners had an increasing need to understand how to implement strategies to improve the local economic development and ensure the sustainability of businesses through the public private partnership.

Problem Statement

Public and private partners fulfill the promises of better public value, accelerated economic development, and increased cost-effective service provisions (Grogan, 2011). The mobilized resources for public private partnerships increased from \$41 million in 2012 to \$942 million in 2013 (International Finance Corporation, 2013). The general business problem was that business owners embark on public private partnerships projects without adequate awareness, assessment, and utilization of success factors to ensure business sustainability. The specific business problem was that business owners often lacked strategies to sustain public private partnership businesses.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon. The population of the study business owners of a local economic development agency in the Northern region of Lebanon. The LEDA, a public private partnership, is in the development phase, a very delicate phase towards producing a long-term mature business. The results of the case study revealed what support business owners, whether technical and/or financial, need from the United Nations Development Program to ensure the sustainability of the business. The results contributed to the improvement of designing additional public private partnership businesses in Lebanon.

Nature of the Study

The three research methodologies considered for this study were quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. A quantitative method relies on closed-ended questions

and deals with validation or disaffirmation of the tested hypothesis (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). I did not consider the quantitative method since the purpose of the study did not include an enumeration of numerical data, predictions, or testing hypothesis. Mixed methods research is an approach that considers both qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same research inquiry; however, the mixed method might help develop rich perceptions into various phenomena of interest that researchers cannot fully understand using only a quantitative or a qualitative method (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). With mixed methods, I might minimize shortages in both the qualitative and quantitative methods, yet I might reduce the ability to explore the in-depth perspectives of a case study. Qualitative research allows for a deep and information-rich understanding of situations and processes, especially with regard to organizational leadership (Bryman, 2012). To explore the strategies business owners can follow to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon, qualitative data collection and analysis were the best method to follow.

Common qualitative research designs include phenomenological study, multiple case study, collective case study, instrumental case study, and intrinsic, single case study. Willig (2013) stated that researchers use the phenomenological approach to explain the phenomenon as related to, or as perceived by, the participants in the situation. Phenomenological research was also inappropriate for this study because the aim was to identify the strategies business leaders used to sustain public private partnerships, and not to describe the lived experiences of the business leaders with respect to a specific phenomenon.

Researchers often use the case study approach to research design for organizational leadership (Dillon, Tinsley, Madsen, & Rogers, 2013). Yin (2011) strongly urged the use of case studies when the research questions require explanations. Case study answers questions begin with *how* and *why* words, as opposed to questions beginning with *whom*, *what*, and *where*, which are key discriminators. Qualitative case studies generally involve focusing on a single or multiple of instances (Thomas, 2011). Multiple case study designs include exploring similarities and differences between different cases. The multiple case study was not appropriate as I was considering only the Local Economic Development Agency in the North Lebanon case. Stake (1995) categorized a case study as collective, instrumental, and intrinsic. The collective case study involves data collection from different cases to understand a specific phenomenon (Stake, 1995). The collective case study was not suitable because participants are from the same agency. An instrumental case study refers to attention to a particular case in order to examine the issue for further understanding and generalization (Stake, 1995). Stake clarified that if a researcher wanted to understand a particular case with no intention of generalizing or building a theory, then the case was an intrinsic and not an instrumental case. I chose the intrinsic single case study design because the research goal was to get a deeper and better understanding of what strategies Lebanese business owners followed when they embarked on public private partnerships to sustain the businesses.

Research Question

The central research question was: What strategies do business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon?

Interview Questions

The following open-ended interview questions enabled the participants to share the strategies they used to develop the public private partnership.

1. Why were you motivated to join the public private partnership?
2. How effective were the steps you considered in the establishment phase to ensure the growth of the public private partnership from a startup phase to successful and sustainable business?
3. What strategic factors contributed to a sustainable public private partnership in Lebanon?
4. What strategies did you use to establish the public private partnership and ensure sustainable businesses?
5. What were the main challenges in achieving a sustainable public private partnership business in Lebanon?
6. Why do you need support as a business owner from the government and United Nations Development Program leaders to address the challenges for a sustainable public private partnership business in Lebanon?
7. What other information would you like to add regarding strategies business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses?

Conceptual Framework

For a comprehensive approach, the conceptual framework required looking at literature from different sources about public private partnerships and focusing on developing the local economy. For the study, I based the conceptual framework of the

theory of X-efficiency developed by Leibenstein (1966) and the new public management model developed by Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012). In his X-efficiency theory, Leibenstein (1966) explained public institutions or enterprises could not crash if official financial and monetary policies were available to safeguard or minimize the probability of failure. Public private partnerships emerged as a solution for governments, as government leaders often lacked the knowledge in administering loan guarantee programs (Mauldin, 2012). The typical high bureaucracy government interventions and states' organizational structures cause inefficiencies in public institutions (Heybati, Roodposhti, Nikoomaram, & Ahmadi, 2011). According to Leibenstein's theory, public private partnerships are essential to diminish the sources of X-efficiency in public organizations and to allow government leaders to react to market forces and to have a competitive advantage (Heybati et al., 2011).

The new public management model emerged in the United Kingdom, under Margaret Thatcher's governance, because of the inefficiencies of public organizations in the 1980s (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012). The need to reduce public expenditures and inefficiency as well as to overcome the lack of managerial skills in public organizations inspired the emergence of the new public management model (Seitanidi, 2010).

Advocates of new public management model focus on restructuring the institutions structure, reforming the state, and enhancing the administration of public enterprises (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012). Fatemi and Behmanesh identified seven principles of the new public management model:

1. The first principle is the emphasis on management skills for active, objective,

and voluntary control of organizations.

2. The second principle is defining standards and criteria for measuring performance through determining the objectives and indicators success.
3. The third principle is emphasizing the use of output controls, instead of using input controls.
4. The fourth principle is moving toward separation units and decentralization in the public sector.
5. The fifth principle is moving toward greater competition in the public sector that leads to lower costs and better standards.
6. The sixth principle is emphasizing private sector management styles.
7. The seventh principle is emphasizing affectivity and economic efficiency to use the resources.

The consideration of the new public management model and the X-efficiency theory were of value to understanding the public private partnership emergence and expected output. Business owners might contribute and improve the inefficiencies in public organizations by establishing public private partnerships. Business owners' awareness of the benefits, risks, success, and failure factors of public private partnerships was significant. As business owners planned strategies, recruited competent staff, and aligned project management to the set business strategies, the sustainability of the businesses might be ensured.

Operational Definitions

The following defined terms provided the context for the use of the study:

Local Economic Development Agency. The LEDA serves to facilitate the implementation of complex initiatives and partnerships, and provide specific solutions that lead to poverty reduction, gender equality, job creation, and micro and small enterprise development (Heideman, 2011).

Local government. The term local government refers to administrative authorities managing areas smaller than a state (Berg, 2011).

Microbusiness. Microbusiness refers to a business with at most 10 workers or employees (Bosworth & Atterton, 2012).

Private sector. The private sector encompasses individuals who work for an organization not financed by the government (Nolan, 2014).

Public private partnership. A public private partnership is an agreement or contract with the government (public) and the private sector to deliver infrastructure or services (Sarker, 2011).

Public sector. The public sector is the component of the state that exists to create and distribute government services and commodities for the citizens or government (Sharma, Bajpai, & Holani, 2011).

Strategy. The strategy is a comprehensive plan to guide the management in an organization with respect to structure and processes to achieve the objectives of the stakeholders (Bozkurta, Kalkanb, & Arman, 2014).

Assumptions, Limitations, and Delimitations

Through the execution of the case study research design to explore the strategies business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon, the it

was important to identify the assumptions, limitations, and delimitations. The assumption section included unverified facts. The limitation section referred to possible weaknesses of the study. The delimitations section referred to the boundaries of the study.

Assumptions

Assumptions refer to things researchers cannot control. Neuman (2011) stated assumptions are announcements about issues researchers cannot observe or test. I conducted the study while maintaining two key assumptions. One assumption was that the participants' input and answers were honest and true at the time the interview took place. Participants provided honest feedback if the researcher confirmed confidentiality (Simon et al., 2011). By ensuring confidentiality in the study, as written in the Consent Agreement, the interview environment might help participants give open and honest responses. Another assumption was that the participants provided information without any personal agenda or gain. By ensuring confidentiality of the identity of the participants, United Nations Development Program officials in Lebanon would not be able to connect the participants' inputs to specific persons. As compensation, the participants received a brief complimentary summary of the final doctoral study. I expected the participants had no personal motivation in the study other than to provide honest insights and opinions to further the cause of the research.

Limitations

The results of the study might not be transferable and were limited to the expectations, attitudes, actions, and values of the business owners of public private

partnership in Lebanon, because the specificity of the geographical region. The total number of partners in the Lebanese public private partnership was 10, of which only 7 were business owners. The study only included seven participants, making the study limited to their experiences and feedback.

Delimitations

According to Leedy and Ormrod (2013), delimitations provided boundaries and narrowed the scope of the study. The purposeful selection of participants limited the study to business owners of public private partnership in the Northern region of Lebanon. I excluded the participation of government leaders of the Northern public private partnership. I further excluded business owners of the other three public private partnerships in the other regions of Lebanon, namely, the South, Bekaa, and Beirut Southern Suburbs. Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of the four Agencies on the Lebanese map.



Figure 1. Map of public private partnership agencies in Lebanon.

Significance of the Study

Although numerous studies about public private partnerships are available (Wu, 2010), literature on public private partnerships and economic development in Lebanon was unavailable. Exploring the strategies business owners used to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon was vital. In the contribution to business practice section, I discuss how the study might fill the gap in understanding public private partnership businesses. I illustrated how the study would reflect a positive change in the implications for social change section.

Contribution to Business Practice

Through the results of the study, I provided the United Nations Development Program in Lebanon with a work assessment of the established public private partnership. The findings section revealed the strategies business owners used to establish and operate a public private partnership in Lebanon. The results of the study also revealed to business owners and government leaders in Lebanon how to employ the success factors applicable to Lebanon. According to Hsieh (2011), local economic development occurs through the establishment of projects that enable the creation and retention of jobs, and projects that attract businesses into the area.

Undertaking the case study of the Northern Agency might aid the leaders of the United Nations Development Program in creating new strategies to support the Northern Lebanese Agency. The findings of the study provided the public and private partners of the Agency with recommendations to ensure improved sustainability of businesses. The public often indicated that businesses operate to the detriment of the lower classes, and

businesspersons perceived the government as self-righteous and anti-profit in outlook (Houghton, 2011). Despite such perceptions, public private ventures have become common in recent years, especially in developing countries, as a means to increase profits, manage risks, and attain sustainable economic development (Houghton, 2011; Ismail, 2013). The public and private partners of the Agency in Lebanon help was decreasing poverty, supporting local businesses in various branches of production, improving the economy by creating jobs, and making the poor, rural areas a better habitat for the underprivileged. The work of the agency needed further research; it also needed to explore what strategies business owners used to sustain the public private partnership businesses.

Implications for Social Change

A public private partnership focusing on enhancing local economic development is a new concept in Lebanon (United Nations Development Program, 2012), where business owners and government leaders approach issues of local development with a private sector frame of mind. The findings from the study contributed to the body of knowledge about the public private partnership in Lebanon. Through the study, business owners might also gain knowledge about benefits and advantages of public private partnerships and strategies that could sustain the businesses in Lebanon. The results of the study might also raise the awareness of leaders in Lebanon about the different ways in which business owners may collaborate with the public sector to benefit eradicating common ideas that the private sector is inefficient. From the results, business owners might learn how to collaborate with government leaders in providing efficient goods and

services, which could ultimately improve the public image and increase profitability.

A crucial matter is a need for adequate resources for the agencies' startup and operations phase (United Nations Development Program, 2012). The adequate resources include availability of funds as well as the technical capacity to identify strategies contributing to sustainable business and economic growth in the regions of Lebanon. The results of the study provided the United Nations Development Program with information about the ways to offer inclusive, equitable, and sustainable development programs. Successful local economic development programs have proven elusive in most small towns and rural areas because of the slow processes of land reform, lack of emphasis on sustainable local economies, weak local government capacity, and limited engagement with local economic potential (Heideman, 2011; Houghton, 2011; Rogerson, 2011).

A Review of the Professional and Academic Literature

The purpose of the qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies business owners use to sustain PPP businesses in Lebanon. The population of was concentrated in the study business owners of a local economic development agency in the Northern region of Lebanon. The data analysis, when combined with existing literature, research, and theories on public private partnerships provided the basis of the study. I answered the research question: What strategies did business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon?

I organized the review of the professional and literature review in 10 sections to address three key topics. The first key topic was the conceptual framework of the public private partnerships. The second key topic was to understand the public private

partnership businesses in general. The third key topic was the strategies and sustainability of businesses. While searching the literature, I looked for recent peer-reviewed journal articles as well as books on private partnerships and business strategies. The literature review included 120 references, of which 111 were peer-reviewed, six were scholarly books, and three were non-journal peer-reviewed articles. Of the references 108 out of 120 (90.0%) had a publication date less than 5 years from my anticipated completion year (2015), and 111 references out of 120 (92.75%) were peer-reviewed articles from journals.

Organizing the review in 10 sections allowed me to formulate a thorough understanding of the concept of public private partnerships specifically illustrating success and failure factors of public private partnerships as well as strategies to sustain businesses, both of which were important to address the business problem. The average value of (€) 22,900 million for public private partnership projects signed in Europe between the years 2002 and 2006 was three times the yearly average over the previous decade (Engel, Fischer, & Galetovic, 2013). The high number of established public private partnerships revealed the rising importance of public private partnerships. The prominent arguments for public private partnerships are maximization of benefits through collaboration, reduction, if not elimination, of misallocation of funds (Houghton, 2011), and prevention of corrupt management of revenues (Aaronson, 2011). The literature review, along with interviews with Lebanese business owners who own public private partnership highlighted the importance of adapting or amending strategies that could ensure the sustainability of the partnership business.

X-Efficiency Theory and New Public Management Model

For a comprehensive approach and for the purpose of the study, the conceptual framework necessitated considering literature from different sources about public private partnerships benefits, risks, themes, success factors, failure factors, business strategies, and the alignment between project management and business strategies. In the literature, the role and importance of public private partnerships in achieving local economic development was often determined with the use of a policy tools framework, namely, X-efficiency theory (Leibenstein, 1966) and the new public management model (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012). Heybati, Roodposhti, Nikoomaram, and Ahmadi (2011) stated that the theoretical underpinning the concept of the public private partnership traced back to the theory of X-efficiency developed by Leibenstein (1966). The schemas formed a solid ground for the maturity of the concept of public private partnership specifically as it relates to strategies that sustain the businesses.

