

THE DEGREE OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRANSPARENCY IN THE PALESTINIAN HIGHER EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract - The aim of the study is to identify the degree of administrative transparency in the Palestinian higher educational institutions in the Gaza Strip. In the study, the researchers adopted a descriptive and analytical method. The research population consisted of administrative staff, whether academic or administrative, except for those in senior management or the university council. The study population reached 392 employees. A random sample was selected (197). The number of questionnaires recovered was (160) with a recovery rate of (81.2%). The researchers used a questionnaire for the data collection and were treated using SPSS to obtain the results.

The results show that there is no significant difference between male responses and female responses due to gender variable. The results also confirm that there is no significant difference between respondents' responses due to the age variable. The results also showed a significant difference between respondents' responses attributed to the university variable. There is a fundamental difference between respondents' responses attributed to the scientifically qualified variable. The results also confirmed a significant difference between respondents' responses attributed to the management level variable. The results also confirmed a significant difference between respondents' responses due to variable years of service.

The research reached a number of recommendations, the most important of which is: The necessity of Palestinian universities to adhere to the application of transparency standards in all university activities. The need to benefit from regional and international experience in the application of transparency systems within universities and to examine the possibility of applying these systems in our universities. As well as the need to engage in the program of teaching transparency in universities, as it is confirmed that only five universities participated in this experiment. The importance of raising awareness among the employees of Palestinian universities to clarify the foundations of building transparency and its dimensions to represent the active supporter through workshops and seminars.

Keywords— Administrative Transparency, Palestinian Universities, Institutions of Higher Education, Gaza, Palestine.

1. INTRODUCTION

Transparency is one of the most important topics that occupy the minds of specialists in accounting, finance, economic as well as the law and administration, where it works to protect money and calls for the use of the best economic resources available to achieve growth, stability, and ensure the achievement of financial activity for its objectives. The subject of administrative transparency has raised many researchers in the different fields of knowledge to research this subject in order to explore its various horizons and shed light on its various contents in order to provide practices that stand up in the institution to achieve the goals that all societies seek.

Transparency is one of the elements of achieving governance in management. Transparency is the principle of creating an environment in which information on current circumstances, decisions and actions is available, perceived and understood, and the method of providing information, making policy decisions related to a more specific society through timely publication and openness to all parties concerned relationship. Or to provide an attractive work environment that facilitates the prediction of changes in them and thus determine their future direction [11,16, 17, 20. 21]. The academic institutions are considered an essential means of building the good person and the society's tool for achieving progress and development. Therefore, it is important to connect the university with the society by linking the sites of science to the production sites. There should be a clear communication bridges between the university and these sites to ensure the flow of information between them. This requires adopting an open system and applying a democratic approach to decision-making, following the scientific method of organization, taking into account functional specialization and dealing with its problems and problems of society [2, 18, 19].

The importance of transparency stems from its positive effects on the public and private sectors. It helps to achieve many benefits, including enhancing the role of loyalty among the employees, increasing their productivity and strengthening their values, strengthening the values of cooperation and synergy, clarity and improvement of results, reducing ambiguity and blurring corruption.

Lack of transparency leads to ambiguity of legislation; thus allowing the employee to take upon himself the freedom to interpret legislation, thereby increasing

administrative constraints. Transparency also facilitates performance assessments, saves time and costs, avoids confusion and chaos in work. Develop the functions of administrative units and establish values of cooperation and teamwork [12, 22, 23]. In light of the great importance of the academic institutions in society, the importance of building these institutions on sound and clear foundations, especially with regard to their management systems, is thus starting to study and research concerned with modern issues in universities in order to establish sound and clear foundations for the management system at all levels. One of the important issues of focus when applying these methods is administrative transparency. Administrative transparency in higher educational institutions include transparent relationships, practices, practices and behaviors, providing a healthy regulatory environment at all administrative and academic levels, including credibility and trust between management and individuals through real empowerment rather than Empowerment Bogus to carry out their responsibilities and provide the necessary information for each level as required.

Transparency institutions communicate continuously with all their members do not deal with them confidentially and involve them in decision-making and policy-making, where management takes into account decentralization and flexibility through adoption of the principle of democracy and dealing with integrity at all levels [2, 24, 25].

