

NATIONAL INTEGRITY STANDARDS BETWEEN THEORY AND PRACTICE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY BETWEEN JORDAN AND THE KINGDOM OF SAUDI ARABIA

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Abstract

This paper explores the theory of establishing and enforcing the National Integrity Standards in Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and compares the applied laws in their legal, institutional, and policy framework. Based on official reports, international governance indices, and scholarly writings, the study proposes that five main pillars of integrity, transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation, and integrity culture are all efficient in influencing ethical governance. The results indicate that in both countries there are notable achievements that align with the international standards and of which this can be seen in the strategic plans of Jordan, through its National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy (NIACS) 2020-2025 as well as that of Saudi Arabia in its governance reforms of its vision 2030. But the issues remain, such as irregular application of the rule of law in Jordan and the lack of mechanisms of taking part in the process of decision-making in Saudi Arabia. The researchers come to a conclusion that effective systems of integrity need not only the strong legal framework but also cultural change, institutional autonomy, the prolonged involvement of the people. It is recommended that the judicial capacity should be improved, participatory governance should increase, monitoring mechanisms, and the capacity to foster cross-border collaboration needed to reach more transparent, accountable, and trustworthy governance.

Keywords: National Integrity Standards; Anti-Corruption; Transparency; Accountability; Rule of Law; Public Participation; Integrity Culture; Jordan; Saudi Arabia; Governance; NIACS; Vision 2030

Introduction

Good governance has also been said to be rooted in integrity, as the latter is deemed one of its major pillars, which can guarantee fairness, responsibility, and transparency in the state-citizen relationship. Integrity is no longer a moral toward goal by itself in the modern systems of governance since it is a strategic necessity to maintain governance integrity, security of public resources, and socio-economic prosperity. Coupled with an ever-increasing global focus on anti-corruption initiatives and ethical government, the need to develop institutionalized integrity systems, nationally commissioned to various political, cultural and institutional environments, has motivated many countries.

In Jordan, such a sentiment became the National Integrity Standards that came to serve as an essential feature in the context of a public sector reform, especially with the institutionalization of the National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy (NIACS) 2020-2025. This strategic framework would seek to institutionalize the concept of ethics and standards of operations amongst the various state institutions so that, transparency, credibility of accountability, the rule of law, justice and good governance are enforced at all levels of administration. The Jordan Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission is (JIACC) which is at the center of efforts to ensure compliance with such standards, by providing oversight and facilitating cooperation among government departments and agencies, civil society, and the business community in terms of the integrity agenda.

Although these norms are institutionalized, the application of the standards is usually associated with immense difficulties. Research has indicated that although the principles of national

integrity are recognised and incorporated into the policy; the implementation of the same is constrained by structural, cultural and political barriers. Indicatively, empirical studies of the Jordanian public sector indicated that, despite the moderate to high application of the integrity standards in an overall scale, especially regarding transparency, their implications in practice are vastly different with the standard of the rule of law being the least impactful in practice (Al Omari & Khersiat, 2020).

In the current paper, the researcher aims to investigate the theoretical background of the Jordanian National Integrity Standards, critically assess the real life application of these standards, and discuss the gap that has always existed between policy design and practice. This study will track whether the intended outcomes are reflected by the behaviors exhibited by the institutions and thus seek to explain the root causes of such gaps and also offer practical solutions to bring about the gap thus improving the effectiveness of the integrity system in Jordan and improve the trust of the masses in governments.

Conceptual Framework of Integrity in Jordan

Evolution of Jordan national integrity system portrays a political and institutional will in order to engrain ethical governance within the entire public sector. Jordan has articulated integrity as a moral imperative coupled with their strategic pillar towards political modernization, economical reformation and public sector effectiveness. Over the last twenty years, Jordan has gradually adjusted its systems of governance towards fulfilling the standards of international integrity without, however, losing the local variations that add an element of context to its laws and culture.

An achievement in this process was the introduction of the National Integrity Charter in the year 2012 with a national endorsement after a wide national consultation sessions with the state officials, civil society organizations, and the stakeholders in the private sector. The charter formulated a guideline of principles to achieve the following goals; transparency, accountability, the rule of law, justice and equal opportunity of all the public affairs. It sought to give a reference point towards institutional behavior and policy-making and it acted as a form of guide to the further functioning frameworks that occurred later.

