The feasibility of investment in the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts in Palestinian public organizations

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Abstract

Purpose – The purpose of the study is to investigate the feasibility of investing the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts in public organizations in Palestine. The study sought to measure the current status of public organizations, if they are investing the religious heritage in the efforts of encountering corruption. Further, the study sought to measure the attitudes and future expectations if there is an integration of the religious heritage in the current anti-corruption efforts.

Design/methodology/approach – This study combines two folds: First, theoretical and qualitative, through research in previous studies, texts and religious attitude of corruption, historical models and international experiences that have tried to invest in it and incorporate it in anti-corruption efforts, which are generalizable generic models; and the second: a field empirical part, through the researcher use of a questionnaire tool and analyzing it statistically, in addition to ensuring the possibility of using religion in anti-corruption efforts within the Palestinian public institutions which will eventually enable us to answer the study questions.

Findings – The study found that the reality of investment in the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts in the Palestinian public sector is present in a moderate degree (56.8%), both in rules and regulations, in strategic plans or policies, or in the internal systems and the organizational culture of the public institutions. With regard to the attitudes of the employees toward corruption and the way of their formulation to these attitudes either if they are influenced by the religious heritage or the law or by the eight reasons mentioned previously in this study, it is obvious that the employees attitudes toward corruption are formulated first from a religious perspectives and second from a legal perspective. Regarding their attitudes and their agreement level toward the investment of the religious heritage in anti-corruption in the Palestinian public sector was high (75.9%), as well as their future expectations in case the religious heritage is invested in anti-corruption efforts was in a high degree (74.1%). Therefore, the authors conclude that there is a feasibility of religious heritage investment in anti-corruption efforts in the Palestinian public sector in case it is accredited and integrated in anti-corruption strategies as a supportive factor but not as a substitute of other efforts. The study recommended that decision makers should adopt new anti-corruption policies and strategies compatible with these striking results through the rules, regulations and administrative decisions, or in the internal institutional system and the cultural organization, in the publications and declarations of the public institution, in special code of conduct based on the religious heritage, in the training of the employees and designing new proposals to integrate the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts in parallel with the permanent evaluation of these efforts after its application.

Originality/value – This study, The feasibility of investing in religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts, is different from the previously reviewed studies, as the previous studies were either philosophical or theoretical in nature, looking at the relationship between religion and corruption or empirical, but in a different environment and society than the society of this study. The general purpose of this research is to identify the impact of religious perceptions on corruption in the behavior of public officials in the Palestinian public sector as it is on the ground, and whether their attitudes were affected by corruption with their religious beliefs? Do they welcome the investment of religion in the fight against corruption and what are their expectations if this is done in institutional, strategic or policy context.

Keywords Investment, Anti-corruption, The religious heritage

Paper type Research paper

Introduction

Religion has generally declined since the 16th century (Cunningham, 2005) and modernity ages, where it remained on the margins or outside the text as a variable that can be integrated and invested in improving the patterns of governance and administration. In contrast, governmental corruption has been one of the biggest drawbacks for public institutions and efforts of governance and development, especially in developing countries. It may be argued that anti-corruption is a matter based primarily on the circulation of power, the principle of separation of powers, the existence of effective institutions and mechanisms of control under a comprehensive constitution, as well as the institutions of civil society. However, some researchers have recently criticized this approach for not considering the moral and cultural dimensions of corruption and considering religion as a starting point for these dimensions, suggesting that religion affects corrupt actions by shaping cultural attitudes (Ko and Moon, 2014). Today, the leaders of many religions are united in their opposition to corruption and the leaders of religious organizations are more clearly condemned, as truth and justice are the universal values of many religions (Beets, 2007).

It is historically understood in the European context that democracy has been created because of the corruption of religion, and it is generally understood that there are those who demand the exclusion of religion from the state, at least it is important for them to protect religion from corruption by the state to be consistent (Stevens, 2012). Some may argue that the combination of religion and law is impossible, but a study found that there are subtle shifts between them and even argues that some religions are compatible with secularism and public religions that might protect secular society (Brandtstädter, 2013). A study that was carried out in 129 countries in 12 years found that the correlation between religion and the reduction of corruption is conditional on the extent of democratic political institutions (Sommer *et al.*, 2013).

The relationship between religion and corruption is understandable because the latter is an immoral variable. This is directly related to the religious teachings that call for ethical commitment. The heavenly religions (Islamic, Christian and others) consider corruption as a wrong act based mainly on the employee's lack of integrity, which is what all religions have done for self-reform and the promotion of higher supervision instead of employers' control. Some may discuss the relative perspective of ethics, but this debate ends with the agreement of reason and religion on the immorality and non-legitimacy of corruption. The study does not investigate non-believers or those who saw religions as a form of insanity and even in some cases they find it useful (Hood, 1997). We will not argue whether conservative or conservative societies are more involved in corruption on the ground than those of non-believer communities because that is what (Ko and Moon, 2014) explain. But what we are trying to put forward here is a reference supplement to strategies within the traditional anti-corruption system and not a substitute for it.