The X-efficiency theory relates to the efficiency of the companies and addresses several influencing factors. The X in X-efficiency represents the unspecified and unknown influencing factors responsible for the inefficiency (Frantz, 2007). Leibenstein (1966) based his research about efficiency on the microeconomic level, as the concept of allocative efficiency, which explored what is achievable by collaboration with a perfect market (Bogetoft, Färe, & Obel, 2006). Leibenstein doubted the allocative efficiency theory and questioned if estimates of allocative inefficiencies in a monopoly would consider the economic environment of organizations does not affect the firm's efficiency (Frantz, 2007). According to Leibenstein's (1966) X-efficiency theory, public private

partnerships are crucial to reducing the causes of X-efficiency in public organizations and to make them react to market forces and become more competitive.

Leibenstein (1966) based his theory on the assumption that increases in X-efficiency is due to increases in motivational efficiency-workers and to improvements in the inefficient markets for knowledge. He specified three elements as significant determinations of X-efficiency: (a) intra-plant motivational efficiency, (b) external motivational efficiency, and (c) non-market input efficiency. He illustrated: (a) some firms operate under conditions of non-minimum cost with possibility for an industry to have a non-minimal cost equilibrium; and (b) improvements in X-efficiency are part of the process of development. He built his theory on the assumption that the price of the unit cost is subject to the level of X-efficiency, which consequently depends on the degree of competitive pressure as well as other motivational factors. Based on the data Leibenstein collected, often the amount the firms gained by increasing allocative efficient was trivial while the amount gained by increasing X-efficiency is frequently significant.

Leibenstein (1966) based his theory on five assumptions. The first assumption considers that humans are not programmable machines but individuals who have a free will (Frantz, 2007). The second assumption is the influence of the competitive environment on the efficiency or inefficiency of the firm's production processes. The third assumption can hinder companies' performance efficiency is that market information is not similarly accessible to actors in the market, consequently, some firms might gain an advantage over the competitors, which permits them to achieve better outputs. The fourth assumption is human beings might not act rationally in every

situation. The fifth assumption is the influence of governmental regulations affects the X-efficiency. According to Button and Weyman-Jones (1994), companies managed by the public sector have a high possibility for increased X-inefficiency.

In 1975 and 1978, Leibenstein elaborated the theoretical background of the research and developed an improved X-efficiency theory. Leibenstein (1978) developed a framework to show firms operating in a less-than good competition are producing outputs not as much of efficiency as firms functioning in another organizational environment is characterized by more competition. Leibenstein (1978) explained the general X-efficiency as an illustration of what he suggested as micro–micro theory, and proposed the theory as exemplified sense of new research boundary in economics, the first since the macroeconomic revolution of the 1930s. Frantz (2007) stated the X-efficiency is the theory of why similar inputs do not always record the same technically efficient output. In addition, X-efficiency is a concept refers to the actual world of actual individuals and organizations, and focuses on realizing the ways in which partners could be better. Through the X-efficiency theory, researchers can have a deeper understanding of how the market order works (Leibenstein, 1978). Leibenstein faced criticism regarding the content of the X-efficiency theory. Stigler (1976) criticized Leibenstein's arguments as the types of inefficiencies mentioned by Leibenstein assimilate to the traditional allocative inefficiency. Stigler (1976) argued Leibenstein's apparatus did not allow for effective concrete analysis of economic problems.

Loasby (1976) argued the X-efficiency theory is important because Leibenstein did not go far enough in his analysis. Loasby (1976) claimed Leibenstein was too

conservative, as Leibenstein wished to give a different groundwork for a boosted economy.

Leibenstein had supporters for his X-efficiency theory. Hosseini (2003) supported the X-efficiency theory and discussed that Leibenstein wanted to attain a better representative sight on economic processes to show the economic environment of organizations can have an influence in inefficient production. Frantz (2007) recognized Leibenstein's notion of efficiency is not just only explainable in a difficult structures framework, but also vital to an evolutionary interpretation of the economic system. X-efficiency is a theory about the choices and actions in particular organizational environments, and not a common theory of markets or the economic order, yet the foundation enables a clear understanding of how the market order actually works (Frantz, 2007). Ayadi (2014) conducted an empirical study of the Tunisian banking industry; Ayadi's findings revealed management capacities and the efficiency level of banks are closely interrelated, and the economic conditions influenced the X-efficiency levels as well as the market structure of the banks' environment. The findings of Ayadi's (2014) study provided empirical evidence for the factors influencing X-efficiency. Zelenyuk and Zheka (2006) empirically investigated the X-efficiency across firms explicitly in the context of the corporate governance in the Ukraine. The researchers investigated whether a positive relationship existed between the corporate governance quality and a firm's X-efficiency. The findings revealed additional empirical support for Leibenstein's knowledge that the main source of X-efficiency is the motivation at every level of management / ownership (Zelenyuk & Zheka, 2006).

In 1980, the new public management model emerged due to the inefficiencies of public organizations (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012). Ismail (2013) stated public private partnerships have become common in recent years, especially in the developing country, as a means to increase profits, manage risks, and attain sustainable economic development. Kurniawan, Ogunlana, and Motawa (2014) declared government leaders are using the public private partnership framework as an alternative approach for infrastructure projects in case of public funds shortage. Organizations are utilizing adequate methods to support the delivery of competitive products and services with a comparative advantage in a consistent and sustainable approach (Leitao, Cunha, Valentea, & Marques, 2013). The urgent need to reduce public spending and inefficiency in public organizations, advocates of new public management model encouraged the establishment of public private partnerships (Seitanidi, 2010). Heybati et al., (2011) further explained the new management aimed at modernizing the state, reinventing the institutional structure, and improving the management of public enterprises. The need to reduce public expenditures and inefficiency and to control the lack of managerial skills and knowledge in public organizations inspired the emergence of the new management model (Heybatiet al., 2011).

Advocates of the new public management model claimed public sector organizations were unaccountable, overly bureaucratic, inefficient, and largely unconcerned with the quality of the services delivered, accordingly, public managers had to become professional by adopting the mores and behaviors of the private sector counterparts and establishing public private partnerships (Baker, 2012). Forrer et al.

(2010) highlighted business owners have to employ effective leadership to achieve economic development by utilizing public private partnerships. Eriksson (2013) stated the leadership of the project manager and involving the project manager in developing a business strategy would play an important role in aligning project management with business strategies, thus ensuring business sustainability.

Ismail and Haris (2014) discussed the top three causes of public private partnership implementation in Hong Kong, Australia, and the UK. The private initiative, high quality of required services, and economic development pressure demanding more facilities are the main reasons for Hong Kong. In Australia, the three core reasons are economic development pressure demanding more facilities, high quality of services required, and inefficiency because of lack of competition and public monopoly. The top causes for implementing the public private partnership in the UK are economic development pressure demanding more facilities, shortage of government funding, and to escape public investment restriction.

Wang and Zhao (2014) explained the financial situation, political system, relevant legislation, and infrastructure demands are four significant environmental factors for the development of the effective public private partnership. The public private partnership framework allows the private sector to use the expertise and financial capital for a better cost for the money to public users (Wibowo & Alfen, 2015). The overall partnership objective is to bring together capabilities of the public and private sectors to share risks and provide services (Waring, Currie, & Bishop, 2013). Business owners might contribute and improve the inefficiencies in public organizations by establishing public

private partnerships. Awareness by business owners about the benefits, risks, success, and failure factors of public private partnerships is significant. As business owners plan strategies, recruit competent staff and specifically competent project managers, and align project management to the set business strategies, this might ensure sustainability of the businesses.

Public Private Partnership Origin and Definition

The public private partnership is growing in popularity as a governing model for delivery of goods and services (Heideman, 2011). The public private partnership has become a new trend in public assets management, and has been an increasingly important approach to historic preservation and urban regeneration (Ismail, 2013). Wu (2010) further explained the partnerships are a legal form of cooperation of both public and private sectors, with the principles of jointly participation and sharing of responsibility. The government leaders use the public private partnerships framework to react against their financial restrictions and to deliver public services (Lopesa & Caetanob, 2015). Ismail and Haris (2014) stated the public private partnership involves the assignment of responsibility from the public sector to the private sector for the designing, building, financing, and operating public sector assets accordingly over an agreed period of 25 to 30 years.

The origin of public private partnership traces back to the 1990s. Emirullah and Azam (2014) stated public private partnerships term has become popular since the early 1990s led by the United Kingdom and other advanced countries such as Japan and Australia, and then leaders adopted the term in many parts of the world including in the

USA, Western Europe, Latin America, Australia, and East and South Asia. Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Trojanowski (2013) indicated since the early 1980s, public private partnerships have grown dynamically both in European countries and the United States of America. Ismail and Haris (2014) declared in 1983 cooperation between the private and public sectors started as the government leaders introduced the Malaysian Incorporated Policy to foster Malaysia's economic growth.

Public private partnerships can be highly complex in conception and implementation; partnerships can take years to gestate and may begin without the deliberate intention of the players involved to shape a formal partnership (Codescasa & Ponzini, 2011; Siddiquee, 2011). The increasing financial restrictions and economic crisis led government leaders on sharing financial risk with private partners (Demirag, Khadaroo, Stapleton, & Stevenson, 2011). Mistarihi, Al Refai, Al Qaid, and Qeed (2012) estimated business leaders established around 860 public private partnership projects, worth £ 239 billion, over the past 20 years in the UK. Engel, Fischer, and Galetovic (2013) further declared the average annual value of Euro 22,900 million for public private partnership projects signed in Europe between the years 2002 and 2006 was three times the yearly average over the previous decade. The partners of the public private partnership are the government or local governments and the private sector including non-governmental organizations that partners consider essential to the partnership businesses (Parashar, 2014). The term, public private partnership, has become the main method of providing public services in both the developed and developing countries. The public and private leaders are leveraging joint resources to pursue a common goal.

There are many ways to define a business public private partnership. Brinkerhoff and Brinkerhoff (2011) defined the term partnership as a collaboration of many features such as jointly determined goals, trust-based and informal relationships, collaborative and consensus-based decision-making, non-hierarchical and horizontal structures and processes, synergistic interactions between partners, shared accountability for outcomes, and results. Wu (2010) further explained the partnerships are a legal form of cooperation of both public and private sectors, with the principles of joint participation and sharing of responsibility. Keating and Keating (2013) defined public private partnerships as a long-term relationship between the state and a private non-profit or profit-seeking firm for designing, constructing, maintaining, and delivering the infrastructure or social services.

The classification of defined public private partnerships has lately come to be associated with the institutional arrangements allow public sector organizations to organize and govern the outsourcing and delivery of public services through contracts with private sector companies (Sarker, 2011). In a general sense, public private partnerships are collective works between the private and public actors formed with the general aim of providing optimum goods and services to the people (Heideman, 2011; Sarker, 2011). The definition of a public private partnership is a contractual long-term agreement whereby business owners and government leaders translate the mutual willingness of cooperation into a regulated relationship.

Business owners and government leaders establish public private partnerships for different reasons. Appuhami, Perera, and Perera (2011) and Rogerson (2011) claimed that government leaders and private partner require regular and extensive interaction in public

private ventures. Babatunde, Opawole, and Akinsiku (2012) highlighted state and federal governments explored more subtle alternatives to accessing private sector resources in the delivery and operation of public facilities through public private partnerships. Mouraviev and Kakabadse (2014) stated that a public private partnership exists where partners from the public and private sectors jointly contribute resources to a project, share responsibilities, risk, and provide public services using the newly built or renovated facility. Business owners and government leaders go into public private partnerships to merge multi-sector capacities and manage social and economic changes (Grossman, 2012). Heald and Georgiou (2011) claimed that the provision of public services to residents in the government's name comprises private sector investment in infrastructure work and maintenance. Turhani and Shqau (2011) claimed that public private partnerships give the private sector investors the opportunity to make profits by providing services more cost-effectively than public institutions. The public private partnership is a tool to prepare a project where business owners can improve the public service delivered to the beneficiaries, decrease the investors' risk, and reduce government's expenditures for construction operation and maintenance (Solana, 2014). Business owners and government leaders would form a public private partnership to join resources and benefit the communities.

Experience from worldwide countries reveals that government leaders collaborated with business owners to deliver enhanced services to the communities. In Nigeria, the federal government is moving into a private sector driven the economy, and thus putting in place laws to regulate the public private partnerships contractual

arrangements (Babatunde, Opawole, & Akinsiku, 2012). Since 2002, the Federal Government of Nigeria contributed over 10 trillion dollars for infrastructure public private partnership projects, while the target for 2020 for infrastructure projects is 32 trillion dollars (Babatunde et al., 2012). In Russia, the public-private partnership development began in 2005, when the government adopted the federal law on concessions and started forming an institutional framework (Mouraviev & Kakabadse, 2014). In 2008, the Russian Government amended the law on concessions to kick-start partnership formation including transport, housing and utilities, and social infrastructure (Mouraviev, Kakabadse, & Robinson, 2012).

In Malaysia, the introduction of the Malaysian Incorporated Policy occurred in 1983 resulted coordination between the public and private sectors, the businesses established in the framework of public private partnerships fostered the economic growth (Ismail & Haris, 2014). Cheung, Chan, and Kajewski (2012) further discussed the public and private partners are establishing public private partnerships in many developed countries such as Europe, Australia and America to deliver building and construction projects. Jamali (2004) discussed in Lebanon, after two decades of political unrest, the efforts of the public sector faded due to physical damage, the absence of government supervision, and a shortage of resources. Considering the cumulative negative effects of Lebanese operational, financial, institutional, and environmental problems, business leaders proposed public private partnerships as a potential resolution to leverage needed technical and managerial proficiency, ensure capital injections, and build greater efficiency (Jamali, 2004). Government leaders worldwide are drafting laws to legalize the

public private partnerships to ensure regulated delivery of services.

Benefits and Challenges of Public Private Partnerships

Business owners have to be aware of the benefits as well as the challenges of public private partnership businesses. Fischer, Leidel, Riemann, and Alfen (2010) and Hampton, Baldwin, and Holt (2012) discussed analyzing public private partnership markets and looking for effective models to provide advice for practitioners regarding project organization, project financing, and risk management is significant. Babatunde et al. (2012) stated successful public private partnerships build on the experience of each partner to meet clearly defined needs and give a net benefit to the public through the appropriate allocation of resources, risks and rewards. Glennie and Lodhia (2013) further explained the sustainability of a partnership's agenda refers to the capacity of the agenda to remain functionally and financially viable over time. Ismail and Haris (2014) declared understanding the perceptions of the public and private sectors is crucial because the effective implementation of public private partnership requires a commitment from the contracting parties. Brinkerhoff (2011) claimed the utilization of public private partnership yielded different levels of costs and benefits to the stakeholders depending on the developed partnership. The academic review of the literature revealed significant information on worldwide experiences of public private partnerships. Business owners and government leaders might guarantee a sustainable and profitable business if took into consideration the worldwide experiences (Hampton, Baldwin, & Holt, 2012) while establishing a partnership business. Establishing the public private partnerships based on a well-planned and structured business would ensure a successful and sustainable

partnership (Wojewnik-Filipkowska & Trojanowski, 2013).