2. RESEARCH PROBLEM

Universities play a major role in establishing the principles of transparency and integrity which are considered to be modern management concepts that all administrative organizations must adopt because of their importance in creating a successful management that tries to address many administrative problems such as ambiguity in the laws and regulations in force and try to find ways to simplify procedures to combat administrative corruption. Therefore, this study attempts to shed light on the degree of administrative transparency in order to achieve transparency in the Palestinian universities in order to reduce the mismanagement practices that harm the public interest and make some suggestions to activate their application.

As a result of strengthening the principle of administrative transparency, a number of researchers pointed out, for example, the report issued by the coalition for integrity and accountability [9, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30] on the environment of transparency and accountability in the Palestinian higher education sector in the

Gaza Strip. The results and recommendations showed lacks in executive regulation related to transparency in higher educational institutions no. (11) of 1998 that clarifies the responsibility of universities towards the ministry and the responsibility of the ministry towards higher education institutions of the Palestinian National Authority, which weakens the system of accountability of universities. The law limits the competence of the ministry to issuing regulations and decisions, which is a lack of legislation that regulates the work of institutions of higher education in the Palestinian National Authority. There are no codes for the staff of Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip, although some universities include in their publications a set of standards and values to be observed while performing their duties. Harb [12, 31, 32] recommended activating the role of senior leaders in Palestinian universities in order to support the principle of transparency by opening the door for the participation of employees and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation.

3. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Q1: What is the degree of administrative transparency in the Palestinian higher education institutions in the Gaza Strip?

It is divided into the following sub-questions:

Q1-1: What is the level of administrative transparency in Palestinian universities?

Q1-2: Are there statistically significant differences in the opinions of the sample in question on the level of administrative transparency, depending on the demographic variables (gender, age, university, academic qualification, administrative level, years of service)?

4. RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

H1: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between universities in the Gaza Strip in the degree of administrative transparency due to the following demographic variables (gender, age, university, academic qualification, administrative level, and years of service).

The following sub-assumptions are derived from it:

H1-1: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the universities in the Gaza Strip in the degree of administrative transparency due to the variable (gender).

H1-2: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between universities in the Gaza Strip in the degree of administrative transparency due to the variable (age).

H1-3: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) among universities in the Gaza Strip in the degree of administrative transparency due to the variable (university).

H1-4: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between universities in the Gaza Strip in the degree of administrative transparency due to the variable (scientific qualification).

H1-5: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between the universities in the Gaza Strip in the degree of administrative transparency due to the variable (administrative level).

H1-6: There are no statistically significant differences at the level of significance ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between universities in the Gaza Strip in the degree of administrative transparency due to the variable (years of service).

5. STUDY LIMITS AND SCOPE

□ **Subject (Academic) limitations:** The research was limited in its objective to study the degree of the practice of administrative transparency. □ **Human Limitations:** The research was carried out on administrative staff and academics in an administrative position. □ **Institutional Limit:** Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip □ **Place Limitations:** The research was conducted on five Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip. □ **Time limitation:** The research, preliminary data collection and statistical analysis were carried out during the year (2017).

6. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

This research attempts to achieve the following objectives: □ To examine the reality of the degree of administrative transparency in the Palestinian universities - Gaza Strip. □ To highlight differences from the point of view of the respondents on the degree of administrative transparency in the Palestinian universities - Gaza Strip according to the demographic variables (gender, age, university, academic qualification, administrative level, years of service). □ Suggesting proposals that contribute to enhancing the degree of administrative transparency and contribute to increasing the application of the concept of administrative transparency in the Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip. □ Outcomes and recommendations contribute to increasing the degree of administrative transparency in the Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip. □ Identify the challenges facing universities, and what features should be available in universities to achieve a high degree of administrative transparency. □ To find out if there are statistically significant differences between the averages of the degrees of the employees in the universities on the research axes

according to gender, age, university, academic qualification, administrative level, years of service.

7. RESEARCH IMPORTANCE

The importance of the research is in the importance of the subject, which is the subject of interest of researchers, and there is an urgent need to promote the degree of administrative transparency in accordance with scientific methodology and clear application.

