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I- Problem of the Study:

Recently, the competitive advantage has increasing importance. Accordingly, it is clear for our country that the civil sector plays very important role in managing economic and social crises, especially those related to unemployment, poverty, high costs of social services, after withdrawal of government and conversion to policies of encouraging voluntary and civil sectors as the only way to face poverty and helping improve living standards. On the other hand, this would increase competition among associations in favor of poor and disadvantaged people who needs their social services. This could lead to the support and extension of effective contribution range delivered by voluntary sector in delivery of social services in a way that enable them to compete successfully in community development.

Associations can be provided by distinguishing abilities that help them adopt to complex and constant environmental changes. Recently, this requires the associations to be in a lifelong learning process with employees participating in decision-making and structural flexibility. This can achieve successful development in the light of contextual changes. The roles of employees include constant development within these rapid changes currently

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surrounding the associations. This flexibility allows changing strategies stemming from responsive meeting of needs and real desire to provide maximum number of clients with these services.

For successful programs and services, associations should constantly provide services related to community. Sustainability is a necessary condition here to achieve continuity of services delivered to poor. It helps achieve competition among associations and each other. Accordingly, the optimum use of sources will be related to sustainability. Sustainability means the ability to create a community capable of meeting clients' needs continuously and regularly.

It is important to develop and enhance the voluntary associations' work to achieve competitive advantage and to develop their abilities to deliver various developmental services and programs .We should take into consideration that the competitive advantage plays important role in developing their performance by enhancing their inner possibilities and continuous development of their organizational policies and sharing leaders, employees and beneficiaries in making decisions related to the development and implementation of social programs. Social Work, as the most profession related to voluntary associations work, constantly seek to develop their organizational structure because of its impact on

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community programs and developmental services. The main issue of this study is "to define the requirements for achieving the competitive advantage for sustainability of developmental program in voluntary associations. This can be done by defining requirements related to inner and external factors of achieving competitive advantage in voluntary associations :defining the requirements related to associations' culture and values that contribute to the achievement of competitive advantage, and requirements related to the association's ability to induce changes in its programs to achieve sustainability, requirements related to the association's ability to market its programs, and its ability to achieve the competitive advantage for the sustainability of development programs. The study also defines the challenges that face a voluntary association in achieving the competitive advantage for sustainability of its development programs, and finally, reaching a paradigm.

II- Goals of the Study:

Main Goal:

- 1- To define requirements for achieving the competitive advantage for sustainability of development programs in voluntary associations"
- 2- To define challenges faced by the associations in achieving competitive advantage for the sustainability of its programs.

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- 3- To suggest a paradigm from the Social Work perspective for identifying requirements for achieving competitive advantage for the sustainability of development programs in voluntary associations.

III- Questions of the Study:

The main question:

- 1- What are the requirements for achieving the competitive advantage for sustainability of development programs in voluntary associations?

The following set of sub-questions stem from this main one:

- a. What are the requirements related to **internal factors** for achieving competitive advantage of voluntary associations?
- b. What are the requirements related to **external factors** for achieving competitive advantage of voluntary associations?
- c. What are the requirements related to the association's ability to induce **changes** in programs to be more sustainable?
- d. What are the requirements related to the association's ability to **market** its programs?
- e. What are the requirements related to the association's use of **strategies** that achieve competitive advantage for the sustainability of its programs?

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- 2- What are the **challenges** faced by the associations in achieving competitive advantage for the sustainability of its programs.
- 3- Is there a statistically significant correlation between the characteristics of the studied sample and requirements of achieving competitive advantage for sustainable development programs in voluntary associations?

IV- Terminology of the Study:

- 1- The concept of **competitive advantage**
- 2- The concept of **requirements competitive advantage**
- 3- The concept of **sustainability for development programs**

V- Methodology of the Study:

Type of the study: the study is a descriptive study since it defines the requirements for achieving the competitive advantage for sustainability of development programs in voluntary associations; then, a paradigm from Social Work perspective to achieve this advantage can be extracted.