The public private partnerships would be beneficial for both the private and public sectors in regards to risk sharing, finance, and project's implementation. Mladenovic, Vajdic, Wundsch, and Temeljotov-Salaj (2013) stated the main reasons for partnerships between the public and private sectors are the risk sharing and ability of the private sector to deliver, maintain, finance, and operate projects at lower costs than the public sector. Wetterberg (2011) posited collaboration between the public and private sector would result in positive outcomes. Hahn (2012) explained business owners in particular have a desire to participate in the community, but often do not have an outlet, and expressed a public private partnership could be that outlet. Kociemska (2010) indicated many researchers have analyzed public private partnerships as organizational solutions to demanding societal problems that demand the comparative advantages of government, business, and civil society. The experience the business owners have in managing businesses and the commitment business owners have towards enhancing public service delivery are reasons to establish successful and public private partnerships.

Establishing a public private partnership is for the advantage and benefit of both the public and private partners. Grogan (2011) stated the public private partnerships fulfill the promises of better public value, accelerated development, and an increase in cost-effective service provisions. Hahn (2012) listed the opportunities arising from public private partnerships as more education, trust building, exchange of expertise, sharing lessons learned, promotion of citizen programs, and development of resource databases. Seitani (2010) indicated collaborating with private businesses allow government

leaders to benefit from the acumen and expertise, and to leverage financial resources for costly and complex public service projects. Kraak et al. (2012) stated governments seek out partners in the private sector for greater funding and innovative provisions of goods and services. The key benefits of public private partnerships include the opportunity for extensive involvement of a private partner, the transfer of risk, flexibility for private partner selection, possibility of public asset ownership rights transfer to private partners, and preferential tax treatment (Wojewnik-Filipkowska & Trojanowski, 2013).

Mendel and Brudney (2012) recommended three reasons for utilizing the public private partnership strategy. First, the private sector can save the costs of planning, designing, constructing, operating, and avoiding bureaucracy in administrative procedures. Second, organizations can maintain balanced risk-return arrangements. Third, private participation can ease the government's financial burden. Public private partnerships are vital to both the private sectors and the public sectors, since partners have many benefits such as; lower costs, lower taxpayer risk, reduced initial cost, reduced budget deficits, maximization of user, charges, increased effectiveness, and increased efficiency (Landow & Ebdon, 2012). The use of public private partnership in Ireland has resulted in the private sector's involvement in services have previously been the only providers of the public sector (Reeves, 2011). The benefits of establishing public private partnerships include: (a) accelerated development, (b) cost-effective service provisions, (c) exchange of expertise, (d) leverage of financial resources, (e) innovative provisions of goods and services, (f) transfer of risks, (g) preferential tax treatment, (h) project costs saving, (i) administrative bureaucracy procedures avoidance, and (j) increased

effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery.

Business owners and government leaders might face different challenges while establishing and managing a public private partnership business. Hahn (2012) identified the following challenges in building partnerships between the public and private sectors; (a) legal restrictions, (b) differences in perception, (c) identifying priorities, (d) keeping people motivated, (e) cultural and jurisdictional issues between groups like municipalities and private/public sectors, (f) lack of trust, (g) communication, and (h) rules and regulations. Identifying clearly the outputs and outcomes are challenging for the public private partnerships (Koontz & Thomas, 2012). Small firms have entry barriers to joining a public private partnership (Demirag, Khadaroo, Stapleton, & Stevenson, 2012). Sharma (2012) stated the executives' interest in joining public private partnerships depend on the market size. Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Trojanowski (2013) claimed the constraint on public private partnership development could be psychological, educational, institutional, and legal factors. Measuring outcomes fosters a learning environment in which managers and policymakers can identify how to adjust policy tools and programs to attain the goals (Denee et al., 2012). Bloomfield and Ahern (2011) pointed out two main challenges: (a) uncontrollable government circumstances in long-term contracts; and (b) unfavorable contracting conditions that include poor planning and implementation, noncompetitive contracting, and reduced transparency and accountability.

Related to the need to balance priorities, Mauldin (2012) also highlighted two challenges associated with effectively managing public private partnerships. The first

challenge is that groups must clearly specify each partner's role and level of authority because without such clarity, role confusion may hinder the achievement of goals. The second challenge is that each partner must identify performance expectations and link performance expectations to the tools used to achieve policy goals. The deficits in skills among public officials require ongoing and capacity-building programs to enhance awareness of executives in the public sector (Rebeiz, 2012). Without appropriate identification of challenges and accurate planning to address the challenges, business owners and government leaders would risk acquiring a sustainable public private partnership.

To build on the benefits and overcome challenges, business owners and government leaders need to execute a cost-benefit analysis prior to establishing a public private partnership. Gbadegesin and Aluko (2014) discussed the nature of the project, technical capabilities, and risk involvement are the significant challenges for public private partnership businesses. Forrer, Kee, Newcomer, and Boyer (2010) claimed the situation was critical to conduct a costs and benefits analysis to provide the partners information about the comparative advantage of the partnership. Conducting a cost-benefit analysis allows stakeholders to weigh the advantages and disadvantages, which helps stakeholders decide whether to pursue the partnership or to seek other avenues (Kraak et al., 2012). For public private partnerships to succeed, both partners need to improve operations and reach compromises that may benefit stakeholders (Santoso, Joewono, Wibowo, Sinaga, & Santosa, 2012). Wang (2015) suggested government actions to reduce public concerns and advance political support for public private

partnerships, such as conducting surveys, establishing a task force with government leaders and local stakeholders. A public private partnership established based on a well-founded understanding of the advantages and disadvantages of the partnership, is likely to generate the expected outcomes set by the business owners and government leaders.

Public Private Partnerships Themes

Public and private partners join resources to deliver different themes of public private partnerships. Adisu (2014) stated the main goal of most developing nations' economic, political, and social development planners is to create a competitive and sustainable environment that will support booming businesses and permit the individual citizens a modest living condition. Scholars agree, government leaders establish a public private partnership to provide efficient, good quality, and innovative service delivery (Hefetz & Warner, 2012). Public private partnerships are complex, yet essential to modern government and local economic development (Mendel & Brudney, 2012). Leland and Read (2013) stated government entities and private firms are cooperating for the sake of the real estate industry. Marschall (2012) discussed the public and private sector players are building partnerships to maintain and develop sustainable transportation infrastructure.

The public private partnership includes traditional government infrastructure, housing and utility infrastructure, and social sector development (Mouraviev & Kakabadse, 2014). Demirag, Khadaroo, Stapleton, and Stevenson (2012) expressed the public private partnership is a framework for the provision of infrastructure-based public services. Sharma, Bajpai, and Holani (2011) discussed public private partnerships themes

include infrastructure and mix-economical enterprises. Chinyere & Xu (2012) stated public private partnerships are platforms to deliver infrastructure, finance/investment, and development trade projects. Business owners and government leaders might use the public private partnership framework to deliver infrastructure development projects (Keating & Keating, 2013). Parashar (2014) clarified when the government is a facilitator for housing delivery system, the private sector is collaborating with the public sector to develop the housing delivery models.

Many communities, especially small and developing ones, are successful in creating and implementing partnerships with each other. These partnerships are critical to local economic development (Hawkins, 2011). Local economic development is a process by which local government and community-based groups manage the existing resources and organize a partnership to create new jobs and stimulate activity (Alexander, 2012). Rahaman, Dhar, and Hossain (2014) stated NGOs are prioritizing the tasks in the field of poverty alleviation in urban areas. Entities within a community, such as NGOs, colleges, and community groups, form alliances to have an active involvement in economic development (Pastor, Benner, & Matsouka, 2011). Goldsmith (2011) posited public and private partners would reduce poverty in the region if working together in the framework of partnership to enhance economic development. Grogan (2011) explained business owners and government leaders are establishing social public private partnerships to ensure an intimate connection with people's lives. Business owners and government leaders used the public private partnership approach to enhance the local economic development, create job opportunities, and reduce poverty.

Public Private Partnerships Success Factors

Success factors are imperative tools for business owners and government leaders to use. Hwang, Zhao, and Gay (2013) illustrated the importance of identifying the critical success factors for the public private partnership which are necessary for having successful businesses. To achieve sustainable partnerships, law enforcement agencies need to tailor programs for private sector support to reflect industry core competencies, include clear measurable results, and address private sector perceptions (Avina, 2011). A willingness to compromise and collaborate, to strive for open communication, to develop trust, and respect are important factors in delivering public works through a public private partnership (Kraak et al., 2012). When engaging in projects requiring private sector involvement, municipal-level public managers have to assess the level of government before initiating processes with those outside the organizational boundaries (Alexander, 2012). For public private partnerships to be sustainable, both the private and public sectors need to recognize each other better, own up to the shortcomings, hold open discussions, and work through issues that come up during the project (Santoso et al., 2012). Business owners and government leaders must know and understand the needs of each other as well as have the willingness to collaborate to serve better the communities.

Researchers identified public private partnership key success factors in different ways. Rouboutsos and Macario (2013) identified capabilities of both the private and public sectors to be a key success factor. Public private partnerships require active participation from members; partners must become familiar with one another and define the objectives and characteristics (Siddiquee, 2011). Active and organized professional

cooperation among partners at all employment levels from, linked to project success through the mechanism of consistent network membership, enable relationships to mature and communication efficiencies to increase (Alexander, 2012). O'Brien and Kaluzny (2014) stressed partners need to align goals for success and sustainability, define and assess the performance capacity and expectations, and promote a culture of multilevel collaboration.

Kort and Klijn (2011) stated the government capacity is a key success factor for sustainable public private partnership businesses. Yang, Hou, and Wang (2013) clarified the government capacity refers to the expertise, familiarity, management, organizational structure, and credibility has to supervise, negotiate and operate public private partnership businesses. Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Trojanowski (2013) declared a well-prepared public private partnership law is conducive to better-structured transactions and may contribute to a more reliable, transparent, and efficient investment process. Tserng, Russell, Hsu, and Lin (2012) stated political support provides the public private partnership businesses opportunities. Hwang, Zhao, and Gay (2013) stated the legal basis, binding contract, risk-sharing arrangement, defined mechanisms of public private partnership's needs, and political support are key success factors for the public private partnership. The researchers identified the key success factors based on case study experiences. The factors differ based on the circumstances of each country.

Cheung (2012), Ismail (2013), Babatunde et al. (2012), and Jamali (2004) argued there are many public private partnership success factors, of which the top five are the most critical success factors. Cheung et al. (2012) discussed the top five success factors

for public private partnerships in Hong Kong are: (a) favorable legal framework, (b) commitment and accountability of public and private sectors, (c) strong and good private consortium, (d) stable macro-economic condition, and (e) appropriate risk allocation and risk sharing. Ismail (2013) further discussed the top five success factors as perceived by the respondents are: (a) good governance, (b) commitment to the public and private sectors, (c) favorable legal framework, (d) sound economic policy, and (e) availability of finance market. Babatunde et al. (2012) identified public private success factors as: (a) effective procurement, (b) project implementation, (c) government guarantee, (d) favorable economic conditions, and (e) available financial market. Trust, openness, and fairness are the basis of successful public private partnerships (Jamali, 2004).

Experiences differ from one country to another, yet the availability of favorable legal framework is a critical factor underlying behind successful public private partnerships.

Identifying success factors of public private partnerships might differ from the business owners and government leaders. Mladenovic et al. (2013) differentiated between the critical success factors of the public and private sectors. The most important factors for the public sector included stable political and social environment, predictable and transparent legal framework, favorable investment climate, the stable macroeconomic environment, and transportation infrastructure needs. The critical success factors for the private sector included detailed project planning and evaluation, transparent, efficient procurement process, proper risk allocation, project economic efficiency, capable public and private partners, and professional relationship between stakeholders. To measure the performance of the public private partnership projects, outputs and outcomes are the main

measuring tools (Denee et al., 2012). Public private partnerships also have a measurable profit potential as the shared risks of costs between public and private partners, allocating the risk can lead to improved economic development (Appuhami et al., 2011; Ismail, 2013; Kraak et al., 2012). To assess the performance and sustainability of the public private partnerships, business owners and government leaders need to measure the costs against the benefits of the partnership.

Public Private Partnerships Failure Factors

Researchers discussed failure factors of public private partnerships. Presonu and Gherman (2014) stated despite strong growth, public private partnership projects fail if partners do not agree on the allocation of project risks, or the partnership lacks of a suitable contracting and governance framework (Turhani, 2013). Several scholars have expressed concern that partnerships of cross-sector collaboration insulates the government from citizen preferences and may result in policy outcomes that do not include the collective public interest (Leland & Read, 2013). According to Wilson, Pelham, and Duffield (2010), the prerequisites for public private partnership development include budgetary constraints faced by the state in the implementation of large public investments, benefits offered by cooperation with a private partner, change of the government's role in the contemporary economy.

Liu and Wilkinson (2013) identified the political, social and legal risks, unfavorable economic and commercial conditions, high transaction costs and lengthy lead-time as well as difficulties linked to contracting partners as negative aspects of public private partnership. The shortage of public and private partners in understanding

design and administration of economic development partnerships may lead to significant shortcomings in the service delivery (Lombard & Morris, 2012). Business owners and government leaders must consider the failure factors while establishing and operating public private partnerships.

An academic review of the literature revealed critical failure factors. A majority of public and private partners aborted the businesses before contract implementation because of high transaction costs (Jefferies & McGeorge, 2009), political disagreement (Cheung, Chan, & Kajewski, 2010), and inability to resolve legal issues (Zhang, 2005). Abdul Aziz and Kassim (2011) described the organizational, financial, technical capabilities, the nature of the project, and risks are critical factors for the public private partnership businesses. Ismail and Haris (2014) discussed the lack of government procedures and guidelines on public private partnership might contribute to the failure of the partnership businesses.

Trangkanont and Charoenngam (2014) identified 10 critical failure factors in Thailand and classified the factors under three categories. Under the first category, the critical failure factors are ineffective change management, poor bidding documents, and inappropriate contractors originated from the ineffective public private partnership policy and strategy. The second category included the undermined organizational culture and staff's behavior related to the innate disregard of the public client agency. The third category included the emergence of political risks, the economic crisis, relative law, policies, and the finance limitation. Although the failure factors might differ from one country experience to another, yet poor management and planning (Ahern, 2011) would

affect the public private partnership progress.

Strategy, Sustainability, and Sustainable Development

The strategy concept is important to understand while establishing and operating a business. Hunger and Wheelen (2010) defined the strategy of an organization as a complete plan showing how the collaboration will achieve its mission and objectives. Shavarini, Salimian, Nazemi, and Alborzi (2013) identified business strategy as the way in which companies achieve competitive advantage. Murthy (2012) further stated business professionals are adapting and mitigating strategies to meet the basic needs of people, moderate the use of natural resources, and renew the earth's depleting limited resources. Alsudiri, Al-Karaghoul, and Eldabi (2013) stated business strategy take full advantage of competitive advantage and minimizes competitive disadvantage.