The importance of research can be highlighted by: □ The theoretical importance of this study highlights the scope of administrative transparency and the importance of enhancing its practice in the Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip. □ This study draws on its importance as it is a subject of modernity, scientific, and practical excellence. □ This research provides data to assist researchers and scholars in this field. □ The attention of the management of Palestinian universities to the importance of enhancing the degree of administrative transparency because of its role in upgrading the status of the university at the local and regional levels. □ Providing scientific and practical recommendations to Palestinian universities that help achieve the degree of administrative transparency.

8. RESEARCH TERMINOLOGY

Administrative transparency is the clarity of legislation, its ease of understanding, stability, harmony with each other, objectivity, clarity of language, flexibility and development in accordance with the economic, social and administrative changes in accordance with the spirit of the times, as well as simplification of procedures and dissemination of information and accessibility. It is the right of every citizen or employee to access data, to access information, policy-making and decision-making mechanisms, and knowledge of institutional decision-making mechanisms. Transparency is an input to ethical standards and an institutional charter of trust, as well as helping to discover Corruption [6, 33]. It can be said that all definitions call for one substance, which is linked to four words: credibility, disclosure, clarity, and participation [12, 34, 35].

To this end, procedural information is defined as information sharing, public policy making, regulations and legislation, and procedures in accordance with written and published legal rules, which specify the information to be provided, the dates in which they should be published in detail. This information is sufficient to understand the work of the university and monitor its performance, so that it is accessible to the stakeholders, especially the administrative staff working in it.

9. PREVIOUS STUDIES

The study of Abu Habib [1] aimed to identify the application of international transparency standards in the international organizations operating in the Gaza Strip, where the research sought to reach a transparent international regulatory environment that rejects corruption and is able to confront and reduce its spread in society, Identify the most important ways to promote the application of international transparency standards. One of the most important findings of the research was that there was a moderate agreement by the sample of the research sample that UNRWA applied and practiced transparency and indicators in its work in the light of international transparency standards with a rate of approval of 63.19%. The research recommended activating the role of senior leadership in UNRWA to support the principle of transparency by opening the door for the participation of employees and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation; as well as annual awards for the most transparent section. Finally, the agreement with some local universities and colleges to work on teaching a course on the ethics of the profession and work, and on combating corruption and the requirements of integrity, transparency and accountability, especially for students in fourth, fifth years, and expected to graduate.

The study of AL-Omri [5] aims to identify the degree of administrative transparency in Saudi universities and its impediments and ways of improving them from the point of view of its faculty members. The descriptive method was used and a questionnaire was designed for this purpose. The research community consisted of all members of the faculty - male and female - in the five Saudi universities in the government. The research sample consisted of 1070 members, representing 20% of the research community. One of the most important findings of this research was that the overall degree of the administrative transparency of the Saudi universities from the point of view of the teaching staff was medium. The highest dimensions were as follows: the transparency of administrative communication, transparency in information and work mechanisms, transparency in laws and regulations, transparency in performance appraisal, transparency in decision-making, and finally transparency in accountability. The research recommended that the university should work with the participation of the community in the decision making process related to the services it provides.

The need for senior departments at the university to open the way for all employees at the university at different levels of management to participate in the decision-

making process. The University should provide protection and guarantees to individuals who contribute to the detection and reward of corruption.

The study of USAID [15] aims to ensure that transparency can be defined as a principle that allows those affected by administrative decisions, business transactions or philanthropy to know not only numbers and facts, but mechanisms and processes; it is the duty of staff, board of trustees, and managers to act clearly and predictably and understandable. Every citizen has the right to be transparent in society in the public and private sectors. The research showed that the evidence of academic misconduct evades academics from their responsibilities at intervals, and students evade lectures without being punished. In addition to the academic betrayal of academic gains such as: academic theft, falsification of data, fraud in research, and complacency in carrying out duties and responsibilities. As well as academic bribery, in accepting gifts or payments for academic degrees.

The study of Al-Harbi [3] aimed to determine the degree of commitment to the practice of administrative transparency in the academic departments in the Faculty of Education, King Saud University, from the point of view of faculty members and administrative staff. One of the most important results of the research was that the degree of practicing administrative transparency at King Saud University was medium. The degree of administrative transparency requirements was high according to the views of the sample members. The research recommended that academic leaders should adopt the principle of administrative transparency through a procedural plan that promotes the policy of clarity and disclosure of all administrative and academic dealings, and the consolidation of integrity practices through the adoption of objective accountability systems.