Corruption is a hindrance to human progress, as systematic corruption undermines democracy and carries the risk of non-legitimacy of power, and generates a crisis of legitimacy (Souza *et al.*, 2017), which is not a new phenomenon, there is almost devoid of which a society and has become a noticeable phenomenon with a remarkable impact when the state institutions were found "(Shabbir and Anwar, 2007), and in parallel, interest in the fight against corruption had adopted increased efforts after the World Bank President James Wolfensohn spoke about the "cancer of corruption" in 1996 and national and international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and governmental censor bodies are all involved in the organized efforts of anti-corruption, donor organizations have spent millions of dollars on anti-corruption programs and introduced the Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) of International Transparency organization, and the index of global governance of the World

Bank, and Fix Rate and Closing the loop of International Organization (Integrity Action). Many believe that corruption is on the rise globally, at an annual cost is estimated at US $1tn, according to the World Bank, and still innovative ways to combat it is insufficient (Marquette *et al.*, 2014). The most recent effort in this series of efforts was the United Nations Convention against Corruption, released in 2003 and joined by most of the world, including the Palestinian Authority in 2014.

Within the Palestinian context, corruption is not a new scourge on Palestinian Authority institutions, as according to reports issued by the Palestinian Legislative Council and the Ministry of Finance, the budget of President Arafat since 1994, totaling $74m, has been distributed exactly as planned, and indicated that a transfer of $900m (to unknown party) for 5 years 1995–2000, the Ministry of Finance was not informed about how the funds were spent (Ramahi, 2013). We can attribute the corruption in the Palestinian administrative system to many internal and external factors, starting with the Israeli occupation and its economic dependence, through the transformation of power from the era of the revolution to the stage of state and institutions, besides to the legal, economic and cultural factors, in addition to globalization, and the international attendance represented by its organizations, ending with the disruption of the elections and the absence of the Palestinian Legislative Council.

Corruption is inherent in Palestinian Authority institutions. The situation of the private sector and the non-governmental organizations do not differ. According to a report released by the European Union, financial corruption in the Palestinian Authority led to the loss of financial aids estimated by 2bn Euros, which was transferred to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip During the period from 2008 to 2012, which indicates that there is an imbalance in spending and management of European funds in the Palestinian territories (Ramahi, 2013).

Statement of problem

Despite the obvious position of religious heritage on the public service and public money and its prohibition or criminalization of many acts of corruption such as: (Theft, fraud, bribery, patronage, exploitation of position and influence, abuse, waste, waste, blocking information, harassment). However, efforts to fight corruption globally and nationally have not stopped investing in these efforts as supportive but not as a substitute for any other effort. Can religious heritage do its positive work and make an important difference in the Palestinian administrative system and thus adopt new policies and strategies that engage in anti-corruption efforts? Hence, the problem of the study is to answer the following question: What is the feasibility of investing in religious heritage in efforts to combat corruption and the extent to which it promotes integrity, transparency and accountability in the Palestinian public sector? Therefore, the research objectives are represented in addressing the following questions:

RQ1. To what extent religion is regarded as one of the references to administrative organization and a source of strategic planning in Palestinian public sector institutions?

RQ2. Are employees of Palestinian public sector institutions affected in shaping their attitudes and perceptions toward corruption due to their religious beliefs?

RQ3. How well do Palestinian public sector institutions invest in religious heritage in efforts to fight corruption and promote integrity, transparency and accountability among employees?

RQ4. What is the level of attitudes of workers in the Palestinian public sector toward the investment of religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts?

RQ5. What is the level of expectations of workers in the Palestinian public sector institutions toward corruption indicators in case of the religious heritage is strengthened and invested in the efforts of anti-corruption?

RQ6. Are there any significant statistical differences at significance level of ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the responses of respondents attributed to the following demographic variables: (gender/educational qualification/career status/nature of work/years of experience, type of institution)?

Previous studies

There are many studies that dealt with the subject in Arabic and English but few, and focused either on the theoretical or the jurisprudential aspects and tried to find a correlation between religious heritage and corruption with an attempt to test in reality.

Studies in Arabic

A study carried out by Naser (2013) on the Islamic religious heritage in anti-corruption, "Speech and Practice", which was a part of the publication of the Coalition for Integrity and Accountability (AMAN), in an attempt to establish an intellectual and systematic approach based on historical texts and models to review the position of the Islamic religion in anti-corruption, Along with a brief overview of the role of other religions. The study concluded that the Islamic religion has laid the foundations for collective responsibility.

The study of Al-Ghasab (2011) entitled as "The methodology of Islamic law in protecting the society from administrative and financial corruption" that aimed to clarify the Islamic Sharia approach in protecting society from financial and administrative corruption. The study had adopted the comparative inductive approach that explores the conjugation in change and correlation between what is recognized by Islamic jurisprudence and the Saudi regime. The study concluded that the weakness of religion and lack of adherence to the teachings of religion are of the main causes of corruption, and therefore religion plays a major role in protecting institutions from corruption, such as the requirements for those who hold public positions. The study recommended updating the system of the Committee for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice and expanding its powers.

Another study is (Al-Fleet and Nassar, 2008) that aimed at clarifying the approach of the holy Quran in the processing of the administrative corruption. The researchers stated that the Palestinian society, similar to any other society, was not free of corruption. The study tackled the administrative corruption in the Palestinian National Authority institutions since 1995, and the traditional methods used to confront them. The researchers relied on the deductive approach of religious texts and how to overcome this problem, and recommended the development of laws to protect the employee and promote Islamic values as a prevention of corruption, and raise the standard of living of the employee.

Studies in English

The study of Xu *et al.* (2017) that examines the influence of religious beliefs on corruption in China. The study used data from the regional level board from 1998 to 2009. Practical results showed that bureaucratic corruption is negatively associated with local religious heritage, which means that religious culture plays a positive role in curbing official corruption because religion has an influence on political preferences and labor ethics. The negative correlation between religion and corruption is also weaker in the law-enforcement provinces. The results also revealed that the impact of the fight against the indigenous religions (Taoism and Buddhism) among different religions is more important than foreign religions

(i.e. Christianity and Islam). This paper, as a preliminary study, presents a new evidence of the relationship between religion and corruption in China.