Jordan was the first country in the region where the Jordan Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission (JIACC) was formed under Law No. 13 of 2016 that became the key institution tasked to implement integrity and anti-corruption procedures. The directive of JIACC involves overseeing the adherence to the integrity standards and inquiring of allegations related to corruption as well as coordination with other state agencies aimed at encouraging good governance. It is at the center of the enlargement of the difference between the prescribed principles stated in the charter and their implementation in the operations in government and non-government forces (OECD, 2024a).

On this basis, Jordan proposed the National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy (NIACS) 2020-2025, a policy document that expounds on the general provisions of the charter by setting out specific goals, quantifiable targets, and specific action plans. The strategy is concentrated on enhancing capacities of the institutions, transparency of the government administration, the proper establishment of the rule of law, and a culture of integrity established in the society. The OECD Public Governance Review of Jordan notes that NIACS is a well-rounded, evidence-based implementation of the integrity into the broader governance structure focusing on promotion of inter-agency collaboration, stakeholder participations, and monitoring and evaluation processes (OECD, 2024b).

This upstream conceptual model, which is rooted in the National Integrity Charter, implemented through the means of JIACC, and strategically enhanced with the help of NIACS, stands as the main mechanism of integrating integrity in the governance of Jordan. Nevertheless, as discussed later, the extent to which these pillars of the concept pass to actual and perceived gains in terms of public trust, service delivery and prevention of corruption is subject to the mitigation of systems and operational setbacks.

Previous Studies

The most recent literature gives us glimpses of how the interaction of the various mechanisms of governance and efforts of fighting corruption in the Arab perspective was coined. Bassem Mohammad bin Nasser (2019), first of all, discusses the central role of governance in increasing integrity and combating corruption in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Nasser uses analytical indicators of governance effectiveness in terms of increasing the transparency levels and reducing corruption. Based on the use of empirical figures and formal statistics, the research determines that effective governance systems can help in enhancing institutional performance and returning the confidence levels of the masses towards the overseeing authorities, hence acting in support of the administrative reform initiatives.

On the same note, Nidaa Mohammad Abdulmunem (2022) investigates the relationship between good governance and the elimination of corruption in government institutions. Focusing on the requisite administrative changes that need to be brought in place including in the strengthening of oversight tools and accountability frameworks, the paper highlights the influence they have on institutional performance and organizational trust. It also establishes that successful governance in governmental institutions creates a stable and smooth administrative environment, which is imperative in the integrity of the system.

In a master thesis by El-Fayez et al. (2021) titled Enhancing integrity and transparency and combating financial and administrative corruption in the Jordanian law: a comparative analysis of the Emirati law, the authors review the degree of financial and administrative corruption in Jordanian law through lessening the levels of integrity and transparency. The scope of the research was intended to ensure that the legal and institutional framework of the promotion of integrity and transparency were found in both the Jordanian and Emirati laws, which could be compared to the international anti-corruption conventions. Based on a descriptive-analytical approach to research, the researchers came to the conclusion that the independence of anti-corruption agencies should be strengthened so that they could carry out their remit without interference. Also, the authors observed a diversity of regulations and regulatory mechanisms, as well as a lack of rigor of penalties against certain acts of corruption. Some of the recommendations were the necessity to stiffen the corruption sanction, the necessity to contemplate merging statutes and agencies focused on warring corruption, and the necessity to undertake additional research on how the current statutes are operating and the challenges encountered in trying to regulate corruption.

Habbashneh, D. A. M. (2023). In the research called, Work ethics and their role in improving the performance of municipal employees in Jordan 2023, which was published in Journal of Humanities and Natural Sciences, the author wished to detect the significance of work ethics in enhancing the performance of municipal employees in Jordan. The research took a descriptive-analytical methodology and came up with a conclusion that the work ethics, which are founded on the principles of integrity, responsibility, high quality, discipline, humility and teamwork, are major aspects required to enable the employees to carry out the work efficiently. The research

advised the management in the Kingdom to ensure that all the municipalities in the Kingdom should embrace work ethics by implementing codes of conduct that can be used in enhancing performance of their employees.