The Method used: the study has depended on the descriptive method; since it focused on the phenomena as a whole and its explanation. The researcher has used the comprehensive social survey to be applied to employees in active voluntary associations, in Fayoum Governorate, Egypt.

Tools of the Study: the tools used by the researcher were based on the scientific approach, whether in data-gathering or statistical data-analysis. These tools are:

Tools for data-collection: the data was gathered from field using: a measurement form titled "Requirements for Achieving the Competitive Advantage for Sustainability of Development Programs in Voluntary Associations" to be applied to employees.

Data-Analysis Methods: In processing the data of the study, the researcher depended on SPSS software and used a set of statistical functions as the following: (percentages, Weights sum, Weighted Averages, Relative Strength, Pearson Correlation Coefficient, T-test, and One-Way ANOVA).

VI- Fields of the Study:

- 1- **Location:** the field study was applied to 23 voluntary associations actively working in Fayoum city.
- 2- **Human scope:** a comprehensive counting of employees working in the selected voluntary associations (n= 167 units).
- 3- **Duration of the study:** the study took from June 1st, 2018 till September 30th, 2020 to prepare theoretical part, data-collection, field application, data-analysis, and extracting findings.

VII- Results of the Study:

1- Results about requirements related to the internal factors for achieving the competitive advantage of a voluntary association.

a. Skills and Human Abilities: High responses were received from participants about the first dimension "skills and human abilities" as one of the internal factors for achieving the competitive advantage in voluntary associations. This was shown in the following statements: "variety of employees' scientific qualifications"; then "the association has enough number of employees", then, "the association holds training courses related o development programs for employees", at the last order.

B. Physical Resources: responses of subjects about the second dimension "the financial resources as one of the internal factors to achieve competitive advantages in voluntary associations" at the highest level, expressed in the statement "the building of the association is appropriate for services delivered to clients"; then came the statement "The association has waiting places for delivering services to clients", and finally, "the association has the technological equipment necessary for delivering services as soon as possible" at the last order.

c. Financial Resources: responses of the participants to the third dimension "the financial resources" an internal factor for achieving competitive advantage in voluntary

associations was at a high level, through the statements: "the association invests its financial resources in delivering its programs"; then, the statement: "the association urges charitable people to donate for delivering development programs". Finally, as the last in responses order, is the statement: "The association gets the necessary support from government agencies.

d. Culture and Values of a Voluntary Association: The responses of the participants about the third dimension (i.e., the culture and values of a voluntary association) as an internal factor for achieving competitive advantage, with a very high level; then, "*the employees are responsive to the clients benefiting from the association*". The statement: "*the association's management uses the principle of punishment and rewarding in dealing with its employees*" came at the last order.

2- Results about requirements related to external factors for achieving the competitive advantage of the voluntary associations: this question was related to three main dimensions:

a. **Building long-term relationships with clients:** the responses of participants about this dimension with a very high level, since ""employees respect clients and maintain their dignity" as the first in order; and "the association is interested in client's complaints"; Finally,

the statement: "The association follow up its clients after delivering services" came at the last order.

b. Achievement of client satisfaction about the association's development program: The responses of participants about this dimension with a very high level since "client satisfaction is a main objective for the association", and "the association attends to the services delivered to clients to increase the association's activities". Finally, the statement: "some stated conditions of services can be overlooked for increasing numbers of beneficiaries" came at the last order.

c. Surrounding associations: The responses of participants about this dimension with a very high level since "The association determines its development program cooperatively with the social security directorate" and "The association delivers newer services than those delivered by other associations". "There is a direct connection between the association and the other associations that deliver similar services" came at the last order.

3- Results about requirements related to The association's ability to induce changes in its programs for achieving sustainability of these programs, at a very high level, since "employees accept changes in the association's administrative system to achieve faster delivery of services to its clients" and "The association

adjusts its programs to be more appropriate for needs of its clients"; and, at the last order, "Programs delivered by the association are changeable in order to satisfy needs of all clients".

4- **Results about requirements related to The association's ability to market its programs** at a high level since "The association seeks increase of beneficiaries of its services" and "The association depends on specialists in marketing its services", at the last order.