A study examined the relationship between religion and corruption (Ko and Moon, 2014). It considered that there was a growing interest in understanding the impact of religion on corruption. And that many empirical studies have indicated that countries with strong hierarchical religions (such as Islam, Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity) are more likely to suffer from corruption. However, these results are controversial, largely because of the lack of empirical characterization of the causal links (or theoretical) that explain this relationship: obedience to power, promotion of negative culture, immoral family and trust mediation. Using the Fourth World Values Survey ($n = 87,988$) of 64 countries, this study constructed a general equivalence model to assess these four causal links after controlling the heterogeneity of religious beliefs among individuals from 64 countries. The study did not find strong evidence support for causal explanations.

In Marquette *et al.* (2014) study on religion, attitudes and perceptions toward corruption in India, the aim was to improve understanding of religious perception and its impact on corruption in different socio-cultural contexts. In addition to explore any possible role that religious actors can play in fighting corruption. The study used a qualitative approach through personal interaction of the researchers with interviewees through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions, which included 120 participants working in the design and implementation of anti-corruption policies. The research focused on two religions (Sikhism and Hinduism). The study found that there is no possible role for religion or religious institutions. It does not attempt to form a specific concept to combat corruption. Indeed, the high level of religiosity is accompanied by high levels of corruption. In fact, when corruption becomes systematic and organized rather than incidental, religion and religious institutions might be part of the problem. Hence, the study concludes that the mechanisms to combat corruption need to be reconsidered. Although religions do not have the capacity to influence at present, a review of policies and practice may find a role for religions in supporting them.

In Flavin and Ledet (2013) study entitled as "Religiousness and Governmental Corruption in the United States of America", a set of theoretical assumptions were developed, such as the statement that states with more religious people had lower levels of corruption. The study then involved an empirical test of this prediction and found little correlation between corruption and religiosity in the USA. The study indicates a lack of consensus on the measurement of both religiosity and governmental corruption, and found that although theoretical logic leads us to believe that more religiosity means lower levels of governmental corruption, the relationship between these two variables has been weak, and the state's sectarian makeup is linked to corruption. States with a high Catholic presence have higher levels of corruption, but without a close link between religion and corruption or that religion can save governments from corruption.

Marquette (2010) studies about corruption, religion and moral development. Begins with the proposition that any attempt to develop an understanding of how religion affects individuals' attitudes and behavior toward corruption should begin from a critical and interpretative perspective at the individual level. Hence, it is necessary to benefit from studies that discuss how an individual perceives his/her perceptions of corrupt behavior. That there is no definite evidence of religious content that affects individuals' attitude toward public morality, membership in the sense of being in a religious society that rejects a particular behavior as corrupt, and what happens is to engage in principled thinking as a determinant of behavior which is subject to a relative proportionality.

A study performed by Koppelman (2009) entitled "Corruption, Religion and the Establishment Clause", argued that the government's neutrality toward religion was based on considerations of avoiding religious conflict, exclusion of religious minorities and the risk of irrational Ideologicalization of the government's actions. The author attempted to explore that religion could be corrupted if it was implicated in the issues of the modern state. By re-establishing, religion was excluded because of the corruption of the religious establishment. In other words, corruption is one of the foundations for political accommodation among people with different religious views. In addition, the study argued that religion is valuable and likely to be harmed if the state tries to manipulate it. This understanding lies behind the founding doctrine of the modern state, but citizens need to share a common understanding of what is valuable. So, the most effective and appropriate way for a government is to take a stand of neutrality.

In Beets (2007) study entitled as "global corruption and religion: an empirical examination". The study attempted to understand the relationship between religion and corruption. The researcher used information on religion and the International Transparency Index, which classifies countries according to perceived degree of corruption among government officials and politicians. In total, 133 countries were included in the 2003 CPI by a combination of factors: "Dominant religion, perceived corruption, the importance of religion to citizens of each country, religious freedom, and gross domestic product per capita)." The Christian countries, which make up 48% of the countries in the Transparency International Index, have a moderate level of perceived corruption, moderate in their estimation of religion, relatively high religious freedom and relatively large per capita GDP. The predominantly Islamic countries, which account for 26% of the listed countries, have a high level of perceived corruption, consider religion as very important, have little or no religious freedom, and low per capita GDP.

In a study we end by, Paldam (2001), entitled as "Corruption and Religion: An addition to the economic model." It is suggested that the pattern of corruption in the 100 countries covered by Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index is explained by a mixed economic-cultural model. The economic model uses real per capita income and inflation, whereas the cultural model includes a group of 11 variables in each country, and the Herfindahl Index of Religious Diversity, the predominance of the interpretation of corruption as a result of the economic model of interpretation. However, the study also found that corruption is lower among Protestants and Anglicans.

Scientific implication and added value
This study, The feasibility of investing in religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts, is different from the previously reviewed studies, as the previous studies were either philosophical or theoretical in nature, looking at the relationship between religion and corruption or empirical, but in a different environment and society than the society of this study. The general purpose of this research is to identify the impact of religious perceptions on corruption in the behavior of public officials in the Palestinian public sector as it is on the ground, and whether their attitudes were affected by corruption with their religious beliefs? Do they welcome the investment of religion in the fight against corruption and what are their expectations if this is done in institutional, strategic or policy context.