The study of Harb [12] aimed at identifying the reality of administrative transparency and the requirements of its application by the senior management in the Palestinian universities in the Gaza Strip and the commitment of university employees to practice transparency in the fields of information systems, administrative communication, administrative accountability, participation, and work procedures. The recommendations of the research are the need to work on the practice of transparency while creating a balance between the right to know and the right of the university to maintain its secrets. As well as activate the role of senior leaders in Palestinian universities to support the principle of transparency by opening the way for the participation of employees and encourage the spirit of initiative and innovation.

Evidence of low level of transparency

The low level of transparency in the institution can be inferred by some of the evidence mentioned in the USAID report, which was as follows [15]:

- Economic pressure: The delay, irregularity, or inadequacy of funding for universities; the absence of incentives for academics or administrators drives them to seek additional sources of income in unethical ways.
- Lack of clarity of laws and legislation: Where it is difficult to distinguish between what is acceptable and unacceptable in a way that creates opportunities for corruption.
- In societies with tribal customs, favoritism, moderation, and giving gifts to supervisors are implicitly acceptable or normal, and these habits increase the degree of bad and increase the problem of corruption in education.
- When infrastructure is weak, inspectors are not allowed to visit universities to avoid the risk of collisions when arresting corrupt employees.
- Lack of effective participation of academics with society, lack of accountability in the education sector, and lack of responsibility in the education sector.
- Some practices are not the result of a bad intention, but simply as a result of the belief that this behavior is part of the transaction, and because breaking this law can be considered a serious risk to the individual a collective action is taken against him.

Ways to enhance transparency

Harb points out some actions that will help universities enhance transparency within their administrative systems, which can be summed up in the following points [12]:

- Reformulation of internal laws and regulations.
- Continuous development of control systems so that democratic control is correct.
- Educational programs for new employees, and increasing their knowledge of the organizational and administrative dimensions, rights and duties.
- Issuance of communications and circulars directly related to employees, and labor laws within the institution.
- Activating the role of the committees and groups assigned to the supervision to have a separation between those who supervise and those who manage.
- To create the working environment and climate appropriate for transparency and try to link the personal interests of individuals with the general interests of the University.
- Monitoring and continuously guidance and the existence of an effective evaluation system.
- Provide open communication channels and strong bridges between university members and the outside community in which the university lives.
- Respect the rights and privacy of individuals.
- Stay away from secrecy in administrative style.
- Use advanced information systems and employ IT to facilitate and support

openness which in turn improves efficiency. □ Commitment to values and ethics of public service, which contributes to the building of integrity systems. □ Emphasize the great role of the academic administration in particular, and the university in general, in influencing people's beliefs and convictions, and developing the necessary awareness programs.

11. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The researchers used the analytical descriptive approach, which attempts to describe and evaluate "administrative transparency in higher education institutions" in the hope of reaching generalizations that have a meaning that increases the knowledge of the subject. The research also relied on data collection from the field reality through research conducted for this purpose. The research community consists of all administrative personnel, whether an academic in administrative position or administrative with the exception of the senior management in the university. The researchers have enumerated (392) job titles.

12. RESULTS OF STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The research presents data analysis and test hypotheses by answering the research questions and reviewing the main results of the questionnaire, which were obtained by analyzing their paragraphs and finding the demographic variables. Therefore, statistical treatments were conducted for the collected data from the research questionnaire. (SPSS) was used to get the results and analysis.

Methodology and procedures First: Methodology of the study

In order to achieve the objectives of the research, the researchers used the analytical descriptive method by which the phenomenon can be described, the data analyzed, the relationship between its components, the expressed views about it, the processes involved, and the effects it causes are all outlined. Primary data was collected by using a random stratified sample,

Check the authenticity of the tool Internal Validity

Internal validity means the extent to which each paragraph of the questionnaire is consistent with the axis to which this paragraph belongs. It is calculated by finding the correlation coefficients between each paragraph of the questionnaire field and the total score of the field itself.