Moreover, Abd al-Rahman al-Khatib (2020) puts stress on the idea of governance compliance in the organizational structure, especially regarding the instance of the Jordanian Customs Department. The paper shows the roles of governance in enhancing organizational commitment that leads to the institutional performances. The recommendations made by Al-Khatib involve cultivating the culture of governance by means of transformative projects and social interactions, which in turn improves the effectiveness of the anti-corruption measure and improves the quality of public services.

The Five National Integrity Standards in Jordan

It is indeed a pillar of the efforts that the Kingdom of Jordan has made to enhance transparency, accountability, and ethical governance all through its governmental sector through the Five national standards of Integrity that act as a guiding framework in all the endeavors of the Jordanian government to promote transparency, accountability, and ethical governance. These standards which are enshrined in the National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy (NIACS) 2020-2025 play the role of a strategic framework that will drive the culture of integrity within the governmental and societal institutions. They will also be aimed not only at fighting corruption but also at developing a culture of governance founded on openness and fairness and civic engagement. Each standard targets an area of public integrity and the combination of these jointly constitutes an interconnected order that supports Jordanian hopes sustaining and trustworthy government. The below passages include an in-depth discussion of these standards.

Transparency

Transparency is a fundamental concept in good governance which demands that knowledge of government activities, decision making alternatives and financial reporting be exposed in the open where there is clarity, timeliness and completeness. The given principle guarantees the possibility to monitor the functioning of the public institutions, observe irregularities and identify them to citizen, the media as well as oversight bodies. It is recommended in studies that transparency plays a considerable part in the disclosure of a public budget in Jordan, and there is empirical evidence that the application rate was relatively high in the public sector of the country (Omari & Khersiat, 2020). Active sharing of information, open data portal creation, and mechanisms of disclosure regularization are the necessary measures on the way of complete disclosure. Nevertheless, this degree of openness can only occur with a constant dedication, investment, and political desire to avoid the problem of being selective in disclosure and information vacuum.

Accountability

Accountability bolsters the duty of the public officials to explain their decisions, actions, and utilization of the government funds. It involves existence of unambiguous performance norms, systems of compliance tracking, and implementation of penalties in the event disobedience is identified. In Jordan, the Jordan Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission is the key body in this context acting as the primary enforcement authority to make sure that in case of violations of integrity the matter will be solved in a timely and fair way (OECD, 2024). Improving accountability does not just mean formal checks and balances but also the promotion of a culture where the public servants take responsibility of their actions and consequences. Good

accountability systems assist in narrowing down the gap between community expectations and performance, which builds improved levels of trust in the state institutions.

Rule of Law

The rule of law benchmark helps guarantee that the laws are implemented in the same way and do not discriminate or favor people in any particular way and that individual rights and freedoms of the entire population are put in safe hands. It is one of the basic guarantees against the arbitrary governance. Nonetheless, the studies point out that this dimension influences disclosure of the budget of the government in Jordan less than other standards do (Omari & Khersiat, 2020). Such a finding suggests that the implementation of the law may not be as strong or there could be inconsistency in the application of the same. Compounding the rule of the law could comprise of legal reforms, judiciary capacity building, and put in place measures that guarantee that the rules of the law can be applied to every part of the government.

Participation

The involvement of the populace is a significant tool in making sure that the processes of governance identify with the demands, principles and priorities of the citizens. This standard further encourages participation of civil society, community groups, and the private sector in fact entering into the process of decision-making. In that way, through establishing open avenues of communication, Jordan would be substantially increasing the level of validity and of its governing system as well as the levels of responsiveness. To further enhance the participation of the people, a proposition has been suggested to create a more comprehensive approach to society, which consequently assists in the enhancement of building trust and integrity (OECD ,2024). Involvement also does not only promote the achievement of better policies but also discourages the accumulation of power and possible abuse.

Integrity Culture

The integrity culture standard aims at installing ethical values and morals into the everyday operation of public institutions and interactions in the society. It extends further than obedience of laws and regulations to the attachment of a common moral duty to trustworthy, fair and serving the public good. This would have to be done through joint efforts that need a collaborative effort by citizens, civil society organizations, and the private sector in the creation of an environment that will actively discourage corruption and provide rewards to ethical behavior (OECD, 2024). The tools that can support such a culture include educational programs, role models in leadership and value based training of the officers in the society.