Literature review
The literature review in this study is dealing with the main variables and the analysis of the functional theory of religion from one side; and its relationship to anti-corruption from the

other hand; as suggested by Emil Dorkham and Max Weeber. The effect of religion and culture was confirmed on the society in general and in individuals on particular. Max Weeber argued that culture has a great effect on individuals' behaviors and mentioned that religion as an element of culture affecting individuals' behavior directly. From this point of view Emil Dorkham confirmed the way that religion helps in the cohesion of the social system due to the suitable circumstances it generates to keep integrity and cohesion and in keeping the legitimacy of social arrangements (Francis, 2015).

First: the independent variable (religion and religious heritage)
The anthropological studies showed that religion is not only a universal phenomenon but also a real phenomenon spread and existed in all times. Though all attempts to identify religion and its concept, none of those attempts was neither satisfying nor applicable for those who are studying religion (Francis, 2015).

British anthropologist James Fraser mentioned that findings a definition that can be accepted by all opinions is impossible; as the researcher can only determine precisely what he means of the term (religion), then using this word in the vein he wants. Therefore, the religion is "the submission and asking of help from higher power than humans, this power is believed that is controls nature and humans' life". This process has two elements: the first is theoretical and the second is practical. First, there is the belief of super powers followed by submission to those powers; religion is not valid without those two elements. The belief which is not followed by practices is only a theoretical theology. With regard to abstract practice from any belief it is considered something else than religion (Al-Sawah, 2002). This definition was criticized heavily but it fits the purpose of the current study, it shows the central idea about that faith only is not enough, and it must be accompanied by good practice and evident in the moral behavior on earth (Al-Sawah, 2004).

Thus, the religious heritage in this study is the total values, religion beliefs (Muslim, Christian) agreed upon and adopted by the Palestinian public employees such as truth, honesty, prohibition of fraud, theft, bribery, fraud and forgery, those are related to financial and administrative corruption in public organizations. The study will not analyze this term or supporting it through evidences or verses as it is studied vastly in many studies (Yagboyaju, 2017). However, the purpose will be using it and testing it empirically.

Second: dependent variable (corruption and corruption forms)
The term corruption in language is (corrupted) against (reconciliation); meaning corrupting things in since of damage and decline. In al-Wasset dictionary it is damage, decline, distribution and breach while, in the legal dictionary it is spoiling the thing, People are connected to the concept of evil and the negative aspects in general (Musleh, 2013).

It can be said that the most well-known definition of corruption is that it is the misuse of public power to gain private benefits this definition is the used in the international bank, it is based on public sector's activities without eliminating private sector ones; especially those with huge effects. The forms of corruption are existed in commercial deals or administrative deals such as employment, as well as in private activities organized by the government. The private interest is not individual self-one but, corruption is carried out in favor of sect, tribe, friends, family or even the political party or any other groups work against the general order serving the interests of certain categories (Tanzi, 1998).

Though corruption is linked to all bad things, the attempts of putting a definition of it is affected by the scientific filed of the researcher as well as the perspective of discussing corruption. Some researchers look into corruption as "The illegal use of official power or post by a government official, whether to gain wealth for himself or to maximize his

influence at the expense of the public, in violation of the conventions and laws in force" (David, 2012).

Third: the relationship between religion and corruption variables
A study discussed that religion affects the way that people talk or act regarding corruption; it may lead in a whole to refuse this phenomenon. Despite that; in countries where corruption is a systematic and institutionalized practice, it is not unlikely that this verbal condemnation affects actual behavioral practices of corruption (Marquette *et al.*, 2014). The interest in the relationship between religion and corruption emerges from an assumption postulated that justice, rights, truth and honesty are high ranked interests in any religion. Consequently, it can be used regardless the empirical results in such concern and regardless its compatibility, objection or neglecting it in general, though it is important but it cannot be seen as absolute results (Lambsdorff, 1999).

The role of religion can be understood in facing corruption through understanding the nature of relationship between religion and ethics; the religion of all kinds is full of moral issues expressed in the sacred text. The essence of religion is based on moral values, and religious texts are based on moral and normative issues. Moral values have an advantage different from narrative or news. It speaks of what should be, not what it is, it is inevitable to recognize that religion and morality have its own distinct essence with the existence of common spaces, and this particular essence is because each has a different origin, the religious origin back to the sacred text, when the origin of moral values comes back to the necessities of the abstract mind (Mohammed, 2017).

Some might argue in drawing comparisons between religion and ethics, o confirm that religion is not a necessity to enjoy good ethics; others might see that the decline of religion helps in the deterioration of ethics. Meanwhile, a third party sought to evoke an endless argument in such matter. Survey for American Bio Research center in 2014 about the relationships between religion and ethics; including 40,000 people from 40 countries, conducted between 2011 and 2013 with a main question about if they are religious or not and the relationship between religion an ethics, showed that the majority of the sample in Arab countries, including Egypt and Jordan, said that the following of the teachings of religion is necessary, and that religion cannot be separated from morality, while about one-third of the sample in Lebanon said that faith is not necessarily related to morality, the poll found that the great contradiction between the three countries Caused by the religious variance of the population. According to the results of the survey, the vast majority of respondents in Pakistan, Ghana and Indonesia, the faith is necessary, while the results show that less than one-fifth of the population of France, Spain and Britain agree on the need for faith, and the proportion in China is less than 14%. The citizens of Egypt, Brazil, Afghanistan, Malaysia and Tunisia, more committed to the religion of their peers in the surrounding countries, as participants from the USA more than others believe that faith is a necessity (Abdelhamid, 2017).

In the empirical literature of corruption, there is a similar result; protestant countries have lower levels of corruption, as a study concluded that the percentage of Protestants since 100 years has the greatest effect on corruption than the current percentage in the same country (Gokcekus, 2008). Another study in a global context concluded that the positive effects of religion are not limited to main religions such as Protestantism and Islam but also Hindu Buddhism (Mensah, 2014).