Business leaders need to consider business sustainability to ensure long-term businesses. Rankin, Gray, Boehljec, and Alexanderdet (2011) identified five levels of sustainability: (a) innovative sustainability, (b) organizational sustainability, (c) profit-driven sustainability, (d) sustainability for regulatory compliance, and (e) societal sustainability. The sustainability characteristics of each level are overlapping than isolated one from another (Pitrenaite-Zilenienea & Mikulskieneb, 2014). Svensson and Wagner (2011) referred to business sustainability as the total effort of a company, including its demand and supply chain networks, to reduce the impact on the Earth's life and ecosystem. Mather, Denby, Wood, and Harrison (2011) illustrated incorporating sustainability principles into an organization's central activities necessitates challenges to people's habitual thinking and practices to build better relationships between people, and

between people and environment. Høgevold and Svensson (2012) stated successful management of business sustainability involve coordination of business departments, subsequently, driving forces in the marketplace and society in general encourage the emergence of business sustainability models.

Business leaders need to consider sustainable development while operating the businesses. Mather et al. (2011) clarified the references related to the word, *development* reveal that sustainability develop as a more suitable way to express the intent in terms of social responsibility. Hart and Dowell (2011) said sustainable development, which reduces the environmental burden and increases the economic benefits of lesser-developed markets, could deliver a competitive advantage in the future. When establishing public private partnership businesses, business owners and government leaders have to plan and implement strategies to ensure business sustainability and sustainable development (Larson & Gray, 2011).

Strategies

Researchers discussed seven types of strategies. Alsudiri et al. (2013) stated the typical business company usually reflects three types of strategy: corporate strategy, business strategy, and functional strategy. Corporate strategy refers to a company's global direction in term of its general attitude towards development and management of its various product lines and businesses, while business strategy occurs at the business unit or product level and stresses enhancement of the competitive status of a corporation's products or services (Alsudiri, Al-Karaghoul, & Eldabi, 2013). The functional strategy is the practice taken by a functional area manager to achieve the

business unit objectives. Schroeder, Goldstein, and Rungtusanatham (2011) stated the profit-generating engine of any company is its operations. In developing strategies, companies need to create suitable strategic role.

Slack and Lewis (2011) illustrated operations strategy emerges from four different perspectives. First, operations strategy is a top-down reflection of what the whole group in business wants to do. Second, operations strategy is a bottom-up activity where operations improvements cumulatively build strategy. Third, operations strategy involves translating market requirements into operations decisions. Fourth, operations strategy involves exploiting the capabilities or operations resources in chosen markets.

Murthy (2012) further discussed the natural-resource-based view where three strategic capabilities of pollution prevention, product stewardship, and sustainable development could each possibly yield the business sustainable competitive advantages. Pollution prevention, which seeks to prevent waste and emissions, could give a sustainable competitive advantage of lower costs. Product stewardship, which expands the prevention to include the entire value chain of the business's product systems, creates the potential for competitive advantage through strategic pre-emption. Sustainable development, which reduces the environmental burden and increases the economic benefits of lesser-developed markets, could deliver a competitive advantage in the future. Business owners would identify strategies applicable to the businesses and operate a business accordingly.

Aligning Project Management to Business Strategies

Communicating and aligning project management with business strategies is

significant. Alsudiri et al. (2013) highlighted business owners need to focus on aligning the project management with the business strategy to provide a well-developed direction of both strategy and projects, since the misalignment might cause an organization to not achieve tangible goals and objectives. Eriksson (2013) further stressed research and experience indicate that some internal factors such as communications, the capability and leadership of the project manager, the involvement of project manager in the initial strategy development phase, and the executive's commitment in aligning large project management to business strategy.

Business success is a strategic management concept in which project management must align with both short and long term goals of the company (Al-Tmeemy, Abdul-Rahman, & Harun, 2011; Han & Hovav, 2013). If business owners do not align project management with business strategies, Larson and Gray (2011) argued some organizations' project management fail to support the strategic plan. Shi (2011) stressed the right implementation of the project management can add value to an organization. Patanakul and Shenhar (2011) highlighted if project managers are not aware of the business strategies, then managers would fail in addressing a proper project plan. The selection of risk management strategies depend on the risk observations of managers, the political environment and the consistence of informal and formal governance characteristics (Krause, 2014). Ensuring that project management are following the business strategies requires business owners to communicate the strategies properly, recruit skilled personal, and align project management with the set strategies.

Relevance of the Review

Public private partnership leaders might be effective and beneficial to the communities in some contexts, but the establishment of the partnership might be costly and inefficient in other circumstances. Ismail and Haris (2014) emphasized contracting parties should have clear and detailed guidelines for the partnership to ensure the effective, efficient, and successful businesses. Nolan (2014) stated both non-state and state actors are applying a combination of public and private regulation to enhance the framework for corporate rights compliance. Studying carefully the structure, organizational model, strategies, and objectives of an existing public private partnership in the North region of Lebanon to determine what strategies may benefit business owners to ensure the sustainability of business was vital.

The business leaders, following a participatory development process, facilitates common design and implementation of a mutual development strategy by using the local resources and competitive gain in an inclusive context, with the final objective of generating jobs and stimulating economic activity (Lawrence, 2013). The United Nations Development Program used the public private partnership model as a framework for the management of the four LEDAs in Lebanon to conceive as forums for social dialogue and negotiations where local actors can promote the processes of economic development (United Nations Development Program, 2012). The accessibility of reliable infrastructure facilities plays an essential role in enhancing and sustaining economic growth in both developing and developed countries (Wibowo & Alfen, 2014). The offered review aimed at understanding and recognizing the benefits, risks, success, and failure factors arise

from using public private partnerships in the framework of LEDA. The gap was apparent when the Lebanese owners needed to embark on public private partnerships. Jamali (2004) illustrated public and private partners have to evaluate the partnership business on the merits, on a case-by-case basis, and contemplate when the ingredients found for effective collaboration (e.g. commitment, interdependence, individual excellence, communication, and integrity).

Summary and Transition

The public private partnerships established by the United Nations Development Program could play a vital role in promoting sustainable business and economic growth, reinforcing local competitive systems, and creating inclusive markets for the community. The study was necessary to explore the strategies business owners can follow to sustain the partnership business in Lebanon and to recommend the support needed for the United Nations Development Program and the Lebanese government in this respect.

In Section 2, I re-emphasize the purpose of the study, and described my role in the data collection process. I included a description of the participants, the population, sampling method, and sample size. Section 2 ends with a more detailed description of the research methodology, design, data collection, and analysis information. In Section 3, I present the findings as well as recommendations for actions and for future studies.

Section 2: The Project

Section 2 includes information on the purpose of the study, research methodology, and my role. The research study used a qualitative, single case-study approach. Section 2 includes a thorough description of the data collection and analysis techniques as well as the ethical basis, reliability, and validity of the study.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this qualitative, single case study was to explore the strategies business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon. The population of the study was business owners of a local economic development agency in the Northern region of Lebanon. The LEDA, a public private partnership, is in the development phase, a very delicate phase toward producing a long-term mature business. The results of the case study revealed what support the business owners—whether technical and/or financial—needed from the United Nations Development Program to ensure the sustainability of the business. The results also contributed to the improvement of designing additional public private partnership businesses in Lebanon.

Role of the Researcher

My objective was to conduct new research to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic to recognize the success and failure factors of public private partnerships and the best strategies to sustain the businesses. The Belmont Report is the foundation of the U.S. laws governing ethical research on humans (Corman, 2010). The three areas of ethical considerations in the Belmont Report include respect, beneficence, and justice. I showed respect by giving weight to participants' considered opinions and choices and

allowing them to express ideas without interruption. I confirmed beneficence by making sure that no one was able to connect the participants' inputs to specific persons, thus no harm affects the participants while disclosing the insights, suggestions, and opinions. To ensure justice, I treated the seven participants equally in terms of explaining the purpose of the study, reading the consent form, answering the questions honestly, allowing them to express ideas and opinions without stopping them, confirming confidentiality, member checking, verifying answers, and sharing with participants the findings.

I addressed the research question while considering the three areas of ethical considerations in the Belmont Report throughout the process, reflecting well on Walden University, ensuring confidentiality of participants, and sharing the approved Institutional Review Board consent form prior to the interview with the participants. I have been working with the United Nations Development Program since 2002; the experience has given me a solid foundation of the rules, regulations, and policies for conducting the single case study, although the agencies were not under my direct supervision. The adequate understanding of the support process the United Nations Development Program leaders were providing to the agencies afforded me an optimum, yet nonbiased, basis to execute the research. The position provided recognition on the practices taking place, with no preconceptions of the support process. I mitigated bias by keeping away all the preconceptions about the issue under study by making sure that participants expressed clearly their ideas without stopping them from making considered judgments. I listened to participants, recorded the interview, interpreted the data, and verified it through member checking, and shared the findings with participants.

The literature review provided familiarity with international experiences of public and private sectors in succeeding or failing to achieve the objectives set through partnerships. From the problem and purpose statement along with the review of the academic literature, I was able to identify the research and sampling methods, participants, and determine the appropriate sample size. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) stated an interview protocol includes information to remind the interviewer of important things during the interview. The interview protocol (Appendix A) was my procedural guide throughout the interview process. I collected data using semistructured interview technique, member checking, interview notes, and audio recording of the interview participants. Csordas, Dole, Tran, Strickland, and Storck (2010) stated the open-ended nature of interviewing would lead to further questions for elaboration and pursue multiple narratives. The objective was to code and organize the retrieved data into themes, analyze, and interpret the findings of the study.

Participants

The business owners of a public private partnership business in the North region of Lebanon were the population of the study. Three factors were the basis of the selection criteria. First, the participant was a business owner. Second, the business owner was a private sector partner in the LEDA in North Lebanon. Third, the business owner was an active member in contributing to strategies would sustain the public private partnership business. Ten different public and private partners were working together to enhance the local economy through an LEDA (United Nations Development Program, 2012). Out of those 10 partners, 7 were business owners. The strategies to gain access to the 7 business

owners were through personal and professional relationships. I reduced bias by listening to participants, recording the interview, interpreting the data and verifying it through member checking.

The North Agency Director expressed his interest in supporting the study by providing the contact information to me (see Appendix B). During the regular board meeting, he informed the business owners that he gave me the participants' contact information, and that I sent an invitation e-mail to participate in the study. The relationships I had with the director of the agency from previous business engagements assisted in establishing a working relationship with the participants. I shared the consent agreement by e-mail with the participants to explain the research goals, and seek permission for an interview meeting.

The sampling method was a purposeful selection of the participants based on the selected criteria (Bryman, 2012). Researchers use purposive sampling to explore information rich cases that afford the most opportunity to gain a meaningful comprehension of the issue (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). Ke, Wang, Chan, and Cheung (2011) adopted the purposive approach to select a group of experts for research focused on conducting a more up-to-date evaluation of the potential risks in China's public private partnership projects. Conducting multiple interviews with the seven participants lead to exploring the strategies business owners used to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon.

Research Method and Design

Qualitative research is appropriate for an in-depth and information-rich

understanding of a certain subject (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative research brings the life of the organization to the study, illustrates context, and allows readers to view the world through the author's eyes (Bansal & Corley, 2011; Thomas & Magilvy, 2011). Based on the literature review, I executed on qualitative research, the qualitative single case study design was appropriate to the study.

Research Method

The three research methodologies are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The use of a quantitative method relies on closed-ended questions and deals with validation or disaffirmation of the tested hypothesis (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). Yin (2011) stated researchers use quantitative research to answer questions about relationships among measured variables with the purpose of explaining, predicting, or controlling a phenomenon. Quantitative research is more objective, yet lacks the contextual detail of qualitative research (Yin, 2011). I did not consider the quantitative method since the purpose of the study would not include an enumeration of numerical data, predictions, or testing hypothesis. Mixed methods research is an approach that considers both the qualitative and quantitative research methods in the same research inquiry, however, the mixed method might help develop rich perceptions into various phenomena of interest that researchers cannot fully understand using only a quantitative or a qualitative method (Venkatesh, Brown, & Bala, 2013). I might minimize shortages in both the qualitative and quantitative methods by using the mixed method, yet I might reduce the ability to explore the in-depth perspectives of the case study. Qualitative research allows for a deep and information-rich understanding of situations and

processes, especially with regard to organizational leadership (Bryman, 2012).

Qualitative research helps in the interpretation and explanation of relationships between variables and findings in quantitative research (Agerfalk, 2013). Some academics maintain that researchers reserve qualitative research for the social sciences, whereas many scholars and practitioners argue that qualitative methods are rigorous enough for acceptance into scholarly and professional publications (Leitner & Hayes, 2011).

The interview questions posed in the study were open-ended and non-directional. The goal was to obtain insights into a specific social process in a specific location and context. The use of qualitative methods in answering open-ended interview questions will help researchers achieve the research goals when discussing specific organization process (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2012). Willig (2013) added the main objective of the qualitative research is to describe the experiences, and not to predict the outcomes of a phenomenon. In line with the purpose of exploring the strategies business owners followed to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon, qualitative research was the appropriate method for the study of this unexplored area of research. Researchers cannot use quantitative variables and methods alone when understanding of the organization, its context, goals, and processes (Caniato, Kalchschmidt, & Ronchi, 2011).

Research Design

Common qualitative research designs include phenomenological study, multiple case study, collective case study, instrumental case study, and intrinsic single case study. (Hyeit, Kenny, & Dickson-Swift, 2014). Phenomenology research can help in explaining a phenomenon that occurs in business as related by individuals describing the experiences

(Willig, 2013). Phenomenological research studies focus on the way things appear to people through lived experiences or in consciousness where phenomenology researchers' aim at providing a rich textured description of lived experiences (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). The phenomenological approach was not an optimal choice because the study purpose was to identify the strategies used by business leaders to sustain public private partnerships, and not to describe the lived experiences of the business leaders around a specific phenomenon.

Case study approaches are helpful in complex situations where researchers strive to understand and improve business practice (Yin, 2011). Yin added the use of case study research incorporates observations, information from individuals, data and artifact analysis relative to the issue. Case studies are ideal for understanding organizational and business processes as these processes vary across institutional contexts, thus requiring specific approaches to inquiry (Kezar, 2012). Bustamante and Moeller (2013) stated researchers using case studies tend to place emphasis on a particular program, its context, and the experience of its participants to provide an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon, and not because of its generalizability.

Qualitative case studies generally involve focusing on a single case or multiple cases (Thomas, 2011). Thomas (2011) stated single case study design contains no element of comparison, while multiple case study design involves cross-case analysis of different cases. The single case study design was appropriate to the study since the participants were business owners of the public private partnership in Lebanon. Stake (1995) categorized a case study as intrinsic, instrumental, and collective. The purpose of

the research allows researchers to determine the case study design (Thomas, 2011).

The collective case study involves data collection from different cases to understand a specific phenomenon (Stake, 1995). The study involved only the business owners of the public private partnership in Lebanon, thus data collection from different cases was not applicable. An instrumental case study refers to an attention to a particular case with an intention to examine the issue for further understanding and generalization (Stake, 1995). Stake (1995) clarified a researcher uses the intrinsic case study design to understand a particular case with no intention to generalize or build a theory. Following the intrinsic single case study design allowed a better understanding of what strategies Lebanese business owners followed when embarked on a public private partnership to sustain the businesses and enhanced the local economic development.