Table1.The Five National Integrity Standards in Jordan

Standard	Key Focus	Practical Implications
Transparency	Clear, accessible, and timely disclosure of government operations and financial data.	Enhances public monitoring, prevents information gaps, and strengthens trust.
Accountability	Holding public officials responsible for actions and decisions.	Requires oversight bodies, performance standards, and sanctions for misconduct.
Rule of Law	Equal and consistent application of legal norms to safeguard rights.	Demands impartial enforcement, judicial capacity-building, and legal reforms.
Participation	Encouraging citizen involvement in governance processes.	Builds trust, inclusiveness, and legitimacy through civic engagement.
Integrity Culture	Embedding ethical values in institutions and society.	Requires education, leadership, and multi-sector collaboration.

Assessing the Actual Compliance with National Integrity Standards in Public Institutions

The comparison of the national integrity standard compliance in the public institutions will give significant information about both the efficiency of the governing system and the degree of trust in the governments. Introducing these standards is a crucial and fundamental step, which in case of the enhancement of transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior within the whole of the public sector is the key pillar of a successful and sustainable system of governance. Based on such evaluations, both the positive and negative aspects of government practices may be discovered, and institutions can enhance their performance to create a close relationship of trust between people and the organizations that serve them.

Integrity standards are important in that they play a central role in creating institutional credibility and reason to trust among people because they have a direct influence on the efficiency and effectiveness of governments in the attainment of their goals. It has been established that such standards provide a strong point of support in helping governmental procedures to be transparent and accountable reducing the likelihood of corruption and push toward the government officials to engage in actions consonant with the expectations of the moral and legal principles (Daniel-Costel & Cristian-Eduard, 2016).

Moreover, integrity standards are not limited to stacks of rules and regulations, but they can be viewed as an entire ideology within the field of reference that forms an outline of conduct of individuals employed in the public sector and sketches what the benchmarks of performance should be attained. They have a bigger role in ensuring a sustainable and just government that administrative processes and public policies are planned and executed in a manner that portrays fairness, equality and respect of the right of citizens (Head et al., 2008).

In addition, such standards can also be an effective measure to build a culture of integrity in institutions through establishing a working environment that would promote ethical conduct and decision making by involving others along the way thus enhancing the quality of government services offered to the society. This helps in increasing civic trust in the governmental institutions as people feel that there is indeed adherence to ideals of integrity and transparency thus increasing the active involvement of citizens in the political and societal matters.

The use of national integrity standards in the case of Jordan has proved to have generally considered as satisfactory in adherence, as the research shows an average rate of adherence of more than 60 percent. Such high compliance has been especially influential in terms of practices associated with budget disclosure, which is a visible manifestation of an effort to be transparent about finances in government bodies (Omari & Khersiat, 2020). The increased interest in the transparency of the budget is an important mechanism that impairs accountability of the public officials, and allows citizens and supervising agencies to track governmental finances mobilization upstream.

Likewise, the National Integrity System of Indonesia reveals the utmost urgency of providing compliance not just in the area of the public institution but also in the sphere of the entire private sector. Such two-sector strategy is expected to establish a holistic system to fight against corruption by taking into consideration the weak points that can be present in either of the worlds (Lukito, 2016; Suhartati, 2016). As the Indonesian model underlines, the risk of corruption threatens to cross conventional lines distinguishing the public sector, so comprehensive approach that imposes the high standards of integrity on a wide range of public sectors is necessary to enhance governance and trust in the government.

Although the results of compliance in this area are positive, there remain big challenges to realizing the full and effective application of national integrity standards and this is particularly so in situations where corruption is entrenched and systemic. Formal compliance in and of itself is usually not enough in ensuring veritable integrity or ethical behavior in institutions, reality being therefore that the very act of formal compliance as it were is usually not enough. According to the position of many scholars and practitioners, compliance is better perceived as a part of a larger ecosystem that enlarges with the cultural, social, and organizational contributors, as they have a significant impact on ethical conduct (Suhartati, 2016).