Therefore, a study explained that the increase in society religion leads to a decrease in corruption rates. However, according to CPI indicators there is a tendency toward contradicted phenomena. For example, in Islamic countries there is no effect for Muslims beliefs directly on their commitment to eliminate of corruption (Umam, 2014). Among the factors influencing the study of basic patterns,

in the sense that citizens with low corruption tend to be richer, enjoy greater religious freedom, and tend to regard religion as not important to them. On the other hand, those who suffer from relatively high corruption tend to be poorer, enjoy relatively less freedom of religion and tend to regard religion as important to them. The predominantly Christian countries fall under the first group, and Islamic countries tend to be in the latter group, with no exceptions, this indicates that there are even differences between the one group (Beets, 2007).

Recent studies that tried to study the reasons and consequences of corruption concluded that it is accompanied with weak policies and fake will in encountering corruption, this leads to the inequality in income and reducing competition (Lambsdorff, 1999). Policy makers and Academics reflects corruption as institutional failure, neglecting the effect of cultural issues in it (Marquette, 2010). Though, extracting clear arguments about the causal relationship between corruption and many variables, lack confidence. Corruption may cause these distortions, but it is also likely to be a consequence, and cultural determinants cannot be ignored (Lambsdorff, 1999). In developing countries there were many studies about corruption. Those studies concluded that it refers to political and economic factors and reduced the effect of social and religion factors, as the contribution of religion in practical life is low taking into consideration the cultural values of developing countries are not religious. Therefore, the level of perceived corruption is not affected by religion and reducing it starts from governments concentration on improving the economical level (Shabbir and Anwar, 2007). Some might argue that religion may hinder development and economic growth, but a study of the oil-producing OPEC countries found that there is a strong positive impact of religion on economic performance (Samanta, 2011). A study was also conducted on 207 countries found that there is a relationship between religion and economic growth. Religion may increase the demand for, and compliance with, strong legal institutions and the rule of law. Religion may have a beneficial effect in discouraging corrupt practices within society (North *et al.*, 2013).

Corruption is a mixed phenomenon within economical, social, cultural and political domains, effecting and affected in various levels and cannot be explained from one reasons, its treatment is not set from one method. Though, corruption is a behavioral problem on the level of group all the current practices of anti-corruption must be reviewed as religion is an entry point in anti-corruption efforts; on the levels of protection, fighting and society education (Rothstein, 2011). Some studies that attempted to establish a relationship between religion and corruption used religion as an indicator of culture (Paldam, 2001). This study, which we are conducting, does not call for the abolition of any existing anti-corruption measures to replace religion. The teachings of Islam, for example, do not act alone to prevent Muslims from doing such harmful acts (Azra, 2010).

Design and procedures
Study methodology
This study combines two folds: First, theoretical and qualitative, through research in previous studies, texts and religious attitude of corruption, historical models and international experiences that have tried to invest in it and incorporate it in anti-corruption efforts, which are generalizable generic models; and the second: a field empirical part, through the researcher use of a questionnaire tool and analyzing it statistically, in addition to ensuring the possibility of employing religion in anti-corruption efforts within the Palestinian public institutions which will eventually enable us to answer the study questions.

Study population
As the current study investigates the Palestinian public sector, the study population is represented in centralized and decentralized governance institutions as following:

Ministries, Security services, Non-ministerial public institutions, governorates, municipalities and local councils.

Study sample

The sampling units were selected from the study population through probability and non-probability procedure. The institutions were selected purposefully according to their significance and the largest number. The number of the institutions was selected in a proportional way according to the employee ratio followed by the selection of an accidental sample of them as represented in Table 1.

Study instrument

As the study population and the sample are of the Palestinian public sector employees, the questionnaire instrument had been adopted. A total of 900 questionnaires were distributed and 800 questionnaires were retrieved representing a response rate of 88% and analyzed using the Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). The analysis included instrument validity and reliability, means, percentages, standard deviations, in addition to other statistical tests presented in the study to obtain the desired findings.

Instrument description

The questionnaire contained a cover page, demographic data and items measuring the main study questions. Two patterns were adopted in developing the study questionnaire; the first pattern was according to a five-point Likert scale, which contained 35 items that measure four of the study questions. The second pattern was developed using eight responses scale. In the second pattern, the respondent was required to identify the most important five reasons among the eight reasons.

Instrument validity and reliability

Instrument validity: The questionnaire was submitted to a panel of experts to ensure its validity, they included: (University academic staff members, AMAN coalition, anti-corruption body, NAZAHA Academy and general staff office), then the questionnaire was modified according to their suggestions and comments. Regarding the instrument reliability

No.	Population	Sample	Count	Sample type and method of selection
1	Ministries (21 ministries)	12 ministries	440	Purposeful, proportional and accidental
2	Non ministerial public institutions (62 institutions)	13 institutions	160	Purposeful, proportional and accidental
3	Governorates (11 governorates)	4 governorates	100	Purposeful, proportional and accidental
4	Security services (7 services)	2 services	100	Purposeful, proportional and accidental
5	Local governance (430 municipalities and local councils)	4 municipalities	100	Purposeful, proportional and accidental
	Total	900		

Table 1.
Study sample

of the all study domains, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was calculated and was (95.4%) which is very high. The scoring key used to analyze the results of the questionnaire in Table 2.

Results of analyzing the study questionnaire
Part one: demographic characteristics of the study sample are given in Table 3.

Part two: questionnaire domains
Results of analyzing the first question are given in Table 4.