The achievement of data saturation was significant while doing research. Kerr, Nixon, and Wild (2010) stated the simple definition of saturation is data adequacy, whereby the researcher is obtaining no new information from additional qualitative data. Roberts et al. (2014) explained they reached the data saturation when no new themes and codes emerged with additional interviews. Mason (2010) noted researchers might interview a small number of participants to obtain a deep understanding, analyze interview responses thoroughly, and categorize themes easily. Mason (2010) suggested researchers might use follow up interviews with the same participants to acquire in-depth information and reach data saturation. L Harvey. (2014) indicated that member checking is the process of taking ideas back to research participants for confirmation, and to gathering more information to elaborate on the research findings. I used member

checking interviews to ensure the achievement of data saturation.

Mouraviev and Kakabadse (2014) used the case study design to investigate to what extent one can apply experiential learning theory to the public-private partnership setting in Russia and to draw insights regarding the learning cycle's nature. Trangkanont and Charoenngam (2014) employed case study design to investigate the critical failure factors that cause failure of public private partnership focusing on low-cost housing program in Thailand. Liu and Wilkinson (2013), similarly, used case study design to evaluate the experiences of public-private partnerships in China's urban rail development, and to investigate the critical factors affecting the project viability and derive lessons for future urban rail public private partnership projects in China and elsewhere. The case study is a research design used when a researcher attempts to understand a problem using one specific case as the focus (Yin, 2011). I deemed that the case study design was the best for the study because the research objective was to achieve a deeper and better understanding of the strategies business owners followed to ensure sustainability of public private partnerships in Lebanon.

Population and Sampling

The research design was a case study concerning a Lebanese public private partnership business. The partnership consisted of three private sector partners and seven business owners. The sample for the study included the seven business owners who embarked on the partnership in the development phase. The sampling method was purposeful by selecting participants based on the criteria of a business owner and partner in the Lebanese public private partnership in North Lebanon. By selecting the seven

business owners, purposive sampling allowed me to describe multiple perspectives about the case (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). Suri (2011) elaborated a smaller purposefully selected sample is more desirable than a larger sample that might or might not contribute to the purpose of the study. Vissak (2010) further explained that small purposefully selected samples are best for case studies because the benefits of information-rich feedback outweigh the abstract, thin, and superficial responses often derived from widely disseminated questionnaires. I shared the consent agreement by email with the participants to explain the research goals, and seek permission for an interview meeting.

Bryman (2012) explained the saturation point is the point of diminishing return and the topic, context, method, and purpose of the study affect the determination of this point. L. Harvey (2014) indicated that member checking is the process of taking ideas back to research participants for confirmation, and / or to gathering more information to elaborate on the research findings. If the gathered data was not repetitive and still providing additional insight or ideas, then I would have considered in-depth interviews and achieve data saturation by member checking with follow-up interviews. I used member checking interviews with participants for further understanding the participants' perspective. The purposeful sampling along with in-depth follow-up interviews helped in answering the interview questions.

Three factors were the basis of the selection criteria. First, the participant was a business owner. Second, the business owner was a private sector partner in the LEDA in North Lebanon. Third, the business owner was an active member in contributing to

strategies that would sustain the public private partnership business. One-to-one interviews supported hearing the participant's feedback and provided expression of fears and thoughts. McLeod and Elliott (2011) illustrated the importance of selecting quiet locations that are free from any distractions while conducting the interviews. I scheduled the meetings with the participants at convenience, in terms of time and location, to ensure an appropriate and comfortable atmosphere.

Ethical Research

Regmi (2011) stated the value of research ethics outweighs the burdens of the review process and advocates on behalf of increased ethics education for scholars.

Gannon (2014) stated students have to incorporate ethics into university education. F.

Harvey (2014) stressed a good knowledge of ethics is important to understand the value of truth and accuracy in generating new understanding of science as a process. An overarching goal while conducting the study was to address the research question while concurrently establishing a good understanding of the participants' feedback, maintaining honesty throughout the process, and reflecting well on Walden University. Explaining the research process details maintained high ethical standards, and ensured the researcher met the acceptance criteria and practice standards (Abbott & Grady, 2011). I established a professional atmosphere to allow participants to be comfortable enough to disclose opinions, as well as assure confidentiality. I established a professional atmosphere by sharing the Institutional Review Board consent form prior to the interview. I conducted the research under the Institutional Review Board approval from Walden University (06-04-15-0262084). I read with the participants the consent form to address any questions

they had. I clearly stated to the participants that they were free to withdraw from the study at any point of time without penalty, and the participants can inform me verbally or through an email. Participants also had my contact information, in case they had questions or follow up inquiries. There was no incentive for participating in the study.

After clarifying the points mentioned in the consent form, the participants signed the form before the interview started. The consent form included a brief description of the purpose and procedures of the data collection in the study. The informed consent form also described the role of the participants in the study. The informed consent form also ensured participants accept to participate in the study and aware of the conditions they undertook the data collection. The informed consent form included a note that participants can withdraw from the study at any point of time without penalty. If the participants decide to withdraw from the study, then I would have given the participant the audio recording and interview notes to destroy. The consent form included information about the research topic, risks, and benefits of the study. Essentially, the consenting process assured the collected data was representative of the participants' experiences and perceptions of the effectiveness of public private partnerships in Lebanon.

I ensured confidentiality of the participants throughout the study by referring to participants as P1 through P7 throughout the study. The assurance of confidentiality of the participants encourages honest responses to interview questions (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011). For qualitative researchers, Myers (2013) defined ethical practice as a moral stance that includes respect and protection for the participants contributing to the

study. Bryman (2012) clarified corporate and educational institutions recognize the importance of protecting participants and consider the practice ethically necessary in every research in which humans serve as a source of data collection. To ensure proper protection of participants, the collected business identification information were confidential. Researcher discipline ensured proper and accurate coding and recording of the data collected. I referred in the transcripts, analysis, and findings to the participants as P1 through P7. The final research report did not disclose names, organizations, or organizational positions. Participants received a copy of the completed dissertation results after the completion and approval of the study. I will saved the collected data in a password-protected external hard drive for 5 years, I will then delete the data as well as shred the interview notes.

Data Collection Instruments

The researcher collects data for a qualitative case study through direct interaction with the participants (Kisely & Kendall, 2011). Through interaction and a face-to-face interview with participants, I was the primary data collection instrument. To capture the participants' voice, the secondary data collection instruments included semistructured interviews and member checking with seven business owners from the public private partnership agency in North Lebanon, and the agency documents included reports and brochures. Hallback and Gabrielsson (2013) used semistructured interviews as a primary data collection instrument, and the firm reports, news releases, and other written documents as a secondary data collection instrument.

Triangulation is applicable if the researcher wants to look at the same topic from

different angles (Myers, 2013). Ozdemir and Adan (2014) stated methodological triangulation includes using more than one technique to gather data, such as using interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents. Researchers achieve methodological triangulation by checking the themes through the interviews, observations, and documents of the case (Bird, Martin, Tummons, & Ball, 2013). Hallback and Gabrielsson (2013) used methodological triangulation to ensure study credibility by using primary data from the cases through semistructured theme interviews and secondary material such as firm reports, news releases, and other written documents related to the study. For the study, I used the methodological triangulation by relying on multiple sources, namely, the semistructured interviews and member checking interviews, printed agency reports and brochures, and the academic review of the literature.

The use of semistructured interviews allows the researcher to merge the flexibility of the unstructured, open-ended interview with the plan of the survey tool to generate focused, qualitative, and textual data at the factor level (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999). The semistructured interviews help researchers to acquire in-depth responses from participants' experiences (Yin, 2011). Schensul, Schensul, and LeCompte (1999) stated the answers to semistructured questions are open-ended, since the interviewer and the interviewee can expand the questions at discretion, and enhance the interview by using probing questions to clarify responses. I used member checking with the participants to understand further the participants' perspectives. The use of semistructured interviews led to an understanding of the strategies business owners used

to ensure the sustainability of the public private partnership business in North Lebanon.

The credibility of the data collection instrument was significant. Harper and Cole (2012) stated the member checking technique serves to decrease the incidence of incorrect data and incorrect interpretation of the data, and allows the researcher to confirm the exactness and comprehensiveness of the findings, which then supports to enhance the credibility of the study. Weisheng, Liu, Hongdi, and Zhongbing (2013) used semistructured interviews to shed light on procurement innovation by examining an agent construction system and public private partnership states in China. Mahalingam, Devkar, and Kalidindi (2011) collected data using many semistructured interviews, then compared comments made by various participants on a given issue helped the researchers to increase the internal consistency and credibility of data collected. I asked the participants to check the responses to make sure my notes reflect all the information provided during the semistructured interview, and to agree, disagree, or clarify on how I reflected the views. I ensured credibility through the consistency of participants' replies by using the participant checking technique and using methodological triangulation for support and contrast of the themes that emerged from the interviews.

An interview protocol assists researchers in collecting data. Jacob and Furgerson (2012) stated an interview protocol includes the list of interview questions, script of what the interviewer will say before the interview, script for what the interviewer will say at the conclusion of the interview, and remind the interviewer of the information she or he is concerned in collecting. I followed the interview protocol listed in Appendix A. The interview protocol was my procedural guide throughout the interview process.

Data Collection Technique

Myers (2013) classified interviews into three basic types. The first type is structured interviews, where the interviewer uses pre-formulated questions strictly regulated about the order of the questions. The second type is semistructured interviews, where the interviewer uses some pre-formulated questions but no strict adherence to the questions, thus new questions might emerge during the interview. The third type is the unstructured interviews, where the interviewer uses no pre-formulated questions, and interviewees are free to say what they want. Myers (2013) further discussed semistructured interviews give the interviewee an opportunity to add important insights during the conversation whereas the previously prepared questions provide some focus as well. The data collection technique for this study included using semistructured interviews while taking interview notes and audio recording the interviews, member checking, in addition to obtaining copies of the Agency reports, brochures, and relevant documents. The observations from the face-to-face semistructured interviews also allowed me to understand the participants' perception of non-verbal interaction, and I had a chance to clarify the participants' responses. The audio recording further ensured I captured all information spoken by the participants and filled in any missed information from the written interview notes. The documents collected from participants allowed me to compare the interview data, understand the participants' replies during the interview, and clarify answers during the member checking and follow-up interviews.

I did not execute a pilot study. Chanail (2011) stated the main reason for a pilot study is to develop and test the appropriateness of a research instrument. Neuman (2011)

clarified that researchers practice the interview and receive feedback on the questions using a pilot study. The study only included seven participants from the North LEDA in Lebanon. The member checking strengthened the data collection instrument and confirmability of the study.

I used the member checking as a collection technique. Koelsch (2013) stated researchers use member checking as a source to verify the accurateness of a participant's words. L. Harvey (2014) indicated member checking is the process of taking ideas back to research participants for confirmation, and to gather more information to elaborate on the research findings. Harper and Cole (2012) highlighted the benefit of conducting member checks to provide the researcher a chance to confirm the accurateness and comprehensiveness of the findings, which helps to enhance the credibility of the study. Patton (2002) warned researchers about the assumption of understanding the meaning of the participants without checking back with them. The member checking process allowed me to verify the participants' responses and gather additional needed information.

The first step in conducting the interview was sending an email to the selected participants explaining the purpose of the study, with the consent form attached as a reference. Follow-up phone calls to schedule interviews then occurred. To ensure appropriate and comfortable interviews, planned interviews with participant were at their convenience in terms of time and location. The interview protocol (Appendix A) was my procedural guide throughout the interview process. Interview sessions started by thanking the participant and covering the purpose of the interview. Use of note takings and audio recording the interviews both supported retrieving all shared information from the

selected participants. To allow the participants to share their pertinent ideas with enough depth, the interviews lasted for a period of 60 to 90 minutes. Once each interview was over, I reviewed and organized the collected interview notes. I used member checking to understand better the participants' perspective, and to confirm the interpretation of the interview results with the participants. The process repeated until I achieved data saturation and interviews were ready for further analysis.

To support the interview design, Javed, Lam, and Zou (2013) based the research on 19 semistructured interviews with key Australian stakeholders from the public and private sectors who used the public private partnership framework for procurement. Liu and Wilkinson (2013) used semistructured interviews to evaluate the public private partnership experiences in the school sector focusing on the critical dimensions affecting the viability of using public private partnerships for school development. Similarly, Mouraviev and Kakabadse (2014) investigated to what extent one can apply experiential learning theory to the public private partnership setting in Russia using in-depth semistructured interviews. For the study, I used the semistructured interviews and member checking to have a better understanding of the strategic thinking of business owners in sustaining the public private partnership business in North Lebanon.

Data Organization Technique

For the study, I used semistructured interviews and member checking, along with printed agency documents including reports and brochures. I organized the interview transcripts, interview notes, agency documents, and the review of the academic literature. I used MAXQDA® software to assist me in mind-mapping, coding, identifying themes,

and creating professional maps to visualize the results of my analysis. MAXQDA software supported organizing the data into common themes. Bazeley (2013) illustrated the two specialized qualitative data analysis programs were NVivo® and MAXQDA. Franzosi, Doyle, McClelland, Rankin, and Vicari (2013) stated MAXQDA allows the user to reword, manipulate, or modify source documents from within the program, and to make text revisions outside the program and then import the modified documents into the database. Kuckartz and Sharp (2011) reported MAXQDA allows for the creation of various document groups, consequently the researcher can analyze by selecting the data and answer questions.

I organized the recorded data in chronological order depending on the date and time the data collected. I stored the collected data on my password-protected personal computer as well as external hard disk backup drive for the required minimum of 5 years. I also organized and stored the copies of the agency documents in my personal locked closet. To ensure the confidentiality of the participants, no one will have access to the password protected raw data.

Data Analysis

After collecting the data from the interviews, I analyzed the data. Myers (2013) stated triangulation is an excellent idea if the researcher wants to look at the same topic from different angles. A researcher can use four types of triangulation. The first type is data triangulation, which implicates multiple sources of data utilization in an investigation (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). The second type is investigator triangulation, which involves using many evaluators to participate in observations or analyze

participant replies (McGehee, Kline, & Knollenberg, 2014). The third type is theory triangulation, which includes multiple theoretical perspectives either in conducting the research or in interpreting the data (Trenholm & Ferlie, 2013). The fourth type is the methodological triangulation, which includes using more than one method for data gatherings, such as interviews, questionnaires, observations, and documents (Ozdemir & Adan, 2014). For the study, I used methodological triangulation by depending on multiple sources, namely, the semistructured interviews and member checking interviews, printed agency reports and brochures, and the academic review of the literature.

To protect the participants' identity and ensure confidentiality, I used letters and numbers P1 through P7 before starting the data analysis. The objective was to code and organize the retrieved data into themes, analyze, and interpret the findings of the study. I downloaded MAXQDA software and created an account for the study. I imported the data collected on my MAXQDA software account. MAXQDA software allowed me easily to retrieve any resource. The ability to synchronize the data collected on the MAXQDA server allowed me to access the references from any computer using my account credentials.