5- **Results about requirements related to The association's use of strategies that achieve competitive advantage for the sustainability of its programs:**

a. **Strategy of Leadership:** The responses of participants about this dimension of leadership as one of the strategies that achieve the competitive advantage for a voluntary association with a high level since "The association carefully reviews the data of clients"; and "The association cares for increasing confidence among employees to be more able to accomplish their work". At the last order was "The association gives financial rewards to motivate employees".

b. **Strategy of Cooperation and Alliance:** The responses of participants about this dimension of Cooperation and Alliance as one of the strategies that achieve the competitive advantage for a voluntary association with a high level, since "The association avoids any conflict

with surrounding associations"; and "The association discovers the strengths of successful associations and attempts to deliver its services in a better way". "The association receives appropriate governmental support and subsidies to help in delivering better services to community" came at the last order.

c. **Strategy of differentiation and Quality:** The responses of participants about this dimension of differentiation and quality, as a strategy that achieves the competitive advantage for a voluntary association, came with a high level since "The association has a good reputation among its clients"; and at the last order "The association presents its services to clients in time ".

d. **Cost Strategy:** The responses of participants about this dimension of Cost Strategy, as a strategy that achieves the competitive advantage for a voluntary association, came with a high level since "The cost of services delivered by the association is appropriate"; and "The services delivered by the association are cheaper than those delivered by the other associations". "The association presents new services with low costs as possible" came at the end of the list.

6- **Results about requirements related to challenges facing voluntary associations,** in their attempts to achieve competitive advantage for the sustainability of their programs, came at a weak level:

- a. **Challenges of surrounding environment** were defined with "Changing circumstances around the association lessen its chance to achieve its goals" and "imitation of delivering the same services delivered by other associations". Finally, at the last order, there was the statement: "services delivered are not appropriate for client's needs" with weak level.
- b. **Challenges of Human Resources** were determined by "low financial incentives introduced to employees lessen the accomplishment of work", and "no renewal of methods of work accomplishment" and "inaccurate work done by employees concerning procedures of services delivery" as the last one.
- c. **Challenges of Implementation of Development Programs** were determined by "Low donations given by the charitable people for the implantation of development programs", and "Low amounts of money dedicated for development programs"; and finally, "Implementing the development programs without previous planning".
- d. **Challenges of Administrative leadership** were determined by (that) "Leaders of the association do not cooperate with other associations in identifying priorities of client's needs", and "The leaders do not focus on the ultimate service delivered to the clients" and "; and

finally "The leaders are not convinced of sharing clients in the implemented programs".

7- Results about the differences in dimensions of the measurement for requirements of achieving competitive advantage for sustainability of development program in voluntary associations, according to variables of the study:

- a. There were no statistically differences, at the significance level (0.05) in the dimensions of the measurement, between social workers and employees of the association, except in the sixth dimension. In the sixth dimension, there are differences in favor of the social workers. That means that social workers and employees of the associations are conformed to the dimensions of the instrument in favor of the social workers.
- b. There are no statistically differences, at the significance level (0.05) in the dimensions of the measurement, between males and females. This means that males and females are conformed to all the dimensions of the measurement.
- c. There are no statistically differences, at the significance level (0.05) in the dimensions of the measurement, among various ages, except in the sixth dimension. In the sixth dimension, there are differences in favor of participants of 50 years old or older.

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- d. There are no statistically differences, at the significance level (0.05) in the dimensions of the measurement, between employees with different qualifications. By using Scheffe' Test, it was evident that differences are in favor of those getting above medium qualifications except in the third and the sixth dimension.
- e. There are no statistically differences, at the significance level (0.05) in the dimensions of the measurement, between different social statuses. This means that the sample of the study with different social statuses is conformed to all the dimensions of the measurement.
- f. There are no statistically differences, at the significance level (0.05) in the dimensions of the measurement, between participants with different periods of experiences in favor of the longer periods of experience, except for the sixth dimension. By using Scheffe' Test, it was evident that differences are in favor of those with 15 years of experiences and more (15).



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