The analysis of the first question items presented in Table 4 had yielded a mean score equals to (2.99) and a percentage of (59.8%) which is a moderate degree based on the adopted scoring system in this study. Therefore, we conclude that the Palestinian public sector does not consider the religious heritage as a source of the administrative organization in anti-corruption efforts only to a moderate degree, either in systems and regulations, plans and policies or even in the organizational culture.

Results of analyzing the second question are given in Table 5.

The analysis of the second question results in Table 5 reveal that the first reasons influencing the employees' formulation of their attitudes toward corruption was "Religious reasons", as it got the highest mean (3.50) and the highest percentage (70 %) which is a high score. Therefore, we conclude that the religious heritage is strongly present in the minds of the employees in the Palestinian public sector as they formulate their attitudes toward corruption depending on their religious tendencies. It is noteworthy that the second reason influencing attitudes formulation was "respecting the laws and the rules", the third reason was "Self-control and conscience", and the last and lowest ranked reason was "Awareness that this practice is a corruption".

The results of analyzing the third question are given in Table 6.

The analysis of the third question results in Table 6 had scored a mean equal to (2.69) and a percentage equals to (53.8%) which is a moderate degree based on the scoring system. Therefore, we conclude that the investment of the Palestinian public sector of the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts is currently within a moderate degree. The results of analyzing the fourth question are given in Table 7.

The analysis of the fourth question results in Table 7 have scored a mean equal to (3.79) and a percentage equals to (75.9%) which is a high degree according to the scoring system. Therefore, we conclude that the employees in the Palestinian public sector tend to and agree with the investment of the religious heritage in the efforts of anti-corruption to a high degree. The results of analyzing the fifth question are given in Table 8.

The analysis of the fifth question results in Table 8 have scored a mean equal to (3.71) and a percentage equals to (74.1%) which is a high degree according to the scoring system. Therefore, we conclude that the employees in the Palestinian public sector are expecting, to a high degree, that in case of the investment in the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts, the corruption level will be reduced.

Rate	Likert scale	(%)
Very high	4.24 – 5	84.8 – 100%
High	3.43 – 4.23	84.7 – 68.6%
Moderate	2.62 – 3.42	52.4 – 68.5%
Low	1.81 – 2.61	36.2 – 52.3%
Very low	1 – 1.80	0 – 36.1%

Table 2.
Scoring key

Characteristics	Statistical analysis	
	Frequency	(%)
Gender		
Female	388	48.5
Male	412	51.5
Total	800	100
Educational qualification		
Diploma	114	14.2
Bachelor degree	479	59.9
Master degree	135	16.9
PhD degree	11	1.4
Other	61	7.6
Total	800	100
Academic specialization		
Banking and Financial Sciences	120	15
Administrative Sciences	213	26.6
Social Sciences	92	11.5
Legal sciences	65	8.1
Other	310	38.8
Total	800	100
Job position		
General manager	23	2.9
Head of Department/Unit/Division	186	23.3
Manager (Ex. Project)	78	9.8
Employee	460	57.5
Other	53	6.6
Total	800	100
Work nature		
Administrative or financial	383	47.9
Executive	190	23.8
Consultation	26	3.3
Legal	63	7.9
Other	138	17.3
Total	800	100
Years of experience		
Less than 5 years	185	23.1
6 – 10 years	232	29
11 – 15 years	162	20.3
16 – 20 years	95	11.9
More than 21 years	126	15.8
Total	800	100
Work place		
Ministries	380	47.5
Public institutions	154	19.3
Governorates	90	11.3
Security and police	84	10.5
Municipalities	92	11.5
Total	800	100

Table 3.
Demographic
characteristics of the
study sample

N	Question 1: What is the extent to which religion is considered as one of the sources of administrative organization and a source of strategic planning in the Palestinian public sector?	Frequency	Mean	SD	(%)	Degree
1.	Systems, instructions and regulations under the control of the institution include part of the religious heritage of anti-corruption efforts and the promotion of values of integrity and transparency	800	3.16	1.112	63.2	Moderate
2.	The public institution takes into account the religious heritage in the strategic plans and provide it in the vision, message or objectives for the purpose of efforts of anti-corruption and promoting the values of integrity and transparency.	800	2.98	1.074	59.6	Moderate
3.	The internal system of the institution include part of the religious heritage for the purposes of anti-corruption efforts and the promotion of the values of integrity and transparency	800	3.01	1.051	60.2	Moderate
4.	In its policies, the Public Institution takes a closer look at religious heritage in efforts of anti-corruption and promoting values of integrity and transparency	800	2.89	1.041	57.8	Moderate
5.	The Public Institution publishes religious heritage in the organizational culture for the purpose of efforts of anti-corruption and promoting the values of integrity and transparency	800	2.90	1.054	58.0	Moderate
	Total	800	2.99	1.066	59.8	Moderate

Table 4.
Results of analyzing the first question of the study

Third: analysis of the demographic data
A significance level of 0.05 that completes a confidence interval of 0.95 was used to interpret the results analysis, as the if the significance values was less than 0.05 we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis, vice versa.
First: gender.

> *H0.* There are no significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to gender variable.