As an example, the traditions of a culture, unofficial practice, and reward system may not facilitate the integrity standards spirit and hence lead to a scenario where the rule of compliance is sloppy or window-dressed but not substantive. Such a gap demonstrates that the organizational culture of ethical conduct is extremely difficult to develop and constant actions beyond regulatory frameworks have to be undertaken. These can be in the form of education and training, commitment of the leadership, institutional checks and balances and a culture that truly appreciates the importance of transparency and accountability.

Comparative Theoretical Framework

The conceptualisation of national integrity standards has so far been referred to as a collection of requirements, rules and principles, institutional frameworks that play a part in guaranteeing the aspects of transparency, accountability and law, thus giving rise to a state-society trust (Head, Brown, & Connors, 2008). In Jordan, they are strongly associated with the 2012 national integrity charter, which is a manifold guideline on the assurance of visibility and accountability in the government sector. The "National Strategy on Integrity and Anti - Corruption 2020-2025" is driven by the Integrity and Anti- Corruption Commission (IACC) which monitors this charter (OECD, 2024a). These norms include five major pillars, i.e., transparency, accountability, the rule of law, the public participation, and the culture of integrity (Al Omari & Khersiat, 2020).

The original idea of the national integrity standards was related to the activities of the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), which was launched in 2011 already in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is because Nazaha is mandated to coordinate operations to curb corruption and make sure that the government institutions are practicing good governance (Bin Nasser, 2019). This work is aligned with the Saudi vision 2030 and its target of making the integrity and transparency a strategic step towards the public sector development and increasing the trust of the society.

Similarities and Differences in Legal and Institutional Foundations

Conceptualisation of the national integrity standards has thus far been invoked as a set of requirements, rules, and principles, institutional structures that contribute towards ensuring the elements of transparency, accountability and law thereby leading to a state-society trust (Head, Brown, & Connors, 2008). They are closely connected to the national integrity charter of the year 2012 in Jordan, which is a tripartite guideline on ensuring the visibility and accountability of government circles. The Integrity and Anti- Corruption Commission (IACC) is the driver behind the strategy and monitors this charter (OECD, 2024a). These norms incorporate 5 significant pillars, i.e. transparency, accountability, the rule of law, the public participation and the culture of integrity (Al Omari & Khersiat, 2020).

The national integrity standards had their original conception linked to the proceedings of the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), which was instituted as early as 2011 in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. This is given that Nazaha is required to undertake coordination

activities to help limit corruption and ensure the governmental institutions are implementing good governance (Bin Nasser, 2019). This piece fits into the Saudi vision 2030 and its goal to transform the integrity and the transparency strategy into a strategic direction to the development of the public sectors and the growth of the society trust.

Comparative Methodology

This paper follows a comparative analysis paradigm to measure the national integrity standards in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia by comparing against the laid down standards in that literature governing the issue of national integrity. The main indicators which were compared are:

- Transparency - how operations, decision-making processes, and financial information can be collected in governmental processes, and how these functions can be understood by citizens or groups (Al Omari & Khersiat, 2020).
- Accountability-mechanisms that hold the executives in the government accountable, meaning that their decision making and their actions are justifiable and that there are clear guidelines and penalties in regards to malpractices (OECD, 2024a).
- Rule of Law - even treatment of legal norms, assuring the rights and freedoms without bias or favoritism (Head, Brown, & Connors, 2008).
- Participation- when citizens, civil society and the private sector take an active role in the governance processes (OECD, 2024b).
- Integrity Culture Integrating ethical values and anti-corruption in institutions and the society in general (Torje & Stefan, 2016).

The five requirements are in line with the internationally accepted frameworks on integrity like the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) and the OECD framework on standards of public governance.

- Primary data is based on a variety of sources of information to make the analysis methodologically rigorous and triangulated:
- Policy documents and strategic plans, such as the parliaments in this case, Saudi Vision 2030, and annual reports of the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), among other official publications of the Saudi government (Bin Nasser, 2019).
- International datasets,
- Testing of the Current Study , peer-reviewed government-related academic research on governance, anti-corruption initiatives and performance of institutions in the Saudi and Arab Arabian regions (Nidaa, 2022; Bin Nasser, 2019).
- Comparative Case Material , past empirical and descriptive research in Jordan and other nations in the MENA region to give a regional standard (Al Omari & Khersiat, 2020).