I marked important information with different codes by using different colors. I organized the recorded interview data and categorizing into themes generated from the review of the academic literature, the newly published public private partnerships studies, and the conceptual theory used for this study, namely, the X-efficiency theory (Leibenstein, 1966) and the new public management model (Fatemi & Behmanesh,

2012). Next, I compared and contrasted the various participants' responses along with the themes generated from the review of the academic literature. The use of MAXQDA software assisted me in mind-mapping, coding, identifying themes, and creating professional maps to reflect the results of my analysis. Demirag et al. (2012) used interview notes to collect, code, analyze the data, and then extract themes from the coded data from six participants from the Private Finance Initiative, United Kingdom public private partnership. Liu and Wilkinson (2013) collected and analyzed data using semistructured interviews with senior practitioners and experienced academics in evaluating the experiences of public private partnerships in China's urban rail development. Javed et al. (2013) collected data using semistructured interviews, and then generated themes from the coded data to compare and contrast the themes generated from the literature review.

Credibility, Dependability, Confirmability, and Transferability

Reliable and valid instruments are necessary for rigorous, credible case study research (Bryman, 2012; Cohen et al., 2011; Yin, 2011). Yin (2011) stated the validity of a research study is demonstrated when the data are properly collected and analyzed; and the conclusions accurately characterize, reflect, and correspond to the real world phenomenon under study. Patton (2002) stated validity and reliability are two factors that any qualitative researcher would consider while planning a study, analyzing results and judging the quality of the study. Marshall and Rossman (2011) explained the researcher might enhance reliability and validity by using coding during data collection and analysis. Lincoln and Guba (1985) added in quantitative studies the terms reliability and

validity are essential criterion for quality, whereas in qualitative studies the terms credibility, consistency or dependability, neutrality or confirmability, and transferability or applicability are the essential criterion for quality.

Golafshani (2003) stated researchers achieve dependability by verifying the consistency of data through examination of items such as raw data, data reduction products, and process notes. Member checking and verification of data interpretation improves dependability (Harper & Cole, 2012). Campbell (2013) achieved dependability through keeping the raw data, providing a complete explanation of the research method, and relating the same procedure throughout the research process. Discussing in-depth information on how I collected, organized, and analyzed the data confirmed the dependability. Researchers and readers are able to track back and understand the process I used to obtain and interpret the data. Saving audiotapes, interview notes, agency documents, and transcripts for the required duration of 5 years, ensured the reliability and dependability of the study. I executed member checking of data interpretation by restating to participants the interview transcript to ensure dependability.

To achieve the credibility of the data collected, researchers use multiple sources of data for comparison and verification purposes (Bryman, 2012). The objective was to perceive the different perspectives to increase the credibility of the results. Koelsch (2013) recommended member checking as the best tool for evaluating the credibility of a qualitative study because the researcher provides the participant with relevant sections of a research report and asks the participant to comment on the accuracy of the report. L. Harvey (2014) stated member checking is the most crucial technique for establishing

credibility. Harper and Cole (2012) highlighted the benefit of conducting member checks to provide the researcher a chance to confirm the accurateness and comprehensiveness of the findings, which helps to enhance the credibility of the study. To ensure credibility and confirmability, I executed member checking to verify, confirm the interview transcripts, and ensure data saturation.

Researchers use triangulation to examine the consistency of different data sources within the same method (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Methodological triangulation is another method to ensure credibility. Ozdemir and Adan (2014) stated methodological triangulation includes using more than one technique to gather data, such as using interviews, observations, questionnaires, and documents. Bird, Martin, Tummons, and Ball (2013) stated methodological triangulation achieved by confirming the themes through the interviews, observations, and documents of the case. Hallback and Gabrielson (2013) used methodological triangulation to ensure study credibility by using primary data from the cases through semistructured theme interviews and secondary material such as firm reports, news releases, and other written documents related to the study. I performed methodological triangulation using multiple sources, namely the semistructured interviews and member checking, agency documents, and the review of academic literature related to public private partnership businesses.

Transferability was another criterion to ensure the validity of the study. Bustamante and Moeller (2013) stated researchers using case studies tend to place emphasis on a particular program, the context, and experience of the participants to provide an in-depth exploration of the phenomenon, and not because of its transferability.

Due to the specificity of the geographical region, the results of the study might not be transferable and were limited to the expectations, attitudes, actions, and values of the business owners of public private partnership in Lebanon. Bryman (2012) urged qualitative researchers to provide rich, descriptive explanations of collected data to allow external readers to interpret findings and to apply transferability of the studies. Campbell (2013) highlighted the person who wishes to transfer the results to a different context is accountable for creating the judgment of how practical the transfer is. I established transferability by providing the reader with sufficient in-depth information in the study in the research context and assumptions for readers to determine whether the findings are applicable to new research.

Summary and Transition

Section 2 contained the research methodology, sampling, data collection, organization, analysis, reliability and validity procedures. I described my role to familiarize readers with my function and relationship to the study topic. In section 3, I present the findings of the study with applications to professional practice, implications for social change, as well as recommendations for future study based on observed gaps. In Section 3, I present the findings as well as propose recommendations for future research.

Section 3: Application to Professional Practice and Implications for Change

Introduction

The purpose of the qualitative single case study was to explore the strategies business owners used to sustain a public private partnership in Lebanon. The population of the study was business owners of a Local Economic Development Agency (LEDA) in the Northern region of Lebanon. The LEDA, a public private partnership, was in the development phase, a very delicate phase toward producing a long-term mature business. Ten different public and private partners worked together to enhance the local economy through a LEDA (United Nations Development Program, 2012). Out of those 10 partners, 7 were business owners. The population of the study included the 7 business owners of the North LEDA in Lebanon. The participants openly answered the interview questions.

The results of the study could contribute to the understanding of the strategies the business owners used to sustain their public private partnership businesses. The strategies identified included: (a) proper selection of partners, (b) considering international best practices and experience, (c) setting a clear mission and vision, (d) recruiting a strong technical director and professional staff, (e) drafting bylaws for the partnership, and (f) partners meeting on monthly basis to follow up on the Agency's work and to discuss emerging needs. The results provided insights on the seven factors that contributed to a sustainable public private partnership in Lebanon. The seven success factors of a public private partnership included the commitment of partners, having a strong technical director, political stability, bylaws, funding, visibility and communication, and adaptation to emerging needs. The results also provided an understanding of the main challenges the

participants faced to sustain the partnership. The participants' challenges included a lack of public private partnership law, an unstable security situation, and a lack of funding.

Presentation of the Findings

The central research question was: What strategies do business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon? I conducted semistructured face-to-face interviews and member checking with the seven business owners to reach an understanding of the strategies used, the factors contributing to a successful partnership, and the challenges faced by the participants in initiating and operating the partnership businesses. Participants shared documents about the agency with me to get a deeper understanding of the work and to have a better understanding of the participants' answers during the interview. I conducted methodological triangulation by using semistructured interviews, member checking, and agency documents. I used the review of academic literature related to public private partnership businesses to compare to the participant responses. The following open-ended interview questions enabled the participants to share the strategies used to develop the public private partnership.

1. Why were you motivated to join the public private partnership?
2. How effective were the steps you considered in the establishment phase to ensure the growth of the public private partnership from a startup phase to successful and sustainable business?
3. What strategic factors contribute to a sustainable public private partnership in Lebanon?
4. What strategies did you use to establish the public private partnership and

ensure sustainable businesses?

5. What were main challenges in achieving a sustainable public private partnership business in Lebanon?
6. Why do you need support as a business owner from the government and United Nations Development Program leaders to address the challenges for a sustainable public private partnership business in Lebanon?
7. What other information would you like to add regarding strategies business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses?

After conducting the semistructured interviews, I organized the interview transcripts, interview notes, agency documents, and the review of the academic literature. I downloaded MAXQDA software and created an account for the study. I replaced the names of the seven participants with P1 through P7 to ensure confidentiality. I imported the data collected on my MAXQDA software account. The use of MAXQDA software assisted me in mind-mapping, coding, identifying themes, and creating professional maps to visualize the results of my analysis. I conducted member checking by taking my analysis of the participant responses, and checking whether they confirmed, disconfirmed, or needed to add more information to the analysis based on their initial interviews.

I conducted member checking by returning my transcripts to the participants for their response to my analysis and checking whether they confirmed, disconfirmed, or they needed to add more information to the analysis. After coding and identifying the themes, I looked back into the literature review in Section 1 to see where the literature

intersected with the strategies and where the participants' actions and responses substantiated the themes. The following subsections include the identification of main themes, aligning themes and findings to the conceptual framework, and creating a conclusion of the findings.

Main Themes

I executed member checking to verify, confirm the interview transcripts, and ensure data saturation. After analyzing the participants' responses, I found five main themes. The first theme included the strategies used to establish a public private partnership. The second theme included strategies used to sustain a public private partnership. The third theme included the factors contributing to a sustainable public private partnership. The fourth theme was about the challenges of public private partnership. The fifth theme included the strategies to ensure a sustainable public private partnership. I conducted methodological triangulation by incorporating semistructured interviews, member checking, and agency documentation. The following is the presentation of the themes generated from the data collected with a comparison and / or contrast with the review of academic literature in Section 1.

Theme 1. The first theme was the strategies used to establishing a public private partnership. Siddiquee (2011) stated active participation from public and private members to become familiar with one another and define the objectives of the partnership are important. The seven participants stated the United Nations Development Program management invited all North municipalities, different sector representatives, and NGOs to meetings and discussed the concept of establishing a public private partnership to

implement local economic development interventions in the region. Only committed and dedicated partners attended the meetings and were involved in creating the mission and vision of the partnership.

Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Trojanowski (2013) declared a well-prepared public private partnership law is conducive to better-structured transactions and may contribute to a more reliable, transparent, and efficient investment process. The seven participants stated the public and private partners worked on the bylaws and registered the agency with the Lebanese Ministry of Interior and Municipalities. P3 stated the partners were active in social work and had experience in business and local economic development. P4 and P7 stressed the registration of the partnership took one year since Lebanese law prohibits municipalities to partner with for-profit organizations. P4, P6, and P7 discussed the followup of the United Nations Development Program management with a lawyer to secure the registration and establish the office in the Chamber of Commerce building thereby providing the Agency with credibility. P5 stated when the United Nations Development Program managers proposed the concept of creating the Agency, several meetings took place with representatives from different sectors and municipalities. All debates centered on the risks, challenges, and available resources in the area. The discussions were on how to support different sectors and all region districts, and network with strong partners. P6 discussed the partners agreed to the vision, mission, and objectives of the partnership during the meetings. P5 highlighted how the United Nations Development Program management did not make enough efforts to motivate some significant partners to join the partnership.

Analyzing the participants' responses and comparing the responses with the literature, the first theme included several needed strategies mentioned by the participants which were supported by the review of the academic literature. The steps included selecting the partners, creating a clear vision and mission statement, drafting the bylaws, and recruiting a strong technical director and essential staff. The selection criteria of the partners included their representation, commitment, and the value added that they would provide to the partnership. The partners had to agree on the mission and vision of the partnership and consequently they agreed on the nature of the intervention of the partnership. Drafting the partnership bylaws clarified the operational procedures of the partnership as well as the relationship between the partners. Having the essential staff managed by a strong technical director, contributed to a successful partnership.

Theme 2. The second theme included strategies used to sustain a public private partnership in Lebanon. The seven participants discussed how the United Nations Development Program managers invited important representatives in the North area to discuss the significance of establishing a local economic development agency under the framework of a public private partnership. Hahn (2012) explained business owners have a desire to participate in the community, but often do not have an outlet, and the business owners expressed a public private partnership could be that outlet. The seven participants said the United Nations Development Program managers considered the meetings as focus group meetings where the participants discussed the needs, potentials, risks, and resources of the area. After several meetings, the committed partners remained and identified the mission and vision of the agency. The seven participants agreed to create a

strategy for the Agency showing how the collaboration would achieve its mission and objectives (Hunger & Wheelen, 2010). P6 highlighted the partners took into consideration international best practices while establishing the agency.

Business owners and government leaders might guarantee a sustainable and profitable business if they took into consideration worldwide experiences while establishing a partnership business (Hampton, Baldwin, & Holt, 2012). The seven participants clarified how the partners employed a lawyer to work on the bylaws and ensure the registration of the Agency in the Ministry of Interior and the Municipalities. When establishing public private partnership businesses, business owners and government leaders have to plan and implement strategies to ensure business sustainability and sustainable development (Larson & Gray, 2011). The seven participants stated the public and private partners agreed to meet once every month to check on the Agency's work, provide strategic guidance to the technical team working in the Agency, and ensure reliable service delivery to the Lebanese North region. Patanakul and Shenhar (2011) highlighted if project managers are not aware of the business strategies, then managers would fail in addressing a proper project plan. Ismail and Haris (2014) emphasized contracting parties need to have clear and detailed guidelines for the partnership to ensure the effective, efficient, and successful businesses. O'Brien and Kaluzny (2014) clarified public and private partners need to align goals for success and sustainability, define and assess the performance capacity and expectations, and promote a culture of multilevel collaboration.

The seven participants ensured having a good technical Director who follows up

on task completion and objectives, plays an important role in achieving the organizational goals. Eriksson (2013) stated the leadership of the project manager and involving the project manager in developing a business strategy plays an important role in aligning project management with business strategies, thus ensuring business sustainability. P1, P2, P3, P4, and P5 stated in the monthly meetings, partners continually discussed the challenges of the region ensuring that the Agency was responding to the emerging needs. The monthly meetings and strategic guidance of the partners ensured the sustainability of their businesses.

The second theme was the strategies used to sustain the public private partnerships in Lebanon. While drafting the strategy, the partners considered international best practices and experience. The partners aligned their strategy with the Lebanese North region needs as well as with the mission and vision of the partnership. The partners had a strong technical director and involved him/her in the strategic discussions and decisions. The partners had to be aware of their capabilities and take full benefit of competitive advantage and minimize competitive disadvantage. The partners met on regular basis and discussed emerging needs and adapted their strategies accordingly.

Theme 3. The third theme included seven success factors that contribute to a sustainable public private partnership. The seven participants stressed that the commitment of the partners was the significant strategic factor for a sustainable partnership in Lebanon. P2 and P6 explained how the process of selecting partners and having more partners onboard contributes to a sustainable partnership. Alexander (2012) suggested active and organized professional cooperation among partners at all

employment levels enhanced project success through the mechanism of consistent network membership, enabling relationships to mature and communication efficiencies to increase. P3 and P7 explained the dedication and commitment of the partners towards social work ensures the sustainability of businesses. P3 stressed the partners planned and worked for long-term development and not just for short-term development. P4 discussed the partners respect for each other and they accepted others opinions. The partners attempted to understand and discuss the needs of each sector representative, and they worked toward one vision. Siddiquee (2011) highlighted the need for public private partnerships requiring active participation from members. The partners must become familiar with one another and define the business objectives and characteristics. P5 and P7 highlighted the importance of the partners' motivation to achieve long-term development and support the Lebanese North region. Cheung et al. (2012), Ismail (2013), and Jamali (2004) explained the commitment of the partners was one of the main success factors for a sustainable public private partnership in Lebanon.

