

ABSTRACT

Improving the environmental performance of universities is being an important issue recently in the world, in a way of limiting environmental damage. Environmental management system (EMS) provides a suitable framework for universities that wish to effectively manage their environmental affairs. Environmental management involves setting goals and objectives, allocating and organizing resources, assessing results, and providing feedback. It is an interactive process which focuses on continual improvement and can reward universities by: improving compliance with regulatory requirements, decreasing costs, increasing communication between units within the university, and assisting in the identification and minimization of adverse environmental impacts and risks.

This study aims to introduce environmental management system as an effective tool to manage the environmental activities at Birzeit University. By developing an environmental policy as an initial step to develop the EMS.

A review for the existing environmental activities was done to make a group of the main environmental categories at BZU. Also a questionnaire was distributed for BZU community (employees and students) in order to explore the relationship, awareness, and acceptance to develop an EMS.

The results for this research showed that there is a relationship between the increase in the numbers of students and employees and consequently the number of buildings, and the environmental activities at the university and the increase in consumption. Results of questionnaire showed that there is a relationship between BZU community and the visible environmental activities, BZU employees have the awareness of environmental issues more than students, finally, more than 90% of BZU community accepted and committed to have an environmental policy as a first step in order to develop an EMS.

A suggested EMS for BZU was developed in addition to a detailed managing and technical levels, that could help the university to manage its environmental activities in a way that can reduce the negative impacts on its environment, as a step to support developing the EMS.

The recommendations of this study were to focus on environmental issues besides academic goals, to develop an environmental office in BZU, to develop an environmental policy for BZU, to develop an EMS of level two, to apply suggested managing and technical methods and finally, BZU can change the values and attitudes of its community into better understanding for environment, and consequently that can affect the society.