Using independent samples *t*-test, it is obvious from results shown in Table 9 for gender variable that calculated *t*-values (2.635) was higher than the tabulated *t*-values (1.962) with a significance level (0.009) less than 0.05; therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis and state that there are significant statistical differences in the participants' responses referred to gender variable. To explore the direction of the differences, it is clear that the mean value of males (3.35) is higher than the mean value of

Number Study participants' choices	The second question: Are the workers in the Palestinian public institutions affected by the formation of their positions and attitudes toward corruption with their religious beliefs?				
	Mean	SD	(%)	Degree	Rank of reasons
Respect the laws and the rules	3.31	1.437	66.3	Moderate	2
The rooted culture that fights corruption	2.89	1.377	57.9	Moderate	6
From a religious perspective (Religious reasons)	3.50	1.259	70	High	1
Taking strict punitive measures against nepotism practices	3.16	1.258	63.2	Moderate	4
Control departments in work environment	3.11	1.323	62.1	Moderate	5
Self-control and conscience	3.26	1.400	65.1	Moderate	3
Awareness that this practice is a corruption	2.47	1.393	49.4	Low	8
Commitment to codes of conduct and the ethics of public service	2.63	1.494	52.6	Moderate	7

females (3.23) for the whole items. So, we conclude that males are agreeing with the investment in the religious heritage in anti-corruption more than females.

Second: educational qualification.

H0. There are no significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to educational qualification variable.

Using one-way ANOVA test, results shown in Table 10 indicates that calculated F value is higher than tabulated F value at significance level of 0.05 and less than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis stating that there are significant statistical differences in the participants' responses referred to educational qualification variable. To explore the direction of these differences, it is obvious from the results that the mean value of the educational qualification category (other) is (3.75) and for bachelor degree category is (3.30) are higher than the mean values of other categories (PhD degree, Master's degree and Diploma degree)

Third: academic specialization.

H0. There are no significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to academic specialization variable.

Using one-way ANOVA test, results shown in Table 10 indicate that calculated F value is lower than tabulated F value at significance level of 0.05 and the significance value equals to than 0.280 which is higher than 0.05. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis which indicates that the academic specialization did not influence the responses of the study participants regarding the agreement about the efficiency of investment in religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts.

Fourth: job position.

H0. There are no significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to job position variable.

Using one-way ANOVA test, results shown in Table 10 indicate that calculated *F* value is higher than tabulated F value with significance level equals to 0.034 less than 0.05.

N	Question Three: To how extents do Palestinian public sector institutions invest in religious heritage in promoting the values of integrity, transparency and accountability among employees?	Frequency	Mean	SD	(%)	Degree
1.	The public institution promotes the culture of (Halal and Haram) during the performance of administrative tasks such as meetings, evaluations and reporting.	800	2.96	1.117	59.2	Moderate
2.	The institution employs specialists in religious heritage to train employees on the values of mastery of work and dedication from a religious basis.	800	2.53	1.152	50.6	Low
3.	The public institution coordinates with religious institutions (such as endowment and Islamic Jurisprudence) to invest in religious and historical values to improve the quality of administrative work such as: speed, proficiency, justice in treatment)	800	2.62	1.143	52.4	Moderate
4.	Employees are subjected to special training courses to promote values of integrity, transparency, objectivity and non-discrimination from religious standpoints	800	2.67	1.159	53.4	Moderate
5.	The public institution warns employees of the legitimacy of wages and salaries in terms of legitimacy in the case of a decline in the performance of work as required	800	2.60	1.145	52.0	Low
6.	The institution persuades senior management staff to sign a religiously-motivated financial declaration (The principle of from where do you have this? And honesty in acknowledgment)	800	2.66	1.164	53.2	Moderate
7.	The administration promotes a culture of values of integrity and sincerity in the work during holding meetings from religious basis	800	2.86	1.128	57.2	Moderate
8.	There are religious slogans in the work environment, such as: (Whenever one of you does something, he should excel in it) (He who deceives is not of us) (Allah cursed the one who bribes and the one who takes bribe.). Or others	800	2.71	1.224	54.2	Moderate
9.	The institution's publications and the web page include religious statements that encourage action and disavows neglect, negligence and wastefulness	800	2.60	1.161	52.0	Low
10.	The institution raises the religious feeling of the employees toward work and carrying the secretariat as it is a responsibility in front of Allah before the directors.	800	2.68	1.146	53.6	Moderate
	Total	800	2.69	1.154	53.8	Moderate

Table 6.
Results of analyzing
the third question of
the study

Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis stating that there are significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to job position variable. To explore the direction of these differences, it is obvious that the mean value of the category employee is (3.34), and general manager is (3.30) is higher than the mean value of other categories (Project manager, Head of Department/ Unit/Division).

Fifth: job nature.

H0. There are no significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to job nature variable.

N	What are the attitudes of employees in the Palestinian public sector toward the investment of religious heritage in the efforts of anti-corruption?	Frequency	Mean	SD	(%)	Degree
1.	I encourage the strengthening of the Public Institution for Religious Heritage in regulations and instructions for anti-corruption efforts and the promotion of values of integrity	800	3.72	1.078	74.4	High
2.	There is a need that anti-corruption plans and strategies have a religious dimension as well as other measures	800	3.70	1.045	74.0	High
3.	I support the public institution interest in religious heritage in the internal system for the purposes of anti-corruption and promoting values of integrity	800	3.71	1.061	74.2	High
4.	There is a need for administrative policies based on religious heritage to promote integrity, transparency and compliance with laws and regulations	800	3.71	1.032	74.2	High
5.	I think the institution must publish the religious heritage in the organizational culture to promote the values of integrity and transparency	800	3.72	1.035	74.4	High
6.	I believe that the positive investment of religion can reform illegal administrative practices such as bribery and forgery	800	3.81	1.076	76.2	High
7.	I think religious faith and compliance to religious teachings reduces (committing mistakes and repudiated practices) as "moderation and nepotism"	800	3.91	1.048	78.2	High
8.	I have no problem in enrolling in specialized courses that depend on religious heritage to nurture the values of integrity and anti-corruption	800	3.87	1.060	77.4	High
9.	I welcome the inclusion of religious texts such as banners, statements and paper or electronic slogans that promote the values of integrity and transparency	800	3.78	1.055	75.6	High
10.	I am convinced that religions are rich in positive teachings in which outlaw practices can be combated as public money misappropriation	800	4.01	1.004	80.2	High
	Total	800	3.79	1.049	75.9	High

Table 7.
Results of analyzing
the fourth question of
the study

Using one-way ANOVA test, results shown in Table 10 indicate that calculated F value is lower than tabulated F value with significance level equals to 0.113 higher than 0.05. Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis and state that the job nature does not influence the responses of the study participants regarding the agreement about the efficiency of religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts.