The second success factor for a sustainable public private partnership also included the availability of a professional technical team headed by a good leader. The seven participants discussed how the board members met once every month to discuss their progress and provided strategic guidance to the technical director. Eriksson (2013) stated the leadership and involvement of the technical director in developing a business strategy plays an important role in aligning project management with business strategies, thus ensuring business sustainability. The participants stressed the director was the one leading the work and implementing the decisions and strategies, resulting in proper

implementation and progress in the partnership. Patanakul and Shenhar (2011) stressed if project managers are not aware of the business strategies, then managers would fail in addressing a proper project plan.

The third success factor was area stability. The seven participants discussed the importance of having a stable security situation in the North to ensure long-term sustainable development in the area. The participants mentioned the potentials of the Agency when the situation was stable. A stable political, social, and macroeconomic environment are critical success factors for the public private partnership sustainability (Liu & Wilkinson, 2013; Mladenovic et al. 2013; and Trangkanont & Charoenngam, 2014).

The fourth success factor was the bylaws of the partnership. P1, P2, P4, P5, P6, and P7 discussed the efforts taken to draft the bylaws specifically because Lebanon lacks a public private partnership law. The availability of clear bylaws that govern the relationship eased the execution of works and avoided misunderstandings between the partners. Babatunde et al. (2012) stated successful public private partnerships build on the experience of each partner to meet clearly defined needs and give a net benefit to the public through the appropriate allocation of resources, risks, and rewards. P6 discussed the constructive meetings between partners and setting a clear vision, mission, and objective of the partnership was a success factor.

The fifth success factor was project implementation to secure the running costs of the partnership. P1 clarified the Agency implemented local economic development interventions / projects and took a percentage from the total budget to cover the

operational costs of the Agency. P1 and P2 stated project implementation secured the Agency's sustainability. P3 and P7 said if donors or the government consider the Agency to implement projects, the Agency would address the right needs and achieve sustainability. P5 and P6 said the board members represent sectors and LEDA have to implement projects targeting those sectors.

The participants discussed other success factors for a sustainable public private partnership. P1 and P2 stressed the importance of visibility and support from the local government. P1 and P2 discussed the significance of public partners' capacities in ensuring the sustainability of businesses. Kort and Klijn (2011) stated government capacity is a key success factor for sustainable public private partnership businesses. P5 and P6 stated adaptation to changing situations was a success factor. P5 noted the North region was facing lots of challenges, and thus the priorities in the North region were changing. Adaptation to change and the ability to respond quickly to the emerging needs was a success factor. P3 and P4 discussed the importance of communicating the achievements of the Agency for the Lebanese North region to trust the agency's work and donors would consider the agency as an implementer. Kraak et al. (2012) elaborated on the willingness of partners to compromise and collaborate, strive for open communications, and having respect for other businesses as key success factors for a public private partnership.

The third theme included seven success factors that contribute to a sustainable public private partnership. The seven factors included the commitment of the partners, having a strong technical director, political stability, bylaws, funding, visibility and

communication, and adaptation to emerging needs. The commitment and collaboration of the partners to achieve the set target was the main factor that contributed to a sustainable partnership. The partners needed to align goals for sustainability and success of their businesses. Recruiting a strong technical director who was able to contribute to strategic discussions with partners and implement interventions contributed to the sustainability of the partnership businesses. To ensure sustainable businesses, the region had to be politically stable. Clear bylaws improved the relationship between partners and contributed to the success of the partnership. Approaching donors and ensuring projects for implementation provided credibility and secured the operational cost of the Agency. Communicating the Agency's achievements with the Lebanese North region made the Agency more credible and attracted donors. Being flexible in aligning strategies to respond to the Lebanese North region emerging needs, provided sincerity to the Agency and contributed to the sustainability of the partnership.

Theme 4. The fourth theme included the challenges of public private partnerships in Lebanon. P1, P2, P3, P4, P5, and P7 stressed the lack of a public private partnership law is the main challenge to achieve sustainable businesses. Avina (2011) stressed the need to achieve strong and sustainable partnerships needs law enforcement agencies to tailor private sector support to reflect industry core competencies and include clear measurable results and address private sector perceptions. The seven participants clarified that the Lebanese municipalities and union of municipalities cannot partner with for-profit organizations, consequently, the partners are either municipalities or non-for-profit organizations. P1, P2, P6, and P7 stated having more partners might ensure the

sustainability of businesses and enhance the credibility of the Agency. P5 and P6 discussed the private sector is more involved in Lebanese North region development through corporate social responsibility. Rahaman, Dhar, and Hossain (2014) stated NGOs are prioritizing tasks with great interests in the field of poverty alleviation in urban areas. Entities within a community, such as NGOs, colleges, and community groups, form alliances to have an active involvement in economic development (Pastor, Benner, & Matsouka, 2011). P5 added having business owners from the for-profit organizations ensured sustainable funding for the Agency and thus improved the sustainability of businesses.

The seven participants discussed the challenge of the unstable security situation. P1 and P6 stated the partners cancelled many activities especially the activities related to visibility due to the unstable security situation. P2 highlighted the unstable security situation was making donors hesitant to invest in the area. Jamali (2004) discussed in Lebanon, after two decades of political unrest, the efforts of the public sector faded due to physical damage, the absence of government supervision, and a shortage of resources. P4, P6, and P7 explained how the partners discuss the new emerging needs every board meeting resulting from the unstable security situation, and sometimes the partners are unable to achieve their goals due to shifts in priorities. Liu and Wilkinson (2013) identified the political, social, and legal risks, unfavorable economic and commercial conditions, as negative aspects of public private partnership.

The seven participants highlighted the fact that lack of funding was a challenge that would hinder the sustainability of businesses. The participants discussed the

importance of implementing local development projects to secure operating costs for the agency and thus ensure the sustainability of businesses. P1 stated the Lebanese government and specifically the Ministry of Social Affairs might support the Agency and secure the operating costs. P2 declared the local government could direct donors to work through the Agency. P3, P5, and P6 highlighted the United Nations Development managers might consider the Agency as its implementing partner in the region for different local economic development interventions. P4 and P7 discussed the importance of having the director aggressively approach donors to ensure that the agency implements diversified local economic development projects in the region.

The participants discussed other challenges for a sustainable public private partnership. P3 and P6 stated the Lebanese North community was hard to convince when discussing collective efforts to achieve local development. P3 and P6 added the Lebanese North region is the poorest region of Lebanon and the Lebanese government leaders did not make concrete interventions to enhance the local economy. It was difficult to encourage and convince the Lebanese North region to join and be part of the interventions. P4 discussed responding to the emerging needs was challenging to the board members and the Agency. Ismail and Haris (2014) declared understanding the perceptions of the public and private sectors are crucial because the effective implementation of a public private partnership requires a commitment from both contracting parties. P5 and P7 stated keeping all board members motivated to stay on board was a challenge.

The fourth theme was about the challenges of a public private partnership. Under this theme I found three main challenges identified by participants and supported by the literature. The challenges were a lack of public private partnership law, an unstable security situation, and a lack of funding. Lebanon has no public private partnership law, and the municipalities cannot partner with for-profit organizations. Since the municipalities were the responsible local authorities for local development, it is essential to partner with strong private organizations. The security situation in the Lebanese North region was unstable affecting the ongoing business owners, entrepreneurs to start a business, as well as donors who were hesitant to invest in the area. The business funding and operating costs were a challenge for the partners.

Theme 5. The fifth theme included strategies to ensure a sustainable public private partnership. P1 and P7 stated the Lebanese North region has the highest poverty rate and the community needed every single support. P1 stated donors were asking for project proposals to enhance the region, and the United Nations Development Program managers could support LEDA by creating a unit for writing project proposals and approaching donors. P1 highlighted the Lebanese Ministry of Social Affairs was supporting NGOs, and the Ministry might consider supporting the LEDA. P2 expected nothing from the government, and the United Nations Development Program managers would provide training and capacity building for the technical team working for the Agency. Hsieh (2011) illustrated local economic development occurs through the establishment of projects that enable the creation and retention of jobs, and projects that attract businesses into the area.

P2 stressed the agency executed local development plans and conducted a needs assessment for the region. P2 also said the United Nations Development Program could get a local consultant to support approaching financial donors. P2, P6, and P7 highlighted the municipalities are the main players for local development, and the government could develop the region by supporting the municipalities. P3 and P6 stated the partners need government recognition and financial support and from the United Nations Development Program we need the moral, technical, and financial support. P3 reported the Lebanese North region is living below the poverty line, and thus there is a need for a Local Economic Development Agency to work closely with the United Nations Development Program managers and ensure long-term development. P3 added the United Nations Development Program managers could consider the Agency as an implementing partner and channel the local economic interventions to the Agency. P4 said the government could consider the Agency as an implementing partner in the region because the Agency can secure proper implementation. P5 said the LEDA could be a part of the government structure, where the government would use LEDA to implement local economic development interventions. P5 discussed the importance of the United Nations Development Program managers working on the policy level and gave an example of working on a public private partnership law to secure more strong partners to ensure the sustainability of businesses. P2, P3, P4, P5, and P7 wanted the United Nations Development Program managers to support the technical team in writing proposals and approaching the donors.

The fifth theme was about the strategies to ensure a sustainable public private partnership. The needed support from the Lebanese government included financial support to ensure the operational costs of the Agency as well as directing donors to consider the Agency as an implementer to different local economic development interventions in the region. The needed support from the United Nations Development Program managers was creating a unit specialized in writing proposals and approaching donors. The partners needed the United Nations Development Program managers to enhance the capacities of the Agency's staff. Finally, the partners wanted the United Nations Development Program managers to consider the Agency as an implementer to all the interventions in the North region.

Aligning Findings to the Conceptual Framework

The first interview question, Why were you motivated to join the public private partnership? enabled me to better understand why participants were motivated to join the partnership and how the study aligned with the conceptual framework. The alignment related to the theory of X-efficiency developed by Leibenstein (1966) and the new public management model developed by Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012). The seven participants agreed the Lebanese government lacked policies and financial support to the local government.

The X-efficiency theory developed by Leibenstein (1966) supported the responses of the participants. According to Leibenstein's theory, public private partnerships are essential to diminish the sources of X-efficiency in public organizations and to allow government leaders to react to market forces and enable a competitive advantage

(Heybati et al., 2011). The new public management model emerged in 1980 as a result of the inefficiencies of public organizations (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012). Mauldin (2012) stated public private partnerships emerged as a solution for governments, as government leaders often lack knowledge in administering loan guarantee programs.

The seven participants agreed that the government lacked policies and financial support to the local government. The seven participants indicated the motivation to create a public private partnership was to support the Lebanese North region specifically because the government leaders lack the capacity to implement effective and efficient local economic development plans. P1 stated the public sector in Lebanon was weak, while private sector leaders were able to perform better. P1 said companies managed by the public sector had a high possibility for increased X-inefficiency as highlighted by Button and Weyman-Jones (1994). P1 stated since 2008, the United Nations Development Program managers were implementing local economic development interventions in the Lebanese North region. The municipalities and union of municipalities were concerned with local development. The United Nations Development Program managers proposed the idea of establishing a public private partnership between the municipalities, union of municipalities, and business owners. The United Nations Development Program managers' vision was to have technical experts and execute local development plans, and have LEDA as an implementer of different interventions in the region. P1 further clarified the strength of having business owners working with municipalities and having a union of municipalities to develop the region was the main motivation for P1 to join the partnership. P2 stated the region is poor and in continuous

crisis, and to help the Lebanese North region, P2 was motivated to join the partnership and support the sector P2 is representing. Ismail (2013) discussed public private partnerships have become common in recent years, especially in the developing country, as a means to attain sustainable economic development.

P3 highlighted the fact that the Lebanese North region is poor and there is a need to develop capacity and support the region. P3 discussed before joining the partnership, P3 was executing interventions to support the North region based on an individual initiative. Yet, the support was not enough, P3 was motivated to join the partnership because there was a need for an institutional approach to development and to follow other countries approach and think collectively. P6 used to be active in social development interventions and was motivated to join the partnership because it is an international approach and P6 can contribute to local development using an institutional approach and not just using individual interventions. P4 and P7 stated the concept of a public private partnership and the vision of having LEDA connecting donors with cooperatives, NGOs, microenterprises, and municipalities was the motivation to join the partnership. P4 asserted business owners had to employ effective leadership to achieve economic development by utilizing public private partnerships. The motivation of P5 for joining the partnership was implementing interventions that benefit the local economy and thus supporting the sector P5 is representing and creating jobs for the Northern region of Lebanon.

Baker (2012) argued that advocates of the new public management model claimed public sector organizations were unaccountable, overly bureaucratic, inefficient, and

largely unconcerned with the quality of the services delivered, accordingly, public managers had to become professional by adopting the mores and behaviors of the private sector counterparts and establishing public private partnerships. The seven participants expressed the importance of having public private partnerships, specifically because the development of the Lebanese North region will be under a framework of an institutional approach rather than individual intervention. Business owners have to employ effective leadership to achieve economic development by utilizing public private partnerships (Forrer et al., 2010).

The findings included business owners were aware of the inefficiencies of the public sector, yet since municipalities are the main players of local economic development public private partnership was vital. The findings included Local Economic Development Agency working under the framework of the public private partnership is a solution to reduce poverty, create jobs, and develop micro and small enterprises.

Conclusion of the Findings

In the conclusion of the findings, it is vital to note that the participants were openly answering the interview questions. I performed methodological triangulation using multiple sources, namely using semistructured interviews and member checking, agency documents, and reviewing the academic literature related to public private partnership businesses. The answers of the participants were clear and thorough, and the use of the agency's documents was to support the answers. The use of MAXQDA software assisted me in mind-mapping, coding, identifying themes, and creating professional maps to visualize the results of my analysis.

The Lebanese North region is among the most under-developed regions in Lebanon. The region faces a myriad of social, economic, environmental, and political challenges. Establishing a Local Economic Development Agency in the region under the framework of the public private partnership is vital and might lead to poverty reduction, job creation, and micro and small enterprise development. The results of the study contributed to the understanding of what strategies the business owners used to sustain the public private partnership businesses. The strategies included: (a) proper selection of partners, (b) considering international best practices and experience, (c) setting a clear mission and vision, (d) recruiting a strong technical director and professional staff, (e) drafting bylaws for the partnership, and (f) partners are meeting on monthly basis to follow up on the Agency's work and discuss emerging needs. The results provided insights on the seven factors that contribute to a sustainable public private partnership in Lebanon. The factors were the commitment of the partners, having a strong technical director, political stability, bylaws, funding, visibility and communication, and adaptation to emerging needs. The results also provided understanding on the main challenges the participants are facing to sustain the partnership. The challenges were a lack of public private partnership law, unstable security situation, and lack of funding. The business owners needed financial support from the Lebanese government and technical support from the United Nations Development Program to ensure the sustainability of public private partnership businesses.