Institutional Context in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has the framework of the anti-corruption system, anchored in the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) based on the institution, which was established in 2011. In a nutshell, Nazaha has a mandate to detect, investigate, and prevent corruption in both the public and the private sector, and encourage principles of transparency, accountability, and integrity (Ahmed, 2021). This is reinforced by its legal base that is the Organizational Law of the Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority which gives it investigative powers, the capacity to forward cases to the Public Prosecution, and the oversight over all government agencies. Being placed instead of independent of the Saudi leadership increases Nazaha operational autonomy that contributes to fighting high-level corruption and complying with the ministries and state-owned enterprises (Hindawy, 2023).

Specialized units that complement the work of Nazaha include the Nazaha Training Center that designs capacity-building programs to build the culture of integrity and ethical governance among the officials that work in the state (Unjacke, 2022). The wide range of responsibilities and its inclusion into the national governance system can be viewed as strategic priorities of the anti-corruption interventions as a condition of development sustainability under Saudi Vision 2030 (Biygautane, 2023).

National Policies and Strategies

Anti-corruption and governance reforms in Saudi Arabia are enshrined in the strategic framework of Vision 2030 where transparency, accountability, and integrity are mentioned among the main pillars of transformation of the public sector axiomatically. Commendable initiatives in Vision 2030 as far as integrity is concerned are:

- Making use of e-government systems to bring up transparency in delivery of services;
- Forming up of internal and external audit systems;
- Making more government performance data publicly available; and
- Bringing the rules on corruption at home in line with international law on preventing corruption (Alsajjan, 2022; Hindawy, 2023).

The governance program of the Vision allows Nazaha to justify its activities as the initiative aimed at joining anti-corruption work with the objectives of economic diversification, as it is essential that investor confidence as well as trust between institutions is key to facilitating foreign investment and promoting sustainable growth (Biygautane, 2023). Also, digital governance platforms are used to strengthen anti-corruption efforts, collaborate between agencies, and identify any conflicts of interest and cases of fraudulent procurements (AlShaikh & Al-Adeem, 2023).

Comparative Analytical Approach

This paper applies comparative institutional methodology to assess the integrity system of Saudi Arabia in regard to global standards and some regional patterns. The assessment takes into account both formal frameworks, (e.g., legal requirements, policy statements, and institutional construction) and the results on the practical level related to implementation, e.g., enforcement figures, compliance rates, and indicators of the public authority trust (Ahmed, 2021; Hindawy, 2023).

This comparison will be done using the top five core integrity criteria; namely: transparency, accountability and the rule of law, participation and integrity culture, thus, enabling one to seek out how well the formal considerations are placed into actual practice. The study compares the Saudi Arabian perspective on tackling corruption with the best international practices and the experiences of other similar nations of the MENA region to establish strengths, weaknesses, and areas of unmet needs and eventually provide policy recommendations that could be used in improving the integrity of the institutions with respect to the reform trajectory of Vision 2030 (Biygautane, 2023; Alsajjan, 2022).

Institutional and Policy Context in Jordan

The integrity system of Jordan is mostly based on the Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission (IACC) which was formed according to Law No. 13 of 2016. The IACC is meant to monitor, investigate and prevent corruption, encourage transparency, accountability and follow the rule of law within the public institutions. The Commission also works under the umbrella of the National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy (NIACS) 2020-2025, which puts into specific goals and actions the general provisions of the domestic charter on the national integrity (NIC)

(2012) (OECD, 2024a). The plan focuses on strengthening the institutional capacities, independence of the judicial systems and the creation of a culture of integrity in society which includes educating and involving people.

The model of governance forces to which Jordan adheres puts significant stress on the involvement of the stakeholders, and NIACS encourages partnerships between government agencies, the civil society, and the private sector. Moreover, transparency is promoted via means of budget disclosure, unrestricted access of common information as well as open information access opportunities. Nevertheless, research shows that there is a problem of inconsistency in enforcement of the rule of law aspect, which means that there are improvements that the country still needs to make (Al Omari & Khersiat, 2020).