Sixth: years of experience.

H0. There are no significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to years of experience variable.

Using one-way ANOVA test, results shown in Table 10 indicate that calculated F value is higher than tabulated F value with significance level equals to 0.028 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis stating that there are significant statistical differences in the participants' responses referred to years of experience. To explore the direction of these differences, it is obvious that the mean value of the category (less than 5 years) is (3.42) and the category (16–20 years) is (3.34) which is higher than the mean values of the other categories.

N	What are the expectations of employees in the Palestinian public sector institutions toward corruption indicators if the religious heritage is strengthened and invested in efforts of anti-corruption?	Frequency	Mean	SD	(%)	Degree
1.	The significance and effectiveness of self-control will increase in case of adopting policies and activities promoting the religious heritage in the administrative work	800	3.83	0.968	76.6	High
2.	I am optimistic that the acceptance of moderation and nepotism will be reduced if plans are adopted to strengthen the anti-corruption religious values.	800	3.67	1.055	73.4	High
3.	Cases of (staff exploitation of their positions) will be decreased in case of propagating a strengthened organizational culture of anti-corruption religious values	800	3.65	1.054	73.0	High
4.	I am optimistic that there will be fewer cases of financial misappropriation if religious heritage enhanced policies are adopted in the administrative work	800	3.65	1.019	73.0	High
5.	I expect a reduction for the cases (negligence and neglect) after strengthening the religious heritage in the organizational culture of the institution	800	3.66	1.026	73.2	High
6.	I think that cases (sexual harassment) will decrease if a strategy and activities that promote religious values are adopted among employees	800	3.69	1.065	73.8	High
7.	I think that "waste of public money and wasteful situations" will be decreased in the institution if policies to strengthen religious heritage among employees are adopted	800	3.70	1.023	74.0	High
8.	I believe that bribery cases will be decreased in case of adoption of policies to promote anti-corruption religious values	800	3.68	1.034	73.6	High
9.	The culture of relations and the officials' satisfaction firstly will be decreased to the culture of God satisfaction firstly in case of spreading the awareness of religious values in the work environment.	800	3.75	1.041	75.0	High
10.	I think the policies of promoting the religious values will positively influence the work environment	800	3.77	1.033	75.4	High
	Total	800	3.71	1.032	74.1	High

Table 8.
Results of analyzing the fifth question of the study

Demographic data	T (calculated)	T (table)	Significance	Correlation
Gender	2.635	1.962	**0.009**	Exists

Table 9.
Analysis of the demographic data

Demographic data	Calculated F	Tabulated F	Significance	Correlation
Educational qualification	3.738	2.383	0.005	Exists
Academic specialization	1.271	2.383	0.280	Does not exist
Job position	2.614	2.383	0.034	Exists
Job nature	1.876	2.383	0.113	Does not exist
Years of experience	2.726	2.383	0.028	Exists
Institution type	19.607	2.383	0.000	Exists

Table 10.
Analysis of educational qualification

Seventh: type of the public institution. H0. There are no significant statistical differences at significance level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) in the participants' responses referred to the type of the public institution variable.

Using one-way ANOVA test, results shown in Table 10 indicate that calculated F value is higher than tabulated F value with significance level equals to 0.000 which is less than 0.05. Therefore, we reject the null hypothesis and accept the alternative hypothesis stating that there are significant statistical differences referred to the type of the public institution. To explore the direction of the differences, it is obvious that the mean score of the category security services is (3.77) and ministries category (3.35) are higher than the mean scores of other categories of public institutions, governorates and municipalities.

Results and recommendations

The study found that the reality of investment in the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts in the Palestinian public sector is present in a moderate degree (56.8%), both in rules and regulations, in strategic plans or policies, or in the internal systems and the organizational culture of the public institutions. With regard to the attitudes of the employees toward corruption and the way of their formulation to these attitudes either if they are influenced by the religious heritage or the law or by the eight reasons mentioned previously in this study, it is obvious that the employees' attitudes toward corruption are formulated first from a religious perspective and second from a legal perspective. Regarding their attitudes and their agreement level toward the investment of the religious heritage in anti-corruption in the Palestinian public sector was high (75.9%), as well as their future expectations in case the religious heritage is invested in anti-corruption efforts was in a high degree (74.1%). Therefore, we conclude that there is a feasibility of religious heritage investment in anti-corruption efforts in the Palestinian public sector in case it is accredited and integrated in anti-corruption strategies as a supportive factor but not as a substitute of other efforts. The study recommended that decision makers should adopt new anti-corruption policies and strategies compatible with these striking results through the rules, regulations and administrative decisions, or in the internal institutional system and the cultural organization, in the publications and declarations of the public institution, in special code of conduct based on the religious heritage, in the training of the employees and designing new proposals to integrate the religious heritage in anti-corruption efforts in parallel with the permanent evaluation of these efforts after its application.

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