Applications to Professional Practice

The findings of the study reflect how the study aligned with the conceptual

framework specifically the theory of X-efficiency developed by Leibenstein (1966) and the new public management model developed by Fatemi and Behmanesh (2012). The bureaucracy in Lebanese government interventions causes inadequacies in public institutions and services provided. According to Leibenstein's theory, public private partnerships are essential to diminish the sources of X-efficiency in public organizations and to allow government leaders to react to market forces and to have a competitive advantage (Heybati et al., 2011). The new public management model emerged in 1980 as a result of the inefficiencies of public organizations (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012). As a means of improving the neglected and institutionally weak regions of Lebanon and at the same time conducting development initiatives, in late 2010 the United Nations Development Program in Lebanon established the North Local Economic Development Agency. The need to reduce public expenditures and inefficiency as well as to overcome the lack of managerial skills in public organizations inspired the emergence of the new public management model (Seitanidi, 2010). Advocates of new public management model focus on restructuring the institutions structure, reforming the state, and enhancing the administration of public enterprises (Fatemi & Behmanesh, 2012). The Agency is a public private partnership. Local economic development occurs through the establishment of projects that enable the creation and retention of jobs, and projects that attract businesses into the area (Hsieh, 2011). The seven participants discussed business owners were aware of the inefficiencies of the public sector, yet since municipalities are the main players of local economic development public private partnership was vital. The findings included the Local Economic Development Agency, working under the

framework of the public private partnership, is a solution to reduce poverty, create jobs, and develop micro and small enterprises.

The findings of the study included the strategies business owners used to establish and sustain a public private partnership in Lebanon. The steps to follow while establishing a public private partnership and implementing strategies discussed under themes one and two might assist business owners in creating and sustaining LEDA in other regions of Lebanon. Having strategic planning for public private partnership businesses might assist in having sustainable Agencies in other regions. The need for committed partners and qualified human resources to manage the Agency might assist the partners in having a sustainable partnership. The need for setting a clear vision, mission, and bylaws while taking into consideration international best practices might assist partners in distributing the responsibilities and roles among all partners.

The review of the academic literature included 13 success factors for a sustainable public private partnership. Kraak et al. (2012) discussed the importance of open communications, trust, and respect between partners. Avina (2011) argued the importance of having measurable results. Active participation from members (Siddiquee, 2011) and government capacity (Kort & Klijn, 2011) are success factors for sustainable public private partnership. Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Trojanowski (2013) declared a well-prepared public private partnership law is conducive to better-structured, reliable, transparent, and efficient investment process. Hwang, Zhao, and Gay (2013) stated the legal basis, binding contract, and risk-sharing arrangement are key success factors for the public private partnership. Commitment to the public and private partners (Ismail, 2013),

stable macroeconomic condition (Cheung et al., 2012), project implementation, and effective procurement (Babatunde et al., 2012) are key success factors for public private partnership. The findings of the study under theme three revealed seven success factors applicable to Lebanon. The factors included the commitment of partners, strong technical director, political stability, bylaws, funding, visibility and communication, and adaptation to emerging needs. Considering the seven success factors in other regions of Lebanon while establishing a public private partnership is significant.

The review of the academic literature revealed several challenges for a sustainable public private partnership. Bloomfield and Ahern (2011) pointed out two main challenges; (a) uncontrollable government circumstances in long-term contracts, and (b) unfavorable contracting conditions that include poor planning and implementation, noncompetitive contracting, and reduced transparency and accountability. Liu and Wilkinson (2013) identified the political, social and legal risks, unfavorable economic and commercial conditions, as well as difficulties linked to contracting partners as challenges of public private partnership. Gbadegesin and Aluko (2014) discussed the nature of the project, technical capabilities, and risk involvement are the significant challenges for public private partnership businesses. Ismail and Haris (2014) discussed the lack of government procedures and guidelines on public private partnership might contribute to the failure of the partnership businesses. The challenges highlighted under theme four provided an insight on the essential actions needed to ensure the sustainability of public private partnerships in Lebanon. The challenges were a lack of public private partnership law, unstable security situation, and lack of funding. United Nations

Development Program leaders in Lebanon, as well as business owners and government actors have to consider the challenges and work together to overcome the difficulties faced by a sustainable public private partnership businesses.

The findings under theme five, strategies to ensure a sustainable public private partnership, are significant to both the United Nations Development Program and government leaders. The participants expressed what needed support from United Nations Development Program managers and the Lebanese government to ensure the sustainability of the business. Donors and government leaders may benefit from the existence of such agency and leaders might consider implementing local economic development interventions through the Agency. The public private partnership framework, gives the Agency credibility and comparative advantage among other NGOs. The government leaders and specifically the Ministry of Social Affairs in Lebanon might secure the operating costs of the Agency, while the United Nations Development Program leaders might provide the technical support specifically in terms of writing proposals and approaching financial donors.

The presentation of the study under all five themes included a detailed discussion on the applicability of the findings for a sustainable public private partnership in Lebanon. The discussion revealed what strategies business owners used to sustain the public private partnership businesses. Building on success factors applicable to Lebanon, providing solutions to overcome the challenges, as well as responding to the needed support is significant and may contribute to improved business practice and social change.

Implications for Social Change

The seven participants indicated the North region in Lebanon is facing social, economic, environmental, and political challenges. As indicated by P2, some Northern municipalities' leaders understood that the role of the mayor was not only to improve the infrastructure, but also to support human and economic development. Hefetz and Warner (2012) stated government leaders establish a public private partnership to provide efficient, good quality, and innovative service delivery. The findings of the study revealed how municipalities can partner with private sector, cooperatives, and NGOs to reduce poverty, create jobs, and ensure local economic development for the region. Goldsmith (2011) discussed public and private partners would reduce poverty in the region if working together in the framework of partnership to enhance economic development. An implication for social change includes business owners and government leaders learning how to collaborate in providing efficient goods and services, which could ultimately improve the public image and enhance profitability.

Partnerships are a legal form of cooperation of both public and private sectors, with the principles of joint participation and sharing of responsibility (Wu, 2010). The findings of the study provided insight on the needed support from the Lebanese government, especially with respect to establishing a public private partnership law. Wojewnik-Filipkowska and Trojanowski (2013) claimed the constraint on public private partnership development could be legal factor. The legal framework would allow the private sector to partner with municipalities and local stakeholders for the benefit of the Lebanese North region. Hahn (2012) explained business owners in particular have a

desire to participate in the community, but often do not have an outlet, and expressed a public private partnership could be that outlet. An implication for social change might include government leaders drafting a public private partnership law for the benefit of partners. Wang (2015) suggested government actions to reduce public concerns and advance political support for public private partnerships might include having a legal framework to govern the partnership.

A crucial matter is a need for adequate resources for the Agency's startup and operations phase (United Nations Development Program, 2012). Adequate resources include availability of funds as well as the technical capacity to identify strategies contributing to sustainable business and economic growth in the regions of Lebanon. The findings of the study provided an understanding of the needed technical support from the United Nations Development Program to ensure the sustainability of the partnership. The findings of the study provided the United Nations Development Program with information about the ways to offer comprehensive support to ensure the businesses' sustainability. An implication for social change might include the United Nations Development Program leaders providing the needed technical and financial support to ensure the partnership's sustainability.

Recommendations for Action

Business owners in the Lebanese North Local Economic Development Agencies might consider assessing the businesses per the first and second themes. If the business owners did not follow essential steps in establishing the public private partnership, then they need to evaluate the steps and consider corrective actions. If the business owners had

no proper strategy, then they need to evaluate the strategy against the strategies used to sustain a public private partnership in Lebanon discussed in the second theme. Lebanese business owners need to take advantage of the success factors applicable to Lebanon and try to overcome the challenges identified under theme three, namely the seven success factors that contribute to a sustainable public private partnership and theme four, namely challenges of a public private partnership. The Lebanese government and United Nations Development Program could consider the needed support identified in theme five to support business owners in sustaining the partnership businesses. The needed support from the Lebanese government included financial support to ensure the operational costs of the Agency as well as directing donors to consider the Agency as an implementer to local economic development interventions in the region. The needed support from the United Nations Development Program managers was creating a unit specialized in writing proposals and approaching donors. Lebanese business owners willing to join or establish a new public private partnership might consider the strategies North Agency business owners used to establish and sustain the partnership businesses.

The findings of the study could be of interest to Lebanese business owners and the United Nations Development Program leaders. Applying the findings might help business owners in the other three Local Economic Development Agencies to sustain the public private partnership businesses. Business owners interested in establishing or joining a public private partnership might be interested in understanding the results of the study. The study findings might be of interest to decision makers in the United Nations

Development Program and the Lebanese Government. I might disseminate the study findings through workshops and training courses.

Recommendations for Further Research

Researchers might consider conducting further studies to cover other detailed topics that I did not address in this study. The results of the study might not be transferable and limited to the expectations, attitudes, actions, and values of the seven business owners of public private partnership in North Lebanon. I recommend further research to explore what strategies business owners are using to sustain the other three Local Economic Development Agencies in Lebanon. Exploring whether the success factors and challenges applicable to the North region apply to the other three regions of Lebanon might be considered for future research. I recommend further study on strategies and actions the business owners might follow to enhance the quality and variety of services to the Lebanese North region.

Reflections

I used semistructured interviews to achieve a deeper and better understanding of the strategies business owners followed to ensure the sustainability of public private partnerships in Lebanon. The participants were honest and provided important information relevant to the study. The follow up questions on the participants' responses allowed me to capture the participants' perceptions and answer the research question. The use of MAXQDA software supported me in organizing the data into common themes and executing the data analysis.

I have been working with the United Nations Development Program since 2002. I have an adequate understanding of the support process the United Nations Development Program leaders are providing to the agencies. I had my doubts regarding the sustainability of the four Agencies. I was not aware of the strategies the business owners are using to sustain the North Agency. I was impressed with the commitment of the participants towards enhancing and developing their region. The fact that the participants know exactly how they are planning to ensure the sustainability of the partnership was a surprise for me. I had the impression that the participants needed only financial support from the United Nations Development Program. After completing the study, I realized the participants need technical support from the United Nations Development Program and need the Lebanese government to realize the Agency as an implementing partner to local economic development interventions in the Lebanese North region. The United Nations Development Program as well as the Lebanese government might take advantage of the North Agency and build the capacities of board members and staff to meet the Lebanese North region demand.

I will share the study findings and recommendations for action with the United Nations Development Program leaders. Putting a plan of action for the needed interventions to ensure the smooth establishment of a public private partnership in Lebanon is my target after completing the study. The plan of action will include working closely with government leaders to ensure the proper legal framework for public private partnerships, and setting an execution strategy to provide the needed technical support to the Agency's staff and board of directors.

Summary and Study Conclusions

The Local Economic Development Agency operating under the framework of the public private partnership is essential for the North region of Lebanon. The findings of the study might assist business owners in achieving sustainable public private partnership businesses. The strategies to attain a sustainable partnership included proper selection of partners, considering international best practices and experience, setting a clear mission and vision, recruiting a strong technical director and professional staff, drafting bylaws for the partnership, and ensuring the meeting of partners on monthly basis to follow up on the Agency's work and discuss emerging needs.

The seven success factors for a public private partnership in Lebanon and supported by literature were: (a) commitment of partners, (b) having a strong technical director, (c) political stability, (d) bylaws, (e) funding, (f) visibility and communication, and (g) adaptation to emerging needs. The Lebanese government might support such agencies to overcome the challenges by having a public private partnership law and considering the Agency as an implementing partner to all its planned local economic development interventions in the region. The United Nations Development Program managers could support the Agency with technical support and capacity building of the Agency's staff. Interested business owners and government leaders in local economic development interventions might consider the North Local Economic Development Agency strategy and build on the success factors identified in this study.

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Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Things to remember:

- Take an audio recording to the interview,
- Make sure the audio recording machine is working properly,
- Collect the signed consent form,
- Take brief interview notes,
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewee,
- Make sure the arranged interviews are in a quiet place and convenient to the participants,
- Put off my mobile phone,
- Ask probing questions,
- Keep the interview focused on the research topic,
- Be genuine with participants and show interest in what the participants are saying,
- Watch carefully the non-verbal body language, and
- Do not interrupt or stop the participants, listen carefully to what they are saying.

Introductory notes to interviewee:

- Introduce myself,
- Describe briefly the purpose of the study,
- Thank participants for participating in the study, and confirm confidentiality,
- Ask participants' permission for audio recording,
- Ask participants to sign the consent form,
- Remind participants this is a voluntary study and they can withdraw anytime without penalty,
- In the case of withdrawal, I will give participants all their collected notes,
- Inform participants member checking and follow-up interviews will be scheduled to get more information or clarify their answers,
- Inform participants I will share the findings and recommendations of the study with them, and
- Ask participants to share publications, documents, reports relevant to my study and can support their answers.

Research Questions:

Central Research Question: What strategies do business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses in Lebanon?

1. Why were you motivated to join the public private partnership?
2. How effective were the steps you considered in the establishment phase to ensure the growth of the public private partnership from a startup phase to successful and sustainable business?

3. What strategic factors contribute to a sustainable public private partnership in Lebanon?
4. What strategies did you use to establish the public private partnership and ensure sustainable businesses?
5. What were main challenges in achieving a sustainable public private partnership business in Lebanon?
6. Why do you need support as a business owner from the government and United Nations Development Program leaders to address the challenges for a sustainable public private partnership business in Lebanon?
7. What other information would you like to add regarding strategies business owners use to sustain public private partnership businesses?

Closure Notes:

- Thank the interviewee;
- Reassure confidentiality;
- Remind interviewee member checking and follow-up interviews will be scheduled;
- Ask participants can contact me in case they need to clarify any point or provide more information.

Appendix B: Letter of Cooperation - LEDA



وكالة التنمية الاقتصادية المحلية في شمال لبنان
North Lebanon Local Economic Development Agency
Reg. Nr. 611 / 2011
علم وخبر ٢٠١١ / ٦١١

Letter of Cooperation - LEDA

Local Economic Development Agency
North - Lebanon

Date: May 2015

Dear Nada Dimachkieh Sweidan,

Based on my review of your research proposal, I give permission for you to conduct the study entitled "Strategies to Sustain Public Private Partnership: A Lebanese Agency Case Study" within the United Nations Development Program. As part of this study, I authorize you to interview the seven business owners of North Local Economic Development Agency as well as to collect the needed data, member checking, and results dissemination activities. Individuals' participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

We understand that our organization's responsibilities include: providing only the contact information (phone numbers and email addresses). We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I confirm that I am authorized to approve research in this setting and that this plan complies with the organization's policies.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential and may not be provided to anyone outside of the student's supervising faculty/staff without permission from the Walden University IRB.

Sincerely,
Alain Chatry
Director
North Local Economic Development Agency