In both Jordan and Saudi Arabia, central anti-corruption bodies, the IACC in Jordan and in Saudi Arabia Nazaha are created with a legal mandate to investigate misbehavior and impose integrity norms. Whereas the Nazaha in Saudi Arabia has the advantage of direct reporting to the top political leadership, which has increased its operational autonomy, in Jordan the operation of IACC occurs in the context of a wider consultative governance system with its focus on inter-agency coordination. Policy-wise, Saudi Vision 2030 incorporates anti-corruption in the context of economic diversification, but NIACS of Jordan takes the entire reformation of the public sector to encompass integrity issues. Both models fit into international treaties including UNCAC, but the method of strategy implementation is different: Saudi Arabia applies technological innovations and concentrated power, whereas Jordan focuses on participatory state model and piecemeal institutional building.

Table 2. Comparative Institutional and Policy Frameworks for Integrity and Anti-Corruption in Saudi Arabia and Jordan

Criterion	Saudi Arabia (Nazaha & Vision 2030)	Jordan (IACC & NIACS 2020–2025)
Institutional Body	Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha), direct reporting to senior leadership	Integrity and Anti-Corruption Commission (IACC), operates under Law No. 13 of 2016
Strategic Framework	Vision 2030 Governance and Anti-Corruption Initiatives	National Integrity Charter (2012) and NIACS 2020–2025
Transparency	E-government platforms, performance data disclosure, enhanced audit mechanisms	Budget disclosure mechanisms, open data platforms, public information access
Accountability	Centralized investigative powers, coordination with Public Prosecution	Oversight mechanisms with inter-agency coordination, stakeholder engagement
Rule of Law	Legal reforms aligned with Vision 2030, strict enforcement across sectors	Judicial independence emphasis, but enforcement challenges noted
Participation	Limited formal citizen engagement in anti-corruption policy formulation	Strong emphasis on civil society and private sector involvement
Integrity Culture	Training through Nazaha Training Center, digital monitoring tools	Public education campaigns, ethical codes in public institutions

Conclusion

This comparative study of Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia indicates the importance of National Integrity Standards in achieving transparency, accountability, rule of law, participation and culture of integrity. These countries have considerable institutional and policy efforts to place these principles into the governance systems of their states and be in connection with the international expectations such as the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC). In Jordan, the National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Strategy (NIACS) 202025 presents a participatory/reform oriented strategy, whose main focus is on stakeholder engagement and transparency/oversight systems. The Oversight and Anti-Corruption Authority (Nazaha) has a centralized and powerful mandate in Saudi Arabia, which has been boosted by the strategic goals of Vision 2030 on governance and anti-corruption activities.

Nonetheless, these developments notwithstanding, policy translation into coherent and effective practice in the two nations is proving to be a challenge. Others like inconsistency of the rule of law, interference in body of oversight by politicians in Jordan are some of the obstacles that have plagued this land. The case in point in Saudi Arabia is that although enforced to some extent, there is less citizen involvement in the governance process that limits the involvement of the populace. These results suggest that legal frameworks are not sufficient when it comes to accomplishing real integrity it needs cultural transformation, the drive of leaders and the constant capacity-building to allow institutions to work as they should.

Recommendations

- Increase the operational flexibility of anti-corruption institutions in the two countries to reduce cases of political interference and the effectiveness of enforcing consistency.
- Build formal avenues of participation by civil society and private sector in policy making, tracking of integrity efforts, and accountability.
- Invest in capacity building in the judiciary, reform of the legal system and institutions that build consensus in the way the law is applied equitably without susceptibility or preference.
- Expand the application of open data functionalities, e-governance solutions and online auditing tools to enhance information availability at the grass root and minimize areas of corruption.
- You should embark on national education and awareness campaigns to the officials, young people and leadership groups to inculcate ethics, fairness and responsibility.
- Set quantitative performance measures and periodic independent audits to determine how the company is meeting the standards of integrity and the improvement over time.
- Share best practices, have joint training programs and coordinate more with related anti-corruption instruments in the world to strengthen credibility, and trust.

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